Guidelines for making students aware of the academic and social environment of the University

Introduction

To foster a thriving academic and social environment, students are expected to be aware of and adhere to the principles of good conduct. Being well-informed allows students to navigate their educational journey more effectively. We believe that fostering awareness in these areas will help students achieve their academic goals and indirectly contribute to enhancing the university's quality assurance activities. To ensure this, it is recommended that the following awareness sessions be conducted at appropriate times for both new and existing students. Additionally, it is recommended that students be introduced to the Student Charter during the orientation program.

Focus Areas for Awareness

a) Student Feedback on Teaching, Learning, and Facilities

Gathering student feedback on teaching methods, curriculum content, and campus facilities is essential for fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Feedback provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the educational experience, highlighting areas that are working well and those that may require attention. Involving students in the evaluation process helps institutions make data-driven decisions that enhance teaching quality and student experience. Moreover, actively seeking and responding to feedback demonstrates that student voices are valued, which can improve satisfaction, motivation, and a sense of community within the academic environment.

b) Prevention of Drug Use

Awareness programs on drug prevention play a vital role in safeguarding students' health, well-being, and academic success. These programs educate students on the dangers of drug use, its physical and mental health impacts, and the risks it poses to academic and personal life. By raising awareness, students are empowered to make informed decisions, resist peer pressure, and build resilience against substance abuse. Such initiatives also foster a supportive environment where students have access to resources and help, contributing to a drug-free community on campus.

c) Reproductive Health Awareness

Reproductive health awareness programs are essential for university students, offering critical knowledge to help maintain both physical and emotional well-being. These programs encourage informed decision-making, promote healthy behaviors, and help prevent risks such as unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Addressing common misconceptions and facilitating open dialogue also reduces stigma, creating a supportive campus environment that contributes to students' overall health and academic success.

d) Student's Role in Protecting University Resources and Promoting green initiatives

An awareness program on protecting university resources and promoting a plastic-free environment is crucial for building a sustainable and responsible campus community. These programs encourage students to care for shared resources, including campus facilities and infrastructure, while highlighting the importance of reducing plastic and polythene usage. Students can contribute to a cleaner, healthier environment by adopting eco-friendly practices and minimizing waste. This initiative supports the university's sustainability goals and fosters a culture of environmental stewardship, benefiting the campus community and beyond.

e) Programme by-laws and Academic Misconducts

Informing students about the importance of knowing programme by-laws and the seriousness of academic misconduct is crucial. It reinforces the value of integrity in education, which is fundamental to personal and professional success. Academic misconduct undermines the credibility of grades, degrees and the institution itself. Ensuring students understand the gravity protects the value of their own qualifications. By addressing misconduct early, students are encouraged to develop ethical habits that will carry into their professional lives. Moreover, academic misconduct can lead to disciplinary actions, damaged reputations, and even expulsion. Clear communication helps students avoid these potentially life-altering outcomes. It is recommended to introduce the student's handbook during this awareness session.

f) Respect for others

Informing students about the importance of respecting others is essential for fostering a positive, inclusive, and productive learning environment. Respect ensures that students, faculty, and staff feel valued, safe, and supported, encouraging collaboration and mutual growth. A respectful environment allows for open dialogue, diverse perspectives, and constructive debates, enriching the educational experience. Moreover, it teaches students skills such as empathy, active learning, and effective communication, essential for personal and professional success. By emphasizing respect, students learn to appreciate differences in culture, background, and perspectives, promoting harmony in a diverse community. A culture of respect reduces the likelihood of harassment and discrimination, creating a safer and more enjoyable university environment.

Responsibility for Conducting Student Awareness Programs

The responsibility for organizing and conducting student awareness programs lies with the Quality Assurance Cell of each faculty member and the Director of Students' Welfare of the University.
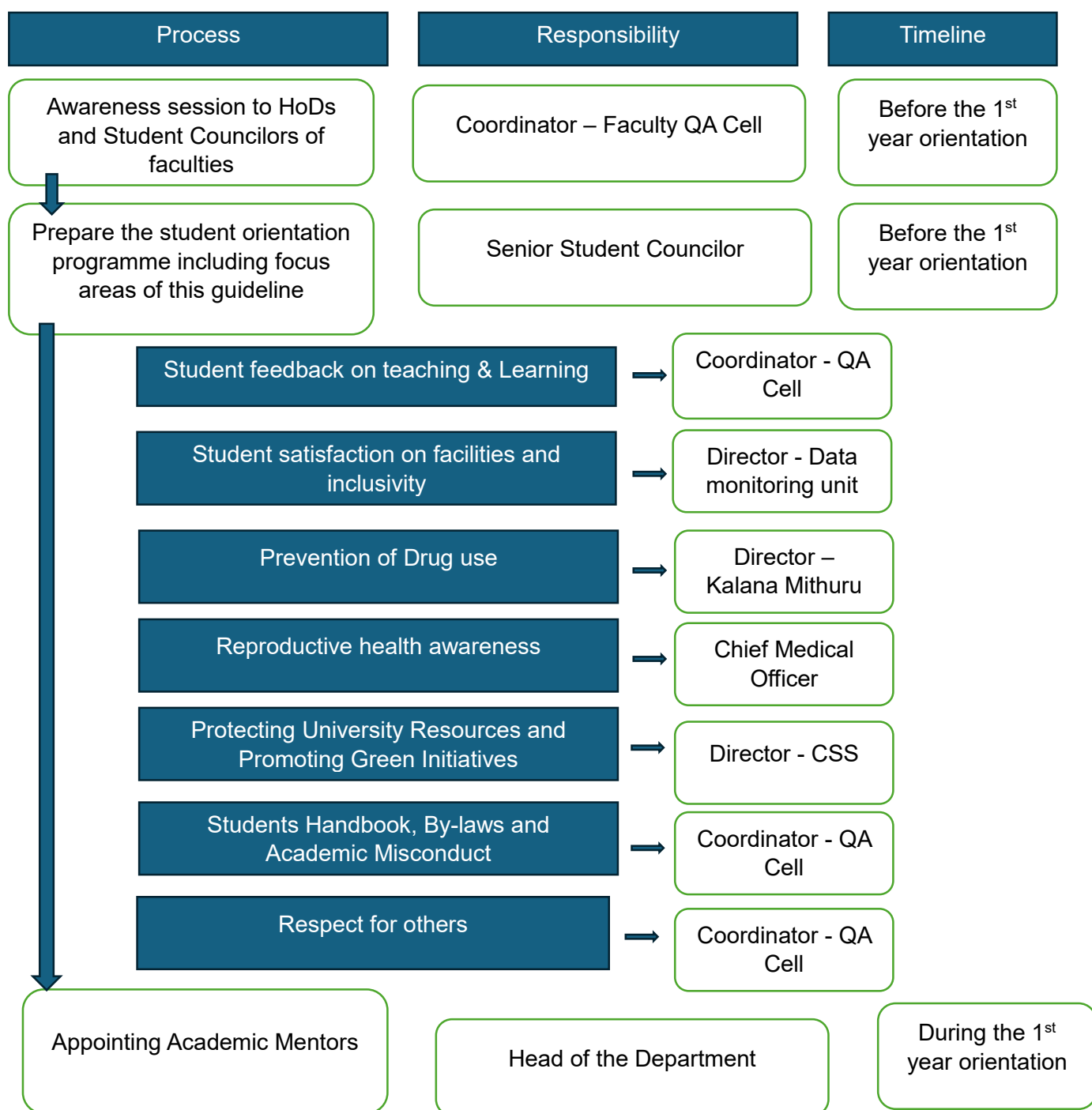
Implementation guidelines

Phase 01

Awareness sessions should be arranged by the Quality Assurance cell of each faculty for the students in each year on the above focus areas.

Phase 02

Starting from the new batches enrolled in the University for the Academic year 2023/2024 (Calendar year 2025), the awareness sessions can be conducted for first-year students.

Process	Responsibility	Timeline
Awareness session to HoDs and Student Councilors of faculties	Coordinator – Faculty QA Cell	Before the 1st year orientation
Prepare the student orientation programme including focus areas of this guideline	Senior Student Councilor	Before the 1st year orientation
Student feedback on teaching & Learning	Coordinator - QA Cell	
Student satisfaction on facilities and inclusivity	Director - Data monitoring unit	
Prevention of Drug use	Director – Kalana Mithuru	
Reproductive health awareness	Chief Medical Officer	
Protecting University Resources and Promoting Green Initiatives	Director - CSS	
Students Handbook, By-laws and Academic Misconduct	Coordinator - QA Cell	
Respect for others	Coordinator - QA Cell	
Appointing Academic Mentors	Head of the Department	During the 1st year orientation

Awareness sessions during the semester

Based on the number of students in each intake and the dates allocated for the orientation program, the faculties can select relevant areas from the list to be included in the orientation programme. Other topics can be scheduled during the semester at appropriate times. Additionally, it is recommended to make students aware of the following key areas throughout the semester:

1. **Student Feedback for Teacher Evaluation**: This should be discussed before the feedback collection period begins to ensure students understand the process.
2. **Academic Misconduct**: This topic should be addressed at least one week before the study leave period to remind students of academic integrity expectations.
3. **Prevention of Drug Use and Reproductive Health Awareness**: This should be covered once a year, ideally in small group sessions, to encourage more personal discussions.

These sessions can be incorporated into the orientation or scheduled during the semester based on the appropriate timing.

Academic Mentor- Mentee relationship
The purpose of appointing an academic mentor is to provide guidance, support, and encouragement to students throughout their educational journey. The key objectives of this relationship are to;
1. Provide academic guidance
2. Identify challenges and assist in resolving them
3. Offer personalized support
4. Facilitate skill development
5. Assist with career planning
6. Provide emotional and psychological support
7. Enhance student engagement in university activities

Appointing mentors and their role

Eligibility

- The academic mentor should be a permanent academic member of the faculty.

Assignment process

- During the orientation programme, the head of the department (HoD) will assign a group of students to each academic member of the department.
- Students will be informed about their respective mentors.

Documentation

- Each mentor is required to maintain a file for their assigned group of students. The file should include:
    - A brief profile of each student [Name, Student number, Permanent address, contact details, Parents/ Guardian details, Special health conditions - subject to consent).

- Records of mentor-mentee meetings, including the signing sheet, main discussion points, and any special concerns of the students.

Mentor responsibilities

- Mentor should conduct at least two meetings (group or individual) per semester
- Meetings should take place in person during daytime on weekdays, either in a designated meeting room or the mentor's office.
- These meetings aim to understand students' academic performance, challenges, and personal issues affecting their studies.

Referral

- If necessary, mentors should refer students to appropriate authorities such as the Head of the department, Kalana Mithuru Sewana, Medical Center.

Confidentiality

- Mentors must maintain the confidentiality of students' personal information
- Information should only be disclosed when it is essential for the student's benefit or the university's interest.

Change Requests

- If a student or mentor requests a change in the assigned mentor-mentee pairing, the HoD should evaluate the reason and make the necessary changes.

Professional Bond

- Students can authorize their admission cards only through their respective academic mentors during their studentship.
- Mentors are expected to maintain a professional and supportive relationship with their mentees throughout the studentship period.

This structure ensures a supportive and organized mentor-mentee system that contributes to the holistic development of the students and strengthens their connection to the University.

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