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| Policy Document Approver | Council |
| Responsible Body/Person | Council |
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| Superseded documents | None (but note pre-existing Related Documents) |
| Related documents | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support Policy Disability and Accessible Education Charter Code of Conduct Policy Critical Incident Policy Orientation Program Rules Grievance Resolution Policy - Students Risk Management Policy Risk Management Procedure Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Procedure Staff Grievance Resolution Policy (AUT Staff) Whistleblower Policy Workplace, Health and Safety Policy |
| Related HE Standards | 2.3 (esp. 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.3.5), 2.2.1, 2.4, 5.3.5, 6.1 (esp. 6.1.4), 6.2 (esp. 6.2.1), 7.2 and 7.3.3 |

If you or someone else requires help in an emergency, contact 000.

If you or someone else needs immediate support these national services are available:

- Lifeline (Ph: 13 11 14) – 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention
- Beyondblue (Ph: 1300 224 636) – Mental health support
- Suicide Call Back Service (Ph: 1300 659 467) – 24-hour crisis support and counselling for people affected by suicide
- 13Yarn (Ph: 13 92 76) – 24-hour crisis support run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- National Alcohol & Other Drug Hotline (Ph: 1800 250 015)
- National Debt Helpline (Ph: 1800 007 007) – free and confidential financial counselling
- Headspace (Ph: 1800 650 890) – online support and counselling for people aged 12-25
- 1800RESPECT (Ph: 1800 737 732) – 24-hour support for sexual assault and domestic violence
- Kids Helpline (Ph: 1800 55 1800) – 24-hour crisis support for people aged 5-25
- Mensline (Ph: 1300 78 99 78) – 24-hour counselling service for men

You can also find information about how to access support on the AUT website here:

<https://www.aut.edu.au/student-support-services/>



1. PURPOSE

The Policy and its related policies, procedures and systems address a broad range of issues affecting the wellbeing, welfare and safety of students, staff, officers and volunteers of the Australian University of Theology (AUT) and its Affiliated Colleges. The AUT and its Affiliated Colleges promote and foster safe and supportive learning environments through timely access to student support services and addressing issues of wellbeing and safety collaboratively, proactively and responsibly.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#). The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to all **students, staff, officers and volunteers**, with a particular focus on student wellbeing.
- 3.2. Students, staff, officers and volunteers are required to maintain standards of behaviour set by the AUT and **Affiliated Colleges** as a condition of enrolment, employment or engagement.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1. The AUT affirms that all people are created in the image of God with sanctity and dignity (Gen 1:26-28) and therefore respect is due to every person (1 Peter 2:17).
- 4.2. The AUT seeks to provide for its students, staff, officers and volunteers a fair and safe academic environment free from bullying, discrimination and harassment, with resources and services which support wellbeing and advance academic flourishing.
- 4.3. The AUT considers all forms of bullying and harassment unacceptable and will not tolerate them under any circumstances.
- 4.4. The AUT promotes and fosters safe learning environments for students at Affiliated Colleges by using reasonable endeavours, working in conjunction with Affiliated Colleges, including:
 - raising awareness about the educational, social, health, cultural, and other issues affecting wellbeing and safety, including but not limited to the issues described at 5.1 to 5.10 of this Policy;
 - encouraging students to take appropriate responsibility for their own wellbeing, developing resilience and seeking wellbeing support through the **resources**, referrals and services offered by the AUT and Affiliated Colleges;
 - encouraging students to seek out safe and appropriate ways to encourage and support others in their learning community to develop resilience and seek



support;

- providing access to appropriate, effective and timely information and services for wellbeing support for students affected by a **critical incident** and/or the identified issues described at 5.1 to 5.10 of this policy;
- encouraging Affiliated Colleges that provide residential facilities to foster a safe context for students and staff at these facilities;
- taking appropriate action in relation to student wellbeing and safety through systems and processes designed to foster a safe learning environment, mitigate **risk**, respond to incidents and prevent recurrences; and
- continually improving the AUT and Affiliated Colleges' approach to wellbeing and safety through good practice, consultation, feedback, current relevant **research** and internal and external review.

4.5. Specific support for individual students is determined by the nature of the incident, issue or support required.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1. Mental Health and Wellbeing: Increasing rates of mental health issues among students, often caused by stress, pressure and isolation, are a prime concern. The AUT and Affiliated Colleges provide access to education, resources, workshops and support systems to promote mental health and wellbeing. Resources include:

- [Centre for Theology and Psychology – Melbourne School of Theology](#)
- [Graduate Certificate of Pastoral Care for Mental Health](#)
- [Living Wholeness Institute – Brisbane School of Theology](#)
- [The Mental Health and Pastoral Care Institute – Mary Andrews College](#)
- [Universities Australia and Headspace Real Talk Framework](#)

5.2. Physical Safety includes ensuring a safe campus environment, and addressing issues such as harassment, bullying and physical violence.

5.2.1 The AUT's [Workplace, Health and Safety Policy](#) establishes the provision of physically safe learning environments.

5.2.2 The AUT's [Critical Incident Policy](#) sets out the roles, responsibilities and courses of action in responding to a critical incident.

5.2.3 Bullying is linked to poor academic performance and poor mental health. The AUT and Affiliated Colleges provide access to information to raise awareness about and prevent bullying, hazing, discrimination and harassment, and access to support systems. Resources include:



- [Preventing and responding to Bullying – Western Sydney University](#)
 - [Reachout’s bullying information and support](#)
 - [Comcare’s Workplace Bullying resources](#)
 - [Safe Work Australia’s Guide for Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying](#)
- 5.3. Online Safety: The AUT and Affiliated Colleges will: (i) provide information about and support systems for issues of online safety and wellbeing; (ii) build awareness of online safety risks; and (iii) prevent, prepare for and respond to online safety incidents; through resources such as:
- [Universities Australia and eSafety’s Toolkit for Universities](#)
 - [Charles Sturt University’s Five Steps to Protect Your Personal Information](#)
 - [eSafety Guide](#)
 - [Reachout’s cyberbullying resources and support](#)
- 5.4. **Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH):** The AUT and Affiliated Colleges have a stand-alone [Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Procedure](#), undergirding the provision of support to those affected by SASH and fostering a culture of respect and SASH prevention.
- 5.5. Academic Stress: High-pressure academic environments can lead to burnout and mental health issues. The AUT and Affiliated Colleges recognise that effective time management is associated with greater academic performance and lower levels of anxiety in students. The AUT promotes and encourages balanced study habits, time management skills and stress management through orientation programs, academic and study skills units, and resources such as:
- [Australian National University’s free online study skills program](#)
 - [Murdoch University’s Ten tips to balance study, work and family life](#)
 - [Deakin University’s Stress, anxiety and time management resources](#)
 - [The University of Melbourne’s Ten tips to manage time and tasks](#)
- 5.5.1 The AUT and Affiliated Colleges recognise that critical incidents, such as SASH, will impact upon academic stress and achievement. Academic support, reasonable adjustments and/or other interventions may be required to best support a student’s overall wellbeing.



- 5.6. Financial Challenges: Many students, including international students, face financial issues which can lead to stress and impact their academic performance. Providing resources for financial advice, information about scholarships, and support for students who are financially struggling are some of the services the AUT and Affiliated Colleges offer, including:
- [Moneysmart](#) is a government-run organisation providing information about financial literacy and services including financial counselling and crisis support.
 - [Moneyminded](#) has online resources to create a budget, reduce debt and/or improve savings.
 - [Anglicare](#) provides emergency food assistance, Community Pantries, no-interest loan schemes, bill assistance, help with rent and bond, financial counselling, as well as other help with housing, mental health, families and relationships.
 - [The Salvation Army's Moneycare](#) service has free resources for financial wellbeing including a three-week course, videos and top tips, as well as urgent financial assistance.
- 5.7. Addiction and Substance Abuse: Drug and alcohol misuse, as well as issues of various kinds of addiction, can be significant problems in student populations. The AUT and Affiliated Colleges provide access to resources for substance abuse prevention, education and recovery, including:
- [Alcohol and Drug Counselling Online's support service](#)
 - [Reachout's addiction resources and support](#)
 - [National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre's research and resources](#)
 - [Alcohol and Drug Foundation's \(ADF\) Drug Information Directory](#)
- 5.7.1 Research indicates alcohol is a contributing factor to students' experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- 5.8. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The AUT has a specific policy framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students described at 5.9, and a reference group for students with disability described at 5.10.
- 5.9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: The AUT's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support Policy](#) describes how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported in culturally appropriate ways, in a fair and inclusive academic environment free from racism and discrimination, and with resources and services which promote academic flourishing.
- 5.9.1 The AUT and Affiliated Colleges recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are disproportionately affected by many of the



issues impacting wellbeing described in this policy. As such, the AUT and Affiliated Colleges provide access to culturally relevant services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, such as:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: [The Black Dog Institute](#) has social and emotional wellbeing resources as well as a [directory](#) of other mental health services for First Nations peoples.
- Physical Safety: [NACCHO](#)'s map locates 140 Aboriginal-controlled health organisations nationwide.
- Online Safety: [eSafetyFirstNations](#) is a resources package created in consultation with First Nations peoples to help them stay safe online.
- SASH, Sexual Violence, Domestic and Family Violence: [Wirringa Baiya](#) is the Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre and provides fact sheets on bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic and family violence.
- Academic Stress: The [Oorala Aboriginal Centre](#) at University of New England has study skills videos and other academic skills resources.
- Financial Wellbeing: [First Nations Foundation](#) provides free financial literacy training and further resources.
- Substance Abuse: The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has collaboratively created [Indigenous Resources. Positive Choices](#) provides access to national and state-based aboriginal-controlled alcohol and drug services.

5.10. Students with Disability: The AUT's Disability Reference Group (DRG), reporting to the **Vice-Chancellor**, oversees the University's *Disability and Accessible Education Charter* setting expectations for a fair, inclusive and safe learning environment free from discrimination for students with disability.

- 5.10.1 The AUT and Affiliated Colleges consider Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles where appropriate.
- 5.10.2 Students with disability receive individualised support through Learning Access Plans (LAPs), reasonable adjustments and other supports as needed.
- 5.10.3 Reasonable adjustments are informed by examples from the [Australian Disability Clearing House for Education and Training \(ADCET\)](#).

Governance

5.11. The Vice-Chancellor has established a Student Wellbeing Working Group (SWG) from the DRG with responsibility for the implementation of this policy and strategies to promote wellbeing, mental health and safe learning environments



within the AUT and Affiliated Colleges. The working group monitors the outcomes of strategies and recommends improvements.

- 5.12. The Vice-Chancellor is to appoint as members of the SWG one or more representatives from (i) the **AUT Office**, (ii) staff of Affiliated Colleges and (iii) AUT students. The responsibilities of the working group are established in the *Student Wellbeing Working Group Terms of Reference*. The working group reports to the Council through the Vice-Chancellor.
- 5.13. The Vice-Chancellor will review de-identified summary data for identified equity cohorts and oversee the implementation of responses to any concerns identified in reviewing the data.
- 5.14. Risks to wellbeing and safety, such as WHS, SASH and critical incidents, are regularly assessed and treated appropriately under the **risk management** framework established by the AUT, which is described in the [Risk Management Policy](#) and [Risk Management Procedure](#).
- 5.15. When **courses** and **units** are reviewed there is to be consideration of the integration of material relevant to wellbeing. The **Course Learning Outcomes** and **Unit Learning Outcomes** will guide where such integration is appropriate.

Support services

- 5.16. The AUT will ensure information about appropriate support services is available to students, staff, officers and volunteers on its website. The AUT website will provide referral to appropriate support services to students, staff, officers and volunteers as recommended at 5.1 to 5.10.
- 5.17. The range of support services will, where reasonably possible, include counsellors, be available to students, staff, officers and volunteers from all study locations, include 24-hour support services and be culturally and linguistically appropriate for student cohorts.

Provision of a safe environment

- 5.18. Upon enrolment, employment or engagement, students, staff, officers and volunteers will be given access to this Policy including its links to support resources. For students, staff (other than contractors), officers and volunteers, this normally occurs during induction or orientation.
- 5.19. Resources will be informed by reliable and up-to-date research and **scholarship** and will be reviewed regularly by the SWG. Reviews shall also consider student and staff feedback.
- 5.20. Those to whom this Policy applies are also expected to maintain the confidentiality of information held by them about a disclosed or reported incident and protect the privacy of persons involved in that incident. It is appropriate for persons involved in incidents to speak in confidence with a trusted friend or family member, pastor or counsellor for the sake of personal support and



maintaining wellbeing.

- 5.21. The AUT will take precautionary action where necessary for the provision of a safe environment. Precautionary action is not a form of disciplinary action and will be determined based on the interests and wellbeing of the persons directly involved and others potentially impacted by the circumstances.
- 5.22. The AUT will take disciplinary action against any student, staff, officer or volunteer who bullies or harasses or threatens harm to another person. Procedures for investigating allegations of bullying or harassment will involve procedural fairness and follow equivalent processes to those described for formal reports and investigations in the [SASH Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).

Quality management

- 5.23. The AUT will monitor the compliance of Affiliated Colleges with this Policy and its related systems. AUT may request from Affiliated Colleges evidence of compliance with their obligations under this Policy and related legislation.

Policy review

- 5.24. The Academic Board is responsible for overseeing the satisfactory implementation of this policy, and is responsible for undertaking a review of the policy at least every three years. Proposed amendments to the policy are to be recommended by the Academic Board, another relevant governance body or AUT staff member to the Council for consideration.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

[Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)

[National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)

[Privacy Act 1988](#)

[Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, "Final Report: Executive Summary, Our vision for an inclusive Australia and Recommendations," 2023.

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)

TEQSA Guidance Note: Grievance and Complaint Handling,
<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note->



[grievance-and-complaint-handling](#)

TEQSA Guidance Note: Wellbeing and Safety, <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-wellbeing-and-safety>

TEQSA Material Changes information:, <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/provider-registration/registered-providers/requirements-and-responsibilities-registered-providers/notify-material-change>

Universities Australia, "Safety and Wellbeing," <https://universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/safety-wellbeing/>

Mental Health Australia, <https://www.mentalhealthaustralia.org.au/>

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

7. VERSION HISTORY

| Version | Approved by | Approval Date | Effective Date | Changes made |
|---------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | Council | 13 November 2023 | 13 November 2023 | New policy, incorporating existing policies and procedures. |
| 2 | Vice-Chancellor | June 2025 | June 2025 | New policy format, minor editorial updates to implement university status. |
| 3 | Council | 30 March 2026 | 30 March 2026 | Minor editorial updates to restore links, add first instance of Policy Glossary terms in bold, and clarify that the SWG was formed from the DRG. |

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the AUT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at www.aut.edu.au/documents