



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher distance education provider offering qualifications on NQF levels five to ten, which are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This policy forms part of the institutional Integrated Quality Management System and details the principles for ensuring that programme offerings adhere to academic standards and empower students to contribute to the transformation of their communities, society and the economy of the future. This approach is underpinned by the Business- and Community-based Action Learning discourse on the co-creation and distribution of relevant knowledge.

The Institute places a high value on the health and social well-being of its employees and recognises that there are a number of challenges which could impact negatively on the employees' personal and work lives. Personal challenges can have a detrimental effect on performance, productivity and behaviour in the workplace. The Institute, according to its values and ethical behaviour maintains a safe and healthy working environment for all employees in order to uphold the reputation of the institution and its employees, and to ensure that service is maintained at the highest possible standard.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
Consultation	Seeking information/advice from an EAP practitioner or the institution
Counsellor	The individual counsellor/psychologist who has been assigned to provide a staff member with confidential services related to the EAP
Dependency	The condition of psychological and physical dependence on substances to be repeated, and compulsive use thereof, with detrimental effects on the individual and the institution
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	A work-based programme designed to assist employees in the identification and resolution of performance and behavioural problems associated with employees hampered by personal challenges which can include, but are not limited to; marital, family, emotional, legal, financial, substance abuse, illness or other personal challenges that adversely impact on the individual's health as well as their productivity

Term	Definition
EAP Practitioner	A person skilled to intervene in a case of an employee in the workplace needing assistance.
Illegal substances	Excludes the use of controlled substances for which the person has received a legitimate prescription.
Informed permission	An employee has full prior knowledge about the implications of the content of the agreement for which he gives verbal or written permission.
Management	Person/s responsible for managing and administering the department at the highest level.
Presumable under the influence	The person is probably, in the opinion of his/her manager using a substance to such an extent that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The individual cannot work safely and productively ii. The individual's physical and mental state is a risk for the general safety and welfare of the individual, fellow employees, the institution and the public iii. The employee's blood alcohol level as measured by a breathalyser, exceeds the allowed limit.
Psycho-active substance	Is a chemical substance that acts primarily upon the central nervous system where it alters brain function, resulting in temporary changes in perception, mood, consciousness and behaviour. Including all forms of narcotics, including depressants, stimulants, hallucinatory and all forms of drugs, as well as dagga. Not all these substances are restricted to use.
Service Provider	A provider that has been engaged by the institution for the purpose of providing confidential counselling services to individual staff members through the EAP.
Staff member	A person employed by the institution as a continuing or fixed-term staff member on a full-time or part-time basis.
Substance abuse	The use of legal or illegal drugs, controlled medication or alcohol in such quantities that the individual is judged as 'presumably under the influence.'

3. LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

This policy is benchmarked against and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies and operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained. These include:

A. Relevant Legislation

- i. Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998
- ii. Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995
- iii. Tobacco Products Control Act 83 of 1993.

B. Applicable Da Vinci documents

- iv. Human Resource Policy and all related policies, procedures and documents
- v. Drug-free Workplace Policy

4. SCOPE

The Employee Assistance Programme is accessible to all full-time, permanent employees of The Institute as well as full-time independent contractors.

Employees who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs or any other substance present safety and health risks to themselves and their fellow employees and have a detrimental effect upon high standards of performance and conduct. The provision of employee assistance services endeavours to establish business benefits, including increased productivity of employees and decreased absenteeism. The institution has a vital interest in maintaining an effective and professional working environment for all its employees.

The Institute's Employment Assistance Programme (EAP) services include counselling and referrals for additional services to employees with personal and/or work-related concerns, such as stress, financial issues, legal issues, family problems, office conflict, and alcohol and substance abuse. The Institute's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to all staff. Where a referral is made by the EAP Practitioner for further assistance beyond assistance already provided by the Institute, employees will carry the cost in their own capacity.

5. PURPOSE

The purpose of the EAP policy is to provide:

- 5.1. A framework for the effective operation of an employee assistance programme.
- 5.2. Guidance to staff when the need to access an EAP programme arises.
- 5.3. Constructive assistance in the form of confidential counselling and referrals to every employee who experiences personal as well as work-related challenges.

- 5.4. Assistance through referrals to appropriate providers for employees who seek assistance in overcoming dependency upon, or challenges with alcohol, drugs or any other substances.

6. SERVICES

- 6.1. The EAP services are available to assist staff who are seeking to address personal or work-related challenges.

- 6.2. The aim of the EAP is early identification and provision of assistance to help resolve either work-related or personal challenges. Matters that may be addressed by means of the EAP include, but are not limited to dealing with:

- 6.2.1. Work or life changes
- 6.2.2. Occupational stress
- 6.2.3. Major life events, including births, accidents and deaths
- 6.2.4. Health care concerns
- 6.2.5. Financial management and concerns
- 6.2.6. Substance abuse: alcohol, drugs, prescription medication
- 6.2.7. Legal non-work-related concerns
- 6.2.8. Relationship challenges
- 6.2.9. Personal trauma including hijacking, robberies, burglaries
- 6.2.10. Emotional distress
- 6.2.11. Family difficulties
- 6.2.12. Financial concerns
- 6.2.13. Health matters
- 6.2.14. Gambling or other addictions
- 6.2.15. Coping or dealing with grief and/or loss
- 6.2.16. Concerns about family members
- 6.2.17. HIV/AIDS and other dread diseases
- 6.2.18. Family violence
- 6.2.19. Sexual harassment
- 6.2.20. Psychological problems

- 6.3. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides staff, including managers, access to the following confidential services:

- 6.3.1. Face-to-face, telephonic or external confidential counselling for personal or work-related challenges
- 6.3.2. Confidential counselling assistance
- 6.3.3. Support and advice for managers in dealing with issues relating to their support roles in assisting employees.

7. TYPES OF REFERRALS

7.1. Self-Referral

An employee through a process of self-realisation recognises that a challenge exists and seeks assistance by consulting the HR Manager or Line Manager who will then contact the relevant party directly. Self-referrals are treated with strict confidentiality and employees who voluntarily seek assistance, but do not want their managers to know of their participation, can arrange appointments outside working hours. The cost for these sessions will be for the employee's own account.

7.2. Informal Referral

An employee who experiences personal or social challenges, and on advice regarding other people, for example, their manager, a colleague, friend or family seek assistance from the EAP practitioner. The HR Manager will refer this matter to the Executive Head: Business Operations for approval. A maximum of 2 to 3 sessions will be for the employer's account. Sessions in excess of this will be for the employee's own account.

7.3. Formal Referral

A manager who is concerned about the decline in an employee's performance, attitude and behaviour may refer the said employee, with the employee's consent, to an EAP practitioner for assistance. The manager is required to notify the HR Manager. The Executive Head: Business Operations will review and approve the request. A maximum of 2 to 3 sessions will be for the employer's account. Sessions in excess of this will be for the employee's own account.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

All consultations will be conducted in complete confidence between the staff member and the EAP counsellor. The institution may obtain statistical data on the broad categories and frequency of access and use of the EAP programme and providers to ensure that the funding support to the service is adequately maintained. Such data will not include names of persons using the EAP services. Informed permission will be granted by the employee as to the purpose of such data collected by the institution.

9. COSTS

9.1. In cases where the counselling/treatment is undertaken by another professional person or institution, the institution and the full-time employee or full-time independent contractor shall discuss what financial assistance will be

given by the institution in respect of the balance which could not be recouped from the staff member's own Medical Aid. This decision will be determined according to each case and is not guaranteed and will be the capped at the amount DVI would have spent using the contracted counsellor.

- 9.2. Part-time employees will be encouraged to seek professional advice at their own cost when there is a decline in performance. DVI could assist in providing the part-time employee with the contact details of suitable counsellors.

10. LEAVE

- 10.1. In the case of leave, an employee will use his/her leave days for consultation (treatment).
- 10.2. The ordinary rules in respect of sick leave shall apply should an employee agree to go to a centre for substance abuse for a period of treatment.

11. ASSISTANCE

- 11.1. In the case of any incident in the workplace which relates to substance abuse, an employee shall be informed by their manager about the assistance which is available. A maximum of 2 to 3 sessions will be for the employer's account and is based on the discretion of the line manager and the Human Resources office. Sessions in excess of this will be for the employee's own account.
- 11.2. Da Vinci encourages employees with dependency problems to approach the relevant manager or Human Resources department within the institution or an outside counsellor voluntarily for assistance.

12. NEGATIVE FORMS OF CONDUCT

A manager has a responsibility upon identifying any of the following forms of conduct to institute a referral to a counsellor or EAP practitioner should the following be apparent:

- 12.1. Productivity, work attendance and interpersonal relationships are prejudiced by substance abuse.
- 12.2. Action in the workplace pose a safety risk to the employee, management, the institution and/or the public.
- 12.3. The person's behaviour in an official capacity is detrimental to the institution's reputation and good name.

- 12.4. An alcohol or drug-related offence is committed which is contrary to the stipulations of the disciplinary code of the institution.

13. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 13.1. In the case of offences relating to substance abuse, the chairman of a hearing or the manager of an employee may reserve referral to a counsellor with or without certain conditions, depending on circumstances
- 13.2. Should an employee's behaviour be such that a disciplinary hearing/meeting is deemed necessary, the chairman of the hearing or manager (in the case of a disciplinary meeting) may request a report from the counsellor concerned
- 13.3. It is the responsibility of the chairman or the manager concerned of the disciplinary hearing/meeting, to ensure that the employee fully understands the implications and responsibility of cooperation in the treatment programme. Lack of cooperation should be taken into account in the case of further action with regard to the employee's behaviour
- 13.4. Voluntary acceptance of professional help without this being initiated by a manager does not exempt the employee from disciplinary action but shall be taken into account as extenuating circumstances.

14. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Regular review and amendment of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional policies and regulatory requirements. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the HR Manager.

15. VERSION CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Version History	Custodian
04/2019	V1	Human Resource Manager
04/2021	V2	Human Resource Manager
07/2024	V3	Human Resource Manager