



## **Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka**

**Policy Title – Policy for Psychological Counseling Services and Handling Distressful Situations Encountered by Students**

**Policy Number – Policy / SUSL / Stu & Sup / 03**

**Effective Date – 24.02.2020**

**Revised Dates – NA**

**Approving Authority – The Council, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka**

**Administrative Responsibility – The Council**

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### **Purpose:**

Enabling effective, efficient and reliable psychological counseling service.

### **Scope**

Students of all faculties, academic, administrative, academic staff, non-academic staff along with the community outside.

### **Legislative context:**

This policy for counseling will be supported by the university establishment code, UGC Circulars and internal circulars and circular letters, guidelines and etc...

### **Definitions**

Term	Definition
University	All faculties, centers, branches of SUSL
Staff	Staff of all categories in the university
Counseling	Growth oriented professional helping service
Psychological Counselor	Staff member who is qualified and experienced for the purpose
Counseling center	Any center of University practices psychological counseling

Counselee	Any person represents the above specified scope who by him/her self or by a third party seek help of a psychological counselor

### **Policy statement:**

The Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka shall be able to assure a secure, reliable and professional psychological counseling service to the entire University community extending the service to the community outside.

### **Supporting Documents:**

- i. The University act
- ii. Establishment code of HEI
- iii. Administrative and Financial Circulars (UGC, University etc...)
- iv. Other policy documents
- v. Code of discipline/code of ethics for Academics
- vi. Code of conduct/student charter
- vii. Human Right Code of Practice

### **Responsibility:**

The University council is responsible for the implementation of this policy for counseling

### **Promulgation:**

- i. This policy for counseling will be circulated as a document
- ii. Appear in the web site of the University
- iii. Establishment division of the university
- iv. This policy will be included in to the students' information package

### **Implementation:**

#### **Appointment of Counsellors**

1. Following qualifications are required to be appointed as a psychological counselor.

- a). Postgraduate Diploma or above postgraduate qualifications in Counseling Psychology

or,

- b). Valid Diploma in Counseling Psychology.

2. Psychological Counselor (Hereafter said PC) should be formally appointed by the Vice –Chancellor of the University after the evaluation of his/her qualifications

3. Any staff member from academic, administrative, or academic supportive staff who have met the above qualifications can be considered as a PC.

4. A PC, if not appointed under the University carder as a permanent PC, should be paid a nominal fee of Rs. 500 per month, or a PC should be paid a telephone allowance of Rs. 500.

5. PC if not a full time counselor shall serve at least 02 hours per week in the Psychological Counseling Center ( PCC)

### **Procedures of the Psychological Counseling Center**

a) PC is bound to follow all rules of discipline specified in the Establishment Code, and PC shall follow ethics of Counseling Psychology.

b) All PCs in the PCC should follow the same procedures specified pertaining to its practices and processes.

Exceptions:

Considering the context, here the Psychological Counseling happens in an Institute of Higher Education, PC shall responsibly follow up the progress of client assuring the welfare of the client. The follow up shall be done by means of a telephone call, SMS or and E-mail.

c) In case of psychiatric illness needs medical attention, the counselor is bounded by ethics to refer the client to a consultant psychiatrist with the consent of the student.

d) In case the major psychiatric illness needs the attention of a psychiatrist, medical attention the counselor should inform the parents or guardian of the client with or without the consent of the student (client).

d) PC/PCC is not responsible for any arbitrary behavior, or an accident happen at the personal realm of the client

e) In case of major psychiatric illness needs medical attention, PC should follow the procedure, as the respective administrative officers should be aware of such impaired students, and as demanded by a law enforcement body or UGC the PC/PCC or Administrative officer of the University are answerable UGC regarding psychiatric illness of a client, respective PC should send a Memo to Vice Chancellor and to the Dean of the faculty informing them the seriousness of the illness. However, Vice Chancellor, Dean and PC are responsible for keeping the privacy of such correspondence.

f) PC should maintain the client records following the format available in the PCC.

g) PCC should be administrated by a Director- Psychological Counseling Services/Chief Counselor, shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor of the University. Appointed director/Chief Counselor is responsible for the functioning and maintenance of PCC.

h) PCC shall extend its proactive services by screening all fresh entrants to the University for Psychological Disease /instabilities and the University, Faculty administration shall provide resources, assistance carrying out such healthy, innovative practices for the benefit of students.

- i) Once appointed, tenure of office in the post of Director/Chief Counselor is valid maximum for a time period of three years.
- j) The Director/Chief Counselor of the PCC shall produce an Annual Report to the Vice Chancellor regarding within the first month of every New Year summarizing the service and progress of the PCC
- k) PC is responsible to inform the respective Head, Dean or VC at specific times when the physical or psychological safety of the client is at risk due to the internal circumstances /conditions of the University, administrative officers responsible shall take necessary action for the wellbeing of the student.
- l) PCC shall yearly display a list of PCs in all faculties of the University, and Director – Psychological Counseling/Chief Counselor shall be responsible for keeping a list of faculty representatives to the PCC, and their names and contact numbers should be displayed at faculty notice boards.

Sub –section

**Policy for handling serous Physical/Mental Illness or distress situations among Students.**

- a) All academic staff, administrative staff, academic wardens, sub wardens, Martial or any officer of similar capacity responsible shall alert student support systems in the University when they notice such illness or distress situations experienced by a student.
- b) In case of serous Psychiatric illness or similar distress situation, respective Heads, Deans, Academic Warden, Sub warden shall inform the following officers relevant
  - Assistant Registrar –Student Affairs
  - Martial ((In case of disciplinary issues)
  - Director –Psychological Counseling (If relevant)
- c) Assistant registrar or his appointed representative as a student welfare officer of the institution is with the responsibility of contacting parents/guardian and he/she is responsible for the necessary communication
- d) In circumstances the student needs transport, security or temporary guardianship at the times of such as hospitalization, the student welfare officer who is responsible to Director- Student welfare or shall accompany student to the relevant institution of care or home. In such circumstances, all other responsible officer may contact Director – Student welfare or Assistant Registrar –Student Welfare.
- e) Considering the gender of the distressed student, a responsible male/female officer proposed under the statement (d) shall travel/accompany the student.
- f) At times of a serious physical/mental illness occur at the halls of residence, respective sub warden shall inform the academic warden, Academic sub warden is with the responsibility of informing the respective Dean of the Faculty or Vice Chancellor depending on the gravity of the issue encountered by the student.
- g) At such distressful situations the University should assure the availability of transport for the distressed party within 30 minutes since the service is requested by the responsible officer.

h) All such events should compulsorily be reported to the Assistant Registrar – Student Affairs and he/she shall maintain records of such events.

### **TOR for Psychological Counselors**

1. Psychological Counselor (PC) is appointed by the Vice Chancellor of the University for a period of one year.
2. Unless the PC is a permanent psychological counsellor, all other PCs from University Academic staff shall be paid a nominal fee of Rs. 500 and a telephone allowance of Rs. 500 or both.
3. PC (if not a permanent psychological counselor appointed by the University) shall spend minimum two hours (02 hours in the relevant counseling center per week, and continuous non-availability as a PC for more than one month may automatically cancel the appointment as a PA.
4. PC is bound to abide by all codes of discipline in the University and are deemed to follow professional ethics of psychological counseling
5. It is mandatory for PC to follow all formats in the PCC maintaining records of the clients.
6. PC shall enter the signature of attendance in the log book available in the PCC
7. In case of major psychiatric illness/or any similar distressful condition to the client, PC shall make the referral to a psychiatrist with or without the consent of student after informing the parents or guardians of the student.
8. PC should adhere to the policy frame work for counseling services in the University
9. In case of major psychiatric illness/or any similar distressful condition to the client, PC shall inform the relevant administrative officers using the formats available in the PCC. Ex. Informing the VC, Dean, Assistant Registrar, Academic Warden, Sub warden
10. If a student needs transport PC may follow the established policy/ procedures in such distress situations.
11. PC shall report to the Director Counseling/Chief Counselor of the PCC communicating with regards to issues of practice.
12. Assistance towards the Director/Chief Counselor in the process of delivering outreach services through communication with University community or outer community is an obligatory part of tenure.
13. Assistance towards the Director/Chief Counselor in the process of preparing the Annual report and documents of communication.
14. PC is responsible for follow ups on clients who needs the service and follow up may happen within the procedures of PCC.

***\*\*\*\*\*This policy has been approved at 236<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting and at 257<sup>th</sup> Council***

***\*\*This policy was originally in Internal Quality Assurance Policies (Amended) document as Policy 03. Policy for Psychological Counseling Services and Handling Distressful Situations Encountered by Students. It was taken as a separate document in order to categories them in to different policy areas.***