



Policy on Struggling Students for Improvement

1. Preamble

Khulna University is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student has the opportunity to achieve their full academic and personal potential. This policy outlines the university's commitment and framework for identifying, supporting, and guiding students who may be experiencing academic, personal, or financial challenges that hinder their progress. Our aim is to provide timely and effective interventions, resources, and mentorship to empower students to overcome obstacles, improve their performance, and successfully complete their studies. Although most learners complete their education without significant difficulties, 10–15% experience some challenges during their program. Learner difficulties can have a huge impact at various levels. There is a moral imperative to assist struggling learners in order to improve their success and their institutions' retention rates. The challenge is that these learners typically fail to seek help and continue to underperform throughout their education. There is a growing consensus that early identification and intervention provide the best chance of improving these students' skills. Academic Difficulties (issues with knowledge, attitudes, or skills) are often interconnected with other issues (personal life, teacher, environment); understanding these issues can help identify and address them.

2. Definition

Struggling Students: A struggling student who is falling below a specified GPA threshold or getting consistent low grades in multiple courses. Student also fails to meet other course requirements and fails to submit of assignments or poor performance on assessments. Apart from academic issues, a struggling students can be who remain absent from classes frequently.

Student Support Referrals: When a faculty member refers a student to counseling, academic support, or other university services

Self-Referral: A self-referral usually means that instead of waiting for someone else (a faculty, or discipline head), the student nominate or refer himself/herself for counseling.

3. Policy Objectives

The objective of the Academic and Well-being Counseling Policy is to support students in achieving academic success while maintaining their personal well-being.



Learn, Lead and Live

Objectives:

- Enhance academic performance through guidance and skill development.
- Promote student well-being by providing safe and confidential support.
- Identify challenges early and ensure timely intervention or referrals.
- Foster holistic growth, resilience, and positive coping skills.
- Ensure inclusivity and equity in counseling services.
- Strengthen collaboration between faculty, staff, and students.
- Support student retention and successful graduation outcomes.

4. Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- All undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by Khulna University.
- All faculties, disciplines, and academic programs.
- All academic staff assigned as course instructors/ teaching assistant or tutorial facilitators.

5. Policy Provision

Faculty should build connections with students, as social belonging improves motivation and help-seeking. Further, when an faculty gets to know learners, they are more motivated to succeed and are more comfortable accessing academic help when necessary.

- 5.1 Early Identification and Intervention:** Regularly monitor student progress to identify signs of disengagement or academic struggles early on. Develop intervention plans and individualized learning strategies to provide personalized support.
- 5.2 Prioritize Teacher-Student Relationships:** The most effective way to engage students and keep them engaged is to focus on and provide support for developing teacher-student relationships.
- 5.3 Establish Clear Communication Channels:** Use LMS messaging systems, telephone calls, web conferencing tools, and personal visits to maintain regular communication among teachers, students, parents, and administrators.
- 5.4 Take the students' perspective:** Find opportunities to explicitly tell them we see and value their concerns, especially when it seems like they're complaining.
- 5.5 Invite students to pursue their personal interests:** Create projects and assignments that offer chances to explore what they're naturally curious about and interested in.



- 5.6 Flexible Learning Options:** Consider adjusting pacing, providing alternative assignments, or offering varied assessment methods to accommodate different learning needs and support student engagement.
- 5.7 Provide Additional Support Services:** Offer tutoring sessions, peer mentoring programs, teacher-led virtual support hours, and other resources to assist students who need extra help.
- 5.8 Ask open-ended questions:** Questions that ask students to justify an opinion or interpret a reading are more likely to elicit responses even from those who do not know exactly how to define a term or derive a formula because there is no risk of “failing” the question. Open-ended questions can have multiple correct answers or valid perspectives, they can also generate more interesting discussions. Engagement-based questions can require students to be more diligent in their readings and homework as these questions require a deeper understanding than simply knowing a correct answer.
- 5.9 Ask students what they know about a topic before instruction:** Background-knowledge probes are useful because they can help instructors decide what to cover in limited time, ensuring that subsequent meetings of the course will better engage students, and can even generate discussion in the moment.
- 5.10 Encourage students to take more active roles in collaborative learning and teaching**
Many studies underscore the effectiveness of learning techniques that utilize student experts or require students to practice teaching what they learn.
- 5.11 Incorporate student discussion time into activities:** Instead of having students solve an example problem on their own, consider asking students to form small groups or try activities such as think-pair-share to work through it. In addition to boosting engagement, group discussions give students the opportunity to explain to others their reasoning and problem-solving processes, which helps promote metacognition. Small groups work equally well for discussing open-ended questions and problems with explicit solutions.
- 5.12 Offer multiple versions of activities or assignments:** Information is only accessible to students when it engages their cognition, so it is essential to give students both autonomy in choosing how to engage with the material as well as a diversity of methods for them to learn and assess their skills. Consider utilizing information from multiple types of sources or modalities when giving lectures or allowing students the freedom to choose different types of projects for a final assessment.



Learn, Lead and Live

- 5.13 Financial and Basic Needs Support:** Assist students in understanding financial aid options and managing their university expenses (*Please refer to the Policy on Academic and Well-being Counseling*).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Students:** Responsible for proactively engaging with their studies, communicating challenges to faculty or advisors, utilizing available support services, and adhering to academic improvement plans.
- **Faculty Members:** Play a vital role in early identification, providing clear course expectations, offering flexible support within their courses, and referring struggling students to appropriate university resources.
- **Discipline:** Responsible for implementing and overseeing departmental-specific support initiatives, monitoring student progress, and ensuring advisors are equipped to guide students effectively.
- **University Administration:** Responsible for allocating adequate resources, overseeing policy implementation, and ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach to student support across all departments.
- **Discipline head and the academic committee** need to sit during the annual review (results, extra-curricular activities) to identify and report recurring at-risk cases and may take appropriate action (assign advisor, use the faculty referral system etc.)

7. Confidentiality and Data Privacy

All personal and academic information related to struggling students will be handled with the utmost confidentiality, adhering to all applicable privacy laws and university policies. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis among relevant university personnel (advisors, Discipline head and counselors) involved in supporting the student, with a focus on facilitating effective intervention and respecting student privacy. Records of the student will be kept until the student graduates/leave the university after post-graduation. After each semester, Discipline head will collect all the counseling-related records and store it in hard copy/soft copy. Advisors can request previous records from the discipline head if required.

4



Learn, Lead and Live

8. Policy Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed periodically (e.g., every three years or as required) by the University Academic Council, in consultation with student representatives, faculty, and student support staff, to ensure its effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with the evolving needs of the student body and best practices in higher education. Adjustments and improvements will be made as necessary.

9. Approval and Effective Date

This policy becomes effective upon approval by the Academic Council/Syndicate of Khulna University.

Approved by:

Khulna University

Khulna-9208

Effective From: __/__/2025