

Policy: Student Support

Policy Reference: A-AB-026

Version: 2

Person Responsible: Deputy CEO for Academic Services

1. Policy Statement

Bahrain Polytechnic is committed to supporting all the students and identifying students whose educational achievement could be adversely affected, as well as to enhance their progress and educational experience in the light of Bahrain Polytechnic's Vision and Mission.

Bahrain Polytechnic support services and corporate directorates' works in partnership with the faculties to ensure overall student well-being through early identification and intervention procedures for students. The purpose of this policy is to outline the support services available and the procedures for dealing with students who may have a range of difficulties including personal, medical, psychological and financial or a combination which may impact their learning.

2. Definitions

Academically at-risk: Academically at-risk students may not experience academic success and may potentially drop out of study, be excluded, or fail to progress. Issues may include challenges in their area of study, Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs), use of second language, poor attendance, interrupted schooling, lack of motivation, or poor or inadequate course/programme choices, gifted or mature students etc.

Aspergers Syndrome (AS): Aspergers is part of the Autistic Spectrum and shares some of the same characteristics as autism. Generally those with Aspergers Syndrome have an IQ within the normal range, but may have poor social, communication and emotional skills. No two people will have the same combination of symptoms.

Assessment Accommodations: These are tools and procedures that allow equal access to assessment for students with identified learning difficulties/disabilities. Examples of accommodations include extra time for tests or exams, a scribe/writer, or modifications to a test paper (e.g. large print). Eligibility for the provision of assessment accommodations is determined on a case by case basis by Learning Support Services.

At Risk Financial: These issues stem from family difficulties in meeting education and life expenses that cause stress and may have an impact on their learning and progress. Students who continue to miss class because of work commitments are also included.

At-risk: Students of concern or “at-risk” are those identified as experiencing difficulties and requiring support during the course of their study which may include but is not limited to: academic, personal, psychological, health/ safety-related, financial, social/ behavioural, Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Aspergers Syndrome (AS).

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD): AD/HD is a complex neurological condition characterized by developmentally inappropriate inattention and/or hyperactivity and/or impulsiveness, which is causing functional impairment in major life activities.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder that affects the development of the brain in areas of social interaction and communication. It is marked by severe difficulties in developing language, in the use of abstract concepts and in the communication and formation of relationships with others. Autism is described as a “spectrum “ disorder which means that the characteristics and symptoms of autism can present themselves in a variety of combinations and can range from mild to severe.

Health and/or safety-related: These difficulties include the need for short-term support, such as for those with broken limbs or post-surgical needs; or long-term care, such as students with sickle-cell anaemia or diabetes. Other health-related issues include brain injury, occupational overuse syndrome (OOS), hearing impairment, or visual impairment (short-term/long-term). Health and/or safety related issues may have an impact on student learning.

Interpreter: An interpreter is an accommodation provided for students with a hearing impairment. An interpreter is a trained professional who translates between the spoken word and a signed language.

Learning Support Services: offers one-to-one sessions tailored to students individual learning needs whether their goals are to improve their grammar and writing skills, math skills, reading, listening, speaking, spelling, APA referencing, study skills, or time management. Learning Support Services also offer a range of workshops that are delivered in the classroom as per tutor request. PASS leaders (student tutors) also assist students in improving their learning in specific courses.

Permanent: Disabling conditions that are a result of injuries, surgery or long-term medical conditions which impair the physical and/or mental ability of a person to perform his/her normal work or non-occupational activities supposedly for the remainder of his/her life.

Personal: These difficulties may arise when students experience personal issues which may have an impact on their ability to study and progress. Issues may include financial difficulties, inadequate or over-crowded housing, domestic violence, health and/or safety issues, work/family commitments, or lack of family or spousal support.

Psychological: Psychological difficulties occur when students experience mental or emotional traumas which may have an impact on their studies and progress. Issues include mental health issues

(i.e. depression or anxiety), domestic violence, low self-esteem, victims of harassment (religious/racial), risk of suicide, victims of physical or sexual abuse, or long-term illness.

Reader: A reader is an accommodation provided by a trained professional for students in need of assistance with reading due to a specific learning disability (SLD) and/or a short-term or long-term visual impairment that affects their ability to read.

Scribe and reader: A scribe and reader is an accommodation provided for students in need of assistance with both reading and writing due to a SLD and/or health-related issue that affects the student's ability to write and read. The scribe and reader service is provided by a trained professional.

Scribe/Writer: A scribe is an accommodation provided by a trained professional for students in need of assistance with writing due to a short-term or long-term disability, such as a broken limb or visual impairment that affects their ability to write.

Social/behavioural: These issues include students with a developmental social level different to peers (i.e. a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder ASD or AD/HD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder), social isolations tendencies, non-participation in class, lack of effective relationships with peers/friends, classroom inattentiveness, or disruptive behaviour. These challenges may impact on student learning.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): A Specific Learning Disability is a processing difficulty that affects one's ability to acquire or understand oral language, reading, written language, or mathematics. Specific types of learning disabilities include dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia. Students with SLD have average to above average IQ.

Standardized Assessment Tools : internationally recognized assessments used by authorized personnel to identify a student's learning strengths and areas for improvement. The results of the assessments are used to determine eligibility for course assessment accommodations, such as extra time or an alternative testing location.

Student at-risk register: A semester-based record of students referred (by tutors) for Learning Support Services. Information about the area(s) of support students require is also included in the record.

Temporary: Disabling conditions that are a result of injuries, surgery or short-term medical conditions that may need access to services and resources similar to individuals with permanent disabilities. Examples of temporary disabilities may include, but are not limited to: broken limbs, hand injuries, or short term impairments following surgery or medical treatments.

3. Application

People:

- All Bahrain Polytechnic staff and students

Processes:

- Identification and support for students with medical conditions
- Identification and learning support for academically at-risk students
- Academic Advising
- Referral of students at-risk
- Financial support for students in need
- Peer Assisted Study Scheme (PASS) Leader program for peer assisted study support
- PASS leader selection, recruitment, training and development
- Mentoring and counselling management
- Physical disability support
- Assessment Accommodation
- Alternative study arrangement

4. External Requirements

This policy helps Bahrain Polytechnic meet the following external requirements:

- Higher Education Council (HEC)

5. What is Expected:

- Students are advised of the range of support services available through orientation, letters, posters, website, etc...
- Staff are regularly informed of the range of support services available for students through a range of communication methods (staff orientation, SharePoint, emails, etc...).
- Support services are available to all current students
- Students with specific support needs are identified and supported as early as possible. Students are academically advised to successfully progress through their course of studies.

6. Key Dates

First Approved:	Establishment of the Polytechnic (as at risk student policy)
This Version Approved:	10 May 2015 by SMT, 14 December 2015 by BoT
Next Review Date:	4 years from the date of this version approval or as required

7. Links and Related Documents

- Assessment and Moderation Policy
- Student Attendance Policy and procedures
- Student Admission Policy
- Timetabling Policy
- Procedure: PASS Leader Management
- Procedure: Managing Mentoring
- Procedure: Learning Support Services
- Procedure: Tuition Fees Exemption (refer to Tuition Fees Exemption Policy)
- Procedure: Physical Disability Support