

Ākonga Handbook 2026

**Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou,
ka ora ai te iwi**

With your food basket and my food basket,
the people will thrive.

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Tēnā koe, and welcome to Upskills

Our goal is to create engaging learning with work-relevant and personal impact so that individuals, workplaces and whānau all benefit from your learning. We work hard to understand what you need from your learning and to create an inclusive learning environment where people feel comfortable sharing ideas, discussing and learning from each other as well as the content and facilitation we provide.

Upskills offers vocational training, NZQA- and non-NZQA-recognised, in workplace literacy and numeracy, emerging leadership, financial literacy, and short courses in wellbeing and adult education. We partner with organisations to deliver learning that improves workplace culture, productivity, and ākonga outcomes.

We collaborate with our clients (your workplace) to deliver learning that boosts efficiencies and enhances workplace culture.

Our purpose is to make learning and qualifications accessible and achievable for everyone, creating learning and career pathways to ongoing success whilst improving workplace productivity and culture.





Upskills Ltd – Governance

Upskills Ltd is a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) governed by its directors and led by the General Manager. If you ever need to reach us, here are the key people:

Directors: Holly Patterson (holly@upskills.co.nz) and Sarah Balfour (sarah@upskills.co.nz)

General Manager: Janeke Fourie (janeke@upskills.co.nz)

Programmes Manager: Junita Tupai (junita@upskills.co.nz)

What we offer

Upskills offers a range of programmes and non-NZQA-recognised short courses to support employed ākonga and their organisations.

These include customised training to meet specific workplace needs in areas such as:

- Workplace literacy and numeracy programmes
- Short courses in:
 - Wellbeing
 - Financial literacy
 - Conflict resolution
 - Train the Trainer
 - Digital skills

- English as a Second Language

We also offer leadership qualifications in areas that support your career development within your organisation.

Your Feedback

Upskills supports the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021. We are committed to providing safe learning environments, clear communication, culturally responsive support, well-being pathways, and fair and transparent processes.

Giving Feedback

We want you to have a positive learning experience. If you are not happy, we want to hear about it so we can find a solution. Initially, you can speak to your Kaiako or programme coordinator or contact us at the office.

You can send us an email: feedback@upskills.co.nz or email your programme coordinator. We will respond within 48 hours.

Making a formal complaint

We are here to help, we are here for you, and most concerns can be sorted out quickly by talking with the people involved.

Initial resolution

Try to resolve the issue directly with the people involved, or raise it with your Kaiako, programme coordinator, or the General Manager.

Formal complaint

If it cannot be resolved, you can make a formal complaint using our online complaints form or by emailing feedback@upskills.co.nz

Include details of what happened (for example, dates and who was involved) and the outcome you are seeking.

Our response

Upskills will respond to a formal complaint within five working days. If you feel the issue is still unresolved, you can escalate it externally.

External escalation

If you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been resolved with us, you can contact an independent agency for assistance:

- New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) — 0800 697 296; www.nzqa.govt.nz
- Study Complaints | Ngā Amuamu Tauira, the independent dispute resolution scheme for domestic ākonga — 0800 00 66 75; www.studycomplaints.org.nz
- Office of the Ombudsman — www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Keeping records

All complaints are recorded in the Upskills Complaints Register so we can resolve them fairly and learn from them. Raising concerns will not disadvantage you.

You'll also find the NZQA Learner Guide to Complaints in Appendix 1.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Diversity and Inclusion

Upskills acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document, and we are committed to honouring its principles through our teaching, ākonga support, and the way we run our organisation. We recognise the importance of Māori succeeding as Māori, and we work to create learning environments that are culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive.

We aim to fulfil the intent of Te Tiriti by valuing and reflecting Aotearoa New Zealand's dual cultural heritage. Our approach to wellbeing draws on taha whānau (social and cultural), taha wairua (spiritual), taha hinengaro (emotional and mental), and taha tinana (physical) dimensions to encourage and enable your progress.

This commitment is reflected through:

- respect for te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, and mātauranga Māori;

- incorporating Māori perspectives and models into our programmes where appropriate;
- supporting equitable outcomes for all ākonga;
- building strong relationships with ākonga, whānau, employers, and communities; and
- creating opportunities for ākonga to share their culture, identity, and experiences.

Our objectives

To put this commitment into practice, Upskills will:

- ensure our curriculum reflects Māori perspectives;
- make equitable provision for the learning needs of Māori ākonga;
- provide a te reo Māori component in appropriate programmes, including an understanding of taha Māori, local and general tikanga, and local history;
- recognise Māori values in the resources and facilities we provide;
- ensure staff have access to training in tikanga Māori, and follow appropriate protocol; and
- consult with Māori stakeholders about how well we are supporting Māori ākonga, our programme content, and other relevant matters.

We encourage everyone to contribute to a respectful learning environment where diversity is valued, and everyone can succeed. This commitment is supported across our wider policies, including our Ākonga Wellbeing Policy, Learner Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and Complaints Policy, and our Strategic Māori Direction.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

The following outlines what you can expect as an ākonga at Upskills. These expectations reflect the Education and Training Act 2020 (and its amendments) and the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021. A full copy of the Act is available online.

At Upskills, we want your learning to be positive, fair, and safe. As an Upskills ākonga, there are things you can expect from us, and some things we ask of you in return.

What you can expect from us:

- clear, accurate information about your programme — what you will learn, how you will be assessed, and what is expected of you;

- teaching and support that is respectful, inclusive, and responsive to your culture, language, and learning needs;
- a safe learning environment, free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination;
- fair and transparent assessment, with feedback and the opportunity to ask questions or request a review of a decision;
- your personal information kept private and handled with care; and
- Your feedback and concerns will be taken seriously, with no disadvantage to you for raising them.

What we ask of you:

- take part in your learning, attend your sessions, and complete activities and assessments within the agreed timeframes;
- treat your kaiako, fellow ākonga, and workplace colleagues with respect;
- make sure the work you submit is your own (see Assessments and Academic Integrity);
- let us know early if something is getting in the way of your learning, so we can help; and
- keep your contact details up to date.

Raising a concern won't put you at a disadvantage.

If you give feedback, raise a concern, or make a complaint, it will not affect your results, your standing in your programme, or your relationship with Upskills or your workplace. We welcome honest feedback; it helps us improve.

Your rights under the Code of Practice

Upskills is a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and supports the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code). The Code sets out what every tertiary ākonga in Aotearoa New Zealand can expect for their wellbeing and safety.

For you, it means we are committed to providing:

- a safe and inclusive learning environment;
- support for your wellbeing and for any additional learning needs;
- clear and honest information about your programme; and
- fair processes for feedback, complaints, and concerns.

You can read more about the Code on the NZQA website at www.nzqa.govt.nz. If you ever feel these expectations are not being met, please talk to us, see Giving Feedback and Making a Formal Complaint.

Your Privacy and Information

Upskills collects and holds personal information so we can enrol you, deliver your programme, assess your work, and report your achievement to NZQA. We handle your information in line with the Privacy Act 2020.

- We only collect the information we need, and we keep it secure.
- We use it to support your learning and to meet our reporting obligations to NZQA and, where relevant, funding agencies.
- We don't share your personal information without your consent, unless we are required to by law or there is a serious safety concern.
- You can ask to see the personal information we hold about you and ask us to correct it if it is wrong.
- Wherever possible, we collect your information directly from you, and we tell you why we need it.
- We share information about your progress, achievement, and attendance only with your employer or funding provider, where this is part of your programme.
- We only discuss your results with people who are directly involved in your learning.

Anything you share with a Kaiako or coordinator about your wellbeing or personal circumstances is treated sensitively and kept confidential. The main exception is if we believe there is a risk to your safety or someone else's, in that case we may need to involve the right support or agency, and we will talk with you about this wherever we can.

Learning pathways

Our learning pathways are designed to build confidence, workplace capability, and progression into leadership and management roles. We currently offer the following qualifications, all delivered in a flexible, workplace-based way.

NZ Certificate in Business (Introduction to Team Leadership) – Level 3 (45 credits)

A practical introduction to leading within a team in a business context — covering effective team performance, setting team objectives, and different styles of team leadership.

NZ Certificate in Leadership – Level 3 (40 credits)

For new and emerging leaders. On completion, you will be able to:

- identify and use strategies to enhance your personal strengths and values as a leader;
- use self-reflection to evaluate professional and ethical behaviour and its impact on others;
- communicate effectively in a socially and culturally responsible way; and
- contribute to decision-making and solution-building in your own context.

NZ Certificate in Leadership – Level 4 (60 credits)

For those leading others and managing workflows. On completion, you will be able to:

- lead others and manage workflows to achieve objectives;
- apply self-reflection and self-assessment to improve your leadership and management practice;
- assess situations and respond effectively as a leader;
- promote an inclusive environment that values diversity for positive performance;
- communicate to build effective relationships with your team and others; and
- role-model and promote professional and ethical practice.

Entry requirements

Entry requirements follow the requirements of each qualification. To enrol in a Level 3 leadership qualification, we expect you to:

- have literacy and numeracy skills at around NZQF Level 2;
- be employed (part-time or full-time) in a New Zealand workplace as a new or emerging leader; and
- be motivated to develop your leadership skills and apply your learning at work.

If you don't meet these criteria but have relevant experience, we'll consider your enrolment on a case-by-case basis.

Assessment

Assessment is competency-based and aligned with the relevant unit and skill standards. In each qualification, you'll complete a project that gathers evidence for assessment, along with some written work. Evidence may include documents you have developed or used in your workplace, and verification from your workplace supervisor of your practical skills and knowledge.

Full unit and skill standard details for each qualification are available from your Kaiako or on the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

Learning with Upskills

Getting the best from your learning

- Be sure to complete your Learning Plan
- Set learning goals that are relevant and meaningful to you
- Plan to review your mahi after each session
- Be inclusive and open to learning from others
- Attend every session and actively participate in learning activities
- Speak up - ask questions if you're not sure of something
- Listen - not just to "hear" but to "understand"
- Communicate with your kaiako – they are there to help you
- Apply your learning at work – learning sticks when you practice it often

Learning Support

Support is available through kaiako, programme coordinators, workplace supervisors, and external wellbeing services. Upskills are committed to providing reasonable, accommodating, and culturally responsive support for ākonga with additional learning or disability needs. We're here to support you in your learning. Here are some of the people who will assist you:

- You'll interact with your kaiako the most. They will facilitate the learning sessions, assign any extra tasks, explain what is required for assessment and when this is due, including the resubmission process
- Your workplace supervisor will verify some of your skills on the job. You'll arrange times for observations at work with them as needed, and they will sign off that

you've met the required standards. They can also help with workplace learning and practice your skills, so keep them involved in your learning.

- Upskills Programme Coordinator will assist with planning and ask you for your feedback on the course.
- Your own supports – you may have colleagues, family/whanau who will support you and keep you motivated in your learning. That is helpful – just be sure when it comes to assessment time, it is your own work.
- Additional support is available for cultural comfort and disability needs. Talk to your kaiako to discuss support needs.

Learning Delivery

Upskills delivers flexible, workplace-focused learning designed to meet the needs of both ākonga and their organisations. Programme delivery is structured to support ākonga who are balancing employment and study responsibilities while developing practical workplace capability.

As part of the enrolment process, ākonga will receive detailed information about how their programme will be delivered in their workplace. Depending on the programme and organisational requirements, delivery may include:

- Facilitated group learning sessions with an Upskills kaiako
- Online learning modules and self-directed activities
- Microsoft Teams hui and virtual workshops
- Workplace projects and applied learning activities
- Reflective practice and workplace evidence gathering.

Programmes are delivered part-time to enable employed ākonga to study, while continuing in their workplace roles.

Programme durations may vary depending on delivery arrangements and ākonga progression. Indicative durations are:

- NZ Certificate in Leadership (Level 3): approximately 6 months
- NZ Certificate in Leadership (Level 4): approximately 6 months

Ākonga are expected to actively engage in all learning activities and complete the assessment requirements within the agreed programme timeframe.

Resources

To support you in your learning and assessment, you will receive:

- A ākonga workbook from your kaiako,
- Assessments where you will write your answers
- Log in to our Learning Management System, which has a range of self-directed e-learning modules to support your learning
- This handbook
- An ākonga folder, notebook and pen

Applying Learning at Work

The most effective learning happens when new knowledge and skills are applied regularly in the workplace. As part of your programme, your kaiako may provide practical workplace activities following learning sessions. These activities could include contributing to a team meeting, completing a workplace Health and Safety “near miss” report, practice communication skills, or applying leadership techniques within your role.

These activities are designed to help you build confidence, strengthen workplace capability, and apply your learning in real-world situations. Workplace supervisors and managers also play an important role in supporting your development by providing guidance, feedback, and opportunities to practice new skills.

Additional Learning and Disability Support

We want every ākonga to be able to fully take part. If you have a disability, health condition, or a specific learning need (including neurodiversity), we can put reasonable adjustments in place to support you.

- Let your kaiako or programme coordinator know, at enrolment, or at any time during your programme.
- We’ll have a confidential conversation about what would help. This might include extra time, alternative formats, assistive technology, a quieter space, or other adjustments.
- You don’t have to share a diagnosis, only what support would help your learning.
- We’ll check in with you to make sure the support is working.

Asking for support will never count against you, and we'll keep what you share private.

Attendance, Engagement and Staying on Track

Getting the most from your programme means taking part regularly. We ask that you attend your learning sessions, join in activities, and keep up with your assessments within the agreed timeframes.

Life happens, and sometimes things get in the way. If you're going to miss a session, or you find yourself falling behind, tell your kaiako or programme coordinator as early as you can. We're here to help, not to judge.

- If we notice you've missed sessions or haven't submitted work, we'll check in to see how you're doing and what support might help.
- Together we can look at options such as a catch-up plan, an extension, or other support.
- Staying in touch is the most important thing — we can almost always find a way forward when we know what's happening.

Learning Online Safely

Some of your learning happens online, through our Learning Management System (LMS), Microsoft Teams hui, and other digital tools. To keep online learning safe and positive for everyone:

- keep your login details private and don't share your account
- be respectful and inclusive in online discussions, chats, and group spaces, just as you would in person
- only share what you're comfortable sharing, and respect the privacy of others; and let us know if anything online makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

If you have any trouble getting online or using the tools, your kaiako can help you get set up.

Assessments and Academic Integrity

Your assessment must be your own work, expressed in your own words (known as academic integrity). Upskills is committed to maintaining academic integrity to ensure ākonga genuinely possess the ability to understand and complete the required tasks. Your assessments will involve a variety of methods, including personal reflection and applying ideas and theory learned in sessions.

Your assessments will be clearly explained to you and spaced out throughout your programme of study. Part of your learning will focus on ensuring your assessment is your own work, and we will teach you how to avoid issues with assessment and plagiarism.

The expectations and guidance for you as a ākonga include:

1. Plagiarism Prevention:

- All ākonga must sign their authenticity declaration that the submitted work is their own and appropriately referenced prior to submitting assessment evidence or assignments for marking
- Kaiako and assessors will provide Upskills resources and guidance on proper referencing techniques and the consequences of plagiarism
- Assessments will be designed to encourage original thought, reflections and personalised examples in relation to content in order to discourage plagiarism
- Tools for plagiarism detection may be used by Upskills to verify the originality of submitted work.

2. Acceptable Use of AI Technology:

- Ākonga may use AI tools to support their learning (e.g., research, brainstorming, drafting) but must disclose and document AI-assisted inputs in their submissions
- AI-generated content must not replace critical thinking or personal effort and must be supplemented with personal insights and analysis
- Kaiako and assessors will clarify acceptable AI use for learning and assessment at the commencement of each programme and course
- Misuse of AI, including generating entire assignments or assessments without disclosure, constitutes a breach of Upskills policy.

3. Consequences of Breach:

- Minor Breaches: Incidents involving unintentional plagiarism or limited misuse of AI may result in feedback, re-education, or resubmission of work.

- Major Breaches: Intentional plagiarism or significant misuse of AI tools will result in more serious consequences, including potential disqualification from assessments, suspension, or dismissal from a programme.
- Investigations into breaches will follow principles of natural justice, with the individual given an opportunity to explain their actions confidentially and protected in accordance with wellbeing, bullying and harassment policy and procedures.

4. Training and Awareness

Updates to guidelines on referencing and AI use will be continually communicated as technology and best practices evolve.

Using AI Tools

AI tools (like ChatGPT) can support your learning, but they must be used properly and honestly.

You can use AI to:

- get ideas for presentations or slide content
- check spelling or grammar (except in literacy assessments)
- help with research and brainstorming.

You must not use AI to:

- write your full answers or assessments for you
- replace your own thinking and understanding; or
- copy content from AI without checking it or learning from it.

If you're unsure whether your use of AI is okay, check with your kaiako or the Programmes Manager before submitting your work.

Completing Assessments

Ākonga shall be provided with:

- NZQA Unit standard titles, numbers, version and credits within each programme
- Evidence required to be gathered (as applicable to programme and unit standard requirements)
- Statement that successful completion of all assessment requirements meets the requirements for "Achieved" for the relevant unit standard and qualification.

Submitting Assessments in Te Reo Māori

You are encouraged to complete your assessments in te reo Māori if you wish.

- Just let your trainer or assessor know at the start of your programme (or early in your course) so we can make sure the right assessor or support is available.
- Upskills supports learning and assessment that honours *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and recognises te reo Māori as an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Feedback

Kaiako/Assessors will mark your assessments and return them to you with their feedback within 10 working days unless otherwise specified.

Resubmission

If required, your kaiako will let you know what you need to do and within what timeframe for resubmission. Resubmission may involve extending an answer, adding some verification or evidence, or adding further examples specific to your workplace. It's part of the learning and assessment process, we encourage our ākonga to avoid too many resubmissions, so it's important to follow the kaiako guidelines when you need to resubmit.

Extensions and Special Consideration

We know that work, whānau, health, and life can sometimes affect your study. If you need more time to complete an assessment, or something significant has affected your work, talk to your kaiako before the due date, wherever possible.

- **Extension** — if you need a little longer, we can agree on a new due date with you.
- **Special consideration** — if illness, bereavement, or another serious event has affected your assessment, let us know, and we can look at what's fair, which may include more time or another opportunity to be assessed.
- **Late work** — if work is submitted late without an agreed extension, your kaiako will talk with you about the best way forward.

The aim is always to be fair and to give you a genuine opportunity to show what you can do.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Cross-Credits

You may already have skills, knowledge, or credits that relate to your programme. If so, you might not need to repeat learning you have already done.

- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** - if you can show you already meet the requirements of a standard through your experience or previous work, we can assess this rather than asking you to complete it again.
- **Cross-credits** — if you have already achieved a relevant NZQA standard, it may be able to count towards your qualification.

If you think this might apply to you, talk to your kaiako or programme coordinator. They will explain what evidence is needed and how the process works.

Keeping and Returning Your Work

Your assessment work is important, and we look after it carefully.

- You will receive feedback on your assessments, and you can ask to see your marked work at any time.
- We keep your completed assessment materials for at least 12 months after you finish your programme.
- Your results are recorded permanently as part of your NZQA Record of Achievement.

We keep training and assessment records securely, with access limited to authorised Upskills staff. We retain only the records we need for:

- the requirements of regulatory bodies;
- moderation;
- appeals;
- re-accreditation; and
- audits.

Results of Assessment

Before your results are finalised, a sample of marked work is checked by another assessor and, for NZQA standards, by the relevant standard-setting body. This is called moderation, and it makes sure marking is fair and consistent for everyone.

Results will be verified by another academic staff member and then reported to NZQA. Final assessment results shall comply with NZQA rules and regulations for recording and reporting of assessment for your NZQA Record of Learning.

Appeals and Remarks

An assessment appeal differs from a complaint. An appeal is when you believe a marking decision was incorrect and want it reviewed. A complaint concerns the service, support, or treatment you've received. You are welcome to use either process, or doing so will never disadvantage you.

If you believe there is an error of judgement in the assessment marking and would like to appeal your results, please contact the Upskills email in the first instance. We will consider whether the appeal is valid and can arrange for your work to be remarked by another kaiako. If you are still unhappy with your result, we can discuss further options with you, including sending a complaint to NZQA.

Certificates

Certificates for leadership qualifications are currently awarded either directly by Upskills or in partnership with another provider, such as Service IQ or Competenz. Certificates are awarded upon successful completion of all unit standards required for the qualification. Successful NZQA unit standards achievement will be recorded on your NZQA Record of Achievement.

Your Wellbeing

Upskills supports the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 – your wellbeing and safety are part of Upskills, creating an effective learning environment. We're here to guide you - your Upskills kaiako or programme coordinator is the best first step. This list of resources is to support your wellbeing. Please reach out to for further information if you need help.

Beating the Blues: A cognitive behavioural therapy program for managing depression and anxiety. Find it at:

Beating the Blues

Five Ways to Wellbeing: This framework is promoted widely in New Zealand to encourage mental wellness:

<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

Fonofale model of mental health:

<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/social-action-grants/pacific-approach>

Groov: A digital mental health platform designed to support workplace wellbeing. Learn more at: [Groov](#).

Hauora Hub aims to showcase the wide range of Māori health services, organisations, GP's, and programmes available to whānau and make these easily accessible for whānau – learn more at:

<https://www.hauorahub.co.nz/>

Just a Thought offers free cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) courses to all New Zealanders. <https://www.justathought.co.nz/resources>

Le Va: Le Va is a Pasifika-focused organization in New Zealand that provides resources and programs for mental health, suicide prevention, and wellbeing. Learn more at their website: [Le Va](#)

Lifeline: Offers 24/7 crisis support through calls and texts. Learn more at: [Lifeline NZ](#)

Mental Health Foundation: They offer various wellbeing resources, campaigns, and support services. Visit: [Mental Health Foundation NZ](#).

Small Steps: Provides practical online tools to support mental health. Explore their resources: [Small Steps](#).

SPARX: An interactive online tool to help young people deal with depression. Visit: [SPARX](#).

Te Whare Tapa Whā model of wellness:

<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>

Te Whatu Ora Wellbeing Services: As part of New Zealand's health services, Te Whatu Ora promotes health and wellbeing initiatives:

<https://www.wellbeingsupport.health.nz>

The Kindness Institute: This organization focuses on teaching mindfulness and resilience. Explore their work at:

[The Kindness Institute](#)

The Lowdown: A website to support young New Zealanders with depression and anxiety. Learn more: [The Lowdown](#)

Worksafe: Government website with information and resources about workplace health and safety, including bullying:

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying/>

Youthline: Provides youth-focused support services, including helplines and programs for young people. Visit:

[Youthline NZ](#).

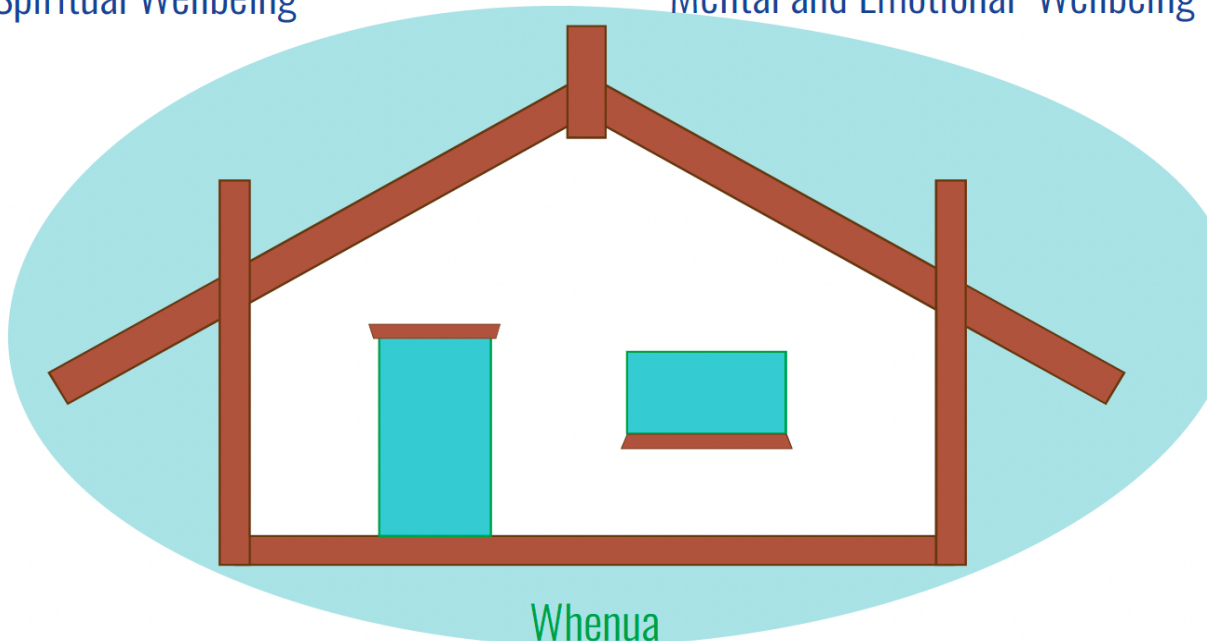
Te Whare Tapa Whā

You might have seen this Māori model of wellbeing before. It was developed by Dr Mason Durie, a leading Māori health advocate. It looks at health and wellbeing through the four taha of a whare - with each taha needing to be in balance in order to hold up the roof of the whare. On your course you will explore this model of wellbeing to strengthen your Hauora and to develop some goals around wellbeing.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

Taha Wairua
Spiritual Wellbeing

Taha Hinengaro
Mental and Emotional Wellbeing



Taha Tinana
Physical Wellbeing

Taha Whānau
Family and Social Wellbeing

Along with Te Whare Tapa Wha there are other wellbeing tools you may find useful.

Fonofale

The Fonofale Model was created as a Pacific model of health, encompassing values and beliefs from the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Niue, and Tokelau. Developed by

Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann, the Fonofale Model is a system of wellbeing that not only acknowledges but also embraces Pacific perspectives and ways of being. Like the Māori model of health, the Te Whare Tapa Whā approach, The Fonofale Model also uses the image of a house, otherwise known as a 'fale', a traditional Samoan house, using the walls, foundation, and ceiling to represent the different constructs of health.

<https://manaservices.nz/the-fonofale-model-of-health/>

Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing (Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give) are simple, proven actions that workplaces can introduce to help their people find balance, build resilience, and boost mental health and wellbeing. Tips and tools are provided here: <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/five-ways-to-wellbeing-at-work-toolkit>

Keeping You Safe

Your safety and well-being matter to us. You have the right to learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination, whether in a learning session, online, or in your workplace while learning with us.

If something doesn't feel right

If you experience or see bullying, harassment, discrimination, or any behaviour that makes you feel unsafe, please tell someone. You can talk to:

- your Upskills kaiako or programme coordinator;
- the Upskills office or a Director; or
- your workplace health and safety representative or manager.

We will listen, take it seriously, and work with you on what happens next. You can bring a support person, and what you share will be treated confidentially. Raising a concern will not disadvantage you (see Making a formal complaint).

In an emergency

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 111. Once everyone is safe, let your kaiako or the Upskills office know so we can support you and follow up.

Extra support

If you have been affected by harm, including sexual harm, free and confidential help is available, any time of the day or night:

- **Need to talk?** — call or text 1737 to talk with a trained counsellor;
- **Safe to talk** — call 0800 044 334 or text 4334 (sexual harm helpline); and

- in a life-threatening emergency, call 111.

Your kaiako or programme coordinator can also help you connect with the right support — just ask. You will also find a range of wellbeing resources in the Your Wellbeing section of this handbook.

Health and Safety

Guidelines for Reporting Health and Safety Concerns in New Zealand Workplaces. The first step is always to refer to your company's Health and Safety policy and procedures, or to talk to your health and safety workplace representative. This is a general guide only.

1. Understand Your Health and Safety Rights:

- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, every worker in New Zealand has the right to a safe working environment.
- You are encouraged and legally protected when reporting health and safety concerns.
- Participating in creating a strong safety culture is the job of everybody at work.

2. Identify Common Health and Safety Issues and Report Them:

- Hazards: Slippery floors, faulty equipment, obstructed exits, or unsafe handling of chemicals.
- Unsafe Acts: Examples include a lack of proper training, not wearing PPE protective gear, or ignoring safety rules.
- Incidents: Events where an accident happened. Report through your workplace system, talk to your supervisor.
- Near Misses: Situations where an accident could have occurred

3. Learn the Reporting Process in Your Workplace:

- Familiarise yourself with your workplace's health and safety protocols, including how to:
 - Complete incident or hazard reporting forms.
 - Report concerns to your health and safety representative (HSR), manager, or HR department.

4. Follow These Steps to Report a Concern:

- Gather Details: Write down what you observed, including:
 - Date, time, and location of the issue.
 - Description of the hazard or unsafe act.

- Individuals involved, if relevant.
- Report Promptly: Notify your manager, supervisor, or HSR as soon as possible. Quick reporting helps keep everybody safe.
- Document Evidence: Where appropriate, take photos or videos, or provide a written statement detailing the concern.
- Complete Official Forms: Many workplaces require filling out a hazard or incident report form, either in paper or digitally.

5. Be Proactive in Promoting Safety:

Encourage open communication in health and safety discussions at work.

Participate in health and safety meetings, toolbox talks, or risk assessments. Speak up.

6. Access Additional Support:

If needed, contact an external organisation, such as

WorkSafe NZ: For advice and assistance on unresolved safety concerns.

Unions or Worker Representatives: For additional advocacy and support.

Making a formal complaint

If you have a concern or complaint, please refer to 'Making a formal complaint' earlier in this handbook for the full process and contact details, and see the NZQA Learner Guide to Complaints in Appendix 1.

Learner Fee Refunds and Reimbursement

This policy applies to all ākonga enrolling and paying study fees individually outside of an employer organisation development contract with Upskills. In the event that Upskills is unable to continue providing tuition, the unspent portion of the fees will be returned to the ākonga in accordance with the NZQA Fee Protection Rules 2022 (and related amendments).

Note: Upskills does not offer programmes to, or enrol, international ākonga.

Should a domestic ākonga wish to withdraw from a programme the following rules (in accordance with NZQA Fee Protection Rules 2022 (and related amendments) will apply:

1. Refunds must be within the refund period for the applicable programme.

2. Refunds must be applied for in writing, stating the reason for the withdrawal/refund, or have stopped studying for more than 30% of the duration time of their programme.
3. Refunds will be paid promptly (within 10 working days of approving the refund).

Appendix 1.

Learner guide to complaints

Most learners in Aotearoa New Zealand have a great experience throughout their studies, however sometimes issues can arise. If they do, learners have a right to speak up. Raising issues early with your education provider gives you the best chance of working them out together. If you can't resolve them together, you can get help from a range of organisations. This short guide has all you need to know about how and where to raise complaints.



1. Let your education provider know

Start by letting your provider know if you experience an issue. An open conversation can often solve the problem without you needing to take it further.

If the person you speak with can't help, you can use your provider's formal complaint process instead. New Zealand education providers must have a complaint process that you can use. You will often be able to find information about their complaints process on their website, in your handbook, or by asking staff.

It can be useful to make your complaint in writing to ensure your education provider has all the details and to help them understand it.

Give them a chance to work through your complaint and to try to resolve your concerns. You can always request updates on the status of your complaint.

If you can't reach an agreed solution, you can take the complaint further by raising it with an outside agency.

Tips



- **Prepare** - Take some time to think about the issue, how to explain it and what you would like to happen.
- **Gather details** - Share any useful information that you can.
- **Keep notes** - It can be helpful to make a note about who you spoke with, when and what was said.
- **Save copies** - Keep a record of any emails or letters about your complaint in case you might need them later.
- **Still unresolved?** - Get some help! Find out how below.

2. Get some independent help

There are two main agencies who can help if you have an unresolved complaint:



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority



New Zealand Qualifications Authority

NZQA is a government agency that can investigate complaints about:

- the quality of education, management, and pastoral care of learners in Private Training Establishments
- the quality of education and pastoral care of learners at Te Pūkenga or Wānanga
- the pastoral care of learners at universities
- the pastoral care of international students at schools.
- fee refund concerns.

For more information, you can contact:

- **Phone:** 0800 697 296
- **Email:** risk@nzqa.govt.nz
- **Visit:** www.nzqa.govt.nz

Study Complaints | Ngā Amuamu Taurira

Study Complaints | Ngā Amuamu Taurira is a free and independent service to help domestic tertiary learners and international students resolve disputes with their New Zealand education providers.

They can assist with:

- Financial matters
- Contractual matters
- Redress claims.

It's easy to get started, simply get in touch by:

- **Phone:** 0800 00 66 75
- **Email:** help@studycomplaints.org.nz
- **Visit:** www.studycomplaints.org.nz

Appendix 2.

Ākonga Pre-Assessment Check Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

This is to certify that I have received instructions and understand the following items:

Health and safety and general rules	☐
Programme overview and outline	☐
Understanding the unit and skill standard environment	☐
Support for ākonga with English as an additional language	☐
Literacy requirements	☐
My responsibilities as an ākonga	☐
Upskills' responsibilities towards me	☐
Appeals process	☐
Complaints procedure	☐
Privacy Act	☐
Recording of completed units	☐

Ākonga signature: _____ Date: _____

Upskills signature: _____ Date: _____



**Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou,
ka ora ai te iwi**

With your food basket and my food basket,
the people will thrive.

Document Control

This handbook is a controlled document. The current approved version is held by Upskills; printed copies are uncontrolled. It is reviewed at least annually, or sooner if NZQA requirements or Upskills policies change.

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Version history

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.1	2026	Initial 2026 ākonga handbook.
2.0	2026	Added ākonga rights and responsibilities, a Code of Practice statement, privacy and information, safety and escalation pathways, additional learning and disability support, attendance and engagement, and online learning safety. Expanded assessment information (extensions and special consideration, recognition of prior learning and cross-credits, and returning and retaining work). Added formal document control.
3.0	2026	Adopted te reo terminology (ākonga, kaiako). Added Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Diversity and Inclusion; governance contacts; Using AI Tools; an expanded complaints process

		with external agencies; records retention; a Notice of Disclaimer; and Appendix 2 (Ākonga Pre-Assessment Check Sheet). Condensed Learning Pathways and restyled the handbook to Aptos.
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