



HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher distance education provider offering qualifications on NQF levels five to ten, which are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This policy forms part of the institutional Integrated Quality Management System and details the principles for ensuring that programme offerings adhere to academic standards and empower students to contribute to the transformation of their communities, society, and the economy of the future. This approach is underpinned by the Business- and Community-based Action Learning discourse on the co-creation and distribution of relevant knowledge.

The Da Vinci Institute supports and is committed to the overall health and well-being of its employees and to recognize the importance of employee wellness in the workplace. The Institute has established a framework for promoting wellness for the benefit of employees by identifying both mechanisms and resources that will be used to promote and encourage wellness among employees.

The Institute is situated in Modderfontein, in a tranquil setting, allowing both staff and students access to the outdoors during their tea and lunchbreaks. All classrooms / offices have windows and/or doors to the outside and are well ventilated. Healthy lunch options are offered. Smokers have a designated area on campus, sufficiently distanced for the protection of all employees.

The Institute has obtained the services from a local general practitioner to assist staff with screening services (e.g. cholesterol, blood sugar, height, weight and blood pressure). Brochures are made available to assist staff with information on specific diseases and illnesses.

The Institute has first aid services on site to assist staff and students should they need urgent medical assistance. For more serious matters the staff and students are referred to the local general practitioner.

2. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Staff member	Any employee of the Institution including the Assessors/ Moderators appointed for specific duties
Student	Any individual who at the time of the alleged misconduct is a registered Student of the Institution, registered for any of the learning programmes offered by the Institution

Term	Definition
Safety	The condition of being protected from, or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury

3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is benchmarked against, and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies and operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained. These include:

- A. Relevant Legislation
 - I. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996)
 - II. Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE, 2004)
 - III. Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide (CHE, 2014)
 - IV. Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 as amended Act No. 39 of 2008
 - V. Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995)

Applicable Da Vinci documents

- i. B17 - Human Resources Policy

4. SCOPE

The provisions of the law will supersede the contents of this document. It is the responsibility of all staff members to carefully study and understand this document and ignorance of the document will not be considered a legitimate reason in any dispute, disagreement or discussion pertaining to adherence.

5. PURPOSE

A healthy work environment results in a more productive workforce with less absenteeism, fewer accidents, lower health care demands, and greater overall savings by reducing the incidence of disease and disability. Employees are encouraged to participate in education classes and disease screenings that help identify and reduce health risks before serious health problems occur and/or allow better management of existing conditions.

Through the Employee Wellness Programme (EWP) and partnerships with various organizations and health care providers, employees are encouraged to access classes and screenings to identify and manage health issues and preventable illness.

6. WELLNESS DEFINED

For purposes of this policy, wellness is defined as those activities identified by the Wellness Committee that contribute to the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of employees, including educational awareness, behavioural and lifestyle changes and supportive environments.

7. THE ROLE OF THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The Wellness Committee supports and oversees the implementation of an integrated Employee Wellness Programme. The Wellness Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Executive Team on wellness issues. The Committee may also raise funds to support and promote sanctioned activities.

Membership in the Wellness Committee consists of the Human Resources Manager as the sponsor, a chairperson, one or more co-chair-persons, and includes representatives from within the office. Participation on the committee is voluntary.

The Wellness Committee determines its operating procedures, including the content and frequency of meetings, its decision-making process and priorities.

Employee Wellness programmes should provide clinical, educational, and consultative services of the highest professional standard, concentrating on confidentiality, cost-effectiveness, and professional excellence, and should furthermore include:

- 7.1 The creation of a conducive environment that addresses relevant legislation, core values, infrastructure, and capacity building to ensure transfer of skills and a sustainable, dynamic service delivery environment.
- 7.2 Information management and control with respect to absenteeism, sick leave, injuries on duty, staff turnover, medical expenses, and risk management.
- 7.3 Managed Wellness care that is reflective of evidence-based practice, Risk management, Outcomes management and Impact analysis.
- 7.4 To provide integrated preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative wellness services to all employees, guided by the Employee Wellness policy.
- 7.5 To maintain high productivity through the empowerment of employees and employer towards the holistic management of employees' health and wellness needs.

- 7.6 To integrate the programmes into the Human Resources policies, procedures and practices of the organization, so as to ensure non-discriminatory practices, and to minimize the impact of ill-health/injury on both the employer and the employee.

The Employee Wellness Programmes shall, at least, encompass the following key functional areas:

- a. Occupational Health, Safety and Risk
- b. Health management
- c. Wellness Management.

8. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Occupational Health and Safety includes but is not limited to:

- 8.1 Occupational Safety: Protection of the workforce from occupational injury, diseases, stressors, and hazards through proactive measures of risk reduction
- 8.2 Occupational Hygiene: Involves the recognition, evaluation, and control of physical, ergonomic, psychological, and biological factors in the workplace which may affect the wellness of employees
- 8.3 Environmental Management: Refers to environmental conservation such as waste management, environmental impact assessment use and control of hazardous materials inside and outside the workplace
- 8.4 Disaster Management: Preventing, planning for, and managing disasters through disaster preparedness, rapid response, recovery and rehabilitation, so as to minimize loss of life, injury, and damage to property.

9. HEALTH MANAGEMENT

This refers to preventive and promotive health care, aimed at all non-communicable, communicable, and chronic diseases, including HIV & AIDS, both within and, with certain limitations, outside of the workplace. It involves a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to managing diseases effectively, and includes health risk profiling, disease prevention and management protocols, and rehabilitative activities. The Employee Wellness Programme can play a pivotal role in conducting health promotion activities, early identification of wellness problems, referral to inside or outside wellness services, support to employees affected by ill-health, facilitating adherence to protocols, and liaison within the department to ease the employee's rehabilitation.

10. WELLNESS MANAGEMENT

This encompasses human wellness, guided by risk assessment, and promoting individual and organizational wellness. The components of wellness management facilitate fulfilment of employees' needs, such as:

10.1 Physical needs:

To promote a culture where physical exercise/activity is encouraged and embraced

10.2 Spiritual needs:

To promote set guiding beliefs, principles or values that help give direction to life e.g. Intra-personal skills, value clarification, religious activities, etc.

10.3 Emotional needs:

To promote emotional intelligence, self-esteem, optimism, sense of coherence, and resilience of employees, e.g. fear management skills, stress management, trauma counselling, critical incident management, etc.

10.4 Social needs:

To promote the ability of employees to interact successfully and to live up to the expectations and demands of personal roles, by learning good inter-personal communication and financial skills, creating support networks with colleagues, friends and family, and showing respect for others and self

10.5 Physiological needs:

To promote healthy behaviours, awareness, and behavioural regulation towards healthy life styles e.g. fitness, nutrition, weight control, work-based sport activities, healthy cooking methods etc.

10.6 Intellectual needs:

To promote the ability to make sound decisions, to think critically, to be open to new ideas, to master new skills, to be creative and curious. e.g. role clarity, participation in decision-making surrounding their immediate job content and procedures, growth opportunities, etc.

10.7 Types of Programmes within the Employee Wellness Programme:

10.7.1 Availability of flexitime work schedules

10.7.2 No smoking policy

10.7.3 Drug use policy and testing

10.7.4 The use of protective/safety equipment

10.7.5 Sexual harassment policy and non-discrimination policy

10.7.6 Family leave initiatives

Consistent and frequent awards and recognition of employee work efforts (The Purple Cow)

10.7.7 Promoting wellness programs through the Company's website and Employee Wellness Days

10.7.9 Encouraging the inclusion of healthy food options at meetings and special events

10.7.8 Supporting the availability of healthy food options in vending machines and cafeterias operating at the workplace

- 10.7.11 Encouraging employees to utilize breaks for walking, stretching or other physical activity
- 10.7.12 Providing educational resources/classes that promote physical exercise.

11. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1 The Employer

With respect to Employee Wellness, the employer has the responsibility of ensuring that:

- 11.1.1 A healthy and safe environment that is conducive for optimum productivity / service delivery is created and maintained in the workplace
- 11.1.2 The basic wellness services are made accessible to employees, and are conducted in an ethical manner
- 11.1.3 The working environment and working conditions of employees are conducive to wellness
- 11.1.4 Employees' rights to autonomy, sensitivity, timeous intervention, equality, openness and transparency and confidentiality are protected
- 11.1.5 Employees are informed of conditions in the workplace that may be harmful to their health and wellness
- 11.1.6 Employees are not arbitrarily and unfairly discriminated against.

11.1 The Employees

Employees have the right to expect that:

- 11.2.1 The environment in which they work is healthy and safe
- 11.2.2 The basic wellness services will be made accessible to them, conducted in an ethical manner
- 11.2.3 Their working environment and working conditions will be conducive to wellness
- 11.2.4 Their rights to confidentiality, autonomy, sensitivity, timeous intervention, equality, openness and transparency will be protected
- 11.2.5 They will not be arbitrarily and unfairly discriminated against
- 11.2.6 Their privacy is maintained and respected.

Employees have the responsibility to:

- 11.2.7 Conduct their work in a manner that advances sustainable, high-quality service delivery, and that protects their health and wellness
- 11.2.8 Report and/or take action to correct conditions in the workplace that may be harmful to their own health and wellness and that of other employees
- 11.2.9 Inform themselves of ways in which they can protect their health and wellness, both within and outside the workplace
- 11.2.10 Take initiatives to seek professional intervention if necessary.

11.3 The Line Manager

- 11.3.1 Communicate and maintain links with the employee wellness committee
- 11.3.2 Provide feedback to employees about wellness status of the department
- 11.3.3 Ensure that staff is sufficiently trained in order to be able to discharge their duties
- 11.3.4 Create meaningful growth and developmental opportunities for staff
- 11.3.5 Manage job demands (monitor workloads) in order to prevent work overload
- 11.3.6 Create an environment that is conducive to the referral of employees, namely, that referral is a corrective measure and not a punitive measure
- 11.3.7 Encourage employee participation in employee wellness programmes
- 11.3.8 Support employees in times of need
- 11.3.9 Provide necessary support and encourage all employee wellness initiatives.

11.4 Human Resources

- 11.4.1 Provide for a human resource strategy and operational plan that includes employee health and wellness
- 11.4.2 Ensure appropriate reporting on the employee health and wellness policy
- 11.4.3 Facilitate training requirements
- 11.4.4 Provide continuous support in aspects of employees
- 11.4.5 Monitor the effectiveness of employee wellness interventions
- 11.4.6 Facilitate continuous support to managers and employees in aspects of employee and wellness
- 11.4.7 Promote the employee wellness programme.

11.5 Confidentiality

Confidential information generally pertains to private personal information and may include an employee's financial and marital circumstances, criminal record or **health status**, but not to the exclusion of other types of information. The constitution of the Republic guarantees every person's right to privacy. Its application in the workplace therefore determines that an employer may not disclose an employee's confidential information to the requesting party.

This right, however, may be limited by legislation (e.g. section 16 of the Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995 and Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000) and or court orders that warrant the disclosure of information. The collection and maintenance of confidential information should be kept securely and only those entitled to officially engage therewith may be allowed controlled access, as prescribed by the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.

12. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Regular review and amendment of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional policies and regulatory requirements. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Human Resource Manager.