

Student Mental Health Support Guidelines

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) All University staff should respond to students with mental health difficulties in a non-discriminatory, non-stigmatising and positive manner. The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide members of the University community with information on how best to support students experiencing mental health difficulties.

Section 2 - Procedure

Mental Health and Student Conduct

(2) The [University of Canberra \(Student Conduct\) Rules 2023](#) require students to behave appropriately while attending University or whenever they are/or could be seen to be representing the University. The [Student Conduct Rules 2023](#) describe a range of prohibited conduct, both academic and behavioural. Some of the non-academic prohibited conduct matters are:

- a. in connection with the provision to the University of information or documentation by the student, making a false or misleading statement or engaging in, or being a party to, conduct intended to deceive;
- b. obstructing, or attempting to obstruct, an officer or employee of the University in the performance of his or her functions;
- c. obstructing, or attempting to obstruct, the Council, the Student Conduct Committee (the Committee) or any other authority, committee, board or other body of the University established under a Statute in the performance of its functions;
- d. engaging in conduct that hinders or prevents the use by other students of any of the University's facilities or the attendance of other students at a class conducted by or for the University; or
- e. contravening:
 - i. a provision of any Statute or Rule established under any Statute;
 - ii. an order or a direction of an authority, committee, board or other body of the University established under a Statute;
 - iii. a lawful order or direction of an officer or employee of the University, or of a person acting with the authority of the University; or
- f. engaging in behaviour offensive to:
 - i. a member of the Council, the Committee or any other authority, committee, board or other body of the University established under a Statute; or
 - ii. an officer.
- g. engaging in behaviour offensive to:
 - i. a member of the Council, the Committee or any other authority, committee, board or other body of the University established under a Statute;
 - ii. an officer or employee of the University; or
 - iii. a student or group of students.
- h. engaging in, or being a party to, conduct, either within the University grounds or elsewhere, that is likely to

bring the University into disrepute or prejudice the management, good governance and discipline of the University; or

- i. engaging in, or being a party to, conduct or behaviour, either within the University grounds or elsewhere, that threatens, harms or causes distress, as adjudged by a reasonable person, to an officer, employee or student of the University or visitor to the University.

(3) Serious Misconduct includes behaviour that is considered unlawful, discriminatory, sexually inappropriate, bullying, harassing, threatening, offensive, invades another's privacy or causes any person to fear for their personal safety.

(4) These standards of behaviour apply to all students and a diagnosis of mental illness will not automatically preclude the imposition of penalties for breaches of discipline. However, it is recognised that certain behaviours may result from mental health difficulties in which case, whilst due penalty for any offence may be imposed, the student will also be referred to the relevant support services for assistance. Moreover, if the University is aware that the student has a mental health difficulty, this will be taken into account when any penalties are applied.

Services for Students

(5) The University has a range of support services. For students experiencing mental health difficulties, the following support services may be helpful, depending on the nature of the support needed (refer to the [Student Mental Health Support Contact List](#) (see also Section 4 of these Guidelines).

Medical and Counselling Centre

(6) The [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) provides general medical and psychological services to all enrolled students and this includes the provision of services and care for patients with mental health concerns. The [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) is staffed by doctors, nurses, psychologists and social workers. Their work practices are informed by legal obligations to their patients, their professional associations and relevant codes of ethics applicable to their professions, especially in relation to confidentiality.

InclusionUC

(7) [InclusionUC](#) brings together general welfare support for all students studying through the Bruce campus, support for students with disability or ongoing health conditions, as well as a range of specialist support programs.

(8) InclusionUC coordinates and implements services and supports to assist students with disability or ongoing health conditions. This is achieved through the provision of reasonable adjustments to enable equal access and participation in university life.

(9) Support is available whether the student's condition is permanent, fluctuating or temporary. Eligibility is determined at a registration appointment with an Inclusion Advisor.

Multi-Faith Centre: Chaplaincy and Pastoral Support

(10) Students use the Multi-Faith Centre for a wide range of welfare issues, the majority of which are not related at all to religion, but instead have to do with the complexities of the human condition. Often they do so because they know they will be given sympathetic support as well as pastoral care. Refer to the following link for details of the full range of support available through the [Multi Faith Centre](#).

Student Wellbeing and International Support

(11) Student Wellbeing and International Support offers a dedicated and specialised advice and referral service for the University's international student community. The team is staffed by experienced, friendly and knowledgeable International Student Advisors (ISAs). The service provides advice, referral, and assistance with a range of matters such as:

- a. Australia Awards student support;
- b. Visa and eCoE enquiries;
- c. new international student orientation;
- d. complaints and grievances, both academic and administrative;
- e. welfare referral; and
- f. general enquiries.

Study Skills

(12) For students who require additional support with their studies, the [Study Skills](#) offers a range of learning and careers support, both face-to-face and online.

Student Representative Council

(13) The University Student Representative Council (SRC) employs Student Advocacy Officers who are available for consultation on a number of issues ranging from student grievances to academic appeals. The Student Advocacy Officers will always refer students with mental health issues to the appropriate service, and can assist with making contact.

(14) Students can organise a consultation with a Student Advocacy Officer by emailing: student.advocacy@canberra.edu.au.

Section 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

(15) All University staff should respond to students with mental health difficulties in a non-discriminatory, non-stigmatising and positive manner. If a student discloses a mental health difficulty, staff members should encourage the student to seek advice and support from InclusionUC, Student Wellbeing and International Support, and/or Medical and Counselling .

(16) If staff members require advice in relation to a student with a mental health difficulty they should contact the University's [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) or, depending on the nature of the issue, InclusionUC, Student Wellbeing and International Support or the Director, Student Life (for critical incidents).

(17) All staff members should be aware of their own personal and professional limitations. If they are concerned that a student is exhibiting behaviour that they believe may arise from a mental health disturbance they should seek advice from the [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) or suggest the student makes an appointment. If they believe that a student has mental health problems and requires additional support they should refer the student to Student Wellbeing and International Support.

(18) If someone appears to be in immediate danger of seriously harming themselves or other people, staff should call the Security Office on 6201 2222 and Emergency Services on 000 (or 112 from a mobile phone) and should refer to the University's Critical Student Incident Management Procedures.

(19) Under no circumstances should a member of staff accompany a student manifesting symptoms of serious disturbance off-campus, e.g. to the Accident and Emergency Department of the local hospital.

Students

(20) Students need to take responsibility for communicating their needs and seeking support within the University as without this information there can be no offer of support.

(21) Students are encouraged to take care of their own mental health, for example ensuring that they get adequate rest, take prescribed medication and access appropriate support, including support available through the [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) and Student Wellbeing and International Support.

(22) Students should be aware that any behaviour which impacts negatively on fellow students or staff, or is in any way disruptive or offensive, is not acceptable within the University community and will be subject to University procedures for the maintenance of good order (see Section 4 below).

(23) Students concerned about a fellow student's mental well-being should be aware of their personal limitations; they should encourage their fellow student to seek specialist support at the earliest opportunity. Students may wish to recommend to their fellow students that support is available through [Medical and Counselling Centre](#) and Student Wellbeing and International Support.

(24) If someone appears to be in immediate danger of seriously harming themselves or other people, students should call the Security Office on 6201 2222 and the Emergency Services on 000 (or 112 from a mobile phone).

Critical Student Incidents

(25) Incidents or behaviours that are potentially “critical student incidents” are those that involve the death of a student, serious injury to or by a student, a threat to the life of a student, a threat by a student to the life of others or a major threat to property involving students. Sometimes, these things will not be deemed a “critical incident” and sometimes they may require management under the terms of the University’s [Resilience Management Framework](#) and [Business Continuity Plan](#). Whether or not a staff member believes that a critical student incident arises from a mental health issue, there are procedures to be followed in reporting a critical student incident.

(26) For on-campus incidents staff or students who are first made aware of a critical incident should immediately contact Emergency Services and the University Security Office (see Contacts List in Section 4 below). If the incident does not warrant immediate referral to Emergency Services, the Security Office should be advised of the incident. Once the immediate need has been addressed, the Security Office must report the critical incident to the Director, Student Life. For acute and urgent mental health issues, staff members or students may also wish to contact Mental Health ACT Triage for reporting and advice (see Contacts List in Section 4 below).

(27) For off-campus incidents involving students on University business (e.g. during a field trip or a placement) the incident should be dealt with as though the event had occurred on campus. Other incidents occurring off-campus involving domestic students which do not have an immediate impact on other staff or students of the University do not need to be reported to University personnel. Staff members who become aware of an off-campus critical incident involving an international student who is not on University business should report the incident to their Executive Dean, Director or Manager, who will then contact the Director, Student Life as soon as possible.

(28) If a staff member is unsure of whether or not a circumstance involving a student should be defined as a critical incident then the matter should be referred to the Director, Student Life in the first instance. If the Director, Student Life is unavailable the matter should be referred to the Director, Student Connect (see Contacts List in Section 4 below).

(29) Full details relating to the management of critical student incidents can be found at:

- a. [Business Continuity Plan](#) (staff-only).
- b. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) Plan.

Section 4 - Contacts List

| External Contacts | Hours | Phone Number |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Emergency Services | All hours | 000 or 112 from a mobile phone |
| Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CATT) Mental Health Triage Service | Office hours | 02 6205 1065 |
| | All hours | 1800 629 354 |
| Lifeline (Counselling service) | All hours | 13 11 44 |
| UC Contacts | | |
| University Security Office | All hours | 02 6201 2222 |
| Medical and Counselling Centre | Office (9am to 5pm) | 02 6201 2351 |
| Student Wellbeing and International Support | Office (9am to 5pm) | 02 6206 8841 |
| Study Skills | Office (9am to 5pm) | 02 6201 2205 |
| Director, Student Connect | Office (9am to 5pm) | 02 6201 2284 |
| Director, Student Life | Office (9am to 5pm) | 02 6201 2284 |

Status and Details

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