Policy on Student Mental Health & Psychological Well-being (Version 1.0)

Policy on Student Mental Health & Psychological Well-being

1. Preamble

Mental health is integral to a student's academic success, personal growth and overall well-being. Psychological distress, if left unaddressed, can affect learning, attendance, relationships and long-term outcomes. Aligned with the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the UGC guidelines on student well-being, the National Education Policy 2020 and UN Sustainable Development Goal Three (Good Health and Well-being), Geeta University is committed to a safe, inclusive and stigma-free campus. This policy establishes a structured and accountable framework for promoting student mental health and providing timely, confidential support.

2. Objective

This policy promotes the psychological well-being of students, ensures accessible and confidential counselling, enables early identification and referral, provides a clear response to crises, and ensures that no student faces discrimination or academic disadvantage solely on account of seeking help for a mental health concern.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all bonafide students of Geeta University (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, diploma and certificate programmes), whether on campus, in University hostels, or engaged in off-campus academic activities such as internships, industrial visits and field trips. It also guides the conduct of faculty, staff, wardens and student bodies in matters concerning student well-being.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Student

- Seeks help early, respects the privacy of peers, submits a consent form where required, and informs the SCC of any change in the support plan or accommodations availed.

4.2. Faculty / Mentors

- Observe warning signs, respond with empathy, make a confidential referral to the Student Counselling Centre (SCC) with the student's consent, and refrain from diagnosing or disclosing.

4.3. Student Counselling Centre

- Provides free, confidential counselling, crisis support, awareness programmes and training; maintains secure records and anonymised data.

4.4. Deputy Registrar

- Coordinates with the SCC, Academic Departments, Hostel Administration and Examination Cell to implement accommodations and approved academic adjustments.

4.5. Hostel Wardens / Security

- Monitor hostel well-being, report concerns promptly and assist in emergencies.

4.6. Registrar

- Oversees policy compliance, constitutes and convenes the Student Well-being Committee, reviews exceptional cases and reports to the Vice Chancellor.

5. Policy Provisions

5.1. Student Counselling Centre (SCC):

- The University maintains an SCC staffed by qualified counsellors/psychologists, providing individual and group counselling, workshops and referral support free of charge to all students, with fixed working hours and an after-hours emergency contact.

5.2. Student Well-being Committee:

- A Committee chaired by the Registrar or nominee, with the Head of the SCC as Convener and representatives from faculty, the medical unit, hostel administration and students, oversees implementation, reviews data and feedback, and meets at least twice a year.

5.3. Awareness and Prevention:

- The University conducts a well-being orientation for new students, and observes World Mental Health Day (tenth of October) and Suicide Prevention Day (tenth of September). Workshops on stress, time management, sleep, healthy relationships and digital well-being are organised regularly. Helpline details are displayed in classrooms, hostels, the library and on the ERP.

5.4. Early Identification and Referral:

- Faculty, mentors and wardens are sensitised to warning signs such as prolonged absence, sudden decline in performance, withdrawal, marked mood changes or expressions of hopelessness, and refer the student to the SCC with consent. Students may also self-refer or be referred by peers or parents/guardians.

5.5. Confidential Counselling:

- Counselling records are confidential and are stored separately from academic records. Information is not shared with faculty, parents or any third party without

the student's written consent, except where there is a serious and imminent risk of harm, a legal requirement, or a safeguarding obligation for a minor, and then only to the minimum extent necessary.

5.6. Crisis Response:

- In case of imminent risk, the student is not left alone; Security, the SCC crisis contact and the University medical unit are alerted immediately, and the student is taken to the nearest hospital where required. The Registrar is informed, and the emergency contact/guardian is notified in accordance with Section 7. Post-crisis follow-up and re-integration support are provided by the SCC. Treatment follows the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

5.7. Academic and Residential Accommodations:

- On the recommendation of the SCC and with the student's consent, reasonable accommodations may be granted, such as extended deadlines, rescheduled examinations, medical/mental health leave with attendance relaxation, alternative assessment formats or a change of hostel room. The SCC shares only the information necessary to implement the accommodation, and not clinical details.

5.8. Training and Capacity Building:

- Annual mental health literacy and psychological first-aid training is conducted for faculty, mentors, wardens, security and administrative staff, and for trained student peer supporters working under SCC supervision.

5.9. Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation:

- No student is penalised, ridiculed, excluded or disadvantaged for seeking help or having a mental health condition. Special attention is given to first-generation learners, women, students with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ students, out-of-state and international students, and those facing financial or family hardship.

5.10. Special Approval Mechanism:

- Exceptional cases, if any, may be considered with the approval of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor.

6. Process and Documentation

Students seeking support or accommodations under this policy follow the process outlined below:

- The student contacts the SCC directly (walk-in, e-mail or phone), or is referred by a faculty member, mentor, warden or peer.

- For referrals by staff, a confidential Referral Form recording observations only, without any diagnosis, is submitted along with the student's consent.
- The SCC assesses the need and provides counselling or refers the student to an external psychiatrist/hospital where required.
- For academic or residential accommodations, the SCC sends a confidential recommendation to the Deputy Registrar, with the student's written consent.
- Upon approval from the Registrar, the Examination Cell, concerned Department and Hostel Administration implement the accommodation for the defined period.
- Students inform the SCC of any change in their situation, and the SCC reviews the accommodation periodically.
- National support: Tele-MANAS (Government of India) 14416 or 1-800-891-4416. SCC contact: [Location / Phone / E-mail / Hours]. Campus Emergency: [Number].

7. Confidentiality, Transparency and Review

- All student mental health records are kept strictly confidential, and information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- The SCC maintains anonymised data on usage and outcomes and submits an Annual Student Well-being Report to the Vice Chancellor through the Registrar.
- A student dissatisfied with the application of this policy may submit a written complaint to the Registrar, who responds within thirty days.
- This policy is reviewed every two years, or earlier if law or circumstances require, and is made available to all students through the University ERP and the Admissions Office.

Deputy Registrar

Registrar

GEETA UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR PANIPAT