

Student Mental Health Agreement

2026 – 2029

The University of Aberdeen and the Aberdeen University Students' Union are committed to working in partnership to deliver initiatives and systemic changes to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all our students through our Student Mental Health Agreement.

Students' mental health and wellbeing are vital in their pursuit of academic success and a positive student experience. To ensure our students feel, and are, supported, included, and empowered, this agreement sets out how the University and Students' Union will work together to strengthen and promote student mental health and wellbeing.

Through our shared approach, we will ensure that University systems and processes are conducive to wellbeing, while helping students prioritise their mental health, understand how to access support, develop essential wellbeing skills, and feel confident in doing so throughout their student life.

Key working area and themes will be set on a three-year cycle, with annual action plans that align with wider institutional priorities such as Aberdeen 2040, the Wellbeing strategy, and the Students' Union strategy. Leads from the University and Students' Union will champion partnership working and ensure continuous progress.

The Student Mental Health Agreement 2026 – 2029 reflects the University's and Students' Union's joint commitment to work on these key areas:

- Embedding wellbeing within the curriculum
- Tackling stigma and fostering an open culture around mental health
- Improving communication and awareness of available support

By working in partnership, the University and Students' Union commit to shared responsibility and ownership of student wellbeing. This includes co-designing and agreeing themes, key working areas, and measurements for successes, which will be reported back on through updates to both our students and University committees for transparency and accountability. Student feedback and lived experience will inform work done through annual action plans that build on each other year-on-year to achieve our targets.

Signatures:



University of Aberdeen Principal



Students' Union Vice-President for Welfare

Date: 18/2/26

Curriculum:

Embedding Wellbeing Across Teaching and Learning

Our student community has highlighted the challenges around balancing academic workloads with wider aspects of student life, such as socialising, working and rest. While students have emphasised the helpfulness and friendliness of staff, they also need mental wellbeing and access to support that is fully embedded throughout the teaching and learning experience, ensuring a holistic approach to wellbeing in the curriculum.

Aim

To embed wellbeing meaningfully across learning, teaching, and assessment so that students develop healthy study practices and a balanced lifestyle alongside academic achievement.

Themes:

- We will advance work around the **student journey**, mapping the holistic experience from induction to graduation to ensure mental wellbeing and support are sustained throughout.
- We will provide reasonable adjustments required to support students to achieve a **study/life balance**, reviewing areas such as course design and assessments to ensure students have a manageable workload
- We will review the current **pastoral support offering**, considering the use of language, purpose of the role in the context of wider support pathways available to students.
- We will work towards making **wellbeing support explicit** in the teaching and learning environment.

Measuring Impact/Success:

- Evidence of wellbeing themes being integrated into course design, induction, and personal development planning with a focus on sharing best practise across the institution.
- An incremental increase year on year from students regarding their ability to manage workload
- Positive feedback from students on their ability to manage workload and maintain wellbeing obtained through closing the feedback loop with class reps
- Improved continuation and attainment rates, particularly for students who have faced wellbeing challenges

Culture:

Creating an open and stigma-free culture around mental health and wellbeing

Culture has also been identified as a priority for work around mental health at the University. Students have highlighted the need to challenge stigma and build an environment where open, honest conversations around mental health and wellbeing are a natural part of university life, where seeking support is encouraged.

Aim

To build a university community where mental health is openly discussed, stigma is challenged, and students feel confident seeking support without fear of judgement. Work undertaken between 2026–2029 will be guided by the following themes:

Themes

- Ensuring all students have **fair and equitable opportunities** to engage fully with the University community.
- Creating an **inclusive environment** that supports an equitable experience for all students, regardless of lived experiences or personal circumstances.
- Promoting and sustaining a **stigma-free culture**, particularly around mental health and the use of support services.

Measuring Impact/Success:

- Increased sense of belonging to the university community and/or specific cohorts with the ability to engage with clubs, societies and activities.
- Positive shifts in student survey data on attitudes toward mental health and inclusivity
- Increase in students reporting that they feel safe, respected, and free from stigma or discrimination related to mental health.
- Increase in utilising the Dignity at work and Study toolkit by students and staff who face discrimination.

Communication:

Creating a Wellbeing Focused Communication Culture

Our students have told us that clear, tailored, consistent, and transparent communication is essential to support their wellbeing and sense of belonging at the University. Students want to know what resources are available and how to access them, streamlining processes to ensure ease and equity of access.

Aim

To ensure all students are aware of the full range of support services available, understand how to access them, and feel confident navigating the pathways to help. We will deliver impactful, transparent, and timely communications student centred - to maximise engagement with services and resources.

Themes

- Ensure students know what to expect through **clear, appropriate, and transparent communication**, ensuring students know how, where, and when to access support.
- We will deliver a comprehensive programme of **wellbeing communication** and engagement activities informed by evolving student situational needs.
- We will encourage a **collective institutional responsibility in the university community** to create, share, and engage with information that supports student wellbeing.

Measuring Impact/Success:

- Clear, accessible information on support services provided through university websites, student portals, and social media.
- Student survey data showing improved awareness of where and how to seek help
- Reduction in students experiencing barriers to accessing support, such as long waiting lists, while increasing confidence to report difficulties when they occur.