

## 2019 Strategic Leaders Global Summit

### *Cultural Contexts of Health and Wellbeing in Graduate Education*

September 1-3, 2019 | Manchester, England

*Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. – WHO definition*

### **Statement of Principles and Practical Actions**

After the 2019 Global Summit on Graduate Education, it is evident that supporting health and wellbeing is a priority for the international graduate education community. The prevalence of mental health issue among students is recognized in all parts of the world. Universities have engaged in a broad set of responses to help to identify and address this, but efforts have not always addressed the unique needs of graduate students. There is a growing realization that doctoral candidates face a distinctive set of challenges arising from issues such as expectations of high achievement, supervisory relationships, and career insecurity. We recognize that our universities are both an enriching and stressful environment, and we must work to create spaces and communities that support wellbeing in an integrated way that addresses the needs of students, faculty, staff, and the academic mission of the university. The wellness of our students directly affects the overall operation of the university.

### **Practical Actions**

- Focus on prevention and resilience by building communities and offering resources and training.
- Contribute to a culture of inclusion that supports mental health and wellbeing for **all** members of the university community.
- Adopt a consistent terminology to distinguish between mental health, mental illness, and mental wellbeing.
- Situate the student voice at the center of mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Coordinate programs and practices supportive of mental wellbeing.
- Develop and implement strategies to identify students in need of support and establish clear pathways to available services.
- Delineate between the roles of supervisors and mental health professionals by clarifying expectations and responsibilities for supervisors.
- Provide training and resources to support supervisors.
- Identify and address the causes of excessive stress, such as institutional policies and practices, meeting high expectations, career uncertainty, supervisor relationships, and financial constraints.
- Develop plans for responding to the mental health consequences of traumatic events.
- Evaluate in a consistent and comparable way the impact of measures taken to promote better graduate student mental wellbeing.