

## 6.t. Student Counseling

<b>Subject</b>	Students	<b>Effective From</b>	Sep - 2011
<b>Policy #</b>	6.t.	<b>Latest Revision</b>	Dec - 2023
<b>Title of The Policy</b>	Student Counseling	<b>Next Review</b>	Dec - 2024
<b>Responsible Entity</b>	Student Affairs Deanship	<b>Policy Pages</b>	3
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b><u>Student's Counseling</u></b>  Student counseling refers to a confidential and professional service provided within AAU to support the mental, emotional, and social well-being of students. It involves the provision of guidance, support, and therapeutic interventions to help students address personal, academic, and social challenges, and develop skills necessary for their overall growth and success.</p> <p><b><u>Academic Counseling</u></b>  Academic counseling refers to a specialized form of counseling provided to students to support their educational and academic progress. It involves assisting students in identifying and achieving their academic goals, developing effective study habits, addressing academic challenges, and making informed decisions regarding their educational pathways.</p> <p><b><u>Career Counseling</u></b>  Student career counseling refers to a process of providing guidance, support, and resources to students in exploring and making informed decisions regarding their career paths and vocational aspirations. It involves assisting students in understanding their interests, strengths, values, and skills, and aligning them with potential career options.</p> <p><b><u>Crisis Interventions</u></b>  Student crisis interventions refer to immediate and targeted actions taken by professionals, such as counselors or educators, to address and mitigate acute and urgent situations that pose a significant risk to a student's well-being, safety, or mental health. Crisis interventions aim to provide immediate support, stabilize the situation, and ensure the student's safety and emotional well-being.</p>		
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework that promotes the availability and accessibility of student counseling services. It aims to create a safe and supportive environment that fosters the personal and academic development of students, enhances their resilience, and assists them in overcoming barriers to learning. The policy also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between students, parents/guardians, faculty, and counseling professionals to ensure the holistic well-being of students.</p>		
<b>Scope</b>	<p>This policy applies to all students enrolled in the educational institution, irrespective of their age, grade level, or academic program. It encompasses counseling services offered on-campus or through external partnerships. The policy encourages early identification and intervention in addressing student concerns and ensures that counseling services are provided in compliance with ethical standards and legal obligations.</p>		

<p><b>Statement</b></p>	<p><b>a. Availability of Counseling Services:</b> The educational institution shall strive to provide accessible and timely counseling services to students, maintaining an appropriate counselor-to-student ratio. Counseling services should be offered during regular school hours and extended hours if necessary, taking into account the diverse needs of the student population.</p> <p><b>b. Confidentiality:</b> Student counseling services shall be conducted in a confidential manner, respecting students' privacy rights and adhering to legal and ethical obligations. Information shared during counseling sessions should only be disclosed with the informed consent of the student or as required by law.</p> <p><b>c. Qualified Counselors:</b> The educational institution shall employ qualified and licensed/certified counselors who possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to provide effective counseling services to students. Ongoing professional development opportunities shall be provided to ensure counselors remain up-to-date with best practices in the field.</p> <p><b>d. Student Consent and Parent/Guardian Involvement:</b> Student counseling services may be initiated with the consent of the student or by referral from parents/guardians, faculty, or other concerned individuals. Collaboration with parents/guardians, while respecting students' autonomy and confidentiality, is encouraged to support the student's overall well-being.</p> <p><b>e. Multi-Dimensional Support:</b> The counseling services offered shall encompass various dimensions, including but not limited to personal, academic, and career guidance. Counselors shall work collaboratively with students to identify their strengths, interests, and areas of concern, providing guidance and resources to help them overcome challenges and make informed decisions.</p> <p><b>f. Crisis Intervention:</b> The policy shall outline a clear procedure for handling crisis situations and emergencies, including suicide risk assessments, self-harm incidents, or any immediate threat to student safety. Emergency response protocols should be established, and counselors should be trained to handle such situations appropriately.</p> <p><b>g. Referral Services:</b> In situations where the counseling needs of a student extend beyond the scope of the institution's counseling services, appropriate external referrals should be provided to ensure the student receives specialized support.</p>
<p><b>Procedures</b></p>	<p><b>General Procedures of the Student Counseling Policy:</b></p> <p><b>Scheduling Counseling Appointments:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Students can schedule counseling appointments by contacting the counseling office or using an online appointment system.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Efforts should be made to accommodate urgent or immediate counseling needs promptly.</p> <p><b>Initial Assessment and Intake:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Upon the first counseling session, the counselor conducts an initial assessment to gather relevant information about the student's concerns, background, and goals.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Informed consent is obtained from the student, explaining the counseling process, confidentiality, and any limitations.</p> <p><b>c.</b> If the student is a minor, consent from the parent/guardian may be required, unless an exception applies (e.g., legal emancipation or mature minor status).</p> <p><b>Counseling Sessions:</b></p>

	<p><b>a.</b> Counseling sessions are conducted in a private and confidential setting, allowing students to freely express their concerns.</p> <p><b>b.</b> The counselor employs various therapeutic techniques to assist students in exploring their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Counseling sessions are tailored to address the specific needs of each student, focusing on their personal, academic, and social well-being.</p> <p><b>d.</b> The counselor helps students develop coping strategies, problem-solving skills, and self-awareness, promoting their resilience and growth.</p> <p><b>Crisis Management:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> In the event of a crisis situation or emergency, counselors should follow established protocols for immediate intervention and student safety.</p> <p><b>b.</b> The counselor assesses the risk level and provides appropriate support, involving other professionals or authorities as needed.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Documentation of crisis situations, actions taken, and communication with relevant parties should be maintained.</p> <p><b>Collaboration and Referrals:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Counselors collaborate with teachers, administrators, and other relevant stakeholders to address student needs holistically.</p> <p><b>b.</b> If a student's counseling needs exceed the scope of on-campus services, appropriate external referrals are provided, considering the student's preferences and available resources.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Collaboration may include regular communication with parents/guardians to ensure a coordinated approach to student support.</p> <p><b>Record Keeping and Confidentiality:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Counselors maintain accurate and confidential records of each counseling session, adhering to legal and ethical guidelines.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Students' personal information and counseling records are securely stored, and accessible only to authorized personnel.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Information is shared with third parties only with the student's informed consent or when legally required for the student's safety or well-being.</p> <p><b>Ongoing Professional Development:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Counselors engage in continuous professional development activities to enhance their counseling skills and stay updated with research and best practices.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Attendance at relevant workshops, conferences, and training sessions is encouraged to ensure the delivery of effective counseling services.</p> <p><b>Policy Review and Evaluation:</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> The counseling policy is periodically reviewed and evaluated to assess its effectiveness and make necessary improvements.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Feedback from students, parents/guardians, and staff is considered in the policy evaluation process.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Policy revisions are made as required to align with changing needs and best practices.</p>
<b>Recent Changes</b>	