



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS POLICY

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EMPLOYEE WELLNESS POLICY

Preamble

Against the background of our vision to discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, thereby advancing our relevance and impact, the Council of the North-West University (“NWU”, “university”) adopted this policy on 19 November 2025.

1 Interpretation and application

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

- 1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 1.2 Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995;
- 1.3 Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998;
- 1.4 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997;
- 1.5 Mental Health Care Act, 17 of 2002;
- 1.6 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993;
- 1.7 National health Act, 61 of 2003;
- 1.8 Children’s Act, 38 of 2005, and
- 1.9 Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013.

2 Definitions

In this policy –

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

“**confidential**” means not disclosing any information about a client to a third party without the client’s express prior written informed consent;

“**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, which is an organisational resource based on core technologies or functions. The programme aims to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness by preventing, identifying and resolving personal and productivity issues;

“**EAP practitioner**” means a person performing EAP-specific tasks such as referral, liaison, training, marketing and evaluation;

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

“**HPSCA**” means the Health Professions Council of South Africa;

“**immediate family members**” refers to a spouse or partner and all children who are legally dependent on an employee;

“**psychological safety**” refers to a work environment in which a person feels safe to take interpersonal risks, communicate openly and freely, and raise concerns without fear of negative consequences or pressure. The focus is on identifying and removing or minimising factors in the workplace that could cause psychological harm.

“**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 who 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 are accessible to all employees, and actively promote awareness of these services through ongoing communication and engagement activities;
- 3.2 ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, including psychological safety;
- 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 awareness, understanding and appreciation of workplace challenges among both management and employees, fostering a culture that enhances productivity and well-being.

4 Guiding principles

The NWU supports and is committed to the overall health and well-being of its employees and recognises the need for wellness in the workplace. To this end, it has established a framework for promoting wellness for the benefit of employees, focusing on the following objectives:

- 4.1 to provide a worksite-based programme designed to help identify, prevent and resolve personal and productivity issues, including health, family, financial, substance dependence, legal, emotional, social and work-related problems, which could negatively impact job performance, productivity, health or safety;
- 4.2 to deliver holistic wellness services that focus on the organisational, spiritual, emotional, physiological, and intellectual circumstances of all employees and their dependants;
- 4.3 to ensure that these services are provided in a culturally sensitive and inclusive manner, and are tailored to a diverse workforce;
- 4.4 to develop proactive interventions to assist in the prevention or improved management of psychosocial concerns;
- 4.5 to enable managers, in appropriate circumstances, to manage problems contemplated in 4.1 more effectively;
- 4.6 to provide counselling services delivered by professionally registered social workers, counsellors, or psychologists, and
- 4.7 to provide confidential employee health and wellness services that comply with the ethical codes and standards of professional bodies, including the HPCSA, SASSP and SANC.

5 Rules

- 5.1 All employees and individuals dealing with the NWU are entitled to fair treatment.
- 5.2 Services offered by the EAP are voluntary, except where intervention without prior consent is legally required, for example in cases where a person's life is threatened.
- 5.3 All employees, as well as their legal dependants experiencing personal concerns, trauma, or psychosocial distress, have the right to access the NWU's employee health and wellness services.
- 5.4 Employees making use of the EAP services are considered to be on official duty when meeting with an EAP professional for an assessment, assistance or referral.
- 5.5 The EAP must play a neutral role in all its service offerings.
- 5.6 All therapeutic services provided 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;
 - is necessary because the client is assessed as posing a risk to themselves or others;
 - must be made in terms of a court order;
 - occurs with the written consent of a parent or guardian of a minor under 12 years of age;
 - is necessary and occurs with the written consent of the next of kin of a deceased patient or the executor of their estate, or
 - is mandatory in terms of the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 regarding the reporting of cases of child abuse.
- 5.8 All employees and managers must be aware of the applicable procedures regarding employee health services.
- 5.9 The EAP services must be constructive and designed to enhance or improve employee performance in the workplace.
- 5.10 Referring an employee to the EAP due to poor work performance must be conducted as a formal referral by the line manager and viewed as a supportive mechanism for the employee.
- 5.11 Employees using EAP services during work hours must notify their line manager of their absence from work for this purpose.
- 5.12 Participation or non-participation in the EAP does not relieve individuals of their responsibility for achieving satisfactory performance and conduct, nor does it relieve managers of their responsibility to manage performance, discipline, illness or injury procedures.

- 5.13 Employees who use the EAP are expected to continue adhering to the job performance requirements.
- 5.14 The EAP does not supersede or nullify the requirements of any existing procedures, such as those relating to incapacity, ill health, injury or grievances, which may run concurrently with the EAP.
- 5.15 Employees may not suffer any negative consequences for using EAP services. No disciplinary action or sanction can be taken against an employee for using or not using EAP services.

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