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1. Background

The mainstay of higher education institutions is teaching and learning which is assessable through the student outcome and their behavior while in colleges and upon graduation. Producing quality graduates and facilitating them to develop with both head and heart is central to the roles and responsibilities of the colleges. Whilst initiatives are put in this direction by all colleges in the day to day running of the colleges, but lately our higher education institutions had also been facing lot of disciplinary related problems. Most of these problems are to do with non-compliance of the university / college rules and regulations which is a concern to not only the colleges but to the society as a whole.

In absence of a university-wide agreed definitions on ***offences and disciplinary sanctions*** to be applied, it has become even more easier for any student community or the parents to question our decisions and making reference to the course of actions taken by the independent colleges, thus opening ourselves to further criticisms. As shared by JNP in its 12th COD meeting, we consider this issue urgent and critical to the upkeep of its identity and reputations while at the same time being fair and transparent to the affected students.

Our colleges should be read or seen by the society as a center of excellence not only in offering quality education and training but in producing future citizens who can fit in to the greater society. Some of these graduates will eventually become the leaders of tomorrow who will help not only in upholding what has been cherished by this sovereign country, but at the

same time shaping its destiny. For a country that is endowed with rich tradition, it is only imperative for everyone in the system to uphold what is cherished and discard the habits and practices that are detrimental to the upkeep of its age old tradition and culture.

With this backdrop in mind, the “**Student Code of Conduct and Ethics**” is prepared for adoption and use by colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan.

2.Purpose

The purpose of “Student Code of Conduct and Ethics” is to provide a common ethical framework for resolving complaints and offences on violations of the University / College Rules & Regulations. This is proposed so that:

i. Student development is emphasized

This process emphasizes the educational purpose in student discipline, including helping students understand and accept responsibility for their own behavior.

ii. National / Community interests are met

While the emphasis of the disciplinary process is on responsible student self-development, the nature of the offense may require, in fairness to the nation or community, the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.

iii. Students receive uniform / fair treatment

Although all colleges have their own disciplinary rules they are quite similar in terms of the contents. But when it comes to taking actions for similar nature and degree of offences, they are

different. This means that students across the colleges are not treated fairly / uniformly.

iv. Harmonious living is promoted

The ultimate purpose of this process is to encourage harmonious living within the university/college premises.

3. Basic Requirements of Colleges

Each college shall fulfill the following basic requirements for addressing the disciplinary issues:

- i. ensure that proper orientation and awareness is provided to students in the college on the Student Code of Conduct and Ethics (SCCE) that is adopted herein;
- ii. ensure that students found violating the Student Code of Conduct and Ethics (SCCE) are imposed sanctions at the most appropriate time.

3. Definition of Disciplinary Offenses

Any student or student organization found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action under this policy.

3.1 Assault (Section 156)

Assault means engaging oneself in purposely, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently causing apprehension of bodily injury to another person, e.g; a

student threatening another student by saying that he would break his nose if he does not listen to him.

3.2 Battery (Section 158)

Battery means engaging oneself in using physical force of an adverse nature on another person. An example of this can be illustrated by i) A student punches another student for not listening to him. ii) A group of friends challenges another group of friends and they start fighting (gang fight). In this case all the members of both the groups shall be liable for battery and other offences.

3.3 Sexual Harassment (Section 205)

Sexual harassment means engaging in making unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal abuse of sexual nature. E.g; a student passes obscene or lascivious remarks to a student of the opposite sex.

3.4 Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic

record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

3.5 Disruptive Classroom Conduct

Disruptive classroom conduct means engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.

3.6 Falsification

Falsification means willfully providing University/college offices or officials with false, misleading, or incomplete information; forging or altering without proper authorization of an official of the University/college records or documents or conspiring with or inducing others to forge or alter without proper authorization University/college records or documents; misusing, altering, forging, falsifying, or transferring to another person University / college-issued identification; or intentionally making a false report of a bomb, fire, natural disaster, or other emergency to a University/college official or an emergency service agency; or intentionally pasting false notice (s) resulting into classes being cancelled /postponed / changed or of any other college activities .

3.7 Refusal to Identify and Comply

Refusal to identify and comply means willfully refusing to or falsely identifying one's self or willfully failing to comply with a proper order or summons when requested by an authorized University/college official(s).

3.8 Attempts to Injure or Defraud

Attempts to injure or defraud means making, forging, printing, reproducing, copying, or altering any record, document, writing, or identification used or maintained by the University/college when done with intention to injure, defraud, or misinform.

3.9 Possession of stolen property (Section 255)

Possession of stolen property means engaging oneself in receiving, retaining, or disposal of the property of another person knowing that it has been stolen, or believing that it has been stolen, with the intent to benefit oneself or a third person other than the owner of the property or to impede the recovery of the property by the owner

3.10 Defamation (Section 317)

Defamation means engaging oneself in behavior that intentionally cause damage to the reputation of another person or a legal person by communicating false or distorted information about that person's action, motive,

character or reputation. E.g; a student announces at a gathering that one student is a hard core criminal.

3.11 Libel (Section 320)

Libel means engaging oneself in defaming another person through the means of writing, drawing, or photographing. E.g; Dorji draws the picture of Tandin running away with Pema's lost watch on the blackboard, intending it to be believed that Tandin stole Pema's watch.

3.11 Threatening or Harassment (Section 462)

Threatening or harassment means engaging in conduct that endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, or welfare of another person, including, but not limited to, threatening, harassing, or assaultive behavior. E.g; Penjor calls up Dorji and tells him that he will kill him for not listening him.

3.12 Prowling (Section 464)

Prowling means engaging in loitering at a place and in a manner not usual for a law-abiding individual under circumstances that cause alarm for the safety of another person or property in the vicinity.

3.13 Disorderly Conduct (Section 460)

Disorderly conduct means engaging in conduct that incites or threatens to incite an assault or breach of the peace; breaching the peace; obstructing or disrupting teaching, research, administrative, or public service

functions; or obstructing learning; or obstructing or disrupting disciplinary procedures or authorized University activities.

3.14 Illegal Possession or Display of Weapons (486)

Illegal possession or display of weapons means possessing or displaying weapons or articles or substances usable as weapons including, but not limited to, firearms, incendiary devices, explosives, and dangerous biological or chemical agents, threatening or intimidating another person, except in those instances when authorized by law and, where applicable, by the proper University/college authority.

3.14 Public intoxication (Section 383)

Public Intoxication means, engaging oneself in being in public place under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or a drug not administered under the medical supervision endangering oneself, another person or a property. E.g; A group of students found drunk in a bar showing violent behavior.

3.15 Illegal Possession of a controlled substance or Use of Drugs (Section 500)

Illegal possession of a controlled substances or use of drugs or alcohol means engaging in possessing or using any psychotropic substance or narcotic drugs

without the prescription of a registered doctor or the proper authority of the University/college.

3.16 Illegal Transaction of controlled substances (Section 498)

Illegal transaction of controlled substances mean engaging oneself in unlawfully importing, exporting, selling, purchasing, hoarding and storing and transportation of psychotropic substances or narcotic drugs. E.g; Tashi buys fifty strips of Relipen tablets, fifty strips of Nitrosu-10 tablets and twenty bottles of Phensedyl from Jaigoan / Darranga and manages to bring it to Thimphu / Dewathang for selling at a higher rate to the abusers.

3.17 Malicious mischief in the use of University Facilities and Services (Section 396)

Malicious mischief in the use of University/college facilities and services means engaging oneself in wrongfully using University/college properties or facilities; misusing, altering, or damaging fire-fighting equipment, safety devices, or other emergency equipment or interfering with the performance of those specifically designed/fixd to carry out emergency services; or acting to obtain fraudulently-through deceit, unauthorized procedures, bad checks, or misrepresentation-goods, quarters, services, or funds from University departments or student organizations or individuals acting on their behalf.

3.18 Theft, Property Damage, and Vandalism (235)

Theft, property damage, and vandalism include theft or embezzlement of, damage to, destruction of, unauthorized possession of, or wrongful sale or gift of property. E.g; A student has stolen money by breaking the door lock of his fellow mates whose occupants are away for vacation and enters inside the rooms.

3.19 Unauthorized Access or Trespassing (Section 237)

Unauthorized access or trespassing means accessing without authorization to the University/college property, facilities, services, or information systems, or obtaining or providing to another person the means of such unauthorized access, using or providing without authorization keys, access cards, or access codes. E.g; A group of students enter into the premises of a private individual without permission.

3.20 Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior means willfully disrupting University/college events; participating in a campus demonstration that disrupts the normal operations of the University and infringes on the rights of other individuals; leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled or normal activities of the University/college; engaging in intentional obstruction that interferes with freedom of movement, either pedestrian or vehicular, on campus; using sound amplification equipment on campus without authorization; or making or causing

noise, regardless of the means, that disturbs authorized University/college activities or functions.

3.21 Hazing

Hazing means any act taken on University/college property or in connection with any University/college-related group or activity that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of an individual (including, without limitation, an act intended to cause personal degradation or humiliation), or that destroys or removes public or private property, with ill-intention against fellow students, or disrespect for public property or under the influence of alcohol/drugs or anger.

3.22 Rioting

Rioting means engaging in, or inciting others to engage in, harmful or destructive behavior in the context of an assembly of persons disturbing the peace on campus, in areas proximate to campus, or in any location when the riot occurs in connection with, or in response to, a University/college-sponsored event. Rioting includes, but is not limited to, such conduct as using or threatening violence to others, damaging or destroying property, impeding or impairing fire or other emergency services, or refusing the university/college rules and regulations or direction of authorized college/university official(s).

3.23 Tampering with computer program (Section 472)

Tampering with computer program means, engaging oneself on altering, destroying data or hacks in computer system or computer program of the institute or another person or plants a virus in a computer without the right to do so. E.g; A student involved in hacking staff computer in order to get some information.

3.24 Violation of University/College Rules

Violation of University/college rules means engaging in conduct that violates University/college, college, or departmental regulations that have been posted or publicized, including provisions contained in University/college contracts with students.

3.25 Violation of National Laws

Violation of national laws means engaging in conduct that violates a National or state law, including, but not limited to, laws governing alcoholic beverages, drugs, gambling, sex offenses, indecent conduct, or arson.

3.26 Persistent Violations

Persistent violations mean engaging in repeated conduct or action in violation Student Code of Conduct and Ethics.

4. Definition of Sanctions

The following sanctions may be imposed upon students or student organizations found to have violated the College Rules & Regulations.

4.1 Warning

A warning means the issuance of an oral or written warning or reprimand to the offender.

4.2 Probation

Probation means special status with conditions imposed for a defined period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to violate any institutional regulation during the probationary period.

4.3 Required Compliance

Required compliance means satisfying University requirements, work assignments, community service, or other discretionary assignments.

4.4 Confiscation

Confiscation means confiscation of goods used or possessed in violation of University/college regulations or confiscation of falsified identification or identification wrongly used.

4.5 Restitution

Restitution means making compensation for loss, injury, or damage of University/college property.

4.6 Restriction of Privileges

Restriction of privileges means the denial or restriction of specified privileges, including, but not limited to, access to an official transcript for a defined period of time.

4.7 University/College Housing Suspension

University / college housing suspension means separation of the student from University/college Housing for a defined period of time on disciplinary ground.

4.8 University/College Housing Expulsion

University/college housing expulsion means permanent separation of the student from University/college housing.

4.9 Suspension

Suspension means separation of the student from the University/college for a defined period of time, after which the student is eligible to return to the University/college. Suspension may include conditions for readmission.

4.10 Expulsion

Expulsion means the permanent separation of the student from the University/college.

4.11 Withholding of Diploma or Degree

Withholding of diploma or degree means the withholding of diploma or degree otherwise earned for a defined period of time or until the completion of assigned sanctions.

4.12 Revocation of Admission or Degree

Revocation of admission or degree means rescinding a student's admission to a University College or revoking a degree already awarded by the University/college.

4.13 Interim suspension

The college may impose an immediate suspension on a student or student organization pending a hearing before the College Disciplinary Committee (CDC):

- i. to ensure the safety and well-being of the University/college community or to preserve/protect University/college property,
- ii. to ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being, or
- iii. if the student or student organization poses an ongoing threat of disrupting or interfering with the operations of the University/college.

During the interim suspension, the student or student organization may be denied access to all University/college activities or privileges for which the student or student organization might otherwise be eligible, including access to University/college housing or property.

5. Resolution of Student Discipline

In order to deal with issues related to violation of Student Code of Conduct and Ethics (SCCE) each college shall have the authority to manage its own system of resolving student disciplines in a fair and transparent manner.

Each college shall have the authority to refer cases to law-enforcing agencies where appropriate and necessary.

5.1 College Disciplinary Committee

Every college shall have a College Disciplinary Committee (CDC) constituted in their college consisting of appropriate faculty, staff and student representatives as members.

5.2 Initiations of complaints on violation of Student Code of Conduct and Ethics

Any university/college faculty, staff or student may file complaints on violation of Student Code of Conduct and Ethics to the University/college authority as soon as possible after the incidence is reported with proper details of the nature of offence, time, date and place of incidence to the College Disciplinary Committee (CDC).

Thereafter, the **College Disciplinary Committee** (CDC) shall issue a notice to the offender for resolution. The student's discipline may be resolved informally or formally.

5.3 Informal Resolution of Student Discipline

Every college shall have a system of resolving disciplinary problems informally without resorting to formal hearing processes. However, the student or the affected college, faculty, staff or student may choose to go for a formal resolution.

5.4 Formal Resolution of Student Discipline

Each College shall have a formal system of resolving student disciplines when the nature and/or degree of offence warrants formal hearing or if a complaint is not resolved informally and the student wishes to go for a formal hearing.

5.4.1 The Hearing Process

Hearings on all cases of violation of Student Code of Conduct and Ethics (SCCE) must be fair. A fair hearing process shall be carried out in a transparent manner and allow students/student organizations, for instances but not limited to, to:

- be informed / notified appropriately of the alleged violation and the underlying factual allegations along with the time, date and place of hearing;
- avail a prompt hearing;
- submit statements on the alleged violation;
- present their case, including witnesses if any;
- listen / know all evidence against them;
- question adverse testimony;
- receive written decision following the hearing;

5.4.2 Imposition of Sanctions

Imposition of sanctions mentioned under the “**Definition of Sanctions**” shall be guided by the nature and degree of offence. However, the college disciplinary committee shall ensure fairness on the imposition of sanctions to all similar cases irrespective of ethnic group, religion, gender and social status.

6. Appeal

Students shall be entitled to appeal on the decision made by the Disciplinary Committee in the hearing process. The Director shall make the final decision on the appeal submitted by the appellant. The Director may form an Appeal Committee to hear and make recommendations. The Appeal Committee may review the reason for appeal and outline procedure for hearing an appeal.