

Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

Policy Category	Policy /guideline/procedure/rules		
Review	Three years from the date of approval		
Policy Code	GP023		
Contacts	policy@imc.edu.au		
Version	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Commencement Date
2024.08	Council	19 August 2024	19 August 2024

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides comprehensive guidelines to promote student wellbeing and mental health within the Institute's community. It supports the Institute in meeting its legislative and duty of care obligations, ensuring the highest health, safety, and student support standards. The policy aligns with the IMC Strategic Plan 2024–2028 and the Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy 2024–2026. This policy should be read with the *Workplace Health and Safety Policy*.

This policy and related documents will ensure a sustained, coordinated, and sensitive approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. It reflects the Institute's ongoing commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all students and maintaining the Institute's operational integrity and reputation by:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing through policies, support services, information networks, and regular wellbeing promotion campaigns.
- Clearly outlining the specific types of support services IMC has available for students, including but not limited to academic support, financial support, and professional counselling.
- Recognizing the importance of supporting students studying online, the Institute provides equivalent support services for online students.
- Encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyle choices through active participation in various initiatives that support health and wellbeing.
- Focusing on cultural sensitivities and inclusivity to ensure that support and services are accessible and relevant to all students, particularly international students from diverse backgrounds.
- Engaging with external bodies to promote mental health and wellbeing and develop strategic partnerships to streamline effective support for students.

- Increasing awareness and providing education around stigma and discrimination to cultivate an inclusive and respectful environment.
- Providing an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students to seek support early if they experience declining mental health and offering support and adjustments tailored to their study needs to help them achieve their potential.
- Encouraging students to seek support and enhancing the capacity of students to respond effectively and support others in the community.
- Regularly collecting and analysing student feedback to identify areas for improvement. This includes the review of student retention rates, academic performance, and satisfaction surveys to ensure the continuous enhancement of support services.
- Fostering the development of students' resilience and coping strategies to enhance their ability to maintain overall wellbeing.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students of the Institute which includes:

- Any category of individual or groups of enrolled students (e.g., non-award, undergraduate, postgraduate, research, domestic, and international) at the Institute.

3. DEFINITIONS

Mental Health is a state of well-being in which individuals can cope with the everyday stresses of life, realise their potential, work productively, and contribute to their community. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, affecting our thoughts, feelings, and actions. It is essential for personal, community, and socio-economic development.

Mental Ill-Health refers to conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood, or behaviour. These conditions can range from mild to severe and can impact one's ability to function daily. Mental ill-health does not necessarily involve a diagnosed mental disorder and can include symptoms such as chronic stress, anxiety, and depression, which compromise an individual's wellbeing and ability to live life to its full potential.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties and adapt to challenging situations. It involves maintaining mental and emotional strength in the face of stress and adversity. Resilience enables individuals to navigate life's challenges, maintain their mental health, and develop coping strategies for future stressors.

Stigma involves negative and often stereotyped attitudes toward individuals based on characteristics such as mental health conditions, gender, skin colour, sexual orientation, or religion. Stigma can lead to discrimination and social exclusion, negatively impacting those affected by these attitudes.

Wellbeing is a broader concept that includes the presence of positive emotions and moods, the absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life, fulfilment, and positive functioning. In the context of mental health, wellbeing refers to a state of psychological and physical health characterised by comfort, happiness, and the ability to manage stress and live a productive and fulfilling life.

4. PRINCIPLES

IMC is committed to ensuring its students' health, safety, and wellbeing as part of its dedication to creating a healthy and safe environment for the IMC community. IMC will manage risks to prevent physical and psychosocial injury or illness as required under the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#).

This policy is grounded in the principles set forth by the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) and the [ESOS National Code](#), ensuring that the Institute's practices comply with and exceed the baseline requirements established for higher education institutions in Australia. The principles outlined in this policy emphasize the importance of mental health and wellbeing, encompassing immediate support, continuous monitoring, and ongoing education programs to ensure the wellbeing of all students and maintain the integrity and reputation of the Institute.

Specifically, this policy:

- Aligns with the HESF (Threshold Standards) 2021.
This policy adheres to the requirements for:
 - Maintaining high standards of health and safety (Section 2.3);
 - Promoting diversity and equity (Section 2.4);
 - Providing clear information for prospective and current students (Section 7.2);
 - Ensuring rigorous corporate monitoring and accountability (Section 6.2).

This alignment ensures that the Institute is prepared to handle student wellbeing and mental health with a structured and compliant approach.

- Incorporates ESOS National Code Requirements.
By integrating principles from the ESOS National Code, this policy also caters to the specific needs of international students, ensuring their rights and safety are adequately protected. This is crucial given the diverse and global nature of the Institute's student

body, requiring tailored approaches that consider cultural sensitivities and legal obligations.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. Workplace Health and Safety Policy.*
- ii. Bullying Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy and Procedure*
- iii. Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy*
- iv. Student Code of Conduct*
- v. Support for Students Policy*
- vi. Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy*

The Deputy President (Management) oversees the implementation and compliance of this policy. Please contact the Deputy President's office for any enquiries or clarifications related to this policy.