Maynooth University
Human Resources Office

Maynooth University

Workplace Wellbeing Statement

(August 2021)

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Introduction

The University is committed to providing a healthy working environment and improving the quality of working lives for all its employees. This wellbeing statement aims to support the University's mission and core values of freedom of thought and expression, freedom from discrimination, collegiality, transparency, trust, dignity, respect, and to recognise that employees are its greatest asset.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) define wellbeing as

'Creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation.' (CIPD 2016)

Through the integration of wellbeing in the delivery of our teaching, research, work activities and practices, a positive environment will be created to promote employee engagement, performance, and achievement. Working in partnership across all areas of the University who have a common interest in promoting a culture of wellbeing, is key to the success of this statement.

The University's goal is to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees and to prevent work associated ill health. This goal encompasses the physical, mental, and social health of our employees and recognises an employees' personal development and work within the University contribute to their overall wellbeing.

To deliver on this goal, the University commits to establishing an **action plan** which consolidates our existing commitments and identifies additional initiatives that may be considered.

This statement aims to bring together the initiatives already in place within the University that support and maximise the health and wellbeing of our employees and document how we will improve the wellbeing of our workplace.

Context

The amount of time individuals spend at work emphasises the importance of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace. Studies have shown there is a relationship between the psychological wellbeing of employees and positive organisational outcomes, such as reduced levels of sickness absence as well as enhanced productivity and increased morale.

This wellbeing statement is informed by related national strategies and guidance, as well as several legal requirements, including the employer's duty of care.

The wellbeing statement is designed to ensure that:

- We communicate clear leadership and management in relation to employee wellbeing

- There will be optimal engagement in initiatives by all employees

- We make best use of the resources available to optimise the delivery of the actions

- Actions lead to long-term, sustainable improvements in the health and wellbeing of the Community

- Awareness will be created in relation to the importance of promoting and supporting wellbeing in the workplace

- We will aim to reduce, and where possible eliminate, organisational risk factors in relation to workplace wellbeing (e.g., bullying, stress, discrimination, or harassment)

- We will design and provide appropriate workplace wellbeing initiatives.

Statement of Commitment

The University commits to an integrated approach to employee wellbeing that creates:

- A sense of belonging
- An environment and culture based on shared values and trust
- An environment where employee wellbeing is integrated into day-to-day practices
- An environment that recognises skills and encourages personal development
- A positive workplace wellbeing in a safe, non-judgemental, supportive, and educational manner
- The provision of wellbeing supports
- An environment where employees will develop and manage their own wellbeing
- Organisational systems that impact positively on workplace wellbeing

To deliver on these commitments we will bring together those with a role to play in relation to the health and wellbeing of the community to:

- Oversee the implementation of the wellbeing statement
- Raise awareness of current initiatives and their connection to health and wellbeing
- Develop an action plan
- Help develop specific measures designed to monitor the progress and success of the wellbeing action plan
- Consider how initiatives, required in response to the identified outcomes, might be developed and funded
- Provide an annual report identifying outcome measures that will allow us to report on progress, determine success and direct future initiatives.

Existing Workplace Wellbeing Activities and Initiatives

The University is committed to providing workplace wellbeing initiatives to people at all levels in the University. This includes providing an opportunity for employees to provide feedback and contribute to the design and deployment of workplace wellbeing initiatives. This process is facilitated through a number of forums across the University and sector.

Information from different sources informs the supports provided by the University, such as,

- High level feedback from the Employee Assistance Programme on topics people attend counselling for, which can inform the types of initiatives and activities that are planned.
- Feedback from employee groups and networks across the University for example, the Parent and Carers and Enable networks.
- Regular consultation with Heads of Department, line managers, employees, and occasional staff across the University.
- Reviewing the supports other Higher Education Institutions provide in this area that may be suitable for Maynooth University.

Workplace wellbeing will be included in our strategic and operational Learning & Development plans, and further supports will be provided on specific issues to groups as needs are identified. These plans are communicated via All Staff emails, the University website and through Human Resources updates.

Health Promotion

Human Resources provide a wide range of employee wellbeing seminars and initiatives, which are communicated University wide on a regular basis.

Employee Wellbeing Month

A series of live webinars and workshops, which cover a range of wellbeing themes to support and promote workplace wellbeing for all employees and occasional staff during a dedicated month each year.

See Change Workplace Pledge

See Change is Ireland's organisation dedicated to ending mental health stigma. Their work is informed by people with lived experiences of mental health difficulties, who are best placed to give insight into mental health stigma.

Maynooth University has signed up to the [See Change Workplace Pledge](#) as part of our on-going commitment to support awareness of Mental Health. The University will continue to renew its commitment to this initiative. See Change has developed a six-step pledge programme to help workplaces create an open culture around workplace wellbeing and play a role in challenging stigma. The six steps consist of the following activities:

- Workshops for Head of Departments or their Nominee
- Continuous policy review and implementation
- Workplace Wellbeing Supports
- Workplace Wellbeing Promotion
- Engaging Stakeholders
- Becoming an official Sea Change workplace by signing the Workplace Pledge. As part of the pledge there is a commitment to ensure that all employees know where and how to access wellbeing information, advice, and supports.

Employee Assistance Programme

The Inspire Workplace Services is a support programme provided by Maynooth University for employees.

Inspire Workplace Services provides the following services:

- 24/7/365 Helpline Support
- Immediate Telephone Support
- Up to 6 sessions of counselling, as appropriate
- Financial & Legal Information
- Consumer/Citizens Information
- Management Support via Helpline
- Online Support Hub, with guides, resource library and online self-help courses

Work-Life Balance

There are several policies to support employees in the area of work life balance.

- Annual Leave
- Career Break
- Carers Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Force Majeure Leave
- Maternity Leave
- Parental Leave
- Sabbatical Leave
- Sick Leave
- Shorter Working Year

Employee Wellbeing Webpage

The Human Resources website provides a section which details wellbeing supports available to employees including guides, seminars and national supports.

Employee Networks

The Office of the Vice-President of Equality & Diversity provide several supports including widening participation and employee networks.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion run an Enable Staff Network. Membership is open to all employees with disabilities (including long-term and chronic illnesses and conditions) and people interested in creating a disability friendly Maynooth University. Other networks include LGBTQIA+ and Parents and Carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Adopting an organisational approach to workplace wellbeing carries distinct responsibilities at every level within the University. Everyone has a responsibility for fostering workplace wellbeing.

University Executive

The University Executive is responsible for:

- Creating a safe and healthy environment for all employees at work
- Implementing safe systems of work to safeguard employees' health and wellbeing
- Being accountable for the University's health, behaviour, and performance

Human Resources

Human Resources have a lead role to play in steering the health and wellbeing agenda in the University. The role of Human Resources will be to ensure that:

- An Employee Wellbeing Action Plan is developed
- The benefits of a healthy workplace will be communicated to those that are typically responsible for implementing people management and wellbeing policies
- Practical guidance is provided to all areas of the University to ensure that policies and practices are implemented consistently and with compassion
- Wellbeing supports, such as seminars and guides are available and accessible for all employees.

Heads of Department

Heads of Department are crucial role models who can promote and encourage others to engage with health and wellbeing interventions. Heads of Department or their Nominee have the authority and influence to ensure that wellbeing is a strategic priority and that it is embedded in the day-to-day operations of their department.

The Head of Department will:

- Recognise work stress amongst employees and offer necessary support/control measures
- Engage with colleagues to promote and enhance employee health and wellbeing
- Support employees through a changing and challenging economic climate
- Create a culture where problems arise that they are quickly identified, and a solution considered against an individual's needs
- Implement and monitor workload in relation to health and work

- Undertake return to work meeting following illness/absence from work.

All measures should be taken in consultation with the person and should be reasonable for the University.

Employees

The University will encourage everyone's' involvement in wellbeing initiatives by communicating how to access the support and benefits available. In turn, employees will:

- Provide feedback on the supports so the University can learn how to shape existing initiatives and plan new ones
- Engage with the University to work together to enhance employee wellbeing
- Report stress and ill health to the University as early as possible
- Respond to training and development opportunities
- Contact support agencies where their wellbeing is challenged

How will we measure our success?

- Introduce new wellbeing initiatives
- Review staff survey analysis as an indicator of organisational wellbeing
- Review relevant data, including stress, support services referrals year-on-year
- Monitor the number of work absences due to ill health
- Monitor exit interview feedback
- Introduce blended\remote working arrangements

Further Information

- HR website
- Inspire Workplace Support Services
- Employee Wellbeing information.
- Covid-19
- Health & Safety Policy Statement
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Networks

Human Resources Department
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