



UNIVERSITY COUNSELLING POLICY, 2024

These policies are designed to create a safe, professional and effective counselling environment for both the Counsellor and the student.

1. Purpose and Aims:

- 1.1 The University recognises that good mental and emotional wellbeing is integral to a student's holistic development, and when this development is inhibited, counselling can be an effective and a valuable resource.
- 1.2 The purpose of the counselling service is to provide a professional, confidential, safe and personalised approach for students to explore difficulties they may encounter.
- 1.3 Good practice dictates clear understanding and explains to students the boundaries of confidentiality a university counselling service can offer.
- 1.4 The aims of counselling are:
 - 1.4.1 To promote mental health, reduce stress, improve academic performances, enhance social skills, practice emotional intelligence and other such emotional and psychological problems.
 - 1.4.2 To assist students to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and their relationship with their world.
 - 1.4.3 To create greater awareness and utilisation of their personal resources.
 - 1.4.4 To help build their resilience.
 - 1.4.5 To support their ability to address problems and to pursue personal meaningful goals.

2. Referrals:

- 2.1 A student can refer themselves to meet with the Counsellor for the initial session through a walk-in session where they may seek immediate mental health support and therapy without a prior appointment. Such sessions may also address urgent mental health needs, providing timely assistance to those experiencing emotional distress.

- 2.2 A student can also avail counselling services through prior notice or appointment made with the Counsellor.
- 2.3 For the subsequent session, depending on the availability of the Counsellor, a dedicated time slot will be arranged for the student.
- 2.4 If the need for counselling is urgent then the student should attend the Counselling Centre at the first instance.
- 2.5 Staff and parents can also recommend a student to meet with the Counsellor and can contact the Counsellor directly or through the student's class teacher or any other concerned authority.
- 2.6 Students may also be required to attend counselling to enable reflection on their behaviour in a supportive, non-disciplinary setting in the following situations:
 - 2.6.1 They have been identified as exhibiting bullying behaviour towards others (in line with the University's Anti-Bullying/Ragging Policy).
 - 2.6.2 They have been identified as taking (or at risk of taking) drugs or other harmful substances (in line with the University's Drug and Substance Abuse Policy).
- 2.7 The Counsellor will also meet with groups of new students at the beginning of each academic year, to introduce themselves and inform them of the counselling service available.

3. Confidentiality:

- 3.1 All information disclosed by the student during counselling sessions will be kept confidential, except in the following situations:
 - 3.1.1 There is a risk of imminent harm to the student or others.
 - 3.1.2 The law requires disclosure (e.g., child abuse, suicidal intent).
 - 3.1.3 Student has given consent (written or verbal).
- 3.2 The limitations of confidentiality will be discussed with the student at the beginning of counselling.
- 3.3 While maintaining the ethics of counselling, in case of limitation faced by the Counsellor, he/she may refer the student to another professional keeping in mind the needs and betterment of the student.

4. Reporting, Record access & Note keeping:

- 4.1 Records will be maintained in accordance with professional ethics and privacy laws.

- 4.2 As per the Safeguarding Policy, it is essential that counsellors report all appropriate/concerning detail to the authority of the university.
- 4.3 Counsellor's background notes will be kept centrally on a counselling app which is a designated app and will only be visible by the Counsellor.
- 4.4 For easy tracking of time, skills and resources used, a counselling register is maintained.

5. Appointment, Scheduling and Cancellation:

- 5.1 Appointments can be made by email or in person.
- 5.2 A minimum of 24 hours notice is required for cancellation of session by the student.
- 5.3 The counsellor reserves the right to cancel appointments with reasonable notice. In such cases, the counsellor will make every effort to reschedule the appointment at a mutually convenient time.

6. Professional Boundaries:

- 6.1 The Counsellor will always maintain a professional relationship with the student.
- 6.2 Dual relationships (e.g., friend, business associate) with students must be strictly avoided.
- 6.3 Sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

7. Termination of Counselling:

- 7.1 Students have the right to terminate counselling at any time.
- 7.2 The counsellor may recommend termination of counselling if it is deemed in the student's best interest.
- 7.3 In the event of termination, the counsellor will assist the student in finding alternative resources if needed.

8. Additional Policies:

- 8.1 The counselling session shall be flexible and based on the needs of the students.
- 8.2 Counselling sessions last up to 60 minutes and will take place during working hours.
- 8.3 The counsellor will work with the student to find a time for appointments that minimizes disruption to their studies and avoids conflicts with their classes.

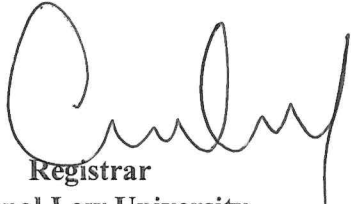
- 8.4 Counselling offered is open-ended; no minimum or maximum number of sessions are specified. Some students may only need to attend a few sessions whilst others may need support for a much longer period.
- 8.5 The counselling service offered will endeavour and meet the needs of all the students, However, due to pressing demand, there may be a waiting period.
- 8.6 Counselling resources such as books are available at the counselling centre.
- 8.7 Electronic communication (emails, texts) can be used only in case of emergency. Students opting for such session should also keep in mind the limitation of online counselling such as confidentiality issues, etc.

9. Confidentiality with Minors:

- 9.1 Confidentiality will be maintained while addressing students under 18 years of age, with limitations depending from case to case.
- 9.2 Parents typically have a right to be informed about their child's counselling, though the counsellor may limit the details disclosed, to protect the student's privacy.
- 9.3 Exceptions to confidentiality exist when there is a risk of harm to the child, or when there is a legal obligation to report (e.g., suspected abuse).
- 9.4 Before divulging any information, the counsellor will discuss the matter with the student and will handle the matter professionally.

Please note: A student's willingness to participate is key to getting the most out of counselling. While counselling can be helpful, we recognize it is not for everyone. We are happy to discuss other ways to address the needs. In rare cases where there is a grave concern about a student's safety or the safety of others, counselling will be stipulated.

Additionally, if a safeguarding concern is raised, the Counsellor may be requested to speak to the student concerned.


Registrar
National Law University
Meghalaya

NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY
MEGHALAYA