The University of Hong Kong
Academic Advising Office

Supporting Students with Academic Risks

Whether or not you are in a formal advising role, there are many ways in which you can help make a positive turn for students struggling with studies by early identification and intervention as well as drawing support from other offices/units. This leaflet aims at providing colleagues a handy and easy-to-follow Guide for supporting students with academic risks.

I. Help Spot them: A 15-item Checklist

**Academic**
- Significant drop in GPA (e.g. from 3.0 to lower than 2.0)
- Missed examination without follow-up from student
- Failed grade in more than one courses
- Repeated absence from classes/tutorials
- Repeated failure to submit assignments on time or of reasonable standard
- Repeated no show at appointments to meet
- Showed inability to comprehend subject content
- Lack of motivation to study

**Personal/Social/Family**
- Withdrawal from friends and/or family
- Recent traumatic experiences
- Fatigue/ lack of energy
- Mood swing and crying
- Loss or gain in weight within short time
- Sickness/poor health
- Heavy involvement in work/other activities
II. Advising Struggling Students: Use the S O A P Approach

Subjective: Listen to student’s story

- Create a friendly and positive atmosphere
- Invite student to talk while you listen

Objective: Note the incidents and the facts

- Take note of student academic background and records in SIS and gather facts

Assess: Diagnose causes

- Lack of academic skills (e.g. math, language, computing)
- Lack of interest/ motivation (e.g. student does not put in effort, loss in educational/career direction)
- Lack of effective learning strategies (e.g. time management, prioritizing, revision skills)
- Other conditions that interfered with study (e.g. emotional issues, family pressure, social relationships, work, financial difficulties, health and behavior problems)

Plan: Plan actions / referrals

- Revise study plan/ study habits
- Improve academic skills (e.g. tutoring, study group)
- Refer to AAO/ Faculty office for University Regulations/curriculum requirements/ programme transfer option
Refer to CEDARS for other personal and non-academic issues:
- CoPE – psychological counseling and study skills
- Careers & Placement – career counseling and employment
- Campus Life – financial assistance

Refer to University Health Service for health concerns

III. How to make Referrals

**Before referral**
- Listen closely to the student’s problem before making the referral.
- Assure student of confidentiality.
- Explain why you’re referring the student rather than trying to help the student yourself.
- Provide a description of the resource and its purpose.

**When making the referral**
- Refer student to a person if possible
- Deal with student’s worries about the referral.
- If needed, help student make an appointment and walk them to the referred person’s office.
- Compliment student for making the effort to seek support and striving for self-improvement.
- Follow up with the referred student.

### Useful Numbers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising Office</td>
<td>3917 0128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Services Office</td>
<td>2859 2433</td>
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<td>CEDARS Campus Life</td>
<td>2859 2305</td>
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<td>CEDARS Careers &amp; Placement</td>
<td>3917 2317</td>
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<td>CEDARS Counselling &amp; Personal Enrichment (CoPE)</td>
<td>3917 8388</td>
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<td>Centre for Applied English Studies</td>
<td>3917 2004</td>
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<td>Common Core Curriculum</td>
<td>2219 4957</td>
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<td>Finance and Enterprises Office</td>
<td>2859 2337</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Affairs Office</td>
<td>2219 4549</td>
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Prepared by AAO May 2015; Updated by AAO in May 2019