

UCC Staff Wellbeing Policy

Purpose

At UCC we recognise that the wellbeing of staff is integral to achieving the University's strategic vision of excellence in education, research, contributions to community, professional life and society. A healthy, motivated and supported staff community is the foundation upon which we build our academic and institutional success.

This Wellbeing Policy sets out the commitment of our senior leadership to create the structures and cultivate the culture needed to support holistic wellbeing across our workforce. Recognising that challenges and stressors will inevitably arise both inside and outside work, we are dedicated to establishing robust practices and approaches that enable resilience, inclusivity, and adaptability. Senior leadership will play a key role in embedding wellbeing into our work—ensuring that as we grow, evolve, and face new challenges, we maintain a healthy, balanced, and supportive environment for all.

By fostering a culture of wellbeing, we empower our staff individually and collectively to reach their full potential upholding the [values](#) that drive UCC forward. The policy underscores our commitment to creating an environment where our core values and in particular our values of respect, compassion and resilience are visible and lived, enabling our employees to thrive both personally and professionally and in turn advancing the University's mission.

Wellbeing is everyone's responsibility and UCC adopts a holistic approach to staff wellbeing including mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing. This policy aims to empower employees to adopt a proactive approach to their wellbeing by receiving appropriate training, support, and accommodations throughout their career at UCC to do their best work.

This policy is in line with our obligations under the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005](#) and [Organisation of Working Time Act 1997](#). This policy is guided by the [Civil Service Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) (The 2021 Framework, published 9 Oct 2021). This policy compliments national frameworks and UCC's commitment to the [Healthy Ireland Campus Charter and Framework](#).

Scope

This policy applies to all UCC employees regardless of status or role.

Principles

- **Proactivity:** The University is committed to taking preventative measures to address potential wellbeing issues and to prioritise early intervention.
- **Equality and Diversity and Inclusivity:** The University is committed to ensuring the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are reflected in this policy to ensure all staff feel included and valued, regardless of their contractual status or role.
- **Confidentiality:** Respecting staff privacy and handling personal information with discretion.
- **Support:** Provision of a visible and comprehensive range of supports for mental and physical wellbeing.

- **Evidence Based:** Supporting staff needs as identified through surveys and feedback and relevant University data.
- **Engagement:** Actively encouraging and involving staff in the development of wellbeing initiatives.

Definitions

The World Health Organisation definition of mental wellbeing is: “A state of wellbeing is one in which the individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community.”

The WHO definition of a healthy workplace is:

A healthy workplace is one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following, based on identified needs:

- health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;
- health, safety and well-being concerns in the psychosocial work environment including organization of work and workplace culture;
- personal health resources in the workplace; and
- ways of participating in the community to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.

Key Responsibilities for People Managers

People Managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the wellbeing of their staff related to work. People managers are expected to:

- Be familiar with this policy and the HR policy framework to support employees to protect their wellbeing.
- Understand their duty of care in relation to employee's health and wellbeing.
- Be equipped with skills and knowledge to practice self-care and model healthy work habits and positive behaviours.
- Create a culture locally where health and wellbeing are prioritised and employees are encouraged to seek support and avail of wellbeing resources.
- Encourage employees to develop a healthy work life balance by encouraging employees to take breaks and statutory leave entitlements and to respect the Right to Disconnect from work.
- Set clear work priorities, objectives and expectations with fairly distributed workloads.
- Address staff wellbeing issues proactively and provide opportunities to discuss wellbeing.
- Undertake wellbeing training programmes and engage with any initiatives to support themselves and employees.
- Treat employees with sensitivity and compassion and make any reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain at work or to return to work.
- Maintain confidentiality where wellbeing disclosures are made. There is a limit to confidentiality where there is a risk to life or harm

Key Responsibilities for Employees

- Take reasonable steps to protect their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of other employees.
- Be familiar with and adhere to the staff wellbeing policies set out by the University.
- Be familiar with the range of staff wellbeing supports and encourage other colleagues to access supports.
- Protect their wellbeing by striving for a healthy balance between work and personal life by respecting the Right to Disconnect of all employees and by taking statutory leave and breaks.
- Employees who are student facing should familiarise themselves with Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and undertake training in identifying and recognising symptoms of students in distress.

- Raise any concerns or risks to wellbeing in a timely manner with their line manager or staff wellbeing unit or HR business manager and work proactively to find solutions.
- Participate in wellbeing training and programmes, information sessions and activities offered to develop skills and knowledge to protect their wellbeing.
- Provide feedback on wellbeing initiatives to help improve programmes.
- Access resources and training to prevent or manage stress.
- Engage positively with team members and contribute to a supportive work environment.

Key responsibilities of People and Culture Department

- Provide guidance, training and support for managers on wellbeing issues including how to recognise and address wellbeing issues.
- Provide information and support for employees who make a wellbeing disclosure.
- Actively promote and make accessible the range of staff wellbeing resources available including Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Liaise with managers on return to work and advise on any reasonable accommodations.
- Where appropriate arrange referrals to Occupational Health for expert advice.
- Identify and manage Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Champions.
- Regularly assess and evaluate the effectiveness of wellbeing programs and initiatives by collecting data through surveys and feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure all wellbeing policies comply with relevant health and safety regulations and employment laws and provide advice on best practice and any changes to legislation.
- Maintain confidentiality of all staff data and ensure privacy policies are enforced.

Implementation and Review

The People and Culture Department will be responsible for implementing and regularly reviewing this Staff Wellbeing Policy. Feedback from staff will be actively sought and used to continually improve the effectiveness of our wellbeing initiatives.

Confidentiality

Managers must ensure confidentiality and information shared by staff members. Wellbeing related matters should not be disclosed without the relevant staff member's explicit consent or where there is a threat to life.

Policy Review and Evaluation

UCC is committed to reviewing this policy in accordance with the University's Policy Framework and in line with changes in the law or other relevant developments. The People and Culture Department is the owner of this Policy.

Further information and resources

[UCC Work life Balance Policies](#)

[UCC Safety Policy](#)

[UCC Leave Policy](#)

[UCC Dignity and Right to Respect Policy](#)

[UCC Employee Assistance Programme](#)

[UCC Sick Leave Procedure](#)

[UCC Student Mental Health Policy](#)

[UCC Staff Support Resource Tree](#)