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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Advising Office</strong></td>
<td>3917 0128</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Services Office</strong></td>
<td>2859 2433</td>
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<td><strong>CEDARS Campus Life</strong></td>
<td>2859 2305</td>
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<td><strong>CEDARS Careers &amp; Placement</strong></td>
<td>3917 2317</td>
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<td><strong>CEDARS Counselling &amp; Personal Enrichment (CoPE)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Centre for Applied English Studies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Common Core Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>2219 4957</td>
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<td><strong>Finance and Enterprises Office</strong></td>
<td>2859 2337</td>
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<td><strong>International Affairs Office</strong></td>
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