Student Support Services Manual

Concise Version
This summary of the Student Support Services Manual was devised to assist all people associated with the Student Support function at a college. It can therefore be seen to belong to everyone – because ultimately we all support students whether directly or indirectly.

This booklet will help the college to facilitate training and to allow critical information about student support to permeate all ranks and divisions with no exclusion, so that they too can appreciate the role they play in supporting students. The distribution of this booklet is mainly directed to all divisions of the institution which have a pastoral and parental role.

We wish you all of the best.
Ensure Career Guidance is in place

Publicity and marketing drives are planned and implemented

Publicity material like posters, brochures and flyers are available

Staff members are available to advise students

Open days are hosted at each campus

Special attempts are made to target unemployed youth
Every college must have an admission policy which is determined through consultation with the academic board and with the approval of the College Council.

2. THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

2.1. Reception: The student receives -
- Information on different venues
- Program
- Checklist
- Registration form
- Bursary application form
- Code of Conduct
- Information on selection and placement assessment

2.2. Selection and placement tests are done

2.3. The registration and bursary application forms are completed and handed in with the required documents

2.4. The program is approved and the student is informed or the program is not approved and another suitable course is suggested.

2.5. Payment of the registration fee takes place.

2.6. Registration takes place
- A student registration card or a proof of registration is issued

2.7. The Orientation program is ready for implementation.
3. THE STUDENT ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

3.1 An orientation committee is elected from various campus constituencies to plan, oversee and evaluate orientation.

3.2 All Staff members (managerial, academic, administrative, student support) have accepted orientation as part of the academic program.

3.3 Students informative orientation booklets are prepared.

3.4 Student leaders have been trained regarding their role.

3.5 The Student Orientation Program is implemented.
Ensure that a Financial Aid System is in place - and that the Financial Aid Committee is properly constituted.

4.1. The student completes the bursary application forms and submits all supporting documents.

4.2. All application forms are thoroughly checked prior to being accepted.

4.3. The Means Test Tool is used at campus and/or central office.

4.4. The Financial Aid Committee convenes to review and make recommendations on applications.

4.5. The recommendation of the Financial Aid Committee is forwarded to the Principal for approval.

4.6. Schedule of particulars or a bursary agreement is issued and is signed by the student and the college.

4.7. The claims are sent to NSFAS.

4.8. The college informs the students of the final decision.
The building and maintenance of an effective academic support system is a whole-college responsibility, under the leadership of the Academic Head. It does not rest with a single individual or department.

5. ON-COURSE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

5.1 Academic support system is planned
- A thoroughly planned timetable is developed and adequately addresses all the learning components of the curriculum.
- Lecturers make an overall year plan for each subject that they teach, so that they have an ‘at a glance’ picture of how all the curriculum components fit together.
- The plan is discussed with the students at the beginning of the year so that they know how the year will unfold and why there is no time to waste.

5.2 Identify Students academic needs
- An early diagnostic baseline assessment is done in each class within the first two or three weeks of the college year.
- A systematic analysis is undertaken to identify common errors and areas of under-achievement.
- Lecturers have regular meetings to exchange information about areas of low academic achievement and to plan collaborative remedial interventions across common areas of need.
- Each lecturer sets aside a regular time slot when students can make an appointment to discuss areas where they are experiencing performance difficulties.

5.3 “Catch Up” is built into the academic support system
- Lecturers decide at the beginning of the year what kind of remedial support they will provide and they build this into their year plan.
- One catch-up period per week is viewed as part of the overall teaching strategy and not as something that is only considered when poor results have been achieved.
- Catch-up periods are planned and well structured.
- A variety of activities are included so that those students who are keeping up can work on their own and go further.
- Lecturers monitor progress and give positive feedback so that students experience a sense of achievement.
6. ACADEMIC SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

6.1 Teaching for learning success
- The lecturers create an environment for active learning.
- Lecturers must be knowledgeable about their subject.
- The lecturer is clear about and emphasises the objectives of each class.
- The lecturer provides opportunities for students to give feedback on their understanding and difficulties.
- Lecturers adapt their teaching in response to feedback.

6.2 Working effectively with language for teaching and learning
- Lecturers become aware of students’ language difficulties and build this awareness into their teaching.
- Lecturers clearly emphasise the main points of each lesson.
- Key words and concepts are presented orally and in written form.
- Students are able to speak before written work is done.

6.3 Integrating learning resources into the classroom
- Each student is provided with a full set of textbooks.
- Students must be guided on how to use textbooks effectively and must see them being used actively in classrooms.
- Students need guidance on how to use the Internet effectively and ethically.
- Students must be encouraged to use dictionaries as well as spell checking and grammar functions available on the software used by the college.
- Lecturers need to bring knowledgeable people into the classroom to help bridge the gap between the world of work and college.

Lecturers have to help students to “crack the code” that opens up learning.
6.4 Academic support tutorials

- Tutorials are planned around specific tasks and activities that deepen understanding.
- Tutorials provide opportunities for students to talk about the subject.
- Tutorials focus on developing useful ways of approaching understanding of the subject.

6.5 Designing appropriate learning tasks and activities

- Outcomes, activities and assessments are aligned to maximise learning.
- Lecturers expose students to the full range of cognitively challenging activities.
- Language used for instruction is clear and unambiguous.
- Tasks are written down and explained orally.
- Assessment criteria are clear and communicated to students when the task is given out.
- Mark allocation for different activities is clear.
Work experience equips students with foundational, social, technological and technical competences which employers look for in intermediate-level employees. It is essential that colleges do not view Work Experience as an add-on function.

7. PROVIDING WORK EXPERIENCE

7.1 Preparing to provide work experience

- Practical application, which includes simulated or actual work experience, is part of the culture and service delivery ethos in the college.
- Work experience is provided in every programme through simulated training or exposure in actual workplaces.
- Practical and simulated training sessions and periods of student placement in actual workplaces are included in the college timetable.
- There are suitable practical training facilities for each programme which support planned practical and simulated training activities.

7.2 Providing work experience in simulated and actual workplaces

- Staff members with suitable qualifications, experience and training are appointed to deliver practical and simulated training.
- Lecturers keep up with industry developments through visits or periodic placement in relevant workplaces.
- Policies, procedures and implementation guidelines are established to support practical and simulated training and encourage the exposure of students and staff to actual workplaces.
- There is a system for managing practical and simulated training.
- Students are given the necessary information and preparation to engage adequately in the practical activities designed for their programme.
- All students are provided with simulated work experience.
- Reflection and evaluation is used to build better practice in relation to practical training and work experience.
Students who are responsible in the way they manage their studies and are able to prioritise their studies along with other issues in their lives are much more likely to achieve better grades than those who do not have these coping skills.

8.1 Planning for successful promotion of health and well-being

- Learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment.
- Policies and strategies are in place with a sound knowledge of all relevant legislation.
- Responsible staff members are well selected, qualified, competent and dedicated.
- Regular training is provided to improve the knowledge and skills of staff.
- Staff members keep to ethical standards and are role models and mentors.
- Regular fire drills are held in all campuses as part Health & Safety policy

8.2 Dealing with problems

- Counseling
  - A private, confidential and accessible counseling room is available at each campus.
  - Professional, knowledgeable counseling staff can handle a range of problems and guide students.
  - The counseling service is student centered, confidential and works on an appointment basis.
- Peer Counseling
  - A manageable team of peer counselors is available at each campus.
  - The appointment process is in place and proper training and in-service training is provided.
  - Peer counselors sign a binding code of conduct and regular meetings are held with the SSO.
  - A confidential, safe record-keeping system is in place.
  - A peer counselor is always on duty according to a timetable.
- Referral System
  - A well-functioning referral system with a list of helpful institutions known to the SSO is in place.
  - Records are kept of all referrals.
  - There is a procedure to follow when support is requested.

8.3 Partnerships with communities and other organisations

- Partnerships are formed with other organisations.
- A detailed list with the names of the organisations, contact numbers and contact person is available.
- The SSO meets with all these people and networks regularly
- Programmes to assist needy students are running.
9. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS

9.1 Planning for successful leadership development for the SRC

- There is an SRC in place with clear roles and responsibilities.
- The whole college community understands why an SRC is needed, who may be elected and the term of office.
- There is a policy on stipends for SRC members.
- There is a procedure for handling students’ requests.

9.2 Organogram, portfolios and responsibilities

- Each SRC member has a portfolio for which they are responsible with a clear job description.
- Each SRC member knows what their responsibilities are and that they need to invest in people.
- There is an implementation plan for the tasks and responsibilities of the SRC.
- Duties are distributed among all members.
9.3 The election of the SRC

- An election committee handles the election process according to a fixed procedure.
- Notice of the election is given well in advance.
- The election process is fair and transparent.
- Equality is strongly built into the process.
- The process is confidential and anonymous.

9.4 Inauguration and code of conduct of the SRC

- A formal inauguration function takes place soon after the election of the SRC.
- The newly elected SRC members sign a code of conduct.
- All newly elected SRC members receive training and attend workshops.

9.5 Meetings and equipment

- An executive committee is elected at the first meeting and meets on a monthly basis.
- Proper meeting procedures are followed.
- The SRC has an office with sufficient equipment.
- Planned activities are submitted with a budget.
Participation in sport and recreational activities, make students feel part of the campus community and may lead to academic success.

10. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

10.1 Planning for successful student development
- The whole college community understands why student development is needed.
- There is a budget allocated for student development.
- There are procedures in place which encourage student development.
- As far as is possible students with disabilities are included in sport.

10.2 Sport
- There is a balance between sport and academic work.
- Creative and innovative ideas are generated, with sport opportunities other than normal sports.
- Partnerships are formed with organisations.
- Sport facilities as well as a first-aid kit are available.

10.3 Cultural activities
- There are opportunities for students to participate in competitions or events.
- Students who excel are recognised.
- There are community outreach programmes.
ALL THESE LEAD TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND EMPLOYABILITY
Parental support is often a key factor in maintaining student’s motivation and achievement.

11. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

11.1 Involvement in the entry and orientation process

- A least one parent accompanies the student when they enroll at the college.
- The selection and placement process is discussed with the parent and student.
- The results of the placement tests or assessments are discussed with the parent as well as the reasons for placing the student in a particular programme.
- The parent signs the registration documents.
- A parent information booklet is handed to the parents to read at home.
- The parent is also oriented about college life and what is expected of them.

11.2 Involvement in the academic process

Reporting on academic progress should cover the following:

- The student’s progress in each subject according to potential.
- The student’s attendance rate.
- The student’s potential and developing talents or interests.
- Specific difficulties the student may have.
- The student’s behaviour.
- The student’s relationship with lecturers and other students.
- The support the parent can give the student and the lecturers.
11.3 Involvement in college activities

- Parents are involved in college activities such as sport days, cultural activities, and open days and caring for needy students.
- Parents are invited to the prize-giving or end-of-year function.

11.4 Keeping parents informed

- There is a two-way communication system at the college.
- There is a workable method in which the college communicates with the parents to keep them informed.
Support will be needed at exit level to enable students to deal with the challenges of their job choices.

12. **EXIT SUPPORT**

12.1 Preparing and supporting students to obtain formal employment

**Classroom-based support**
- Students are formally exposed to work-readiness preparation as part of NC (V) level 2 Life Orientation. Aspects covered include career planning, job search skills, development of CVs and letters of application, conduct in the workplace, and workplace legal aspects.
- Student support service staff complement, classroom teaching and learning through presenting particular topics or facilitating practical workshops on particular topics – if the required expertise and experience is available.

**Direct engagement with exit-level students**
- One-on-one exit interviews are conducted with students as per individual request for information or assistance, for example, preparing a CV, coaching for job interviews and ensuring that job applications are realistic.
- A job placement service is provided: either providing information to students about job advertisements and opportunities or directly recommending students to employers according to employer requests and job requirements.
12.2 Preparing and supporting students for self-employment

Student support personnel participation involves the following:

- Becoming familiar with the general principles underpinning entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education as well as with the nature and content of entrepreneurship education offered at the college to better understand the needs of students at exit level.
- Supporting classroom-based preparation of students for self-employment by either presenting certain aspects (expertise permitting) on a guest lecturer basis or facilitating outside expertise on a guest-lecturer basis.
- Responding to requests for information or assistance from exit-level students - either directly or through sourcing the required expertise from elsewhere (inside or outside the college).
- Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships and partnerships with entrepreneurship development individuals, organisations and government departments.

12.3 Preparing and supporting students who want to study further

- Relevant and up-to-date information is available or can be obtained to address students’ information needs about options for further study.
- Student support personnel may on occasion have to liaise directly with student affairs personnel at higher or further education institutions or providers of DoL-linked programmes.
Without support from their colleges, students generally struggle to break into the job market and frequently end up in employment that is unrelated to their training.

13. JOB PLACEMENT

Establishing job placement as a service

- The goals for the job placement service have been developed and a plan is developed annually to meet these.
- The college provides the physical and financial resources needed to implement its job placement plan (for instance, office space, computers and telephones).
- The college develops a graduate job placement (and tracking) policy.
- The job placement service is located in the student support office.
- Job placement (and tracking) is carried out as one of the responsibilities of campus-based student support officers or by a placement and tracking officer.
- The college develops job placement relationships with employers from different industries.
- The college evaluates its placement service annually and the findings inform the placement plan developed for the following year.

System development

- A database supporting job placement is established.
- Forms and templates are developed that support effective job placement operations and management.

Placing students in jobs

- Students are fully informed about the rules and procedures for job placement service.
- Students apply and register for placement.
- Students are successfully matched with employers and job requirements.
- Student support officers stay in contact with students referred to employers to get feedback about their success and the reasons for such outcomes.
- Job placement reports are prepared on placement results.
14. GRADUATE TRACKING

14.1 Establishing a graduate tracking function

- The college has agreed to establish a tracking function.
- The college develops an annual tracking plan that lists its objectives and outlines how these will be achieved.
- The tracking function is located in the student support department.
- Tracking responsibilities are carried out by campus-based student support officers.
- The college provides the physical resources and budget it needs to implement its tracking plan.
- The college is developing a tracking (and job placement) policy.
- The college evaluates its tracking function annually and the findings inform the tracking plan developed for the following year.

14.2 Developing systems and tools for tracking graduates

- A tracking database is developed to manage the tracking information collected on graduates.
- Tracking forms and templates are developed to manage and report on tracking.

14.3 Tracking graduates and using tracking information to improve college efficiency

- Tracking activities are carried out according to an annual tracking plan.
- Information is kept on each graduate tracked and updated as soon as new information is collected.
- Findings are presented in tracking reports.
- Findings are considered by relevant college managers, academic staff and the college council.
- The college is starting to use tracking information to improve programme delivery and student support.