

Name of Policy	Employee Assistance Program Policy
Description of Policy	This policy provides a framework for the effective operation of the Employee Assistant Program Policy
Policy applies to	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University-wide
	<input type="checkbox"/> Specific (<i>outline location, campus, organisational unit etc.</i>)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Staff <input type="checkbox"/> All Students <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and Students
Policy Status	<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision of Existing Policy

Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Governing Authority	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Officer	Director, Human Resources

Approval Date	1 June 2008
Effective Date	1 June 2008
Date of Last Revision	19 December 2016
Effective Date of Last Revision	19 December 2016
Date of Next Policy Review*	November 2018

* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Related Legislation, Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Local Protocols	Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Critical Incident Management Policy Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
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1. Background Information

Australian Catholic University, in line with its Mission and Values, is committed to supporting the psychological wellbeing of staff members. The University provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers staff and their immediate family members access to professional and confidential counselling to assist staff in this regard.

EAP provides a short-term intervention strategy, and is designed to give staff 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.

2. Policy Statement

Australian Catholic University recognises the importance of providing support for staff 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.

2.1 EAP COUNSELLING

Face to face or telephone counselling is available through the EAP. 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:

- dealing with work or life change;
- issues related to becoming a parent or adjusting to be a parent;
- concerns about anxiety, depression or other mental health issues relating to the staff member or someone close to them;
- personal trauma;
- relationship issues;
- family difficulties;

- financial concerns;
- health matters;
- alcohol or substance abuse; gambling or other addictions; and
- coping or dealing with grief and/or loss.

2.2 MANAGER SUPPORT SERVICE

Specialised support and advice from the EAP can be accessed by supervisors and managers to assist them in managing workplace issues relating to their roles.

2.3 CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

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

3. Purpose

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 staff, including supervisors and managers. Key principles that apply to the EAP include:

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

4. Application of Policy

This policy applies to Australian Catholic University fixed term and continuing staff members, including supervisors and managers.

5. Access to EAP Services

5.1 ELIGIBILITY

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 can access a total of 3 one-hour sessions per calendar year, paid for by the University. Should additional sessions be required, the provider may refer the staff member to an appropriate external agency, or arrange for the staff member to continue with the provider in a private capacity at the staff member's expense.

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

5.2 ATTENDANCE AT SESSIONS

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.

6. Revisions made to this Policy

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
19 Dec 2016	Editorial	Alignment with ACU Policy on Policies template.

The University may make changes to this policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to Human Resources.

7. Further Assistance

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](#).