HEA | AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

hi Healthy Ireland

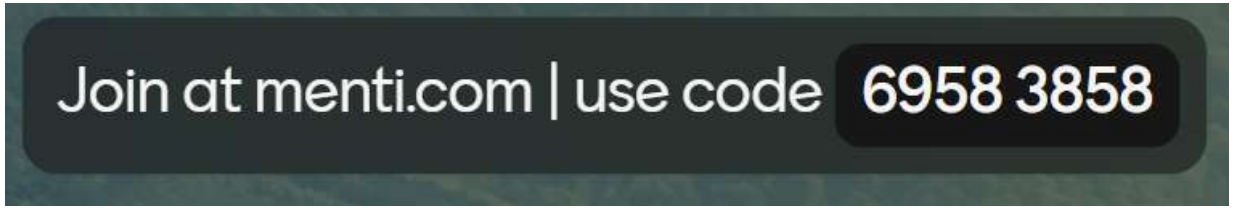
National Frameworks in Ireland

Caroline Mahon, National Healthy Campus Co-Ordinator, HEA

REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA | REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih
Ministry of Science, Education and Youth

How to support student mental health in higher education?

What words come to mind when you think student mental health?



Healthy Settings Approach

"Health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life; where they learn, work, play, and love."

The Ottawa Charter, 1986

World Health Organization

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Why focus on youth mental health?

Around 25% of the total global population is comprised of young people 10-24 yrs old (Abidi, 2017)

Adolescence and young adulthood peak time for the onset of mental health difficulties

75% of mental health difficulties that persist in adulthood emerge before age 25 (Kessler et al, 2007)

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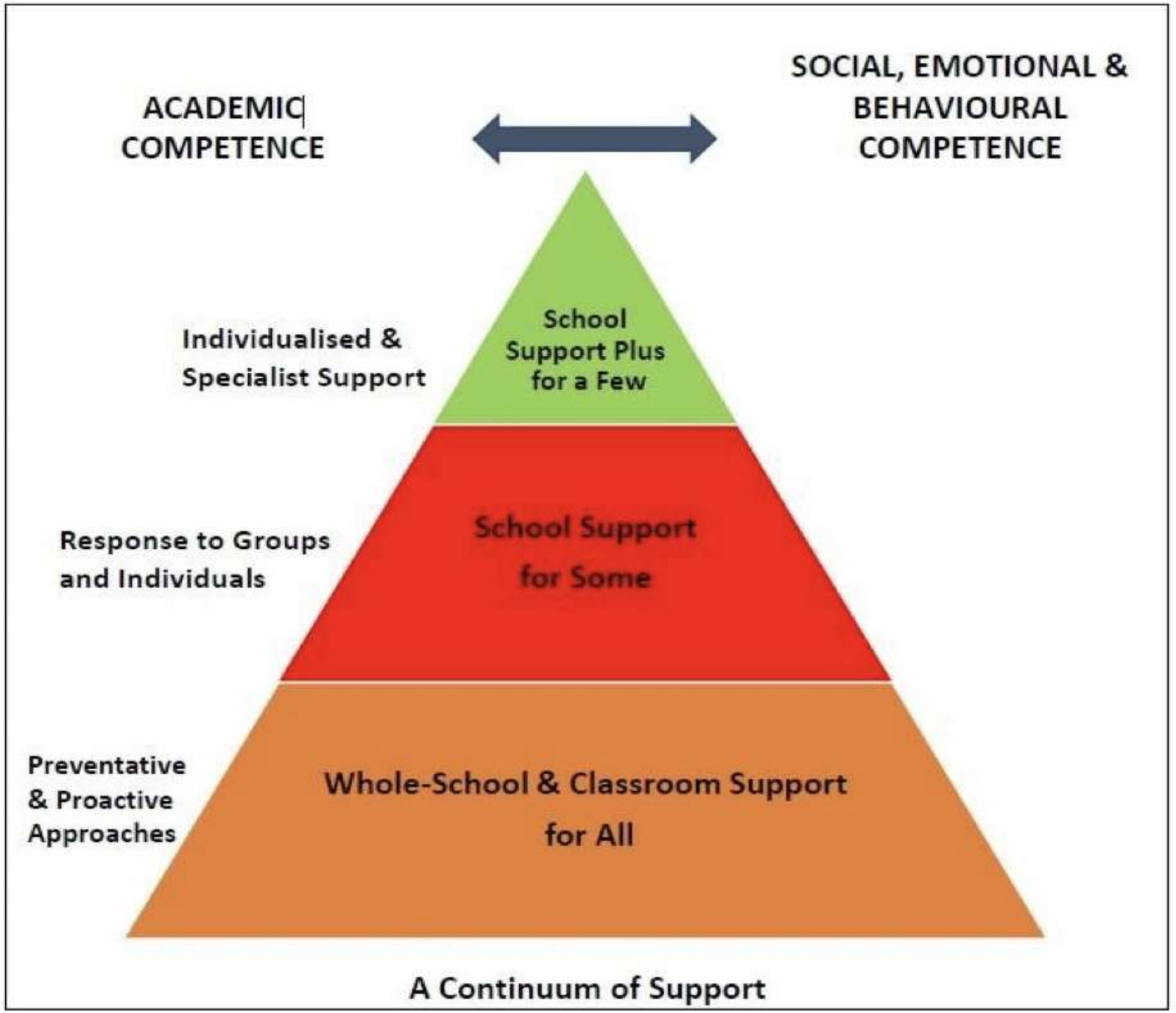
Healthy Campus


ACADEMIC COMPETENCE
SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCE
Individualised & Specialist Support
School Support Plus for a Few
Response to Groups and Individuals
School Support for Some
Preventative & Proactive Approaches
Whole-School & Classroom Support for All
A Continuum of Support

Healthy Settings

- Healthy Settings, the settings-based approaches to health promotion, involve **a holistic and multi-disciplinary** method which integrates action across risk factors.
- The goal is to maximise disease prevention via a **"whole system"** approach.
- An understanding of settings **not only as convenient places to target health interventions**, but also as contexts that directly and indirectly impact wellbeing.
- A commitment to integrating health within the **culture, ethos, structures, processes and routine life** of settings.

World Health Organization

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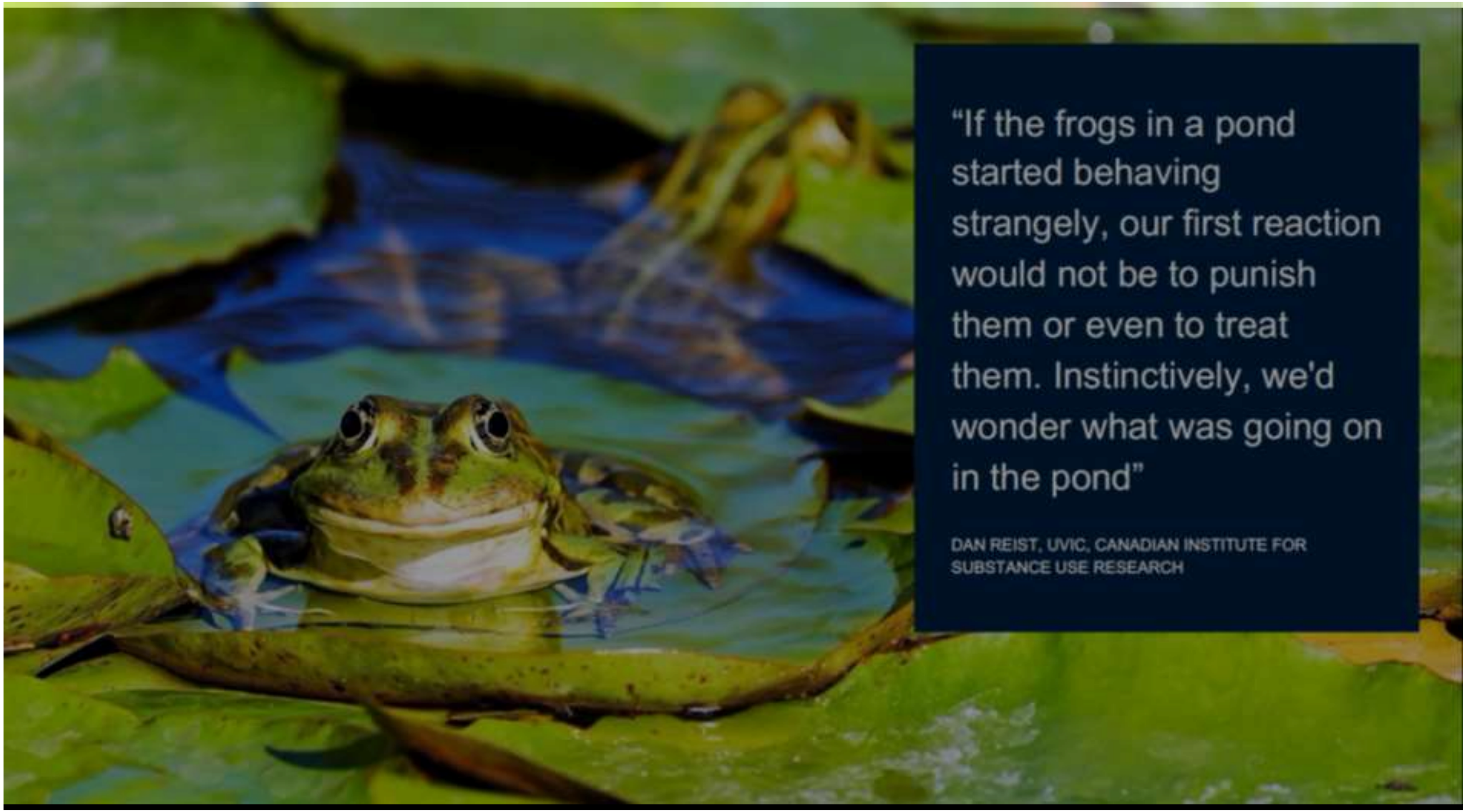
"While it is not possible to state with certainty that multi-component, whole settings approaches are more successful in college and university settings, than one-off activities, the evidence points in this direction" (Warwick et al, 2008)

Effective programmes are "likely to be complex, multifactorial and involve activity in more than one domain" (Stewart-Brown, 2006)

Embedding a 'whole system' commitment to health into university structures/processes results in positive outcomes for students, staff and the organisation as a whole (Newton, 2014)

Slide adapted from Prof Mark Dooris Presentation HEA Health and Wellbeing Conference 2024


“If the frogs in a pond started behaving strangely, our first reaction would not be to punish them or even to treat them. Instinctively, we'd wonder what was going on in the pond”
DAN REIST, UVIC, CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR SUBSTANCE USE RESEARCH

Policy Context

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The HEA has a statutory responsibility for the effective governance and regulation of higher education institutions and the higher education system.

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Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

HEA Act 2022

Lead the strategic development of the HE system in Ireland:

- Coherent system – diverse institutions with distinct missions
- System responsiveness to social, cultural and economic development

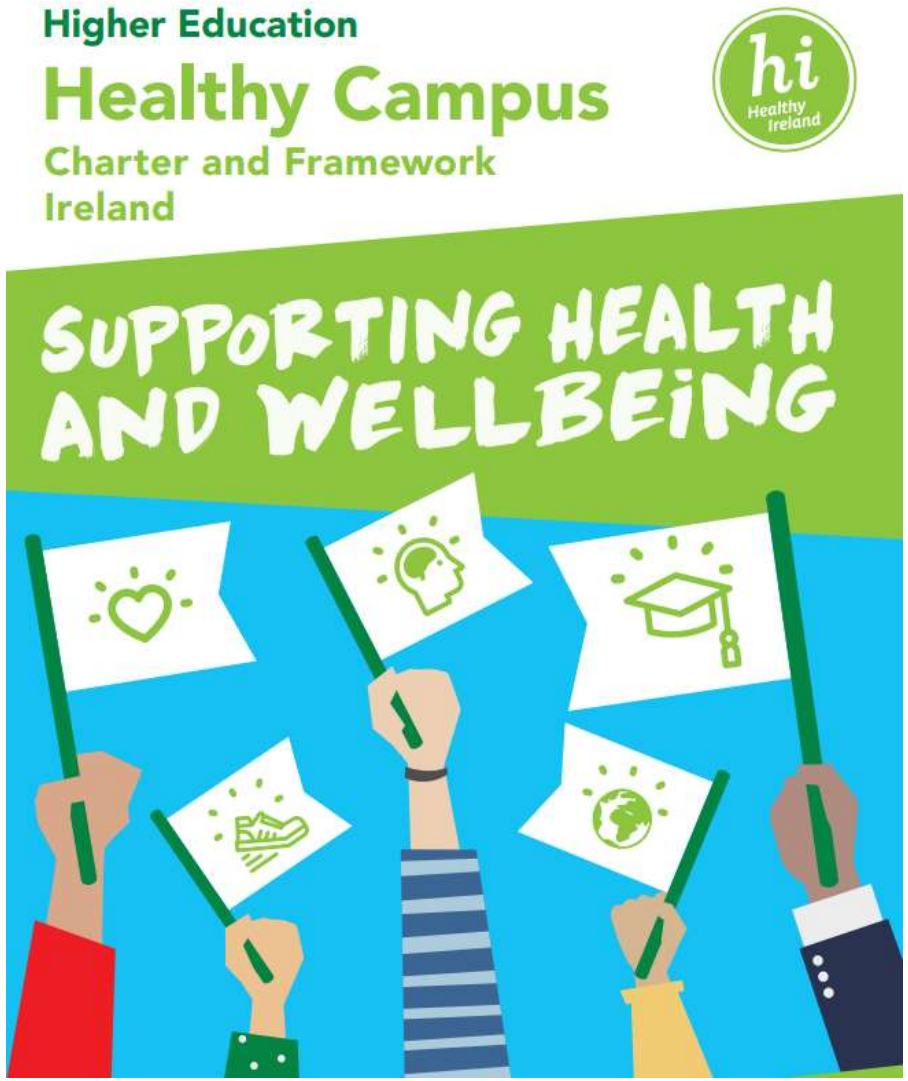
Ensure accountability and strengthen performance at institution and system level

Recognition of institutional autonomy and academic freedom

- 7 Universities
- 5 Technological Universities
- 2 Institutes of Technology
- 2 Specialist Colleges

Legend

ATU	DKIT	MIC	MU	NUIG	SETU	TCD	TUS	UCD
DCU	IADT	MTU	NCAD	RCSI		TU Dublin	UCC	UL



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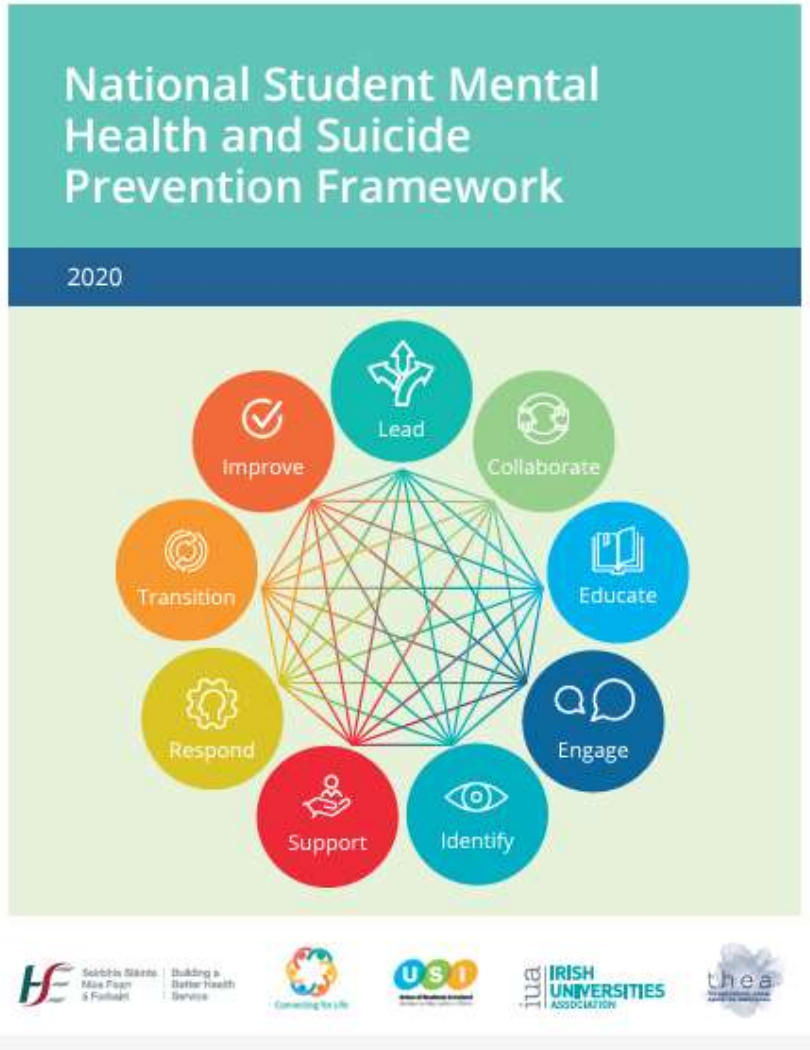

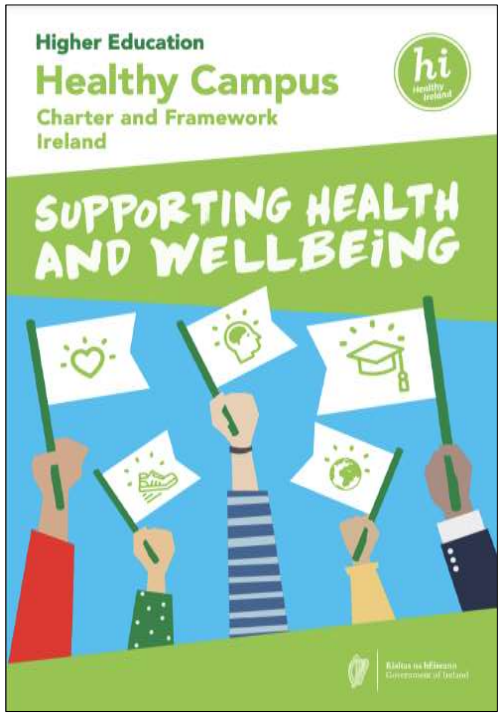

Healthy Places

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice

2018–2023

Revised October 2019

Figure 2: Whole School Approach - Four Key Areas Wellbeing Promotion

HEA Student and Staff Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group

Membership includes representatives from:

DFHERIS

Healthy Ireland	Access and Inclusion
Healthy Ireland	Equality and Diversity
Private Colleges	Youth Mental Health
HSE Education, Health & Wellbeing	Youth Health & Wellbeing
HSE National office of Suicide Prevention	Healthy Campus Network
Student	Human Resources
Student Services	Academic Expert on Health Promotion
Student Services	Academic Expert on Mental Health
HEI Counselling	Academic Expert on Health and Wellbeing
HEI Health Services	
Physical Activity	
Occupational Therapy	

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Funding

- In 2022 €350,000 Healthy Campus Seed Funding – Department of Health

- The HEA, has provided €30.9 million in additional funding since 2020 (including 2025 allocation) for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports

- A number National Projects were funded through this allocation as a direct response to the HEA's Connecting for Life Working Group identifying gaps in the current research and practice (National student counselling dataset; Togetherall)

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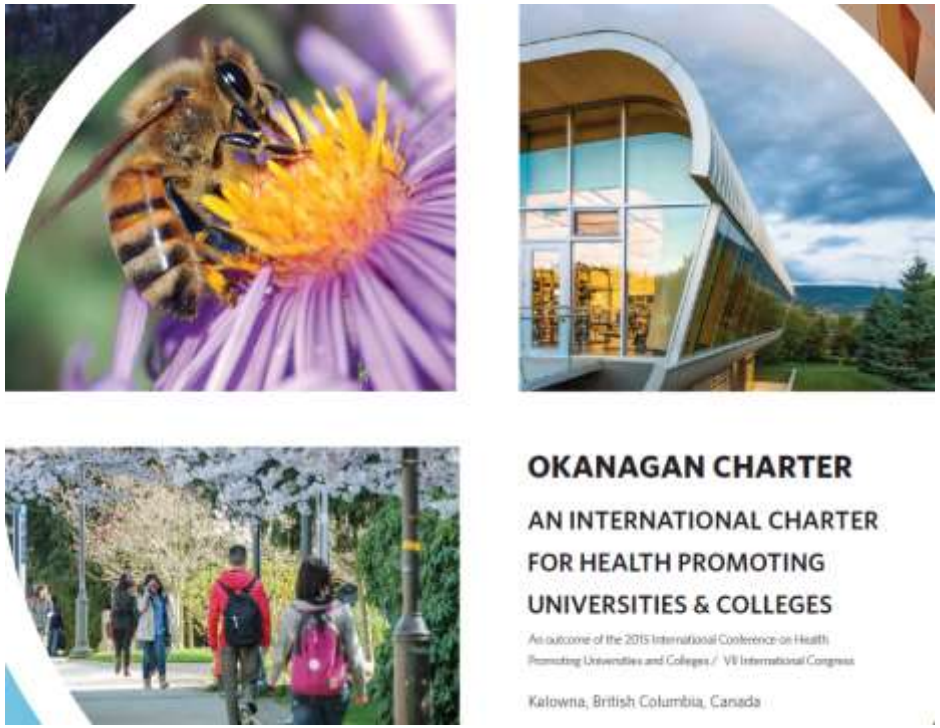
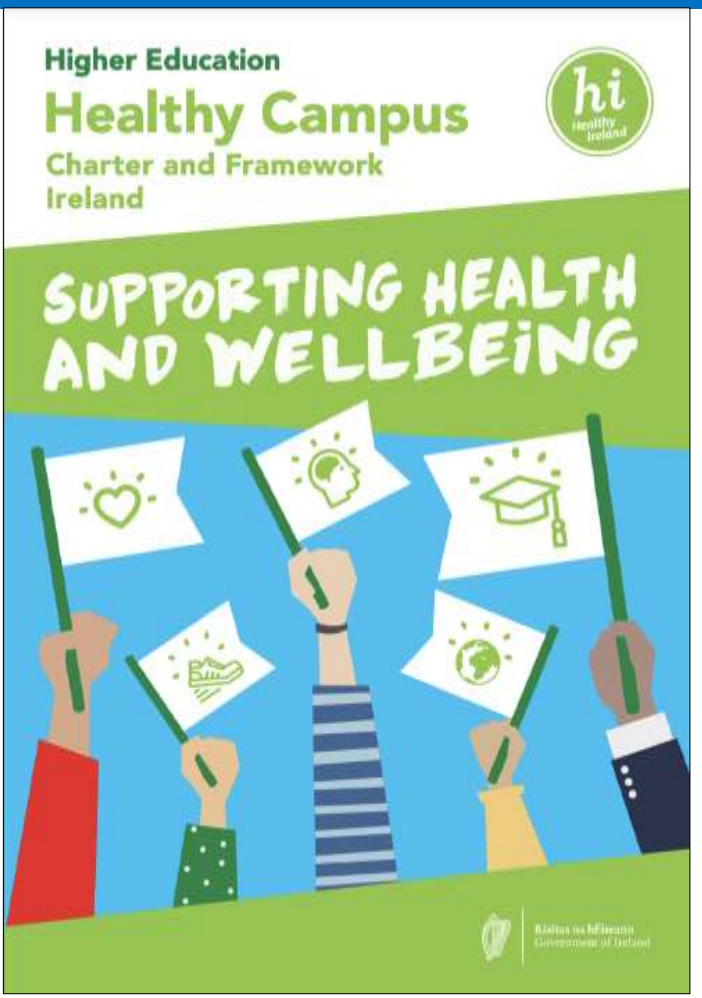
Healthy Campus



Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet

Healthy Campus Charter and Framework



*'A Healthy Campus adopts a **holistic** understanding of health, takes a **whole campus approach** and aspires to **create a learning environment and organisational culture** that **enhances** the health and wellbeing of its **community** and **enables** people to achieve their full potential.'*

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Healthy Campus Charter and Framework

Whole Campus Approach

A whole campus approach is reflected in a Healthy Campus action plan that is developed in the context of the following four key areas:

- Leadership, Strategy and Governance
- Campus Environment (Facilities and Services)
- Campus Culture and Communications
- Personal and Professional Development

COMMIT
Sign Healthy Campus Charter and commit to healthy campus process.

CO-ORDINATE
Appoint Co-ordinator(s).
Establish Steering Group.
CONSULT
Identify needs, prioritise.
CREATE
Develop and implement action plan.
CELEBRATE & CONTINUE
Evaluate the work, share and celebrate the learning and achievements.

Healthy Campus Charter

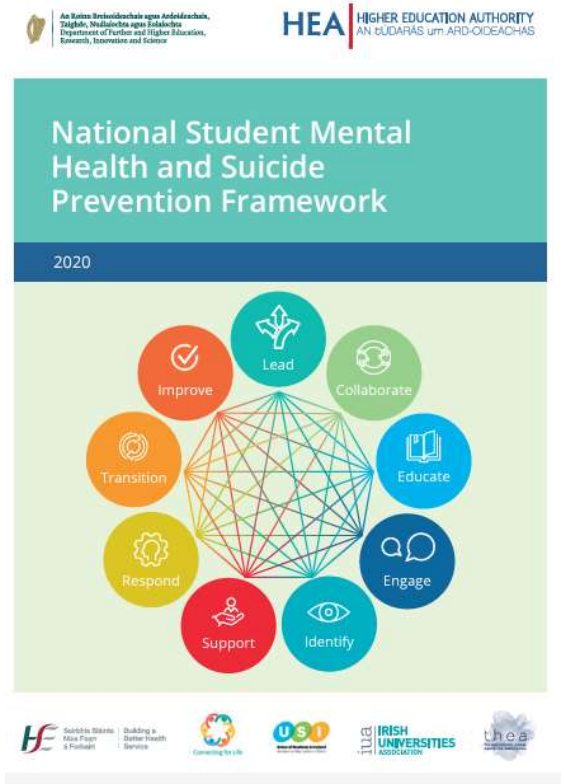
We will:

1. Promote the health and wellbeing of our students, staff and wider community through our institution's mission, strategy, policies, plans and practices, in line with the International Okanagan Charter[3].

2. Act to create empowered, thriving, connected campus communities that foster an ethic of care, compassion, equality and inclusion.

5. Consider how our planning and decision making for teaching, learning and assessment, research and knowledge exchange impact on health and wellbeing.

6. Adopt a strategic approach to promoting health and wellbeing on campus, that reflects locally identified needs and national health priorities, which is guided by the Healthy Campus Framework.


An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
HEA
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework
2020
Lead
Improve
Collaborate
Transition
Educate
Respond
Engage
Support
Identify
IRISH UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION

Lead
Improve
Collaborate
Transition
Educate
Respond
Engage
Support
Identify

- Form a Mental Health Committee with engagement from all staff, including senior management, heads of departments and faculties, provosts, deans, counselling, students, academic staff, tutors, students' unions, security, and accommodation.

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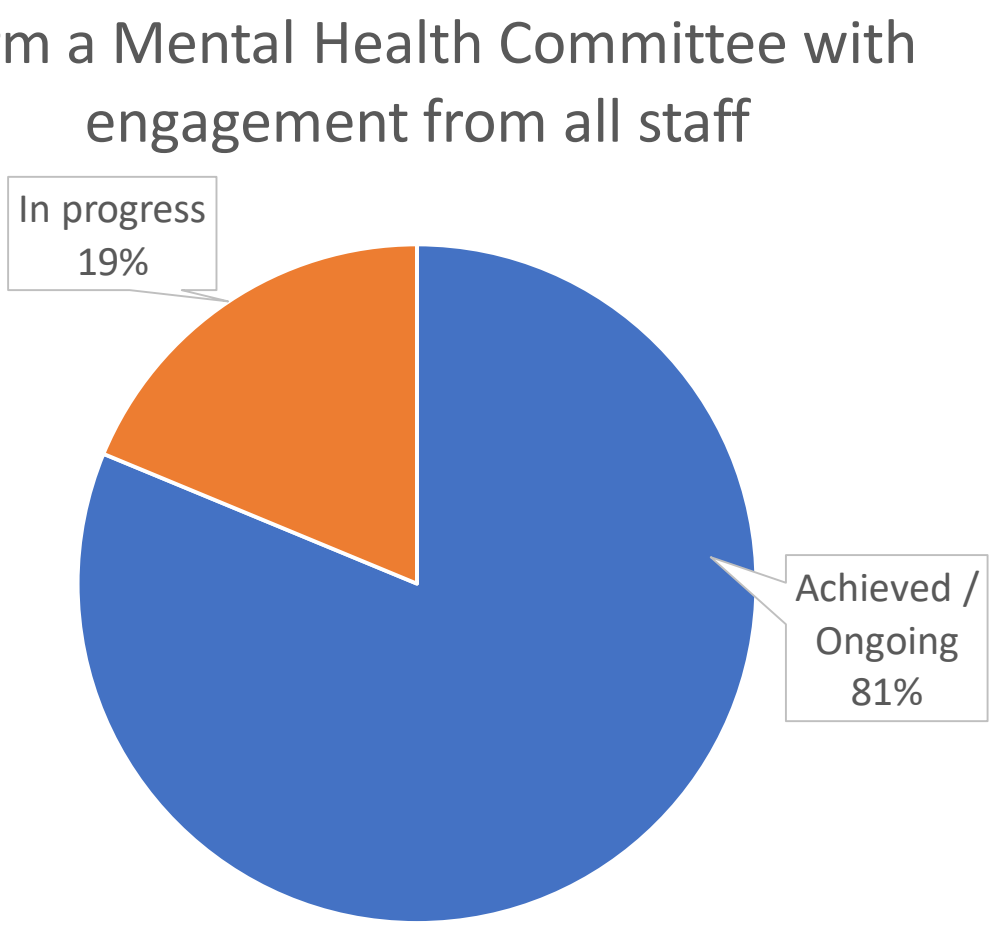
Healthy Campus

Review of the Framework



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Healthy Campus

- Provide for curricular infusion of mental health across all academic disciplines – life skills, resilience, management of challenges/adversity and adaptability.

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Healthy Campus

- Have a plan in place. Well, coordinated postvention has a critical role to play in the prevention of further suicidal actions in a community affected by suicide.

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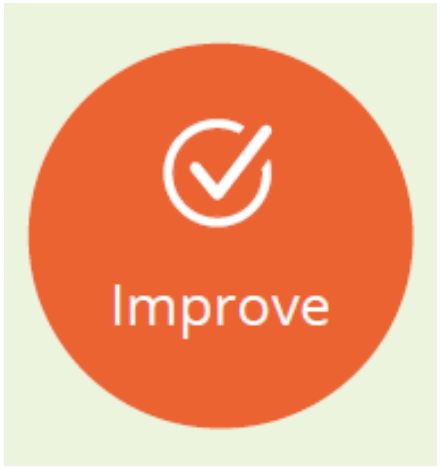
Healthy Campus



- Track and analyse student risk/protective factors, and safety/health indicators using data collected via tools such as Irish Survey of Student Engagement, Graduate Outcomes Survey, as well as generic information on counselling outcomes, wait time, violent/criminal behaviour, sexual assault/substance abuse.

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Healthy Campus

Review of the Framework

1. An **independent revision of the framework** should be commissioned to streamline implementation actions and give more guidance to HEIs.
2. **Meaningful, measurable indicators should be agreed** to monitor and evaluate impact and progress in various areas including: Service provision; Awareness raising initiatives; Interventions for students; Training for staff; Interventions for at-risk groups.
3. **National Guidance** should be developed on: Policy development (e.g. postvention, campus audit); Framework alignment (Healthy Campus & NSMHSPF); Embedding Mental Health Promotion and Wellbeing in the Curriculum.
4. A **national approach to links to external services** should be established.

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Healthy Campus

Progression Work

- Healthy Campus Network

  Ongoing support, knowledge exchanges, newsletters, charter signing events

- National HEA Health and Wellbeing Conference x 2

  Healthy Campus Case Studies

- International Health Promoting Campuses Network and Conference 2025

- Healthy Campus Self-Evaluation Tool

  Resources, templates to support

Healthy Campus
HEA

The Maynooth University Trails Project
Healthy Campus
HEA

Prof. Barbara Dooley

CREATE
HEA Healthy Campus
Healthy Campus
CONSULT

Healthy Campus Case Study

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AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

Mind Body Boost

Name of institution and initiative lead

Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin. Trinity Sport and Trinity Student Counselling Services

Date and timeframe

2018 - ongoing

What was the reach?

120 students participated (over 350 applied / showed interest)

Aims and Objectives

MBB is a practical intervention program aimed at third level students, delivered by the experts in the respective sport and counselling services. It aims to promote equality and inclusion by facilitating access for students who have low levels of physical activity and mental health issues, who for whatever reason have had limited opportunity for taking part in sport.

Aims and Objectives

By combining the elements of group inclusivity, challenging – but achievable – physical activity, and psychological support tools, MBB comprehensively addresses the societal issues of social isolation, physical activation, mood, and stress management problems.

Aligned frameworks, policies, or strategies

National Student Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Framework

'Realising Potential: A Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity 2022 – 2026' (Trinity College Dublin)

Sport Ireland Participation Plan, 2021-24

Project Collaborators

Internal Stakeholders: Students' Union, College Health Service, Tutorial Service, Trinity Disability Service

Project Collaborators

External Stakeholders: 6 countries represented - University of Galway, Technological University of Munich (Germany), University of Stirling (UK) University of Limerick, Universidade Europeia (Portugal), Vilnius University, It's Great Out There (NGO, Belgium); Associated partners: Nightline Paris, European Network of Academic Sports Services

Key Learning Points

It is highly advantageous to collaborate across service areas on student wellbeing programmes.

Creating fun, accessible preventative programmes is a good way to attract students (oversubscribed regularly).

Scheduling the programme to fit into less-pressurised times of the academic year increases participation and retention (e.g., early in the semester vs. later when exams are looming)

Open Course – A Whole Campus Approach to Healthy Campus

NATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

DOWNLOAD Adobe Reader
IMPORTANT
Download the PDF - Do not view in a browser

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Self Evaluation Tool

About the Tool | Tool Guidance | Repository | Enter the Tool

Trinity College Dublin | MTU | University of Limerick | UCC

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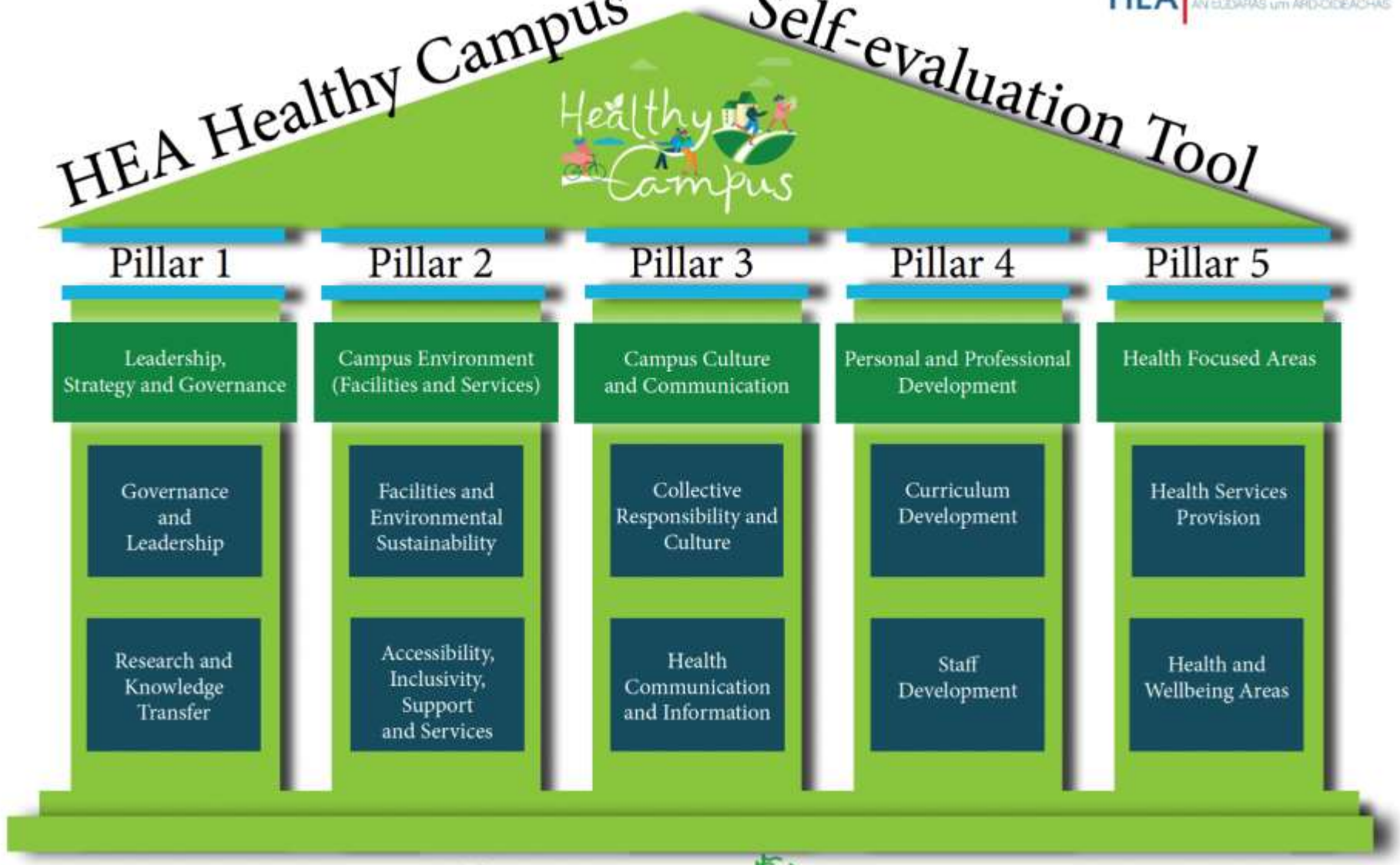
HEA Healthy Campus Self-evaluation Tool
Healthy Campus
Pillar 1
Pillar 2
Pillar 3
Pillar 4
Pillar 5
Leadership, Strategy and Governance
Campus Environment (Facilities and Services)
Campus Culture and Communication
Personal and Professional Development
Health Focused Areas
Governance and Leadership
Facilities and Environmental Sustainability
Collective Responsibility and Culture
Curriculum Development
Health Services Provision
Research and Knowledge Transfer
Accessibility, Inclusivity, Support and Services
Health Communication and Information
Staff Development
Health and Wellbeing Areas

Purpose of the Tool?

- Self-evaluation
- Identifying Gaps and Opportunities
- Monitoring Progress
- Promoting Accountability and Transparency
- Informing Decision-Making

Meeting institutions where they are at…….

Pillar 4: Personal and Professional Development

Curriculum Development

4.1.1 4.1.2

Staff Development

4.2

4.1 Curriculum Development

4.1.1 What opportunities exist to facilitate the integration of health and wellbeing, both directly and indirectly, into the curriculum?

	Participation	Partnership	Evidence Based	Sustainability (Longevity)
NONE	None	None	None	None
MINIMAL	We have limited inclusion of health and wellbeing in our curriculum with minimal outreach to our campus community about opportunities to engage with health topics in academic programmes or educational sessions.	We explore integrating health and wellbeing into curricula through isolated discussions about health topics and themes, but we lack a collaborative framework.	We base our health and wellbeing initiatives on a current consensus in our campus community of relevant topics to include in our curriculum with no reference to evidence-based research.	We have short-term initiatives based on available resources without longer-term planning. Staff are provided with only limited resources on how to integrate health and wellbeing topics into their curricula.
PARTIAL	We embed a health promoting curriculum directly and indirectly across all faculties with input from staff and students, offering opportunities for personal and social health development through specific courses or modules.	We are looking to formally establish partnerships with external organisations or community stakeholders to ensure that health and wellbeing themes are integrated into initiatives in our institution.	We have begun efforts to include reference to clear evidence-based guidelines when outlining topics to be included in our academic programmes, courses or modules.	We have allocated a small budget and rely on goodwill from staff to integrate health and wellbeing topics into academic programmes. We have provided some resources to train staff.
FULL	We fully integrated health and wellbeing into the curriculum with innovative pedagogical practices across all faculties. Staff and students co-create curricula addressing health topics of local and national importance to support wellbeing within teaching and learning. (click link do not hover)	We have formal partnerships with external stakeholders which reflect an interdisciplinary approach to fully embedding health and wellbeing into our core curriculum and extracurricular academic programmes.	We integrate evidence-based health and wellbeing topics into our Healthy Campus programmes. Our staff engage in and publish research on these courses, enriching our curriculum and enhancing wellbeing.	We provide centralised resources and a support system for staff to integrate health and wellbeing into the curriculum, including mandatory training. We secure local, national, and international research funding.

Notes/Evidence of what your institution has done which justifies this score

Actions

For example, Implementation of the ESD to 2030: Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, Programmes, Modules, Link to a Website, Academic Curriculum, Other

HEA - Systems Performance Agreements

'In the period of this Performance Agreement, the university will prioritise student belonging and wellbeing and therefore will put sustained focus on retention and progression.'

SETU
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Oirdheiscirt
South East Technological University

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The International Health Promoting Campuses Conference

June 16th - 19th 2025

Limerick, Ireland

ATLANTIC EDGE LIMERICK EUROPEAN EMBRACE

MEET IN IRELAND

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Shannon Region CONFERENCE & SPORTS BUREAU

ATU St Angelas

A decade since the Okanagan Charter…
Where from, what next, where to? Recent advances and future perspectives in health promoting campuses

Sustainable and Egalitarian and Health Promoting universities

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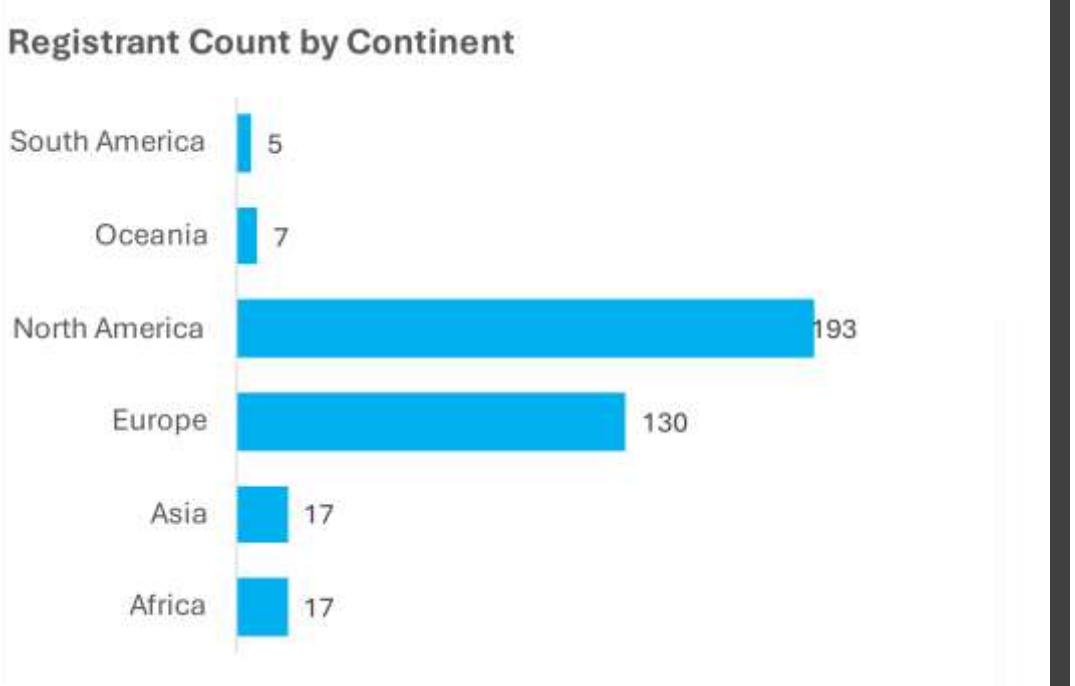
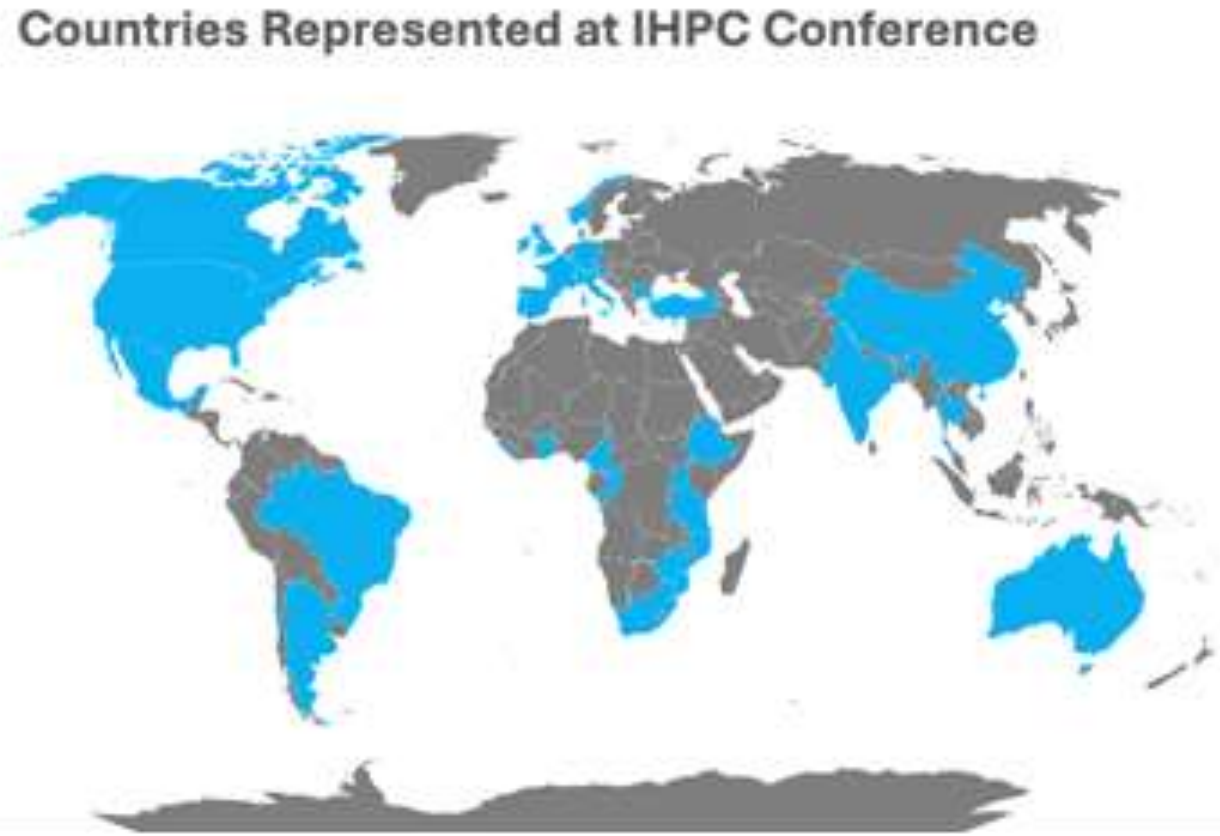
Healthy Campus


Registrant Count by Continent
South America
5
Oceania
7
North America
193
Europe
130
Asia
17
Africa
17

International Health Promoting Campuses Network


Countries Represented at IHPC Conference

Where to next?

- Implementation of the recommendations review of the National Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework report
- Evaluation of the Healthy Campus Self-Evaluation Tool
- Limerick Charter?
- Monitoring and evaluation

For more information

HEA Healthy Campus

68 followers

Healthy Campus Case Study

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- **HEA Healthy Campus Webpages:** https://hea.ie/policy/health-and-wellbeing-landing-page/healthy-campus-landing-page/

- **Email:**

cmahon@hea.ie or healthycampus@hea.ie

Questions and Answers?

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END

National Projects

National Student Counselling Dataset

Togetherall: peer-to-peer mental health support

Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (**CAMS**) **Training**

Speak Out anonymous reporting tool

National Suicide Research Foundation C-SSHRI network

Healthy Campus Self-Evaluation Tool

The Body Project

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Healthy Campus

1. Commit

Healthy Campus Charter

- Higher Education Institute Head signs Healthy Campus Charter (page 6).
- Executive Management team considers how Healthy Campus is integrated into governance, strategy and structures.

2. Co-ordinate

Appoint Healthy Campus Co-ordinator

- Appoint Healthy Campus co-ordinator(s), ideally a senior staff member working jointly with student union president.
- In-house project officers can support operationalisation of Healthy Campus.

Form a Steering Group

- Form a of high level steering group with broad membership across services and disciplines (e.g. students, staff, departments, services)

3. Consult

Map of Current Activity

- Consult with key stakeholders to identify and map current health related activity on campus.
- Identification of any current information that relates to health of campus community that could be used as a base-line for future evaluation.
- Identify health needs using campus wide needs assessment.
- Aim of Framework is to build on and embed existing health related work.

Consultation

- Consult with staff, students and wider campus community to identify one or two priorities.

4. Create

Action Planning

- Develop Healthy Campus action plan for the identified priorities across the four key areas of healthy campus.
- Implementation is based on the principles of Healthy Campus.
- Ensure an evaluation process (what is to be evaluated, how and by whom) is agreed prior to implementation.

Implementation

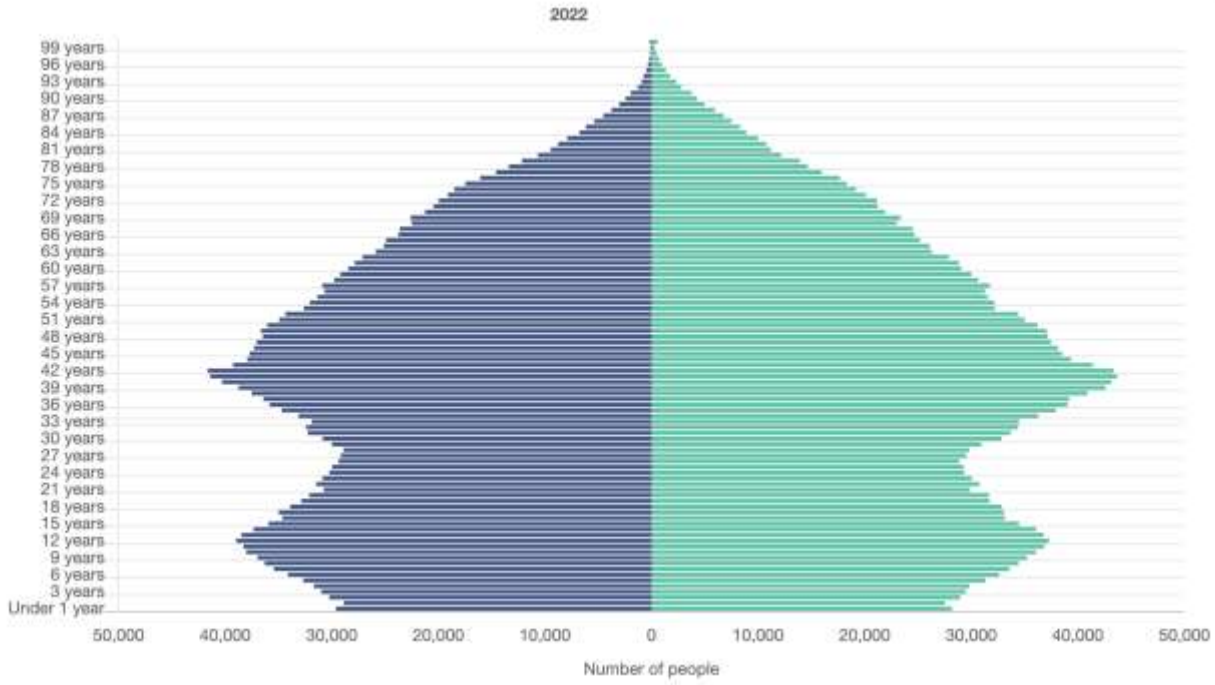
- Communication and awareness raising is essential for buy-in of campus community.
- Ensure working groups are linked into the Healthy Campus governance structure(s) – with regular reporting/monitoring to capture the learning.
- Ensure links with other key objectives on campus/locally, e.g. Green Campus, Healthy Cities/Counties, etc.

5. Celebrate and Continue

Celebration

- Evaluate the work, share and celebrate the learning and achievements.
- Review process and plan for next phase of Healthy Campus.

Why focus on youth mental health?



Around 25% of the total global population is comprised of young people 10-24 yrs old (Abidi, 2017)

In Ireland 12.6% are aged 15-24 (CSO 2023)

Adolescence and young adulthood peak time for the onset of mental health difficulties

75% of mental health difficulties that persist in adulthood emerge before age 25 (Kessler et al, 2007)

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice

2018–2023

Revised October 2019

‘Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and able to make a contribution to their community.’