



Deakin Student Health and Wellbeing Framework



deakin.edu.au

Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B

► Health promoting university

Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the wellbeing of people, places and the planet.

They acknowledge whole-of-campus participation, enable collaborative partnerships -locally to globally, and show clear political commitment to address the social determinants of health and wellbeing in a just, connected and thriving world.¹

Contents

- 2 Health promoting university
- 3 Our commitment
- 4 Vision, Purpose, Principles
- 5 Objectives, Pillars
- 6 Student health & wellbeing framework
- 9 First Nations lens
- 10 Governance, implementation & measurement
- 12 Health continuum support pathways
- 13 Ongoing activities
- 14 References

1. Okanagan Charter. (2015). Okanagan Charter: An international charter for health promoting universities and colleges.

► Our commitment

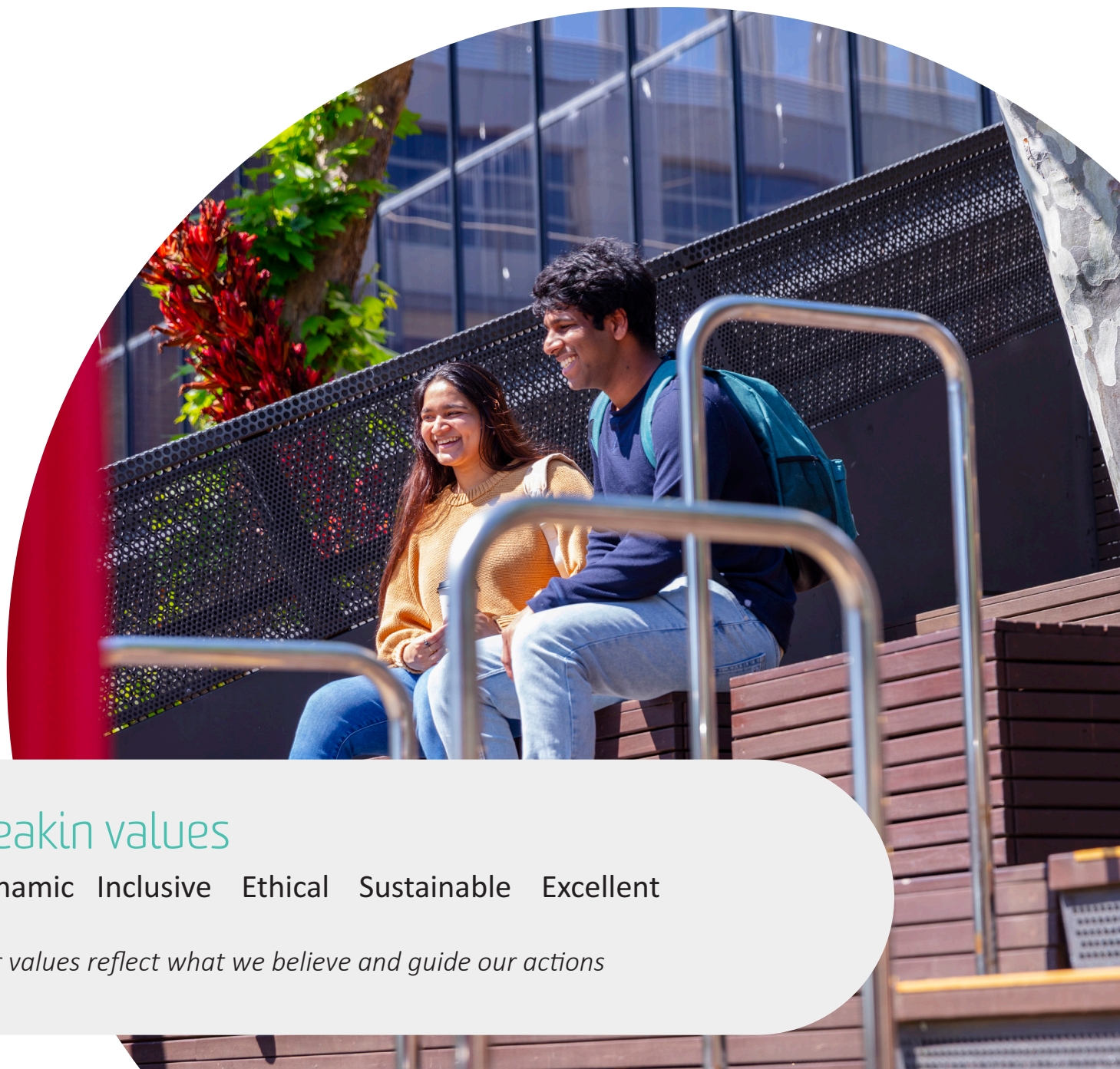
Deakin has a long-standing commitment to supporting the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of our students, and enabling them to flourish as healthy, included and connected individuals.

Since 2019, the university's Student Health Promotion Plan and Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, have guided high quality practices and driven significant progress in supporting student health and wellbeing, achieved through close collaboration with students, staff, researchers, and external partners.

As a founding signatory to the Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities in 2015 and more recently supporting the 2025 Limerick Framework for Action, Deakin is strengthening their commitment towards a healthy campus with an expanded focus on prevention, early intervention, and response.

The Framework reflects Deakin's ongoing compliance with legislative obligations and is informed by key national, state and institutional priorities, including:

- legal and regulatory requirements for student wellbeing and safety (TEQSA).
- sector recommendations from the Universities Accord Final Report.
- institutional strategic plans and Student Wellbeing, Safety, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion quality review recommendations.
- health and wellbeing strategic agendas.



Deakin values

Dynamic Inclusive Ethical Sustainable Excellent

Our values reflect what we believe and guide our actions

► Vision

To foster a connected and inclusive university environment that empowers students to thrive, through research informed, student-centred and coordinated health and wellbeing approaches.



Purpose

To lead integrated student centered, health and wellbeing programs, services and innovation spanning every stage of the health continuum – from prevention and early intervention to treatment and response - improving health and wellbeing outcomes and supporting students to thrive, academically, personally and socially.

Principles

The development and delivery of student health and wellbeing policies, programs and services will be data informed and involve a comprehensive, whole of university approach guided by the following principles:

Promote holistic wellbeing

Address all dimensions of wellbeing - physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social - in a unified and inclusive approach.

Create equitable, inclusive and supportive environments

Ensure campus and digital spaces enable connection, inclusion, safety and wellbeing.

Support personal development

Enable students to lead their own health and wellbeing by building their self-knowledge, skills and resilience.

Ensure accessible and sustainable services

Ensure health and wellbeing services are accessible, inclusive, student-centered, and responsive to evolving needs.

Strengthen community partnerships and collaboration

Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with student and staff stakeholders as well as external networks.



‘The Student Health and Wellbeing Framework is a demonstration of Deakin’s strong commitment to student wellbeing, strengthening prevention, improving support pathways and empowering students to prioritise their health. The framework is an enabler for the creation of a university environment where every student can thrive.’

Rebecca Bone

Executive Director, Student Services

Objectives

The framework supports student health and wellbeing across the health continuum and includes:

Prevention

To help students stay well by preventing problems before they start - through education, early supports, and environments that make healthy choices easier.

Early intervention

To identify and respond early to emerging health and wellbeing concerns through timely, coordinated, and evidence-informed supports that prevent escalation and promote sustained wellbeing.

Response

To provide timely, coordinated, and person-centred responses that ensure students experiencing health or wellbeing challenges receive appropriate care, support, and pathways to recovery.

See page 12 for Deakin's approach to the support across the Health Continuum.

At Deakin we recognise that promoting and protecting student health and wellbeing is essential to student success.

Pillars

Healthy people and environments

Creating the conditions - physical, social and cultural - that enable students to make positive choices, build healthy habits and thrive throughout their university journey.

Themes

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Sexual health and wellbeing
- Equitable healthy eating
- Physical health and active living
- Positive choices and responsible behaviours
- Personal safety

Healthy engagement

Emphasises active participation from students, stakeholders and partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives, strengthening shared ownership and empowerment.

Themes

- Leadership
- Funding & resources
- Collaboration & partnerships

Healthy systems

Embeds wellbeing in policies, leadership, governance and planning.

Themes

- Monitoring & Intelligence
- Governance
- Policies, compliance

Student health and wellbeing framework

'Health promoting universities enhance the success of institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, wellbeing, equity and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play and love on our campuses.'¹

Theme 1: Mental health and wellbeing

Work collaboratively to reduce risks and strengthen support for student mental health and wellbeing, building capacity for help-seeking and ensuring services deliver a coordinated and connected response.

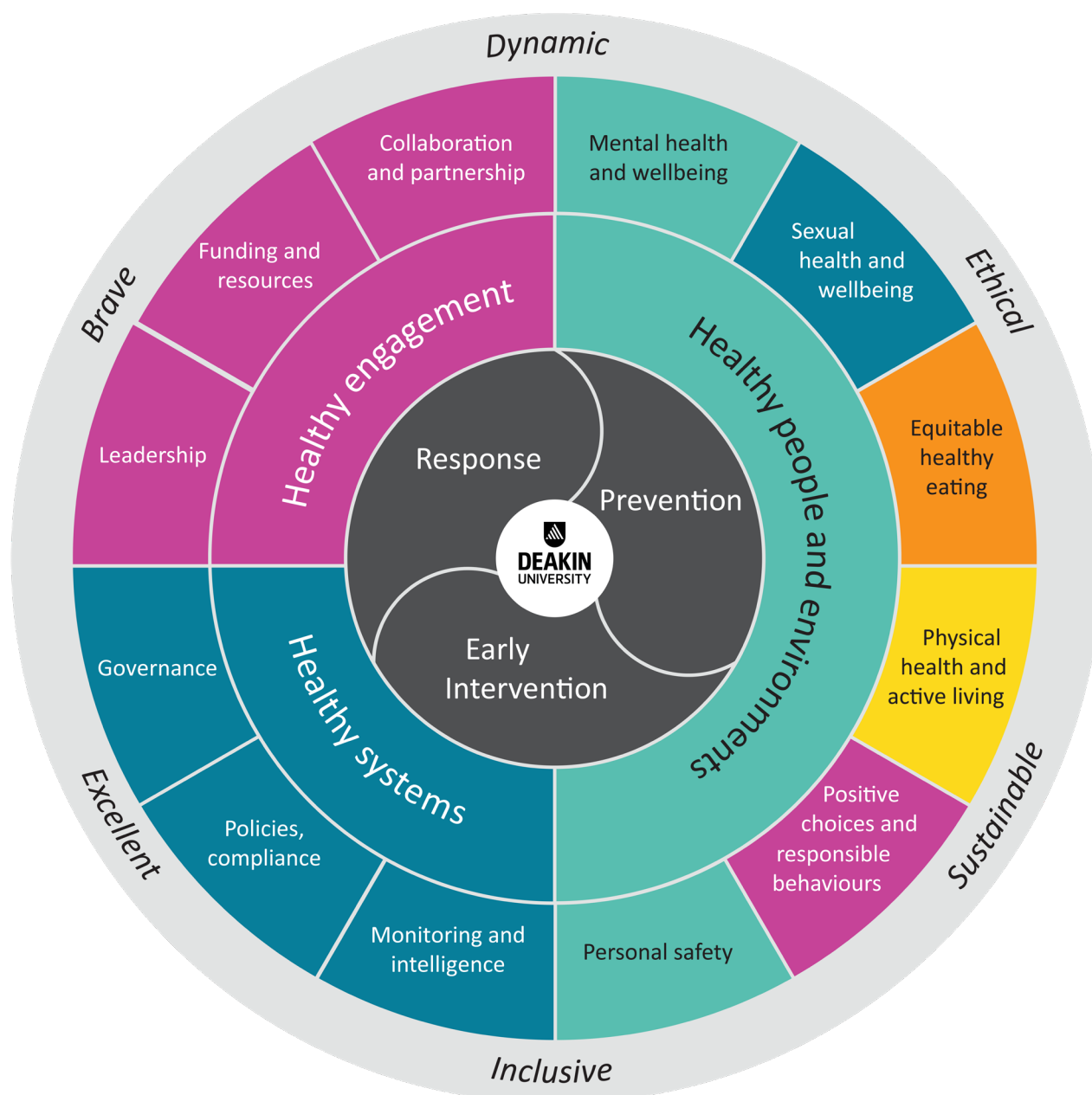
ACTION	ACTIVITIES
Promote positive student mental health and wellbeing and reduce stigma	- Mental health promotion, awareness, campaigns and activations - Connection and belonging activities - Wellbeing information, communication, and mental health resources
Build the knowledge and capacity of students and staff to recognise mental health signs and symptoms and seek support	- Students Helping Students, peer and ambassador programs, mentoring - Support for neurodiverse students - Mental health training and capacity building
Facilitate access to and promote the use of inclusive and culturally appropriate self-assessment and self-help tools and resources	- Accessible, inclusive and culturally informed, digital wellbeing, platforms and resources - Resource review including feedback loops with student partners and subject matters experts
Provide coordinated and integrated response to students experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges.	Access to internal and external, inclusive mental health support services

Theme 2: Sexual health and wellbeing

Promote good sexual and reproductive health by fostering safe sex practices, positive relationships and inclusive, accessible care through prevention, early intervention and response initiatives.

ACTION	ACTIVITIES
Promote safe sex practices and increase awareness of contraception and STI prevention	- Sexual health promotion and awareness campaigns - Free and discreet access to sexual health products - Sexual health information and resources
Prevent sexually transmitted infections and health related complications through sexual health advice and vaccination	Facilitating access to STI vaccination
Access to timely, confidential and non-judgemental sexual health care and advice	STI screening and testing, diagnosis, treatment and contraceptive and pregnancy management and advice
Build and maintain partnerships with external agencies to support access to specialist sexual health and wellbeing program and services.	- Staff training and updated referral pathway information - Sexual Health Outreach Services

1. Okanagan Charter. (2015). Okanagan Charter: An international charter for health promoting universities and colleges.



Theme 3: Equitable healthy eating

Ensure availability and accessibility to quality, affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and drink, supported by health-promoting service delivery that links students to healthy living initiatives, resources and referrals.

ACTION	ACTIVITIES
Promote healthy eating and food knowledge and skills	- Healthy eating awareness and education campaigns - Cooking and nutrition literacy activities
Promote availability and access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food	- Food security initiatives - Campus hospitality and food retail environment
Provide access to programs and services that support early identification and response to nutritional and healthy eating concerns	- Early intervention initiatives that address factors of negative self-perception - Screening, diagnosis and management of dietary, disordered eating and nutritional issues

Theme 4: Physical health and active living

Promote physical health and activity through accessible leisure, sport and recreation, supported by health promoting service delivery including screening, early intervention and referral to healthy living programs, resources and community supports.

ACTION	ACTIVITIES
Promote participation in recreational exercise, physical activity and active travel	- Physical activity and leisure time promotion, awareness and education campaigns - Walking and cycling initiatives
Reduce barriers to active living and promote equitable access	Affordable, inclusive and safe facilities, programs and infrastructure
Supporting students at risk or impacted by inactivity or poor physical health	- Facilitating access to vaccinations to support good health and reduce risks associated with preventable illness - Self-assessment, screening, diagnosis and management of general physical health issues

Theme 5: Positive choices and responsible behaviours

Empower students to make informed, healthy decisions around addictive behaviours (alcohol, drug, gambling and screen misuse) through coordinated education, prevention and support services that build resilience, reduce harm and stigma, and promote early help-seeking.

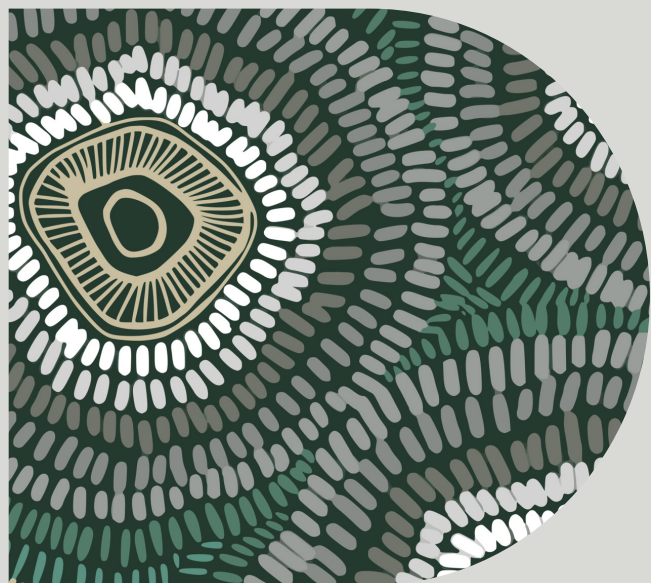
ACTION	ACTIVITIES
Build awareness, a positive culture and supportive environment	- Awareness and education campaigns - Wellbeing and harm reduction activities
Provide early help-seeking and support around risky behaviours	- Screening/self-assessment for alcohol, drug, gambling and screen-use risks - Referral pathways to external resources and support services
Timely, coordinated support, advice, and referral for students experiencing complex needs	- Access to confidential medical and counselling support and referral to external services - Embedded escalation processes to manage high risk and complex cases

Theme 6: Personal safety

Ensure students are aware of programs and services that support injury prevention, personal safety and wellbeing - both on campus and online, underpinned by health-promoting service delivery that connects students with resources, referrals and support to help them stay safe and supported.

ACTION	ACTIVITIES
Proactively address risks and increase awareness to protect students	- Water and sun safety awareness and education campaigns - Overall community safety education particularly for international students (online safety, travel and night-time safety)
Support students at risk before safety concerns or incidents escalate	- Access to internal and external support services - Embedded escalation processes to manage high risk and complex cases

A First Nations lens



Our commitment

Deakin's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is articulated through the Deakin Indigenous Strategy 2023–2028, which spans the domains of students, knowledge, community engagement, whole-of-university responsibility and Indigenous employment.

The Strategy recognises the enduring value of Indigenous knowledges, cultures and leadership, and their contribution to a strong, inclusive university community.

Within the Student Health and Wellbeing Framework, this commitment is enacted by embedding the Indigenous Model of Social and Emotional Wellbeing as a core underpinning framework. This reflects contemporary national understandings of wellbeing as strengths-based and holistic, and supports delivery across all Strategy domains by centring connection, culture and self-determination in health promotion practice.

What we mean by social and emotional wellbeing

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, social and emotional wellbeing is holistic and collective.

It encompasses connection to body, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture, Country and spirituality, and is shaped by historical and contemporary experiences including colonisation, racism and intergenerational trauma. Strong cultural identity and connection are key protective factors.

Social determinants of health

Health and wellbeing outcomes are influenced by education, employment, housing and income, alongside distinct determinants such as culture, language, Country and spirituality.

Ongoing impacts of dispossession and past policies continue to shape lived experience. National evidence shows that social determinants and access to culturally safe services are major contributors to health inequities.

Risk and protective factors

Protective factors include cultural strength, connection to family and community, participation in cultural practices, safe and inclusive learning environments and culturally responsive support.

Risk factors include racism and discrimination, grief and loss, unresolved trauma, disconnection from culture and Country, and social and economic disadvantage. Evidence consistently links experiences of racism with poorer wellbeing and mental health outcomes.

What this means for health promotion at Deakin

Applying an Indigenous lens means designing strengths-based and culturally safe initiatives, embedding Indigenous perspectives across universal programs, co-designing targeted supports with Indigenous students and communities, and building staff and system capability. This supports Deakin's commitments to reconciliation, equity and inclusion and helps create environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can thrive.

Governance, implementation and measurement

Deakin's Student Health and Wellbeing Framework is shaped through collaborative research and knowledge exchange, where our research centres contribute evidence, insights, and evaluation to guide action.

Governance and implementation

STRUCTURE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Health, Wellbeing and Safety Committee	Oversee the strategic direction, coordination, and accountability of initiatives that promote a safer, healthy and supportive university environment
Action Groups	Shape programs and initiatives through staff and student contributions of insights, feedback advice and the student voice guiding implementation and evaluation

Implementation of the initiatives, programs and services delivered under the framework is through Student Services, Student Experience and Engagement, and Student Health and Wellbeing teams, with collaboration and partnership playing an important role in ensuring effective delivery and evaluation.

Impact measurement and evaluation

This framework supports continuous improvement and measurable impact of student health and wellbeing programs. Emphasis is on progress through accountability and evidence-informed practice and is implemented using the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) model to evaluate impact across the student lifecycle and campus environment.

Evaluation focuses on five outcome domains: Engagement, wellbeing and access, sustainability, participation, and service quality.

Evaluation principles

PRINCIPLE	REFLECTION IN PRACTICE
Participation	Students, staff and partners co-design and inform evaluation approaches
Partnership	Data sources are shared across services, faculties, and research centres to enable system-level insight
Progress	Services, resources and campaign outcomes are monitored over time to inform decision making
Planet	Review and monitoring of application of sustainability goals, campus environments



Program success

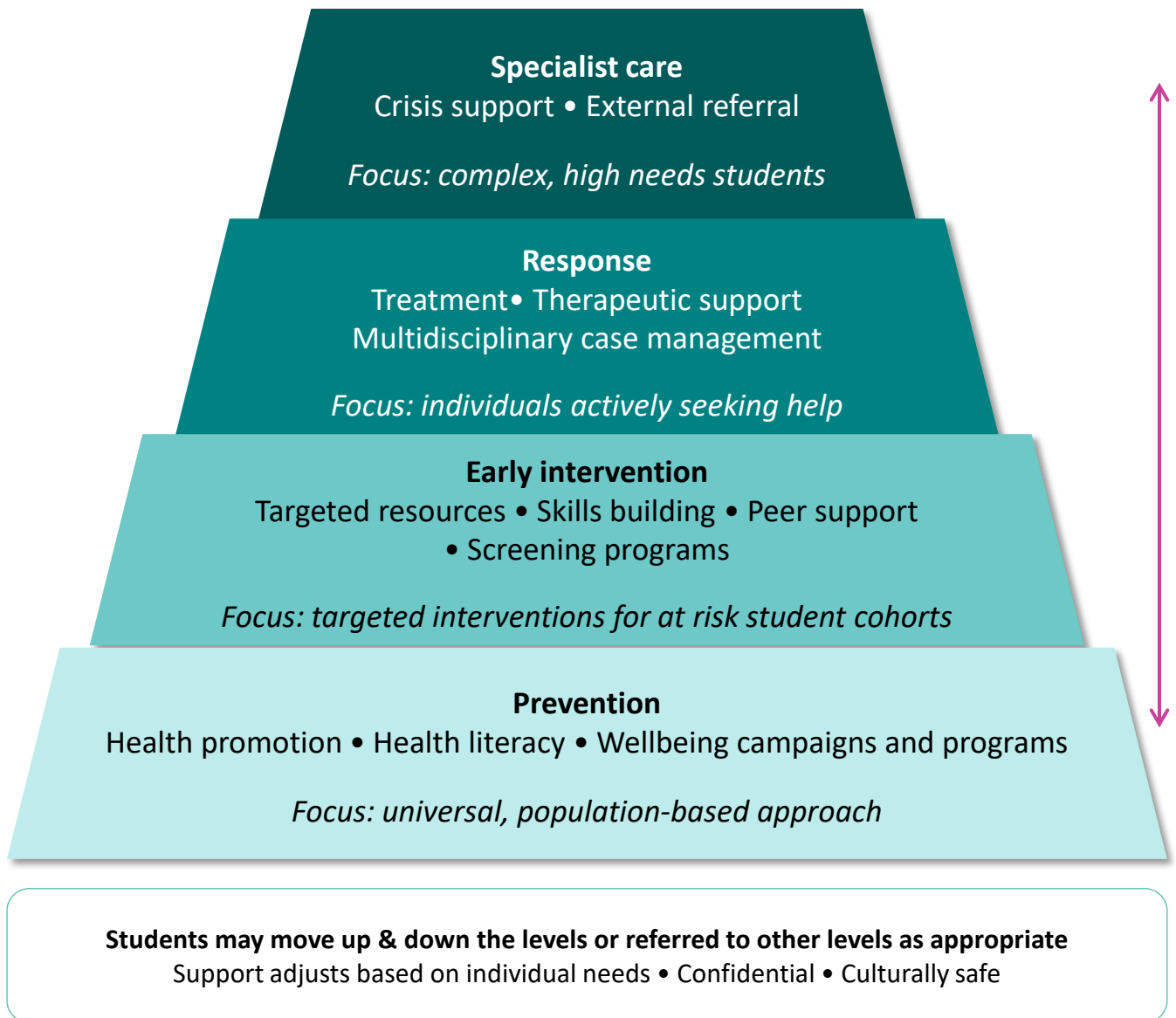
- Students experience inclusive, safe and health-promoting campuses and digital environments
- Earlier identification and support for emerging health and wellbeing needs
- Improved access, participation and engagement across diverse student cohorts
- Clear accountability, consistent delivery and continuous improvement informed by data and evaluation

Impact

- Governance and compliance across legislation, standards, policies and whole of university approach.
- Improved holistic student health and wellbeing, agency, and ability to thrive and succeed.
- Improved health and wellbeing lifelong outcomes, education and choices in the communities we serve.

Health continuum support pathways

Access to the right support based on individual needs



Students experience health and wellbeing along a continuum, moving between thriving, targeted and intensive levels of support as their circumstances and needs change. A flexible, responsive approach provides universal supports that build resilience and capability, alongside targeted and intensive interventions when required.

Students can enter at any or multiple points and move flexibly between levels based on need and seamless referral. The approach is student-centred and partnership-led, informed by lived experience, student feedback, engagement and data.

Programs, activities and operations

Deakin provides a broad and well-established range of programs, activities, resources and services to support student health and wellbeing, outlined below.



REFERENCES

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). National study of mental health and wellbeing, 2020–2022. Australian Government.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). National Health Survey: Dietary behaviour. Australian Government.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). National Health Survey: Physical activity. Australian Government.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia's youth: Unintentional injuries. AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia's youth web report. AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). Australia's health 2022. AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022–2023). National Drug Strategy Household Survey. AIHW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework: Summary report (2023). AIHW. <https://australianwomenshealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-july-ihpf-summary-report1.pdf>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). Determinants of health for First Nations people. AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/social-determinants-and-indigenous-health>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (n.d.). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing measures. AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/first-nations-wellbeing-measures/contents/introduction> (2025)
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (n.d.). Racism and Indigenous wellbeing, mental health and suicide. AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/6557fd8d-8e50-4b38-931e-867edd7243fa/aihw-imh-racism-and-indigenous-wellbeing-mental-health-and-suicide-summary-paper.pdf> (2025)
- Deakin University. (2023). Deakin Indigenous Strategy 2023–2028. https://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0030/118695/2023-2028-deakin-indigenous-strategy.pdf
- Deakin Students as Partners Guiding Principles (2018) <https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/studentsaspartners/>
- Department of Health and Aged Care. (n.d.). Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership. Australian Government. <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/social-and-emotional-wellbeing-policy-partnership>
- International Health Promoting Campuses Network, & University of Limerick. (2025)
- Limerick Framework for Action for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges. (2019)
- Lowitja Institute. (2025). Social and emotional wellbeing: A review. https://www.lowitja.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SocialandEmotionalWellbeing_aReview.pdf
- Okanagan Charter. (2015). Okanagan Charter: An international charter for health promoting universities and colleges.
- Victorian Government. (2023). Victorian public health and wellbeing plan (2023–2027).

Contact us

For further information,
please visit the Deakin website at
deakin.edu.au.

Email: student.healthpromotion@deakin.edu.au
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC 3125
Australia

deakin.edu.au