

As part of an online survey completed late last year for Ako Aotearoa, respondents were asked to identify the importance they placed on building their teaching and educational capability, or that of their staff. Many identified external PLD as an important mechanism by which to do this, while also identifying the areas of focus.

In addition the survey identified the issues which they felt might affect the tertiary sector’s ability to build teaching and educational capability.

## Building teaching and educational capability is rated highly as a priority

Respondents were asked to rate the priority they personally or their organisation placed on building teaching and educational capability. Figure 1 below shows that 40% or more of all groups of respondents rated it as ‘the’ most important or ‘one of’ the most important priorities.

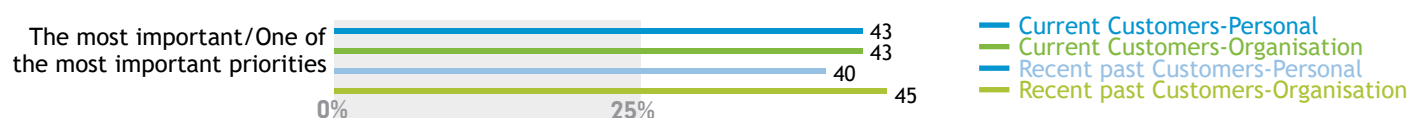


Figure 1: The priority placed on building educational and teaching capability

## ‘Learner engagement and retention’ was the area most frequently identified by all respondents as the most important for building teaching and educational capability

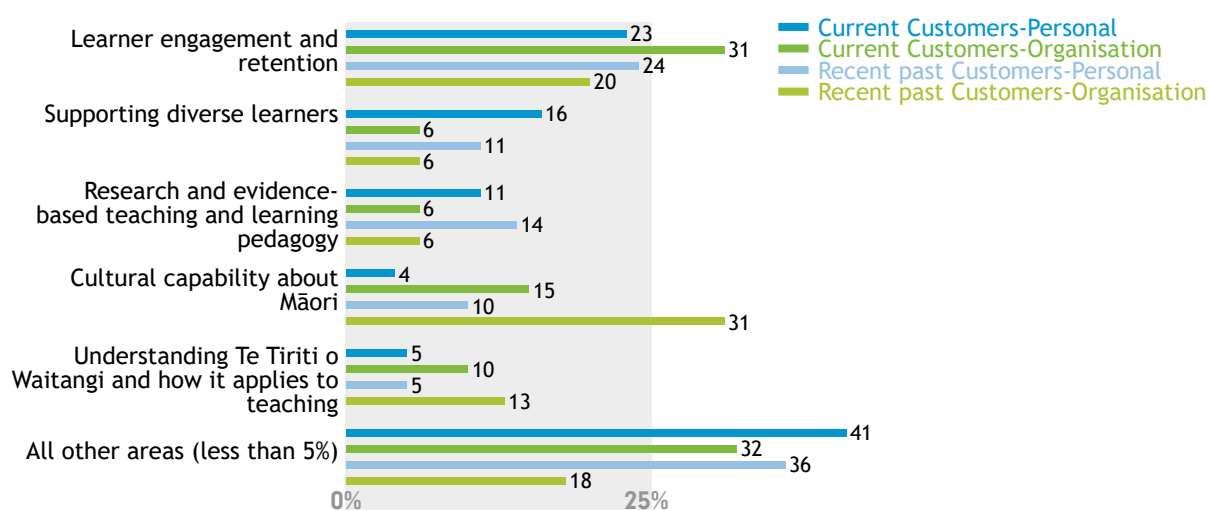


Figure 2: Educational and learning areas most in demand - Current and Recent past customers

<sup>1</sup>The survey was completed between 13 September and 10 November 2021. A total of n=761 current and recent past Ako Aotearoa customers responded to the survey. Respondents answered either from a personal or organizational perspective. Assuming this response is representative, the results based on the total sample are subject to a maximum margin of error of +/- 4.2% (at the 95% confidence level).

## There is a preference for external professional learning and development

With respect to the five areas of educational and teaching capability building most frequently identified as being important, ‘**professional learning and development**’ (internal and external) was most frequently mentioned by both Current and Recent past customers as the method by which they would build these capabilities.

Figure 3 shows the extent to which **external** PLD was mentioned relative to **internal** PLD by Current customers and Recent past customers. In all cases, internal PLD is **more** frequently mentioned than external PLD; meaning that there is a greater preference for the former. Note that this is particularly the case for Current and Recent past customers responding to the survey from an **organisational** perspective.

Questioned as to the reasons for this, customers typically referred to the convenience and cost-effectiveness of internal PLD. On the other hand, customers who preferred external PLD typically referred to the ‘**capabilities and expertise of the provider**’ (i.e. in that they were subject-matter experts, and this was reflected in the way they structured their learning, their method of delivery and their resources).

The preference for internal PLD relative to external PLD appears to reflect what has historically been the case, although the preference for internal PLD may now be stronger given the sector changes occurring.

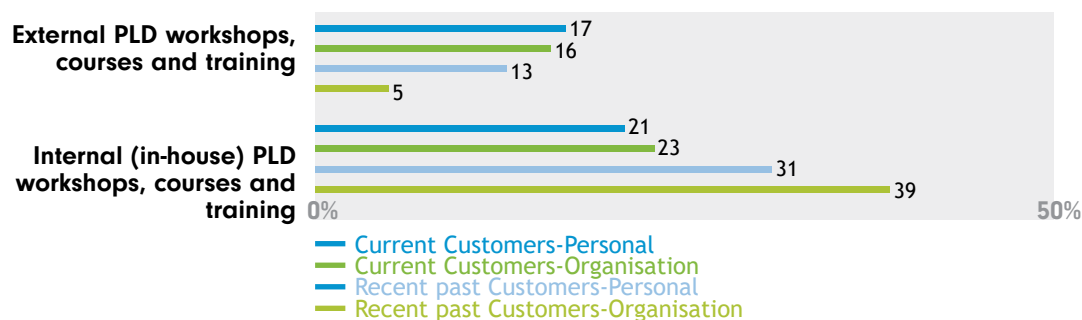


Figure 3: Extent to which external and internal PLD identified as preferred method of building capability in the five most important educational and teaching areas - Current and Recent past customers

## Educators and Educator Managers are very concerned about the impact of sector changes on the upskilling of the workforce and teaching quality

In order to identify the sector-related issues that respondents thought might impact their ability to build their teaching and educational capability, or that of their staff, respondents were reminded about the fact that the tertiary educational sector was undergoing significant change. Then they were asked an open-ended question about the impact this would have on ‘the sector’s ability to build the educational capability of teachers and teaching quality’. Many respondents simply provided a general comment pointing out that the sector changes would have a ‘significant’ impact on the sector’s ability to build educational capability, while others were more specific and referred to the changes affecting government funding, or workloads and staffing.

They were then presented with a list of possible impacts and asked to identify any that they thought were likely to occur and then the one that would have the **most** impact on the sector’s ability to build capability, etc.

The figure below shows that, once again, many respondents provided a general comment or referred to one or more of two specific issues; namely:

- The government’s funding of the sector.
- The level of redundancies in the sector which would, in turn, result in a loss of knowledge and expertise.

COVID-19 was also frequently identified as having an impact, despite this not being directly related to the sector changes.

Other impacts were also identified, but these three were identified by over 50% of respondents, across the board.

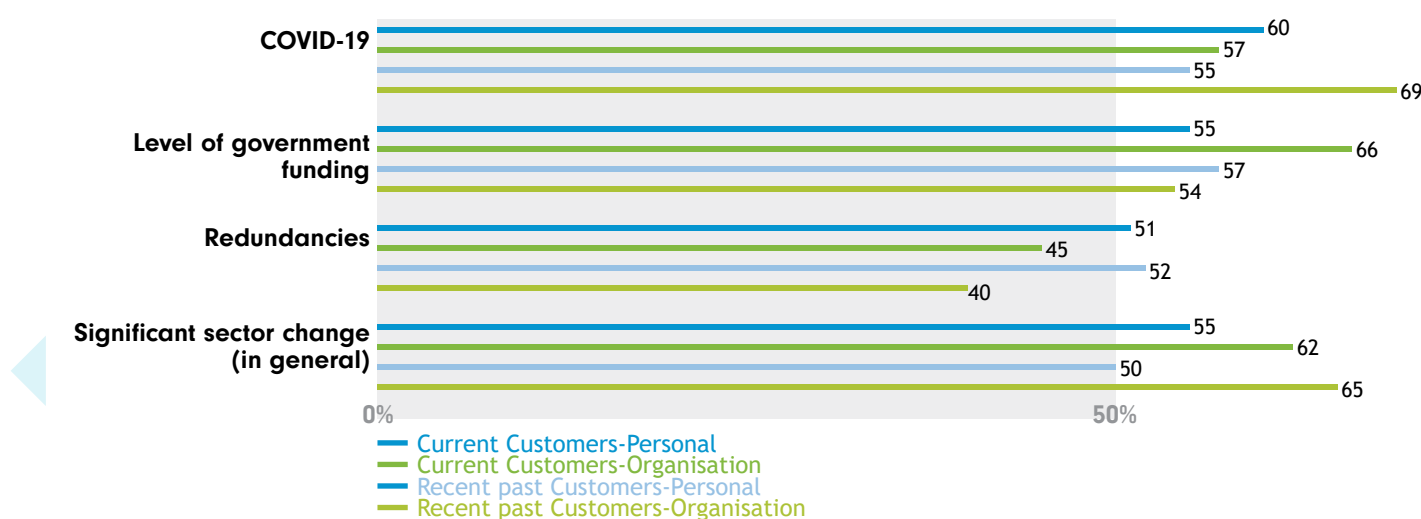


Figure 4: Issues arising from the sector changes identified on a prompted basis as impacting the sector’s ability to build educational and teaching capability

These issues were confirmed when respondents were asked to identify the single most important issue that would have the ‘biggest’ impact.

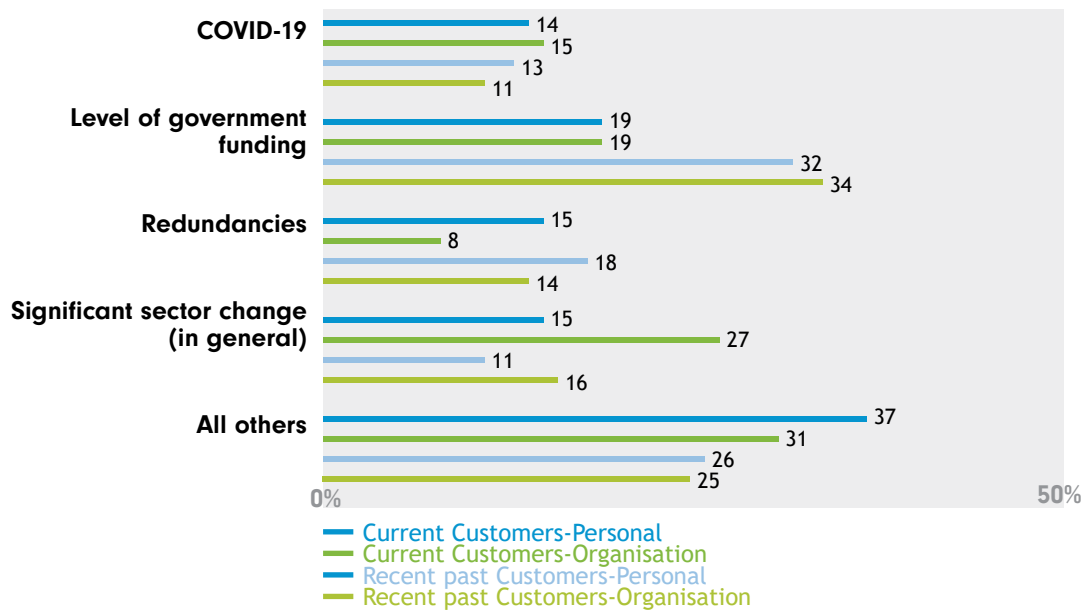


Figure 5: Most important issue arising from the sector changes

*“Overall the sector should be held accountable for being a professional body made up of qualified and experienced individuals who have integrity when it comes to how precious funding is allocated, accounted for and their teaching practice.”*

*“Overwork and underfunding: continuous restructuring is really stressful for many staff, and stems from underfunding. Loss of international students exacerbates this. Failure to pay TAs and many postgrads above the minimum wage is bad too.”*

*“Accepting that the world is changing and that it might not go back to pre-Covid normal. This means lecturers need upskilling in online technologies so that we are able to better engage students.”*

*“Tertiary education managers, teachers, trainers and student support staff need to keep well and be responsive to changing conditions under Covid-19 and be equipped with the educational and teaching capability and be learner or ākonga-centred to support and grow learner agency.”*

*“Our tutors need teaching qualifications so they are more effective in their role and improve the teaching quality of our institution. There needs to be more mandatory requirements for institutions to provide acceptable training and/or attainment of qualifications of their tutors. This is especially important in the courses being delivered at Levels 1, 2 and 3.”*

*“Increase in tertiary funding to ensure appropriate academic staffing levels to enable staff to have time to undertake professional development without impacting on student learning.”*

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## Conclusion

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Many teachers and teaching managers who completed the survey identified building teaching and educational capability as a **high priority**, and then went on to identify ‘**learner engagement and retention**’ as the most important area in which to build this capability.

Together with internal PLD, **external PLD** was frequently identified as the way in which to build capability in ‘learner engagement and retention’, as well as in the other areas identified as important. Those who expressed a preference for external PLD typically did so by referring to the ‘**capabilities and expertise of the provider**’ (i.e. in that they were subject-matter experts, and this was reflected in the way they structured their learning, their method of delivery and their resources).

However, against this background, many teachers and teaching managers expressed a concern that the tertiary sector might be **compromised** in its ability to build teaching and educational capability by the changes currently underway in the sector.

A particular concern of the changes is their impact on government funding and the effect this has on redundancies, workloads and staffing and, in turn, on investment in PLD and training. The natural flow-on effect of this is a **negative** impact on teaching quality and professional standards.

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