Policy on Women Mentoring, Empowerment & Student Well-Being

Year 2025

1. Background and Rationale

Recognizing the importance of female students' academic development, personal growth, empowerment, and psychological well-being, the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), through its Directorate of Student Affairs (DSA), has placed particular emphasis on strengthening support and mentoring mechanisms for female students.

Since 2023, the Directorate of Student Affairs (DSA) has been reorganized into separate male and female platforms, with the establishment of a dedicated DSA Female Office specifically to address the needs, concerns, and welfare of female students. This institutional arrangement reflects NUML's commitment to providing focused attention, accessible support, and a gender-responsive approach to student affairs. Since its establishment, the DSA Female Office has particularly prioritized female mentoring, empowerment, personal development, and mental well-being as key areas of its student support initiatives.

The DSA Female Office aims to provide female students with an accessible, supportive, respectful, and confidential platform where they can seek guidance, discuss their concerns, receive appropriate assistance, and benefit from mentoring opportunities.

This policy provides a structured framework for institutionalizing and further strengthening these ongoing efforts through regular interaction, targeted mentoring activities, awareness sessions, student engagement, and effective coordination with relevant university offices, academic departments, faculty members, and parents or guardians, wherever appropriate.

2. Policy Objectives

The key objectives of the Women Mentoring Mechanism are to:

1. Promote confidence, self-esteem, leadership qualities, and decision-making abilities among female students.
2. Encourage awareness of mental health, emotional well-being, stress management, and personal development.
3. Provide a safe and respectful platform for female students to communicate their academic, personal, social, and other relevant concerns.
4. Facilitate the identification and appropriate referral of students requiring specialized psychological, medical, academic, or administrative support.
5. Encourage positive interaction and mentoring relationships between female students, female faculty members, and experienced professionals.
6. Promote awareness regarding personal safety, responsible conduct, harassment prevention, university policies, and available institutional support systems.
7. Strengthen communication and coordination with parents or guardians, where necessary and appropriate.

3. Institutional Mechanism and Coordination

The Directorate of Student Affairs (DSA) shall serve as the central coordinating office for the implementation and facilitation of the Women Mentoring Mechanism.

The mechanism shall operate through the following institutional arrangements:

a. DSA Female Office

The DSA Female Office shall serve as the primary contact point for female students seeking guidance, support, facilitation, or assistance regarding their academic, personal, social, and well-being-related concerns.

b. Female Faculty Mentors

Female faculty members as departmental DSAs from various faculties may be engaged as mentors to provide academic guidance, professional advice, personal development support, and appropriate mentoring to female students.

c. Coordination with Academic Departments

The DSA Office shall coordinate with Deans, Heads of Departments, departmental focal persons, and relevant faculty members to facilitate mentoring activities and address matters requiring academic or departmental intervention.

d. Coordination with Relevant University Offices

Where required, the DSA Office shall coordinate with relevant university offices, including the Medical Centre, Psychological/Counselling Services (where available), Harassment Complaint Mechanism, Hostel Administration, Security Office, and other relevant authorities for appropriate assistance and referrals.

e. Parent/Guardian Coordination

Where a situation requires parental or guardian involvement, the DSA Office may facilitate communication and coordination, subject to the student's circumstances, applicable university policies, confidentiality requirements, and relevant safeguarding considerations.

4. Key Areas of Mentoring and Support

The Women Mentoring Mechanism shall focus on the following areas:

- Academic guidance and adjustment to university life.
- Personal development, confidence-building, and self-esteem.
- Leadership development and participation in university activities.
- Mental health awareness and emotional well-being.
- Stress management, time management, and work-life balance.
- Career guidance, professional development, and future opportunities.
- Personal safety, self-protection, and awareness of university support mechanisms.
- Social adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and responsible behaviour.
- Guidance regarding university rules, regulations, and student-related policies.
- Identification and referral of students requiring specialized assistance.

5. Annual Activities and Initiatives

The DSA Office shall initiate and coordinate simple, practical, and strategically relevant activities on an annual basis to promote female mentoring, empowerment, and well-being.

The proposed activities include:

S. No.	Proposed Activity	Frequency/Purpose
1.	Female Students' Mentoring and Interaction Sessions	At least once per semester; interactive sessions with experienced female faculty members and professionals.
2.	Mental Health and Well-being Awareness Sessions	At least twice annually; awareness regarding stress, anxiety, emotional health, and coping strategies.
3.	Women's Empowerment and Confidence-Building Workshops	Semester wise: promoting self-confidence, communication, decision-making, and personal development.
4.	Career Guidance and Professional Development Sessions	Annually; guidance regarding career planning, employment opportunities, interviews, and professional growth.
5.	Female Leadership and Student Engagement Activities	Annually; encouraging female students to participate in leadership, societies, debates, and co-curricular activities.
6.	Awareness Sessions on Personal Safety and University Support Mechanisms	Annually; awareness regarding personal safety, harassment prevention, university policies, and complaint mechanisms.

The DSA Office may organize these activities independently or in collaboration with academic departments, female faculty members, university societies, alumni, relevant university offices, and external professionals. Activities may be arranged in physical, virtual, or hybrid formats according to institutional requirements and available resources.

6. Routine Student Support and Facilitation through DSA Female Office

In addition to planned mentoring activities, the DSA Female Office shall provide continuous, day-to-day facilitation and support to female students through multiple communication channels.

The routine support mechanism shall include:

a. Face-to-Face Interaction

- Providing a welcoming and accessible environment for female students to discuss their concerns.
- Listening to students' academic, personal, social, hostel-related, and other relevant issues.
- Providing initial guidance, counselling-oriented support, and appropriate advice within the scope of the office.

- Facilitating students in approaching the relevant university authorities for resolution of their concerns.
- Addressing sensitive matters with due care, respect, and confidentiality.

b. Support through Telephone

- Responding to calls from female students seeking guidance or assistance.
- Providing information regarding university procedures, student facilities, and relevant support mechanisms.
- Facilitating urgent communication and coordination in cases requiring timely intervention.
- Directing students to the appropriate university offices or authorities where required.

c. Support through Official Emails

- Responding to students' queries and complaints received through official email channels.
- Providing guidance regarding administrative and student-related matters.
- Forwarding concerns to relevant offices or authorities for appropriate action.
- Maintaining appropriate records of correspondence and follow-up, subject to confidentiality requirements.

d. Coordination and Follow-up

- Maintaining regular contact with students where follow-up is required.
- Coordinating with relevant departments and university offices for timely resolution of student concerns.
- Facilitating communication with parents or guardians in appropriate cases.
- Monitoring the progress of referred matters to the extent possible within the authority of the DSA Office.

7. Terms of Reference (TORs) and Responsibilities

The DSA Female Office and designated female mentors shall observe the following Terms of Reference:

1. **Confidentiality and Secrecy:** Maintain strict confidentiality regarding students' personal information, complaints, family matters, and other sensitive disclosures. Information shall only be shared with authorized persons where necessary and in accordance with applicable university policies and safeguarding requirements.
2. **Respect for Dignity and Self-Respect:** Ensure that every female student is treated with dignity, courtesy, fairness, and respect, irrespective of her academic background, personal circumstances, or social status.
3. **Non-Judgmental Approach:** Listen to students' concerns without discrimination, unnecessary criticism, intimidation, or personal judgment.
4. **Accessibility and Responsiveness:** Remain accessible to female students through face-to-face interaction, telephone, official email, and other approved communication channels.

5. **Appropriate Guidance and Mentoring:** Provide constructive guidance regarding academic, personal, social, and professional matters while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
6. **Parental/Guardian Liaison:** Facilitate communication with parents or guardians, wherever necessary and appropriate, particularly in cases involving student welfare, serious concerns, or matters requiring parental support, subject to applicable confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.
7. **Referral and Coordination:** Refer students to relevant university authorities, professional counsellors, medical personnel, or other appropriate support services whenever a matter falls beyond the scope or expertise of the DSA Female Office.
8. **Timely Follow-up:** Ensure appropriate follow-up of reported concerns and maintain coordination with relevant offices until the matter is appropriately addressed or referred.
9. **Neutrality and Fairness:** Maintain impartiality while dealing with student concerns and avoid favouritism, personal bias, or conflicts of interest.
10. **Protection of Student Privacy:** Avoid unnecessary discussion, circulation, or disclosure of students' personal matters and ensure the secure handling of relevant records and correspondence.
11. **Awareness and Advocacy:** Promote awareness among female students regarding their rights, responsibilities, university policies, available facilities, and institutional support mechanisms.
12. **Professional Conduct:** Maintain professional ethics, appropriate boundaries, and a supportive attitude while interacting with students and their families.
13. **Documentation and Record Maintenance:** Maintain appropriate records of mentoring sessions, student interactions, referrals, activities, and follow-up actions while ensuring confidentiality and restricted access to sensitive information.
14. **Crisis Identification and Response:** Identify cases requiring immediate attention, including serious threats to student safety or well-being, and promptly coordinate with the competent university authorities.
15. **Continuous Improvement:** Obtain student feedback periodically and recommend improvements in the mentoring and support mechanism.

8. Implementation and Monitoring

The Directorate of Student Affairs shall coordinate the implementation of this policy through the DSA Female Office, designated female faculty mentors, and relevant university departments and offices.

The following measures shall be adopted for monitoring and improvement:

- Preparation of an annual calendar of female mentoring and empowerment activities.
- Maintenance of records of activities, participation, and student engagement at department level.
- Collection of feedback from participating female students.

- Preparation of an annual activity and performance report highlighting initiatives, participation, key observations, and areas for improvement.

Where feasible, the University may progressively expand the mentoring mechanism to ensure broader participation of female students, with a proposed annual outreach target of at least 10% of the total female student population.

9. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the Directorate of Student Affairs in consultation with relevant university authorities to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional policies, student needs, and applicable regulatory requirements.