

1.4 STUDENT ADVICE AND COUNSELLING POLICY

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External Reference points	- Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan – Quality Assurance Framework and relevant policies (where applicable) - Academic Regulations of Partner Universities and Awarding Bodies		
Version Control			
Previous Version	New Version	Date	Update/Notes
V01	V02	14-04-2026	Clarified referral pathways to external services and expanded the confidentiality and consent section.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

IVY Academic Network is committed to providing a supportive, inclusive, and student-centred learning environment that enables students to achieve their academic potential and maintain their wellbeing throughout their studies. The institution recognises that student success depends not only on teaching and assessment, but also on timely advice, counselling, pastoral care, academic guidance, and access to appropriate support services. IVY Academic Network therefore provides academic advice, counselling, and pastoral support to help students manage academic, personal, social, emotional, and career-related concerns. The aim of this policy is to ensure that students know where to seek support, that support is provided in a fair and confidential manner, and that students are guided towards making informed decisions about their studies and personal development.

IVY Academic Network offers free and confidential student advice and counselling services to all enrolled students. Students may approach the Student Advisor, Student Counsellor, Programme Manager, Academic Coordinator, or other authorised support staff for guidance on academic concerns, institutional procedures, programme choices, attendance, progression, wellbeing, adjustment to life at IVY Academic Network, personal difficulties, or future study and career planning.

The Student Advice and Counselling Service can support students in the following ways:

- Discussing student concerns in a respectful and confidential manner.



- Exploring available options and helping students make informed decisions.
- Providing academic guidance for progression, further studies, and career direction.
- Referring students to relevant academic, pastoral, disability, wellbeing, or external support where required.
- Supporting students who may be at risk due to attendance, engagement, academic performance, wellbeing, or personal circumstances.
- Helping students understand institutional policies, procedures, responsibilities, and available support routes.

This service is highly confidential. Information shared by a student will not normally be disclosed to anyone outside the service without the student's consent. However, confidentiality may be limited where there is a serious concern about risk of harm to the student, risk of harm to others, safeguarding concerns, legal obligations, or the need to protect the wider IVY Academic Network community. In such cases, information will be shared only with relevant authorised persons and only to the extent necessary.

STUDENT ADVISOR

The Student Advisor should foster a collaborative relationship with the student by being accessible and by being a responsive listener. The goal should be to guide the student towards accepting responsibility for their own learning and academic decision-making. The duties of the advisor are therefore:

- Guiding students through self-assessment and helping them reflect on their academic strengths, areas for improvement, interests, and career goals.
- Helping students understand programme requirements, academic expectations, attendance responsibilities, progression routes, and institutional procedures.
- Assisting students in choosing programmes, planning academic pathways, accessing learning resources, and making informed decisions about their studies.
- Supporting students who may be struggling with academic adjustment, attendance, engagement, time management, or study planning.
- Referring students to academic support, counselling, disability support, pastoral care, or other relevant services where required.
- Maintaining appropriate records of advice given, while respecting confidentiality and data protection requirements.
- Developing knowledge of academic advising practice and improving the interpersonal, communication, and professional skills required for effective student support.

Academic advice may be provided through individual meetings, group sessions, orientation activities, progression briefings, or targeted support sessions, depending on the needs of students and the nature of the issue.

STUDENT COUNSELLOR

Counsellors address all students' academic, personal/social, and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating, and enhancing a comprehensive institutional counselling programme that promotes and enhances student success. Their duties and responsibilities include the following:



- Supporting and mentoring students in relation to emotional, mental, social, academic, and adjustment-related needs.
- Helping students develop skills in personal wellbeing, resilience, communication, decision-making, educational planning, and career development.
- Providing individual or group counselling support, where appropriate, to meet student needs.
- Developing counselling-related activities, awareness sessions, wellbeing resources, and support initiatives that promote student success.
- Consulting with students, parents, tutors, academic staff, and relevant institutional personnel only where the student gives consent, or where there is a serious risk or safeguarding concern.
- Referring students to external professional services, medical support, emergency services, or specialist agencies where the concern is beyond the scope of the counselling service.
- Supporting students who may be affected by stress, anxiety, family concerns, adjustment issues, low confidence, peer difficulties, academic pressure, or personal circumstances.
- Working with academic and administrative teams, where appropriate, to support students whose wellbeing may affect attendance, progression, engagement, or assessment performance.
- Maintaining confidential records of counselling interactions in accordance with institutional data protection and confidentiality requirements.

The Student Counsellor must act professionally, sensitively, and without judgement. Counselling support should respect student dignity, privacy, and personal circumstances.

Based on institutional experience of working with partner universities, bi-monthly meetings are organised by partner-university pastoral managers with interested students, providing an opportunity for students to share their concerns. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory for the IVY Academic Network pastoral manager or counsellor.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care refers to the wider culture of care, respect, and support that exists across IVY Academic Network. All staff have a role in creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where students feel respected, heard, and able to seek help.

IVY Academic Network promotes pastoral care through a framework of academic care by:

- Providing students with clear information about available academic, counselling, wellbeing, and support services.
- Encouraging students to seek help early when they face academic, personal, emotional, or social challenges.
- Monitoring student attendance, engagement, academic performance, and wellbeing indicators to identify students who may need support.
- Supporting students through academic advising, counselling, mentoring, and referral routes.



- Creating a respectful and inclusive environment where students from diverse backgrounds can participate fully.
- Encouraging staff and students to communicate with respect, empathy, and professionalism.
- Providing reasonable support to students with disabilities, health conditions, learning difficulties, or additional support needs.
- Supporting students during transition into IVY Academic Network, progression between levels, and preparation for future study or employment.

Parent or guardian support and involvement in their child's education is a critical factor in student engagement, achievement, and wellbeing, and reflects the institution's view of parents as partners and primary educators. The Student Counsellor engages with parents when the need arises, and only after the student has granted permission to do so, unless the student is at high risk of harm to themselves, or of harm to or from others.

REFERRAL AND ESCALATION

Where a student requires support beyond the role of the Student Advisor or Student Counsellor, the student may be referred to another internal or external support route.

Referral may be made to:

- Programme Manager or Academic Coordinator.
- Student Support Office.
- Disability or special needs support.
- Academic support services.
- Campus Head or Principal.
- Quality Assurance Department, where a policy or procedural issue is involved.
- External medical, psychological, emergency, or specialist services, where required.

Where there is serious concern about student safety, risk of harm, safeguarding, violence, harassment, or emergency circumstances, the matter must be escalated promptly to the relevant senior authority.