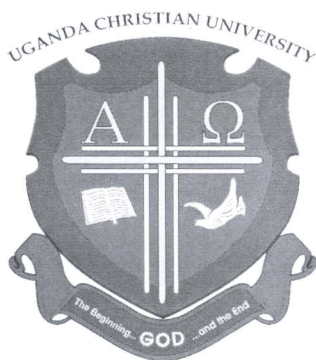


# UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

## STATUTE ON STUDENTS DISPLAYING PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS



A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

### Statute Schedule

Title	Statute on Students Displaying Psychological Problems
Policy Lead Contact	
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Approving Body	Senate
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Vice Chancellor's Signature	

**UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
STATUTE ABOUT STUDENTS  
DISPLAYING PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

**UCU SENATE APPROVED**

**05 November 2009**

## PREFACE

Information contained in this statute is of vital importance in maintaining an ethical approach to Uganda Christian University's (UCU's) Psychological Counseling Program. It's designed to assist in the identification, evaluation, making referrals, clinical or therapeutic processes within available resources of UCU. It mentions setting up confidential files and maintaining them. Additionally, it's guided by counseling ethics and prescriptive norms respected within psychology, psychiatry, chaplaincy, and the medical professions where standards for confidentiality and the security of records are well-established. All staff and students are expected to recognize and respect the privacy of those identified as needing and receiving counseling help from chaplains, counselors, physicians, psychologists, or psychiatrists. Psychological issues and problems include but are not limited to the following:

- ◆ Instances where a student engages or threatens to engage in behavior that poses a danger of causing harm to others, to herself or himself, or to campus property, and
- ◆ Instances where a student engages in behavior that directly and substantially impedes the lawful activities of others, or interferes with educational processes, or
- ◆ Instances where a student engages in behavior that directly or indirectly shows anxieties, phobias, or neurological symptoms interfering with personal studies, the scholarship of others, or the orderly operation of this university.
- ◆ Instances of chronic or persistent mental disorders arising from trauma, rape, depression, academic examination or research paper anxiety, failed relationships, losing consciousness under stress, parenting trials and tribulations, alcohol/drug/substance abuse are examples, and
- ◆ Chronic neurosis or psychosis where these are established through professional assessments.

If or when a student exhibits serious psychological issues or problems that rise to levels of danger or threats to herself, himself, and others, then UCU's officials can and will lawfully detain this person so that individualized and objective assessments can be made of the student's ability to safely participate in classes and other activities. In such instances, UCU reserves the right to take such actions as may be required in safely detaining the student in a clean and safe environment with personal hygiene facilities, room and board, and/or encourage the student to withdraw, or administratively withdraw the student, from the university community.

## UCU's Undergraduate Academic Regulations

Uganda Christian University (UCU) sets forth policies, regulations, procedures, and statutes in convenient handbooks that are frequently updated. For example, the blue-bound *Academic Policies and Regulations Handbook* contains important academic regulations and policies regarding students. All students are required to read and follow the rules and regulations as presented in this handbook.

Additionally, it's important that UCU Application and Medical Forms should include the question: *Does this applicant and/or student have a history of mental health challenges, problems, or conditions that are acute or chronic in nature, or that may present difficulties with academic success.* If the answer is "no", then so be it! If the answer is "yes", then an explanation on these forms is required so that further evaluations and recommendations can be made.

AEGROTAT Policy at UCU, as explained in the *Undergraduate Academic Regulations 2009/2010*, page 27 notwithstanding, focuses upon the following recommendations:

- ◆ In case of prolonged hospitalization of a student due to a psychological problem, when such student recovers, he or she should be allowed to continue studies regardless of the time spent as an inpatient and/or outpatient at a hospital.
- ◆ In cases where a student is unable to concentrate during an academic examination, other modes and means of examination shall include (a) extended/supervised essays or assignments, or (b) consideration of student's course work as a substitute for an academic examination, or (c) a student may be provided a take-home or open-book examination.

## UCU's Code of Conduct

Uganda Christian University (UCU) sets forth a *Code of Conduct Handbook* in a small pinkish-purple document that's convenient to carry. Campus regulations are reiterated in this booklet, plus pertinent campus government policies are included. Enforcement via various humane penalties for failure to comply with this Code of Conduct, along with grievance procedures and a statement on student rights are included. Failure to follow the Code of Conduct can result in suspension from this university.

## UCU's Suspension Procedure for Psychological Problems

Uganda Christian University (UCU) is authorized by the Ministry of Education & Sports to maintain a safe and secure campus environment needed by students for excelling in their academic scholarship and athletic pursuits.

Whenever a student exhibits serious psychological problems or issues as defined in the preface of this statute, and these problems or issues rise to levels where individual and/or group safety and security are threatened, and/or campus life and property is endangered, then the Vice Chancellor, his/her designee, shall convene the following members of a Psychological Referral Board for the purpose of determining whether or not a student should continue as an enrolled member of this student body:

- ◆ Director of Student Affairs (DOSA)—Board Chair
- ◆ Chair, Student Disciplinary Committee
- ◆ Chair, University Disciplinary Committee
- ◆ University Chaplain
- ◆ University Counselor
- ◆ Physician, or a responsible designee, of the campus clinic
- ◆ Dean, or a responsible designee, of the school in which the student is enrolled

### Evaluation & Referral Procedures

Inquiries into behavioral conduct that violates academic regulations, the Code of Conduct, and other published policies and statutes communicated throughout the campus community may be initiated by any staff member (faculty or support staff) when suspicions of psychological behavior pose a threat to a student, significant others, or campus property. Any staff member (faculty or support staff) who suspects a student may pose a danger to herself or himself, to significant others, and/or to campus property can report suspicions to any one of the following responsible persons who serves on the Psychological Referral Board:

- ◆ Director of Student Affairs (DOSA)
- ◆ Chair, Student Disciplinary Committee
- ◆ Chair, University Disciplinary Committee
- ◆ University Chaplain
- ◆ University Counselor
- ◆ Physician, or a responsible person employed at the campus clinic
- ◆ Dean, or a responsible person within the school where a student is seeking a degree

Any one of the persons listed above shall, upon oral or written notification by a staff member (faculty or support staff), submit a completed copy of the "Psychological Notification" found at the back of this statute that's designed for providing written notification to the Chairperson, Psychological Referral Board, who will then convene the board for evaluating the evidence, factual, circumstantial, or otherwise wherein an identified student displays psychological or dangerous behavior. Time is important, delays may be harmful to campus life or individuals; therefore, it's important that the Psychological Referral Board, or a majority forum of this board, convenes within 72 hours of initial notification.

Once one of the responsible persons listed above receives an oral or written notification from a staff member (faculty or support staff), then that identified student will be referred and transported for evaluation to a chaplain, physician, counselor, psychologist, or a psychiatrist, where consultation fees shall be paid by medical fees collected during registration processes. If a clear and present danger exists resulting from adversarial psychological behavior, then the student shall be detained in a safe and clean environment with access to personal hygiene facilities, food and nutrition, under scrutiny of campus security, or at a qualified psychological detention centre off campus, until such time when the student is dismissed from the university and is no longer on campus as a threat.

Any behavioral-problem student shall be informed of opportunities to meet with the Psychological Referral Board, or within a more private setting with no less than two members of this board. Sessions with a chaplain, counselor, physician, psychologist, and/or psychiatrist must, however, be private sessions, unless the student desires otherwise. The student must be kept informed that the ultimate decision for university dismissal or suspension rests alone with the Vice Chancellor, who bases final decisions upon professional recommendations of others who interact directly with the student. Prior to dismissal or suspension, the student is afforded an opportunity by the board to submit a written rebuttal to recommendations and decisions that shall be presented to the Vice Chancellor.

### Special Guidelines

#### **Suicide, Abuse, Neglect Cases:**

- ◆ Ask directly if the student is having thoughts about killing herself or himself.
- ◆ Ascertain if this student is physically abusing others or neglecting caring for others.
- ◆ Evaluate seriousness of thought (plan, method, place, giving away possessions, etc.).
- ◆ Evaluate recent changes in habit or routine.
- ◆ Evaluate futuristic thinking.
- ◆ Evaluate the extent of awareness with friends and family.
- ◆ Attempt to decrease intensity by problem solving approaches.
- ◆ Initiate a **No Harm Contract** written specifically for that student at that moment.
- ◆ Secure permission to consult with family, friends, or others with capacity to intervene.
- ◆ Encourage the student to self admit if facts suggest hospitalization is required.

**Homicidal Ideation and Duty to Warn:** If a problem student makes active homicidal threats and professionals believe these to be true, an ethical and moral **Duty to Warn** an intended victim by a written report should be immediately completed and copies distributed as indicated on the form. A professional clinician or therapist, as well as the university, therefore, have an obligation to inform in writing the police and the intended victim, if known and if possible.

**Student's Self-Evaluation:** Student perceptions of behavior are helpful when making psychological evaluations, especially from clinical or therapeutic points-of-view. Thus, students identified as suffering psychological problems and/or issues shall be afforded the opportunity to orally or in writing express their concerns, fears, perceptions, and anxieties in confidential ways that protect personal privacy.

**Maintaining Confidential Files:** Confidentiality and security of student records shall not be compromised under any circumstances. Students presenting psychological problems and/or issues shall have their complete records maintained within a secure safe located in UCU's counseling offices. Security access to files shall be identified on the outside of the safe, and under no circumstances are files to be copied or checked out of the counseling offices without written permission from the Vice Chancellor. Under no circumstances should a problem student ever gain access to her or his confidential files outside the presence of a responsible person whose name is identified on the outside of the file-safe. Access audit files shall be kept on each record containing psychological problems, counseling sessions, and clinical treatments, and the UCU's Quality Assurance Committee will audit these "access files" on a semi-annual basis, but will not have access to the individual confidential files unless a QA Committee Member's name is listed on the outside of the safe as having authorized access. The access list shall contain the Vice Chancellor's signature.

**Understanding of Confidentiality:** It's vitally important that records, recordings, and other information concerning counseling sessions, or clinical therapy, be kept in strict confidence by counselors, physicians, chaplains, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Clinicians or therapists shall not give information about a student's sessions, referral plans, or treatment protocols to others, including companions or family members, except when specifically required by law, or with specific written consent from the student identified within the records.

**Exceptions to Confidentiality:** While counseling, clinical, and therapeutic records are kept confidential, there are times when exceptions may be legally or ethically required to divulge information against a problem student's wishes. Sometimes, legal and professional ethics require evidence in the presence of suspicion of abuse or neglect, homicidal or suicidal tendencies, with or without the student's consent, including evidence or suspicions discovered and documented during courses of treatment. Clinicians, counselors, or therapists are sometimes required by professional ethics and law to report threats to physically harm self, or others. Additionally, counselors, clinicians, and therapists are sometimes legally obligated to break confidentiality when ordered to testify by a court of law.

**Interim Sanctions:** Interim sanctions may be recommended by the Psychological Referral Board to the Vice Chancellor under the following conditions:

- (a) To ensure the safety and well-being of members of the campus community or the preservation of university property,
- (b) To ensure a student's personal, physical, or emotional safety and well-being, or
- (c) If the student poses a direct threat of disruption or interference with the normal operations at this university.

Interim sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension from UCU, removal from campus or hostel residences, restriction from attending classes or participating in extracurricular activities, or entering campus property.

**Reinstatement Procedures:** Upon receipt of official documented evidence from a counselor, chaplain, physician, psychologist, or a psychiatrist, and based upon the recommendations of the Psychological Referral Board, perhaps even following an interview with the suspended or dismissed student, the Vice Chancellor, his/her designee, can reinstate the student. The Vice Chancellor's signature alone is necessary to reinstate a suspended or dismissed student.

### Conclusion

Students suspected of presenting psychological problems at Uganda Christian University (UCU) have a right to confidentiality and informed consent concerning every aspect of their evaluation, referral, and treatment. The Psychological Referral Board does not require formal courtroom procedures or rules of evidence, and all parties shall be afforded opportunities for reasonable oral and written arguments, to question any participant present at board meetings. Students suspected of presenting psychological problems shall have the right to the following: (1) to be present during the presentation of evidence at board sessions, (2) to be accompanied by an advisor, counselor, chaplain, psychologist, physician of one's own choosing, (3) to present such witnesses and/or documentary evidence as may be pertinent, and (4) to be provided opportunities in board meetings to cross-examine witnesses by other parties.

Within three working (3) days from the receipt of the Psychological Referral Board's reports and recommendations, the Vice Chancellor, his/her designee, shall either concur, in whole or in part, with the recommendations, and then direct appropriate action to implement the recommendations, or shall overrule the recommendations. The Vice Chancellor shall inform the student in writing of the actions to be taken and is the final authority in these proceedings.

Since staff and student turnover occurs at Uganda Christian University (UCU), it's important that the biblical Christian ideals of this university remain intact and durable over time. Therefore, it's important that staff and students view psychological problems and issues among some students as a opportunity for service in that Christians can "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Resistance to statutes like this one, as well as toward some policies, procedures and regulations,, however, stem from at least three sources, (1) unintended inertia toward adhering to or following some guidelines, (2) distractions during the work day or week that encourage people to procrastinate making hard decisions or taking necessary actions, and (3) pressures of time and circumstances that erode or displace essential priorities that are out-of-the-ordinary. Psychological problems do not go away on their own with human interventions; instead, they tend to get worse when ignored. Therefore, it's important that this statute be set in place, and then reviewed with staff and students at least annually.



**Psychological Notification**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Suspicion of Psychological Problems and/or Issues in the case of:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reference: (a) UCU's Senate Approved Psychological Evaluation Statute of 05 Nov 09

Describe in detail the evidence, factual and circumstantial, existing as to why this student is under suspicion for psychological problems and issues as identified in reference (a). Use separate sheets of paper, if more room is needed; *do not write on the back* of this form. Use precise and succinct descriptions without being so brief that ample evidence for convening the Psychological Referral Board is lacking.

Your phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Your e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to appear before the Board?      YES      NO      (circle one answer)

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_

**No Harm Contract**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of counselor, chaplain, etc.)

From: \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of student, client, patient)

Subject:           Personal Contract Not to Harm Myself, Others, or University Property

*This seems like a difficult time in my life due to pressures that I'm feeling both from forces external to me as well as internal, within myself. Indeed, I've been contemplating, thinking about, harming myself, perhaps others, and/or doing harm to campus property. I don't want to do these bad things and need help. I'm really not a bad person!*

*Therefore, this is my personal contract not to harm myself, others, and/or do harm to campus property. It's my desire to be held accountable for my actions by a responsible chaplain, counselor, physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, friend, or family member. Please accept my personal contract, and help me!*

*Thank you,*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ethical & Moral Duty to Warn**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Person in Danger)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Local Magistrate)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Local Police Chief)

From: Uganda Christian University, Psychological Referral Board

Subject: An Ethical & Moral Duty to Warn Against Threatened Harm

Reference: (a) UCU's Senate Approved Psychological Evaluation Statute of 05 Nov 09

According to reference (a), it's determined by UCU's Psychological Referral Board that the following person is at risk of being harmed: \_\_\_\_\_ who can be found located at: \_\_\_\_\_ whose cell phone (if known) is: \_\_\_\_\_

An ethical and moral obligation, a duty, to warn this person of danger resulted from this Board's evaluation of UCU student (name of student), \_\_\_\_\_, who is under further professional evaluation and security surveillance on the UCU campus until such time that suspension or dismissal from this university if required.

Furthermore, this university is obligated to keep the person at risk, as well as civil authorities, informed and alerted as to the final determinations of this Psychological Referral Board. Please take this threat seriously; it's not an idle threat.

Thank you,

Director of Student Affairs (DOSA)