



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DEAN (Clinical Medicine)

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ACADEMIC ADVISING AND MENTORING IN THE FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES DURING COVID-RELATED RESTRICTIONS

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

In this unprecedented period of uncertainty and rapid change, student access to accurate information, academic support and mentoring is vitally important. To ensure that the students of the Faculty of Medical Sciences continue to receive adequate support, the following guidelines are recommended in this period of remote teaching. These guidelines derived from a meeting of the FMS Academic and Advising Committee held on May 28, 2020. The Committee comprises academic and administrative representatives from all Schools and Departments, FMS clinical psychologist and a student representative.

The following were noted:

1. Student levels of anxiety, frustration and disgruntlement are high
2. The main drivers of the anxiety are uncertainty surrounding their programmes, slow decision making, and the perception of inadequate communication between faculty/staff and students
3. A significant contribution to anxiety was misinformation.

Academic advisors will continue to address students' academic needs, identify any non-academic concerns that may be affecting a student's academic performance, and make the necessary referrals to UWI resources and support systems. In addition, advising and mentoring in this period will emphasize:

1. Keeping abreast of students' concerns and needs, as it relates to changes in delivery of the programme and assessment and any other matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Providing prompt support in this regard
3. Providing accurate information in a timely manner.

Academic advising and mentoring - process

1. The Faculty will continue to provide academic advising and mentoring for students through senior administrative staff (Level 1 advisors) and all lecturers (Level 2 advisors), as described in the Faculty Academic Advising handbook.

- Meeting with students who seek advisement and support
- Early identification of students with academic challenges

- Early identification of students' non-academic challenges contributing to academic under-performance
- Referral to appropriate UWI agencies, departments and services for assessment and intervention e.g. SLDD and CAPS.

2. For routine advising, students will access administrative and academic staff by appointment, through requests for academic advising/mentoring videoconferencing sessions. These will be delivered via Zoom or WebEx.

3. Where required, videoconferencing meetings will include both academic and administrative staff, and the student.

4. For urgent advising, students can request an urgent videoconferencing session.

5. Lecturers will hold regular check-ins with the student group leader to determine whether there needs to be a meeting with the class. These check-ins can be initiated by the lecturer or the student leader.

6. A brief period at the end of online teaching sessions will also be used by lecturers to determine student needs and to encourage students to seek individual sessions, if needed

7. WhatsApp groups can be set up for group mentoring

8. Student liaison meetings will continue regularly

Academic advising and mentoring – documentation

1. The procedure will follow what is already in place for academic advising. Advisors will complete the academic advising form online or record the information usually documented on the form, and send via email to the student for confirmation of the recommendations made, and/or decisions taken.

2. Students will return the academic advising form indicating acceptance of the recommendations. This correspondence will be copied to the Deputy Dean (Clinical) at DeputyDean.ClinicalSciences@sta.uwi.edu

3. Students must use official UWI email addresses for all communication.

Continued support for students

The FMS Academic Advising and Mentoring Committee will continue to conduct webinars for students of the faculty as the need is identified.

Approved at FEC 2/6/2020
OBO BFMS



Electronically Signed

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Dr. Sandra Reid
Deputy Dean (Clinical)
Chair, Academic Advising and Mentoring Committee
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