

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

Embedding wellbeing across the curriculum in higher education

An Fholláine a Leabú ar Fud an Churaclaim Ardoideachais

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Foreword/ Réamhrá

The concept of 'embedding wellbeing within the curriculum' is not new – it has been discussed by many stakeholders previously as an important step in addressing wellbeing concerns amongst the student population. Indeed, the USI Report on Student Mental Health in 2019 and the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework in 2020 spoke of the importance of embedding wellbeing within the classroom. Despite this, there is limited research available on how wellbeing can be embedded within the curriculum, and what practice in this space looks like.

As part of USI's partnership with the National Forum, this policy area was identified as a priority for both organisations. The last twelve to eighteen months has seen Higher Education facing one of its greatest challenges. Staff and students alike have been placed in an entirely different environment to what they were previously used to. Whilst the sector has worked rapidly to adapt learning for online delivery, the wider concept of 'Higher Education' cannot be as easily replicated in an online environment.

Students have missed the social engagement opportunities that are synonymous with college life - the clubs & societies, volunteering opportunities, events and casual coffees in between classes. Readjusting to life on campus will not simply be about the return of in-person classes but about fostering the relationships that have been lost throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and creating the connections that were never built.

However, timely as this report may be, the need for embedding wellbeing within the curriculum came long before the COVID-19 pandemic and will remain long beyond it. This report provides a comprehensive and clear set of recommendations around how we can move beyond acknowledging the importance of this topic and move towards action.

Central to the advancement of this topic is institutional and national leadership. We have seen huge strides forward in policy and practice when issues have been identified as a central priority within the sector. One such example is the work that has been carried out on consent within third-level education over the last few years. If we wish to meaningfully embed wellbeing in the curriculum, the development of a strategy or policy to oversee this should be a national priority. Furthermore, institutional leaders should aim to embrace and support the development of policy within their HEIs.

The National Forum and the Union of Students in Ireland will continue to work together in advancing this issue within the sector, but we need support from other stakeholders, and from the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to move it from a 'nice to have' to an essential component of sectoral policy.

Ultimately, we aspire to see a sector that considers the wellbeing of its students through all stages of the curriculum design process. This moves beyond the content of the curriculum to the way in which it is delivered, how it is assessed and the support available to students in developing the skills necessary to meet the learning outcomes. This vision can be realised only when staff and students work together in partnership at the programme, institutional and national level.

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Executive summary/ Achoimre Fheidhmeach

In January 2021, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science established a new working group, chaired by the USI, to examine how to enhance student wellbeing and engagement across further and higher education. Interest has been growing in recent years in the concept of embedding wellbeing across the curriculum as a whole system approach^{1 2 3}. Increased concerns regarding the mental wellbeing of young people have been a particular driver in calls to embed wellbeing within curricula. The 2019 USI National Report on Student Mental Health in Third Level Education, for example, cited students' recommendations that mental health promotion should be part of the curriculum to make it more accessible to all⁴. Similarly, the 2020 National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework⁵ and Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015 - 2024⁶ both endorse the idea of embedding wellbeing and mental health content within higher education curricula. International research shows that where institutions do provide students with mental wellbeing knowledge and skills through academic courses, the positive effect on students are evident⁷. Embedding wellbeing skills within curricula can help prevent depression and anxiety, as well as increase optimism⁸.

The research detailed in this report aimed to take a 'first glance' at the wellbeing space within the higher education curricular context in order to capture examples of how wellbeing is currently being embedded across curricula of higher education institutions nationally and internationally and to identify features of existing practice in this area. The purpose of this exercise is to inform future related developments and decision making at national and local level.

The research was carried out between January 2021 and May 2021. A number of approaches were taken in exploring the wellbeing curricular landscape of Irish higher education:

- A scoping review of literature
- A review of institutional websites and grey literature to explore existing practice nationally and internationally
- Group discussions with 36 student representatives from across the sector
- A survey of higher education students
- Individual semi-structured interviews with nine staff across six institutions.

The report provides examples of existing practice and provides links to resources nationally and internationally. The examination of research, practice and student/staff perspectives in the current research revealed three main approaches to embedding wellbeing in higher education curricula, embedding wellbeing through mandatory content, embedding wellbeing through elective content and curricular infusion. In addition, three main enablers were identified; making content relevant to students and their personal and professional development, Leadership and intra-institutional collaboration.

Key suggestions to inform for future development for embedding wellbeing across the curriculum with particular reference to how it can best be enabled are outlined below.

- 1 More work is needed to identify what constitutes good practice in embedding wellbeing in the curriculum and to develop an evidence base that supports our understanding of what works and why.
- 2 Staff capabilities both in terms of curriculum design and delivery including approaches to how wellbeing can be embedded need to be further developed through a strong focus on the professional development of those who teach and related processes and structures.
- 3 Within each higher education institution it is essential that a whole of institution approach is taken to supporting student wellbeing. This will require time, space and adequate resourcing.
- 4 Senior management, academic and support staff, and students should work in partnership to ensure institutional capabilities, culture and practices support student success.
- 5 The Irish higher education sector would benefit from an evidence informed, nationally led, collaborative approach to identifying and sharing the features of good practice.
- 6 A national collaborative network should be developed facilitate collaboration and to share experience and expertise across the sector.

I mí Eanáir 2021, bhunaigh an tAire Breisoideachais, Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta grúpa nua oibre, a bhfuil AMLÉ ina chathaoirleach air, chun cíoradh a dhéanamh ar conas an fholláine agus rannpháirtíocht mac léinn a fheabhsú sa bhreisoideachas agus san ardoideachas. Le blianta beaga anuas, tá méadú tagtha ar an spéis i gcoincheap na folláine a leabú ar fud an churaclaim mar chur chuige córais uile. Tá an méadú atá tagtha ar an imní maidir le folláine mheabhrach daoine óga ina phríomhchúis leis an éileamh go leabófaí an fholláine i gcuraclaim. I dTuarascáil Náisiúnta AMLÉ um Meabhairshláinte Mac Léinn san Oideachas Tríú Leibhéal, 2019 (USI National Report on Student Mental Health in Third Level Education), luadh, mar shampla, moltaí mac léinn go mbeadh cur chun cinn na meabhairshláinte mar chuid den churaclam le go mbeadh fáil ag gach duine air. Ar an gcaoi chéanna, sa Chreat Náisiúnta um Meabhairshláinte agus um Chosc ar Fhéinmharú Mac Léinn, 2020, (National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework, 2020) agus i Straitéis Náisiúnta na hÉireann chun Féinmharú a Laghdú 2015 - 2024 (Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015 - 2024) araon, tacaítear leis an smaoineamh an fholláine agus an mheabhairshláinte a leabú i gcuraclaim ardoideachais. Léirítear i dtaighde idirnáisiúnta go mbíonn an tionchar dearfach le sonrú ar mhic léinn nuair a thugann institiúidí eolas agus scileanna meabhairshláinte dóibh. Is féidir an dúlagar agus an imní a chosc agus an dóchas a ardú trí scileanna folláine a leabú i gcuraclaim.

Bhí sé mar aidhm ag an taighde a shonraítear sa tuarascáil seo 'an chéad sracfhéachaint' a thabhairt ar áit na folláine laistigh de chomhthéacs curaclaim an ardoideachais chun teacht ar shamplaí de na bealaí a bhfuil an fholláine á leabú ar fud churaclaim na n-institiúidí oideachais go náisiúnta agus go hidirnáisiúnta faoi láthair agus chun gnéithe den chleachtas reatha sa réimse seo a shainaithint. Is é cuspóir an bhirt seo ná eolas a thabhairt d'fhorbairtí gaolmhara sa todhchaí agus don chinnteoireacht ar leibhéal náisiúnta agus ar leibhéal áitiúil.

Rinneadh an taighde idir mí Eanáir 2021 agus mí na Bealtaine 2021. Rinneadh iniúchadh ar áit na folláine i gcuraclaim ardoideachais in Éirinn ar roinnt bealaí:

- Athbhreithniú scóipe ar an ábhar léitheoireachta
- Athbhreithniú ar shuíomhanna gréasáin institiúidí idirnáisiúnta agus ar litríocht liath chun iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar an gcleachtas reatha náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta
- Plé i ngrúpa le 36 ionadaí mac léinn ón earnáil ar fad
- Suirbhé ar mhic léinn ardoideachais
- Agallaimh leathstruchtúrtha le naonúr ball foirne ar fud sé institiúide.

Cuirtear samplaí den chleachtas reatha ar fáil sa tuarascáil mar aon le naisc chuig acmhainní náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta. San iniúchadh ar thaighde, ar chleachtas agus ar dhearcthaí mac léinn/ball foirne sa taighde reatha, nochtadh trí phríomhbhealach a leabaítear an fholláine i gcuraclaim ardoideachais: leabú trí ábhar éigeantach, leabú trí ábhar roghnach agus insileadh curaclaim (“curricular infusion”). Chomh maith leis sin, aithníodh trí phríomháisitheoir: ábhar a chur ar fáil do mhic léinn a bhaineann leo féin agus lena bhforbairt phearsanta agus ghairmiúil, ceannaireacht agus comhoibriú laistigh d’institiúidí.

Tugtar achoimre thíos ar mholtaí an-tábhachtach chun eolas a dhéanamh d’fhorbairt na folláine ar fud an churaclaim sa todhchaí agus go háirithe do na bealaí is fearr le gur féidir an fhorbairt sin a bhaint amach.

- 1 Tá tuilleadh oibre ag teastáil chun teacht ar cad is dea-chleachtas ann maidir le folláine a leabú sa churaclam agus chun bonn fianaise a fhorbairt le go mbeidh tuiscint níos fearr againn ar cad a oibríonn agus cén fáth.
- 2 Ní mór cumas foirne a fhorbairt níos mó maidir le dearadh curaclaim agus soláthar curaclaim araon, lena n-áirítear bealaí chun an fholláine a leabú, trí dhírú go láidir ar fhorbairt ghairmiúil múinteoirí agus ar na próisis agus na struchtúir ghaolmhara.
- 3 Laistigh de gach institiúid ardoideachais, ní mór cur chuige a bheith ag an institiúid uile maidir le tacaíocht a thabhairt d’fholláine mac léinn. Beidh am, spás agus acmhainní cuí ag teastáil chuige seo.
- 4 Ba chóir do bhainisteoirí sinsearacha, baill foirne acadúla agus tacaíochta agus mic léinn obair a dhéanamh i gcomhpháirtíocht le chéile lena chinntiú go rachaidh cumas, cultúr agus cleachtas na hinstiúide chun tairbhe do rath na mac léinn.
- 5 Is chun tairbhe d’earnáil ardoideachais na hÉireann a rachadh cur chuige bunaithe ar eolas, á threorú ar bhonn náisiúnta agus comhoibríoch chun gnéithe an dea-chleachtais a shainathint agus a roinnt.
- 6 Ba chóir líonra náisiúnta comhoibríoch a fhorbairt chun comhoibriú a éascú agus chun taithí agus saineolas a roinnt ar fud na hearnála.

Introduction/ Réamhrá

In 2013, a unique cross-Government vision for Ireland, the Healthy Ireland Framework, was published following extensive consultation and evidence building over the preceding years. The overarching vision for Healthy Ireland is as follows:

A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility⁹.

Drivers for this concerted national focus on health and wellbeing, cited in the Framework background, included a growing, increasingly diverse population, which is living longer than ever before, but not always living longer lives in good health. There was concern regarding the prevalence of chronic diseases and disabilities related to poor diet, smoking, alcohol misuse and physical inactivity, often strongly influenced by socio-economic status, levels of education, employment and housing. Mental health was also highlighted as a growing health, social and economic issue, expected to be the leading cause of chronic disease in high-income countries by 2030.

Beyond the public sector, wellbeing has also begun to come into sharp focus in the workplace; the Deloitte 2020 *Global Human Capital Trends*¹⁰ study found 80% of the responding organisations [n=8949 from 119 countries] identified wellbeing as important or very important to their organisation's success. In Ireland, research conducted by Ibec in 2020 found that Irish business owners are putting initiatives in place to positively influence wellbeing indicators such as those related to work/life balance, mental health, physical activity and nutrition¹¹. Ibec also recently introduced the KeepWell mark, a workplace wellbeing accreditation with associated supports including guidance, tools and best practice sharing opportunities¹².

Subsequent to the initial implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework, the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-23 was published by the Department of Education and Skills. This policy statement encouraged primary and post primary schools to place the promotion of wellbeing at the core of their school ethos and to provide evidence-informed approaches and support to promote the wellbeing of all their children and young people. The following multi-dimensional definition of wellbeing was broadly accepted:

Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life¹³.

Since 2017, wellbeing has been formally embedded in the Junior Cycle curriculum of post primary education in Ireland. This means that the majority of students now entering higher education have been exposed to a curriculum in which their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing has been attended to in a structured manner and they have been supported to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community¹⁴.

To date, the majority of policy support for embedding wellbeing within the formal learning experiences of children and young people has been concentrated at primary and post primary levels. Higher education however, unlike primary and post primary, does not have a standardised curriculum that would allow for a continuation of the systematic embedding of content related to wellbeing within the student learning experience.

Beyond the formal curriculum, on-campus health and wellbeing promotion has become a strong feature of Irish higher education since the publication of the Healthy Ireland Framework. Higher education institutions offer a wide range of supports and opportunities for students to enhance their own wellbeing through, for example, peer support, sports clubs and student-led societies, getting involved in campus life and volunteering in the wider community. Student support services play a vital role in student wellbeing and the USI¹⁵ has stressed that the availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student wellbeing, as is signposting these services so students are aware of availability and encouraged to seek help when needed. In 2015, the Okanagan Charter¹⁶ became the guiding document for higher education institutions wishing to become health promoting campuses. The aim was to embed health and wellbeing principles into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promoting activities for staff, students and the wider community. The new Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-25¹⁷, developed to support the continued implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework, includes within its objectives the launch of a Healthy Campus Framework and the development of a National Network of Healthy Campuses, all supported by the establishment of a Healthy Campuses Advisory Group at national level.

In January 2021, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science established a new working group, chaired by the USI, to examine how to enhance student wellbeing and engagement across further and higher education. Interest has been growing in recent years in the concept of embedding wellbeing across the curriculum as a whole system approach^{18 19 20}. Increased concerns regarding the mental wellbeing of young people have been a particular driver in calls to embed wellbeing within curricula. The 2019 USI National Report on Student Mental Health in Third Level Education, for example, cited students' recommendations that mental health promotion should be part of the curriculum to make it more accessible to all²¹. Similarly, the 2020 National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework²² and Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015 - 2024²³ both endorse the idea of embedding wellbeing and mental health content within higher education curricula. International research shows that where institutions do provide students with mental wellbeing knowledge and skills through academic courses, the positive effect on students are evident²⁴. Embedding wellbeing skills within curricula can help prevent depression and anxiety, as well as increase optimism²⁵.

There are two common arguments for embedding wellbeing across curricula in higher education. Firstly, although student wellbeing is traditionally thought of as supported by student services, student counselling and through the activities of students' unions, all of which are very important supports, these exist outside the learning environments in which students spend the majority of their time and where teaching staff can also play a significant role in pastoral care.

Academic staff and the curriculum are the only guaranteed points of contact between a student and their university. Therefore, any genuine whole university response to wellbeing must consider the role of the curriculum – and its potential for positive and negative impacts on wellbeing.²⁶

Secondly, embedding wellbeing is important because we know that wellbeing is necessary to our capacity to learn and is essential in helping students to succeed.²⁷ Some everyday factors of higher education can increase the risk of students experiencing wellbeing deficit such as: academic pressures; exam and assignment stress; transitions into and out of higher education; financial burdens; managing jobs and academic work; social and cultural pressures and geopolitical concerns²⁸. Higher education is distinct, in that it is potentially the only stage of life in which a person will live, work, study and socialise, as well as having health services and other supports, in a single setting.²⁹

Focus of this report

The research detailed in this report aimed to take a ‘first glance’ at the wellbeing space within the higher education curricular context in order to capture examples of how wellbeing is currently being embedded across curricula of higher education institutions nationally and internationally and to identify features of existing practice in this area. The purpose of this exercise is to inform future related developments and decision making at national and local level.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a multidimensional concept that is difficult to define because it reflects personal interpretation of one’s state of being and goes beyond a narrow or specific measure³⁰. At a personal level, it relates to one’s physical, social and mental state³¹ and how satisfied we are with our lives, that what we do in life is worthwhile and our day-to-day emotional experiences. At the societal level, wellbeing encompasses objective and subjective features, including the natural environment, personal wellbeing, our relationships, health, our contribution to society, where we live, personal finance, the economy, education and skills and governance³². Wellbeing changes over time, as society and the relative importance of different aspects of life evolve³³.

A multi-disciplinary review exploring the main theoretical perspectives of wellbeing found that a universal definition for wellbeing remains largely elusive and this has resulted in vague and wide-ranging definitions of the term³⁴. Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders (2012) present a definition for wellbeing that is focused on three main points. Their principal idea (see Figure 1) is that ‘stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When individuals have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their wellbeing, and vice-versa.’³⁵

Put simply, wellbeing is ‘the balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenge faced’.³⁶

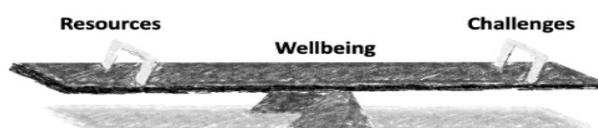


Figure 1: Stable wellbeing

Curriculum

Curriculum is a term that can be used to encompass the structure and content of a unit or programme of study, the experience of learning, or the process of teaching and learning³⁷. The planning and decision-making involved in curriculum development is often termed curriculum design and is conducted by individuals and/or programme teams, who take various factors into account when designing course content. Although there is no national curriculum in higher education in Ireland, some professions, such as nursing, medicine and psychology have agreed curricula. Regulatory bodies, such as CORU, the Medical Council or the Teaching Council, ensure curriculum content and qualifications consistently prepare professionals to work within the regulated field. Quality and Qualifications Ireland, the independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland, approves programmes offered at a variety of higher education institutions and undertakes external reviews of providers' quality assurance on a cyclical basis. At institutional level, programmatic reviews, conducted by local quality units, are also influential processes that impact on the evolution of any given programme over time.

Embedding wellbeing in the curriculum

To embed wellbeing in the curriculum is to incorporate it into required learning content and spaces. Wellbeing content can cover a wide range of skills and encompass a variety of desirable graduate attributes³⁸. This might include personal development skills, such as resilience, stress management, strength building. It may include lifestyle skills that impact on wellbeing, such as nutrition, physical activity, sleep, alcohol and substance use, and behaviour change. Wellbeing content can also encompass academic skills, such as time management, setting goals, interpersonal skills, and group work.

Methods/ Modhanna

A number of approaches were taken in exploring the wellbeing curricular landscape of Irish higher education:

- A scoping review of literature
- A review of institutional websites and grey literature to explore existing practice nationally and internationally
- Group discussions with 36 student representatives from across the sector
- A survey of higher education students
- Individual semi-structured interviews with nine staff across six institutions

Scoping review of literature

The Academic Search Elite database was searched for available articles dated 2005 – 2021, in the English language, using the following search terms: wellbeing; wellness; mental health; promotion; prevention; higher education; universal; curriculum; general education; academic class; course. In the two subject fields, the following terms were entered: courses or classes or curriculum; and college students or university students or undergraduates. In total, 73 articles were retrieved and when the inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied (see Table 1), 22 articles were selected for further review. The search was then repeated with the following terms entered in the subject field: higher education or college or university. This second search resulted in 139 articles being retrieved but when duplicates from the previous search and inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied 6 more articles were selected for further review. In total, therefore, 28 articles underwent full review.

INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
Post-secondary / higher education students of ages including mature students	Students all other levels e.g., secondary / primary
Wellbeing content embedded across the curriculum / graded credit / universal / mainstream	Non-mainstream wellbeing interventions, co-curricular wellbeing programmes / student support services, discipline specific, physical health

Table 1 Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Of the 28 articles that underwent full review, six were deemed of sufficient relevance to include in this review. The references for these six articles were then mined for further examples and this led to two further articles being included, giving a total of eight articles included in the review of literature.

Conley, Travers, Bryant, (2013)³⁹ evaluated the effectiveness of a psychosocial wellness seminar for first-year college students, using an intervention class seminar on psychosocial adjustment skills and stress management versus the control group in an alternative seminar.

Conley, Durlak and Dickson, (2013)⁴⁰ conducted a large-scale evaluation of the effectiveness of universal promotion and prevention programmes for higher education. They examined 83 controlled interventions involving higher education students and focused on: social and emotional skills, self-perceptions, and emotional distress.

Conley, Durlak and Kirsch, (2015)⁴¹ completed a systematic literature search investigating the effectiveness of universal mental health prevention programs for higher education students on a range of adjustment outcomes. That study identified 103 controlled published and unpublished interventions involving higher education students.

Polacek, Erwin and Rau (2013)⁴² conducted a longitudinal study on the impact of general education wellness courses. The study involved 87 student participants and had three administration points: 1st year, 2nd year and 4-5 years after graduation.

Jafari (2017)⁴³ conducted a study of higher education students (n=1,269) who took a Life 101 course. The course aimed to provide students with tools to manage stress and to ultimately enable them to improve their health and achieve their academic goals. Student-led discussions and informal surveys provided the basis for the topics chosen such as behaviour change, stress, nutrition, substance misuse, exercise, volunteering, finance and social responsibilities. Pre and post course surveys were taken as well as a one year follow up to find if the learning was durable.

Finley (2016)⁴⁴ discusses the benefits of the Bringing Theory to Practice [BTtoP] project that provides funding for US campus programmes on civic engagement, personal growth and wellbeing. The paper discusses links between students' sense of empowerment, self-efficacy, and self-confidence with the learning environment. She also provides several practical steps for campus leaders to develop their commitment to fostering student wellbeing.

In a related article, Olsen and Riley (2009)⁴⁵ discuss the Engelhard Project at Georgetown, which is a BTtoP funded project that embeds wellbeing into the curriculum and has had a broad reach. The courses include: management and organisational behaviour, social entrepreneurship, introduction the math modelling and theatre for social change. The Engelhard Project⁴⁶ is an international exemplar for embedding wellbeing across the curriculum. The project was established by a group of faculty and student affairs staff who were interested in exploring the connection between academic studies and students' broader life experiences of wellbeing, flourishing, and mental health. The project has offered nearly 500 courses to more than 19,200 students. The Engelhard Project has forged strong connections among faculty, student affairs staff, and students and has engaged in national conversations about the role of wellbeing in higher education.

In their discussion paper, Goss, Cuddihy and Michaud-Tomson (2010)⁴⁷ present an argument for a transformative framework for wellness education in higher education. Their literature review focuses on the individual overcoming barriers to their own awareness. They argue for an integrated theoretical framework for optimum wellness education that supports a learner-centred approach. Further, they call for curriculum design to include personal experiences, the need for reflective practice and self-managed learning approaches that validate and promote personal lifestyle change.

Review of institutional websites and grey literature

The websites (and, where available, prospectuses) of 40 Irish higher education were reviewed, including 29 institutions funded or partially funded by the Higher Education Authority and 11 privately funded institutions. The search focused on references in academic modules and syllabi to wellbeing, wellness, self-care, health, and personal development that was a timetabled mandatory or elective class, excluding student supports/services. This search was complemented by a search of the grey literature, including education, government, health and other policy documents, and conference proceedings, to explore existing practice nationally and internationally.

Fieldwork/ Obair allamuigh

Interviews (staff)

To gain greater insight into how wellbeing is embedded across the curriculum in Ireland, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with nine staff from six higher education institutions (universities, institutes of technology and technological universities). In some instances, the participants (six lecturers, two researchers and one staff member from student services) were introduced to the authors by members of the advisory group, who acted as gatekeepers, while in other cases participants were approached by the authors directly because of work they were involved in, as indicated on their institutional website. Some participants also approached the authors directly having found out about the project via press releases and social media. The interviews were conducted online and were recorded. Each lasted approximately one hour and focused on student wellbeing, curriculum design, examples of wellbeing workshops/training, and enablers, challenges or obstacles to embedding wellbeing in the curriculum.

Group discussions and survey (students)

To explore students' experiences of and perspectives on embedding wellbeing in higher education curricula, two group discussions were held, one arranged by the USI (n=13 student representatives) and the other by the National Forum (n=23 students). The sample reflected a cross section of students from first year through to postgraduate enrolled at universities (n=9), institutes of technology (n=9), technological universities (n=1) and other colleges (n=2). Students' ages ranged from 18 to 36 and they were drawn from a wide range of programme stages and fields of study.

Prior to each group discussion, the researchers gave a short presentation that included an overview and background to the study. Students were then asked for their perspectives on the idea of, and approaches to, embedding wellbeing in the curriculum. A link to a brief survey to record further student perspectives was shared in the 'chat' of the online discussion, and emailed after the meeting, and students were invited to complete the survey in their own time. The survey was also circulated directly to institutional student union contacts and via social media. In all, 38 completed survey responses were received.

Descriptive analysis was conducted across all gathered data.

Ethics approval for this study was granted by Institute of Technology, Sligo Ethics Committee.

Findings/ Torthaí

Overarching findings

The review of literature and practice revealed a number of high-level findings. Firstly, while there is extensive literature on curricular health and wellbeing promotion and prevention interventions in higher education, research on embedding wellbeing across the curriculum is considerably less common. Having said this, the empirical evidence available does demonstrate the efficacy of embedded content in supporting the wellbeing knowledge and skills of students.

In their examination of one curricular psychosocial wellness intervention, Conley, Travers, and Bryant, (2013) found that students had significantly greater perceived improvements while in the class, increases in psychosocial wellbeing, decreases in psychological distress, and greater adaptation to college, psychosocial adjustment and stress management. Further, the large-scale evaluation of 83 controlled interventions involving higher education students conducted by Conley, Durlak and Dickson, (2013) found that interventions embedded in the curriculum were effective:

In terms of intervention formats, those delivered as a class were more effective than small-group programs (e.g., workshops outside of class; interventions conducted in residence halls or other campus settings), perhaps because students are most used to learning new content in classes, and they also might bring more effort and motivation to course-based interventions that are led and evaluated by an instructor⁴⁸.

The longitudinal studies of Jafari (2017) and Polacek, Erwin and Rau (2013) also evidenced the efficacy of embedding wellbeing in the curriculum. In the study by Jafari, students reported continued gains in areas such as exercising, understanding of emotional intelligence and adopting healthy nutrition one year on and follow-up data suggests that lifestyle courses may lead to long lasting behaviour change, increased personal and professional success and increased retention. Similarly, Polacek, Erwin and Rau (2013) found that wellness behaviours and knowledge had lasting outcomes for the students surveyed and wellness behaviours established during their higher education continued after graduation. Conley, Durlak and Kirsch, (2015), who reviewed 103 controlled published and unpublished interventions involving higher education students, also found that skill-oriented programmes that include supervised practice show the strongest benefits.

A second overarching finding is that existing practice of embedding wellbeing in curricula in Irish higher education is somewhat ad hoc, relying on the efforts of

individual staff members, programme teams and leaders, rather than being a coherent approach at system level, as can be found at primary and post-primary levels. Of the 38 students who completed the survey, only four had experienced embedded wellbeing content as part of their studies. However, the majority of the students (n =30) stated that they would like their academic studies to include content on personal wellbeing.

It would be beneficial for students across all disciplines to have wellbeing built into their curriculum, to encourage and enable healthy practices throughout their studies. (Survey response 5)

Needs to be integrated into classes as it should be integrated into work and general life ... Needs to be given gravity and seriousness rather than being a nice add-on. (Survey response 9)

The examination of 40 HEI websites and prospectuses in Ireland found few publicly available examples of wellbeing embedded in the curriculum of higher education. Classes that do exist tend not to use uniform models of delivery, typically address a wide range of subject matter and often last only a few sessions. Student participants in this study indicated that wellbeing content is mainly included in allied health fields and not generally applied to personal wellbeing. Most commonly, topics such as nutrition, physical activity, sleep, alcohol and substance use are briefly discussed in transition classes for first year students entering higher education. Self-care is also a common focus in placement preparation modules and applied psychology classes.

Thirdly, existing practice is in its early days and, as mentioned above, does not yet have the benefit of a rigorous evidence base. The practice of embedding wellbeing in the curriculum is relatively new in Ireland and some evaluations have yet to be completed. There is an opportunity for the current emerging practice in the Irish context to undergo evaluation and produce written evidence of success or lessons learned, as has been done in the USA, Canada and the UK.

The examination of research, practice and student/staff perspectives in the current research revealed three main approaches to embedding wellbeing in higher education curricula, as well as three main enablers to these efforts. These will now be detailed.

Approaches to embedding wellbeing

Embedding wellbeing through mandatory content

Mandatory classes or modules are compulsory and must be taken by all students to complete their programme. In this case, the content is often deemed necessary for success in a professional role in the chosen field.

Polacek, Erwin and Rau (2013) ⁴², investigated this in their study of the impact of general education wellness courses in the US. General education is based on the theory that all students should have a common experience or be exposed to particular knowledge. General education courses are mandatory, credit bearing and required for programme progression. This longitudinal study found that wellness behaviours and knowledge gained through general education courses had lasting outcomes and the wellness behaviours established continued after graduation.

In Ireland wellbeing is seldom found as a mandatory subject in higher education. No reference was found to personal wellbeing as a stand-alone subject among the 40 institutional websites or prospectuses reviewed during this study. Discussions with both staff and students suggested that personal wellbeing is considered essential for those who will be involved in the care of others and there are emerging requirements by professional regulatory bodies to incorporate wellbeing. It was therefore expected that if personal wellbeing would be found anywhere it would be in the allied health fields. However, the only mandatory classes with personal wellbeing content embedded in Ireland were found in schools of business, and sport and leisure. Illustrative examples of how wellbeing is being incorporated into mandatory classes in Ireland and elsewhere can be found in Table 2.

Table 2 Illustrative examples of embedding wellbeing through mandatory content

IRISH EXAMPLES

Dundalk Institute of Technology: Life Skills for the Resilient Graduate

- In six programmes in DkIT School of Business & Humanities since 2017 ~25 students / class. Provides training on stress management; mindset; goals and habits; strengths; time management and planning for stressors of the workplace and life in general.

Munster Technological University: Health and Personal Wellbeing

- Health & leisure studies at MTU Kerry since 2016, ~80 students / year.
- Introductory health studies module exploring lifestyle, health choices and personal wellness, concept of health, health perception, and risky behaviour in college students.

University College Cork: Person Environment Occupation One

- Occupational Therapy course at UCC for first year students. Cohort of ~30 students / year.
- Examines the occupational nature of humans across the lifespan, begins by understanding yourself as an occupational being and the relationship between occupation and health.

Trinity College Dublin: Work and wellbeing

- Global Business at TCD since 2018 ~50 students per year.
- Examines personal wellbeing, organisational / societal wellbeing, work-life balance, stress, wellbeing promotion, wellbeing initiatives from case studies in various business contexts (e.g., corporate, non-profit).

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

Binghamton University

- All undergraduate students must take a two-credit health / wellness requirement ~15,000 undergraduate students. List of all health & wellness course descriptions.
- Sample class HWS 233: Stress Management - explores stress management through practice and theory, recognizing stressors, effects of stress, and impact of prolonged stress responses. Stress management techniques like exercise, nutrition, breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, meditation, and cognitive strategies like goal setting and time management.

Pennsylvania State University

- Requires three credits of health and wellness as part of general education in baccalaureate degree programmes. ~40,000 undergraduate students, list of health and wellness classes
- Sample class is Values, Health & Academic Success - Addresses students' social wellness, healthy relationships, sexual ethics, sexual health, mental health, positive decision making, bystander intervention, alcohol consumption, healthy eating, awareness of biases and cultural differences.

Rochester Institute of Technology

- All undergraduate students must complete two wellness courses for their graduation requirements ~15,000 undergraduate students. Wellness Education Department offers courses in nine disciplines with close to 200 classes offered, list and descriptions of Wellness Courses.

Embedding wellbeing through elective content

Elective classes or modules are a credit bearing part of a course that students can choose to complete. An elective module may be selected as most relevant to the student's interests or to their career plan. Some examples of for-credit assessed electives in Ireland include open undergraduate elective modules in schools of health science and physiotherapy, postgraduate electives, and electives in the school of business and communications. Because electives are selected based on a student's personal or professional interest, the content is often seen by students as relevant and connected to their lives, a circumstance which can enable the success of embedded wellbeing content, as discussed later. Illustrative examples of how wellbeing is being incorporated into elective classes or modules in Ireland and elsewhere can be found in Table 3.

Table 3 Illustrative examples of embedding wellbeing through elective content

IRISH EXAMPLES

University College Dublin: 'Sort Your Life Out and Thrive'

- UCD Public Health, Physio & Sports Sciences since 2021 ~30 students.
- Aims to provide lifelong skills for living, learning, and being well by fostering physical, cognitive, emotional, social skills, behaviour change, self-reflection and tracking personal data of interest.

Trinity College Dublin: 'Planning & Managing Your Research & Career'

- TCD PhD elective ~25 students / year since 2011.
 - Strategies and tools to help manage research process, successfully complete degree, time management, communication skills, career planning and teamwork.
-

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

University of Alberta: Introduction to Personal Health and Wellbeing

- Individual-based analysis of personal health and wellness, emphasis on planning and managing health and wellbeing within the context of the current health care system. Blended format allows application of health to personal context, week includes a lecture, online activities, and a seminar.

University of Minnesota: courses focused on integrative healing and wellbeing

- Sample class is *Connected or Disconnected: Social Media and Your Wellbeing* - explores relationship with social media, effects on overall wellbeing, impact of digital decisions, assess online presence and develop skills to have a more meaningful relationship with social media.

University of Michigan: Living Well in College and Beyond

- Class explores the eight dimensions of wellbeing through a lens of positive psychology, behaviour change, social justice, intercultural development, health and wellness as part of success, resilience, choices that reduce harm and promote wellbeing, and find meaning and purpose.

University of Rhode Island: Mental Health First Aid

- Class teaches people to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness or distress, provides mental health literacy on anxiety, depression, and substance abuse, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder. 1,300 campus community trained since 2019.

Ryerson University: Personal Finance

- Teaches financial planning, budgeting, financial goals, tax, debt and credit management, etc. to students who may not have a strong math ability and / or interest so they will be better able to manage and plan their own finances.
-

Curricular infusion

Curricular infusion can be defined as the infusion of ideas, values or practices into an existing course or discipline. In this case curricular infusion would use the students' own discipline to develop an understanding of wellbeing and related issues. When curricular infusion is successful⁴⁹, students go beyond merely absorbing information by integrating reflections on how these issues apply not only to themselves and the academic content of their courses but to the people they will be working with in the community as well as across a wide range of disciplines. Taking into consideration the key societal concern for wellbeing, infusing it into the curriculum has deep-rooted value:

Raising awareness also increases the likelihood that students may be more effective at managing their own wellbeing and able to access appropriate support, where necessary - both for themselves and one another.⁵⁰

Houghton and Anderson (2017)⁵¹ stress that a 'tokenistic, or bolt-on, approach' needs to be avoided. If students are to recognise the value of the embedded content it must be relevant to the discipline. Some examples of how curricular infusion is being used to embed wellbeing into existing modules in Ireland include segments of classes in business programmes, communications, law, sciences, allied health disciplines and computer science. Illustrative examples of how wellbeing is being embedded through curricular infusion in Ireland and elsewhere can be found in Table 4.

Table 4 Illustrative examples of embedding wellbeing through curricular infusion

IRISH EXAMPLES

NUI Galway: The Student Resilience Programme

- Offered in 'Skills for Success' Commerce 1st year module NUI Galway to ~1200 students.
- Focused on positive mental health and interpersonal effectiveness, co-designed by academics / student services, 4 core sessions delivered and assessed in groups, lectures, eLearning resources.

Munster Technological University: '[5 actions to wellbeing](#)' 6 week initiative

- Piloted at MTU Kerry to ~800 students through existing classes in a variety of disciplines.
- Five ways to wellbeing; connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, give to others. Materials and training were provided to instructors and then incorporated into their spring 2021 classes.

Dublin City University: "Applied Data Science"

- DCU Computer science module currently piloting an assessed wellbeing component incorporated into an existing, disciplinary final year module in spring 2021 term.
-

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

The University of Iowa

- [Integrated gender-based violence and discrimination prevention education](#) in classes across disciplines.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

- Curriculum infusion programme to help influence the campus culture around alcohol use.

Georgetown University: [Engelhard Project](#)

- [Connecting the Safety Net to the Heart of the Academic Environment](#) addresses health issues, like depression, alcohol and substance abuse, infusion of wellbeing through various forms of engaged and community-based learning, to reach students on a personal level.

UCLA [MindWell](#) Program

- Aims to promote wellbeing, resilience, social connectedness, and creative achievement and highlights the academic courses in all disciplines related to mental health.

Georgia Tech mental health curriculum

- In [first-year seminars](#), partnership of student services and subject academics for instructional delivery and resources.

Open University: 'Embedding well-being in the curriculum'

- A whole university approach including students, academics, support staff on barriers and progress to [implementing inclusive wellbeing practice in teaching and learning](#).

Simon Fraser University Canada: ['Wellbeing in learning environments'](#)

- Provides examples and resources in a variety of academic disciplines that infuse wellbeing into projects, assessments, like group projects on resilience, course evaluations, career planning, etc.

The University of British Columbia: [Mental Health Literacy Programming](#)

- Example in the mechanical engineering 2nd year programme, mental health literacy components were embedded like stress response, strategies for coping with stress, and resources on campus.
-

Student perspectives on approaches to embedding wellbeing

Considering the various approaches to embedding wellbeing in the curriculum, student representatives initially raised concerns that there is no space for wellbeing content in an already overcrowded curriculum. Indeed, students commented that the design of the curriculum itself can impact on student wellbeing if student workload is not carefully considered in the planning stage.

There was consensus among most student participants that some form of curricular infusion would be the best way to embed wellbeing content. Discussing the approach of embedding wellbeing as an elective class, some thought this risked reaching only students who were already interested in the subject. The idea of a mandatory wellbeing class garnered conflicting responses, with some students suggesting it would be the only way to reach all students and others arguing that students should have a choice as to whether they engage with wellbeing content. These students raised the concern that mandatory wellbeing content could be seen as unnecessary and unconnected to their discipline.

There's a danger it could become the 'doss' class like SPHE. (Student - discussion group 2).

Students also stressed that how wellbeing content was delivered needed careful consideration to avoid a tokenistic, or bolt-on, approach. If students do not recognise that embedded wellbeing content is relevant to their lives or their discipline, they will find it difficult to engage and see the value for their future lives and careers.

Enablers to embedding wellbeing

Making content relevant to students and their personal and professional development

There was consensus amongst staff participants that for the embedding of wellbeing across the curriculum to reach desired outcomes, it must require students to reflect, and to apply the associated skills and concepts to their lives and subject areas. Goss, Cuddihy and Michaud-Tomson (2010) call for curriculum design that includes personal experiences, the need for reflective practice and self-managed learning approaches that validate and promote personal lifestyle change.

To embed it, students need to see the relevance of it, they must reflect on what did they learn, how did it impact their person, so it's personal... they had to create a kind of an action plan picking one thing that they like to pull forward for their wellbeing during college, and create an action plan, because that's a behavioural intervention, when somebody commits to something they're much more likely to follow through on it so. (Staff - interview 3)

Students practise turning the ideas gathered from class back onto themselves in order to shed light on their own beliefs, their habits and behaviours.

It's really about cultivating yourself, personal development, being confident, being prepared to go out there and do different things... (Staff - interview 6)

As an example, reflective class assignments aid students in developing deeper self-knowledge, self-awareness, and self-concept. A strong sense of self is a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing⁵². Having greater psychological wellbeing is a protective factor against mental distress, stress and the associated negative coping behaviours like binge drinking, missing class, poor academic performance, smoking and substance abuse. Increased psychological wellbeing results in positive functioning, healthy decision making and lifestyle choices, happiness/life satisfaction, lifelong health and financial success.

Leadership

The review articles examined during this research recommend the need for further rigorous research into the outcomes and potential benefits of universal health promotion and prevention programmes for higher education students. If, as their research confirms, embedding wellbeing across the curriculum is beneficial to students, then 'effective population reach' needs to be considered.

To reach a broad audience, effective interventions need to become systemic in higher education. In other words, they need to be integrated into the routine structure and programming of higher education institutions and to have support from students, staff, and administrators.⁵³

A rationale for embedded wellbeing is that many supports for student wellbeing run alongside the curriculum rather than being integrated into it and that students who require support may not necessarily access these supports so having wellbeing integrated into the curriculum would support these and all students.

Institutional leaders play an important role in establishing a shared culture that supports wellbeing. If wellbeing is to be embedded across the curriculum, and achieve effective population reach, leaders need to ensure that their institutions adopt a strategic approach that prioritises wellbeing across the whole institution and ensures appropriate resources are allocated. Finley (2016), provides several practical steps for campus leaders to develop their commitment to fostering student wellbeing.

Winning the space in the programme needs champions.
(Staff - interview 2)

There was consensus amongst staff participants that wellbeing classes would not have been established without high-level support within their departments, schools and at institutional level. The staff in this study were aware that space in the curriculum is at a premium and adding additional content needed to be well evidenced.

We were very lucky in that [a senior member of staff] had been in the department for a while and she was very aware of how important health and wellbeing was to student engagement. (Staff - interview 5)

If wellbeing is to be embedded in core curricula, this will require time, space, staff professional development, and dedicated resources, none of which is possible without high-level institutional support.

Intra-institutional Collaboration

Collaboration plays an equally important role in establishing a wellbeing institution culture. The research of Conley, Durlak and Dickson, (2013)⁵⁴ recognised that in planning how best to integrate and coordinate the activities and resources of various institutional departments, such as student support services and academic departments, to benefit as many students as possible, collaboration is essential. The importance of intra-institutional collaboration was also stressed by Jafari (2017)⁴³ and Olsen and Riley (2009)⁵⁵.

If wellbeing is to be embedded across the curriculum, creative collaborative strategies need to be adopted to incorporate wellbeing across all disciplines and the whole institution.

I think you need the school to see that there is a value not only a need, and an opening for it, and then you do need a staff member with expertise ... or within the university you draw on the different services available, everyone has a spot they'd be able to do for their area, like the disability, counselling, health. (Staff - interview 3)

Most staff participants felt that the wellbeing classes they had been involved in would not have succeeded without effective partnership between academic departments and student services or wellbeing subject matter experts to develop wellbeing content. These partnerships make embedded wellbeing across the curriculum scalable as not all lecturers may be familiar or comfortable with delivering wellbeing subject matter. Wellbeing content can be developed by experts who provide structured information, lectures and resources to incorporate in classes. The wellbeing activities, application and synthesis should be topical, suit the areas of knowledge, and comfortably fit in with the discipline in order to promote student response and usefulness.

I know academics often wouldn't be working all that closely with student services ... [but] they've clearly got the credibility and they genuinely do know wellbeing and how to design good activities for students ... that kind of cross working, I think that's why we've done well [we have a] high profile in the college and people are very aware of it. (Staff - interview 6)

One staff participant (Interview 5) described a collaborative six-week embedded wellbeing programme designed to enhance the student experience and engagement in spring 2021. The programme was implemented through 30 online classes to approximately 800 students in a variety of disciplines. All the wellbeing content was created by a health and wellbeing academic, including a weekly email with the topic overview and briefing session, presentations, videos, resources, and different delivery tools and options depending on type of class, i.e., online lecture or workshop or lab. The module instructors then had the task of embedding wellbeing into class material, making it relevant and part of the core discipline being studied, not tokenistic or appearing as an extra study load. This example of collaboratively embedding wellbeing in the curriculum proved successful, with 90% of students who responded to a post-initiative survey indicating that they would implement the wellbeing ideas/strategies in the future.

Limitations/ Teorainneacha

The number of staff and student participants in this study is small and generalisations should therefore be avoided. However, this study provides an initial exploration of evidence, practice and perspectives in the area of embedding wellbeing in the higher education curriculum.

Suggestions for the Future/ Moltaí don todhchaí

This is the first national study in Ireland to explore how wellbeing is being embedded within higher education curricula. It outlines examples of existing practice and provides links to resources nationally and internationally. The aim is to inform future development for embedding wellbeing across the curriculum with particular reference to how it can best be enabled.

It is clear from this initial work that more needs to be done to understand what constitutes good practice in embedding wellbeing in the curriculum and to develop an evidence base that supports our understanding of what works and why. What is included in the curriculum and how it is taught and assessed need to be considered in the context of supporting student wellbeing. This requires that staff capabilities both in terms of curriculum design and delivery are further developed through a strong focus on the professional development of those who teach and related processes and structures.

1 More work is needed to identify what constitutes good practice in embedding wellbeing in the curriculum and to develop an evidence base that supports our understanding of what works and why.

2 Staff capabilities both in terms of curriculum design and delivery including approaches to how wellbeing can be embedded need to be further developed through a strong focus on the professional development of those who teach and related processes and structures.

Within each institution it is essential that a whole of institution approach is taken to supporting student wellbeing. Senior management, academic and support staff, and students should work in partnership to ensure institutional capabilities, culture and practices support student success¹. The latter will be enhanced by sharing expertise,

1 For further information please see Embedding Student Success: A Guiding Framework 2021. <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/guiding-framework-for-embedding-student-success/>

resources and approaches and by building strong connections between co-curricular supports for student wellbeing and embedding wellbeing in the curriculum. To embed wellbeing creatively and effectively, adequate resourcing will be required for curriculum design including input from students to ensure that wellbeing knowledge and skills are recognised and valued components to help them achieve student success. While taking a whole-of-institution approach is crucial, it is important to bear in mind that embedding any educational imperative throughout an institution's teaching and learning infrastructure requires time, space and adequate resourcing to bring about. Consideration needs to be given to incorporating student wellbeing as part of the institutional teaching and learning strategy or equivalent strategic plan relating to teaching and learning. Curriculum design can directly impact on student wellbeing and HEIs need to avoid the curriculum having a negative impact through excessive content and assessment overload not just in the individual modules but across the whole programme.

3 Within each higher education institution it is essential that a whole of institution approach is taken to supporting student wellbeing. This will require time, space and adequate resourcing.

4 Senior management, academic and support staff, and students should work in partnership to ensure institutional capabilities, culture and practices support student success.

One of the challenges of embedding wellbeing is that it must compete with other topics for space in the curriculum. Nationally, there is a focus on developing agile curricula and micro credentials funded through the Human Capital Initiative. The current pandemic has highlighted the need to embed digital capability as a core aspect of preparing students for life and work in a dynamic digital world. Further, there is a spotlight on education for sustainable development that will be driven by the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030, currently under development. All are important areas for ensuring our students are prepared for life and work once they have completed higher education. However, there are good examples of how new concerns and priorities have been embedded in busy curricula over the past 20 years. Graduate attributes have been married with disciplinary content through forms of teaching and assessment such as groupwork and project-based assessment. Digital literacies have been infused into curricula through information search and retrieval tasks, and assessment outputs including multimedia artefacts. Community-engaged learning has demonstrated that curricula can evolve to include undergraduate research and interdisciplinary work and connected students with regional and local concerns. The potential is there for wellbeing to be infused into teaching and learning in the disciplines through reflection on existing curricula and

their ongoing dynamic development. Such reflection and development is ongoing in light of national and international priorities. Although there are pockets of innovative development evident in the Irish higher education sector, the future development of embedding wellbeing in the curriculum would benefit from an evidence informed, nationally led, collaborative approach to identifying and sharing the features of good practice. A national network/community should be developed to share experience and expertise across the sector. This network, once established, should link to existing networks e.g., Healthy Campuses Network.

5 The Irish higher education sector would benefit from an evidence informed, nationally led, collaborative approach to identifying and sharing the features of good practice.

6 A national collaborative network should be developed facilitate collaboration and to share experience and expertise across the sector.

To develop creative wellbeing content those delivering it will require adequate re-sourcing for curriculum design and input from students to ensure that wellbeing knowledge and skills are recognised and valued components to help them achieve student success.

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