

## **1. Student Counseling and Habilitation Section**

### **1) Introduction:**

Counseling at UOB is aimed to assist students to surmount their issues and support them to be social and have participative academic life and improve, progress, and excel in their studies. Counseling and Students' Engagement unit (EDRAK) is responsible to ensure that appropriate and timely counseling.

Students' counseling process adopted by EDRAK is to ensure for students are psychologically and mentally healthy. EDRAK identifies students with counseling needs in co-ordination with colleges, student's affairs department, admission and registration department and other academic and non-academic entities. Therefore, all concerned departments must ensure confidentiality of counseling matters at all stages.

### **2) Aims and Objectives of Counseling:**

1. To counsel students with psychological, mental health, stress, tension, and depression caused due to academic, social and personal.
2. To provide and suggest appropriate course of action, solutions, psychological courses and training programs to the identified students.
3. To continuously monitor counseling process and student's improvement.
4. To identify and recommend appropriate external consultation and training.
5. To build students' confidence, improve performance, and enable them managing and overcoming their psychological to be more independently and effectively.
6. To ensure students' social and academic life is stress free, active and participative and that students contribute to the fullest of their abilities

### **3) Types of Counseling:**

students counseling depend on the counseling needs of the students, however following are the main areas that are covered under the title "Students' Counseling"

- **Psychological counseling**
- **Mental health and mental hygiene counseling**

- **Social, personal and family issues counseling**
- **Depression, stress, tension, anxiety and behaviors counseling**
- **Counseling for discriminative or abusive behaviors**
- **Counseling for emotional and de-motivated behaviors**
- **New students who find difficulty to adapt in university life.**
- **Students who need guidance regarding their academic and occupational orientations (eg, new students or graduated students).**
- **Students who need to develop their personal/academic skills.**

**NOTE:** EDRAK will not accept any such case orally unless the case is filled in the form (**General Counseling student's referral Form (EDRAK – F1)**, and submitted by hand or E-mail.

#### **4) Role and Responsibilities of the counselors**

1. Counselors are responsible counselees assigned by EDRAK
2. Counselors must arrange an induction session or meeting after counselees are allotted to them, during induction to ensure counselee understands his/her role and responsibilities  
Counselors must ensure counselees and counseling confidentiality throughout the process
3. Must follow all applicable rules, regulation, policies and procedures of Counseling
4. Must diagnose appropriate cause and recommend appropriate course of action
5. If counselor does not expertise the areas of counseling, he/she must inform EDRAK head to reassigned the case to the appropriate counselor
6. Recommend, develop, design and deliver appropriate training programs, counseling sessions, workshops, lectures, and courses etc.
7. Shall assist and monitor timely progression and successful completion of counseling sessions or process or any other program related to counseling.
8. Ensure that counselees become socially and academically responsible and active as can as possible after counseling process
9. Ensure that counselees information, data and records are well maintained and available for EDRAK when required
10. Prepare and submit counseling reports of all assigned counselees at the end of each semester/academic year to the head section of the EDRAK
11. Must be fair and neutral, do not make any bias on matters related to counselee's personal, emotional or psychological abilities, color, age, gender, ethnic, racial, social, political and

- religious beliefs; any such information disclosed during meetings shall part of confidential record
12. Must act as mediator or facilitator and do not take decision on behalf of any other department
  13. Must follow counseling process, keep a comprehensive record of previous meetings, actions, and progress to enable past action tracking and future plan and progress
  14. Must inform section head and director of EDRAK in case of no improvement or counselee being irresponsible

**NOTE:** Counselors shall coordinate with EDRAK director if they find any difficulty to plan Counselee's process.

**NOTE:** EDRAK recommends that Counselors should carry copy of the current year student's guide for every session/meeting scheduled with the Counselee(s).

## **5) Role and Responsibilities of the Counselees**

Students must understand their role and responsibility as Counselees. Their role and responsibilities include but not limited to the following:

1. Inform EDRAK regarding problems or difficulties related to psychological as mentioned above in the types of "Students' Counseling"
2. Must attend all sessions, meetings, training courses, workshop etc conducted for the counselees
3. Must not hide information or lie, fully cooperate with the counselor, explain your problem in full detail so that most appropriate course of action is adopted to solve your problem
4. Must follow, all instructions, suggestions, recommendations or any other tasks or goals given by the counselor
5. Must follow students' counseling rules and regulations and its processes and procedures so that timely counseling support is made available
6. Must not discuss, disclose, share information or progress with other is it may lead to misguide or delay counseling process
7. Ensure confidentiality at all times throughout the process
8. Must read and understand students guide and other university documents these may help solving the problem, e.g., read academic calendar and student handbooks; make note of important schedules such as course registration dates, exam schedules and other curricular

or co-curricular activities. These will help planning and preparing for exams etc. leading to reduce exam related stresses

9. Must organize for counseling sessions, e.g., prepare agenda, list questions, provide evidences/documents to the counselor, read previous sessions/meeting's agenda, assess your improvement and follow-up on suggested actions
10. Must attend scheduled appointment; reappointment may delay the counseling process
11. Must agree in writing with the counselor on all proposed goals, actions and tasks and agree timeframe to attain the goals

**NOTE:** Notify counselor/EDRAK on extension{[111 - 175](#)} or EDRAK staff email ([Laila@uob.edu.om](mailto:Laila@uob.edu.om)) or ([Halima.m@uob.edu.om](mailto:Halima.m@uob.edu.om)), if in case of being unable to attend scheduled counseling session a day before the session.

## **6) Students' Counseling Process:**

### **6.1) Assigning Counselees:**

The head of EDRAK assigns counselees to the appropriate counselor, usually thirty (30) counselees are assigned to each counselor and excess students are proportionate by the head of EDRAK between available counselors.

### **6.2) Transferring Counselees:**

EDRAK transfers counselee due to the following reasons:

1. Counselees being assigned to the counselor with different expertise
2. At the time of Counselor leaving job with UOB
3. New counselor joins the university, excessive numbers of counselees is transferred to the new counselor
4. Counselor not being able to deliver as per expectations or not being able pay follow regulations and policies e.g., confidentiality
5. When transfer is recommended by the head of EDRAK
6. Transfer request from Counselor or Counselee is approved by the head of EDRAK as per policies

### **6.3) Keeping Counselee Record**

The Counselors must maintain separate record files for each Counselee and ensure that information and data is available as and when needed by the EDRAK. The academic Counseling file shall contain the following documents.

1. List of assigned Counselees
2. Details of personal, academic information/data, and previous counseling records
3. Details of counselee's issue or problem
4. Mutually agreed goals and tasks assigned to Counselee
5. Plan, timeline, target dates and appropriate completed forms
6. Details of counseling session/Meeting schedules, agenda, record of previous sessions / meetings
7. Updated information on counseling and counselee's progress

#### **6.4) Counseling Steps:**

**Step1:** Students identified with counseling needs by advisors, faculty members, student's affairs, EDRAK or any other source are submitted to the EDRAK office on a prescribed form (**General Counseling student's referral Form (EDRAK – F1)**).

**Step2:** The Director of EDRAK assigns appropriate counselor and informs the concerned dean/director

**Step3:** The EDRAK counselee completes (**Advisee/Counselee Consent Form**) (**EDRAK – F2**) and confirms to counseling rules and regulations, role and responsibilities, confidentiality, ethics and confidence, and the importance of counseling stages

**Step4:** Counselor and counselee agree on a detailed counseling plan, e.g., counseling sessions, meetings, training workshops, lectures, goals, and tasks with timeframe to achieve targets

**Step5:** Counselor is responsible to record, follow, monitor and evaluate counselee progress, complete appropriate forms such as (**Counseling Interview Form (EDRAK- F3)**) and provide regular feedback to the head of EDRAK.

**Note:** EDRAK (**Counseling Interview Form (EDRAK- F3)**) contains confidential information and it is kept with EDRAK, however recommendations are provided in the (**General Counseling students referral Form (EDRAK – F1)**) and this form is submitted to the EDRAK Counselor.

## **7) Ethics & Confidence Building**

Ethics & confidence building is one of the most important parts of psychological counseling. Without building confidence between counselor and counselee it is not possible to achieve desired results. Following must be considered for ethics and confidence building:

1. Counselor and counselee must ensure that sensitive, personal, and private information that may be distressing at times will be treated as per counseling roles
2. Personal Information and data related to counselee including academic report must remain top secret
3. Counseling interactions, including scheduling meetings, attendance, appointments, and contents of counseling sessions, counselees' progress and other similar record are all confidential.
4. Counseling report shall not be distributed to anyone including EDRAK staff, deans, directors, academic advisors, faculty members or any other department inside or outside university except EDRAK Director and VC or if permitted by the VC for the wellbeing of counselee advisee
5. The counselor reserves the right to ask, write, record any information deemed important for counseling and related to counseling
6. Counselor shall not record any academic, educational, or job placements information and data in the counselee's file
7. Counselee may request in writing that release specific information about counseling
8. Counselee must cooperate throughout the counseling process and understand that follow-up will continue till matter is resolved and counselee shows the progress
9. Counselee agree and understand that during counseling sessions there could be situations of increased anxiety or confusion
10. Counselee agree and understand that counseling outcomes vary from person to person, most of the cases outcome are positive however, the level of satisfaction is likely to differ for each individual and it is not predictable

11. Counselor's aim is to reduce problem, improve progress, and support counselee and attain aims and goals, therefore counselor shall remain available throughout the process, without any fee, dues, charges and gifts (in kind) against counseling

#### **7.1) Exceptions to Confidentiality:**

Following are the exception related to counseling:

1. All counselors and advisors at UOB work as a team and may need to consult each other for the benefit of advisee and counselee
2. Counselor is legally bound to report the evidence of clear and imminent danger of self-harm or threat to others to ensure that safety of counselees and UOB community or any other individuals is intact
3. Both counselor and counselee deserve the right to stop counseling process as per counseling and other applicable university policies, EDRAK rule, MOHE or other legal terms and conditions
4. The VC may allow acquiring and releasing information related to counselor or counselee as per applicable rules and policies of the university and the law of the land (the Country)

### **8) Stages of Counseling Process:**

These stages are normally adopted by the counselors to ensure the effectiveness and be timely achievement of counseling aims and objectives; therefore, EDRAK recommends that counselor and counselee must get familiar with the five stages of counseling process:

#### **8.1) Identification stage:**

Identify the problem, analyze the factors influencing the behavior and determine that which ones shall be controlled counselor and which by counselee. Also determine modification, elimination or enforcement of factors.

#### **8.2) Planning stage:**

Plan, coordinate, organize, and determine mutually suitable time for counseling sessions, training courses, lectures etc.

#### **8.3) Conducting Stage:**

Counselor must establish a safe and trust worth environment as explained in “ethics and confidence building” and understand conducting counseling session requires sincerity, compassion, kindness, and time management, therefore;

- Determine counselees believes causes of behavior could be and what must be changed
- Counselor during counseling sessions must be active listener, paraphrase, summarizer, reflector, and interpreter focused on feelings rather than events
- Must not ignore any fact use all facts to decide, plan or to take correction action for the resolution of problems
- Transform problem statements into goals
- Explore all possible approaches to achieve the goals
- Help counselee choose the best way towards achieving goals
- Summarize what has occurred, clarify, and get verification

#### **8.4) Follow-up Stage:**

Counselors must support counselees to implement agreed plans of action, such question, teach, train etc.

#### **8.5) Evaluation Stage:**

Obtain continuous feedback, review actions as a result of counseling session and determine if the desired results of counseling session or any other counseling instrument were achieved or not.

### **9) Group counseling:**

Group counseling is various type of counseling is offered in this unit. It is an approach of planned intervention that help effectively in increasing hopefulness positive response for the future. Also, it assists to learn positive coping strategies to avoid happen the obstacles and the problems that the students may face in their academic and personal life.

Thus, group counseling interventions have the potential to increase optimistic, hopefulness and peer connectedness among members. It is one successful approach leads to enable students to change by providing them with the tools they can use in daily life in their environment.

These group counseling sessions is held by the counselor in **Al-Najah classroom** which includes data show projector, 15 chair-tables, desktop computer, white board and flip char.

## **10) Estisharah:**

Estisharah is designed to counsel emergency cases and quick matter; EDRAK provides temporary sessions for this type of counseling for quick psychological help and assistance for the cases that are not part of regular counseling system. The counselor may not follow the set counseling procedure of completing forms, a quick counseling session(s) is arranged to address case on priority bases.

However, counselor must ensure to obtain consent of counselee as a matter of legal requirement if it needs, shall also inform counselee about counseling policy at UOB including roles, responsibilities, counseling ethics and confidence building, and counseling stages to ensure that counselee does not get confused.

The Estisharah shall determine the nature of counseling and referring the case for the further counseling or academic advisement to the appropriate counselor or advisor.