

MAHER/STU.AFFAIRS-03/2020-R1

**MEENAKSHI ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
AND RESEARCH**

MAHER

(Deemed to be University)

(Established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 vide Notification No.F.9-5/2002-U.3,dt 31.03.2004)



MENTORSHIP POLICY

DATE	REVISION
15.04.2019	1

No.12, Vembuliamman Koil Street, West K.K.Nagar, Chennai-600 078.

Tamil Nadu, India.

A handwritten signature in green ink, likely of the Vice Chancellor, is positioned above the official stamp.

VICE CHANCELLOR
MEENAKSHI ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
(Deemed To be University),
No:12, Vembuliamman Koil Street,
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Revision details

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Institutional Vision statement

Excellence in Education and Healthcare to continuously upgrade exemplary standards in the quality education and teaching, training, research and extension.

Institutional Mission statement

- To impart quality medical education.
- To spread knowledge and promote education in all fields viz., medical, dental, paramedical, medical technology and arts and sciences etc.
- To serve the humanity with sincerity and dedication.

1. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

1.1. SHORT TITLE, APPLICABILITY, AND COMMENCEMENT

- a This Policy may be called, “**MAHER (Deemed to be University) MENTORSHIP POLICY**”
- b The Policy shall apply to all students of MAHER and its constituent colleges and to the academic staff members involved in the mentor-mentee program.
- c The Policy shall come into force from the date of approval of the document by the Board of Management of MAHER on 15.04.2019.

2. PREAMBLE

Mentoring is an effective process wherein caring non-parental adults can play a vital role in the educational, behavioral, and emotional development of children, adolescents and youth.

MAHER offers a mentoring program to the students wherein every student gets assigned to a particular faculty member at the beginning of an academic year. The mentorship program entails a dynamic relationship between a mentor and mentee, where the mentor is expected to assist and support the mentees in their professional and personal development outside of their teaching-learning activities. The interactive mentoring system of MAHER ensures that the students adapt to the high-spirited learning system and emerge successful in their professional lives.

3. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the activities related to design, development and implementation of an effective mentor mentee programs for all the students and academic faculty members of MAHER and its constituent colleges.

4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This is a university wide mentorship policy and is implementable across all disciplines of MAHER deemed to be university and all its constituent colleges.

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

- To create a healthy environment for students to nurture their academic and extracurricular talents through constant mentoring.
- To enable students to identify their own skills, interests and aptitudes and ensure their all-round development.
- To create a homely environment, free from peer pressure or external harassment.
- To be compassionate and caring towards students.
- To identify the slow, intermediate and advanced learners and to formulate non-discriminatory action plans to improve their overall academic performances.
- To bring down the dropout rate, boost the morale of the students by counseling and providing personal attention throughout the course.

6. CUSTODIAN OF POLICY

This Mentorship Policy shall be implemented by the Mentorship Committee of each constituent colleges of MAHER and overseen by the Dean of Students, MAHER. The Dean/ Principal of the Institution shall be the chairperson of the committee. The other members of the committee shall include the IQAC director who is the Member secretary and core moderator, Faculty coordinators of the Institution and Representative members from the Anti-ragging, Internal Complaints and Grievance redressal committees.

7. MENTORSHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURE/GUIDELINES

7.1. Essential guidelines

- 7.1.1. Mentors must meet their mentee regularly on the fourth Saturday of every month to record the proceedings and counsel or motivate them as necessary.
- 7.1.2. The purpose of Academic Mentoring in addition to classroom interaction is to support the professional development of students in their careers and to promote excellence in teaching and in learning, research and academic leadership.
- 7.1.3. Every constituent college of MAHER shall have a well-structured mentorship system for student support and mentoring. The mentorship shall be managed completely by the faculty of the college. Each and every undergraduate student shall be allotted a mentor during their entry into a fresh academic year, which is subject to change every academic year or may continue till the completion of his/her course. Each mentor shall have a maximum of 15 students (mentees) under their care. Postgraduates shall be mentored by the HODs and Professors of their respective departments.
- 7.1.4. The mentors shall report to the college-level coordinator of the mentorship program about their meetings with the students. Parents Teachers Meetings are conducted biannually where the mentors interact and update the performance of their mentees to their parents and guardians. Issues of personal nature are also addressed by the mentors, in a non- intrusive and supportive manner
- 7.1.5. A bi-annual meeting of the mentorship committee shall be held to discuss general issues related to the mentees, their progress and development, their success and setbacks and also to develop strategies for the continuous improvement of the mentor- mentee program. Minutes of the meeting are to be drafted by the college-level coordinator and submitted to the Dean of Students.
- 7.1.6. The Vice-Principal of the college is in-charge of curricular and co-curricular activities and regularly monitors student-related activities.

7.2. Dimensions of Mentor review

- 7.2.1. **Attendance** - The mentors shall monitor the overall attendance of the mentees. Attendance in theory classes, clinics, laboratory and practical sessions shall be monitored periodically and necessary follow up action may be taken to rectify any short comings.
- 7.2.2. **Academic matters** -The mentors shall also address the scholastic matters of mentees dealing with previous academic performance, internal assessment marks, semester/annual results, and remedial classes, if necessary. The mentor shall interact with the mentees who have performed below par in their formative assessment and offer suggestions on ways to improve their performance. Parents /guardians shall be kept informed about the performance of their wards.
- 7.2.3. **Other areas of care** -The mentors shall also look into behavioral and disciplinary problems and matters relating to health and overall development of the mentee. The mentors shall also evince keen interest and gently guide the mentees in their extra-curricular and co-curricular pursuits.
- 7.2.4. **Care and Counseling** -The mentor shall offer basic counselling to the mentees during the periodic review meeting. In cases where expert care and counseling is required, the mentor shall ensure that the mentee receives professional help from the qualified student counselor of the Institution.
- 7.2.5. **Personality Development** - The mentors shall encourage the mentees to develop and channelize their skills and talents through an appropriate forum or activity of the University (sports, extension activities, workshops, conferences, association activities, etc.). These are aimed at the overall development of the personality of the students.
- 7.2.6. **Extracurricular activities**- The mentors shall motivate the students to participate in extracurricular activities along with their usual academic activities. The mentors shall highlight the importance of extracurricular activities in the life of students and their importance in the overall character building of students.

8. MENTOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Identification of slow and advanced learners (Annexure I)

- 8.1. The aim of the teaching and learning process is to make every student an advanced learner, so that all the necessary parameters or any new protocol that is to be opted by the Department will be submitted to the teaching and learning process team and upon approval from the principal via IQAC committee will be subjected for implementation.
- 8.2. However, the identified slow learners will be supported through various schemes and counseling to enhance their performance and encourage them to achieve great heights, on par with their contemporaries.
- 8.3. The advanced learners will be further reinforced with incorporation of research activities, scientific paper and poster presentations, attending workshops and hands on programs. They shall be encouraged and motivated to showcase their talents and performances both in academic and extracurricular activities.
- 8.4. This categorization is done by the Institutional mentorship committee, in a fair and unbiased manner with the sole aim of uplifting the slow learners and inspiring the advanced learners. The students shall also be monitored by the grievances committee to ensure that they retain a positive outlook and cope well with whatever is expected of them.

9. MENTORSHIP POLICY GOVERNANCE

The overall management of mentorship activities for the students is coordinated by the Mentorship Committee of the Institution. The mentorship policy may be revised as and when required after due discussion in the Mentorship committee.

The revision proposals shall be placed before the Board of Studies for deliberations before seeking the final approval of the Board of Management, MAHER.

ANNEXURE- I

Methodology for identification and support of MAHER's SUNS and STARS

The student community of MAHER is by nature, heterogenous and this annexure describes the methods and schemes available at MAHER for students with varying levels of learning and comprehension to achieve the desired academic outcomes. The guidelines described herewith shall be uniformly followed across all constituent colleges of MAHER, to identify students who require special attention and to offer assistance to elevate them to higher levels in their academic career. However, the colleges of MAHER do have the liberty to customize support systems for the students, as per their specific needs without grossly deviating from the principles and provisions of this standard operating procedure.

This Standard operating procedure may be called as MAHER'S SOP for '**STUDENTS ACADEMIC SUPPORT SYSTEMS' [SASS]**

Methodology for identification of students with special needs:

The learning level of students is not a static phenomenon and keeps changing with time. Acknowledging this fact, the process that is rolled out to identify students with special needs should be robust, flexible and efficient. Further, the students need to be evaluated at multiple time points with relevant criteria to facilitate proper identification of those with special needs.

All students of MAHER are unique in their own way, although some may require special attention. While some students need additional care and support to handle their academic demands, others may have the potential and talent of a higher order requiring bigger and better challenges. Thus, at MAHER, students are categorized based on their learning abilities as SUNS, and STARS. This categorization is only to ensure that different tailor-made approaches are available to meet the different needs of the heterogenous learning groups. The teachers shall do their utmost to ensure that a sense of positive or negative bias does not creep into their approach towards students.

1. **SUNS:** Students with **Up-scaled/Unique Needs and Strengths** (For reference: Advanced learners)
2. **STARS:** Students to be **Trained with Additional Reassurance and Support** (For reference: Slow learners)

CRITERIA FOR CATEGORIZING STUDENTS AS SUNS AND STARS

Students who get admitted to various programs offered at MAHER and its constituent colleges will be classified as SUNS and STARS at an early stage to facilitate appropriate support and guidance. In fact, the identification process starts as early as the initial one-on-one interview held at the time of admission.

1. Criteria to identify students with special needs at entry level

- 1.1. **Performance at the Higher Secondary Examinations:** Students who score above 80%- 85% at the higher secondary education will be categorized as SUNS while students who have scored between 60% and 65% will be categorized as STARS.
- 1.2. **Medium of Education at Higher Secondary School:** Students who have undergone higher secondary education in their native languages may be provisionally classified as STARS. This will enable them to receive extra help to cope with the medium of instruction at MAHER, ultimately integrating them with the worldwide multi-lingual student community. However, based on their performance and determination to cope up with the academic needs, they shall be escalated to STAR category.

2. Criteria to identify students with special needs after admission to the program:

- 2.1. **Tracking of the STARS:** Support classes will be organized for the STARS after the commencement of the program. After three to four weeks of the support classes, a formative assessment shall be conducted. Students scoring above 75% in the formative evaluation will be upgraded to SUNS while those scoring less than 75% will be retained in the STARS category. This process shall be repeated every three months and students placed in various categories accordingly to facilitate better academic support.

- 2.2. Additionally, participation of the students in the open group discussions and promptness in submission of assignments or projects will be considered for identifying students with special needs.
- 2.3. While the above criteria are considered to identify students with special needs during the first year of admission, in the subsequent years, the performance of the students in the preceding university exams shall also be taken into account.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR SUNS AND STARS

1) Schemes and Support System for SUNS

Students who are classified as SUNS are given myriad of opportunities to display their talents and propel their academic career to greater heights. These students are carefully handled and taught to balance their academic needs while pursuing additional avenues of growth. The following schemes and support system exists for students identified as SUNS:

- a) **Peer mentoring:** SUNS are given opportunity to mentor their peers in the academic front. This arrangement is made with the mutual consent of the involved students. This system enables SUNS to crystallize their thoughts, present them in a simple manner and improve their pedagogical skills. Further, it increases their confidence and gives immense satisfaction of handholding peers on the academic front.
- b) **Research opportunities:** SUNS who have research aptitude will be encouraged to get involved in research activities beyond what is required in the curriculum. Students of the medical and dental colleges shall be encouraged to apply for Short Term Studentship program offered by Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi. Students whose projects get selected will be guided by a faculty member.
- c) **Presentation in National and international platforms:** SUNS are encouraged to participate in international and national conferences, a platform which will improve their presentation skills and boost their confidence. Students who win prizes in such forums are recognized with institutional awards during the college day functions.

- d) **Voice of students' community:** SUNS are accommodated as members of various committees of the institution and serve as representatives of the students' community. They are also encouraged to become office bearers of the Student Council which is actively involved in scientific, cultural, outreach and extension activities. SUNS are also invited to function as members of the Editorial Board of the Institution's magazine (Voice of Meenakshi) to hone their literary skills.
- e) **Additional privileges:** SUNS are given additional privileges such as permission to borrow additional books in the library and permission to access reference books section without restriction. SUNS are also given permission to enroll in more than one value added courses simultaneously.

2) Schemes and Support System for STARS:

- a) **Pairing with Peers:** The STARS are paired with SUNS with whom they feel comfortable to discuss their doubts and queries. In this manner, they are able to forge strong interpersonal bonds and facilitate an amicable learning environment.
- b) **Support classes:** STARS are given remedial classes which are conducted beyond the college hours. These classes are conducted in small groups to facilitate better communication between the staff and students.
- c) **Counseling:** The institution employs professional counselors who provide counseling to STARS during testing times of their life. These sessions are conducted on a 'one on one' basis to help them overcome communication barriers and express their apprehensions. The sessions are conducted in phased manner till the student attains confidence to handle the situation.
- d) **Root cause analysis:** The mentors of STARS play an important role in elevating the students to a better plane on their academic front. The mentors take special interest in students who are classified as STARS and help in identifying the root cause for their slackness in academics. The mentors meet such students more frequently to identify problems and help them to overcome their challenges at the early stages.

- e) **Bridge courses and capability enhancement schemes:** Students who struggle to shine in academics due to their language barrier will be given opportunities to overcome this problem, by providing bridge courses. The bridge courses will be conducted during the first two months of enrollment. The mentors and student welfare dean shall take an active role in organizing the bridge course for students who need them.
- f) **Improving concentration through Yoga:** The STARS are encouraged to enroll in capacity building programs through which their memory and concentration are improved by the adoption and practice of yoga. The faculty members and Ph.D. scholars from the Faculty of Yoga Science and therapy will be engaged for this exercise.

Roles and responsibilities:

The IQAC coordinators/ Principals of the constituent college of MAHER are responsible for identifying the SUNS and STARS in their respective colleges based on the criteria mentioned above. The list of students both in STARS as well as in SUNS category shall be circulated to the heads of all the departments to initiate necessary support measures as detailed above. Faculty members responsible for the STARS and SUNS under them shall track their progress every three weeks. At the end of each academic year, the heads of each department shall send an updated consolidated list of the SUNS and STARS to the college-level IQAC coordinator who shall then forward the list to the University IQAC coordinator for tracking and record keeping.