Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy:
*a partnership approach between the University and Students' Union (*QMU/QMUSU)

Introduction
This Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy has arisen from the joint QMU/QMUSU Student Mental Health Agreement.

What do we mean by *mental health and wellbeing?*

Mental health can be defined as a state of *well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.*[1] (World Health Organisation 2014).

As confirmed in a WHO Report of 2001[2], one in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. This Policy is therefore based on the principle that many students, will at some point during their lives, experience a period of depleted mental wellbeing. The term "mental health difficulties" is one which encompasses a wide range of experiences which may affect an individual's ability to balance his/her life. Such difficulties can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental health conditions, diagnosed and treated by the health services.

In its use of the term *mental wellbeing*, this Policy is talking about emotions, life satisfaction and how people function day to day; individuals' notions of self acceptance and their positive relations with others.[3] While some students who experience mental ill health may experience good mental wellbeing; others who do not have diagnosed mental illness may nevertheless experience poor mental well being and diminished quality of life. In referring to mental wellbeing, this Policy is intended to be relevant to the whole student body.

Under the Equality Act 2010, mental ill health is considered to be a disability, just as any other impairment. The Act states that "A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-

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[1] http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/
[2] http://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/
[3] Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland: Policy & Action Plan 2009-2011;
http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/271822/0081031.pdf

day activities."[4].The Act does not require a formal diagnosis regarding such mental impairment.

The [Public Sector Equality Duty][5] (April 2011), means that the University/QMUSU must consider all individuals as they shape policy; deliver services/conduct teaching and research; and in relation to their own employees as well as students. This Duty also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

Aims

It is the policy of the University and the Students' Union to:

- Promote and improve student mental wellbeing and support students who may experience mental health difficulties during their time at university;

- Engage with students and staff to support students in making informed choices about protecting, strengthening and improving their own mental wellbeing;

- Tackle discrimination arising from mental ill health difficulties and ensure students are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality;

- Develop a university environment and culture that promotes student mental wellbeing and supports students experiencing depleted mental wellbeing;

- Ensure students and staff have a full understanding of the boundaries of their responsibilities.

Principles

This Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy takes a positive and inclusive approach in order to promote and strengthen the mental wellbeing of all students. The Policy adopts an approach framed around core principles of **promotion, prevention** and **support**, both of positive student wellbeing in its own right, as well as the benefits which good mental wellbeing brings to academic progress, employability and quality of life.

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[4] Equality Act 2010: Guidance; Part 1, Section 4, P5
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85010/disability-definition.pdf
[5] Equality Act 2010: Part 11, Chapter 1, Section 149; https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

In pursuing the aims of this Policy, the following principles shall apply:

1. In keeping with the Mission detailed in the University Strategic Plan

   We are known not only for excellent, relevant teaching, research and knowledge exchange but also for the care and respect we give our students, staff and partners. As a thriving campus university we strive to create a community without borders, helping to improve people's lives locally, nationally and internationally.

   The active promotion of good mental wellbeing is integral to the joint aim of QMU/QMUSU of supporting students on their path of sustained and lifelong learning.

2. In accord with the Public Sector General Duty (April 2011) QMU/QMUSU will take active steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between those who experience ill mental health and those who do not.

3. Students are responsible for their own mental wellbeing and are expected to take active measures to maintain mental health.

4. QMU/QMUSU will support students in maintaining mental wellbeing, or in following their path to improved mental health.

5. We recognise that an individual's poor mental wellbeing may be distressing or disruptive for other students and that there is also a duty of care to ensure support is extended beyond the individual.

6. QMU/QMUSU recognise that staff will be better placed to support student mental wellbeing in an environment where a high level of both staff and student mental wellbeing is valued and supported.

Objectives (Promote – Prevent – Support)

To achieve its aims in accordance with the set principles, this Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy is built upon three core areas: ***Promote – Prevent – Support*** and the specific objectives under each one of the core areas, namely:

Objective 1. Promote good mental wellbeing

1.1 Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group to co-ordinate the promotional activities aimed at increased mental wellbeing and to work on developing and maintaining a joint QMU and QMUSU Wellbeing Programme for all students.

1.2 Support awareness raising, behaviour change and promotion of lifestyle choices that have been shown to improve mental wellbeing.

1.3 Invest in the mental capital of QMU students' population, which comprises of resilience, self esteem, cognitive capacity and emotional intelligence.

1.4 Further Develop the Residence-Life Events Programme, aimed at increasing the wellbeing of students in QMU accommodation.

1.5 Reduce discrimination and stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of mental wellbeing issues.

1.6 Remain an active partner in the implementation and renewal of the NHS Lothian Joint Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing.[6]

1.7 Promote the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' (connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, give) and 'Wheel of Wellbeing' (body, mind, spirit, people, place, planet) concepts.

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[6] *A sense of belonging: A joint strategy for improving the mental health and wellbeing of Lothian's population 2011-2016*
http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/OurOrganisation/Strategies/Documents/SenseOfBelonging.pdf

Objective 2. Prevent the development of mental health issues

2.1 Ensure early identification of students who may need support for mental health issues and swiftly offer available support to them. Develop stronger collaboration between ERA (Electronic Registration of Attendance), Thinking-of-Leaving, PATs (Personal Academic Tutors), Stay-on-Course and the Students' Union.

2.2 Consolidate and continue to support the QMU Mindfulness Programme to help students maintain good mental wellbeing and reduce stress and anxiety.

2.3 Ensure students and front line staff (including academic, academically related and professional) have access to training in mental health awareness and/or first aid and encourage them to undertake such training.

2.4 Develop a protocol for mental health crisis intervention.

2.5 Provide opportunities for students to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through physical activity, stress reducing activities and social events.

2.6 Raise awareness of stressors in the student journey.

Objective 3. Support students with mental health issues

3.1 In case of an emergency the 'Helping Distressed Students: A Guide for University Staff' (updated 19/11/2015) is to be applied and the resources listed in the Appendix should also be used. All academic and professional services staff to be made aware of this Guide.

3.2 Facilitate students with mental health issues to find and remain on the path of wellness, but recognise that it is primarily the student's responsibility to ensure they engage and work towards achieving that.

3.3 Encourage further development in provision of peer support, including through existing programmes, such as QMUConnect: Peer Mentoring.

3.4 Further develop the provision of general support through Stay-on-Course Programme and QMUSU Help Zone.

3.5 Further develop the provision of professional support through the QMU services, such as Counselling, Disability Service, Effective Learning Service and Student Funding.

3.6 Ensure individuals suffering from mental health issues are treated fairly and consistently.

3.7 Treat all matters relating to individuals and their mental health problems in the strictest confidence; to share information on a 'need to know' basis only, with consent from the individual concerned.

September 2016
Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group
Queen Margaret University and Queen Margaret University Students Union

Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment	
School / Department	n/a
Policy	**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**
Author This should be the person/body who is responsible for the Impact assessment of the policy, service, function, decision etc.	Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group
Partners decision makers implementers etc Identify who else will need to be involved. This can be decision makers, frontline staff implementing the policy, partner/parent organisations, etc.	The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, which will draw its members from Schools, Student Services, Residential Accommodation and the Students' Union. The Policy is informed by current guidance in the University sector.
Start date The EIA should be started prior to policy development or decision being taken. It should continue throughout the review process. For an existing policy, it needs to be ensured that any changes identified as necessary can be implemented.	February 2016 onwards.
Effective date of implementation The EIA will need to inform decision-making so the date should take this into account. This may be the date on which the policy is put to committee or when a decision is required. It is not however the end of the EIA cycle, which links to review (below).	Senate meeting (26th October 2016), following submission to the Student Experience Committee meeting (27th September).
Relevance This should outline what the relevance of the policy, service, decision, etc is to the equality groups (remembering to consider the duties to promote understanding and equal opportunity	The policy is relevant to all students, and by promoting mental wellbeing awareness will increase understanding of mental health and

and not only the duty to eliminate discrimination). Where it is concluded that the policy is not relevant, this should be recorded here with the reasons and evidence. The EIA can then proceed to 'decision making and quality control'. Relevance may be obvious, in which case go straight to an assessment and detailed collection of data. In other instances some basic data may need to be collected first to identify relevance.	the framework of support which is available. It may aid the de-stigmatisation of mental health difficulties. It will be of particular relevance to students with a mental health-related disability.
Aim of Policy/decision It will help to ask: • Why is the policy or decision needed? • What do we hope to achieve by it? • How will we ensure that it works as intended? (e.g. that there is no discrimination in practice) This is not always easy and a discussion will probably be needed between those who define the policy or make the decision and those who implement it	The Policy will support academic progress of students, their personal effectiveness and employability. It provides a framework which will support Disability Equality and promote understanding of mental health.
Available evidence Identify what evidence is available and set it out here. This includes data and evidence from involvement and consultation	The NUS Scotland research project, 'Silently Stressed', found that only a minority of student respondents would feel comfortable discussing concerns about mental wellbeing with academic or support staff, or with external agencies. The most common barriers to seeking support were stigma, embarrassment, and students' lack of knowledge of mental health problems. Other factors included not knowing where to seek help, and perceived inaccessibility of staff or insufficiently strong relationships with staff. Recommendations to universities therefore include: mental health training for staff; supporting students

	to look after their own mental wellbeing; and also training students to offer peer support to each other. Feedback from the recently run Stay-on-Course Pilot Project has indicated that significant number of students who fall behind in attendance and/or academic progress report decreased mental wellbeing with many of them reporting a mental health issue.
Evidence Gaps Identify where there are gaps in the evidence and set out how these will be filled	Measures to monitor impact will include: uptake of staff and student training, and evaluation feedback from training courses; attendance and feedback from promotional events; evidence of student projects relating to mental wellbeing; feedback from students, e.g. via Students' Union representation on the Steering Group.
Involvement and consultation What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this decision, policy or service and what were the results? What additional involvement and consultation will be needed? Report the results	The Policy was drafted by the current Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group. Consultation is to take place with: the Deans of Schools, Student Union, Human Resources, Student Services, Health & Safety Services, Residential Accommodation Feedback will be incorporated into this final draft of the Policy.
What is the actual/likely impact? Consider the impact in respect of the individual requirements of each of the protected characteristics (Age, Disability, Gender re-assignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation) to which the policy or decision is relevant. The assessment	All students should be affected positively by the promotion of awareness of mental wellbeing. The Policy will support students with a mental health-related disability.

can be supported with a set of key questions to identify the effect, tailored to the area being considered. These should cover all relevant aspects of the policy or decision and, where appropriate, the different options. Broadly the following should be identified: • Who is affected positively? • Who is affected negatively? • Will the policy or decision have the anticipated effect? Please give a full explanation of your reasoning in answering these questions and document the actual or likely impact, along with the evidence used to explain how that conclusion was reached.	The Policy acknowledges that there are potential cultural barriers in relation to mental health. There is commitment in the Policy to investigating ways of supporting staff and students to address the mental health needs of particular cultural groups. Part-time students and Distance Learning students who may not be on campus so often will be alerted to mental wellbeing initiatives and information on events will be available via the website/HUB.
Address the impact Identify the range of options to address the impact Remember to consider each of the general duties. There are four possible options, more than one of which may apply to the policy or decision: 1. No major change. 2. Adjust the policy. 3. Continue the policy. 4. Stop and remove the policy. Document the range of options and identify the effects of each. Identify the option(s) chosen and document the reasons for this.	No major change.
Monitoring and Review Set out the arrangements for reviewing the actual impact of a decision, new policy or changes to an existing policy once it has been implemented.	Policy to be reviewed on a 3 year cycle (2020).
Action Plan An action plan should be developed, monitored and reviewed. This should include evaluation of the changes to measure whether they have had their intended effect, and of the outcomes achieved.	The Policy includes 3 groups of objectives designed to deliver the aims of the policy. Members of the Working Group will be responsible for leading implementation over the 3 year period of the policy. The group

The action plan should include: • actions identified as necessary • details of who is responsible for implementation of actions • timescale for implementation • timescale and actions for review, and • details of how the effects of the actions will be evaluated to measure if expected outcomes are achieved in practice.	will monitor progress on an ongoing basis. The Co-Convenors of the Steering Group will provide regular reports to the Student Experience Committee.
Decision making and quality control Includes sign-off by a responsible officer. (e.g. Head of School, Head of Department) The EIA will then be considered by the Equality and Diversity Committee.	Irene Hynd , University Secretary

Appendix: Directory of Resources

If people believe that this is an emergency, they should consider contacting the emergency services by dialling **999 (or 112)**, or consult with a GP or phone NHS 24 on **111**.

QMU useful resources:

QMU Security
The Security team on campus are on duty 24 hours a day and are here to help with a range of security issues including first aid response, noise and disruption and anti-social behaviour. The on duty team can be contacted directly by visiting the security desk in the main campus building, or by phoning 0131 474 0000 (ask for "security" when prompted)

Counselling
Counselling is a free service available to all matriculated students to help with any personal problems which might be affecting the student's academic work or general health and wellbeing.
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/student-services/counselling.htm

Disability Service
Disability Service provides information, support and guidance for disabled students, including those with mental health related disabilities.
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/student-services/disability.htm

Stay-on-Course
The Stay-on-Course Programme aims to provide rapid support to students identified by the Attendance Monitoring Programme, Thinking-of-leaving and through other referrals as in need of help and/or support.
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/student-services/stayoncourse.htm

Effective Learning Service
The Effective Learning Service at QMU provides guidance and support for all students wishing to develop their study and learning skills.
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/els/

Library Resource Centre
The LRC at QMU provides support to students to help them becoming familiar with library resources, including online resources, and referencing. Students can also access a wide range of workshops (http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/queen-margaret-university-lrc-2521773708)
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/Contacts.htm#LL

Residence Life
Students who live in university accommodation can find help and/or support through the Residence Life Team.
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/accommodation/qmu-living-residence-life/default.htm

Student Services
Student Services can offer specialised advice and support through Disability Services, Mental Health Mentoring and Student Funding, in addition to general wellbeing advice and support.
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/student-services/

Thinking of Leaving?
Students considering transferring to another course, taking a year out or perhaps leaving university altogether, should be able to understand and consider all of options before making a decision. Information is available on the following website:
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/thinkingofleaving/

Help Zone (Students Union)
The Help Zone offers confidential and non judgmental advice and support on any personal and academic matters. The service is independent from the University.
http://qmusu.org.uk/helpzone/

Free external resources:

Counselling in Musselburgh
CHANGES Community Health Project
email: info@changeschp.org.uk
http://changeschp.com/

Telephone counselling
Get Connected Support
http://www.getconnected.org.uk/mental-health/get-connected-counselling/?gclid=CKOrheLtiskCFQsCwwod5LUAeA

Websites that are useful in supporting mental health:

Eastspace (available to anyone who is registered with a GP in East Lothian)
http://www.eastspace.org.uk/

CAPS Independent Advocacy
http://capsadvocacy.org/

Healthy Reading Scheme
http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/1454/mental_health/390/help_and_support_for_peopl
e_with_mental_health_problems/4

Moodjuice
http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/

Living Life NHS
http://www.nhs24.com/usefulresources/livinglife/

Internet cognitive behaviour therapy
https://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome

Steps for stress
http://www.stepsforstress.org/

General Helplines

Breathing space
Tel. 0800 83 85 87
Weekdays: Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am
Weekend: Friday 6pm - Monday 6am
http://breathingspace.scot/

Samaritans
Tel. 116 123
http://www.samaritans.org/

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Group:
Queen Margaret University/Queen Margaret University Students' Union

Purpose, Functions and Terms of Reference

Purpose:
To implement the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy; to encourage the Students' Union and the University to work together on mental health issues in relation to students in order to bring about structural and long term development to address those issues; and to work with the University and Students' Union to ensure the Policy objectives are met;

Functions:
To work towards the policy aims:
1. Promote and improve student mental wellbeing and support students who may experience mental health difficulties during their time at university;
2. Engage with students and staff in supporting students in making informed choices about protecting, strengthening and improving their own mental wellbeing;
3. Tackle discrimination arising from mental ill health difficulties and ensure students are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality;
4. Develop a university environment and culture that promotes student mental wellbeing and supports students experiencing depleted mental wellbeing;
5. Ensure students and staff have a full understanding of the boundaries of their responsibilities.

Terms of Reference:
1. To implement initiatives and activities aimed at enhancing student mental health.
2. To develop, implement and continually improve the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy with local partners.
3. To provide advice across the University student mental health issues and provide training where required.
4. To monitor, review and determine the impact of the Steering Group and develop the functions as appropriate.
5. To develop dedicated online resource for students and staff in relation to mental health.
6. To raise awareness with colleagues, committees and students of the Steering Group and its aims.
7. To continually promote the positive use of social media.
8. To benchmark against other Universities and promote collaborative working across Lothian on student mental health issues.
9. To apply for external funding to run events and undertake research on student mental health issues.

10. To report regularly to the group Champion, relevant Senior Management Staff, the Equality and Diversity Committee, the Student Union's Officers Committee and Board of Trustees providing an update on progress.
11. To seek guidance from, and continuously work in partnership with, NHS Lothian and NUS Scotland (and such other external bodies and Not for Profit organisations as appropriate).

Membership:

The membership of the Working Group is not static and new members can be invited to join as their expertise is required. Current members can leave the Working Group as they wish. There is no fixed term on membership. The maximum number of members shall be fifteen, thirteen internal members and two external members.

Champion

Irene Hynd, University Secretary

Co-Conveners

Cecile Guilloteau, Welfare and Representation Coordinator (*Students Union*)
Sheena Watson, School Manager (*Division of Registry and Academic Registration /ASSaM*)

General Members

Kirsten Baird, General Manager (*Students Union*)
Kira Weir, Student Health Campaign Co-ordinator (*NUS Scotland*)
Dr Carolyn Choudhary, Lecturer in Psychology (*School of Assam*)
Dr Jane Culpan, Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy (*School of Health Sciences*)
Hilary Glendinning, Student Retention and Survey Manager (*Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement*)
Rachel King, Senior Health Promotion Specialist (*NHS Lothian*)
Jillian McKay, Welfare Officer (*Students Union*)
Christine Raffaelli, Senior Lecturer in Drama and Performance (*School of Assam*)
Dr Iliyan Stefanov, Head of Student Services *(Division of External Relations and Student Services)*
Evelyn Weir, Lecturer in Podiatry (*School of Health Sciences*)
Sheila Williams, Liaison Services Manager (LRC) and member of the University Court
Annabel Korki, Residence Life Coordinator *(Commercial Services)*

Frequency:

Members shall meet four times annually during the academic session.

Review:

This Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually and presented to members for approval at the first meeting of each new academic session.