

Name of Policy	Employee Assistance Program Policy
Description of Policy	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Revision
Description of Revision	<i>Delete</i> <i>Please type brief description of the deletion and specify information to be deleted</i>
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Human Resources Directorate

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1. Background and Overview

Australian Catholic University, as a part of its Mission, places a very high priority on the overall quality of working-life for staff, with a particular emphasis on the availability of work and life-balance arrangements intended to assist staff members work in ways which best fit both their personal needs, and those of the University. An important strategy to assist staff in this regard is the provision of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which gives staff access to a confidential counselling service.

An EAP provides a short-term intervention strategy, and is designed to give staff the opportunity to promptly address issues of immediate concern to them. Staff who require longer-term assistance will need to consider making private arrangements, which can be either with the assistance of the EAP counsellor, or with some other provider.

2. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the effective operation of an EAP at Australian Catholic University, and to give guidance to staff and supervisors when the need to access the Program arises.

The ACU Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides staff, including nominated supervisors and managers, with access to the following confidential services:

- external, face to face, or telephone confidential counselling for personal or work related issues;
- confidential counselling assistance to staff and members of their immediate family members; and/or,
- support and advice for managers and supervisors in dealing with issues relating to their roles.

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; relationship issues; personal trauma; family difficulties; financial concerns; health matters; alcohol or substance abuse; gambling or other addictions; coping or dealing with grief and/or loss. The EAP provided services are therefore available to assist staff who are seeking to address such personal or work related issues. Student counsellors employed by the University are for the use of students and are not normally available for staff.

3. Policy Provisions

3.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“**Calendar Year**” means the period from 1 January to 31 December.

“**Counsellor**” refers to the individual counsellor/psychologist who has been assigned by the Service Provider to provide a staff member with confidential services related to the EAP.

“**EAP**” means Employee Assistance Program.

“**Immediate Family**” means a staff member’s:

- (a) spouse (married or de facto), and/or
- (b) child or adult child (including adopted child, step child, ward or ex nuptial child).

“**Service Providers**” refers to the organisation that has been engaged by the University for the purpose of providing confidential counselling services to individual staff members, through the EAP.

“**Staff Member**” refers to a person employed by the University as a continuing or fixed-term staff member on a full-time or part-time basis.

3.2 Access to Services

A staff member may access the EAP provider directly and make an appointment when the need arises. A supervisor may, in consultation with a staff member, refer the staff member to the EAP provider.

A staff member, including members of the staff member's immediate family, may normally 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 cases, and on request of the staff member and/or on the recommendation of the counsellor, the Director, Human Resources may approve up to three additional visits. The Director, Human Resources, whilst maintaining confidentiality, will consult with the relevant Executive Dean/Director regarding any additional visits. Such additional visits will be funded from the relevant Executive Dean/Director's budget.

3.3 Attendance at Sessions

A staff member who attends the service provider during working hours shall be regarded as being on duty, provided that the session is funded by the University. The staff member must advise either the nominated supervisor or the relevant senior officer if they are accessing the EAP during working hours.

4. Confidentiality and Privacy

All consultations will be conducted in complete confidence between the staff member and the EAP counsellor. The University may obtain statistical data on the broad categories and frequency of access and use of the EAP provider to ensure that the funding support to the service is adequately maintained. Such data will not include names of persons using the EAP services.

5. Grievances

Any grievance arising from the application of this policy at the University shall be managed using the grievance management process foreshadowed in the Interim – Staff Grievance Management Policy.

6. Policy Review

The University may make changes to this policy and procedures 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 the Director, Human Resources.

7. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding the provisions of 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 advice be needed, they should contact the relevant Human Resources Consultant.

Information concerning the range of services available from the EAP provider may be obtained from the local Human Resources office or the Human Resources website.