

## Student Mental Health Policy

<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Board of Governors and endorsed by Senate</b>				
<b>Approval Date:</b>	<b>01/28/2025 – Board</b> <b>02/13/2025 - Senate</b>	<b>Revised Date:</b>		<b>Review Date:</b>	01/28/2030
<b>Responsible Portfolio/Unit/Committee:</b>	Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic				
<b>Responsible Officer(s):</b>	Provost and Vice President, Academic				

### 1.0 Purpose

Fostering and promoting good mental health and psychological safety in the learning environment is the responsibility of all NOSM University Community Members. NOSM University is dedicated to providing the necessary tools and resources for the health and wellbeing as well as the success and safety of its learners. The university understands that the provision of these tools is not static and that there needs to be ongoing assessment and adaptation in the services provided. This Policy aims to set forth the programs, policies, services, and supports available to learners with respect to mental health.

In seeking to outline NOSM University's efforts to create a learning environment that minimizes sources of stress and poor mental health, this Policy is guided by the *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024*, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges*, the *Canadian Standard on Psychological Health & Safety* and is in alignment with program accreditation expectations.

### 2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all learners at NOSM University.

### 3.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

TERM	DEFINITION
Community Member	Members of the NOSM University community include, but are not limited to, staff, faculty, librarians, professional staff, Board Members, stipendiary faculty, medical residents, students, all NOSM University registered and visiting learners (e.g. postgraduate residents, undergraduate students, graduate students, health sciences students), volunteers, visitors, observers, and third-party contractors while they are acting in a capacity defined by their relationship with the University, as well

TERM	DEFINITION
	as institutional administrators and officials representing NOSM University.
Learner	All individuals registered or enrolled at NOSM University. Enrolled learners are admitted to and enrolled in a program at NOSM University. Registered Learners are registered in a course(s) which requires the learners to pay fees to access university services.
Mental Health	<p>“Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our well-being.” (<a href="#">World Health Organization</a>)</p> <p>Positive Mental Health is defined by the <a href="#">Public Health Agency of Canada</a> (PHAC) as “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections, and personal dignity.”</p>
Mental Illness	<p>Defined by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) as “alterations in thinking, mood, or behaviour associated with significant distress and impaired functioning.” Medical Illnesses are medically diagnosable and may take many forms including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mood disorders such as major depression and bipolar disorder</li> <li>• Anxiety disorders</li> <li>• Personality disorders</li> <li>• Eating disorders</li> <li>• Substance dependency</li> <li>• Post-traumatic stress disorder</li> <li>• Attention deficit disorders</li> </ul>

#### 4.0 Policy

In keeping with the guiding principles of the Okanagan Charter, NOSM University aims to support learner mental health using a holistic approach with the understanding of and respect for the diverse needs of all its learners and students including UME students, PGME learners, Graduate students and Dietetic Practicum Program (DPP) students. Further, the University recognizes the need for culturally relevant and sensitive mental health programs, services, and supports.

#### 4.1 Academic Accommodation

NOSM University has a legal duty to accommodate. Individualized accommodations and supports are available to learners with disabilities as per the Accommodation Policy and its associated procedures.

#### 4.2 Leaves of Absence

NOSM University understands learners may require a temporary break from their studies. NOSM U programs have specific policies and procedures to describe and support leaves or absence.

#### 4.3 Mental Health Supports and Services

The NOSM U Well App is the official safety app of NOSM University, detailing emergency contacts, crisis alerts, location services, and wellness resources for each of the programs.

Learner Support Services provides all NOSM U enrolled/registered learners and students (UME, PGME, Graduate and DPP):

- Prevention and education programs including health promotion initiatives, stress reduction activities, and initiatives aimed at improving overall mental and emotional resilience.
- An on-site wellness room located on each campus.
- Scheduled touchpoints with learner leadership throughout the academic year.
- The virtual [Health & Wellness Hub](#) highlights resources and provides tools to support health and wellness for learners. It is a centralized platform intended to provide mental health resources to learners in an easily accessible format.
- Learner Affairs Officers who are available on-campus or virtually to provide support for the wellbeing of all learners through individual meetings and group sessions and able to refer learners to more specialized mental health services as needed.
- The Student Assistance Program (SAP), provided by [Homewood Health](#), for NOSM University learners offering confidential wellness services and professional counselling assistance as well as referrals to physician and mental health services. The SAP is available 24/7/365 and can also provide immediate crisis support.
- Homewood Health also provides support for personal and family needs.

In addition, all students and learners can access prayer spaces on campus as well as space in support of breastfeeding learners in accordance with the *Guideline for Accommodating Breastfeeding* (see Section 6).

#### **Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) provides:**

- Theme 6 – a wellness curriculum throughout all four years of the UME education program.
- student membership and input on its key curricular committees.

#### **Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) provides services, such as:**

- a resident wellness program designed to support residents in achieving the knowledge and skills to develop healthy and productive professional identities. The framework includes occupational/academic, physical, emotional, and social health.

- PGY1 Core Curriculum that includes wellness topics such as fatigue risk management and burnout.
- transportation/travel safety considerations as detailed in the PGME Resident Safety Policy.
- psychology services provided by a contract Clinical Psychologist.
- support and resources for International Medical Graduate (IMG) learners through the IMG Learner and Faculty Resource Leads.
- guidance regarding management of fatigue as detailed in the PGME Fatigue Risk Management Resident Wellness Policy.

**Indigenous Affairs provides:**

- A variety of services through the facilitation of culturally relevant supports to assist in maintaining balance in the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual self.
- Connections with Elders/Knowledge Keepers.
- Scheduled Knowledge Sharing Circles.

**Francophone Affairs provides:**

- A variety of services through the facilitation of culturally relevant supports and events.

**Crisis Response Information:**

- NOSM University [/Need Help](#) centralized website detailing crisis response information for each program.
- Homewood Health 24/7 Crisis Line: 1-888-384-1152
- Ontario's Postsecondary Student Helpline [Good2Talk](#): 1-866-925-5454
- CMHA district toll free number: 1(866) 888-8988
- OMA Physician Health Program: 1-800-663-3729
- Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO) Helpline: 1-866-435-7362

## 5.0 Responsibility

The University is responsible for:

- Establishing its commitment to promote positive mental health and well-being of its learners.
- Providing Community Members with the necessary tools, resources, training and information regarding mental health in the learning environment.
- Monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of mental health policies, processes, programs, and supports – both preventative and responsive.

NOSM University Community Members are encouraged to:

- Promoting a supporting learning environment for good mental health.
- Familiarizing themselves with the policies, processes, programs, and supports available to learners.
- Participating in training and education efforts.
- Reporting concerns related to learner mental health, as appropriate in consideration of confidentiality and privacy.

Learners are responsible for:

- Familiarizing themselves with the policies, processes, programs, and supports available to them.

- Seeking assistance, where comfortable, concerning mental health issues.
- Seeking accommodation, if required, by following the *NOSM University Accommodation Policy* and associated Procedures.

## 6.0 Confidentiality

NOSM University respects the privacy of learners seeking mental health support. All private information, including personal health information, shall be kept confidential, unless otherwise obligated by law or situations where there is an immediate risk to the learner or others.

## 7.0 Annual Reporting

NOSM University shall provide an annual report to its Board of Governors no later than January 31st of each year, starting in 2026. The report shall describe mental health promotion activities, Student Assistance Program usage, number of complaints received under the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination & Harassment and Sexual Violence policies. The report will be made available to the public and will not contain personal information, information that would compromise personal privacy, or that would otherwise reveal information that should properly remain confidential.

## 8.0 Related Documents

- Accommodation Policy and Procedures
- Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Sexual Violence Policy and Procedure
- Responding to Student Concerns of Mistreatment
- PGME Resident Safety Policy
- [Okanagan Charter](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents (PIPEDA)
- Guideline for Accommodating Breastfeeding.

## 9.0 Getting Help

Questions regarding interpretations of this document should be directed to:

Provost and Vice President, Academic / Email: [provost@nosm.ca](mailto:provost@nosm.ca)

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Version	Date	Authors/Comments
1.0	2025 02 13	Provost in collaboration with Director, University Policy and Regulatory Compliance