

Student Counselling Policy

Version number	2
Approved by	Corporate Governance Board
Date of approval	30 September 2022

Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SIHE) is committed to ensuring that all students have every opportunity to participate fully in their education, and vital to this is offering support for non-academic challenges that can impact students' education. Counselling services are one component of the suite of support services SIHE maintains in order to uphold its duty of care towards students, and assist students in succeeding in their academic activities.

This *Student Counselling Policy* outlines the principles underpinning the student counselling program at SIHE. It establishes the expected standard for counselling sessions, the ways in which SIHE will facilitate student access to counselling, and the confidentiality measures that will be in place to protect students.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at SIHE.

Principles

All students studying a higher education program at SIHE have the right to:

- Be treated equally and with respect, regardless of their background
- Feel safe and supported in their learning and teaching environment
- Access support services for assistance when extenuating factors affect their learning.
- SIHE is committed to upholding these rights both on-campus and online.
- Student support services will be designed to cater to each specific student cohort and must be responsive to changes in student needs.
- SIHE will ensure that all student difficulties are taken seriously. All students who approach student support staff will have their case considered individually, taking into account their specific context.
- SIHE will ensure that students do not experience any further disadvantage due to divulging their circumstances to SIHE student support staff.
- As per the *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*, SIHE will identify and offer support to students who are at risk of unsatisfactory progress and identify whether academic or non-academic issues are impacting the student's ability to progress through a program.
- Counselling services aim to holistically address the personal wellbeing of students in order to assist them in succeeding in their education.

- SIHE will ensure that student information is treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Procedures

Counselling

The Student Counselling Service will be available to students on an appointment-only basis.

Counselling sessions will be:

- Free of charge for all students
- Scheduled so that they do not clash with the student's classes, where possible.
- Within reason, flexible in terms of length and frequency to meet students' changing needs
- Conducted in a professional and ethical manner.

Information for students

As per the *Information for Students Policy*, information on counselling services, including how to access them, will be available to students via:

- The SIHE website
- The *Student Handbook*
- SIHE Orientation
- The LMS
- Flyers and posters around campus.

Referrals to Counselling

Self-referral

Students may make an appointment with the Student Counselling Service.

Referral by staff members

Any staff member may refer an individual student to the Student Counselling Service during a one-on-one consultation with the student.

External Referral

SIHE student support staff and administration staff are equipped to refer the student to external counselling and support services in addition to the Student Counselling Service.

Students will be treated equally to all other students if they seek external help. This includes continuing access to the Student Counselling Service.

Confidentiality

The Student Counselling Service will ensure that student details and information disclosed are treated with the utmost confidentiality.

The only instance in which the Student Counselling Service is required to communicate something revealed by the student during a counselling session is if the student:

- is at risk of attempting suicide
- Is unable to take care of themselves
- Is at risk of physically harming others.

The Student Counselling Service may discuss any matters they have become aware of as a result of counselling sessions with a student directly with the Dean where they feel such disclosure is warranted and in the best interest of the student

The Student Counselling Service must inform students of this obligation from the outset.

Records of student counselling session details will be securely maintained to ensure confidentiality, as per the *Data and Records Integrity Policy*.

Improvement of service

The Student Counselling Service will be monitored as per 'policy implementation and monitoring' below. Reports from monitoring activities will be used to implement improvements to the service to ensure that they are tailored to the needs of each specific student cohort.

The *Academic Board* will determine which recommendations to implement for improvement of the program and develop implementation plans with clear responsibilities and reporting arrangements.

Improvements must be made in accordance with the limits of authority defined in the *Delegations Register*. As such, the *Academic Board* may be required to submit improvement plans to the *Corporate Governance Board* for approval.

The positions and/or bodies responsible for implementing improvements must provide a report on implementation as per the planned reporting arrangement. This report will be considered part of the ongoing monitoring and reporting on student counselling services at SIHE.

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Academic Board* delegates responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy to the Dean.

The *Academic Board* will review all periodic reports and advice from relevant committees and staff members.

Additionally, the *Academic Board* will review all relevant student complaints, concerns raised by staff members, and instances of student or staff misconduct on an ongoing basis.

Based on these monitoring activities, the *Academic Board* must provide a report to the *Corporate Governance Board* and ensure that findings are taken into account in planning, quality assurance and improvement processes.

Definitions

Academic Board: the governing body responsible for academic matters, including teaching and learning, program approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes. The *Academic Board* reports to the *Corporate Governance Board*.

Academic staff: staff employed at SIHE in learning and teaching or research capacity.

At-risk student: a student who is identified as being at risk of failing a unit and therefore at risk of satisfactory progress through a program of study; or a student who fails a core or compulsory unit, or fails 50% or more of the credit points in a study period, and are thus 'at risk' of unsatisfactory progress.

Corporate Governance Board: the governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability of the institution and the quality of its higher education delivery. The *Corporate Governance Board* guides Management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the Academic Board.

Counselling services: a support service offered by SIHE to any student experiencing personal problems that needs or requests professional help and advice.

Student Counselling and Wellbeing Officer: a non-academic member of SIHE staff responsible for providing students with information regarding non-academic support services. A student support officer can refer students to counsellors, general practitioners, and other health services.

Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Academic Board* every three years.

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	Corporate Governance Board	05/02/2018	Adopted	05/02/2021
2	Corporate Governance Board	30 September 2022	Policy changed to reflect that a professional student counselling service, external to SIHE, will be available to students as opposed to SIHE employing an internal Student Counseling and Wellbeing Officer. The change is made to ensure highest professional standards of counselling are available to students and to better assure independence	30 September 2025

End of document: "Student Counselling Policy"

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Related Documents		
		Data and Records Integrity Policy
		Disability Support Policy
		Information For Students Policy
		International Student Services Policy
		Orientation Program Policy
		Student Welfare Policy
		Delegations Register
		Student Counselling and Wellbeing Plan