

STUDENT COUNSELLING POLICY

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1. Purpose

1.1 This policy and the related Procedural document establish the principles, standard and breadth of activities of the counselling service at Monaro Higher Education (MHE).

2. Principles

2.1 MHE has a duty to help its students overcome all academic and non-academic barriers to education and to take all circumstances which could disadvantage a student seriously. The variety of trials which students encounter often require psychological as well as academic intervention. MHE is committed to ensuring that students have access to any form of assistance the situation requires.

3. Context

3.1 MHE's Student Support Framework establishes the breadth of MHE's active concern for students' welfare. Counselling is a vital component of that care for many students. It is essential that all students find acceptance, respect and dignity at MHE.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to the Student Support Officer, all academic staff and all students at MHE.

5. Definitions

Counsellor – professional qualified to listen actively to clients, empower clients to change their self-perception and thought processes and equip clients to live and work more confidently.

Intervention – combination of measures, strategies and practices with a theoretical and professional basis designed to address an issue or concern.

Risk – circumstances with potential to harm life, health, wellbeing or academic performance.

6. Policy details

6.1 Seeking Counselling

6.1.1 Students are expected wherever possible to take responsibility for their own welfare and for addressing any issues (academic or otherwise) which arise during their studies or through assessment feedback. Students may initiate informal counselling with academic staff or formal counselling with the Student Support Officer or the Academic Skills Advisor for issues including but not limited to:

- Their course of study
- Educational experience
- Harassment, victimisation, bullying
- Accommodation issues
- Financial hardship
- Legal advice
- Disability
- Personal wellbeing and safety
- Mental health.

6.1.2 Academic staff may also initiate counselling. This will begin with an informal conversation with the student and may lead to their referring the student to the Student Services Officer or the Academic Skills and Advisor.

6.1.3 Formal and informal counselling will always be conducted professionally and impartially.

6.2 Informal Counselling

6.2.1 Unit Outlines and the MHE Learning Management System will state the regular hours which academic staff members have nominated when they are available for informal counselling, as well as their contact details. This will be six hours per week for Course Coordinators and full-time academic staff and two hours per week for sessional staff during trimesters.

6.2.2 Students must make bookings to meet staff.

6.2.3 Counselling will occur on the MHE campus for face-to-face students via video chat for online students.

6.2.4 Academic staff may give limited support with underlying issues which hamper students' academic progress and performance but will be aware of the limits of their professional expertise.

6.3 Formal Counselling

6.3.1 The Student Support Office will be open during business hours during trimesters. Students may book counselling sessions using the contact details on the website. The website will also contain contact details for organisations such as Lifeline for support at other times.

6.3.2 All counselling will be conducted professionally, confidentially and with all due respect for the student's right to privacy.

6.3.3 MHE is committed to ensuring that students are never disadvantaged in any way for their involvement in counselling and that no student is shamed or disrespected by staff or other students for using counselling.

6.3.4 The primary aim of the Student Support Officer is to collaborate with the student to improve the student's physical and mental health and optimise their academic performance.

7. Relevant Legislation and Regulations

MHE acknowledges its legal and regulatory obligations under the following frameworks:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework 2013
- Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

8. Policy Administration

Policy category	Student Services
Policy owner	Academic Board
Responsible officer	Student Support Officer
Approving authority	Academic Board
Contact officer	Student Support Officer
Approval date	10 th August 2023
Commencement date	10 th August 2023
Review date	Three years
Version	1.2
Related documents	Student Counselling Procedures Student Support Framework Academic Progression and Student at Risk Policy and Procedure Academic Language and Learning Support Policy and Procedure

9. Version control and change history

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Summary of changes
1.1	27 th May 2022	Academic Board	
1.2	10 th August 2023	Academic Board	Change the name from Academic Skills and Language Support Officer/Advisor to Academic Skills Advisor Change name of Student Welfare Officer to Student Support Officer

10. Reference /Benchmark

- Gateway Business College
119f2a99cea05fd7e60e735d2469267d.pdf (gatewaycollege.edu.au)
- International College of Management Sydney
Student Wellness Policy – Policy Library (icms.edu.au)
- South Australian Institute of Business and Technology
STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY (rackcdn.com)

- Sydney Institute of Higher Education
Sydney Institute of Higher Education