



Te Pūkenga

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3 September 2025

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

By email:

[Redacted]

Tēnā kōrua

[Redacted]

Request under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 28 July 2025, requesting the following information from the Universal College of Learning (UCOL) | Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (Te Pūkenga):

.. from 27 November 2023 to the present day (28 July 2025):

- (i) All correspondence, sent and received, between Minister Simmonds, or any member of her office, and the Universal College of Learning (UCOL)*
- (ii) Details of all meetings that Minister Simmonds has had with the Universal College of Learning (UCOL), including all meeting minutes and notes, and all briefings or advice prepared in relation to any such meetings.*

On 7 August 2025 [Redacted] kindly clarified your request with the following:

In regard to clarification of question (i):

- Could we please refine this timeframe to 1 October 2024 to the present day*
- UCOL communication could be narrowed down to Tier 1 (ie the Executive Director prior to mid-December 2024, and Operations Lead from mid-December) and Tier 2 roles at UCOL.*
- If there is still a large volume of correspondence which this requests picks up, the subject search could be narrowed down to what is captured with the terms 'financial viability' 'federation' and 'independence'*
- Please note that should there have been any letters between Minister Simmonds and the Executive Director or Operations Lead that were sent from administrative email addresses, we would like to request a copy of these letters too.*

In regard to clarification of question (ii):

- *Could we please refine the timeframe to 1 October 2024 to the present day, and that this be only for meetings where Minister Simmonds and the Executive Director and/or Operations Lead are present.*

With reliance on section 15(1)(AA) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), due to this clarification, the timeframe for making a decision on your request was reset, as 20 working days from 7 August. This letter provides a formal decision on your request under the OIA.

Search and collation

We carried out a search for information within scope of your questions using the following parameters:

Correspondence (including any emailed letters) and Meetings

Date range:

- 1 October 2024 to 28 July 2025

External:

- Emails to or from any email address ending in @parliament.govt.nz

Internal:

- Mark Oldershaw, Executive Director, from 1 October to end November 2024.
- [REDACTED], Operations Lead, to 28 July 2025.
- Tier 2 UCOL kaimahi (staff)

Meetings:

- Where Minister Simmonds and the Executive Director and/or Operations Lead were present.

The decision

We must advise that using this refined date range our search did not identify any correspondence or meetings within scope. Therefore, we must refuse your clarified request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist.

However, due to this, we searched using the same refined scope however with a date range of 1 January and October 2024 and identified a small number of emails. As these are outside the scope of your clarified request, we have not provided copies, but for completeness we outline them as below.

- June/July 2024

A series of seven “administration” emails between Mark Oldershaw and the Minister’s office with details, including dates and attendees, for the meeting at UCOL on 2 July 2024.

- 2 July 2024

The Minister visited the UCOL Manawatu Campus and met with the UCOL Senior Leadership Team, Campus Leaders, and some UCOL stakeholders (in one session). It was a high-level discussion about UCOL, its importance to the community, its strengths, and achievements,

and it gave management and stakeholders an opportunity to ask the Minister questions. There were no meeting minutes or notes taken by UCOL at that session.

- 12 September 2024

The Minister was copied into an email from UCOL Operations Lead, sending UCOL's submission in response to 2024 Vocational education and training reforms consultation.

- 12 September 2024

Automatic reply from Minister's office to email providing UCOL's submission.

You have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA if you are not happy with this response. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

We may publish our OIA responses and the information contained in our reply to you on our website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gus Gilmore', with a large, stylized loop at the beginning.

Gus Gilmore

Tumuaki | Chief Executive