

## ABACUS 2023

### Self-Review Report Code of Practice

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

#### Outcome 1

##### Strategic Goals and Strategic Plans

Strategic goals and plans are part of the Abacus whole-of-provider organisational structure and evident in our Policies and Procedures. The wellbeing and safety of our learners sits within our Pastoral Care Code of Practice policy. This policy cites several other Abacus policies that answer to the wellbeing and safety of learners. Abacus policies and procedures are reviewed annually and are driven by annual Business Plan QIPs. Our Category 1 standing for two consecutive EER processes confirms our processes maintain a high standard.

Abacus proactively works with learners and stakeholders to ensure wellbeing and safety of learners. The Human Resource and Quality Assurance managers are part of the lecturer team and are continuously available to the student population. The administration team are also continuously available for any stakeholder and learner needs. See correspondence from lecturers and Abacus admin. for all the support provided to students for understanding assignments and technology, and when needing extensions for personal reasons. The required course workshops (online and in person) also offer a lot of opportunity to get to know students and their needs.

##### Self-review of learner wellbeing and safety practices

As part of the strategic goals and plans for Abacus, regular feedback from stakeholders and learners informs our annual processes so that any necessary changes can take place to add quality to wellbeing and safety practices. This will be evident in policy changes, annual QIPs, course annual summaries and curriculum changes. This is overseen by the Code Administrator who is also the Quality Assurance manager. Evidence will also be available in course handbook changes, training course P&P manual, from trainer bi-annual feedback forums and annual external moderation processes for L5 and L6. This year it was decided to have bi-annual feedback forums with the trainers. There is also intention to include feedback from the students' supervisors incorporated into module assignments for L6.

There are formal opportunities to ask for course feedback at the end of training and at 3 months follow up from training of learners and their managers for L6.

Abacus captures student demographics especially in regard to ethnicity, which informs the organisation on the diversity of their students. This supports the feedback asked for at the end of training for L5 and L6.

This year, L6 has shown increased interest for the course from the rainbow community and for lived experience. This has enhanced the course resources for L6 assignments.

## **Publication Requirements**

Abacus will have this 2023 annual self-review report available on its website for learners and the general public. This document will also be available in the ongoing Code of Practice QIP in the annual business plan. All staff have access to this information.

## **Responsive wellbeing and safety systems**

For anyone utilising Abacus services, Directors (SW, Nursing, Psychology) are available for connecting people to supports outside of the Abacus services. We are a provider that works in the addiction and mental health fields and know how important it is for people to access needed services. We are skilled in comprehensive clinical assessments and duty of care processes. Abacus is confident in biopsychosocial needs and staff are experts in mental health and this is a primary focus of the studies taught as well. Abacus staff are all part of the support team to students and have regular communication back to the Abacus Directors for any emerging concerns or emergency situations. The Abacus P&P reflects this level of responsiveness. There have been no filed incidents this year related to learner wellbeing and safety, however, incident reporting is a routine whole-of-provider practice for this organisation.

## **Outcome 2**

### **Learner Voice**

The learner and stakeholder voice is very important to Abacus. The Directors of Abacus have worked as clinicians and trainers in the addiction and mental health field for many years. Many of the learners of Abacus have first had proactive relationships with Abacus as stakeholders in the addiction and mental health field. The courses that Abacus teaches come from actively hearing the needs of this field. Many learners of Abacus courses are peers and colleagues from the field. Potential learners are often recommended to come to an Abacus course through a graduate of our training from the field. Many learners from the L6 course become contracted supervisors with Abacus and help to build the resources for this course through their diversity. As mentioned above, this year is seeing an increase in students from the rainbow community and lived experience. The Abacus 2 yearly supervisor workshop being held this year represents increasing cultural diversity.

### **Learner Complaints**

Abacus has a comprehensive complaints process that is easily accessible for learners. There have been no complaints this past year.

### **Compliance with the Dispute Resolution Scheme**

Abacus practices are compliant with the Dispute Resolution Scheme and we are exempt from the student funds trust deposit rule financially as we charge for courses after modules are completed.

## **Outcome 3**

### **Safe and Inclusive Communities**

As stated above, Abacus, stakeholders and learners represent the addiction and mental health workforce. We are all bound by inclusive cultural practices and to monitor for any forms of discrimination to clients of our services as part of the professional bodies we are obligated to for our annual practicing certificates. These bodies are mostly registered or accredited organisations that we are accountable to for meeting high standards of competent practices. There have been no breaches of practices from Abacus or contracted providers in this past year or any concerns in this regard by our learners. The APC are audited by Abacus. Please see the Abacus P&P for relevant policies.

All Abacus training requires confidentiality from learners when attending workshops as part of study. To encourage inclusiveness, all agreeable learners have access to contacting their learner peers when in study.

### **Supporting learner participation and engagement**

The training that Abacus provides is mostly to adult learners. For some learners, it has been a long time since they were last in study. Abacus puts a great deal of effort into supporting learners to achieve by talking in detail as a group and individually about what is expected in assignments. For each assignment, both tutors provide a great deal of written feedback. If a module is expected to be redone to pass, tutors work alongside the learner to assist with their understanding. Please see examples of module feedback and relevant correspondence with learners.

During the in person or online workshops, there is a lot of opportunity for experiential learning for learners with their peers. This assists with integrating learning. See course curriculums. The courses celebrate new resources and models that represent learners culturally. There is a lot of autonomy to bring to the courses material that represents the learners for study purposes and for their future practices. See evolving study resource lists that have been partially adapted by the learners and their contributions.

Feedback at the end of training encompasses information on the support learners received while in study and also from a cultural point of view to meet Te Tiriti o Waitangi expectations. Feedback also asks about intentions of further study as a result of the learning completed with Abacus. See relevant feedback responses from learners.

### **Physical and digital spaces and facilities**

After all Abacus trainings, learners are asked to give feedback about the physical space the learning took place. They are also asked to give feedback about the digital platforms (if applicable) they received while in their learning. This feedback is utilised to make changes for future learning environments. See relevant feedback from learners on this subject.

## Outcome 4

### Information for learners about assistance to meet their basic needs

Abacus is a provider that works in the addiction, mental health and social work field and know how important it is for people to access needed services. We know the most relevant up to date community resources for meeting basic needs. In saying that, Abacus courses are mostly short or distance learning based for consideration of physical needs but we are confident in assessing biopsychosocial needs for our learners.

See the Abacus healthy food and drink policy.

### Promoting physical and mental health awareness

As many of the courses Abacus offers represents the addiction and mental health field, course curriculum and assignments often focus their subject matter on physical and mental health wellbeing. This applies to learner work with clients but also about themselves representing the field. Many learners are working in the field while studying and are in occupations that come with high stress and burnout rates. Models and practices taught in the courses, often representing cultural diversity, are for building awareness promoting physical and mental health. See relevant course curriculum and resources.

### Proactive monitoring and responsive wellbeing and safety practices

Abacus works with potential risk to health issues for clients and has protocols for managing this, which would be applicable to learners experiencing risk to health issues too. It does not currently ask for a nominated person to be listed as part of learner enrolment for monitoring wellbeing issues. This will be an action from this self-review. In many cases, we are aware of the learners employer and in a risk to health circumstance would make contact there but this is not the case for every learner. We ask for verbal consent to speak to managers as part of the follow up feedback after the course is completed but not during the course.

To assist learners, we offer the L5 and L6 courses to be extended for up to 2 years if needed due to personal circumstances and monitor this with the learner.

See Abacus Training Manual policies for learner support and responsibilities and the Abacus P&P for relevant policies.

## Outcome Overview

- How effectively do we take a whole-of-provider approach to maintain a strategic and transparent learner wellbeing and safety system that responds to the diverse needs of our learners?

Abacus maintains high standards for its whole-of-provider approach to the wellbeing and safety of diverse learners with well managed transparent communication systems in place.

- How effectively do we access and use learner voice to understand the impact of our learner wellbeing and safety practices for this outcome?

Abacus works diligently to receive feedback from our learners throughout all training experiences. This feedback informs changes and maintains ongoing relationships with people who represent the addiction and mental health field.

- How effectively does our organisation uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi throughout our learner wellbeing and safety practices for this outcome?

Abacus monitors the ethnicity of its learners and makes specific effort to monitor learner feedback and trends represented by Māori and Pacifica.

- How effectively do our current practices for this outcome align with our organisational learner wellbeing and safety strategic goals and strategic plans?

Abacus maintains high standards for its overall strategic goals and plans. The wellbeing and safety of our learners sits seamlessly within this well managed and monitored system.