

## SIEBA WEBINAR - TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020

### NZQA – Code Team

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The Team acknowledges the huge impact that COVID-19 has had on the education sector and is impressed by the work that has been done to ensure the ongoing pastoral care of students in the very challenging COVID-19 environment. Quality care of international students has never been more paramount. The requirements of the Code have continued to be applied in full which has been the right approach.

### Self Review and Attestation

The date for the Code Review Attestation submission will be extended this year and schools will be formally notified once the date is confirmed.

NZQA is completely understanding of the COVID-19 situation. It will not expect a separate COVID-19 report but, as with any critical incident or event affecting international students, self review will need to reflect on COVID-19 impact through the various parts of the Code (eg agent relationships, communication, wellbeing); what has that been done, what worked, what didn't, what were the learnings from that. Working in an evidence-based way, each outcome of the Code will need to be reflected upon, compliance audited, and any gaps addressed with mitigation actions.

### Q & A

#### **What are a school's obligations with regards to paying tuition refunds for the time that schools were closed?**

Schools should follow their Refunds Policy. School closures brought on by COVID-19 required schools to deliver classes differently. Each request for a refund should be considered on a case by case basis to determine if the school was still meeting their contractual obligations, especially with regards to changes that were made to programmes and whether students were still able to engage fully with their classes. Changes in a student's personal circumstances, for example their family's changed financial situation, should also be considered.

Schools also need to ensure students are aware of the school's grievance processes.

**What are the Code requirements for end of enrolment for current students who may not be able to leave as planned (ie July end of enrolment students)?**

The recommendation is that students should be encouraged to return home at the end of their enrolment. NZQA and MOE are aware that some students may not be able to do this, but it is too early to provide information and directives for schools around this.

NZQA advise that schools should already be in communication with parents and students about end of enrolment arrangements to ensure they can reschedule flights, extend enrolment or, if students choose to stay, complete a transfer of care plan. In this case parents must be made aware of their responsibilities with regards to the ongoing costs of keeping their child in NZ. They also recommend that students contact their embassy/consulate in NZ to register their intention to return home and interest in repatriation flights.

They refer schools to the MOE website for information about repatriation flights and handover of care plans as of April 15.

**What will a managed border and quarantine look like for students from the school sector? What will be a school's responsibility?**

International students will be welcomed back once a robust arrangement for quarantine is in place but at this stage there is a concern around the school sector as quarantine arrangements for students under 18 years will be challenging. Government agencies are working closely together and the specific requirements to quarantine international students under 18 normally in a residential caregiver situation will be carefully considered and schools can expect clear proactive advice from MOE on this, once borders open. At this stage it is too early to provide any further details.

SIEBA added that it is highly unlikely quarantine will be delegated to individual providers.

**There were several questions about students studying offshore and NCEA assessment.**

NZQA and MOE are aware of these issues and discussions about possible solutions are underway but, at this stage, details are not available. The current legislation does not allow assessments to be undertaken out of NZ. There is work around NCEA being delivered offshore temporarily however for now current legislation must still stand.

As assessment is out of the Code Team remit, schools were urged to talk to their NZQA school relationship managers.