



Self Review Report

Review of The Mind Lab¹ practices against the outcomes and processes of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice (2021).

October 2022

¹ At the time of writing (October 2022), The Mind Lab Education Limited Partnership was the name of the NZQA accredited Tertiary Education Organisation.

From 30th November 2022, the NZQA accredited organisation is AcademyEX Education Limited Partnership, and The Mind Lab is a faculty of academyEX. All details presented in this report remain true and correct.

TEO Information

TEO Name	The Mind Lab				MoE number	9185
Code contact	Name	Craig Hilton			Job title	National Academic Director
	Email	craig.hilton@themindlab.com			Phone number	021 545 243
Current enrolments (as at 31st Oct 2022)	Domestic learners	Total	1194	18 y/o or older	1194	
				Under 18 y/o	0	
	International learners	Total	0	18 y/o or older	0	
				Under 18 y/o	0	
Report author(s)	Hayley Sparks (National Academic Manager)					

Self-Review Outcomes

Continuous self-review is embedded in The Mind Lab's quality assurance practices on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Further, learners are at the centre of our educational approach and organisation mission - 'Creating Impactful Futures'. We have undertaken a self review to ensure that our organisational structures support a whole-of-provider approach to a learner wellbeing and safety system, which is strategic, transparent and responds to the diverse needs of all our learners.

Culturally responsive, equitable and effective support for the wellbeing and safety of domestic and international learners engaging with us is our priority. Wellbeing can be defined holistically as pertaining to physical, spiritual, mental and emotional, and social dimensions of individual and community health. In a New Zealand context, this approach aligns to Sir Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model. Additionally, other indigenous frameworks on wellbeing globally also reference the multiple dimensions of wellbeing and the importance of holding individuals and communities at the centre. We are committed to continuing to work towards processes and practices building on progress toward being a good partner of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the continued integration of Te Tiriti principles into our practices, including what this means for onshore and offshore domestic and international learners.

Our Learner Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Goals for 2023:

- Provide an inclusive and safe learning environment (both in person, and online reflecting The Mind Lab delivery modes) that enables diverse (i.e. all) learners to thrive and meet their aspirations and the aspirations of their communities.
- Support learners and alumni, both in New Zealand and globally, in responsive, inclusive, culturally appropriate ways to create a strong sense of connection and community.
- Proactively engage with learners and stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement of The Mind Lab learner wellbeing and safety practices.

Part 3 (Education Code of Practice): Organisational structures to support a whole-of-provider approach to learner wellbeing and safety

Outcome 1: A Learner Wellbeing and Safety System
Self-Review Rating: Implemented
<p>Summary of Performance (including how we know):</p> <p>At the centre of The Mind Lab's whole-organisation (all teams, academic and otherwise) Teaching and Learning Strategy, Te Ara Kōtihi are learners. Positive relationships are at the centre of our philosophy and values for teaching and learning. As a collective, the following organisational kaupapa Māori values drive our practice, and underpin everything we do, and importantly guide all activities described in this document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manaaki - We nurture and care for staff and learners in our various activities and learning spaces through our conversations, knowledge sharing, and supporting the wellbeing of all. We embrace difference and respect everyone's values and include everyone, no matter their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs, disability, political opinion or employment status, in all the places and spaces we interact in. - Rangatiratanga - We respect diverse talents and ways of learning; we will support all students to express their learning in ways that are diverse and sustaining to their culture. We acknowledge our cultural heritage and explicitly support Māori and Pacific staff and learners to achieve at the highest levels. - Ako - We believe effective, reciprocal teaching interactions and strong positive relationships are fostered through knowledge exchange. We foster collaborative and effective teaching and learning environments. - Pono - We are all accountable and responsible for our actions – there is transparency, truth, integrity and honesty in everything that we do. We are transparent about the way we make decisions, carefully consider those who might be affected by these decisions, and the impact of these decisions on others. <p>Learner Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Goals have been developed, in collaboration with staff, learners and industry and academic advisors who are connected to The Mind Lab. A process for regular review and amendments to the strategy is indicated and aligns to the review process of our Quality Management System.</p> <p>Our wellbeing and safety systems are responsive, and through a range of mechanisms (including, quarterly reviews of NZQA's KEQs, learner feedback, student ethics processes and close cross team collaboration) we are able to identify any emerging concerns about learners' wellbeing and safety and take steps to connect them to culturally appropriate support services. <i>See Outcome 3 and 4 for further discussion.</i></p> <p>Emergency management plans are in place and the Leadership Team coordinates and responses and plans in an emergency situation to communicate with the wider organisation and learners. This approach was evidenced in responses to Covid-19 lockdowns and changes in government responses impact on our practices and learners.</p> <p>Opportunities for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate the Learner Wellbeing and Safety Strategy with the Mind Lab's <i>Te Ara Kōtihi</i> Teaching and Learning Strategy so that the strategic documentation reflects the integrated reality of our practice. <i>Te Ara Kōtihi</i> processes are followed by all teams and as such the Mind Lab's teaching and learning strategy will ensure wellbeing and safety practices are embedded into all learner support mechanisms and

<p>adopted by all Mind Lab teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to work proactively with learners and stakeholders to further improve our strategic goals and plans. - Continued development of Staff Professional Development Session Schedules, including a focus on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Learner Wellbeing and Safety, and Cybersecurity and Data Privacy. 	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>
<p>Staff Professional Development (Training and Resources) Plan and prioritisation of sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Te Tiriti o Waitangi - Learner Wellbeing and Safety - Cybersecurity and Data Privacy 	<p>Staff engage with and reflect on professional development sessions and resources, leading to better Learner support organisation wide.</p>
<p>Continued development and review of organisational strategies related to teaching, learning and learner wellbeing and safety.</p>	<p>Integrated and improved strategic documentation and feedback from key stakeholders.</p>

Outcome 2: Learner Voice
Self-Review Rating: Implemented
<p>Summary of Performance (including how we know):</p> <p>The Mind Lab's (<i>Te Ara Kōtahi</i>) core values of Manaaki, Pono, Ako and Rangatiratanga are the foundation upon which strong relationships are built and maintained with diverse learner groups. With the learners at the centre, our practices are structured to uphold the mana and autonomy of learners. Across all of the programmes that we deliver, our learners are leaders, practitioners and professionals, bringing with them a wealth of education and professional experiences that make them, in many occasions, experts in their fields.</p> <p>Formal and informal processes are implemented to ensure that we actively hear and engage with the diverse range of learner voices and their communities. These processes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular student feedback surveys - Student Advisory Group, where learners currently engaged in our programmes meet to discuss their experiences as well as provide feedback on items of discussion from The Mind Lab (e.g. new programme proposals, platform development). - Industry and Academic Advisory Group, which includes those working in relevant industry, as well as in academia. They are members of our learners communities and provide insight into the needs of industry and the support we can provide learners. <p>With strong relationships developed with learners, we also receive a lot of unsolicited feedback, which is collated and integrated into continuous self review and improvement processes through quarterly reporting and actions.</p>

Student Complaint processes are outlined in the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures*, and learners are able to access this policy through their Student Handbooks. In here, reference is made to NZQA's complaints procedure for learners to follow if they are not satisfied with The Mind Lab's response. Records of formal complaints are tabled with Academic Governance Group (no formal complaints have been received in 2022).

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Continue building the alumni community
- Review the way in which Student Advisory Groups (and engagement with wider groups of learners) operate and inform the continuous review and improvement of how we support learner wellbeing and safety.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>
Continued Consultation with Alumni to develop an Alumni community that is of value to them.	Increased attendance at Alumni events and engagement with communication
Review of Student Advisory Group practices	Revised plan for Student Advisory Group approach

Part 4 (Education Code of Practice): Wellbeing and safety practices for all tertiary providers

Outcome 3: Safe, inclusive, supportive, and accessible physical and digital learning environments

Self-Review Rating: Implemented

Summary of Performance (including how we know):

Practices that foster learning environments that are safe and designed to support positive learning experiences for diverse learner groups are integrated into the design of our programmes, delivery in physical and digital learning environments, and approaches to learner support from an academic and pastoral care perspective.

Student feedback indicates the way in which learning environments and experiences are safe, inclusive and culturally responsive. For example:

- *"The Mind lab has a world changing ethos of really caring about the people who sign up for their courses, facilitating people with integrity and nurturing potential!" - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner*
- *"Appreciated that it isn't traditional delivery, and wanted to be part of it. Beautiful space to sit in, be comfortable, everything weaved in, guest speakers - personal transformation and relationship to education. Opened up the door to things - transformation and undoing the learning of ideas." - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner*
- *"I am so thrilled that I'm enrolled in this course that already caters to such learning needs [ADHD] and wanted to let you know how great it feels knowing there is support in the wings if I need it." - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner*
- *"Unique, expansive, engaging, flexible educational experience - with a stand out*

kaupapa Maori element integrated throughout the learning journey - fabulous!" - Master of Technological Futures Learner

This feedback highlights a number of important mechanisms and spaces which are created for learners to engage in a culturally responsive way, including Manaakifono, Mahi Tahī, Converge², Learning Agreements³ for Master's projects, and Wananga where learners can come together for support from both staff and fellow learners. All learners are welcomed to their programme through a formal whakatau if they are coming to learn with us at The Mind Lab HQ in Grafton, or an online Mihi for those cohorts learning online.

Manaakifono sessions have provided (and continue to) opportunities for Māori and Pacific learners to give feedback to Māori and Pacific staff on their own learning experience. This feedback is incorporated into The Mind Lab review and improvement processes (both generally but also specifically, when immediate support is needed for individuals or groups of learners).

One of the key ways in which safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments are created and maintained is through the connection between staff and learners, and the relationships that are developed building a sense of trust and community. This sense of trust and community is initiated through a focus on whakawhanaungatanga at the beginning of each intake. Connecting with like minded individuals (both as peers in the learning experience, but also with facilitators and industry subject-matter experts) is one of the key benefits learners highlight when reflecting on their learning journeys.

Feedback from learners demonstrates these points:

- *"Support is very much appreciated - having someone of the same culture to speak to." - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner*
- *"I would also like to say that your feedback on all assignments has been so positive, insightful and encouraging. Not only have I learnt a great deal about leadership and how to create a change strategy, but the collaborations have been inspiring." - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner*
- *"Meeting like minded people has been the best and being challenged out of my own comfort zone has been one of the highlight takeaways." - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner*
- *I tell people it was awesome, it stretched my mind and you get something tangible from it. The networking and being part of the TFL whanau is also A.MAZE.ING. It certainly was a life changing experience." - Master of Technological Futures Learner*

There are a number of mechanisms through which these relationships are developed, and spaces are provided for learners to engage in culturally responsive ways, and with Māori and Pacific staff. Feedback from both staff and learners indicates that these spaces provide opportunities where learners can be open, transparent, their authentic selves and often speak te reo Māori or other languages.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Review the ways in which learners who identify as gender diverse see themselves authentically represented in our physical learning environments.
- Continue our te reo and tikanga Māori journey as an organisation, building staff

² Regular research community sessions

³ Learning Agreements support learners to define the outcome of their masters project

<p>and learner capability to be good partners of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop our support for learners who are exploring pathways to Masters that incorporate micro-credentials, in a way that give learners agency to look at different options and personalise their pathway, but also be able to speak directly with an Advisor who can support them and ensure the pathway is the right fit for their goals and aspirations. - Continue to develop our ability to support learners who have hearing impairments, especially in the context of online and hybrid delivery of our programmes. 	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>
Initiate a review of the inclusivity of our digital and physical learning environments and practices for people who identify as gender diverse, neurodiverse or have other impairments.	Improvement in feedback from learners
Continue to develop resources to support learners choosing their pathway into and through study (both synchronous and asynchronous resource)	Feedback from staff and learners, especially the experiences of learners beginning the Master of Change and Organisational Resilience in 2023.

Outcome 4: Learners are safe and well
Self-Review Rating: Implemented
<p>Summary of Performance (including how we know):</p> <p>The Mind Lab has partnered with Whakarongorau Aotearoa // New Zealand Telehealth Services to connect learners with professional services when they advise of personal challenges that are impacting on their lives and engagement in their learning. Information about this service is provided in all student handbooks, through the Learning Management System, and through communications from staff in a timely way once any known risks to learners health, wellbeing and safety are identified.</p> <p>Feedback from learners indicates that their learning experiences support them to connect to their language, culture, and identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Mind Lab was mana enhancing for me in the way that I got to see the world through a lens that is outside of my career conversation and attached to me, rather than the other way around. On the other side of this I have never known my authentic self as much as I do now, and the kaha that comes from that is nothing I've ever evoked. It's a beautiful, life giving place to be and know that it's only just beginning. - Postgraduate Certificate of Leading Change for Good Learner.</i> <p>Tracking of learner engagement and progress by Programme Teams and Coordinators allows The Mind Lab to identify any learners who might be at risk from a personal and academic perspective, and be able to support them, or connect with those that can offer support. We have different ways by which we can support learners who have unforeseen circumstances that are impacting on their personal and professional lives and therefore their ability to complete or continue their study.</p>

Opportunities for Improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refining our process for collecting information about nominated people for emergency situations and providing opportunities for learners to indicate the circumstances in which the nominated person should be contacted. 	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>
Ensure that the redesign of our enrolments system enables the collection of emergency information in a respectful and compliant way.	New enrolment process meets expectations.

Part 6: Additional wellbeing and safety practices for tertiary providers (signatories) enrolling international learners

The Mind Lab's journey with International Learners is recent, with learners so far joining our programmes from offshore.

Outcome 8: Responding to the distinct wellbeing and safety needs of international tertiary learners
Outcome 9: Prospective international tertiary learners are well informed
Outcome 10: Offer, enrolment, contracts, insurance and visa
Outcome 11: International learners receive appropriate orientations, information and advice
Self-Review Rating: Developing
<p>Summary of Performance (including how we know):</p> <p>All required information for <i>Marketing and Promotion</i> to enable international learners to make an informed decision about studying with The Mind Lab and the application and enrolment process that will be followed (including, but not limited to, information needed before entering a contract, the contract itself, insurance requirements, immigration matters, and student fee protection procedures).</p> <p>International students that we have had so far have been well supported, from orientation, through their programme to completion of their micro-credential. These learners have all been studying online distance and offshore. The feedback below is representative of feedback received from a number of learners who participated in the Digital and Collaborative Teaching and Learning Micro-credential from Vietnam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I would like to show my high appreciation for the team... without them, I think that it would be very difficult for me to finish the course. They gave me a lot of encouragement in how I can finish the course and in what ways I can continue doing it." - Micro-credential Learner (learning online from Vietnam) <p>It is important to note that as The Mind Lab moves into international delivery we anticipate (and intend) that the majority of our international learners will be studying from their home countries (i.e. offshore) and will be mixed with our onshore and offshore domestic learners.</p>

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Engaging with international learners to understand their wellbeing and safety needs - as our engagement with international learners increases, in different parts of the learning journey, we will be learning ourselves and refining our practices to best meet the needs of international learners studying both onshore and at distance.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>
Close engagement with International learners, as they inquire, enrol and begin to study with us to ensure that their needs are all being met in a culturally responsive way.	<p>Onshore and offshore domestic and International students will provide data sets (e.g. course and qualification completions) that will be compared with each other to ensure that we do not have teaching and learning delivery and activities that result in any inequitable outcomes for any of these groups.</p> <p>In addition, learning analytics will help alert us to when learners in these groups can be supported (real time) during the period of their study.</p>