

# 2024 Pastoral Care Self-Review for Service Skills Centre

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## Section 1: Introduction

This self-review assesses Service Skills Centre's 2024 pastoral care against the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021\*. Our goal remains to foster an inclusive, safe learning environment that prioritizes second-chance learners and supports individual and group needs with high staff-to-student engagement, enabled by our tutor-student ratios consistently under 1:10. This review also acknowledges the establishment of a new site in May 2024, which is aligning to meet company standards amid mixed initial data as we refine staffing and processes.

## Section 2: Review Findings

This year, Service Skills Centre made significant strides in expanding pastoral support and refining our educational delivery to better align with learner needs and expectations.

### 1. Enhanced Learning Environment

The welcoming, supportive environment at our primary site was further extended to our new site, ensuring consistency across locations.

Tutors engage with students through regular, personalized check-ins, supporting each learner's unique journey. Feedback from students reinforces that these interactions contribute positively to their sense of belonging and motivation to achieve.

The new site is adapting to align with our standards, working on embedding Service Skills Centre's values and processes to ensure students at this location feel equally supported and valued.

### 2. Individualized Pastoral Support

Our small size enables a personalized approach where tutors serve as both educators and mentors, fostering strong relationships with learners and their whānau.

The introduction of additional support contacts and refined check-in procedures allows students, especially those facing challenges, to receive timely guidance and encouragement. The student handbook and intranet resources continue to provide readily accessible support options, supplemented by more in-person interactions at both sites. The "World at your Feet" study, and "Just a thought" programmes continue to offer immense value and see a real difference in the reduction of noticeable mental health and well-being issues. Whilst detailed quantity measurement of this change has been considered it is considered that the combination of low numbers of students and maintaining confidentiality makes it unreasonable to apply. We will continue to monitor in our scorecard system with general tutor rating.

### 3. Commitment to Cultural Responsiveness

In line with our pastoral care policy, we maintained an emphasis on cultural responsiveness. Our tutors engage learners by incorporating Te Reo and Tikanga into daily interactions, ensuring all students feel respected and included.

The new site has actively integrated these practices, aligning with our strategic commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Mixed feedback from this site reflects some early adjustment phases; however, the overall response has been positive, with students appreciating the respect and understanding shown for diverse backgrounds.

### 4. Academic and Practical Skill Development

Our approach of balancing theory and practical skill development has continued to resonate with students, as seen in evaluations from April 2024 and July 2024. Comments highlighted the effectiveness of our hands-on learning model, particularly the adaptability it offers to each learner's pace and capabilities.

Practical tutors play a key role in supporting students' personal and academic growth, helping them to achieve NCEA goals within an encouraging environment. The new site has adopted this model, though feedback suggests further customization may benefit this cohort's unique needs as it grows.

#### 5. Student Voice and Continuous Improvement

- This year's feedback channels, such as Student Voice sessions and anonymous surveys, revealed student preferences for practical learning, which we implemented through added resources and adjustments to the learning schedule.
- We have maintained our commitment to a responsive feedback system. For example, in response to student requests, we introduced a range of new equipment at the new site and adjusted break times to better support learners' daily routines and wellbeing.

#### 6. Tutor Development and Support

- Tutors at both sites actively participate in professional development programs, which include cultural competency training, youth mental health courses, and de-escalation training. This equips our team to respond effectively to the needs of diverse learners.
- In tandem, we have emphasized the sharing of best practices across sites, allowing newer staff at the May 2024 site to benefit from the experience and resources of our established team.

### **Section 3: Recommendations**

While our pastoral care efforts remain strong, certain areas are identified for continuous improvement as we strive to enhance consistency and responsiveness:

- Ongoing Staff Training: Ensure all tutors at the new site are fully aligned with Service Skills Centre's support model and receive ongoing training in pastoral care best practices.
- Structured Feedback Loops: Regular, structured feedback from students at both sites will allow us to respond quickly to changing needs, particularly as the new site grows.
- Resource Alignment: Continue refining pastoral and academic resources to meet the evolving expectations at the new site, ensuring equity in access to support and learning opportunities.

### **Section 4: Conclusion**

Service Skills Centre's commitment to student wellbeing and success has strengthened in 2024. Our unique, small-scale approach fosters a safe, inclusive environment where each learner feels valued and supported. The expansion to a second site in May 2024 marks a pivotal step in our growth, and while initial data shows areas for refinement, the foundational practices of our pastoral care remain effective and are positively impacting learner success across locations.

We are confident that our ongoing improvements will allow both sites to thrive, meeting the needs of every learner we serve and advancing our mission to be a supportive, responsive provider of second-chance education.