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F R I E N D S



SVAY RIENG UNIVERSITY

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME, KEY ACTION 2 CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Furthering International Relations Capacities and Intercultural Engagement to Nurture Campus Diversity and to Support Internationalization at Home

HOME AWAY FROM HOME PROGRAMME

1. Introduction

The FRIENDS project is funded under the Erasmus+ Programme for Capacity Building in Higher Education. It combines the efforts of 12 Asian Partner Country Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and four Programme Country HEIs from Europe. FRIENDS is built around the concept of internationalization at home and aims to build capacities for it across the five Partner Countries involved, namely Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

The Home Away from Home Programme is designed to meet the needs of international students and students with diverse cultural background studying at the 12 Partner Country HEIs. The Programme offers an integrated model for student care and support, in order to co-create a study experience that is welcoming, friendly and supportive for international students, as detailed in this document. This model has been formulated following the discussions and brainstorming sessions organized during the Home Away From Home Virtual Tea Party held on 8 October 2020, which engaged 49 staff and executive members from across the FRIENDS consortium.

The guidelines for international student care and support outlined in this document are to be endorsed and further adjusted by each of the 12 Asian HEIs involved to reflect their local context and specific needs.

2. Policies and Regulations at the HEIs

It is important to indicate that it is the responsibility of each institution to provide international students with a safe, secure and caring environment that support and nurture them as they strive to achieve their best during their studies.

At SRU Policies will be developed to first cater for Students with Disabilities and Students from Minority Cultural Groups. In the future International students will be covered if the Ministry agrees or if SRU has the authority to do so.

2.1. Designated staff

SRU will have two designated staff to offer support and guide students covered by the Policy. The staff members are available during the institution's working hours, and after hours as required. They handle welfare and safety matters with regards to these students, and can be reached via telephone, social media and/or other means of communication.

2.2. Emergency hotline 24/7

SRU has 2 dedicated staff members reachable 24 hours per day in case of emergency situations involving these students. In such cases, welfare and security staff are within reach in 20 minutes. One is from the International office and one from the English Faculty

2.3. Educational Documents

SRU Will provide assistance to ensure that all students that are covered by the policy have the required documentation to enable them to study at SRU.

2.4. Rights and obligations of the international students

All rights and obligations pertaining to local students also apply to international students. International students must follow all the academic regulations (e.g. cheating, plagiarism and/or copyright etc.). The HEI ensures that international students are appropriately informed about all academic and non-academic rules and regulations applying at the institution.

3. Student Care and Support

3.1. Academic support

Pre-arrival guidance

SRU will provide an English-language online guidebook, handbook, specific website or an English-language center, which includes useful information about preparing for studying at SRU and what to expect when on-site, including academic requirements and support. 1 Students covered can be provided with e-counselling or physical counselling prior to arrival, to inform them about their academic programme, department specializations, and other important details to be taken care of in advance.



Orientation programme

SRU provides an orientation programme (e.g. Orientation Week) to introduce students to the institution's academic services (e.g. library, information technology, academic and student services departments) and social and recreational activities; to facilitate initial academic advice; to inform international students about the institution's rules and regulations; and highlight the academic requirements for each level or plan of study. The orientation may include tours of the campus and facilities, visits to the local area, and so on. HEIs may advise the new students to arrive a few days earlier in order to participate in the orientation programme before their classes start.

Academic mentors/ advisors

SRU will ensure that there is an academic advisor or a designated staff member accessible to students on a daily basis, who can assist and advise students in matters related to their studies. The academic mentors/ advisors also monitor students' academic performance, their GPA and attendance, both to ensure that students maintain satisfactory course progress and to provide support in a timely manner if necessary.

Language support

A large number of students are non-native English or Khmer speakers and although they submit evidence of English language proficiency for admission purposes, many of them struggle with their studies in English and have difficulties in passing the English Exit Exam, which is required in many HEIs. This greatly affects both their academic and social adjustment. Therefore, the HEI provides academic English support, either in the form of self-study online language software or as specialized English language courses or tutoring sessions, including intensive test-focused classes. Local students with good English skills or student clubs may also help students increase their English skills or advance in any other academic subject they may encounter difficulties. In addition, the HEI provides basic national language classes to international students in order for them to be able to "survive" outside the classroom or campus.

3.2. Cultural and Social Integration

Buddy system

SRU will arrange student ambassadors and/or buddy programs to assist students. Local students can offer hospitality, arrange campus tours and organize visits around the city for the students but also help with practical issues like opening a bank account. International students may meet their buddies during an orientation or even before they arrive at the institution via

online communication. Buddies present the local environment, culture, traditions and cuisine to the new student.

Orientation and welcoming events

During the orientation programme, local cultures are presented and students are introduced to the social aspects of the institution besides its academic side. The orientation also introduces students to the rules and policies that can help them stay safe. A variety of events are held to orient and welcome the new students. A freshmen party or social event is arranged in order for the new international students to meet with their seniors and get acquainted with their new classmates.

Connect with institution staff

SRU will connect students with the related staff and offices, like international relations, student affairs division or other units related to their stay at the institution. In this way, the students will know who they can contact in case of social integration difficulties during their studies. International students may also get the opportunity to work as interns at institution's offices, like international relations, library, or computer labs.

Cultural activities

SRU regularly arranges cultural activities and events for students to mingle and share their own culture. The cross-cultural activities may be international days or festivals and can integrate cooking, singing and dancing. The multicultural events also encourage diversity on campus and offer the opportunity for international students to share their own traditions. SRU also involves students in the national traditional festivals and other religious festivals. Some of the cultural activities arranged by SRU to celebrate the cultural diversity on campus may be: Erasmus Day, International Day, Multicultural Night, Independence days (of other countries), Chinese New Year, International Students Evening, International Food Festival, Valentine's Day, Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben etc. Moreover, the diversity of cultures on campus may be also displayed during an International Sports Day or Competition, which gathers students to compete in traditional and regular sports. The activity can be conducted as cooperation between various student clubs at the HEI and may also include animated traditional games.

3.3. Campus Life, including Facilities and Accommodation

SRU will aim to support international students on campus to enjoy the best student living experience by providing quality facilities, as well as comfortable accommodations, to help

them get the best out of campus life. Reliable on-campus management and maintenance services should also be available.

- FRIENDS Teahouse
- prayer rooms for Muslims/multi-faith rooms
- libraries offering online books and academic journals
- English speaking zones/ other foreign language speaking zones
- student clubs and societies free campus-wide Wi-Fi
- campus bookshop, coffee shop and canteen

Further on-campus support may be offered by the International Relations Office, Student Affairs Office and the Faculty of Arts, Languages and Humanities

3.4. On-campus assistance

SRU has a designated staff to support the international students during their studies. Therefore, a staff member is assigned to offer guidance and assistance to international students for visa and other immigration matters. During Orientation, Immigration Officers may be invited to speak on the immigration procedures and to answer to eventual questions from international students. The HEI may arrange regular visits by immigration officers to offer services on campus for the institution's international students and staff.

Information support

SRU will convey information towards the international community through an institutional English language website. In addition, each faculty or college may provide an English version of their website containing essential academic information for international students., Facebook and Telegram will also be used, all being provided in English language. Designated staff and English-speaking students will also keep international students advised on any changes that may affect them through changes in Government policies at a National or Provincial level, changes made by SRU'S board or any other changes that may impact on them.

Approved by the management of SRU this 22nd day of April 2021