

KING CEASOR UNIVERSITY



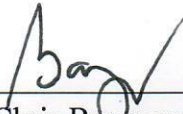
COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE POLICY

JUNE 2024

Approval

This policy has been approved on the 28th day of JUNE the year 2024

Signed:



Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi
CHAIRPERSON, KCU COUNCIL



Dr. Charity Basaza Mulenga
VICE-CHANCELLOR

COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE POLICY

CITATION:

THE POLICY SHALL BE CITED AS “THE KING CEASOR UNIVERSITY COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE POLICY”

ABBREVIATIONS

CGS	Counselling and Guidance Staff
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DHR	Directorate of Human Resources
DRGT	Directorate of Research and Graduate Training
DQA	Directorate of Quality Assurance
KCU	King Ceasor University
KCUCGP	KCU Counselling and Guidance Policy
RIF	Research and Innovation Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

DEFINITIONS

- Mental health:** Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.
- Psychological Risk:** Factors or conditions that may negatively affect or impact an individual's physical, mental or emotional well-being.
- Psychosocial Support:** The provision of emotional, social, and psychological support to individuals facing challenges or stress.
- Referral:** The process of recommending alternative treatment sources when necessary.
- Supervision:** The utilization of another counsellor or psychotherapist to review and enhance professional counselling practices.
- Termination:** Termination is the term for the process when a client is ending services with a particular counsellor or organization. Sometimes termination is final, meaning that the client would not be allowed to return for counselling services.
- The University:** The University means King Ceasor University

UNIVERSITY VISION AND MISSION

Vision

An innovation driven University.

Mission

To provide a holistic education through inventive teaching, learning, and research aimed at fostering socio-economic transformation

The Motto

King Ceasor University`s corporate philosophy is personified in its motto “Ignite the future”

Core Values

To fulfil our mission and realize our vision, we commit ourselves to these values:

Progression: We recognize that learning never ends.

Accountability: We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and conduct our affairs in ways that promote mutual trust and public confidence.

Integrity: We hold ourselves, collectively and individually, liable to do what is right.

Respect: We treat all people with dignity, respect and impartiality.

Synergy: We recognize that we are stronger and more effective as a team than as individuals.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Global, national, and community reports indicate a growing need and demand for psychosocial support services among children, young people, and adults. Recognising this need, King Ceasor University deems counselling services as a priority to ensure the well-being of its community members. This policy is crucial for the efficient provision of counselling services at King Ceasor University, aligning with the institution's vision and mission.

King Ceasor University is committed to promoting the well-being, personal growth, and psychological health of staff and students. The university acknowledges the importance of psychosocial support in fostering a healthy, supportive academic and work environment. This policy outlines the University's commitment to providing psychosocial support and establishes a framework for its implementation. The university is dedicated to ensuring that all members of its community have access to confidential and quality counselling services whenever necessary.

4.0 RATIONALE FOR KING CEASOR UNIVERSITY COUNSELLING POLICY

- a) The KCUGP aims to facilitate the University's contribution to global and national development aspirations. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda emphasizes holistic and inclusive development. The National Vision 2040 and National Development Plan III aspire for a transformed country and a productive population to support national development aspirations. The goal of the Health Sub-program under the Human Capital Development Program is to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage with a range of health and related services necessary to ensure a productive life. The National Health Policy strives to ensure access to a minimum health care package of preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative services. Guidance and Counselling services are part and partial of the essential services package required to attain good health and optimal wellbeing of individuals and populations.
- b) The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA), 2001 (as amended) under section 5(n) mandates the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) "to ensure that adequate facilities and opportunities for guidance and Counselling are provided by the institutions of Higher Education".
- c) Counselling and guidance services are critical for the psychological well being and productivity of human beings. Students as well as staff at the university face several growth and decision-making challenges and need support to build their skills and cope with the challenges they face. Some students are leaving home for the first time. Other students join university with family responsibilities and challenges, needing psychosocial support. These challenges have been accelerated by recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing social and technological advancements such as the internet and social media negative influences.

- d) Individuals encounter issues and events that bring about overwhelming stress and psychological problems that affect the student's personal life and academic performance. Counseling and guidance services are designed to assist students with both addressing difficulties encountered and promoting greater overall wellness. A policy framework is therefore necessary to guide the provision of such services.
- e) Furthermore, King Ceasor University community comprises people from diverse backgrounds with different needs and therefore need special services to cater to different kinds of groups, including international students, students with disability, refugees, and displaced students. KCUGP, therefore, upholds the value of inclusivity in providing services to the university community.

5.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Policy strives to meet the following objectives:

1. Create supportive and inclusive counseling and guidance services.
2. Promote the culture of seeking professional counseling and guidance services.
3. Strengthen the management and coordination of counseling and guidance service delivery.
4. Promote the application of innovative ways of delivering counseling and guidance services.

6.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to promote and support psychosocial support services of students and staff at King Ceasor University. The policy also aims at destigmatizing mental health and psychological difficulties so as to ensure increased effectiveness of learning and teaching at the university. Therefore, the policy provides guidelines for raising awareness and access to psychosocial support services. The policy also ensures that there is conformity to national and international best practice guidelines for counselling services, while accommodating the specific contextual needs of King Ceasor University.

7.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy statement 1: The University shall promote the well-being, personal growth, and psychological health of staff and students in order to foster a healthy, supportive academic and work environment.

Policy statement 2: The University shall develop and support an inclusive and diverse environment that provides equal opportunity for all staff and students to access psychosocial support services.

Policy statement 3: The University shall promote and provide the necessary counseling services to students and staff.

Policy statement 4: The University shall ensure the integration of the principles of equal access, equal participation and equal opportunity for members of the university community.

Policy statement 5: The University staff responsible shall protect the access to confidential information relating to students and staff in its possession.

Policy statement 6: The University shall require a member of staff or a student is to disclose his or her psychosocial state.

8.0 ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND LAWS

The University shall undertake to comply with international and national laws, policies and standards governing psychosocial support.

1. *At the international level, there are key international standards, policies and principles which can be adopted and applied globally regardless of where you work, they include the following:*

Mental health policy, plans and programmes (Updated version 2, 2005) World Health Organization. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/42948>

2. *At the national level, the government has enacted several legal and policy documents on or related to psychosocial support, which apply to King Ceasor University including the following:*

- Child and adolescent mental health policy guidelines, Ministry of Health, Uganda, March 2017
- The National Ethical Values Policy, 2013.
- The Employment Act, 2006.
- The Domestic Violence Act, 2010.
- The Universities and Other Tertiary Institution Act, 2006
- The Mental Health Act, 2018

9.0 RIGHTS AND UNDERTAKINGS

The implementation of the Policy encourages an intersectional approach with shared undertakings between different stakeholders with respect to addressing student and staff psychosocial support services. This section covers rights and undertakings for students and

staff at King Ceasor University. The University strives to support the needs of students and staff with counselling and guidance support services and systems.

9.1 King Ceasor University

- a) King Ceasor University shall promote the Counselling and guidance, which envisions creating a campus where each individual's wellbeing is valued and encouraged based on a holistic approach.
- b) Where a student or staff discloses a mental health disability or difficulty to King Ceasor University psychosocial support staff, the University will seek to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to prevent the student or staff from being unduly disadvantaged by the psychological challenge, difficulty, or illness.
- c) The University shall provide psychosocial support services to students and staff.
- d) King Ceasor University will encourage and monitor all mental health initiatives by both staff and students.
- e) King Ceasor University will ensure that all staff and students are informed about this Policy and their respective responsibilities arising under this Policy.

9.2 Counselling and Guidance Staff (CGS)

The counseling and guidance staff shall undertake the following roles:

9.2.1 *Counselling and Guidance Support to Students*

- i) Spearhead awareness drives across the main campus and other learning centres through orientation talks to freshers, outreaches to schools, via the internet and other useful avenues.
- ii) Counselling and Guidance Staff (CGS) shall provide free and confidential services to all registered students
- iii) CGS shall provide mainly short-term counseling. Students and staff are counseled on an individual basis, through group therapy, support programmes and workshops.
- iv) CGS shall provide a range of psycho-educational resources to all students.
- v) Advise members of staff concerned on student related issues.
- vi) The Counselling and Guidance Staff shall work closely with the Academic registrar's office to support students with academic related challenges. The same will apply to the directorate of graduate training and research.

9.2.2 *Counselling Support to Staff*

- i) CGS in partnership with the Directorate of human resources shall organize counselling support activities for staff to ensure employee wellbeing of the staff. The activities will include workshops for staff, developing self-help materials and any other services as deemed necessary for staff counselling support.
- ii) CGS shall conduct awareness campaigns for staff about the availability of counselling support services for staff.
- iii) CGS shall provide psychosocial support to staff who are referred for support.
- iv) CGS shall provide guidance to the university and the different academic and administrative heads on employee wellness support.

9.3 Responsibilities and Duties of all Staff and Students

All academic and administrative units must ensure that appropriate arrangements for student and staff psychosocial support in the departmental context are in place and are communicated to students.

- a) Staff should be alert to mental health difficulties.
- b) Staff should be able to offer an appropriate response to a student's declaration of such difficulties and be able to refer students to appropriate support, including encouraging the student to seek help from the psychosocial support services.
- c) In crisis situations, staff should contact the Counselling and Guidance staff on campus.
- d) In case of a medical emergency, staff should contact the University health services immediately.
- e) Staff should familiarise themselves with the King Ceasor University Counselling and guidance and comply with it.
- f) Staff should be aware of the principles of confidentiality and disclosure. Written, electronic, or verbal information, that relates to a student's mental health, must be handled in a secure and confidential manner (unless the individual, or any other person's, immediate personal safety is at risk).
- g) All staff should remain aware of the boundaries of their own roles. Staff should be ready to offer support to students and fellow staff, but are not expected to assume responsibilities outside of their primary role and capabilities.

- h) Students with acute mental health difficulties may apply to academic departments directly for concessions for academic obligations subject to the University Academic Standards Policy.
- i) Students too are responsible to take care of their psychological wellbeing as well as support the psychological wellbeing of fellow students where possible. Students and staff who stigmatize their colleagues will be subjected to the Code of Conduct and Human Resource Manual respectively.

9.4 Implementation of the Counselling and Guidance Policy

The university considers the Counselling and Guidance Staff as a critical aspect towards implementation of the policy. Therefore, highly qualified and professional staff will be recruited, they shall undergo continuous professional development and clinical supervision to maintain high-quality services.

a) Continuous Professional Development

All staff shall undertake continuous professional development as required by the professional standards at least two courses or attending conferences every year.

b) Supervision

All counselors must undertake clinical supervision as required by the professional standards bodies as one of the critical ethical practices. Supervision invites counsellors to reflect on difficulties including anything relating to equality and diversity to improve self-awareness and adhere to professional and ethical standards.

9.5 Measures to enhancing Accessibility of services

The university shall ensure accessibility by providing proper facilities, online support, a 24/7 helpline, and collaboration with parents and guardians:

a) Proper Facilities and Assistance

The university shall ensure proper facilities are provided that are accessible to all regardless of their physical ability status.

b) Mobility

Any current and future estate development shall endeavour to consider the aspect of easy mobility of clients to the premises by constructing ramps where they are not and any form of support to facilitate mobility.

c) Online Support

Online anonymous and confidential support: Online and anonymous platforms shall be availed by the university again to ensure easy access to services.

d) 24/7 Support

A telephone number shall be put to ensure 24/7 support to students and staff.

e) Working with Parents and Guardians

Working with parents and guardians will be encouraged. In recent years parents and guardians have become increasingly interested in getting into the lives of their children at the university. Although these had not been considered as part of the service users, the responsible university offices shall work with these parents and guardians to support students.

9.6 Coordination of implementation of the policy

The Dean of Students Affairs together with Counselling and Guidance Staff will coordinate the implementation of the policy, providing clinical services, education, crisis response, and research. In case of offering counseling and guidance services to a member of staff, this shall be done in coordination with the Human Resource Office.

9.7 Review and Evaluation of Policy

Continuous evaluation will be conducted to ensure effectiveness, with the policy subject to review from time to time to promote psychosocial well-being at King Ceasor University.