

POLICY 3.8 – Employee Assistance Program

Policy Category: Personnel - All

Effective Date: September 30, 2008

Supersedes: May 11, 2005

POLICY

- 1.00 Personal difficulties (including physical, mental, emotional, marital, family, alcohol, drug, or financial problems) may have serious effects on the work performance, personal life, and health of a faculty or staff member (hereinafter referred to as "employee") as well as work colleagues and/or family members.
 - 1.01 The University recognizes that many human problems which may affect work performance can be resolved if they are identified in the early stages and assistance is sought from an appropriate resource.
 - 1.02 It is recognized that the resolution of such problems will require a high degree of personal motivation on the part of the employee and that the employee must participate in attaining a resolution.
 - 1.03 The employee may need help in resolving his or her problem. The University's Employee Assistance Program (E.A.P.) offers a free confidential and professional counselling service to regular full-time employees and eligible employees under their respective collective agreements. Counselling under the E.A.P. is provided at an off-campus location by an independent agency which is not affiliated with the University.
- 2.00 Utilization of the services offered by the Employee Assistance Program is voluntary. The program is not meant to interfere with the private life of the employee or his or her family.
 - 2.01 Confidentiality within the law shall be maintained at all times, except with the written consent of the employee.
 - 2.02 Utilization of the Employee Assistance Program by an employee shall not interfere with that employee's position, employment or opportunities for promotion, salary increments, or other forms of advancement within the University.
- 3.00 The services provided by this Plan are available only to regular full-time employees and eligible employees under their respective collective agreements.
 - 3.01 Although the employee is the primary focus of the program, counselling for the employee's family is acceptable when family counselling is necessary to the employee's progress.

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- 3.02 In the event that an employee enlisting services under this plan ceases to be a regular full-time employee or eligible employee under his or her respective collective agreement, such services may continue after cessation of the employee's employment for a period necessary to complete the treatment which would have otherwise been available.
- 4.00 The University recommends the earliest possible utilization of the Employee Assistance Program by any regular full-time employee and eligible employees under their respective collective agreements of the University who are experiencing personal problems, especially where those problems may affect his or her performance of employment duties.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE - COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 5.00 The E.A.P. Committee, representing the employee groups and the University administration, is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of the Employee Assistance Program.
- 5.01 The following representatives comprise the Employee Assistance and eligible employees under their respective collective agreements Program Committee:
- One appointed by the Faculty Association
 - One appointed by the Professional and Managerial Association
 - One appointed by the Staff Association
 - One appointed by Canadian Union of Public Employees 2361
 - One appointed by Canadian Union of Public Employees 2692
 - One appointed by International Union of Operating Engineers
 - One appointed by the University of Western Ontario Police Association
 - One appointed by the Select Administrative Group Employees
 - One appointed from Workplace Health
 - One appointed from Rehabilitation Services
 - One appointed from Staff Relations
 - One appointed by the Associate Vice-President (Human Resources)
- 5.02 The Employee Assistance Program Committee shall be responsible for:
- (a) Monitoring the overall effectiveness of the policy and its procedures
 - (b) Monitoring the services provided by the agency under this policy
 - (c) Providing assistance and support in the planning, coordination, presentation and publicity of Employee Assistance Program information and training sessions on a continuing basis
 - (d) Recommending for payment all appropriate expenses and services provided under the Plan, and ensuring that the agency's services and costs are appropriately audited
 - (e) Recommending the agency with which the University shall contract counselling services in support of the Employee Assistance Program
- 5.03 Recommendations regarding the foregoing responsibilities will be directed to the Assistant Vice-President (Human Resources).

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PROCEDURE

- 6.00 Any regular full-time University employee and eligible employees under their respective collective agreements who identify the need to seek assistance through the Employee Assistance Program may contact the Employee Assistance Program Provider directly.
- 6.01 Information on how to contact an E.A.P. Counsellor is available to all eligible employees by means of posters, notices, brochures, etc. It is also available (on a confidential basis) from Workplace Health, Human Resources, and through any of the employee groups at the University.
- 7.00 On occasion, the possible existence of an employee's problem may be identified by co-workers, or by persons in a supervisory capacity, who observe a decline in work performance. In such cases those who observe the problem may wish to suggest to the employee that he or she consider using the services available through the Employee Assistance Program.
- 7.01 Any such suggestion should be made with the most careful regard for the privacy of the individual. In particular, a person in a supervisory capacity who makes such a suggestion shall not seek to discuss or explore the nature of the problem which has given rise to the observed decline in work performance, nor shall he or she seek confirmation that an employee has accessed E.A.P. services.
- 7.02 Initial contact with an Employee Assistance Program Counsellor must be initiated by the employee; the counsellor may not initiate contact with an employee on the basis of a referral by a supervisory, co-worker, family member, etc.
- 8.00 Employees will have the same opportunity to attend E.A.P. counselling sessions as is provided under existing policies for health care appointments.
- 9.00 While all contact with the E.A.P. is direct, on the part of the employee, and is strictly confidential, circumstances may arise where in the employee's judgement it would be advantageous to advise the employee's supervisor that treatment is being undertaken and/or to provide the estimated duration of treatment.
- 9.01 Only upon the employee's request will such information be provided by the counsellor, and the release of such information shall be authorized by the employee in writing.
- 9.02 Any such information communicated by the E.A.P. Counsellor shall be in written form, and the employee shall be provided with a copy.