

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

DEALING WITH POTENTIALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS: FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

This document should be read in conjunction with the more detailed Protocol document on dealing with potentially impaired students.

Staff involved in the medical and psychological management of students sometimes find that the student's medical and/or psychological condition may interfere with the student's independent functioning as a registered health scientist.

Impaired students could include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- students suffering from a serious and recurring psychiatric illness/condition and whose functioning could be impaired by that condition,
- students suffering from a serious and recurring physical condition and whose functioning could be impaired by that condition,
- students who have been admitted to a psychiatric clinic,
- students who are using illegal substances,
- students showing signs of serious abuse of or dependence on alcohol or medication.

These conditions could potentially impact on the student's independent professional functioning and should according to law be reported and managed.

The following is the process that needs to be followed in the management of such cases:

1. A central committee for dealing with these students within the Faculty, namely the Internal Health Committee (IHC) was established. The Committee consists of the Deputy Dean: Teaching; the relevant Programme Co-ordinator, and a psychiatrist.
2. The students themselves, their parents, fellow students, CSCD and CHS lecturers or residence staff may approach the IHC for assistance.
3. Information and background are gathered to allow the chairperson of the IHC to ascertain whether the reported case is bona fide and that the Internal Health Committee should become involved with the student.
4. If the Internal Health Committee's involvement is warranted, the IHC is convened to discuss further steps.
5. Reports are requested from the doctor and/or clinical psychologist and/or clinic where the student is being treated.

6. An interview is conducted with the student, if necessary.
7. Decisions are taken regarding the student's ability to work independently as a registered student, or not. Feedback on all decisions and recommendations is given to the student's attending health practitioners.
8. The student is informed as to further procedures and is referred for appropriate treatment (if treatment has not yet commenced).
9. If the reports indicate that the student has recovered or that the condition is in remission, the committee decides whether future monitoring will be required or not.
10. If the student is still experiencing problems, further/extended treatment could be proposed. The committee could then establish whether the student's condition is serious enough to submit a formal report to the HPCSA Health Committee.
11. If a student has transgressed a University regulation, the University's Central Disciplinary Committee must be contacted.

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