

1QUALITY ASSURANCE
FOR BEST PRACTICES IN
STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (SCDS)
AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The rating scale is as follows:

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|-----------|---|
| 1 | Poor (No system in place/No evidence of service) |
| 2 | Unsatisfactory (Some system in place/Not much evidence of service) |
| 3 | Satisfactory (Meeting some requirements/Average evidence of service) |
| 4 | Good (System in place/Evidence of bench marking/a lot of evidence) |
| 5 | Excellent (System innovative and being the benchmark/lots of evidence) |
| NA | Not applicable |

Recommended SAACDHE Standard	Indicators of Quality for the Standard	Evidence	Rating 1–5
1 The mission and vision of the SCDS should complement the mission of the institution, the outcomes of the national policy on higher education and encompass the essence of a SCDS service according to national and international criteria.	1.1 Mission, vision, policy statements and practices that:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ complement the mission of the institution and national policy on higher education 	Policy documents	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ are responsive to the needs of all the stakeholders and opportunities in the learning environment 	Records & surveys (internal and external data)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ focus on: 	Policy statements and programmes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are continuously adjusted to the internal and external needs through strategic planning 	Records Strategic plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are actively involved with professional and related bodies to promote bench marking 	Records and Membership		

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2 The goals and objectives of the SCDS should relate to the core business of the respective institutions and the SCDS should be managed against these goals and objectives.	Stated mission, policies and practices that:		
	2.1 maintain an effective SCCDS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ goals and objectives are stated clearly 	Goal & objective policy statements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ current performance is adequate with respect to every set goal and objective 	Performance records for every objective Statistics Annual report	
	2.2 cover a comprehensive range of SCDS activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ wellness promotion (including interpersonal growth) ○ study, work & skills development ○ guidance and counselling to support adjustment and personal, psychological and vocational issues 	Goals & objectives to cover comprehensive service at institution (some may be in other units) – interpreted within the context	
	2.3 contribute to the effective operation of the institution as an organisation. Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ participation in various boards, committees and forums 	Name list reflecting all levels	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ contribution to policy development/review ○ provide feedback about student needs 	List of contributions Reports of feedback to which stakeholders	

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3 SCDS must be accessible to all stakeholders. It must focus on the diversity and the unique needs of the student community.	3.1 Stated policies and practices that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ focus on all stakeholders 	Policies and partnership structures	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ focus on particular student groups (relevant to individual institution) with specific needs ○ a) disadvantaged students (institution’s definition) ○ b) disabled students ○ c) prospective students ○ d) mature students and those in RPL programmes ○ e) international students ○ f) part-time students ○ g) other (relevant to institution) 	Information resources (brochures, etc.) Special programmes (workshops, etc.) Student support groups Surveys, records and statistics	
	3.2 SCDS accessible through personal and multimedia channels to cater for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residential students b) non-residential students c) distance education students d) part-time and full time students 	Information resources Media channels	

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4 Human resources should be managed according to high professional and academic standards.	4.1 A human resource management system that provides for:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an authorised organisation structure in place 	Organogram	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an authorised job description for each member 	Job descriptions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Head of Department management style that is transparent and participative 	Staff feedback	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an ethical code to guide practice 	Ethical code	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ suitably qualified staff including a complement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a) professional counsellors ○ b) auxiliary staff ○ c) support staff 	Qualifications of staff	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a satisfactory provision of professional staff – staff:student ratio (depending on <i>other</i> support services on the campus) 	Ratio	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ registration of staff by a professional body 	List of registered staff	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ regular staff performance appraisals 	PA records	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ appropriate recognition for quality efforts e.g. special awards or incentives 	Awards and applications	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ professional staff: a workload of not exceeding 65% of core SCDS responsibilities 	Records	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fair work distribution of tasks or activities, and responsibilities between personnel 	Formula (weighing and distributing)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a satisfactory staff development practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a) orientation/induction 	Orientation programme	
		Manuals and records	
	Records		

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5 Physical Resources should be accessible to personnel and all stakeholders and administrative systems should be effective for the smooth functioning of the SCDS.	A technological infrastructure must be made available to students and student counsellors with adequate funding.		
	5.1 Funding include: ○ institutional support ○ outside sources	Budget Sponsorships/Donations	
	5.2 Physical facilities should be: ○ accessible to all students, especially the disabled	Stairs/ramps/lifts	
	5.3 Physical facilities should be adequate for staff needs: ○ individual soundproof offices for each professional staff member	Offices	
	○ space for support staff	Space	
	○ office equipped with telephone, filing cabinet, and computer access (preferably Internet and e-mail)	Equipment	
	○ stock like stationery needed for administration and training should be available (paper, ink, transparencies, flip charts, board markers, etc.)	Stock	
	○ reception area	Space	
	○ store facilities for records – lock up	Furniture	
	○ resource material (books, brochures, yearbooks, etc.)	Resources	
	○ available area for group work/testing	Space	
	○ intern training and supervision	Audio-visual recording facilities Observation facilities	
	5.4 Administrative systems should be effective: ○ with regard to the provision of office administration (reception, telephone and fax answering, typing ,etc.)	Service provided	
	○ to support staff with human resource services (leave, service contract information, CCMA cases, etc.)	Service availability and accessibility	
○ with regard to financial services (purchasing, payment of claims, etc.)	Service availability and accessibility		
○ with regard to maintenance of equipment and facilities	Service availability and accessibility		

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6 The SCDS should effectively communicate activities to the stakeholders	6.1 A communication system should be in place: ○ policies and procedures should be approved by relevant structures	Minutes	
	○ policies should be available to all stakeholders	Internet/Manuals	
	○ policies on <i>counselling and psychometric testing</i> should be available to counsellors	Policy/Manual	
	○ manuals for administrative procedures should be available to all personnel	Manuals for procedures	
	○ management information should reach personnel on a regular basis	Feedback method	
	○ information dissemination should be through multi-media channels	Media	
	○ meetings should be regular, scheduled and controlled	Schedule Minutes	
7 Research activities should be linked to all academic and professional practices.	7.1 ○ SCDS Programmes should be evaluated a) internally b) externally	Records of evaluations	
	7.2 Research ○ Individual research by professional staff	Records	
	○ Research on SCDS programmes	Research Reports	
	○ Research on student needs	Research Reports	

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8 The positioning of the SCDS in the organisational structure should allow participation on an integrated level and in partnership with the academic, administrative and professional services.	8.1 The administrative and functional position of the SCDS should provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A direct line of report in order that needs are heard, understood and addressed and contributions acknowledged 	Organogram	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative neutrality 	Organogram	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Functional independence 	Organogram	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partnerships should be formed with all stakeholders, inside and outside the institution 	Stakeholder details	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A communication forum for communication and coordination of all Student Services/Student Affairs 	Forum	
	8.2 Classification and categorization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student counsellors with advanced academic training should be classified as professional staff 	Structure	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working conditions should commensurate with that of professional staff 	Working conditions and benefits	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ time for research and personal continuing professional development ○ a career path according to qualification 	Research time Promotion opportunity	
9 Student Counsellors must reflect core competencies in the demonstration of their unique role and functions.	9.1 Counsellors' professional responsibility include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding the legal aspects with regard to counselling & crisis intervention ○ knowing ethical standards ○ practising integrity and proper judgement 	Knowledge of Policy & procedures Records of problem cases	
	9.2 Counselling/Therapeutic Service that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides for educational, career and personal development and promotes wellness ○ is performed with suitably qualified personnel ○ includes preventive, curative and rehabilitative components ○ cooperates with health services and a referral network ○ includes psychometric and psychological tests ○ keeps records locked up and confidential ○ has specific measures, policies and procedures for crisis intervention 	Policy Procedures Records Testimonials Referral network Testing material Facilities Specific procedures	

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	9.3 Career Development Service that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educates students and prospective students about career opportunities and choices • trains students from job-hunting to employment • supports alumni during career transitions • provides graduate placement 	Testimonials Records Training programmes	
	9.4 Student Development Services that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ orientates students through preparation programmes ○ empowers students through developmental and preventative workshops e.g. stress management ○ prepares students through leadership and personal development programmes e.g. gender, multicultural, community awareness, etc. ○ provides resources such as leaflets, brochures, etc. 	Training programmes Attendance records Programme evaluation records Testimonials	
	9.5 Academic and Learning Skills Development Services that focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identification of learning environmental impediments ○ improving learning and study skills ○ cognitive skills training ○ collaboration with academic faculties ○ access courses ○ provision of resources such as leaflets, study skills packages, etc. ○ assistance to disabled students 	Data on needs, performances & impediments Training programmes Records Committee minutes Testimonials	
	9.6 Advocacy and consultation Service that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assists students in extenuating circumstances ○ campaigns for assistance to disabled students or other groups with specific needs ○ consults/advises/mediates on behalf of stakeholders 	Reports	
	9.7 Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contributions towards tutorial and academic staff training ○ Contributions toward support staff training ○ Training to peer helpers 	Training programmes	

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	9.8 Assessment as part of the admissions process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment of prospective students ○ Research on admission criteria, assessment techniques and instruments 	Policy Procedure manual Research reports	
	9.9 Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community outreach programmes 	Projects and programmes Program evaluations	