

29/11/24	<b>ADVOCACY POLICY</b>	Page 1
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The Student Association of Nelson-Marlborough Institute of Technology Incorporated (**SANITI**) is committed to providing support and advocacy services to ākongā/students of NMIT and Ara.

### **Purpose**

To outline SANITI's Advocacy role in supporting ākongā/students to address their own concerns wherever possible with issues relating to ākongā/student life including:

- StudyLink and other government agencies
- NMIT/Ara Administration issues, including but not limited to fees and enrolment issues
- Academic Procedures
- NMIT Disciplinary Procedures
- Hardship and Welfare
- Tenancy problems
- Employment issues
- Consumer issues
- Personal issues
- Financial concerns
- Other general matters, including but not limited to campus facilities, NMIT/Ara IT services, NMIT/Ara support services

All actions taken by the Association will only occur with the ākongā/student's prior agreement and written consent. See "Working with young people under 16 years of age" policy and procedure for where parental consent applies.

### **Organisational Scope**

SANITI/Ara Advocates and the General Manager.

### **Policy Content and Guidelines**

1. Advocacy is solution focused.
2. Advocacy empowers ākongā/students to manage their own issues.
3. Advocacy seeks resolution at the lowest appropriate and effective level.
4. Advocacy work is conducted with a team approach. The rationale for this approach is that:
  - a. It ensures the ākongā/student will find a staff member available who knows their situation and is aware of any developments.
  - b. It enables staff to share the development of plans and strategies.
  - c. It enables staff to share the workload from the plans.

Review: 2027	Responsibility: General Manager	Approved: Minor changes GM Student Executive
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29/11/24	<b>ADVOCACY POLICY</b>	Page 2
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- d. It enables the ākongā/student to receive the best mix of staff skills and knowledge.
  - e. It ensures safety for ākongā/students and staff involved in the process.
5. Advocacy work seeks to maintain the dignity of the people involved.
  6. SANITI staff do not provide counselling services or give legal or immigration advice but will inform ākongā/students of appropriate organisations who do.
  7. Advocacy work is conducted in the strictest confidentiality, unless the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat to public health and safety, or the life and health of the individual or another individual. (see Privacy Act 2020).
  8. SANITI's key interest in advocating for ākongā/students is in seeing them reach their academic and personal goals, i.e., graduation.
  9. SANITI's employment practice includes professional development plans.
  10. Advocacy work follows the procedure in the SANITI Procedure Manual.
  11. SANITI may refer ākongā/students to community or other organisation(s) if it is assessed that this would be in the best interests of the ākongā/student and with their agreement. This may involve referrals where another organisation is more specialised in the area OR it may be to manage particular aspects of the ākongā/student's issue(s).
  12. Advocacy work seeks to address the issues of the individual as first priority followed by systemic problems that arise out of these either within the institution or in the external environment e.g., Government departments.
  13. SANITI practice and communication is always at a high professional standard.
  14. Systemic Advocacy cases and issues with NMIT/Ara Policies will be referred to the Ākongā/Student President, Advocate attending Academic and Quality Committee or other relevant committees.

### **Storage of Information**

1. All advocacy hard files are stored in a locked filing cabinet.
2. All advocacy electronic files are stored on password protected computers that only authorised staff have access to.

### **Ākongā/Student Access or removal of files**

1. Ākongā/Student may make an appointment to access their advocacy documentation during office hours.
2. Ākongā/Student may remove their advocacy documentation from SANITI with 2 working days' notice. Ākongā/Students must sign out their advocacy documentation. Once signed out the documentation is the responsibility of the ākongā/student.

Review: 2027	Responsibility: General Manager	Approved: Minor changes GM Student Executive
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29/11/24	<b>ADVOCACY POLICY</b>	Page 3
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3. Ākonga/Student advocacy documentation includes but is not limited to: NMIT documentation; ākonga/student documentation; Minutes of meetings.

### **Retention of advocacy documentation**

1. Ākonga/Student Advocacy documentation will be held for a maximum of 5 years after the ākonga/student has completed their studies the advocacy relates to or withdrawn from the Institution, after which all material will be destroyed.

### **References**

SANITI Code of Ethics  
SANITI Privacy Policy  
SANITI Privacy Procedure  
SANITI Working with Young People under 16 years of age

### **Legislative Compliance**

Immigration Act 2009  
Privacy Act 2020  
Bill of Rights 1990  
Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021  
Education and Training Act 2020

### **Disclaimer**

SANITI staff will not give advice in the area of Immigration as per the Immigration Act. SANITI staff may guide a ākonga/student to websites or information. If an agent or advice is needed by a ākonga/student, then a licensed Immigration Agent will be contacted e.g., Citizens Advice Bureau, Lawyer or Community Law Service.

Review: 2027	Responsibility: General Manager	Approved: Minor changes GM Student Executive
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