

ECU STUDENT AND STAFF MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2021-2024



INTRODUCTION

ECU's **Vision** is to be recognised for our world ready graduates and leading-edge research. Our **Purpose** is to transform lives and enrich society through education and research.

ECU is committed to providing our students with the very best learning experiences, by offering transformative learning opportunities, undertaken as part of a community of learners. We understand that our students are individuals with differing needs that may change during their studies. We recognise our support services must be tailored to diverse needs and be adaptable to address individual circumstances.

ECU recognises its overall success relies on the contributions and performance of all ECU Staff. Promoting a culture that improves physical and mental wellbeing as well as the safety of our staff, through the disciplined application of health and safety processes and a progressive wellness program, is key to developing a high

performing, healthy workforce. ECU also invests in leadership development to support more positive psycho-social and inclusive workplace cultures.

The ECU Mental Health Strategy sets out a university-wide approach to promote and support student and staff mental health and wellbeing regardless of location, role or mode of study.

Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet.

(Okanagan Charter 2015)



VALUES AND CULTURE

The Strategy aligns with the ECU Values:

INTEGRITY

Being honest, ethical and fair.

RESPECT

Considering the opinions and values of others.

RATIONAL INQUIRY

Motivated by evidence and reasoning.

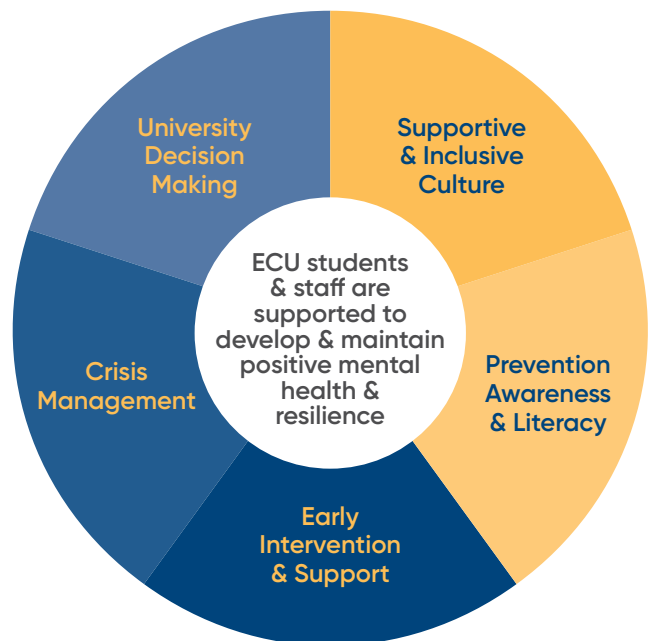
PERSONAL EXCELLENCE

Demonstrating the highest personal and professional standards.

The Mental Health Strategy supports the **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint** and specifically addresses *Action 7 – Promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff and states:*

A University-wide mental health strategy **promoting and supporting positive mental health** ...will provide a framework to promote and support mental wellbeing, minimise health workplace risks to mental health, support students and staff experiencing mental health issues and remove stigma associated with mental health issues.

ECU will adopt a strengths-based approach to raising awareness, building capacity and promoting positive mental health. Development of a whole of University mental health strategy captures all facets of ensuring a psychologically safe and healthy workplace for students and staff. The Foundation phase in the strategy identifies those actions to be focused on first. Outcomes from this initial phase will inform actions in subsequent phases to support the ongoing development of a university-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing.



OBJECTIVES

1. Mental health and wellbeing are embedded into University policies, plans and strategies.



ACTIONS

Foundation Phase:

- 1.1 Student Life and Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) to undertake analysis of key student and staff data to benchmark and understand the current status of mental health issues across the university community and report to established university committees using a data dashboard approach.
- 1.2 Establish student reference groups (including those with a lived experience of mental health issues) and staff reference group/community of practice (incl. academic leaders, accredited Mental Health First Aiders, and staff experts) to inform actions to be developed and implemented as part of this strategy.
- 1.3 Develop a clear implementation plan with defined responsibilities and identified resources distributed effectively across all Schools and Areas to support the ongoing development of this strategy.
- 1.4 Use learnings from other evidence-based university-wide mental health strategies across Australia and internationally to inform the ongoing development and implementation of actions in this strategy.
- 1.5 Develop a university-wide process for assessing mental health risks to students, staff, and others using a psychosocial hazard risk assessment built into ECU's established risk management processes.

Subsequent Phases:

- 1.6 Identify existing policies on student and staff mental health and wellbeing and review based on evidence-based approaches to mental health and wellbeing as well as student and staff feedback generated in developing this strategy.
- 1.7 Break down stigma and discrimination associated with mental health issues by ensuring language used by the university and schools regarding mental health and wellbeing is in line with best practice writing protocols.
- 1.8 Identify opportunities to engage the student reference group and the staff reference group/community of practice in reviewing university and school policies, plans and strategies.
- 1.9 Build on ECU's existing external partnerships and connections, locally, nationally and internationally, to identify evidence-based approaches to mental health and wellbeing.
- 1.10 Systems developed to ensure partnership organisations, suppliers and service providers have psychological support systems in place.

Measures of Success:

- Key student and staff metrics relating to mental health and wellbeing identified and reported annually to all students and staff via a data dashboard.
- Student Reference Groups and Staff Reference Group/Community of Practice established (Foundation Phase only).

2. Promote mental health and wellbeing by facilitating a positive, supportive and inclusive university culture.



ACTIONS

Foundation Phase:

- 2.1 Develop a positive, healthy and inclusive campus culture so all students, staff and others feel they belong by actively promoting existing ECU strategies and initiatives that strengthen and promote the diversity of ECU Community across all campuses and in the online environment (e.g. ECU Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint 2020-2021, Staff Health and Wellbeing program, Respect. Now. Always).
- 2.2 Student Life to develop a feedback loop to students indicating how their responses in the biennial Student Services and Facilities Evaluation (SSAFE) survey 2019 (and future survey rounds) have been acted on (i.e. 'You said, we did').
- 2.3 Audit and enhance signposting of existing on campus mental health and wellbeing services (incl. safe places) to ensure visibility and access.
- 2.4 Promote established reporting systems (e.g. Riskware) to students and staff to ensure reporting of environments that are not psychologically safe.
- 2.5 Develop manager and supervisor with the capability to create positive and open work environments and guide staff in managing job demands using the Leadership Capability Framework and associated professional development program.

Subsequent Phases:

Whole of University:

- 2.6 Digital and Campus Services to review existing planning and development guidelines to ensure future campus developments incorporate the principles of wellbeing and mental health design for the benefit of all building occupants.

Students:

- 2.7 Include mental health awareness as part of peer-led programs to build a sense of belonging to community.
- 2.8 Foster student involvement in the design of student support services through the student reference group.
- 2.9 Support student led activities and events designed to promote health and wellbeing to a diverse range of student cohorts.
- 2.10 Develop student focussed resources in multiple languages and deliver related information sessions by providing employment opportunities to students enrolled in relevant mental health courses.

Staff:

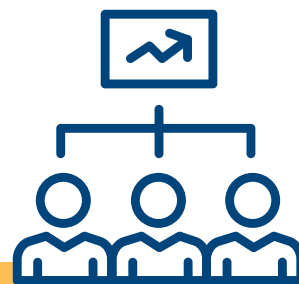
- 2.11 Develop and promote an inclusive and supportive culture using the Diversity Development Framework to provide a psychologically safe workplace free from bullying and harassment.
- 2.12 Improve staff and manager awareness on raising complaints about bullying and/or harassment in the workplace and ECU's complaint handling process so staff feel they can raise concerns or make a complaint safely and confidentially.

Measures of Success:

- Number of students participating in the biennial SSAFE survey by cohort (incl. diversity groups) and the response rate to "I feel that I am part of the ECU Community"
- Number of staff participating in the biennial VOICE staff engagement survey (incl. diversity groups) and the response rate to "My work unit provides a psychologically safe and supportive work environment".
- Number of complaints received each year by ECU from students and staff concerning bullying and harassment and the actions taken in response.
- Number of students and/or staff accessing on campus mental health and wellbeing services/facilities.

3.

Promote mental health and wellbeing awareness and literacy through a strength-based approach across University environments.



ACTIONS	
Foundation Phase:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Improve the mental health literacy and awareness of all students and staff by normalising discussions on mental health and mental wellbeing issues across the university and within schools using consistent mental health messaging.3.2 Develop and promote a decision-making map to assist students and staff who are concerned about someone's mental wellbeing and how to best handle the circumstances.3.3 Student Life and Centre for Learning and Teaching to develop a short introductory student module to promote personal mental health and wellbeing whilst studying, to reduce stigma, outline the role of Learning Assessment Plans (LAPs) and introduce inclusive language using ECU's interprofessional learning video-based expertise in the School of Medical and Health Sciences.3.4 Student Life and Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) to develop regular information campaigns to raise awareness on mental health and wellbeing issues across ECU and within schools using existing programs.3.5 HRSC to review all existing training and development program content (e.g. management development, staff health and wellbeing, personal excellence, customer service) and assess the need to include content on psychological health and safety, psychological injuries and the delivery of culturally safe services to improve mental health literacy and awareness in supervisory, course co-ordination and student-facing/frontline roles.
Subsequent Phases:	<p>Whole of University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.6 Promote and encourage health lifestyle practices to students and staff by developing and implementing a 'Whole of University' health and well-being program.3.7 Develop guidelines and resources on mental health awareness and literacy for students and staff using ECU's interprofessional learning video-based expertise as appropriate. <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.8 Involve student reference groups in the development of resilience-based resources.3.9 Develop specific wellness programs to meet the needs of International students and HDR students and supervisors <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.10 Develop a 'mental health essentials' resource for ECU teaching staff to promote mental health literacy and refer students to relevant ECU support services.
Measures of Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student engagement by cohort (e.g. first-year, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people, international, online etc.) with introductory mental health awareness module, specific mental health awareness campaigns, and access of services.• Number of students and staff participating in awareness raising campaigns.• Number of staff participating in staff development courses on mental health awareness and literacy.

4.

Provide mental health and wellbeing literacy resources for coursework and research curricula including appropriate pedagogies.



ACTIONS

Foundation Phase:

- 4.1 Centre for Learning and Teaching and Graduate Research School to develop resources for academic staff to provide quality feedback that gives students the confidence and motivation to learn and persist when they face challenges given the impact feedback/assessment results can have on student mental health and wellbeing.
- 4.2 ECU Education Committee to identify an evidenced-based approach to effectively engage with student mental health and wellbeing into curriculum to inform how mental health and wellbeing can support student academic success.

Subsequent Phases:

Whole of University:

- 4.3 Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all teaching and research environments.
- 4.4 Ensure inclusive curriculum and pedagogies, including those pertaining to mental health, are enshrined at a policy level, and supported through staff training and professional development.

Students:

- 4.5 Develop a suite of programs to raise student awareness on engaging in learning experiences that build skills in time management, maintaining a healthy study/work/life balance, and academic resilience and persistence at key transition stages of studies.
- 4.6 Review ECU curriculum guidelines to ensure students are provided throughout a course with regular learning experiences that develop collaboration, teamwork and a sense of belonging among diverse students.
- 4.7 Develop or curate resources to provide students in the final years of a course with the means to develop skills in professional resilience and persistence that will support their mental health and wellbeing in future workplaces.

Staff:

- 4.8 Engage in training and professional development that enables inclusive approaches to curriculum and teaching practice including the role of Learning Assessment Plans.
- 4.9 Develop collaborative initiatives between professional and academic staff to promote resilience and positive student mental health within curriculum.

Measures of Success:

- Number of resources available to support mental health and wellbeing literacy into curriculum design.
- Availability of explicit guidelines/resources for staff on providing student feedback that builds resilience and self-management.

5.

Provide early intervention and support for ECU community members experiencing mental health issues.



ACTIONS

Foundation Phase:

- 5.1 Develop strategic partnerships with external mental health service agencies and providers to support student and staff early intervention initiatives and build on the established connections between these and ECU, its schools and academics.
- 5.2 Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) to review existing health and safety training for supervisors/managers and ensure course content provided on psychological health and safety, psychological injuries and the approach to supporting staff.
- 5.3 Establish and maintain a network of trained and accredited Mental Health First Aiders across all campuses to provide initial support to students and staff who are developing a mental health problem or are in a mental health crisis until professional help is available.

Subsequent Phases:

Whole of University:

- 5.4 Develop a communication plan to assist staff and students to access appropriate mental health services ensuring resources are available in 6-10 different languages.

Students:

- 5.5 Provide quick responses to students seeking psychological support across a number of delivery methods (e.g. individual counselling, group therapy, telephone counselling, e-health support, SMS based support)
- 5.6 Normalise the use of key student support services and participation in co-curricular activities for all students.
- 5.7 Benchmark against best practice and monitor resourcing for ECU mental health and wellbeing services, including access for online students.
- 5.8 Identify appropriately trained staff within each discipline who can act as first line support to distressed students

Staff:

- 5.9 Promote and encourage self-management of mental health difficulties and provide early support services to managers, staff and their families through the Employee Assistance Program, ensuring timeliness and accessibility.

Measures of Success:

- Monitor and report the use of Learning Assessment Plans (LAPs) for students experiencing mental health concerns and how these are followed up if due to lapse.
- Number of trained and accredited Mental Health First Aiders on each campus and in each school and service centre.

6.

Crisis management: Provide access to coordinated mental health and wellbeing services ensuring students and staff are supported in a timely manner.



ACTIONS	
Foundation Phase:	<p>6.1 Resource, develop and provide a highly visible and well promoted online tool so students and staff can easily seek mental health support, assistance and other curated resources during a mental crisis using existing online systems (e.g. Blackboard, Staff Portal), whether it be for themselves or another student or staff member.</p> <p>6.2 Develop and promote an ECU-wide guide to suicide and self-harm prevention, based on best practice and through community engagement to meet the unique needs of students and staff.</p>
Subsequent Phases:	<p>Whole of University:</p> <p>6.3 Review existing mental health services available across campuses and identify opportunities for co-ordinating the delivery of services to students and staff.</p> <p>6.4 Establish the Safer Communities Team approach across all campus locations to provide appropriate and timely response to incidents.</p> <p>6.5 Ensure all first responders and frontline staff are trained to identify, respond effectively and provide clear direction in helping to manage mental health incidents.</p> <p>Students:</p> <p>6.6 Review existing resources for Student Health and Wellbeing service provision.</p> <p>6.7 Involve student reference group and key student cohorts as partners in service design to reduce risk of isolation e.g. LGBTIQ, International Students, Indigenous, students with disability.</p> <p>6.8 Implement the Fitness to Study policy and procedures in collaboration with student reference group.</p> <p>Staff:</p> <p>6.9 Develop appropriate resources to support staff supporting others experiencing mental health crises with access available in a timely manner.</p>
Measures of Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of students and staff accessing online mental health crisis tool (including by student cohort/diversity group and staff diversity group).• Number of students and staff reports for defined incidents related to mental health and wellbeing.

SUPPORT FOR ECU STUDENTS AND STAFF

Students

The **Student Counselling Service** provides a free, confidential service to all ECU students.

Student Health Services provide for student's healthcare needs.

The **Out of Hours Crisis Line** is available to ECU students outside of business hours. Call 1300 583 032 or text 0488 884 232.

Staff

Our **Employee Assistance Program** provides employees and their immediate family members access to free and confidential counselling for either personal or work related issues.

Crisis support

For crisis support at any time, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or visit lifeline.org.au/gethelp

GLOSSARY

Students: Current undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree by research students who are studying full-time or part-time.

Staff: All employees of the University, persons acting in an honorary or voluntary capacity for or at the University.

Mental Health: "A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community" (World Health Organisation).

Mental illness: A health problem that significantly affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves and interacts with other people. The diagnosis of mental illness is generally made according to the classification of the Diagnostic and statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) endorsed by the Australian Department of Health.

ECU has achieved Gold status as a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Skilled Workplace 2019-2023





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ECU is committed to reconciliation and recognises and respects the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' communities, cultures and histories. ECU acknowledges and respects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the traditional custodians of the land. ECU acknowledges and respects its continuing association with Noongar people, the traditional custodians of the land upon which its campuses stand.

GREENING ECU: Edith Cowan University is committed to reducing the environmental impact associated with its operations by conducting its activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. This includes implementing strategies and technologies that minimise waste of resources and demonstrate environmentally sensitive development, innovation and continuous improvement.

Information contained in this brochure was correct at the time of printing and may be subject to change.

