Employee Assistance Program Policy

Section 1 - Background Information

(1) Australian Catholic University, in line with the ACU Mission, Identity and Values, is committed to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all staff members. The University provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers staff members and their immediate family members access to professional and confidential counselling.

(2) EAP provides a short-term solutions-focussed intervention strategy, and is designed to give staff members the opportunity to promptly address issues of immediate concern to them. The EAP can assist staff members who require longer-term assistance to source an appropriate alternative provider.

Section 2 - Policy Statement

(3) ACU recognises the importance of providing support for staff members and their immediate families experiencing personal or work related issues and concerns to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. Support is provided through the EAP, which offers confidential, professional assistance to staff members and their immediate family members. The University provides funding for EAP services as detailed below.

EAP Counselling

(4) Face to face, telephone or online counselling is available through the EAP.

(5) The aim of the EAP is early identification and provision of assistance to help resolve either work-related or personal issues. Matters that may be addressed through the EAP include, but are not limited to:

a. personal issues and/or trauma;
b. dealing with work or life change, work/life effectiveness, working relationships;
c. interpersonal conflict;
d. issues related to becoming a parent. adjusting to parenthood, positive parenting;
e. concerns about anxiety, depression or other mental health issues relating to the staff member or someone close to them;
f. relationship issues,
g. family difficulties;
h. financial concerns;
i. health matters;
j. drug, alcohol or substance abuse;
k. gambling or other addictions; and
l. coping or dealing with grief and/or loss.

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Manager Support Service

(6) Specialised and confidential support and advice from the EAP can be accessed by supervisors and managers to assist them in managing workplace issues and challenges.

Wellbeing Resources

(7) ACU staff members can access a range of resources from the EAP provider to assist with wellbeing, including relaxation and mindfulness mediations, which are available through the Acacia EAP.

Critical Incident Management

(8) The EAP can also be requested to provide counselling and support for staff members as part of the University's response to critical incidents.

Section 3 - Policy Purpose

(9) The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework that will ensure the EAP service meets the University's requirements and effectively supports the wellbeing of all staff members, including supervisors and managers. Key principles that apply to the EAP include:

a. the EAP is available for all staff members and their immediate families at no cost to them, normally for up to 3 counselling sessions per 12-month period;
b. access to the EAP is voluntary;
c. in most cases staff members will self refer, however with their agreement or at their request referral can be made by their supervisor, relevant senior officer or People and Capability;
d. the EAP is conducted by a professional accredited provider, independent of the University;
e. the EAP provider ensures professional counselling is provided by qualified health professionals;
f. confidentiality will be maintained, which means individual details of staff members who attend EAP counselling sessions will not be provided to the University;
g. the effective operation of the EAP is monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly; and
h. quarterly reports are received from the EAP provider that assist the University to support is meeting the needs of staff members and the University. These reports do not contain information that identifies individual staff members that have used the service.

Section 4 - Application of Policy

(10) This Policy applies to all Australian Catholic University staff members, including supervisors and managers.

Section 5 - Access to EAP Services

Eligibility

(11) Staff members and their immediate family members, defined as the partner/spouse or child of the staff member are eligible to access the EAP. Normally, staff members can access up to 3 one-hour sessions per 12-month period, paid for by the University.

(12) Should additional sessions be required, the provider may refer the staff member to an appropriate external agency or service, a General Practitioner (GP) for ongoing support, or arrange for the staff member to continue with

the provider in a private capacity at the staff member's expense.

(13) In exceptional circumstances, with the recommendation of the counsellor, the Chief People Officer or their delegate may approve up to three additional sessions which will be funded from current EAP contract hours. Exceptional circumstances would require the EAP providing an assessment that the staff member's wellbeing being is at risk, where the counsellor is confident that up to three additional sessions will provide sufficient support.

Attendance at Sessions

(14) Staff members can attend EAP appointments funded by the University during work hours. In this case, the staff member must advise either the nominated supervisor or the relevant senior officer if they are accessing the EAP during working hours, which the supervisor or senior officer is required to keep confidential. Staff also have the option to attend counselling appointments outside of work hours without notifying their supervisor or manager.

Section 6 - Revisions made to this Policy

(15) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the current policy platform. Any later changes will show in the Status and Details tab.

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
19 Dec 2016	Editorial	Alignment with ACU Policy on Policies template.
15 Nov 2019	Editorial	Updated to state EAP program is available to all staff of the University.
28 April 2020	Editorial	Updated to clarify counselling sessions are provided within a 12-month period.
21 November 2023	Editorial	Updated, Director HR to Chief People Officer. Updated Human Resources to People and Capability. Updated AccessEAP to new provider, AcaciaEAP

(16) The University annually reviews the effectiveness of the Employee Assistance Program supported by this Policy. Where applicable, the review takes account of necessary changes to other relevant University policies and procedures. Any staff member wishing to suggest improvements to this Policy is invited to forward their suggestions to People and Capability.

Section 7 - Further Assistance

(17) Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further information or advice be required staff should visit Service Central.

Section 8 - Associated Information

(18) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th December 2023
Review Date	1st November 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	19th December 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Responsible Manager	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Enquiries Contact	Bernardine Lynch ER and Safety Committees and Policy Officer People and Capability