STUDENTS COUNSELLING POLICY

Version: Rev. 00

Short description: Students' Counselling Policy

Relevant to: Staff and Students

Approved by: University Council

Responsible Officer: Senior Assistant Students Counsellor

Responsible Office: Office of the Dean of Students

Date Introduced: September, 2026

Related University Documents: University Charter, Statutes, Rules and Regulations Governing the Conduct and Discipline of Students of the KVUC, and other relevant policies

Related legislation: Universities Act, 2012

Key words: Counselling

SEPTEMBER,2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University Council and University Management Board appreciate the invaluable contribution of the Dean of Students office and staff, members of the Students Counseling Committee and Students Council for their contribution in formulating this Policy.

APPROVAL

The Kerio Valley University College having been awarded its Charter on 18th June 2026 set itself on a growth path guided by its vision of "To be a university of excellence in knowledge generation, innovation and environmental sustainability for socio-economic transformation". At its foundation, the University is being guided by the University of Eldoret 2024 to 2029 strategic plan.

The University has been developing various policies and procedures to guide decisions of the different organs of the University in order to achieve rational outcomes geared towards the growth of the University. This Students' Counselling Policy is just but one of the many policies that the University is rolling out. My special thanks go to all those who put in their time, effort and skills to develop this Policy.

By virtue of the authority vested in me as the Chairman of Council of the Kerio Valley University College, I hereby sign this Students' Counselling Policy.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL

FOREWORD

The University being an Institution of higher education is expected to produce scholars, researchers and experts who are well informed academically and socially. The University is expected to provide conducive learning environment to its students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds with varied psycho-social dynamics to embrace unity in diversity which makes them be well-adjusted and holistic person. As a means to develop and address the psycho-social needs of the students, the Students' Affairs Department requires a policy framework to guide the delivery of counselling services.

It is my hope and belief that the guidelines provided for by this Policy will meet the expectations of University customers and students on matters to do with counselling.

Prof. Paul K. Tarus

Ph.D, M.Sc, B.Ed (Kenyatta)

PRINCIPAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Policy sets out the general guidelines on students counselling policy by the Office of the Dean of Students. It is drawn from the legal framework of the University statutes 2012, 2016 and other rules and regulations of the University. The policy addresses how the student fraternity will access counselling services at the Kerio Valley University College aimed at helping them to cope with their emotional, psychosocial issues, and academic challenges faced while on campus. It details how students requiring help will be identified and referred to the student counsellor or any other skilled member of staff of Kerio Valley University College who has been mandated to offer assistance in this regard. It also outlines referral system to an external specialist as may be necessary. The services shall also include preventive counselling and information empowerment to help students direct their stay with sound decisions while in the university.

The University as an institution of higher learning anticipates areas of concern that may from time to time affect its students and as such has appropriately deployed qualified counselling staff. The counselling staff shall abide by a code of conduct as prescribed in the relevant law(s) related to dealing with confidentiality of information and protection of persons' psychological issues.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to give a framework on how the students of Kerio Valley University College can access counselling services.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Kerio Valley University College Students Counselling Policy provides for a proficient and standardized counselling service to all students of Kerio Valley University College through harmonized professional approaches by all categories of service providers in accordance with professional ethics.

SCOPE

This Policy shall confine itself to the delivery of counselling services to the students of Kerio Valley University College.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Child: A person under 18 years of age as defined in the Kenyan Constitution, 2010.

Class: A scheduled teaching block.

Counsellor: According to professional standards and required understanding, a counsellor actively listens and works to empower students to desire and bring about change in the way that they experience themselves, their personal circumstances and/ or their academic studies.

Intervention: Measure, strategies or practices which have a theoretical and professional basis.

Orientation: An information day that all students attend when commencing their program or course.

Programme: An approved combination of approved courses in which a student is enrolled.

Staff: All employees and volunteers of Kerio Valley University College.

Peer Counsellors: Are individuals who have undergone minimum counselling training to be able to offer a variety of interpersonal helping behaviors to their peers.

1. BACKGROUND

The Kerio Valley University College is comprised of students from varied social and cultural backgrounds. The University requires a policy to be put in place that guides the delivery of counselling services to the students, and therefore, the need for the development of this policy.

With this policy in place students will have access to varied types of counselling from a dedicated and professional counsellor.

2. INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

Vision

To be a university of excellence in knowledge generation, innovation and environmental sustainability for socio-economic transformation.

Mission

To provide quality education, training and research in Education, Science, Agriculture, Arts and Technology and inculcate holistic values for societal development.

Core Values

The university college's core values are:

a) Customer focus

b) Professionalism

c) Innovation

d) Integrity

e) Inclusiveness

f) Accountability

3. POLICY OBJECTIVE

To give guidance on effective and proficient counselling services to the students of Kerio Valley University College.

4. POLICY

4.1 Identification and Referrals

4.1.1 Identification

The identification of students requiring counsellor's help is a collective responsibility of all the Kerio Valley University College community members, more so the academic staff members, peer counselors and /or any other person with responsibility who shall refer to the counsellor.

4.1.2 Referrals to the counsellor

Referrals to the counsellor may be recommended/initiated by;

(a) Self.

(b) Academic Registrar or any other member of academic staff.

(c) Any member of general staff.

(d) A parent or guardian, (note: student's consent is required in order for the counsellor to discuss academic progress or personal issues with parent, guardian of any student aged over 18 years).

(e) Peer Counsellors.

(f) Students Senate Disciplinary committee or any other University organ.

(g) Any member of staff may encourage students to access counselling without the need for discussion with or approval of others about the student or their circumstances.

4.1.3 Referrals to other Professionals

The counsellor will provide support and therapeutic intervention to the student, and may refer for other specialist advice and assistance where it is considered necessary. In such cases, the counsellor may continue to work in collaboration with the student and the external agency.

4.2 Counselling Service Providers

(a) Kerio Valley University College has established students' counsellors positions deployed under the Office of the Dean of Students who are the designate student counsellors of the institution.

(b) The designate counsellors shall be holders of a minimum qualification of Bachelor's degree in relevant fields and registered with relevant professional bodies.

(c) In addition, the Kerio Valley University College will identify and commission Volunteer Counsellors from among the members of academic staff with passion in counselling and/or relevant training to assist the designate student counsellors.

(d) For easier identification and referral of cases, there shall be Peer Counsellors who shall be recruited from among the students at class level, hostels and/or students' clubs and societies. The Peer Counsellors shall undergo training and receive certification.

4.3 Types of counselling

4.3.1 Individual face-to-face counselling

A student presents him/herself individually to any of the counselling service providers.

4.3.2 Group counselling

A group of students with similar issues come together to consult with the counsellor and agree on their ground rules of operation to address their unique issues in private.

4.3.3 Faith based counselling

A faith-based counselling approach based on religious teachings.

4.3.4 Marital counselling

A type of counselling given to students in marital relationship or those intending to marry.

4.3.5 Preventive counselling

Information given to a counselling client to empower them make an informed decision of a matter of concern.

4.3.6 Online counselling

The counseling services are given online or electronically.

4.4 Intervention

(a) In working with a student, the counsellor's approach will be flexible, using a variety of professionally recognized interventions with the aim of empowering the student to bring about change in self or their circumstances, and to enhance the likelihood of improved personal and/or academic outcome.

(b) The counsellor will liaise with relevant academic staff, where appropriate, in responding to requests for assistance and in the provision of support to students deemed to be at academic risk.

(c) Joint intervention involving other relevant staff, parents/guardians and/or students may be undertaken in particular situations where the participants agree to meet.

(d) Counselling session shall ensure highest level of confidentiality and safety of the client (student).

(e) Counseling session shall be undertaken in a private and secure environment for both the counsellor and client.

4.5 Appointments with the Counsellors

(a) It is the responsibility of a student to ensure that appointments with the Counsellor do not clash with class/lecture times, unless it is an emergency.

(b) The frequency and length of appointments will depend on the nature and complexity of the issue(s) involved, and/or the point reached within an intervention.

(c) The Counsellors are available during working hours and often available after hours in an emergency.

(d) Follow up should be made for verification of the various student concerns for proper supervision, which is important for both the Counsellor and client.

4.6 Confidentiality

(a) The relationship between a Counsellor and the student is considered to be fundamental to effective counselling. It is an essential professional requirement of

counselling that the confidential nature of the information provided by the student is respected.

(b) Student permission to share information (as detailed above) may not be needed in circumstances as is detailed in 9.3 and 9.4 below.

(c) In accordance with the Children Act, No. 8 of 2001, in certain circumstances the Counselor has a legal obligation and duty-of-care to the students to report any instance of child abuse or neglect when a student is aged less than 18 years.

(d) Where the Counsellor believes that a student is clearly at risk or in danger of attempting or contemplating suicide, is unable to function, care for his or herself, make his or her own decision or is judged capable of harming another person, external assistance may need to be sought. Gaining assistance may require limited disclosure. Close examination of individual circumstances will determine who should be privy to information.

(e) In rare circumstances the Counsellors may be required to disclose information from counselling case notes to outside authorities.

(f) Where a student is aged less than 18 years the requirement for confidentiality still applies. Individual circumstances and duty of care will determine to whom disclosure is made if at all should be made. For instance, parents will likely be contacted and often the counsellor may share limited/essential information, with other key people.

(g) All students aged over 18 years have the right to reverse or negate previous permission noted in regard to releasing information to parents/family.

(h) The counsellor may, with the student's permission, share information with key people within the University of Eldoret where it could be beneficial to the understanding of personal circumstances that impact on their well-being, and hence, academic progress and/or attendance.

(i) Any member of staff made privy to such information is required to observe confidentiality and not discuss details with others either within or external to University of Eldoret.

(j) In accordance with circumstance relating to 9.3 and 9.4 the counsellor's obligations regarding confidentiality and duty of care requirement and practices will be specifically explained to students at the counselling session where necessary.

(k) All students present at orientation will, where an opportunity is offered, be made generally aware of confidentiality and of the requirements for disclosure under certain circumstances of risk.

4.7 Counselling Records

4.7.1 Professional records

In order to comply with professional counselling standards, records confidential to the counselor will be maintained with each student's name, date of counselling, and a brief account of the issue(s) discussed and/or of interventions undertaken. Notes will be taken of relevant telephone conversation and/or email discussions relating to a student's situation and any related correspondence.

4.7.2 Student record

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4.7.3 Length of maintenance of counselling records

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4.8 Code of conduct

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5. IMPLEMENTATION

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6. EFFECTIVE DATE

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7. REVIEW

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8. REFERENCES

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: Volunteer Counsellors

9.1.1 Process of incorporation

In appreciating the overwhelming work of the designate students' counsellors, some members of staff from the academic division with skills in counselling would volunteer to offer counselling services to the students.

These volunteers after careful consideration would be appointed by the Principal to take up the roles of volunteer counsellors.

Upon appointment the volunteer counsellors would be taken through one (1) week training to harmonize their counselling skills to synchronize with the required professional standards.

9.1.2 Duties and Responsibilities

(a) To offer counselling services to students in their area of proficiency. This may be done from their respective/normal office environment.

(b) To refer/link students with psychosocial challenges to the counselling unit for advanced intervention/or referral.

(c) To recommend beneficial intervention related to students' academic progress to relevant office(s).

(d) The volunteer counsellor shall maintain record of students counselled or offered assistance and submit a report to the office of the Dean of Students on monthly basis.

9.2 Appendix 2: Peer Counseling Training

9.2.1 Peer Counselling

Peer counselling has been found to be an important aspect in the counselling profession at institutions of higher learning. Peer counsellors are volunteer individuals who offer themselves to give minimal psychosocial intervention to persons in their cadre. In the case of Kerio Valley University College, peer counsellors shall be drawn among students at class level, hostel, clubs and societies or any other groupings of similar interests and will undergo a rigorous 3 weeks training programme.

9.2.2 Process of Identification of a Peer Counselor

(a) Advertisement through the noticeboard for anyone interested to apply.

(b) Shortlisting of the applicants

(c) Interviewing the applicants

(d) Training of the qualified students

9.2.3 Objectives of Training

To equip students with peer counseling skills to be able to identify and offer first aid counselling to students with psychosocial needs

9.2.4 Duties of Trained Peer Counsellors

(a) To identify and offer first aid counselling to students with psychosocial needs.

(b) To refer cases to the University Counsellors for advanced help.

9.2.5 Scope

Peer counseling will cover the following module;

(a) Module 1: Introduction to guidance and counseling, theories of counselling (40hrs.)

(b) Module 2: Counselling approaches, counselling of persons with special needs (40hrs.)

(c) Module 3: Life Skills Training (40 hrs.)

9.2.6 Evaluation

Upon completion of each of the above course module the trainees will undertake a written test.

9.2.7 Certification

Upon successful completion of the course and passing the necessary examination the trainees will be awarded a certificate of attendance and after two semesters of service, they will be awarded a Certificate of Performance/Participation.

9.2.8 Deployment

The successful Peer Counsellors will be deployed to their strategic assigned areas; hostels, clubs and societies, classes or co-curriculum activities.

9.2.9 Mentorship and Follow-Up

Peer counselor shall report to their assigned counselor to give report on weekly basis for action by the Counseling office.

9.2.10 Emoluments/Entitlement

(a) Facilitation fee for Peer Counsellors trainers shall be considered at the standard rate of the Kerio Valley University College.

(b) Peer Counsellors shall be paid a modest allowance for communication at the end of each semester at the standard rate of the Kerio Valley University College.

(c) Upon proposal by the Dean of Students, based on the needs, volunteer counsellors may be approved by the University Management Board to provide support counselling services at allowance rates approved by the Board.