

The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

Minutes of the meeting to self-review our compliance with the code using the NZQA Tool A Gap Analysis which is part of the Code's self-review kit for tertiary providers (<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/tertiary-and-international-learners-code/providers-signatories/self-review-attestation/>)

Preamble

2022 was the first year Bishopdale was required to report under the new 2021 Code of Pastoral Care and to prepare for our first NZQA External Evaluation and Review (EER) in early 2023. These were two major exercises that focused on two key questions: 1) Are we doing all that we can reasonably be expected to do to ensure that student safety and wellbeing is assured and 2) that the quality of the programmes we are offering provide genuine value to students and the wider community. In preparation for this, Bishopdale appointed a new staff member—Rev Dr Andrew Callander—to the role of Senior Academic Administrator (15 hours per week).

The overarching ethos that NZQA seeks to inculcate is self-review leading to an embedded culture of continuous improvement. That is, that instead of NZQA being an external enforcer of standards, they want tertiary providers to have imbedded policies, processes, and practices whereby they are continuously making themselves aware of all things impacting on student wellbeing, and the value and academic integrity of the programmes they offer—and responding accordingly.

To assess how effectively providers are doing this NZQA uses a methodology of triangulation. That is, they look at: 1) what we say we are doing, 2) what they know we are doing, and 3) what key stakeholders say we are doing, and then gauge the extent to which these align.

What this means is that:

- NZQA wants to see evidence that we have processes in place that will make us aware of how well (or not) we are doing, and that we are taking steps to make improvements—all in relation to what is appropriate to our specific context.
- We are open and honest with NZQA and key stakeholders concerning our shortcomings.
- When we become aware of shortcomings (that is, areas we can and should improve on) we take appropriate steps to rectify these.

In our first self-assessment in 2022 in relation to the Code of Pastoral Care, we became aware of a number of deficiencies that we reported to NZQA and to key stakeholders. As noted below in relation to our second self-assessment, we haven't followed through on all of these commitments. The key reason for this is that our resources have been stretched during 2023. This especially relates to the work that the Dean has been doing in relation to:

- Our ongoing relationship with Laidlaw College
- Ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the College

- Conversations with potential stakeholders who wish to engage Bishopdale as a provider of theological education for their communities, and
- Planning around the design and construction of a new purpose-built College

All of these have required huge inputs of time and energy that has had the effect of displacing some of the priorities and commitments we made in 2022 in relation to the Code of Practice. We need to make it very clear (as it should be obvious from the minutes below) that our failure to make good on some of these commitments during 2023 in no way compromised the wellbeing and safety of students.

Pastoral Care Code of Practice self-review meeting 4th October 2023 1:30-2:15pm

Present: Andrew Burgess, Simon Terrill, Kate Tyler, Andrew Callander

7(1)—have strategic goals and strategic plans for supporting the wellbeing and safety of learners across the organisation. Kate and Andrew C have written a student Wellbeing and Safety policy to include in the QMS. This needs to be formally approved. In relation to 7(1b) “contribute to an education system that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori–Crown relations” the Dean attended an Anglican Indigenous Theologies Wānanga on indigenous leadership in the Hawkes Bay 24th -27th September 2023.

7(2)—regularly review learner wellbeing and safety strategic goals and strategic plans. The recommendation Simon and Andrew C made last year regarding the regular formal review of the four key Outcomes from the Code of Practice on a rolling annual basis as part of the Management Committee agenda did not happen. This will be done at the next meeting of MC on 1st Nov.

7(2a)—review Goals and Plans. We do have a student Wellbeing and Safety plan; however, we need to better integrate the revision of this into the regular formal rhythms of college life.

7(2b)—amend Goals and Plans. We need to formally embed the institutional strategy of always asking, “Do any changes need to be made and do we have policies that are no longer fit for purpose?” At an informal level this is always a live assumption at Bishopdale that informs all that we do, however, we need to improve the way we do this at a more formal level and to ensure this is well documented.

7(3)—work proactively with learners and stakeholders. The student representative is on the Management Committee and College Board. The representative report focusses primarily on how students are doing and any aspects of student care that staff may have missed. The rep invites student input. We will do this on “Toastie Thursday” our shared student staff weekly lunch.

8(1)—use strategic goals and strategic plans described in clause 7(1) to regularly review the quality of learner wellbeing and safety practices. We do this well.

8(2)—review learner wellbeing and safety practices. Following our 2022 self-assessment we reviewed and rewrote our student complaints policy. However, we haven't received any student complaints to assess how effective the changes we made are at resolving complaints.

8(3)—take appropriate action to address any deficiencies in learner wellbeing and safety practices.

The following are excerpts from Management Committee (MC) and Senior Academic Committee (SAC) meeting minutes during 2023.

- It's been a predominantly positive start to 2023 despite low student numbers. This has actually contributed to excellent inter-student support (student rep MC March /23).
- The new lecture room is also a great addition to BTC the students are enjoying (student rep MC March /23).
- EER went well and students enjoyed being together to discuss their experience with NZQA – especially how much they enjoy the community feel and the support they receive (student rep MC June /23).
- An issue raised to Jason is that certain students are finding it difficult to make the most of study mentors who aren't often onsite at college. This is mainly due to difficulties of having a mentor they either don't know, or don't know well, or can't approach (student rep MC June /23).
- One student is struggling significantly but current support is good (Burge and Simon have discussed a potential plan for semester two if things don't go well). Another is dealing with very significant family issues but is actively seeking support and is managing current workloads well (Dean MC June /23).

9—make information on strategic goals and strategic plans for supporting the wellbeing and safety of learners, revisions to strategic goals and strategic plans for supporting the wellbeing and safety of learners, and self-review reports on the quality of their learner wellbeing and safety practices readily available to learners, staff, and the general public. We published this information on our website in October 2022 and will do this in October 2023.

10(1)—gather and communicate relevant information, and from relevant stakeholders, to accurately identify emerging concerns about learners' wellbeing and safety or behaviour, and take all reasonable steps to connect learners quickly to culturally appropriate social, medical, and mental health services. We do this well. However, we don't provide exhaustive information to students in relation to every conceivable situation they might confront.

10(2)—provide staff with ongoing training and resources tailored to their roles in the organisation in relation to all aspects of student wellbeing and safety. We have fallen short here. In our 2022 self-attestation report we said we would provide formal staff training in relation to a specific area of student wellbeing. However, this did not happen. It does happen informally, for example during orientation week, but this needs to be formally instituted in 2024. We will do this at the beginning of Semester 1 each year and have a catch up for those staff members who missed this at the beginning of Semester 2. Our focus will be on those aspects of care deemed most relevant to our situation and student cohort.

10(3)—have plans for assisting learners, and responding effectively, in emergency situations. This is done at orientation. Bishopdale is small enough, and our lines of communication with students close enough, to ensure we can respond quickly to a crisis and inform students accordingly. If in doubt we will call the relevant authorities, e.g., Police and Civil Defence, and respond accordingly. However, we recognise our need to develop a formal Critical Incident policy. We will have this in place for Semester 1 2024.

12—proactively build and maintain effective relationships with diverse learner groups within the organisation in relation to all aspects of student wellbeing and safety. We meet regularly with students both formally and informally to ensure their wellbeing and safety.

13—work with learners to effectively respond to and process complaints (including appropriate engagement with support people). As noted above, following our 2022 self-assessment we reviewed and rewrote our student complaints policy.

14—ensure providers are familiar with the relevant Dispute Resolution Scheme rules for learners and ensure compliance with those rules in a dispute to which it is party. We provide wall posters in students spaces outlining the Dispute Resolution Scheme.

16 and 17—have policies and practices to reduce harm to learners resulting from discrimination, racism (including systemic racism), bullying, harassment and abuse. Bishopdale practices a “generous orthodoxy” and consciously and proactively embeds a culture of being aware of “who may be in the room”. That is, ensuring all staff and students are aware that there may be people of diverse orientations and beliefs present that are to be respected.

18—provide healthy and safe learning environments. During 2023 we added a second teaching space with digital distance learning capability. Bishopdale is currently in the planning phase for the construction of a new purpose-built teaching facility. We are actively involving student and Māori input to inform our design and décor decisions.

20—have practices for enabling all learners and prospective learners to identify and manage their basic needs (the essential material requirements to support wellbeing and safety). We do this well.

21—provide opportunities and experiences for learners that improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing and safety. We do this well.

22—domestic learners 18 years and over to provide a name and up-to-date contact details of a nominated person and the circumstances in which this person should be contacted in relation to their wellbeing and safety. This is part of the Bishopdale application process.