Student Support and Advocacy Services Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

To outline the support services provided by IHM to support students to adjust to study, achieve their learning goals and make satisfactory progress towards the learning outcomes of the course in which they are enrolled.

2. Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled at IHM and all staff who will be in contact with students.

3. Principles

IHM will endeavour to identify students who need additional support so that the intervention is respectful, timely, equitable, consistent and procedurally fair.

4. Responsibility

4.1 IHM will endeavour to provide students who need additional support by:

- Having in place strategies for students who require additional support to achieve their academic potential;

- Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its student body through a range of educational and support initiatives;

- Encouraging students with academic or personal needs to access support from internal and external support services;

- Improving staff awareness of the support options available to students;

- Having effective procedures in place for the disclosure of information about students with academic or personal support requirements, which complies with Privacy legislation;

- Having in place effective procedures for dealing with student critical incidents.

4.2 Course Coordinators and academic staff at IHM are responsible for monitoring student progress as well as identifying students who require additional support.

4.3 The Student Administration/Support Officer is responsible for implementation of Student Services and works with academic staff on supporting students with their personal and academic needs.

4.4 Students are responsible for:

- Seek relevant support and professional assistance where a physical or mental health issue is having an impact upon their academic progress;

- Seek and following advice from the Student Administration/Support Officer, course coordinators and academic staff;

- Fulfil academic requirements, including enrolment, class registration and any other requirements by the relevant due dates; and

- Make contact as soon as possible with the Student Administration/Support Officer or relevant academic staff member should they receive any formal notifications regarding concerns for their progress or wellbeing.

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5. Procedures

The Student Support Officer is responsible for ensuring information up-to-date and available for students and staff on available support services and current contact list. This information is distributed to students through the orientation program.

5.1 Student Support Services

5.1.1 IHM will provide students with contact details to refer any matters that require further follow up with relevant professionals.

5.1.2 Any referrals are conducted by IHM at no cost to the student, but fees and charges may apply where an external service is used by the student and this should be checked by the student prior to using services outside of IHM.

5.2 Course Coordinators and Lecturers

5.2.1 Course coordinators and lecturers will work closely with students and have an important role in student support. They will keep in regular contact with student support staff and with staff involved in other areas such as student services (Student Administration and Registration Services Manager) and library services.

5.2.2 Academics will receive training from the Student Administration/Support Officer and be familiar with the services and resources to support students.

5.2.3 Academics will arrange regular consultation times that are convenient for students, during which they will make themselves available for contact in person or by telephone or Skype. They will also proactively contact students as required to assist their progress.

5.3 Research and Learning Support Information Officer

5.3.1 The Research and Learning Support Information Officer provides students and staff with specialised academic support with regard to academic writing, research skills, referencing and other academic matters.

5.4 Student Administration/Support Officer

5.4.1 The Student Administration/Support Officer has expertise and experience in student support services.

5.4.2 The Student Administration/Support Officer will maintain web resources, including a discussion forum and will make themselves available to be contacted by students. Students may make contact by email or by submitting an online enquiry at any time and will identify specific consultation hours during which they will be available on Skype or various instant messaging programs, by telephone or in person. Appointments can also be made for telephone and in person support sessions by the use of an appointment request form, which will be made available both online and in print.

5.4.3 The Student Administration/Support Officer will maintain the referral database for external providers of services relevant to personal support and will refer students to those services. They assist with the admission process and provide student consultation in relation to relevant support services. They also liaise with academic staff on behalf of students, especially where advocacy is required, such as during the handling of complaints or appeals.

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5.5 Counselling Services

5.5.1 When students are at risk or suffering from difficulties such as (though not limited to) anxiety, depression, symptoms that may indicate mental illness or if the student requests specialised help that cannot be provided by IHM staff, they will be referred to a counselling service.

5.6 Referral to Other Services

5.6.1 Student Administration/Support Officers will be familiar with a wide variety of services to support students' wellbeing, including community medical and legal services, telephone counselling services (such as WIRE, Men's Referral Service, Lifeline and others) and will maintain a database of their contact details for the purpose of referring students.

5.7 Learning Support

5.7.1 Writing and learning support groups will be run online and will be coordinated by student support staff. Lecturers and course coordinators will be kept informed of these services and will encourage students facing difficulties in these areas to participate or to seek specific help

5.7.2 The Research and Learning Support Information Officer will make available learning resources to support academic writing electronically and will run online training sessions and support groups for students. The Research and Learning Support Information Officer supports student learning in literature search skills and accessing resources.

5.8 Research Skills and Bibliographic Support

5.8.1 Library resource staff can be contacted by email or through the online inquiry forms at any time. They will be available during specific consultation hours by telephone, Skype, instant messaging.

5.8.2 The Research and Learning Support Information Officer will have expertise in locating and evaluating literature, use of electronic databases and reference management software. Lecturers, course coordinators and other staff may refer students to library resources for assistance in these matters.

5.8.3 Library resource staff will run training for staff as well as online training sessions for newly enrolled students. Students may make appointments for electronic consultation with library resource staff.

5.9 Employment Support Services

5.9.1 IHM will provide employment support services to students, both to assist them if their employment circumstances change during the course of their studies and to help them to access emerging opportunities for career advancement. The Student Administration/Support Officer will maintain a working knowledge of employment services.

5.10 Medical Issues

5.10.1 The Student Administration/Support Officer is available to help students locate an appropriate medical professional to fulfil their specific needs wherever they may be located. Staff will be made aware of this resource so that they can direct students accordingly.

5.10.2 The emergency phone number for an ambulance in Australia is '000'. This number should only be dialled in an emergency and when an ambulance, police, or fire attendance is required, students will be advised that there is a fee for ambulance usage if not covered by a person's health insurance or ambulance membership.

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5.11 Internal Support Services

5.11.1 Library/Electronic Library

A library service is provided free for enrolled students. Books can be borrowed from the Library. Students will also have access to an Electronic library through personal computer including access to eBooks and the ability to search the library catalogue.

Library guides will be used as a means of collecting and providing easy access to the most relevant literature to specific subjects.

Students will also be encouraged to read beyond the required and recommended reading materials for their subjects so as to enhance the breadth and depth of their understanding of complex and interrelated issues in their field of study.

5.11.2 Study Skills Workshops (webinars)

Regular study skills workshops are held to assist students to learn how to succeed in their studies.

In order to gain the greatest benefit from the resources available, all new students will be invited to participate in an online skills workshop covering library services, electronic resources and research skills. Lecturers will liaise with support staff and identify skills and activities with which students face difficulties. Support staff will target webinars and develop support materials to help students overcome these difficulties

Where students require specific support and assistance with locating the resources they require and conducting literature-based research, they may book an electronic appointment with a library resource staff member.

5.11.3 Study Groups

Online informal group meetings will be facilitated to enable students to share ideas and engage in peer mentoring.

5.11.4 English Language Support

The entry requirements for the course of study require specific English language levels; however, Student Support will offer assistance to students to improve academic levels of English language skills in the following areas:

- Understanding the requirements of an assignment and assistance with the structure of an assignment or assessment task.

- English expression, grammar, spelling, editing their work;

- Improving confidence in understanding the principles of writing for higher education;

- Encouraging a student's independence in improving their English language skills and effective ways of studying.

5.11.5 Student Orientation Program

An orientation will be provided to students through face to face and online to build awareness and understanding of key academic and administrative processes, policies and services, to prepare students for successful learning. Face to face activities build on the online experience by providing opportunities for new students to meet peers, academic and professional staff, and familiarise themselves with their campus environment and services. Online orientation will include videos, instructions, screen shots, introductions to key academic and support staff and instructions to assist students in participating in study. At IHM, it is mandatory that all student should attend the orientation program. Orientation Online provides information

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for new students and practice opportunities to use features of the Learning Management System prior to commencement of studies.

Additional procedures for international students:

With regard to the orientation sessions which are specifically structured for international students, a particular emphasis is placed on providing information on and access to:

• Support services available to assist with the transition into life and study in Australia

• Legal services: availability and the referral process

• Emergency and health services – for example, campus security

• Facilities and resources

• Complaints and appeals processes; and

• Information on visa conditions relating to course progress and, if applicable, attendance.

Attendance records will be kept for international students attending the international orientation sessions.

5.11.6   Informing Students about Support Services

Students will be informed about the services available to them through:

- The website
- The handbook
- Orientation
- By referral from staff as the need arises.

5.12   Response Times

All student enquiries will receive a response within three business days. More urgent enquiries will be given priority and addressed sooner wherever possible.

5.13   Student Advocacy

The Student Administration/Support Officer will liaise with academic staff on behalf of students, especially where advocacy is required, such as during the handling of complaints or appeals. They will provide students with advice and guidance regarding their rights and any applicable policies and procedures.

5.14   Mandated Student Support

If a student is identified as at risk of failing to achieve satisfactory progression through their course of study, or if a student has been admitted by means of special entry, a mandatory referral will be made to:

- For domestic students in need of non-academic support services, the Student Administration/Support Officer;
- For overseas students and offshore students in need of non-academic support services, the International Student support officer or;
- For any student in need of academic, language or learning support, the Research and Learning Support Information Officer.

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The officer to whom the student is referred will complete a student support plan using the Student Support Plan Template, which will include a needs analysis, support strategies and tactics and measures for monitoring and evaluation.

5.15 Review of Student Support and Advocacy Services

Recommendations for change, addition or replacement of Student Support and Advocacy Services can be put forward by staff to the relevant committee at any time. All staff will be invited to participate in a major review which will be held triennially.

Supplementary Information

Related policies/procedures:

- Disability Policy
- Equity and Access Policy
- Library Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

Benchmarking: Bond University, University of Southern Queensland

Supporting research and analysis: Not applicable

Related documents:

- Student Handbook
- Orientation Checklist

Related legislation: Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act

Guidelines: Not applicable

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