

Occupational Health and Safety

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

The University of Waikato values the vital contribution that all staff make to its success. The provision of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a practical way of demonstrating that the University has a sincere interest in the well-being of its employees.

Personal problems are recognised as conditions which can be overcome. EAP is a programme through which University staff can access appropriate professional/specialist assistance for a wide range of problems.

The programme will contain the following key features:

- Employees using EAP are entitled to the same rights and benefits as an employee who is sick. The entitlement to take approved sick leave applies to any absences related to assistance an employee is receiving under the programme;
- the programme is available to all employees who are eligible for a University staff ID card - in any location, throughout all levels of the organisation, and including any immediate family members who have personal problems which affect or are likely to affect an employee's work;
- all employee information given to Stratos Ltd is treated confidentially;
- the University of Waikato will meet the cost of up to three sessions per employee per issue;
- employees cannot use the programme to avoid performance management procedures or the consequences of breaching the University's Staff Code of Conduct.

The University of Waikato has currently contracted Stratos Ltd, an independent organisation, to provide our Employee Assistance Programme.

The EAP is designed to encourage people to take responsibility for their own health and wellness. It is not intended in any way to alter the University's responsibility or authority. The EAP is one strategy through which the University of Waikato can maintain and enhance the health, well-being and performance of its staff. The University recognises that personal problems do impact on the workplace. The EAP is dedicated to supporting and strengthening the workplace environment by providing professional help for employees whenever they need it. People experiencing personal concerns which affect their work will receive assistance in a manner which places emphasis on confidentiality, self-initiative and prevention.

PROCEDURES

Programme Co-ordinator

The Employee Assistance Programme Co-ordinator for the University of Waikato Programme is the Health and Safety Coordinator.

The role of the Programme Co-ordinator is primarily an administrative one, and whilst there may be an involvement in referring employees to the EAP, individual cases are not disclosed or discussed.

Confidentiality

Within the normal applicable limits, confidentiality is assured to all employees who use EAP services. Only the EAP counsellor and the staff member will have access to the personal information provided. The only records available to the University of Waikato will be anonymous data collected for statistical use and these will be kept without any individual or identifying reference. No information shared with the EAP counsellor will ever be placed on an employee's personal file at the University. All record keeping will observe normal conventions with regards to confidentiality.

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Eligibility and Entitlement

All staff who are eligible for a University staff ID card may use the programme.

An employee is initially entitled to three counselling sessions, with the University meeting the costs for those sessions. University approval for meeting any additional costs will be made on a case-by-case basis. However, should an employee require referral to a specialist agency, the additional costs involved may have to be met by the employee.

Referrals

The EAP is designed to encourage staff members to make use of the services as they require them. The programme accepts the following types of referrals:

- Self Referral. A staff member, worried about a personal problem, can seek help through EAP of her/his own accord.
- Manager Referral. Managers have a responsibility to monitor and manage the work performance of their staff. When a manager notices that an individual's work performance has markedly deteriorated, she/he can provide the employee with the option of participating in EAP .
- Suggested or Informal Referral. An employee seeks help at the suggestion of a colleague, employee representative, or manager.
- Family or Other Referral. Sometimes a manager or EAP Services is contacted by a family member outside of the workplace who is concerned about a relative who works for the University. If this is the case the Programme Co-ordinator's advice should be sought.

No reports will be made back to the referral source without the express written consent of the employee concerned. However, if a staff member is referred to EAP by their manager, the manager will be advised whether:

- a. the employee has kept the appointment;
- b. the employee accepted or rejected the counsellor's offer of help;
- c. the employee will or will not need time away from work; and/or
- d. the manager will need to be involved in setting the date on which the employee is expected to return to work.

Accessing the Programme

There are several ways to access the University Employee Assistance Programme from work and from home. Accessing the programme will give you a range of counsellors in your area that you can select from and will detail the counsellor's specific areas of interest and qualifications. In order to make an appointment with a counsellor staff are encouraged to contact them via telephone at the number shown in the counsellor profile located on the internet site. If the counsellor is not available when you phone you will be able to leave a message. The counsellor will call you back as soon as possible. When leaving a message you should say you work for the University of Waikato and leave your name, telephone number and the best time to return your call.

To access the programme and to select a counsellor via the staff intranet site follow the links below:

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/hrm/eap/> or

[iwaikato/employment/health&safety/eap](http://www.waikato.ac.nz/employment/health&safety/eap)

To access the programme to select a counsellor from outside the university from a non work computer follow the link below, you will be required to enter a login and password.

www.stratos-ltd.co.nz/index.php

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Organisation Id: uniwaikato

Password: w27

Alternatively you can contact Stratos Ltd on the number below

0800 STRATOS (0800 787 2867)

Critical Incident Debriefing Programme

The Critical Incident Debriefing Programme allows employees responding to critical incidents to discuss or debrief their personal reactions in a confidential, supportive environment.

Critical incidents may include:

- accidents at work causing death or serious injury;
- physical violence against a staff member;
- robbery (armed or other);
- the death or suicide of an employee or employee's family member, friend or client; or
- grave or serious personal problems arising outside normal working hours.

A critical incident can lead to emotional and sometimes physical distress.

Reactions to a critical incident can include:

- nervousness, depression;
- listlessness, nausea;
- anger, irritability;
- flashback;
- fatigue, memory and concentration problems; or
- deteriorating work practices.

To access the Critical Incident Debriefing Programme in the event of a critical incident or traumatic event, please contact: Stratos Ltd 0800787 2867.

Performance Management

The purpose of an Employee Assistance Programme is to encourage and assist anyone with personal problems to seek help.

If work performance is affected, the EAP cannot be used to avoid the consequences of performance management procedures. However, the acceptance of help through the EAP in such a situation will be regarded as a positive step towards addressing personal issues which may be impacting on the workplace.

Related Links

EAP Poster: <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/hrm/internal/health&safety/EAP%20Poster.pdf>
EAP Brochure: <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/hrm/internal/health&safety/EAP%20Flyer.pdf>
EAP FAQ's: <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/hrm/eap/>
Stratos Ltd: www.stratos-ltd.co.nz/index.php