

Uva Wellassa University

The adoption of the following policy is recommended by the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and the Senate of Uva Wellassa University.

Policy Title: Policy on Orientation Programme for New Students Enrolled at Uva Wellassa University
Policy Number: UWU-P-018
Responsible Party: DR/SAR/AR of Student Affairs Division-Uva Wellassa University
Effective Date: 31.07.2024
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Purpose

This policy outlines the key components and standards of the orientation program specifically tailored for freshmen at the Uva Wellassa University (UWU). The primary objective of this program is to provide essential support to new undergraduates, facilitating a successful and seamless transition into both academic life and the broader university experience.

Statement:

- The orientation program is a mandatory event for all new students, conducted prior to the start of the academic programme. Its primary purpose is to familiarize new students with the university environment, the registration processes for academics and housing, academic and general rules and regulations, as well as the various policies and services available to them.
- During the orientation, the Student Orientation Committee at UWU collaborates with faculties, academic departments, the library, other student service centres/units and

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students' union to provide a comprehensive introduction to the university's academic, administrative structure and university life. This includes introducing students to student counselors, academic advisors, and mentors. The program also educates students about their rights and responsibilities as members of the UWU family.

- To enhance students' understanding of university life, the orientation program includes a variety of activities such as campus tours, meetings, lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and other engaging events. Additionally, special guest speakers, including experts from both the university and the local Badulla community, share insights into the cultural, historical, and geographical significance of the university's surroundings.
- Organizers of the programme make every effort to be inclusive, ensuring that differently-abled students and those from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds can fully participate. The orientation programme also incorporates enjoyable activities like sports and talent shows, providing opportunities for freshmen to showcase their talents while fostering integration among freshmen, senior students, and staff. The Student Affairs division at UWU facilitates the programme.

Responsibility:

- The responsibility for organizing and executing the orientation program lies with the Senate. However, the Senate has the authority to delegate the implementation and oversight of these responsibilities to a subcommittee, which will be led by the Senior Student Counselor. The immediate past Senior Student Counselor will also serve as an ex-officio member of this committee.

Composition of the committee:

- Senior Student Counselor (Chair)
- Past Senior Student Counselor
- Deputy Student Counselors from each Faculty
- A senior academic member nominated from each faculty
- DR/SAR/AR of the Student Affairs Division (Convenor)

Responsibilities of the Committee:

The committee is responsible for conducting the following activities related to the orientation programme

- **Programme Planning:** Develop a comprehensive orientation program that covers academic, administrative, and extracurricular aspects of university life.
- **Resource Coordination:** Ensure that all necessary resources, including printed materials, presentations, and logistical arrangements, are in place for the orientation programs.

- **Orientation Schedule:** Create a detailed schedule for orientation activities, including dates, times, and venues for various sessions.
- **Information Dissemination:** Prepare and instruct to distribute orientation materials, including student handbooks, guides, and other relevant documents.
- **Orientation Sessions:** Organize and conduct orientation sessions on academic policies, support services, campus facilities, and student life.
- **Campus Tours and Introduction to Faculty and Departments:** Arrange guided campus tours for new students to familiarize them with university facilities.
- **Mentorship Program:** Develop and manage a mentorship program where senior students assist new students in their transition to university life.
- **Evaluation:** Collect feedback from both new students and organizers to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation programs and make improvements as needed.
- **Coordination:** Collaborate with various university academic departments, the library, IT centres, the sports division, and student services including hostel and cafeterias, to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive orientation experience.

Reporting:

The committee shall report to the Senate on the progress and outcomes of orientation activities.

Duration: Two (02) consecutive weeks

Orientation Package:

The Orientation Package includes the following items, which are provided to each student during the orientation program:

- The Student Handbook
- The University Student Charter (or relevant excerpts)
- The Examination Regulations
- Regulations Governing Penalties for Violation of Examination Regulations
- The University Policy on Gender Equity and Equality (GEE)
- UGC Circular No. 12/2019 on "Strategies/Actions to Combat Ragging and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in State Universities and Higher Education Institutes" or the University's Policy on this subject.
- The Orientation Program Agenda (students are guided to review the schedule, and locate lecture theatres, and service centres before the academic program begins)
- Hostel Rules and Regulations

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- Library Brochures with Clarifications on Terms and Conditions
- IT Guide
- Introduction to Sports Facilities
- Important Contact Numbers and Email Addresses
- Contact Information for Mentors and Psychological Counselors
- Information about the Freshers' Talent Show

This comprehensive package aims to provide essential information and resources to ensure a smooth transition and positive experience for new students.

Participation of Departments, Units and Centers in the Orientation Agenda:

Below is a sample list of the talks, discussions, and visits scheduled as part of the orientation program. These activities are designed to provide new students with insights into the university experience and to outline their roles and responsibilities as university students.

- **Welcome Address:** A formal welcome by the Vice Chancellor, Deans of Faculties, Registrar and the President Student Union introducing students to the university's culture and values.
- **Student Rights and Responsibilities:** A discussion outlining the rights and responsibilities of students within the university community, emphasizing academic integrity and respectful conduct.
- **Meet the Faculty:** Opportunities for students to meet with faculty members for informal discussions and questions. Faculty members provide an overview of academic expectations, course requirements, and strategies for success in coursework.
- **Support Services:** Presentations on the various support services available on campus, including academic advising, counselling, health services, sports, and career guidance.
- **Library Resources:** An introduction to the university library's resources, including databases, research materials, and borrowing procedures.
- **Campus Tour:** Guided tours of the campus to familiarize students with academic buildings, facilities, and key locations.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Information on clubs, organizations, and extracurricular opportunities available to students, encouraging participation in campus life.
- **IT Services:** An overview of the university's IT services, including email, online learning platforms, and computer labs.
- **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Information on available scholarships, financial aid, and guidance on managing finances as a student.
- **Health and Wellness:** Discussions on maintaining physical and mental health, including

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stress management and available wellness programs.

- **Student Mentorship:** Introduction to the mentorship program where senior students offer guidance and support to new students.
- **Cultural and Diversity Awareness:** Sessions promoting cultural understanding and respect for diversity within the university community.
- **Orientation Handbook:** Distribution of an orientation handbook containing essential information, policies, and contact details.
- **Safety and Security:** Information on campus safety measures, emergency procedures, and the importance of personal safety.
- **Academic Advising:** Guidance on course registration, major selection, and academic planning.
- **Student ID and Email Facility:** Issuance of student ID cards and email addresses.
- **Campus Facilities:** Tours of sports facilities, laboratories, and other campus amenities.
- **Social and Networking Events:** Social gatherings to encourage interaction among new students and the formation of friendships.
- **Student Council (Union):** Student voice, student-to-student tips and support.
- **Q&A Sessions:** Open forums for students to ask questions and seek clarification on university-related matters.
- **Feedback Sessions:** Opportunities for students to provide feedback on the orientation programme and suggest improvements.
- **Closing Ceremony:** A closing event to celebrate the conclusion of the orientation and formally welcome students into the university community, featuring a talent show by the freshmen.

Funding

DR / SAR/ AR of the Student Affairs Division shall collaboratively prepare a budget estimate in consultation with the Chairman of the Student Orientation Programme for the activities of the program. This budget estimate will be presented at the meeting of the Student Orientation Programme for approval. Once approved by the meeting, the budget will be submitted to the Finance Committee for final approval.

The Finance Committee will review the budget and direct the Bursar to disburse the approved funds as an advance payment to the DR/SAR/AR or Chairman of the Student Orientation Programme. The DR/SAR/AR of the Student Affairs Division is responsible for settling this advance payment within two weeks following the conclusion of the program.

Freshmen Talent Show and Conclusion of the Orientation Programme

The Freshmen Talent Show, held as part of the closing ceremony of the orientation program, is an exciting and vibrant event that showcases the diverse talents and creativity of the new students, affectionately known as "freshmen." This show serves as both a fun-filled entertainment extravaganza and a warm welcome to the UWU family.

The Freshmen Talent Show typically unfolds as follows:

- **Diverse Performances:** The show features a wide array of performances, including music, dance, drama, comedy, poetry recitations, and more. Freshmen are encouraged to participate and showcase their unique talents. These performances often reflect the rich cultural and artistic diversity present among the new student body.
- **Inclusivity:** One of the key aspects of the Freshmen Talent Show is its inclusivity. It provides an equal platform for all students, regardless of their talents or experience levels. This encourages shy or introverted students to step out of their comfort zones and share their passions with their peers.
- **Emphasis on Creativity:** Creativity is celebrated during the talent show. Students are encouraged to think outside the box and present acts that are both entertaining and thought-provoking. This fosters a spirit of innovation and creativity among the freshmen.
- **Building Confidence:** Participating in the talent show can significantly boost students' self-confidence. It allows them to perform in front of a live audience, which is a valuable skill for their future academic and professional endeavors.
- **Audience Engagement:** The audience, consisting of fellow freshmen, faculty, staff, and sometimes even family members, plays a crucial role in making the event enjoyable. They cheer, applaud, and support their peers throughout the performances, creating a supportive and encouraging atmosphere.
- **Judging and Awards:** Depending on the scale of the event, judges may be invited to evaluate the performances and select winners in different categories. Awards or certificates may be presented to outstanding performers. However, the focus is often more on participation and enjoyment rather than competition.
- **Community Building:** The Freshmen Talent Show not only entertains but also strengthens the sense of community and belonging among new students. It's an opportunity for freshmen to connect with each other, make new friends, and celebrate their shared journey into university life.
- **Memorable Conclusion:** As part of the orientation program's closing ceremony, the Freshmen Talent Show provides a memorable and uplifting conclusion to the orientation week. It leaves a lasting impression on the students, setting a positive tone for their upcoming academic years.

In essence, the Freshmen Talent Show is not just a performance; it's a celebration of individuality, creativity, and unity within the new student community. It marks the beginning of a shared adventure as these students embark on their higher education journey together.

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