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सचिव
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सत्यमेव जयते

भारत सरकार
Government of India
शिक्षा मंत्रालय
Ministry of Education
उच्चतर शिक्षा विभाग
Department of Higher Education
21072, कर्तव्य भवन–2, नई दिल्ली–110001
21072, Kartavya Bhavan-2, New Delhi- 110001

D.O. No. 24011/2/2026-CDN

Date: 17th June 2026

Dear Ma'am/Sir,

As you are aware, the Ministry of Education has consistently accorded high priority to the emotional and mental wellbeing of students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In furtherance of this commitment, the Department issued the Framework Guidelines for Emotional and Mental Wellbeing of Students in Higher Education Institutions in July 2023 and has since undertaken several initiatives, including faculty capacity-building programmes and National Wellbeing Conclaves.

2. The Ministry had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), to inter alia review implementation of the wellbeing framework, and recommend measures for strengthening student wellbeing and suicide prevention mechanisms.

3. The Committee held extensive consultations with institutional stakeholders and submitted a comprehensive report containing observations and recommendations of relevance to the higher education sector. The report has been accepted by the Ministry, and extracts are enclosed for your consideration.

4. The Ministry believes that institutions of higher learning must pursue academic excellence with a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for students, in line with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020.

5. You are requested to examine the recommendations and review existing institutional systems relating to student wellbeing, mentoring, grievance redressal, hostel support, counselling services, faculty sensitisation, and suicide prevention. Institutions may also assess the implementation status of the 2023 Framework Guidelines and take appropriate measures to strengthen areas requiring attention.

6. I shall be grateful if the enclosed recommendations receive your personal attention and are suitably disseminated for implementation among the concerned functionaries of your esteemed institution.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

17/6/26

(Dr. Vineet Joshi)

Encl: As above

To

Directors of IITs IIMs, NITs, IIITs, IISc, IISERs, SPAs & other CFTIs

Vice Chancellors of Central University.

Recommendations of the Committee on Students' Well-being and Prevention of Student Suicide in HEIs

A. Shift from Reactive to Preventive Wellbeing Model

There is need to institutionalize a preventive, community-anchored wellbeing culture integrating academic, hostel, clinical, and peer systems. Ultimate objective should be to move beyond incident-driven responses to continuous risk scanning and engagement.

B. Strengthen Clinical & Human Resource Capacity

B.1 There is need to recruit additional counsellors and visiting psychiatrists, trained social workers for outreach and monitoring, dedicated hostel-level wellness professionals (24×7 residential) by earmarking hostels for each of the counsellors.

B.2 Also considering the stress level of the counsellors, there is need to protect counsellor wellbeing through workload rationalization and supervision.

B.3 All faculty need to be sensitized through workshops and most of the academic related issues of students handled at the faculty level rather than pushing all cases to counselling. Each faculty should be essentially a counselor. Only such cases which require attention of psychiatry, medical attention should be referred to counselling services keeping strict confidentiality and trust of students.

B4. Risk assessment of all known and vulnerable cases must be done and suitable measures to reduce the potential risk may be recommended to the administration.

C. Institutionalize Early Detection & Monitoring

C.1 Develop a secure, confidential, institute-wide early warning system linking hostel indicators, faculty observations, counselling data (with clear crisis-override protocols).

C.2 Begin mental health screening in the first year and ensure continuity across programmes.

C.3 This should be routine regular practice like health checkup and should not get stigmatized by bringing all students under its ambit. Early detection always helps.

D. Reform Faculty & Supervisory Structures

D.1 Introduce departmental climate committees to monitor supervisor–student relationships and research environments.

D.2 Assign faculty mentors to small groups (20–25 students) to build trust and informal support channels.

D.3 Clarify supervisory accountability and grievance-safe mechanisms for PG/PhD scholars.

E. Reframing Hostel Infrastructure as a Developmental System

E.1 Global best practices increasingly position residential spaces as extensions of the university's educational mission. This requires a transition from passive infrastructure to active developmental environments that integrate physical design, social programming, and emotional support systems.

E.2 Core Environmental and Social Interventions

A holistic hostel ecosystem must operate across both spatial design and daily lived experience:

Structured Socialisation

Regularly scheduled informal interactions—icebreakers, cultural nights, themed evenings, and floor-level gatherings—reduce anonymity and foster belonging. These should extend beyond formal auditoriums into everyday hostel spaces, making engagement routine rather than occasional.

Vibrant Activity Ecosystem

Dedicated and well-maintained spaces should include:

- Indoor recreation rooms (e.g., chess, carrom, board games)
- Outdoor play areas
- Cultural rooms for music (Western and Indian classical), dance, and artistic expression
- Access to visiting instructors (e.g., weekly dance, yoga, or music sessions)

E.3 Wellness-Oriented Spatial Design

The environment should incorporate quiet "mind spaces," green areas for informal conversation, open talking zones, and ambient elements such as soft corridor music and positive visual cues. These subtly regulate mood and promote psychological comfort.

E.4 Open Communication Channels

Systems such as suggestion platforms, weekly forums, and feedback loops ensure that student voices actively shape the residential environment.

F. Redefining the Role Of Warden as a Socio-Emotional Gatekeeper And Facilitator

F.1 In many institutions, wardens are underutilised confined to administrative or disciplinary roles. A holistic model redefines the warden as a mentor, facilitator, and socio-emotional gatekeeper operating across three core functions:

a) Observation – Identifying early behavioural changes such as withdrawal, irregular routines, or emotional distress
b) Validation – Providing informal, non-judgmental spaces for students to share concerns
c) Referral – Connecting students to professional mental health services when required

F.2 Operationalising the Role

The critical shift is presence over authority. Wardens should actively embed themselves within hostel life by:

- Spending time in hostels multiple times a week and sharing meals or informal coffee interactions
- Engaging in spontaneous corridor conversations and participating in games and cultural sessions
- Hosting weekly "warden-student dialogues"—open forums for concerns and leadership discussions

This transforms the warden from a distant authority into a relational anchor within the ecosystem.

F.3 Keeping in view the additional work load to the Wardens in addition to their normal routine academic activities, Assistant Warden with adequate qualification to deal with the routine administrative work of hostels, taking care of the wellbeing of the inmates of hostel may be considered for appointment under the supervision of the Warden of each hostel. Number of Assistant wardens to be appointed may be left to be decided by the Institute Administration.

F.4 Peer Networks and Personalised Community Culture

While institutional structures provide the framework, peer networks shape daily experience. Hostels function as micro-communities where students act as each other's primary emotional support systems.

Strengthening Peer Systems

Peer Ambassadors and Mentors: Selected students serve as "first responders" for social and emotional concerns, trained to identify early signs of distress and provide initial hand-holding support (not therapy).

Early Detection Culture: Both peers and wardens trained to recognise flag signs of distress, enabling early, low-intensity interventions.

Normalisation of Support: Informal conversations, shared routines, and late-night interactions reduce perceived isolation and lower stress responses.

F.5 Embedding Personal Touch in Institutional Systems

A key emphasis is the humanisation of hostel life—moving beyond systems into meaningful lived experiences. Micro-level community interventions include:

- Celebrating birthdays and personal milestones collectively
- Acknowledging family events (e.g., weddings, achievements)
- Creating shared rituals and announcements that foster belonging
- Encouraging collective participation in small social moments

These seemingly simple interventions address a critical gap: lack of personal connection, which is often a major contributor to distress in residential settings.

F.6 Integrated System: Collaborative and Compassionate Pathways

A truly effective residential ecosystem emerges from systemic integration across students, wardens, and institutional support systems.

Strategic Implementation Matrix

Systemic Feature	Impact on Well-being
Collaborative Spaces	Reduces loneliness; promotes spontaneous interaction
Structured Activities	Encourages engagement and routine stability
Warden Integration	Strengthens trust and early intervention capacity
Peer Support Systems	Enables early detection and emotional buffering
Personalisation Practices	Enhances belonging and identity validation
Stepped Care Protocol	Ensures clear escalation without stigma

A hostel is not merely a residence—it is a developmental ecosystem. When designed intentionally, it becomes a space that nurtures emotional intelligence, resilience, and community belonging.

The integration of infrastructure, human presence, peer networks, and personalised culture transforms hostels into therapeutic communities. The shift required is not only structural but philosophical: from managing residents to cultivating individuals within a community. An indicative layout is as below:

G. Address Structural Academic Stressors

G.1 Reduce overemphasis on Cumulative Performance Index (CPI) by meaningfully recognizing co-curricular engagement (credits, evaluations).

G.2 Integrate life-skills, resilience, physical fitness, and mental fitness modules into curriculum.

G.3 Strong orientation programme of universal human values of at least two-three weeks for setting the realistic expectations, developing collaborative camaraderie, life skills, physical activities, sports, yoga, meditation, music, art and once a year shorter repetition and revision of value system will go a long way in creating a wellness culture in the institute.

G4. Faculty also be trained in these aspects so that they become student friendly and empathetic.

G.5 Students engagement with the activities which enables learning life skills must be recognized, awarded and creditised. Institutions must impress upon the prospective employer during the campus recruitment to give due weightage to such students.

H. Development of University / Institution Wellness Indicator and its capture on the Ministry level Dashboard

H.1 It is felt appropriate that after issuance of Framework Guidelines for Emotional and Mental Wellbeing of Students in HEIs in July 2023 and several other measures taken by MoE like organizing capacity building Programs for faculty two National Wellbeing Conclave first in 2024 and 2025, there is a need to monitor its implementation by way of taking inputs on some key indicators. In this regard a University / Institution Wellbeing Indicator has been developed and attached at **Annexure.**

It is recommended that a Dashboard at the Ministry level be developed incorporating this indicator for capturing the details at regular interval.

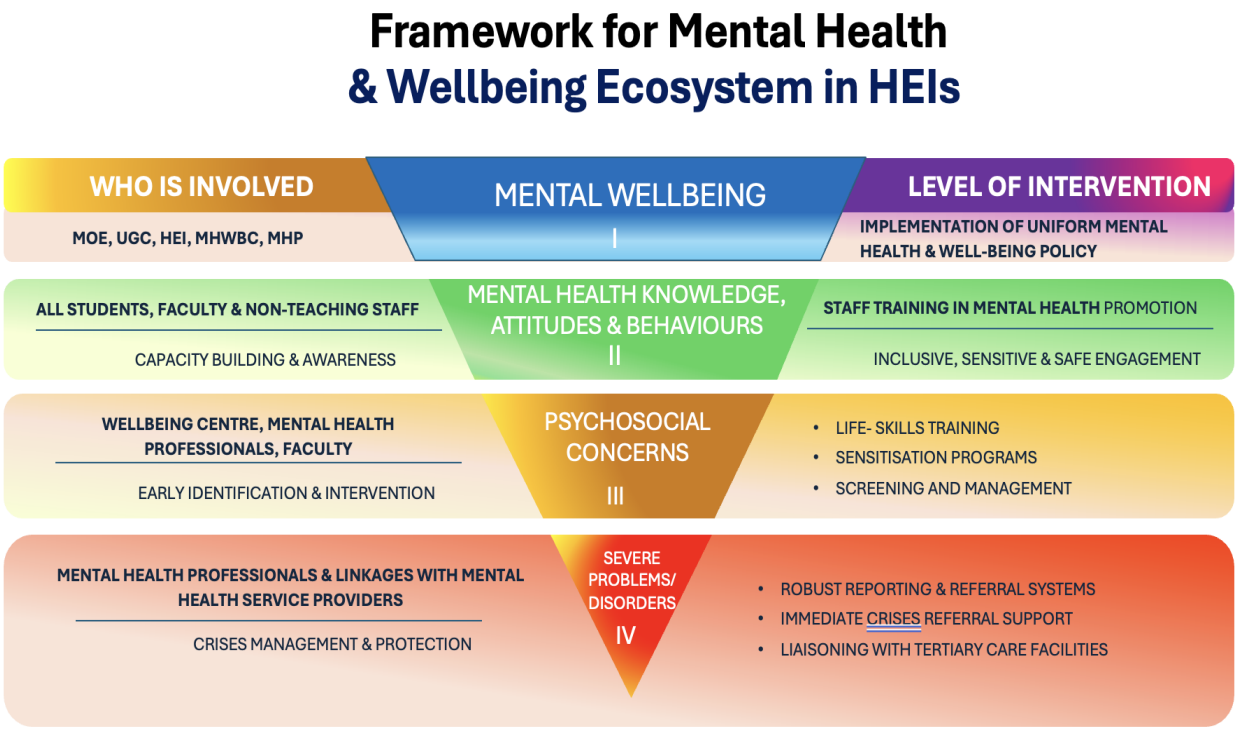
The result captured on the Dashboard need to be reviewed by the Committee designated by MoE.

I. Leadership, Accountability & Continuous Review

Mandate quarterly reviews by the Head of Institution on suicide prevention readiness and wellbeing indicators.

Conduct periodic third-party mental wellbeing audits to objectively assess institutional preparedness.

The doable, sustainable and measurable activities at various stages, level of intervention and the Stakeholders involved at different levels is depicted in the reverse triangle framework below:



ANNEXURE

University / Institution Wellness Indicators Checklist (UWIC) – National Self-Assessment Checklist

University / Institution Name and AISHE Number:
Type of University / Institution (Central / State / Deemed / Private):
State / UT:
City / District:
Assessment Period:

A. Leadership, Policy & Institutional Systems

Sl. No.	Indicator	Yes	No	Remarks
A1	University Student Wellness Committee (USWC) formally constituted	☐	☐	
A2	Roles & responsibilities of USWC clearly defined	☐	☐	
A3	At least one USWC meeting held in the reporting period	☐	☐	
A5	Qualified / trained university counsellor(s) available (full-time / part-time / shared)	☐	☐	
A6	Formal linkage with National Mental Health Helplines / iCall / Vandrevala Foundation / NIMHANS / Govt. hospitals / Non-Government Hospital	☐	☐	
A7	Approved Crisis Management and Student Safety SOPs available (including anti-ragging, POSH, hostel safety)	☐	☐	
A8	Documented referral pathway accessible to staff and students	☐	☐	
A9	Confidential, student-friendly counselling space available on campus	☐	☐	
A10	National and State emergency mental health helplines visibly displayed on campus (including hostels)	☐	☐	

B. Student Support Services & Wellbeing Coverage

Sl. No.	Indicator	Yes	No	Remarks
B1	Individual counselling sessions conducted regularly (including outreach to hostel residents)	☐	☐	
B2	Group / batch or department-based wellbeing sessions conducted regularly	☐	☐	
B3	Early identification and developmentally appropriate screening activities undertaken (including academic stress, exam anxiety, and hostel adjustment)	☐	☐	
B4	Peer support / life-skills programmes implemented (e.g., Peer Listener Networks, Student Buddy Systems)	☐	☐	
B5	Crisis cases (if any) managed as per SOPs	☐	☐	
B6	Follow-up and reintegration support provided where required (including post-leave-of-absence and hostel re-entry)	☐	☐	
B7	Measures adopted to prevent labelling, discrimination, or stigma related to mental health	☐	☐	

C. Capacity Building & Training

Sl. No.	Indicator	Yes	No	Remarks
C1	Faculty / teaching staff trained as mental health facilitators	☐	☐	Number trained: ____
C2	Non-teaching staff sensitised on basic mental health and referral protocols (including hostel wardens, security, and administrative staff)	☐	☐	
C3	Parent / Guardian awareness session conducted on student mental health and available support services	☐	☐	
C4	Student Socio-Emotional Learning and Wellbeing programmes conducted	☐	☐	
C5	Mental health orientation for new faculty / staff / students conducted (including at induction / orientation week)	☐	☐	
C6	Student awareness programmes implemented on substance use, cyber safety, digital wellbeing, academic pressure, ragging prevention, and social isolation	☐	☐	
C7	Periodic training session(s) undertaken by the counsellor	☐	☐	
C8	Other stakeholders sensitisation and training (Family / Alumni / Student Union Leaders / Hostel Wardens / Community Leaders / etc.)	☐	☐	

D. Monitoring, Documentation & Review Systems

Sl. No.	Indicator	Yes	No	Remarks
D1	UWIC / University wellness data submitted within prescribed timelines to relevant authority (UGC / State Higher Education Dept.)	☐	☐	
D2	Records maintained in anonymized and confidential format	☐	☐	
D3	Access restricted to authorized personnel only	☐	☐	
D4	Internal review of wellbeing data conducted	☐	☐	
D5	Data used for planning or improvement actions	☐	☐	

E. Inclusion, Safeguarding & Community Engagement

Sl. No.	Indicator	Yes	No	Remarks
E1	Targeted measures implemented for vulnerable* students (including first-generation learners, hostellers, and students from marginalised communities)	☐	☐	
E2	Reasonable accommodations provided**	☐	☐	
E3	Collaboration with health, student protection, and social welfare departments (including district hospitals and UGC grievance bodies)	☐	☐	
E4	Innovative wellbeing initiatives implemented	☐	☐	

E5	Best practices documented for sharing	☐	☐	

F. Hostel / Residential Student Wellbeing

Sl. No.	Indicator	Yes	No	Remarks
F1	Designated warden / residential counsellor available and accessible in hostel	☐	☐	
F2	Anti-ragging committee active and complaint mechanism accessible to hostel residents	☐	☐	
F3	Regular wellbeing check-ins conducted for hostel residents (especially first-year students)	☐	☐	
F4	Safe and accessible after-hours emergency contact protocol available for hostel students	☐	☐	
F5	Hostel induction programme includes mental health awareness and helpline information	☐	☐	
F6	Substance use prevention and awareness programme specifically conducted for hostel residents	☐	☐	

G. **Ethical & Student Protection Compliance Declaration**

Declaration	Compliance
Activities conducted in a student-centric manner	☐ Yes
Confidentiality and privacy maintained	☐ Yes
No punitive use of mental health data	☐ Yes
Actions aligned with approved SOPs	☐ Yes
Hostel-specific wellness provisions in place and periodically reviewed	☐ Yes

*Vulnerable students are those who, due to socio-economic disadvantage, lack of family or caregiver support, being away from home (hostellers), high or over parental / faculty expectation, disability, first-generation learner status, social marginalisation, or other adverse life circumstances, bear a disproportionate burden of mental health risk and face heightened barriers to accessing mental health care

**Appropriate modifications or adjustments provided to ensure equitable access to higher education for students with disabilities or mental health needs, without imposing disproportionate burden on the institution. This includes flexible examination provisions, extended deadlines, and accessible hostel facilities as applicable under UGC guidelines.