



Student Support Policy

CEDAR INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY NPC

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Purpose

- 1) Cedar International Academy NPC (hereafter called Cedar) is committed to supporting students as they work towards fulfilling their academic and personal potential. The Cedar community comes together to facilitate learning within a culture that creates a supporting and enriching environment so that all are able to develop and achieve their goals. Cedar recognises that student development and learning can be affected by a broad range of factors that can adversely impact progress and success. Subsequently, Cedar seeks to identify and address barriers to learning and development whilst providing meaningful and relevant support to each student. This occurs within a partnership framework in which students are responsible for their own learning, while being actively supported by Cedar.

Scope

- 2) The policy provides staff and students with guidance about their responsibilities to ensure that adequate support is provided to meet student needs. The policy also guides the activities of Student Support Services.

Principles

- 3) The establishment of clear **guidelines** for development and evaluation of programmes and services that will provide adequate academic and personal support helps to ensure that each student has a fair and reasonable opportunity of achieving academic and developmental success.
- 4) **Benchmarks** guide planning, design and development of learning support and serves as a reference point for academic staff in the enhancement of learning experiences for students.
- 5) A holistic **learning system** approach ensures the alignment of learning support services with the purpose, outcomes, learning strategy and assessment criteria of the modules.
- 6) **Flexibility** allows the development of programmes and services to meet the ever-changing needs of students in a changing environment.
- 7) Cedar seeks to create an environment that allows students to reach and achieve their full potential through the support of committed and qualified staff. Cedar seeks to support underprepared students with sensitivity to their background and context.
- 8) Cedar values and supports diversity as far as possible and to the degree that administration, infrastructure and staff have resources and capacity to meet those individual and unique needs.
- 9) Cedar recognises the valuable role that technology plays in supporting students and will endeavour to provide access to technology to help students succeed academically.
- 10) Student support services are critical at the time a student enters Cedar and comes to grips with the expectations and institutional culture, at times of disruption and trauma, and throughout a student's study to ensure retention of happy and satisfied students.
- 11) Staff are required to set a good example and live as role models for students to promote mutual cooperation and respect with the Cedar community.

Student Academic Development

Student Orientation

- 12) Student orientation takes place near the beginning of each academic year. Orientation provides opportunities for students to meet peers, academic staff and become familiar with the facilities at Cedar. Orientation also serves to introduce students to Cedar policies such as regulations and codes of conduct.
- 13) Information about learning programmes, student support services and general teaching and learning matters are communicated both verbally and in the form of handbooks and digital mediums.

Academic Readiness

- 14) Cedar welcomes students from diverse backgrounds including those from rural communities that may not have had the broadest range of opportunities during their years of basic education. Therefore, Cedar is committed to developing academic processes and approaches so that all students are enabled to learn and progress.
- 15) Sufficient academic support must be provided to all students throughout their time at Cedar, especially those more at risk. Through adaptations of teaching and learning activities and methods, where relevant and practicable, academic staff must provide additional support for students at entry level to ensure proper academic conventions are established for the duration of studies.
- 16) The three-stage enrolment process helps to identify students who may be underprepared. Such students shall be appropriately advised, and recommendations made to ensure that academic failure is avoided, and that Cedar is not the cause of a lack of success due to insufficient support processes or early interventions. Thorough formative assessment is key to identifying student needs at an early stage.
- 17) Students identified as underprepared may be advised to:
 - a. register for a short course offered by Cedar;
 - b. register for an English Language course; or
 - c. work with a suitable staff member in designing a bridging course.

Student Mentorship

- 18) Academic staff have responsibility to provide each student with individualised support where required so that students can achieve and engage in effective learning by:
 - a. establishing a supportive relationship with all students;
 - b. adopting a creative approach to teaching and learning;
 - c. providing timely and regular assessment feedback; and
 - d. through mentoring and coaching.
- 19) Students shall be encouraged to meet with any lecturer or Academic Head to discuss progress, request advice with managing workload or to discuss additional tutoring for an area of need.

Academic Progress

- 20) Lecturers must provide formative assessment feedback early in a module to help students understand their progress and to identify any areas of concern so that suitable interventions and scaffolding can be put in place.

- 21) Students can also request to meet with Academic Head or relevant lecturers to discuss their progress. Any recommendations made shall be noted and added to that students' profile in CCAS.

Academic Overload Avoidance

- 22) Several measures are in place to prevent student overload and burnout. Staff must adhere to these measures to ensure that students are not unreasonably overwhelmed by their studies. These measures include:
 - a. careful forward planning of assessment timing by maintaining a central **assessment calendar** showing an overview of assessment due dates in all modules;
 - b. **Assessment Load Guidelines** table provided in the Assessment and Moderation Policy so that assessment load is consistent with and reflects the notional study hours of the module; and
 - c. regular and ongoing **internal communications** and **planning** between lecturers to ensure the learning and teaching experience is streamlined and consistent.

At Risk Students

- 23) Lecturers will monitor students for early signs of underachievement. Students failing assessments, requests for extensions, failing to submit work for assessment, patterns of seeking medical certificates around examination period or having poor attendance records are indicators of students at risk and must be identified and suitably supported. Cedar does not endorse the practice of lowering expectations by adjusting assessment tasks for underachieving students. Rather, staff shall endeavour to make every effort to assist students, through careful scaffolding and support, to achieve all expected learning outcomes.
- 24) Students experiencing ongoing academic issues, may require further interventions. In such cases, the matter must be referred to the Academic Head and a student support plan considered. If a support plan is deemed necessary, all relevant parties shall be considered to provide input in the design of the plan to resolve areas of concern. Relevant parties may include:
 - a. students;
 - b. parents/caregiver;
 - c. lecturers from previous or other modules;
 - d. Academic Head;
 - e. Program Coordinator; and/or
 - f. any other persons that may be identified as potentially providing valuable input.
- 25) Interventions and student support plans must be documented and stored in the student file on CCAS (as an interim arrangement until CCAS supports this function, the Student Interaction Report will be used for documenting interventions).

Learning Challenges

- 26) Students with learning challenges shall be reasonably accommodated within the resource and capacity constraints of the organisation. Such challenges may include:
 - a. language;
 - b. physical impairment;
 - c. cognitive impairment;
 - d. emotional disability; and/or

- e. frequent or extensive absence.
- 27) The Board shall be responsible for approving any recommendations made by Cedar Management to accommodate a student with learning challenges.

Academic Queries

- 28) Accurate and timely information must be provided to students for any academic queries a student may have.
- 29) Queries should be directed to lecturers in the first place. The query shall be escalated to a suitable person in Administration or the Program Coordinator or Academic Head if a lecturer cannot assist.

Mitigating Circumstances

- 30) At times, unplanned and severe events may occur that could have a significant impact on a student's ability to meet assessment due dates. Cedar will have understanding for such cases and will support students within the scope of the extensions rule according to the Assessment and Moderation Policy, to minimise the impact on assessment outcomes.

Learning Support and Microsoft Teams

- 31) Microsoft Teams provides a portal for supporting student learning in the classroom and extends to after hours by providing a platform for students to access materials.
- 32) Lecturers are encouraged to use Teams to support the learning experience by making resources, presentations and lecture materials available to students for future reference throughout the duration of the module.
- 33) Students are encouraged to ask module related questions in the discussion post for the relevant module.
- 34) Students can ask general questions not related to a specific module in the Student Central Team under Questions and Answers (FAQs) channel.
- 35) Links are provided in Student Central for students to make suggestions or provide feedback on any aspect of their experience at Cedar through the General Feedback Form.

Student development

- 36) Student involvement is valued, and Cedar promotes a continuous feedback culture from students through informal discussions and an open-door policy. This allows students to feel free to approach academic staff to discuss academic or personal concerns.
- 37) Students are encouraged to communicate through the Student Committee. The Student Committee is a process for supporting the well-being of the student body. Additionally, leadership is developed when students take up initiatives and roles in the organising and facilitating of extra-curricular events.
- 38) Social events can be effective in strengthening relationships and interacting in non-academic contexts.
- 39) Emotional abuse hinders student development. Cedar is committed to ensuring that students receive education and training free from threat, oppression, or emotional abuse. The student disciplinary process and related policies reinforce the view that bullying and harassment are unacceptable and inconsistent with Cedar objectives. Specific staff will be available to support students with emotional and spiritual needs, whether arising from within Cedar or external influencing factors.

Student Support

Enrolment support

- 40) Administrative staff must ensure that they are helpful, clear and sensitive to the needs of students in the way they interact and relate to students as they assist students with Administration matters. The registration process must be clear, and information about required resources and equipment must be clearly communicated.

Student Counselling

- 41) Depending on the nature of counselling required, Cedar can refer students to those who can provide individual care for specific types of support or counselling requirements.

Administration Support Services

- 42) Administrative staff are available to assist students with matters relating to admission and registration, accounts, fees, facilities, accommodation and general questions that may arise.
- 43) Printing, scanning, laminating, copying and stationery needs can be discussed with Administration staff as the need arises. However, Teams should be the preferred platform for material delivery and access.

Library Support

- 44) A staff member shall be available during regular Cedar hours to assist students in accessing and selecting appropriate library resources as required.
- 45) Resource databases are also available, and access should be discussed with the library Resource Officer.

IT Support

- 46) Lecturers responsible for delivering IT modules are available to assist students with most IT issues relating to navigating the operating system, network, using the Internet effectively and the application of the various functions of Microsoft Office 365 programmes.

Graduate Support

- 47) The Registrar provides advice and support for any matters relating to course admission, registration, promotion, and graduation.

Glossary

CCAS: administration software used at Cedar

Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational technology Learning and teaching programs.

Student support refers to those services that support students in their day-to-day lives on campus as well as those services that support them in their academic work. This includes services such as residences; student counselling; library services and academic resources; IT provision; support for students with health needs, etc.

Student development refers to those extra-curricular campus activities designed for quality of life and for personal and social development, such as leadership development; sport; and the social and spiritual development of students.

Student academic development refers to the curriculum strategies employed at the point of learning and teaching to enhance the quality of learning and the academic performance of students. In South Africa, 'student academic development' sometimes has the alternative meaning of 'academic development' or 'educational development', referring specifically to institutional responses to the needs of underprepared students. It is important to recognise that all of these terms most centrally refer to curriculum development (in its widest sense, including the design of content and forms of delivery and staff development). Student academic development therefore refers to both specific 'stand-alone' or 'add-on' or extended or enriched programmes (e.g., bridging, recruitment, preparation or foundation programmes aimed at the specific needs of a particular group of students), and curriculum development initiatives in the mainstream academic curriculum at all levels of higher education.

Reference Materials

Cape Town College of Fashion Design. (2019). *Student support policy*. Retrieved from <https://ctcfd.co.za/pdf/policies>

Council on Higher Education. (2004). *Criteria for institutional audits*. Retrieved from <https://www.uj.ac.za>

Council on Higher Education. (2007). *HEQC Institutional Audits Manual 2007*. Pretoria. Retrieved from <https://www.ru.ac.za/>

Government Gazette, Vol. 481, No 27819, July 2005 - Policy for Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificates, Diplomas and Bachelor's Degrees Programmes.

Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)

UK College of Business and Computing. (2018). *Student support policy*. Retrieved from <http://ukcbc.ac.ae>

Related Internal Documents:

Admission and Registration Policy

Assessment and Moderation Policy

Equity Policy

Examination Policy

General Feedback Form

Language Policy

Quality Assurance Policy

Student Disability Policy

Work Integrated Learning Policy

Student Interaction Report