



**Charter School
Agency**

Call for Applications Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Application Opens: 11 July 2024
Applicant Briefing: 3:30pm 18 July 2024
Deadline for Questions: 12:00pm, (midday), 31 July 2024
Deadline for Applications: 12:00pm, (midday), 9 August 2024



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Part one: Overview

1a. About Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Charter Schools| Kura Hourua (charter school/schools) are a new type of state funded school. They are being established with the aim of lifting educational achievement of students. Budget 2024 provides \$153 million for up to 15 new charter schools to be established, and 35 state schools to convert in 2025-26, depending on demand and suitability.

The name kura hourua draws on waka hourua, or double-hulled canoe, to signify the partnership between charter school operators and the Government, and between charter schools and their communities.

The operator of a charter school (known as a sponsor) can either set up a new charter school or support the conversion of an existing state or state-integrated school to a charter school under certain conditions (excluding specialist schools). Charter schools will have greater flexibility in teaching, curriculum, governance, hours and days of operation, and funding, with the aim of achieving greater innovation in learning and increasing choice for students and parents. In exchange for greater flexibility, they are subject to increased oversight and accountability.

Sponsors will sign a contract for up to 10 years to meet specified performance requirements in return for state funding. Charter school funding will be broadly equivalent to state school funding. Funding will mostly be on a per-student basis and provided as cash to increase flexibility. This means, for example, that charter schools will get cash instead of staffing entitlements, enabling sponsors to source the specific skills they need.

All charter schools will be required to meet their legal requirements in both legislation, including the Education and Training Act 2020 and individual contracts. Proposed legislative requirements are set out in the Education and Training Amendment Bill currently before Parliament. If charter schools are not meeting their contractual or legislative obligations, there are a series of interventions that the independent Charter School Authorisation Board may take. The Bill is expected to be passed in the last quarter of this year.

The Charter School Authorisation Board will be an independent statutory board with its functions and powers specified in legislation. The Board will approve charter schools and apply interventions against sponsors that are not complying with contractual or legislative obligations.

The Charter School Agency is now beginning the application process to progress capable applications through to a second stage with the aim of having the first schools open in Term 1 2025. While the process can get underway, decisions will not be made until the legislation is passed and the Charter School Authorisation Board is established.

Enrolment in a charter school will be free except for international students. Charter schools must accept all eligible applications to enrol unless they are oversubscribed. Schools with designated character may refuse enrolment applications if the parents do not accept the character of the school.

For more information you can:

- Visit the website www.charterschools.govt.nz.
- See the [Associate Minister of Education's release](#) on the Beehive website.
- Read the [Education and Training Amendment Bill - New Zealand Parliament \(www.parliament.nz\)](http://www.parliament.nz).

1b. How does this application process fit in?

We are looking for sponsors who are motivated to lift student achievement and attendance, have an innovative and viable approach and the experience, knowledge and capability to deliver it.

The legislation sets out that when selecting sponsors, the independent Charter School Authorisation Board will take into account a number of factors, including the focus of the proposed school, the capability of the sponsor, the standard of tuition to be provided, the level of support from the community, financial implications and the potential impact on the wider state and state-integrated school network, given the proposed location, anticipated roll and other factors.

For converting schools, there are additional criteria such as the performance of the school and the level of support from the school community, school staff, and students.

The independent Charter School Authorisation Board can set conditions on the approval of a sponsor.

This year we are conducting a two-stage application process to select sponsors:

- **Stage one:** set out in this document, will establish the suitability of potential sponsors and the viability of their intentions.
- **Stage two:** will be a detailed evaluation of plans to establish and operate a school where children are safe, attending and achieving. The details of stage two are still being finalised.

Decisions will be made by the independent Charter School Authorisation Board once the legislation is passed.

The 2024 application process is focussed on the first tranche of charter schools to open in 2025 and 2026. The process may be refined for future applications. As there is limited funding, the focus is on applications that will maximise positive impact for their students and their community.

In stage one we are seeking purpose statements and high-level business plans from those interested in establishing charter schools | kura hourua. In stage two, we anticipate a staged timetable, with schools aiming to open in Term 1 2025 considered in the first tranche, and others following. We recognise that some sponsors may need longer to prepare their applications and may want a longer lead time before opening.

We are still finalising the detail of stage two of the process and will provide this before stage one is complete. Keep in mind that we anticipate further applications beyond this first round, and the process may evolve. Should you miss out on this opportunity, or not be quite ready to respond just yet please take the time to prepare for a future round of applications.

Information about future rounds will be communicated through our website, and other relevant channels.

1c. Before you apply

Before you apply, please:

1. read this read this application pack in full
2. ensure you have all the required documentation and information.

Email Applications@charterschools.govt.nz if you have any questions.

1d. Application process

The details of this stage one application process are covered in more detail further on in this document. An overview of the whole process and what information we'll be seeking and when is as follows:

Stage	Timing	Details
Stage one applications	Applications due by deadline for applications date	Applications for stage one need to include detail on your: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fit and proper persons declaration/s 2. Purpose statement 3. High-level business plan 4. Network and funding considerations
Charter School Agency conducts assessments	Throughout August	Applications are scored and considered as a full potential school network. Some judgement is applied to possible positive impact on students and communities.
Stage two applications	September to October	This detail is being finalised and is not required at stage one, but, at a high level, stage two applications will ask for detail on your: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full business plan 2. Leadership and capability of the sponsor 3. Additional value of the school including student impact 4. Operational fitness in relation to the performance management framework
Authorisation board approves applications for negotiation	Throughout October	The Charter School Agency will negotiate with each applicant with a view to contracting sponsors for the establishment of new and converting charter schools kura hourua
The first charter schools kura hourua open	Term 1, 2025	New schools will undergo Education Review Office (ERO) review prior to opening as any new school would. Converting schools will need to confirm establishment commitments have been met prior to opening. For example, this could include teaching workforce, payroll, curriculum development.

Part two: Key information

- a. This application, issued by the Charter School Agency, is an open invitation to individuals and organisations to submit an application to sponsor a charter school | kura hourua for assessment.

- b. This is a two-stage process. Resulting from this first stage, and at the discretion of the Charter School Agency, the potential sponsor may be invited to submit an application for stage two.

2a. Application timeframes for stage one

- a. Schools can begin to open from Term 1, 2025, but each sponsor journey will be individual.
- b. The indicative timeline for stage one applications is:

Application published on GETS and Charter Schools website	11 July 2024
Applicant briefing (online, week of)	3:30pm, 18 July 2024
Deadline for questions from applicants	12pm, (midday), 31 July 2024
Deadline to respond to questions	12pm, (midday), 2 August 2024
Deadline for applications	12pm, (midday), 9 August 2024
Applicant selection process (week starting)	12 August 2024
Applicant decisions communicated (week starting)	2 September 2024
Stage two application opens	2 September 2024
Debriefs for unsuccessful applicants commence (week starting)	16 September 2024

- c. All dates and times are dates and times in New Zealand. The timeline may be subject to change via an applicant notification.

2b. Communications

- a. The point of contact will manage all communications in relation to this application:

Point of contact name: **Helen Saville**

Role: Applications process lead

- b. Communication will take place as follows:
 - i. The application details will be posted on GETS and will also be posted on the Charter Schools website
 - i. Questions can be asked by applicants through the GETS question/answer function or through the email address Applications@charterschools.govt.nz
 - ii. The agency will communicate any changes, updates, or additional information to applicants by issuing updates through the addendum function on GETS and posting updates on the website
 - iii. All information communicated to applicants through GETS and the website form part of this application.
- c. Any concern or complaint an applicant has in regard to this application process must be raised with the point of contact. The concerns will be forwarded to Audit NZ for their independent examination.
- d. The applicant briefing will occur online through Microsoft Teams. It will outline the application format and provide key context about charter schools | kura hourua. We strongly encourage you to attend the session to set expectations and have opportunity to ask questions. The briefing will not form part of the assessment.
- e. To attend the briefing, please email Applications@charterschools.govt.nz with your organisation name and to receive the link.

2c. Preparing your application for submission

- a. Documents that form part of this application are:
 - i. Application document (this document and any subsequent applicant notifications and/or addenda related to this application)
 - ii. Response form and application declaration (Word attachment, and any subsequently requested information from applicant)
 - iii. Appendix 1: Charter School Agency application terms and conditions (PDF)
 - iv. Appendix 2: Charter School Agency application glossary (PDF)
- b. Please read all documents provided and return in PDF format the completed and signed response form including the application declaration and signed individual statutory declaration forms.
- c. Sponsor and all known governing members (and future governing members as they become known) must show that they are a fit and proper organisation/person as it is outlined in the drafted Amendment to the Education and Training Act 2020 (applicable to all individuals in the applying organisation) before their application can be assessed.
- d. Your application response must include individual signed statutory declaration forms for the sponsor and all governing members. These declarations should also be signed by a witness. Applications that omit signed statutory declarations for the sponsor and all governing members will not be assessed.
- e. In the course of reviewing the statutory declarations, further due diligence information may be required. In your applicant declaration, you will agree/disagree to allow the Charter School Agency to request/gather and share your information with third parties to undertake due diligence. In disagreeing to allow the Charter School Agency to conduct external due diligence could result in your application being declined for assessment.
- f. The assessment and context parts of your application for stage one cover two key criteria. These are covered in more detail in part three, but at a high level are:
 - a. Testing viability and leadership
 - b. Your high-level business plan.
- g. Responses for each section are to be written.
- h. An application may be received from the following:
 - i. A business or organisation defined as a body corporate, corporation sole, limited partnership, institution, or related entity (the proposed sponsor):
 - ii. In the case of a converting state school —
 - o the school's board with the support of a proposed sponsor; or
 - o one (1) or more members of the school community with the support of a proposed sponsor.

2d. Submitting your application

- a. Applications can be submitted as follows:
 - a. electronically through the GETS e-Tender box function. Please plan accordingly to allow sufficient time to allow the upload to complete before the application deadline.

- b. Applications not submitted by the deadline time and date may be excluded from assessment at the discretion of the Charter School Agency.
- c. Please clearly name your files as follows:
 - [Applicant/sponsor name – Response form for charter schools / kura hourua]
 - [Applicant/sponsor name – Statutory declaration for charter schools / kura hourua]

2e. Application process terms and conditions

- a. This process is undertaken in accordance with the Charter School Agency application terms and conditions. By submitting an application, the respondent agrees to the terms and conditions appended to this application.

Part three: Application process information

3a. Key timeframes

- a. Key timeframes that the application process must align to are:

Date	Activity
June 2024	The Bill to bring charter schools kura hourua into legislation is tabled
July 2024	Application stage one process can now be launched
September 2024	The Bill to bring charter schools kura hourua into legislation is expected to be passed
September 2024	Establishment of the independent Authorisation Board (statutory powers)
November 2024	Successful sponsors can now be contracted
February 2025	The first charter schools kura hourua open

3b. Proposed contract

- a. The contract will commence November 2024. The anticipated contract term and options to extend are:

Description	Years
Initial term of the contract	Up to 10 years
Options for the Charter School Agency to extend the contract	Two extensions of 10 years each (10+10)
Maximum term of the contract	30 years (10+10+10)
Contract type	Bespoke

- b. Individual contract renewals are subject to performance and continued public value being achieved.
- c. The estimated total value of the contract will be based on your funding entitlement.
- d. The draft contract will be released as a part of the stage two application process. The Act outlines at a high level the obligations of the sponsor at a statutory level for compliance. The contracts will outline in detail specific legally binding obligations as well as frameworks to deliver outcomes.

3c. Performance management

- a. The performance management framework will form part of the contract and will be circulated at stage two.
- b. It will detail specific outcomes, measures, and targets and is being designed to support meeting the performance outcomes stipulated within the proposed Act. The purpose of the framework is to enable intervention when required while also supporting high-performing charter schools to grow and share good practice.
- c. It will set out clearly defined performance metrics and at a high level will include but may not be limited to:
 - i. Education outcomes (such as student achievement)
 - ii: Non-education performance (such as financial and reporting)
 - iii: Compliance (such as audits).

3d. Funding components

- a. The types of funding available to successful sponsors are:

No.	Type	Description
1.	Establishment funding	For new charter schools funding to establish the school which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A per-student amount approximating the state school rate for administration, library/resource centres, and teaching and learning material costs. 2. funding to employ principals, senior teachers, and other teachers in the period before opening.
2.	Staff-based funding	Funding based on a per-student rate and paid as cash calculated based on school type and number of students. Additional funding is provided for Māori or Pacific immersion education for specific students.
3.	Services-based funding	Funding for specific nationally provided services that for state schools is provided by the Ministry of Education, including digital, payroll services and nationally provided professional learning and development services. This is calculated based on per-student value based on state school service provisions. Note. <i>not all services are included in this rate. Charter schools can access some of these other services separately.</i>
4.	Operational grant funding	Same operational grant components as with state schools with components that are not “per-student” replaced with broadly equivalent per-student funding.
5.	Property funding	Per-student rates for capital maintenance and the renewal of furniture and equipment based on the property arrangement (Ministry or Non-Ministry property) and the relevant state school funding components. For charter schools in Ministry-owned property, there will be a transition over five years where funding and responsibility is split between the Ministry and the sponsor.

- b. Learning support will be provided based on the needs of the individual student and is excluded from the funding above.

Part four: Application assessment

4a. Pre-conditions

- a. Applications must meet the following pre-conditions. Applications that fail to meet this condition will not be considered further:

Pre-conditions	Confirmation of meeting pre-condition
Pass/Fail to progress to assessment stage	
Fit and proper person test The sponsor and all known governing members (and future governing members as they become known) must show that they are a fit and proper organisation/person as it is outlined in the draft legislation amendment to the Education and Training Act 2020 (applicable to all individuals in the applying organisation) before their full application can be assessed.	
Proposed secondary qualification system Applicants must confirm that their secondary qualification system is nationally or internationally recognised.	

4b. Assessment method

- a. Three assessment ratings are available; **Not Viable, Potentially Viable, Viable**
- 1 (Not Viable):** If you receive a “1” in any criteria, the Charter School Agency will consider if your application should be removed from the process.
 - 4 (Potentially Viable):** If you receive a “4” in any criteria, the Charter School Agency will consider your application, but you are not guaranteed progression to stage two.
 - 7 (Viable):** If you receive a “7” in all your criteria, your application will automatically progress to stage two.

4c. Assessment criteria

- a. The assessment criteria is as follows:

Stage one - PART A: Purpose statement to test viability and leadership		
Overall weighting	30%	
Purpose statement covers:		
1. Motivation and interest	1 (Not Viable)	Motivation and interest are unclear or inadequately articulated.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Motivation and interest are clear but lack comprehensive detail.
	7 (Viable)	Motivation and interest are clearly articulated, compelling, and align well with the proposed school's aspirations and benefits.
2. Aspirations and benefits	1 (Not Viable)	Aspirations are vague and do not demonstrate clear benefits for students.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Aspirations are somewhat clear but lack specific benefits for students.

	7 (Viable)	Aspirations are clearly defined, showing significant potential benefits for students.
3. Education strategy	1 (Not Viable)	Strategy for education is unclear or inadequately articulated.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Strategy for education is clear but lacks compelling detail.
	7 (Viable)	Strategy for education is clearly articulated, compelling, and aligns well with educational best practice.
4. Innovation and/or choice for parents	1 (Not Viable)	Innovation is vague and does not demonstrate clear benefits and/or choices for communities of the proposed school.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Innovations outlined and demonstrate some benefits but not strongly articulated choices for communities of the proposed school.
	7 (Viable)	Innovations are clearly defined, showing significant potential benefits and tangible choices for communities of the proposed school.
5. Opportunity for students in the proposed school's community	1 (Not Viable)	No consideration of opportunity for students in the proposed school's community.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Some consideration of opportunity for students in the proposed school's community but lacks comprehensive approach.
	7 (Viable)	Strong consideration and commitment to provision of opportunity for all students in the proposed school's community.

Stage one PART B: High-level business plan to build educational performance		
Overall weighting		70%
High-level business plan covers:		
1. Student achievement	1 (Not Viable)	No clear plan to deliver academic achievement.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Some plans in place but lacks detailed strategies to deliver academic achievement.
	7 (Viable)	Comprehensive plan with clear, detailed strategies to deliver academic achievement.
2. Student demographic and attendance	1 (Not Viable)	No clear plan considering student demographic and attendance against performance management measures.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Some plans in place but lacks detail in considering the student demographic and attendance against performance management measures.
	7 (Viable)	Comprehensive plan with clear, detailed consideration of the student demographic and attendance against performance management measures.
3. Financial sustainability	1 (Not Viable)	No clear source(s) of funding identified and/or no financial sustainability strategy outlined.

	4 (Potentially Viable)	Source(s) of funding identified but lacks detail to articulate how the funding sources will ensure financial sustainability.
	7 (Viable)	Source(s) identified and detailed strategy outlined for operating with financial sustainability.
4. Workforce planning	1 (Not Viable)	No clear workforce planning approach or governance structure outlined.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Some workforce planning and governance has been considered but it lacks detail and strategy.
	7 (Viable)	Detailed and strategic workforce planning approach outlined with a clear governance structure described.
5. Context and environment	1 (Not Viable)	No understanding of the context or environment of the proposed school.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Some understanding of the context and environment of the proposed school but lacks depth and detail that shows how the school will fit into its environment.
	7 (Viable)	Thorough understanding of context and environment, with detailed analysis of school network, demand, and population forecasts.
6. Physical and Cultural Assets <i>Physical assets i.e., infrastructure, technology [new schools only]</i> <i>Cultural Assets if relevant [all schools]</i>	1 (Not Viable)	No clear plan for required assets outlined.
	4 (Potentially Viable)	Some assets identified but lacks detailed planning in consideration of the specific assets the proposed school will need to deliver its educational objectives.
	7 (Viable)	Comprehensive plan for physical and cultural assets, aligned with the proposed school's academic objectives.

4d. Progressing an application

- a. Selection of applicants to progress to stage two will take into account:
 - i. If the applicant (sponsor and governing members (and future governing members as they become known)) have shown that they are a fit and proper organisation/person as outlined in the draft legislation (applicable to all individuals in the applying organisation).
 - ii. If the applicant has shown use of a nationally or internationally recognised secondary qualification system.
 - iii. An applicant's weighted assessment score.
 - iv. Network and funding considerations including converting school performance, Crown financial implications, views of the Secretary for Education.
 - v. Any due diligence undertaken (including any related to the fit and proper persons test).

4e. Due diligence

- a. Due diligence may be undertaken before, during or after assessment on one or more application/applicant to determine whether entering into a contract with an applicant may expose the agency to undue risk. Written approval of the applications process approver is required to exclude any application from assessment or selection for due diligence reasons. Types of due diligence that may be requested include but are not limited to:
 - i. Reference checks
 - ii. Clarifications, interviews, and/or presentations
 - iii. Police vetting of personnel

- iv. Checks to determine the accuracy/completeness/validity of applications
- v. Companies Office search
- vi. Review of an applicant's financial viability
- vii. Review of an applicant's business practices and other probity issues
- viii. Review of an applicant's disputes with the ministry and/or other parties
- ix. Review of an applicant's ownership/structure
- x. Review of an applicant's director status
- xi. Review of an applicant's conduct

4f. Conflicts of interest

- a. The applicant warrants that it has no actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in submitting this application or entering into a contract to establish a school. Where a conflict of interest arises during the application process, the applicant/s will report it immediately to the applicant point of contact.

Appendix 1: Charter School Agency application terms and conditions

Attached to the GETS application notice.

Appendix 2: Charter School Agency application glossary

Attached to the GETS application notice.



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Published by the **Charter School Agency**

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Visit www.charterschools.govt.nz for more information