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The student experience throughout its life cycle: our duty of care

It is evident from recent published reports that a large proportion of students are suffering some sort of mental health post COVID-19. As university educators, we have an important job to look after the students in our care, the Gen Z students. Parents and families trust us to support these young adults as they navigate the exciting but challenging university experience. Caring for our students has to be our top priority. We need to create a campus environment where each student can thrive academically, socially, and personally. It is our duty to be there for the students and meet their needs, both in and out of the classroom. We must be attentive, supportive, and go the extra mile to help them succeed. This is more than just a job - it is a big responsibility that requires our full commitment. Our university students are counting on us to be mentors they can rely on during this transformative time in their lives. We must rise to meet this crucial obligation and ensure our students have the best possible experience.

Providing the best learning and life experiences for students remains a top priority. Supporting and enhancing the student experience throughout the student lifecycle - from initial contact through becoming alumni - is critical for success in higher education for both the student and the institution.

The student experience encompasses all aspects of student life, including academic, social, welfare, and support, with the academic experience at the core. It can be broken down according to Advance HE into four main stages:

1. The application experience - Interactions between potential students and the institution up to arrival.
2. The academic experience - Students' interactions with the institution related to their studies.
3. The campus experience - Student life not directly connected to study, which may include off-campus activities.
4. The graduate experience - The institution's role in assisting students' transition to employment.

Today, the student experience is greatly influenced by technology, especially social media. Modern students have different expectations and are more demanding. Universities are embracing a strong student-centered approach, allowing the "student voice" to help develop an exciting and modern student experience.

The student lifecycle at universities covers initial contact and recruitment, admissions and registration, orientation, academic support, counseling, learning experiences, financial aid and welfare, sports and community engagement, extracurricular support, career services, and alumni support. Examples include employability workshops, career fairs, cultural exhibitions, sports tournaments, alumni events, and student council-organized activities.

"The expert in anything was once a beginner." —Helen Hayes

Eid Mubarak

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