

**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS  
AND ACADEMIC STAFF POLICY**

**Prishtinë, 2024**

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## 1. Introduction

UNI – Universum International College is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors . and academic staff policy as an essential foundation for personal, academic, and professional success. This Policy affirms the College’s commitment to promoting, supporting, and protecting the mental health and wellbeing of all members of its community including students, academic, and administrative staff.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment that promotes positive mental health and good emotional state.
- Ensure timely access to guidance, information, and support for individuals experiencing emotional distress or mental health difficulties.
- Provide a clear institutional framework that aligns with the **Law No. 05/L-025 on Mental Health (Official Gazette of Republic of Kosovo)** of the Republic of Kosovo and recognised international standards.
- Encourage a culture of openness, empathy, and non-stigmatisation surrounding mental health and emotional wellbeing topics.

## 2. Legal and Policy Framework

This Policy operates within the following frameworks:

- **Law No. 05/L-025 on Mental Health** (Republic of Kosovo, 2015).
- **Law No. 06/L-082 on the Protection of Personal Data.**
- The **Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo**, guarantees the right to health and personal integrity.
- International standards and guidelines, including those of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** principles on student wellbeing.

UNI – Universum International College will ensure compliance with all relevant national laws and will adapt its practices in line with emerging best practices in higher education and mental health care.

### 3. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at Universum College, whether full-time or part-time.
- All staff, including academic, administrative, and support personnel.

It covers all aspects of mental health, emotional state and wellbeing in the College environment, including prevention, early identification, support, referral, and crisis response. In accordance with our commitment to promoting well-being and in compliance with the policies outlined in the Student Handbook 4465/1, UNI -Universum International College has established a mental health and wellbeing for students.

### 4. Definitions

- **Mental Health:** State of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community (WHO)
- **Mental Health Conditions:** Mental health conditions include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states associated with significant distress, and impairment in functioning.
- **Risks:** Individual, social and environmental factors that can increase mental and emotional vulnerability and lead to experiencing mental and emotional conditions with different levels of severity.

### 5. Policy Statement and Principles

UNI – Universum International College is committed to:

1. **Respect and dignity** - treating every member of the community either as a student or as a staff with understanding, respect, and without discrimination.
2. **Access to support**- available to all students and staff through the Wellbeing Office.
3. **Confidentiality** - maintaining privacy in all matters relating to mental health and emotional distress
4. **Prevention and awareness** - fostering knowledge and dialogue around mental and emotional wellbeing.
5. **Collaboration** - working with external professionals and organisations where appropriate.
6. **Continuous improvement** - regularly reviewing and enhancing services, based on feedback and evolving needs.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **UNI – Universum International College**

- Endorses and supports the implementation of this Policy.
- Ensures adequate financial and human resources for mental health initiatives.

### **Wellbeing Office**

- Acts as the main point of contact for mental health and wellbeing matters.
- Provides initial guidance, counselling, and referral to professional services where necessary.
- Organises wellbeing activities, awareness sessions, and stress-management activities.
- Ensures confidentiality and keeps secure records of all interactions with students or staff.

### **Human Resources**

- Provides mental health support information to staff.
- Facilitates return-to-work processes after mental health-related absences.
- Coordinates with the Wellbeing Office for training and prevention programs.

### **Academic or Administrative Staff**

- Are encouraged to recognise early signs of distress among students or colleagues.
- Should refer individuals to the Wellbeing Office when necessary.
- Maintain sensitivity and confidentiality in all communications.

### **Students and Staff Members**

- Are encouraged to look for help early when facing difficulties.
- Should support peers respectfully and without stigma.
- Are expected to respect confidentiality and the dignity of others.

## **7. Support and Referral Pathways**

- The **Wellbeing Office** provides confidential counselling and guidance for students and staff, free of charge.
- When necessary, individuals may be referred to qualified external mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists, psychiatrists) in Kosovo.

- The College will maintain partnerships with relevant institutions and NGO's to enhance referral options.
- In cases of acute mental health crises, immediate contact should be made with emergency services (194/112) and the Wellbeing Office must be notified without delay.

### **8. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- All personal information disclosed in relation to mental health will be treated confidentially and in accordance with **Law No. 06/L-082 on Personal Data Protection**.
- Information will only be shared with relevant professionals on a “need-to-know” basis, and only with the individual’s consent, except in cases of serious risk to life or safety (e.g., planned suicidal attempts).
- Records will be securely stored and accessible only to authorised personnel within the Wellbeing Office.

### **9. Awareness, Prevention and Training**

- Regular training sessions will be offered for academic and administrative staff to recognise signs of distress and respond appropriately.
- Orientation programs for new students will include information on mental health, emotional awareness, stress management .
- Annual campaigns and events will promote wellbeing, inclusion, and stress management.
- The College will encourage dialogue to reduce stigma surrounding mental health and promote openness and empathy, organizing conferences, workshops and social events to raise awareness and destigmatizing mental health.

### **10. Crisis Management**

In cases where an individual is at immediate risk of harm to self or others:

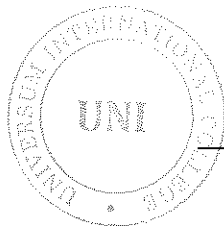
- The situation must be treated as an emergency.
- The Wellbeing Office and security personnel should be informed immediately.
- Emergency services should be contacted (112 / or approach directly to the local mental health care centre).
- The individual’s safety and dignity must be prioritised at all times.

### 11. Monitoring and Review

- This Policy will be **reviewed annually** by the Wellbeing Office in coordination with the Academic and Administrative leadership, especially with the Psychology Faculty department.
- The review will include feedback from staff and students, service utilisation data, and emerging legal or institutional changes.
- Findings will be summarised in an internal **Wellbeing Report** presented to the College Management.

### 12. Approval and Implementation

This Policy takes effect upon approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of UNI – Universum International College in March 2024 and shall remain valid until revised or replaced.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isabel Salvat', is written over a horizontal line.

**Prof. Dr. Isabel Salvat**

*Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean*

*Chair of the Academic Council*