

5.1.13 Student Counselling

Operating Policy and Procedures

1. Policy

It is the policy of the Navitas College of Public Safety that enrolled students whose academic performance or ability to study is adversely affected by personal circumstances are offered professional counselling to assist with dealing with such issues.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Eligible students are offered the opportunity to receive professional counselling;
- Referrals are made in a timely and appropriate manner, ensuring confidentiality at all stages of the process, and in accordance with the formal agreement with the University of Melbourne Counselling Service;
- College staff comply with the College's requirements regarding counselling and referrals; and
- Students are made aware of the services offered by the University of Melbourne.

3. Responsibility

The Registrar is responsible for compliance with this policy.

4. Guidelines

4.1 The College is concerned with the mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of all students and recognises that students may face difficult issues in their personal lives which impact adversely on their academic performance or ability to study. Such personal circumstances may include:

- Illness;
- Bereavement;
- Relationship issues; and
- Adjustment to tertiary life and the stress of studying.

For this reason, the College makes professional counselling services available to all students.

4.2 Formal Agreement with the University of Melbourne

The College outsources student counselling to the University of Melbourne Counselling Service, pursuant to a formal agreement between the two entities. This agreement provides:

- for up to three counselling sessions with professional psychologists or social workers which the College will pay for. Students seeking additional or ongoing counselling will be required to pay for this;
- that only eligible students be referred ie: those whose academic performance or ability to study is adversely affected by personal circumstances;
- that included in the services offered is access to the University of Melbourne bulk billing medical services;
- That referrals must be made by the Registrar; the College will not pay for counselling sessions which are conducted outside the parameters of the agreement; and
- For the agreement to be reviewed annually, at the end of each academic year, and renewed if both parties agree to continue the arrangement.

The University of Melbourne Counselling Service invoices the College monthly.

The hard copy of the current agreement is retained in the Registrar's office in the "University of Melbourne Counselling Service" file.

4.3 **Publicising the Counselling and Medical Services**

The counselling and health services available to NCPS students at the University of Melbourne are publicised to students:

- In the Student Diary;
- By an information sheet (ND514), copies of which are located in the Student Lounge and included with the information packs provided during Orientation;
- On the College's website;
- In information and publications available to Prospective students; and
- At Orientation a counsellor from the University of Melbourne Counselling Service explains the service to all new students.

4.4 **Student Assistance**

4.4

It is incumbent on all College staff - teaching, administrative and managerial - that they do not engage in discussions with or offer advice to students about personal problems. These are best dealt with by professional counsellors.

Students with problems should be referred to the appropriate College staff member ie:

- Academic issues such as marking, assessment, content of lectures and tutorials should be directed to the relevant subject coordinator or lecturer.
- Administrative issues such as fees, timetabling, submission of assessment tasks, use of the online system and website should be directed to Student Administration.
- Personal issues should not be dealt with by NCPS staff. Staff should inform the student that they are able to seek professional advice from the University of Melbourne Counselling Service and refer the student to the Registrar who will refer the student to the Counselling Service.

4.5 **Confidentiality**

4.5

At all times during the referral process, the confidentiality of students is assured and privacy respected. The College's *Privacy Policy* (Policy 3.7.2) and *Confidentiality of Student Records Policy* (Policy 5.4.6) apply to all such records kept. The University of Melbourne Counselling Service staff regard the content of all sessions in the strictest confidence and do not discuss the sessions with College staff.

5. **Procedure**

- 5.1 A student who believes that their academic performance or ability to study is adversely affected by personal circumstances may seek professional counselling by approaching the Registrar.
- 5.2 Students who approach NCPS staff members to discuss or seek advice regarding personal problems must be informed that NCPS staff are unable to assist with such problems and that the student should consider seeking professional counselling from the Counselling Service. Students should be advised to contact the Registrar to arrange a referral.
- 5.3 The Registrar will provide the student with the Melbourne University Counselling Referral Form (NF560), which is to be completed by the student and submitted to the Registrar.
- 5.4 The Registrar will not seek to elicit the nature of the problem from the student.
- 5.5 The Registrar or delegate will email a referral to the Counselling Service within 48 hours of receiving the completed form.

- 5.6 The University of Melbourne Counselling Service will attempt to contact the student to make an appointment within 48 hours of receiving the referral.
- 5.7 The University of Melbourne Counselling Service will confirm by email that they have contacted the student and made an appointment.
- 5.8 The original of the form is returned to the student along with information about the counselling service (ND514) and contact details.
- 5.9 One copy of the form and the referring email is kept in the "University of Melbourne Counselling Service" file in the Registrar's office and another copy of the form is retained in the student's file.
- 5.10 On receipt of an invoice from the University of Melbourne Counselling Service, the Registrar will check against the referral records and submit the invoice to the Accounts Officer for payment.
- 5.11 At the end of each trimester, the Registrar will liaise with the Head of the University of Melbourne Counselling Service regarding the preceding trimester's operational success, and to address any concerns of either party to the agreement.
- 5.12 At the end of each academic year the Registrar, in consultation with the College Director/General Manager, will renegotiate the agreement with the University of Melbourne Counselling Service.
- 5.13 The number of referrals per trimester is reported by the Registrar to the College Director/General Manager and to the Higher Education Board at the meetings held at the end of each trimester. This information is minuted. Names of students are not disclosed.

6. **Authority**

Authorised by the General Manager (Public Safety)

7. **Approval**

Approved by the Higher Education Board on 3 August 2004

Amendments

Date	Modified by	Sections amended/added	Approved by HEB (if required)
30/11/07	Christine Ashton	References to semesters changed to trimesters.	
14/08/08	Christine Ashton	Changes to position titles – College Director and General Manager (formally CEO)	Minor change
22/05/09	Jodie Reeve	Logo change	Minor change
06/11/09	Christine Ashton	Change of logo and name	Minor change
26/11/09	Jodie Reeve	Amended supporting documentation references	Minor change