

Subject:
MDX-DBI Counselling Service for Students - Guidelines
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1. INTRODUCTION

We understand that starting a university can be an exciting and rewarding time. However, it is also a time of change that can be stressful; many challenges and dilemmas may arise that can affect a student's life and studies. Talking to a trained professional can help. Our Student Support Counsellor can provide mental wellbeing support and individual counselling services to help students manage challenges that they might face while studying with us.

Services offered will be:

- Individual Counselling
- Stress Management
- Psycho-Educational workshops
- Consultation
- Coping Strategies
- Resolve conflict
- Reflective Practices

As a result of the ongoing pandemic, certain changes have been made in the way these services are offered, in alignment with the government guidelines, and to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

2. HOW TO GET SUPPORT

Students can access the online booking link via the Middlesex University Dubai website, [click here](#), where they can select an appropriate time from the available slots. After selection, students will receive a consent form which must be completed before the first session.

The initial assessment will provide an opportunity to explore the student's reasons for contacting the service, and help build up a clearer picture. The Counsellor will then discuss the next steps with the student and formulate a plan.

For some students using our service, one or two sessions may be sufficient. Others may require up to six sessions, in addition to the initial assessment, in order to allow issues to be explored in greater depth.

The service is a part of the Centre for Academic Success (CAS) team and is free to all who are enrolled as students at Middlesex University Dubai.

3. CRISIS AND EMERGENCY HELP

Please also note, this service is not an emergency service, calls and emails will not be monitored after hours, so if you are worried about immediate risk of harm to yourself or others please contact any of the following numbers:

1. UAE's police hotline, **999**
2. Toll free mental health support line, **800-HOPE (800-4673)**
3. Ministry of Health and Prevention MOHAP's psychological counselling line, call or message on Whatsapp - **04 519 2519** (Sunday to Thursday 9 am to 9 pm).

4. RISK STATEMENT

This service is intended to help students improve their emotional wellbeing in order to achieve maximum academic potential. It is not a substitute for medication or any psychiatric support. Any advice given by our Counsellor cannot be construed as medical advice. Students are strongly advised not to stop any medication (if they are under any medication) or stop any sessions with their psychiatrist or psychologist.

Our Counsellor may, sometimes make referrals to other internal services or external organisations if considered appropriate.

While we will take all reasonable measures to ensure information, advice or resources shared by our Counselling services whether in person, through published material or on the university website are correct, no guarantee, express or implied, is given as to its accuracy. The University and its Counselling service does not bear any liability for relevant errors or omissions. Neither the University nor the individual Counsellor shall be liable to any person in contract, tort, statute or otherwise for any loss, distress or damage of any kind which is proved to have been caused as a result of the information or advice offered, nor for any damages (including, without limitation, damages or loss) arising in contract, tort or otherwise from the use of or inability to use this service, or from any action or decision taken as a result of using this service.

5. HOW DOES IT WORK

Duration of the Sessions: This will depend on the issue students are bringing. After an initial assessment appointment, students are offered a follow-up session. In exceptional cases a maximum of six sessions can be offered. Every counseling session will typically last for 40-50 minutes. If there is a need for ongoing support, the Counsellor will explore other sources of support and will inform the students about these.

Knowing something is wrong is a very useful start to dealing with a problem, but may not always bring about the desirable change. Talking with a trained professional can provide a different perspective and help students gain a greater understanding of themselves and the difficulties they are facing.

The role of a student counsellor is to help students overcome their emotional problems, social conflicts and improve their mental wellbeing, and thereby help improve their academic performance. Their skills are primarily to help students explore and understand the issues affecting them and help students overcome difficulties. It is a collaborative process where students are encouraged to engage and take an active role in their betterment. The Student Counsellor provides individual counselling for personal concerns that are common among undergraduate and graduate students. Common concerns that students face, include communication problems, navigating relationships, stress and time management, dealing with change, and coping with feelings such as loneliness, depression, anxiety, anger and guilt, and so on.

Issues that can frequently come up are:

- Relationship difficulties: family and friends, colleagues, commitment, jealousy, abusive and/or violent relationships
- Family issues: partners, children, parenting, separation and divorce, homesickness
- Lack of confidence: fear of 'failing', not feeling good enough, feeling judged
- Depression: feeling isolated, lonely, empty, tearful, unloved
- Self-harming behaviour and addictions: self-harm, alcohol and drug use
- Exam, assessment & study stress: feeling out of control, panic attacks, feeling inadequate
- Bereavement: feelings of loss, anger, loneliness, sadness and depression

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The service offered is confidential. All information about the sessions are kept confidential with the Counsellor unless we have written consent from the student to disclose any information. Details of the students' contact with the service are not recorded on their medical or student records, unless authorised by the student. Any statistical data the service collates or is required to provide for monitoring purposes is recorded anonymously.

There are rare instances when we are unable to maintain total confidentiality. In such circumstances, this would be discussed with the student first, to explain the reasons for deviating from full confidentiality. Some examples of this would be:

- The Counsellor has good reason to believe that the student or others may be at risk of serious harm. The Counsellor may also have reason to believe that the student is not in a position to take responsibility for his/her actions
- If there is a child protection issue involved
- If there is a criminal offence involved, and if there is a liability of a civil or criminal court procedure if relevant information was not disclosed.

In such circumstances, additional information is kept to a minimum and only disclosed to relevant others on a 'need to know' basis.

7. REVIEW

These Guidelines will be reviewed at least every 2 years.

Amendment History

Previous Version	Changes to previous version in the current version and date.	Updated by	Authorised by
Vx	Description of changes to each section and rationale	Quality Manager	Director