

UTS Student Mental Health Strategy

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UTS vision/values

Our vision is to be a leading public university of technology recognised for our global impact.

Fundamental to this vision is our commitment to social justice and accessibility

UTS is, and always will be, a diverse and inclusive university, committed to social justice and the economic, social, and cultural prosperity of our community. We aim to ensure a just and equitable society.

We are a university for all, ensuring everyone who desires and merits a place at UTS is enabled to do so. We support individuals and communities to achieve their full potential. Our students will join a community that values diversity of thought, critical thinking, and technical mastery.

This longstanding commitment extends beyond our UTS community to deliver positive social change to our local, national, and global community.

UTS vision/values for mental health

Our commitment to putting safety first for all students and staff, means creating a safe and respectful environment for all of us to work, study and live in. The emotional safety and wellbeing of our community is at the core of this commitment and ensuring the wellbeing of self and others is part of every role across UTS

Moreover, at UTS we recognise the complex and interconnected nature of mental health with other domains of health and wellbeing. UTS recognises that in order to improve the mental health of our community we also need to improve:

- social health through enabling connectedness and respectful relationships.
- educational health through creating safe and inspiring learning environments, resources, and systems
- physical health through enabling adequate rest, good nutrition, and regular movement.
- spiritual health through enabling individuals to develop meaning in their lives.
- environmental health through ensuring access to environments and services that facilitate wellbeing for humans and the planet and the dismantling of any systems, processes or structures that create unnecessary stress or anxiety, or influence the options and decisions that individuals make that lead to ill-health and inequity.

This mental health strategy will outline our commitment to creating a community and environment that contributes to strengthening and supporting the mental health of all of us.

The principles outlined and committed to here will be implemented with the support of an implementation plan detailing the actions and accountabilities to achieve these principles.



Australian Mental Health Framework

We have aligned our strategy with the Australian University Mental Health Framework. This framework is premised on the vision “Mentally healthy universities supporting student mental health and wellbeing in collaboration with the mental health sector.” This alignment will enable us to share expertise and experiences, consolidate understanding and practice, and facilitate an aligned and connected approach to taking action with other Australian Universities.

Australian Mental Health Framework principles

1. The student experience is enhanced through mental health and wellbeing approaches that are informed by students’ needs, perspectives, and the reality of their experiences.
2. All members of the university community contribute to learning environments that enhance student mental health and wellbeing.
3. Mentally healthy university communities encourage participation; foster a diverse, inclusive environment; promote connectedness; and support academic and personal achievement.
4. The response to mental health and wellbeing is strengthened through collaboration and coordinated actions.
5. Students are able to access appropriate, effective, timely services and supports to assist with their mental health and wellbeing needs.
6. Continuous improvement and innovation is informed by evidence and helps build an understanding of what works for student mental health and wellbeing.

Our commitment

1. In partnership with students, develop engaging curricula, learning experiences and assessment tools that are flexible, facilitate collaboration, empower, and excite the love of learning of our students.
2. In partnership with students and multiple university stakeholders, develop physical, social, and online environments that are responsive to students’ needs and expectations and flexible in their ongoing evolution to meet those changing needs and expectations.
3. In partnership with students, evaluate and improve the wellbeing of our community and the alignment of university leadership, policy and resources with the needs and expectations of students. Ensure inclusivity in the learning, community service and social world of university.
4. In partnership with students, create programs of continual improvement incorporating and valuing the diverse voices across the UTS community.
5. In partnership with students, ensure capacity building, mental health, academic support, and ongoing wellness services are appropriately resourced and made available to UTS students in ways which are accessible and inclusive.

6. In partnership with students, undertake evidence-based evaluation of our policies, activities, services, and interventions, continually modifying our position to best meet the needs and expectations of our students.

Enablers

1. Policies and processes will be developed, reviewed, and updated in line with research, leading practice and student expectations and needs.
2. Adequate resourcing and support will be provided to faculties and work areas to ensure they are able to continue to strive towards leading practice in the development, facilitation, evaluation and delivery of processes, services, learning opportunities, communities and environments that support mental wellbeing.
3. Professional development and capacity building opportunities will be made available in safe and sustainable ways to staff and students to ensure the ongoing commitment to, and knowledge and skills in creating and maintaining a safe environment that enhances the mental wellbeing of the UTS community.

Accountability

Accountability for the implementation of the UTS Mental Health Strategy and Implementation plan will sit with the UTS Provost and Senior Vice President.