



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS POLICY

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EMPLOYEE WELLNESS POLICY

Against the background of the dream to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care, the council of the North-West University (NWU) adopted this policy on 20 June 2019 for the purpose of promoting the wellness of all permanent, fixed term contract and temporary employees and their dependents.

1 Interpretation and application

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the –

1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
2. Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995
3. Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998
4. Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997.
5. Mental Health Care Act, 2002 (Act No. 17 of 2002)
6. Occupational health and safety act, 1993 (Act No 85 of 1993)

2 Definitions

In this policy –

“**client**” means an individual or a family member utilizing the EAP owing to personal or work-related issues;

“**confidential**” means not disclosing information about an employee to a third party without prior written informed consent by the client;

“**counselling**” means therapeutic intervention by a trained and registered professional such as a social worker, psychologist or psychiatrist;

“**EAP**” means the NWU's employee assistance programme as an organisational resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues;

“**EAP practitioner**” means a person (not necessarily professionally-trained) performing EAP-specific or related tasks, including referral, liaison, training, marketing, and evaluation;

“**EAP professional**” means a professionally-trained person providing an EAP services including clinical EAP-specific or related tasks, including therapy and counselling;

“**HPCSA**” means the Health Professions Council of South Africa

“**immediate family members**” means the spouse or partner and all children who are dependent on an employee;

“**SACSSP**” means the South African Council for Social Service Professions;

“**SANC**” means the South African Nursing Council;

“**trauma**” means any event generally considered to be outside the range of ordinary human experience resulting in extreme emotional or physical reactions in clients;

“**well-being**” means a positive state of physical, spiritual, social and emotional wellness, and

“**wellness**” indicates the condition of an employee that is functioning optimally resulting in a high or acceptable level of productivity.

3 Policy statement

It is the policy of the NWU to –

- 3.1 ensure that the university's employee health and wellness services identify, prevent and resolve personal concerns of employees that might impact on workplace productivity;
- 3.2 ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all employees;
- 3.3 create a working environment that promotes the well-being of all employees;
- 3.4 use fair labour practices aimed at corrective processes, and
- 3.5 improve the understanding and appreciation of problems facing management and employees thereby increasing the productivity and wellness of employees.

4 Guiding Principles

The NWU supports and is committed to the overall health and wellbeing of its employees and recognises the need for wellness in the workplace by establishing a framework for promoting wellness for the benefit of employees, focusing on the following imperative objectives:

- 4.1 to provide a worksite-based programme designed to assist in the identification, prevention and resolution of personal and productivity issues including problems related to health, family relations, finances, substance dependence, legal, emotional, social or work stress which may adversely affect job performance, productivity or safety;
- 4.2 to deliver holistic wellness services that focus on the spiritual-, emotional-, social-, physiological- and intellectual needs of all employees and their dependents;
- 4.3 to develop pro-active interventions to assist in the prevention or improved management of psychosocial concerns;
- 4.4 to enable managers, in appropriate circumstances, to manage problems contemplated in 4.1 more effectively;
- 4.5 to render counselling by professionally registered social workers, counsellors or psychologists, and
- 4.6 to provide confidential employee health and wellness services that comply with the ethical codes and standards of professional bodies, including the HPCSA, SACSSP and SANCO.

5 Rules

- 5.1 All employees and other persons who have dealings with the NWU have the right to be treated with fairness.
- 5.2 Services offered by EAP are voluntary in nature except for where intervention without prior assent is legally required, for example in cases where a person's life is threatened.
- 5.3 All employees as well as their immediate family members experiencing personal concerns, trauma or psychosocial distress have the right to access the employee health and wellness services of the NWU.
- 5.4 Employees making use of the EAP services must be considered to be on official duty while meeting with an EAP professional or practitioner for assessment, assistance or referral.
- 5.5 The EAP must play a neutral role in all its service offerings.
- 5.6 All therapeutic services rendered by the employee health and wellness office must be conducted in a confidential manner.
- 5.7 Confidentiality may only be breached in cases where such a breach is required by law.
- 5.8 All employees and managers must be made aware of the procedures applicable to them pertaining to the services of the employee health and wellness office.
- 5.9 The EAP services must be constructive services that are made available to enhance or improve the performance of employees in the workplace.
- 5.10 Referring an employee to the EAP as a result of poor work performance must be conducted as a formal referral by the line manager.

- 5.11 Participation or non-participation in the EAP does not relieve the individual's responsibility for satisfactory performance and conduct, nor does it relieve managers of their responsibility to manage performance, discipline, illness or injury procedures.
- 5.12 Employees who make use of the EAP are expected to continue adhering to their job performance requirements.
- 5.13 The EAP does not supersede or nullify the requirements of any existing procedure such as procedures relating to incapacity, ill health and injury or grievance procedures which may run concurrently with the EAP.

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