


Category	Student Support	Policy Number	ACA-STS-102	 جامعة زايد ZAYED UNIVERSITY
Classification	Public	Version	3.0	
Responsible Office	Provost	Policy Owner	SCC	
Date Approved	22 August 2024	Effective Date	13 September 2024	
Date Last Reviewed	6 August 2024	Due Date for Next Review	22 August 2027	

POLICY

Student Counseling Center

1. Purpose

To establish guidelines for offering Zayed University students with counseling services that are effective, efficient, and of the highest professional quality.

2. Scope of Application

This policy is applicable to all Zayed University students.

3. Definitions

Executive Management Offices	Offices of the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Vice-President and Chief Executive Officer, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, and the Chief Administration and Finance Officer.
Person of Determination	A person suffering from a temporary or permanent, full, or partial deficiency or infirmity in [their] physical, sensory, mental, communicational, educational, or psychological abilities to the extent that limits [their] possibility of performing the standard requirements (UAE Federal Law no.29 of 2006).
Preventative Services	Preventative services aim to prevent the onset or recurrence of mental health difficulties where possible. Preventative services are designed to raise awareness, build resilience, and develop coping skills.
Provost	Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Restorative Services	Restorative services are designed to improve the mental health of students who are already experiencing difficulties. The goal of restorative services is to help students manage and overcome mental health challenges and improve their quality of life.
SCC	Student Counseling Center
University	Zayed University

4. Policy

- 4.1** Zayed University (“**University**”) provides professional counseling services to students through the Student Counseling Center (“**SCC**”) to support their wellbeing and personal growth.
- 4.2** The SCC offers two (2) main types of service, preventative and restorative, to help students reach their personal and academic goals.
- 4.3** The SCC is committed to offering students of determination academic accommodations to remove barriers to their education and learning. If a mental health condition leads to an impairment in functioning, academic accommodations can be provided to improve student accessibility to learning materials and activities.
- 4.4** Counseling services are offered in accordance with the standards prescribed by the American Counseling Association (“**ACA**”), the professional guidelines prescribed by the International Association of Counseling Services (“**IACS**”) and the UAE Ministry of Health (“**MOH**”)’s medical code of ethics.
- 4.5** Counselors at the SCC are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with the University Code of Ethics as well as the standards of practice prescribed by the counseling profession. It is expected that counselors fulfill their primary responsibility to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of their clients. When the prescribed ethical and professional standards of conduct are breached it is considered misconduct.
- 4.6** Students seeking counseling sessions will be provided with time-limited confidential counseling. Students may access up to 12 individual sessions.
 - 4.6.1** The session limit may be renewed if the student is unable to access community resources due to financial or family limitations.
 - 4.6.2** The renewal of confidential counseling sessions is determined through an agreement between the counselor and the student concerned, based on the current issue, the availability of resources, and the student’s extended need.
 - 4.6.3** Students may access an unlimited number of workshops, groups, and trainings.
- 4.7** Counseling can be terminated when counseling goals and/or session limits have been reached, or upon the student’s request. The termination of a counseling service must be a joint decision of the client and counselor with respect to the client's autonomy.
- 4.8** The SCC collaborates with other academic and service units on campus to provide students with comprehensive care. Each student’s right to confidentiality is upheld during collaboration with the other units.
- 4.9** In order to maintain the standards of the profession as well as the administrative independence and neutrality that is required of the center, counselors do not extend their services to:
 - a)** Participation in any committees related to administrative proceedings, (e.g., student discipline investigations), except where the purpose of participation is limited to the clarification of a student’s psychosocial situation.

- b) Participation in administrative decision making (e.g., leave of absence, withdrawal, or readmission to academic programs), except in situations when colleges/administration offices seek a counselor's evaluation of a student's mental health status and/or psychosocial issues. Reports produced by the counseling center require a minimum of two (2) evaluation sessions and aim to provide colleges/administration with information clarifying the student's situation but does not make a recommendation regarding the administrative decision at hand.

4.10 The SCC offers counseling services to support students' personal and academic wellbeing and help students manage psychological difficulties. Lifesaving services are beyond SCC's capabilities and scope of practice. Emergencies are to be referred to emergency services.

5. Referrals

5.1 The SCC receives referrals through various channels including the SCC portal webpage, and will reach out to the referred student inviting them to attend a consultation with one of the counselors.

5.1.1 Referrals include self-referrals, referrals from faculty and staff, and referrals from Executive Management Offices, colleges, and departments.

5.2 Referrals are not always required for regular, scheduled appointments as students can book their appointments directly through the SCC portal webpage.

5.2.1 Walk-in students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis (see Article 6.3).

5.3 Students will be provided with appropriate referral resources for services off campus when specialized services beyond the scope of the center are needed.

6. Hours of Operation and Appointment Schedules

6.1 The SCC will be operational during the university's normal working hours in accordance with the University academic calendar. The opening and closing times will be clearly posted and disseminated through official University means of communication.

6.2 At least one (1) counselor will be available during the hours of operation.

6.3 Students are advised to schedule appointments in advance. Walk-in students are seen by a counselor on a first-come, first-served basis with the exception of crisis situations. Students in crisis are always given priority over walk-in or regularly scheduled appointments.

6.4 During peak or high demand periods, clients will be placed on a waiting list if needed.

6.5 Clients should attend their scheduled appointments with the counselor. It is the client's responsibility to contact the center at least 24 hours prior to the appointment if they wish to cancel or reschedule.

6.6 If the client fails to show for or cancels two (2) appointments without giving enough notice, the client is placed on the waiting list before they can book another appointment.

7. Crisis Intervention Services

7.1 Crisis intervention is provided to students in acute emotional or physical distress. The goal of crisis intervention is to provide clients with immediate safety and emergency care, stabilization of emotions, and plan for further follow up.

7.2 Crisis intervention is offered during the center's regular hours of operation. After regular hours, students in crisis are advised to contact available community help lines and emergency services.

7.3 A step-by-step Crisis Intervention Protocol is routinely reviewed and updated by SCC staff. A printed copy is made available in all SCC offices.

8. Outreach Services

The SCC offers outreach services including programs that promote awareness of mental health and wellbeing, break the stigma, and promote help seeking. These services have the primary goal of reaching out to students who may not be inclined to utilize the services from the center.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 As mandated by the ethical principles of the profession, all information obtained through counseling will be kept strictly confidential. Counselors will thus respect and ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the clients' and students' counseling-related information. When necessary, counselors may consult with colleagues in the profession for the purpose of ensuring the provision of high-quality counseling services.

9.2 Exceptions to the confidentiality policy include:

- a) When a client presents a clear danger to him/herself, another person, or society.
- b) When there is suspicion of child abuse, or abuse of a vulnerable adult or the elderly.
- c) When release of information is required by law.

9.3 With the exception of the above-mentioned circumstances, the written consent of the client is required prior to the release of his/her information. It is the responsibility of the counselors to inform their clients of the SCC's policies, and answer their questions about counseling before obtaining their consent to receive the services.

10. Counseling Records

10.1 An efficient counseling record system will be implemented and maintained to ensure accuracy and prompt retrieval of data when needed, within appropriate safeguards of confidentiality. It is the responsibility of the counselors to document any services provided to students.

10.2 In accordance with the standards for university counseling services prescribed by the IACS, all client files and student data will be safeguarded for a period of seven (7) years after termination or the last date of service. The records will be disposed of at the end of the retention period by the staff at the center in a secure manner.

11. Related Policies and Laws

- SUP-HSE-201 University Health Clinics
- UNI-LEG-102 Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- UAE Federal Law no.29 of 2006 re: Concerning the Rights of People of Determination

12. Administration

This policy is administered by the SCC.

13. Revision History

Date	Revision	Ver.
13 September 2024	Chair of the Board's Decision issued (#22 of 2024).	
22 August 2024	Approved by ARSAC (BOT).	3.0
6 August 2024	Responded to feedback received from ARSAC (4.6.2; 5.1.1; 5.2).	
22 June 2023	Endorsed by the Executive Committee.	
29 May 2023	Endorsed by a joint session of the Provost's and Academic Councils.	
8 May 2023	Endorsed by the Deans' Council.	
2 May 2023	Revised according to the current university situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removed the word "Services" from the title to make it more appropriate to the content of the policy.• Added Definitions section.• Added Article 4.3 re: students of determination.• Moved relevant information from the procedures to the policy (Articles 4.2, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10; Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).• Updated Article 4.6 with information from the Procedures.• Updated the Related Policies and Laws section.	
24 November 2022	Administrative change: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated the information header and policy numbers to be in line with the new format.• Policy number changed from ACA-STU-09 to ACA-STS-102.	

17 October 2019	President Decision issued (PD#52 of 2019).	2.0
16 June 2015	New Policy required by CAA, approved by the University Council.	1.0