



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure

Policy Category	Administration
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Responsible Officer	Chief Experience Officer
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Related Documents	Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Procedure Health and Safety Policy and Procedure Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy and Procedure Student Support Framework Student Code of Conduct Staff Code of Conduct Student Handbook
HESF (Threshold Standards) 2021	2.3.4
Policy Visibility	Public

1. Purpose

This Policy and Procedure seeks to demonstrate the commitment of the Australian Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd ('the Institute') to provide a safe and supportive environment that promotes good mental health and wellbeing, and support for all staff and students experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing.

2. Principles

The key principles informing this Policy and Procedure are:

- the Institute aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, as part of its overall commitment to creating a healthy and safe workplace and study environment for all the Institute community;
- the Institute is committed to implementing a number of strategies to achieve this, including:

- promoting positive mental health and wellbeing through policies, support services, information networks and regular health promotion campaigns;
- providing an environment that encourages staff and students to seek support early if they have declining mental health, and as appropriate, provide support and adjustments suitable to their work or study needs to help them to achieve their potential;
- providing education and professional development to all staff to further develop mental health and wellbeing awareness and appropriate support for the Institute community;
- increasing awareness and providing education around the stigma and discrimination in respect of mental ill-health in order to encourage staff or students to seek support and to improve the capacity of staff and students to respond effectively to support others; and
- promoting a responsive community that requires all staff and students to take reasonable care in view of any circumstance that may arise, which affects the safety of self or others. Safety of the Institute community is the first priority.

3. Context

This Policy and Procedure has been developed to ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and students at the Institute meets the standards of the following:

- Disability Discrimination Act (1992) Commonwealth
- ESOS National Code Standard 6, Overseas Students Support Services
- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework S.2.3, Wellbeing and Safety

4. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all staff and students at the Institute.

5. Definitions

See the *AIH Glossary of Terms* for definitions.

6. Procedure, Actions and Responsibilities

6.1 Understanding Mental Health

- Mental health can be considered across a scale, with good mental health at one end, difficulties in coping or increased distress in the middle, and poor mental health at the other.
- The Institute acknowledges that staff and students may move back and forth along the scale throughout their time at the Institute and that as a result, their mental health support needs may vary.
- The causes of poor mental health are complex, with genetics, environment and life experiences influencing a person's risk. Environmental factors and life experiences can also decrease risk, such as having strong social supports and learning resilience.

6.2 Fostering Good Mental Health

- The Institute promotes a culture that supports good mental health, social connectedness and resilience by:

- using evidence to ensure best practice approaches to mental health are implemented in Institute activities;
 - fostering respectful and inclusive behaviour;
 - encouraging staff and students to participate in wellbeing and health-promoting activities; and
 - providing tailored support to help staff and students thrive, and assist those experiencing poor mental health.
- The Institute understands that some individuals may be at a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health and has strategies to support these cohorts.
 - The Institute has a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy outlining goals to encourage staff and students to lead a life of sound psychological and emotional health.

6.3 Prevention and Resilience

- The Institute coordinates activities and initiatives to promote mental health literacy, combat stigma associated with mental illness, and connect staff and students with mental health resources and support services e.g. external support services, such as counselling, financial assistance and legal services.
- The Institute takes steps to ensure that information is available to all staff and students about how they can access these resources and supports.
- The Institute seeks to prevent mental illness from developing or worsening by:
 - offering programs that help staff and students manage a range of demands, particularly those associated with work and study; and
 - supporting staff and students with disabilities, including mental illness, in its policies, strategies and practices.

6.4 Managing Poor Mental Health

- The Institute acknowledges the importance of early intervention in achieving good mental health outcomes and encourages staff and students to seek support if they have concerns or are experiencing poor mental health.
- The Institute has trained staff to sensitively and appropriately engage with staff and students who need mental health support, and to connect them with services.

6.5 Roles and Responsibilities

- The Institute has a Wellbeing Officer who meets with any staff or students who have poor mental health.
- All staff and students are responsible for:
 - contributing to a mentally healthy Institute culture;
 - taking reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing; and
 - taking reasonable care that their actions do not have a negative impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of other staff and students.
- Staff who teach, manage or supervise others, and student representatives are responsible for promoting awareness of this policy and procedure, and supporting its implementation.

6.6 Critical Cases: Suicidality and Crisis Management

- This section provides staff with clear steps and resources for responding to students or staff members experiencing suicidal thoughts or crises.
- Guidelines for staff:
 1. Recognise warning signs
 - Verbal or written expressions of hopelessness or suicidal intent
 - Behavioural changes, such as withdrawing from activities, negative emotional states or sudden mood shifts
 2. Immediate response
 - Engage calmly: speak in a non-judgemental, empathetic manner. Avoid making promises you can't keep, such as confidentiality in life-threatening situations.
 - Safety first: if a student or staff member is in immediate danger, call emergency services (000) and inform both the wellbeing officer and ELT/MD.
 3. Assess risk
 - Approach with empathy and non-judgement
 - Validate emotions: acknowledge their feelings by saying phrases, "It sounds like you've been going through a tough situation."
 - Avoid assumptions: let the student or staff member describe their experience without jumping to conclusions or providing immediate solutions.
 - Normalise seeking help: share that its okay to ask for support and give the Wellbeing Officer's details wellbeing@aih.edu.au
 4. Referral and support
 - Contact AIH support: refer the student or staff member to the Wellbeing Officer and relevant member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and email the details of the student or staff member to the Wellbeing Officer as a priority.
 - Provide contact details for professional services, such as Lifeline (13 11 14) or Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636).
 5. Document and reporting
 - Record the incident accurately and securely.
 - Report the situation to the Wellbeing Officer and relevant member of the ELT while maintaining the individuals dignity and privacy.

7. Legislation

The relevant legislation includes:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- ESOS National Code Standard 6, Overseas Students Support Services
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (including psychosocial risk provisions)
- National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (2025)

This Policy and Procedure also complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Standard 2.3 (Wellbeing and Safety), which specifies that:

4. A safe environment is promoted and fostered, including by advising students and staff on actions they can take to enhance safety and security on campus and online.

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with Higher Education Standards Framework standard 2.3.4 which specifies that:

2.3 Wellbeing and Safety

2.3.4. A safe environment is promoted and fostered, including by advising students and staff on actions they can take to enhance safety and security on campus and online.

8. Version Control

This Policy and Procedure has been endorsed by the Australia Institute of Higher Education Board of Directors as at September 2025 and is reviewed every 3 years. The Policy and Procedure is published and available on the Australian Institute of Higher Education website <http://www.aih.edu.au/> under 'Policies and Procedures'.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2020-1	Chief Executive Officer	New Policy	18 December 2020	18 December 2020
2022.1	Registrar	Updated Higher Education Standards Framework [Threshold Standard] 2021	25 May 2022	26 May 2022
2022.2	CEO/Dean	3-year review cycle, no recommended changes	28 September 2022	29 September 2022
2025.1	Employee Experience Manager / Quality and Compliance Coordinator	Responsible Officer changed to Chief Experience Officer; addition of section 6.6. Updated Section 7 Legislation to reference HESF (Threshold Standards) 2021; added WHS Act/Regulation (psychosocial risk provisions); added National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (2025).	18 September 2025	19 September 2025