### Policy on UG Students’ Advisor System (SAS)

**Background**

1. While dealing with cases pertaining to academic deficiencies of undergraduate (UG) students, it has become evident that despite various measures taken to apprise and educate the students about NUST Academic Regulations, there exists considerable gaps and blanks in the comprehension and understanding of the same by the students and their parents. Lack of knowledge of relevant academic regulations have resulted in withdrawal of a number of good UG students. In many cases such attrition could have been avoided if prompt and appropriate action, as per relevant provisions of the academic regulations, had been initiated within the specified time-limits by the institutions and/or the affected students.
2. Additionally, it has been felt that many of the students need extra help and attention during their first year at NUST. They need frequent advice and guidance for coping with University’s academic environment and challenges. Moreover, in addition to the technical knowledge being imparted to the students, there is a need to groom the students in terms of values, nationhood, etiquettes, and soft skills etc. NUST has always endeavored to adopt new measures and practices to help its student achieve par excellence in all domains of their lives. To make UG students well conversant with the NUST Academics Regulations, and support them to overcome their personal and academic issues, concept of Student Advisor was introduced in 2012. The institutions were encouraged to implement the system in true letter and spirit, however, over the past five years, it has been experienced that the policy could not bring about the desired results.
3. The SAS policy has been revisited in the light of experiences gained in past five years and with the aim to make it flexible and easily implementable at NUST, especially keeping in view the NUST culture and international practices to achieve the following objectives:
	1. To facilitate new students during their settling down phase (Year 1 and 2).
	2. To imbed a system of regular advice and guidance to the students during their course of studies.
	3. To ensure that all students clearly and timely understand academic regulations/policies through regular coaching.
	4. To install and nurture an effective system for monitoring of academic progress of students.
	5. To ensure regular dissemination and understanding of important information / revised policies down to student level.
	6. To provide an effective system for prompt handling of students’ personal issues.
	7. To have a quick and regular, first-hand, informal feedback for Principals / Deans/HoDs and School administration on quality of teaching, teaching aids, facilities, infra-structure and efficacy of Academic Policies / Regulations, etc.

**General Guidelines - SAS**

1. The outline of SAS is given below:
	1. For counseling, guidance and progress monitoring, all NUST students shall be assigned as **wards** to different **faculty members** within respective school who will act as their Advisors, mentors and de-facto guardians.
	2. As a matter of rule, the Student Advisor will not be changed (unless particularly requested by a student or advisor) to ensure a continued and healthy mentoring relationship throughout the student’s academic pursuit at NUST.
	3. Students (wards) would meet their respective Advisors during Compulsory Advisor Mentoring Class (50 minutes, e.g., 4thperiod, Thursday) on weekly basis.
	4. Student Advisor will raise an evaluation report at the end of each semester for every student in his/her group covering the students’ personality traits and academic performance during the semester.
	5. Student Advisor will represent and defend his/her academically deficient wards in DBS and FBS meetings.
	6. All students during their Freshman and Sophomore years will be mandatorily part of an Advisor Group. However, only those students in their Junior and Senior years will be included in Advisor groups who have either of their Cum GPA or Semester GPA less than 2.50. Good students wishing to continue with their Advisor Groups may be accommodated.
	7. Each Student Advisor group may have students from different academic years (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th) within the same school / department so that senior students take leadership roles to guide junior students in their group. However, Principals may choose to form groups with students from the same class / entry / academic year.
	8. Effective implementation of the Student Advisor System (SAS) in true letter and spirit is the responsibility of the Head of the College/School. This aspect will be particularly measured in the bi-annual NUST Academic Audit of the respective institution. A monthly report will also be required to be sent to the Main Office (Academics Directorate) for the information of Rector.

**Key Benefits -SAS**

1. The SAS shall provide several key benefits including grooming of students, regular academic progress monitoring of students, opportunity for counseling of weak / ill-disciplined students, seeking parents’ intervention as and when required, etc. The SAS shall help in getting the true picture of the problems faced by the students. The problems shall be gathered by the Student Advisors and, in accordance with the nature of the problem, would be discussed either **informally** with respective faculty members / HoDs or **formally** in DBS / FBS for finding appropriate solutions. Some of the feedbacks that are typically expected from the students through their Advisors for which timely remedial measures could be put in place are given below:
	1. Feedback about Faculty Members - how teaching is being conducted.
	2. Feedback about the quality of teaching aids being used in the class rooms / lecture halls.
	3. Feedback about the quality of support infrastructure / labs / lab equipment / lab engineers, technicians / TAs / hostels / sports facilities, etc.
	4. Any other complaints /suggestions for improving the academic environment, quality of education and support infrastructure at the college / school / NUST level.

**Responsibilities of Program Coordinators for Student Advisor Groups’ Allocation / Management**

1. Program Coordinator’s office within each school will act as overall OPI of the SAS at NUST Schools / Colleges. They will be briefed once every year (prior to Fall semester) by Academics Directorate on their duties pertaining to SAS.
2. The Program Coordinator will be responsible for the following activities:
	1. To allocate Students’ Mentoring / Advisor Course (1-0 Cr Hr) in academic casting of Fall and Spring Semesters and designate one Compulsory Students’ Mentoring Class of 50 minutes duration for all students of 1st and 2nd year and weak students (CGPA or Semester GPA lesser than 2.50) of 3rd and 4th year in weekly classes schedule (e.g. 4th period on every Thursday).
	2. To assign one Student Advisor Group (comprising 10-12 students in each group) to every faculty member against Students’ Mentoring / Advisor Course (1-0CrHr).
	3. To ensure that female students are preferably allocated to female faculty members / Advisors and vice versa. If adequate number of female faculty members is not available in a School / Dept to take all the female students, then these (female) students are preferably assigned to senior faculty members.
	4. To assign a unique ID No to each Student Advisor Group and display the list of Student Advisor group on notice boards on the first working day of each semester for the information of all students and Advisors.
	5. In case of any addition or withdrawals of students from a Student Advisor group, Program Coordinator will inform the concerned Advisor.
	6. To issue folders to Academic Advisors for each of the student in their group for maintaining the student records i.e. Student’s Personal and Academic History Form **(Appendix ‘A’)** and Student’s Academic Progress Sheet **(Appendix ‘B’)**.
	7. To ensure that the Students’ Personal and Academic History Forms **(Appendix ‘A’)**are filled up by the students within respective Schools and are provided to Student Advisors before the first Advisor Mentoring Class of the Fall semester.
	8. To assign Advisor Supervision Round duties to the Advisors living in H-12 Campus for interaction with students living in NUST H-12 Campus hostels.
	9. To retrieve the Students’ folders at the time of a student’s graduation / termination of studies.
	10. To liaise with ICT Directorate for ensuring automation of Students Personal and Academic History Forms (**Appendix ‘A’**), Students’ Academic Progress Sheets (**Appendix ‘B’**),and End Semester Advisor Feedback Form **(Appendix ‘C’)**through NUST CMS and for ensuring Advisors’ access to these forms / sheets in respect of the students allotted to them in their Advisor Mentoring Groups.
	11. To prepare Monthly Statistical Return / Feedback **(Appendix ‘D’)** for Main Office (Academics Directorate) regarding efficacy and attendance of students in Advisor Mentoring Classes through ICT Dte.

**Responsibilities of Student Advisors**

1. Every Academic Advisor will act as de facto-guardian of students in his / her Student Advisor Group. He / she will be responsible for the following activities:
	1. To conduct Compulsory Students’ Mentoring Class of 50 minutes duration for all students of 1st and 2nd year and weak students (CGPA or Semester GPA lesser than 2.50) of 3rd and 4th year in weekly classes schedule (e.g. 4th period on every Thursday).
	2. To be fully conversant with and knowledgeable on all provisions of NUST Academic Regulations and administrative policies.
	3. To educate all the students in his / her Advisor Mentoring Group regarding relevant NUST Academic Regulations/ Administrative Policies during Mentoring Classes.
	4. To advise, guide and counsel all the students in his / her Advisor Mentoring Group on **general** academic and administrative issues brought up by them during **Collective** Weekly Advisor Mentoring Classes (1st and 3rd week of every month).
	5. To review academic performance of all his / her students (wards) during **Individual** Weekly Advisor Mentoring Classes (2nd and 4th week of every month) while discussing individual Academic Progress Sheets and advise, guide and counsel them on their **personal** /**specific** academic and administrative issues, as and when required.
	6. To maintain telephonic contact with the parents / guardians of his /her wards with academic deficiency / medical conditions / personal problems affecting their academic performance and / or personal development.
	7. To arrange meeting with parents of academically deficient / ill-disciplined students through respective HoD / Principal and maintain a documented record of discussion held and remedial steps / decisions taken during such meetings in Students’ Folders.
	8. To recommend / raise HoD’s / Principal’s Appreciation Letters for his group students who perform brilliantly in academics (e.g., SGPA > 3.00 or 3.50 as decided by the School Principal) and extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, debates, community service, entrepreneurship competitions, etc.).
	9. To monitor attendance and maintain record of all students of his/her group to ensure that they all meet the mandatory bench mark of 75% attendance in all subjects being studied by them during the semester.
	10. To initiate cases of temporary suspension of I-grade, whenever a situation arises.
	11. To update attendance record of Advisor Mentoring Classes conducted on weekly basis in respect of all students in his / her group on CMS and issue fine slips (Rs1000/- per absentee) for students who miss the Mentoring Classes.
	12. To raise first, second and third Warning Letters on third, fifth and sixth absentee from Advisor Mentoring classes, respectively. These letters will be signed by the Advisor, HoD, and Principal respectively. A copy of the letter to be kept in Student Folder while one copy each to be given to student and his/her parents / guardian.
	13. To raise his /her wards’ (students’) Feedback Reports **(Appendix Ç’)** at the end of each semester manually (or through CMS as soon as it becomes available online).
	14. To approve and help in processing of his / her ward’s applications related to long-leaves, sick leaves, self-relegation, deferment, counseling by C3A etc.
	15. To liaise with subject instructors for extra coaching of weak students in his /her Advisor group. If an Advisor makes a request to a particular subject instructor for extra coaching of a weak student, the concerned instructor shall make arrangements for the same during the supervised self-study periods, library periods or problem solving periods.
	16. To coordinate informally (and, if required, formally) with the concerned HoD in case of any valid academic complaints received from students against another faculty member / instructor.
	17. To maintain record of interactions with his group / individual students in his/her Advisor group for follow-up actions.
2. The Advisors living in H-12 Campus will be required to visit their wards in their hostels twice a semester (whenever assigned by Program Coordinator with Principal’s approval). The purpose of these visits will be:
	1. To join his / her students at dinner and guide them for personality grooming, general conduct / behavior and dining etiquettes/manners.
	2. To observe dress, appearance, interpersonal skills, self-confidence and other personality traits of his/her students, help them improve these traits / qualities and also reflect them in his / her End Semester Feedback Report **(Appendix Ç’).**

**Suggested Activities in a Student Advisor Mentoring Class**

1. **Collective Advisor Mentoring Classes (1st and 3rd Week of Every Month)**
	1. Each Student Advisor group is to meet his Advisor twice a month (every first and third week of the month) **as a Group** at a designated time for one period of 50 minutes (e.g. 4th class every Thursday) at a designated place (e.g. in his / her office or as assigned by the Program Coordinator within the school).
	2. In addition to the discussion on academics and extra-curricular activities, the Advisor will select a general topic on manners / etiquettes / norms / values /soft skills and discuss that in each Student Advisor class for the grooming of his/her wards. Students will be encouraged to participate actively in group discussions to improve their confidence and communication skills.
2. **Individual Advisor Mentoring Classes (2nd and 4th Week of Every Month)**
	1. **Each student will also meet his Advisor individually twice a month (**2nd and 4th week of every month).
	2. During individual meetings, each student’s Academic Progress Sheet (**Appendix ‘B’**) will be reviewed and academic progress and overall attendance in each subject along with issues, if any, will be discussed.
	3. This Academic Progress Sheet (which contains marks obtained in all Quizzes, Assignments and One Hour Tests etc.) will be maintained manually in two copies (one kept with student and the other in each student’s Advisor folder) until the data contained in the Progress Sheet becomes available through CMS and is made accessible online to both the students and their Advisors for review during Advisor Mentoring Classes.
	4. During **individual** meetings with Advisor (in 2nd and 4th week of every month), students will share their **personal** academic / administrative problems with the Advisor and he / she will guide, mentor, counsel the student, as required, and initiate appropriate actions to resolve their problems.

**Maintenance of Students’ Records**

1. Advisor has to maintain the folders of their wards, which would serve as a ready reference as far as the academic performance and discipline of the student is concerned. These folders are to be returned to Program Coordinator on the completion of a student’s education at NUST. The documents / records to be maintained / included in a Student’s Advisor Folder are given below:
2. Student’s Personal and Academic History Form **(Appendix ‘A’).**
3. Students’ Academic Progress Sheet **(Appendix ‘B’).**
4. Feedback Reports raised by the Advisors at the end of each semester **(Appendix ‘C’).**
5. Letters of Appreciation / Warning on academic / discipline matters **(Appendix ‘E’).**

**Applicability and Revision of SAS Policy**

13. This policy supersedes all previous instructions on the subject. It will be applicable to all NUST Schools and Colleges with effect from Fall, 2017.

14. The policy will be reviewed in June, 2018 after having been implemented at all NUST Colleges / Schools for two semesters (Fall, 2017 and Spring, 2018).