VINAYAKA MISSION'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR PROVIDING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH-CARE SERVICES TO STUDENTS

1. Procedure For Accessing Sexual And Reproductive Health-Care Services

Step 1: Dissemination of Service Information

At the beginning of every academic year, the Student Welfare Division, in coordination with the University Health Centre, shall disseminate information regarding:

- Available sexual and reproductive health-care services.
- Consultation timings and appointment procedures.
- Contact details of the designated healthcare provider.
- Available counseling and referral facilities.
- Emergency contact arrangements.
- Confidentiality safeguards and the procedure for providing feedback or lodging a grievance.

Information shall be made available through the University website, student handbook, orientation programmes, institutional notice boards, student portals, and other approved communication channels.

Step 2: Access and Appointment

A student may access the services through any of the following approved channels:

1. Directly approaching the University Health Centre.
2. Booking an appointment through an authorized online or offline mechanism.
3. Seeking guidance through the Student Welfare Division.
4. Requesting referral through a designated counselor, mentor, or warden.
5. Approaching an authorized external healthcare provider through an established referral arrangement.

Students should be permitted to seek consultation directly wherever feasible, without being required to obtain unnecessary administrative permission or disclose the reason for consultation to academic staff.

For sensitive consultations, the University shall make reasonable efforts to provide a private consultation setting and an appropriate appointment mechanism.

Step 3: Registration and Initial Assessment

The authorized healthcare provider or designated staff member shall:

1. Register the student using the minimum information necessary for service delivery.
2. Explain the purpose of the consultation and the applicable confidentiality arrangements.
3. Obtain informed consent for assessment and treatment, as required.
4. Identify the student's presenting concern and immediate healthcare needs.
5. Determine whether the concern can be managed at the University Health Centre or requires referral.

Sensitive clinical information shall not be recorded in general academic, attendance, disciplinary, or routine student welfare records unless a specific legal requirement applies.

Step 4: Consultation and Service Provision

The qualified healthcare professional shall provide appropriate assessment, information, counseling, treatment within professional competence, or referral, depending on the student's needs.

No student shall be subjected to unnecessary questioning, examination, testing, or disclosure of personal information.

Step 5: Referral and Follow-Up

Where specialized assessment or treatment is required, the healthcare provider shall:

1. Explain the reason for referral and the available options.
2. Refer the student to an appropriate authorized healthcare facility or specialist.
3. Provide relevant clinical information to the receiving provider with the student's consent, unless another lawful basis for disclosure applies.
4. Inform the student about the process for follow-up.
5. Record the referral and follow-up status in the confidential health record.

The University shall make reasonable efforts to facilitate access to affordable and appropriate services, subject to the availability of resources and referral arrangements.

2. Procedures for Specific Services:

2.1 Sexual and Reproductive Health Education

The Student Welfare Division and University Health Centre shall prepare an annual health education plan covering relevant topics, including:

- Puberty and reproductive health.

- Menstrual health and hygiene.
- Sexual and reproductive anatomy and physiology.
- Consent, personal boundaries, and respectful relationships.
- Contraception and pregnancy prevention.
- STI and HIV prevention, testing awareness, and treatment referral.
- Fertility awareness and reproductive choices.
- Recognition of sexual coercion, harassment, and abuse.
- Access to professional healthcare and counseling.
- Myths, misconceptions, stigma, and misinformation relating to sexual health.

Procedure:

1. Prepare an annual schedule of awareness programs.
2. Identify qualified resource persons and appropriate educational materials.
3. Conduct orientation sessions, workshops, seminars, health talks, and digital awareness programs.
4. Provide students with information on where and how to seek confidential assistance.
5. Collect feedback and assess learning outcomes where appropriate.
6. Maintain program records, attendance information where relevant, educational materials, and feedback summaries.

Participation in non-mandatory sessions shall be voluntary. Attendance at a health education program shall not be used to infer a student's personal health status or sexual activity.

2.2 Menstrual Health and Hygiene

The University Health Centre shall provide information and appropriate assistance relating to menstrual health, including menstrual hygiene, menstrual discomfort, irregular menstruation, and warning signs requiring medical attention.

Procedure:

1. Provide access to confidential consultation with an authorized healthcare professional.
2. Offer evidence-based guidance on menstrual hygiene and self-care.
3. Facilitate access to menstrual hygiene products through designated arrangements, where available.
4. Refer students experiencing severe pain, excessive bleeding, persistent menstrual irregularities, or other concerning symptoms for clinical evaluation.

5. Provide reasonable academic or welfare support in accordance with applicable University rules and individual needs.

2.3 Contraceptive Information and Pregnancy Prevention

The University Health Centre shall provide evidence-based information on available contraceptive methods, their benefits, limitations, and the importance of professional advice.

Procedure:

1. Provide non-judgmental information on available methods.
2. Refer students requiring individualized advice or prescription-based services to a qualified healthcare professional.
3. Ensure that contraception is not prescribed or provided outside the provider's professional authority.
4. Explain that no contraceptive method should be considered universally suitable for every individual.
5. Provide timely guidance on accessing emergency contraception through an authorized healthcare provider, where relevant.
6. Protect the student's privacy and avoid unnecessary disclosure to family members, faculty, or institutional administrators, subject to applicable legal obligations.

2.4 STI and HIV Prevention, Testing, and Treatment Referral

The University shall promote awareness of STI and HIV prevention and facilitate access to authorized testing, counseling, and treatment services.

Procedure:

1. Provide accurate information on transmission, prevention, testing, and treatment.
2. Explain when professional assessment or testing may be appropriate.
3. Refer students to authorized testing facilities and appropriate healthcare providers.
4. Ensure that testing is conducted with legally valid consent and appropriate pre-test and post-test counseling, where applicable.
5. Facilitate timely access to medical assessment following a possible exposure.
6. Refer students requiring urgent post-exposure assessment to an appropriate healthcare facility without delay.
7. Protect test results and related clinical records from unauthorized access or disclosure.
8. Encourage students to seek treatment and follow-up without stigma or discrimination.

HIV-related services shall comply with the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, and other applicable requirements.

2.5 Fertility and Reproductive Health Counseling

Students seeking information about fertility, reproductive function, or future reproductive health shall be provided with accurate educational information and, where necessary, referred to an appropriate specialist.

The University shall not make assumptions about a student's future reproductive choices, marital status, sexual activity, or fertility intentions.

2.6 Pregnancy-Related Counseling and Referral

Where a student seeks assistance relating to a suspected or confirmed pregnancy, the University Health Centre shall provide respectful, confidential, and non-judgmental guidance.

Procedure:

1. Facilitate assessment by an authorized healthcare professional.
2. Explain appropriate options for medical consultation and follow-up.
3. Refer the student to an authorized medical facility for pregnancy-related care.
4. Provide information about lawful and medically appropriate services, including antenatal care and pregnancy termination where legally applicable.
5. Facilitate access to emergency medical care when required.
6. Discuss reasonable academic and welfare support options, where requested and in accordance with University rules.
7. Maintain confidentiality, subject to applicable legal and safeguarding obligations.

The University shall not compel a student to continue or terminate a pregnancy or impose decisions unrelated to the student's lawful rights and medical needs.

2.7 Sexual Health Counseling and Psychosocial Support

Students experiencing anxiety, distress, confusion, relationship difficulties, stigma, or concerns relating to sexual or reproductive health may be referred to a qualified counselor or healthcare professional.

Procedure:

1. Provide an opportunity for the student to discuss concerns in a private setting.
2. Assess whether clinical, psychological, or specialist support is required.
3. Explain available support and referral options.

4. Facilitate referral with appropriate consent.
5. Arrange follow-up where indicated.
6. Escalate immediate safety concerns or risk of serious harm through the relevant emergency and safeguarding procedures.

Counseling shall not be coercive, judgmental, or discriminatory.

2.8 Sexual Violence, Coercion, Abuse, or Harassment

Any student reporting sexual violence, coercion, abuse, or harassment shall be treated with sensitivity and respect.

Procedure:

1. Ensure immediate safety and assess whether emergency medical assistance is required.
2. Listen without blame, intimidation, or unnecessary questioning.
3. Explain the available medical, psychological, safeguarding, and institutional support mechanisms.
4. Facilitate prompt referral to an appropriate healthcare facility, especially where injuries, possible STI exposure, pregnancy risk, or time-sensitive treatment may be involved.
5. Explain available reporting channels, including the appropriate University committee or designated authority, where relevant.
6. Preserve confidentiality and avoid unnecessary circulation of information.
7. Comply with mandatory reporting requirements and applicable child-protection laws.
8. Record only the information necessary for clinical care, safeguarding, or legally required reporting.

The University shall not conduct an informal investigation in place of a legally required process or pressure a student to make a statement beyond what is necessary for immediate safety and applicable legal obligations.

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