

7.2.2. Best Practice – II

VISTAS' Vision for Students' Holistic Development

MAPPING OF BEST PRACTICE - II WITH MISSION OF VISTAS



BEST PRACTICE -II

1. Title of the Practice

VISTAS' Vision for Students' Holistic Development

2. Objectives of the Practice

To fulfill the VISION of the VISTAS, the University strives to instill Holistic Development in its students as one of its best practices.

The objective of holistic development is to foster the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional capacities of students and preparing them to tackle challenging situations effectively.

3. The Context

Holistic student development refers to an approach in education that focuses on nurturing a student's growth and well-being in all aspects, beyond academic achievement. It encompasses physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and moral development, aiming to prepare students for success in all dimensions of career.

This approach recognizes that students are multifaceted individuals with diverse needs, interests, and talents. Therefore, it emphasizes providing a 360-degree education that addresses not only cognitive skills but also social and emotional skills, physical health, creativity, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and other aspects of personal development.

4. The Practice and Evidence of Success

The Practice

VISTAS has initiated the following practices for the holistic development of its students to ensure intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth.

VISTAS' VISION FOR STUDENTS' HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Value Added Courses (VAC)
- Soft skill & Placement training
- Invited Expert Talks from Academia & Industry
- AVISHKAR - Intra University Technical & Science Expo
- Vels Research Fellowship (VRF)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Swachhata Pakhwada
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
- Village Adoption
- Family Adoption



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Yoga
- Fitness & Sports Facilities
- Health & Wellness Program

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Student Mentoring (Mentor-Mentee system)
- Counselling to students through student counsellor
- Alumni Knowledge Sharing

I. Intellectual Development is a key focus at VISTAS, and the university offers several initiatives to foster academic growth, practical skills, and research capabilities among students.

- a. **Value Added Courses (VAC):** VACs provide the students with opportunities to gain additional knowledge and skills beyond their regular curriculum. These courses are intended to improve students' employability by providing training in specialized areas relevant to their fields of study from people with extensive experience in their own field.
- b. **Soft Skill & Placement Training:** Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership are essential for success in the workplace. VISTAS soft skill and placement training programs equip students with these vital skills, helping them become trained professionals who are ready for the job opportunities.
- c. **Invited Talks of Expert from Academia & Industry:** Inviting experts from academia and industry to deliver talks and workshops provides students with valuable insights into current trends, future focus, research findings, and industry best practices. These interactions expose students to diverse perspectives and help them stay updated on the latest developments in their fields of study.
- d. **AVISHKAR - Intra University Technical & Science Expo:** AVISHKAR provides a platform for students to showcase their research outcomes, innovations, and technical skills. This intra-university expo encourages students to engage in hands-on learning, collaborative projects, networking and creative problem-solving.
- e. **VELS Research Fellowship (VRF):** The Vels Research Fellowship are provided to meritorious students which helps to alleviate financial burdens for full-time research scholars, allowing them to focus more on their research work without worrying about financial constraints.
- f. **VELS Success Day:** To recognize and reward the outstanding students at VISTAS, the institution annually celebrates VELS Success Day. Recognition and rewards to encourage the students a positive reinforcement, motivating them to keep striving for excellence in their academic endeavors. Knowing that their efforts and accomplishments are valued can motivate students further to push themselves harder and set higher goals with confidence.

II. Social Development: VISTAS is actively engaged in social development initiatives aimed at contributing to the well-being and progress of communities and sustain livelihood.

- a. **Swachhata Pakhwada:** Swachhata Pakhwada is a nationwide campaign aimed at promoting cleanliness and hygiene practices. The students participate in activities such as cleanliness drives, awareness campaigns, and waste to wealth management initiatives help foster a culture of cleanliness and civic responsibility within the university and surrounding communities.
- b. **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan:** Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is a flagship program of the Government of India aimed at fostering rural development through university engagement. NSS Units in VISTAS participate in UBA and contribute to the holistic

development of rural areas by leveraging its expertise, resources, and knowledge to address local challenges and promote sustainable development.

- c. **Village Adoption:** VISTAS demonstrates its commitment to community engagement and social responsibility by adopting villages. The students engage themselves in healthcare initiatives, vocational training programs, and environmental conservation efforts in the adopted villages.
- d. **Family Adoption:** The Vels Medical College and Hospitals under VISTAS adopts various families in nearby villages in Manjakaranai Taluk. Each undergraduate medical student is allotted with five families. The students conduct medical survey about the members of the family and prepares a clear medical history and monitor through “**Health Card**”. On weekly basis they meet the family members, monitor their blood pressure levels, counsel them to be compliant in taking their medications. Health checkup camps are organized for them on regular basis to provide necessary treatments.

III. Physical Development: VISTAS focus on physical development underscores its commitment to promoting holistic well-being among its students and faculty.

- a. **Yoga:** Integrating yoga into the curriculum or offering yoga classes provides students and faculty with opportunities to enhance physical fitness, flexibility, and mental well-being for supporting stress free education.
- b. **Fitness & Sports Facilities:** Providing access to fitness centers, sports facilities, and recreational spaces encourages physical activity and exercise among students and faculty.
- c. **Health & Wellness Programs:** Organizing health and wellness programs educates the university community about the importance of physical health and provides resources and support for maintaining well-being.

IV. Emotional Development: VISTAS initiatives for emotional development demonstrate a commitment to supporting students' mental well-being and personal growth.

- a. **Student Mentoring (Mentor-Mentee System):** The mentor-mentee system pairs students with faculty members who provide constant guidance, support, and advice. Mentors offer academic assistance, career guidance, and emotional support, helping mentees navigate challenges and develop important life skills. Besides the regular discussions, the following are also taken care with the students - Review of performances in exams, general behavior, regularity to the institute and any specific complaint / grievances.
- b. **Counselling Services:** Providing access to student counsellors allows students to seek confidential support and guidance for personal, academic, and emotional concerns. Counselling services promote emotional well-being, self-awareness, and effective stress management among students.
- c. **Alumni Knowledge Sharing:** Alumni share their career trajectories, lessons learned, and advice for personal and professional development, inspiring students and offering valuable perspectives on emotional resilience, perseverance and goal setting.

5. Evidence of Success

- Each student is empowered with additional knowledge through 2 to 3 value-added courses in addition to their degree certificate, which plays a key role in enhancing job opportunities. During the last five academic year, **484 value-added courses** were offered, and 50,836 students benefited.
- The students develop better communication skills and self-confidence to face the challenges of career through soft skill and training programs. **17 Soft skill**, Technical and Aptitude training programs were conducted in last 5 years. **603 companies** were participated in placements & **17,872 students placed**.
- The invited talks arranged with the experts every year enrich the knowledge of the students. **14,925 students** benefited by approximately **276 Invited expert talks** delivered in different programs.
- Students showcase their patentable ideas at the **Intra University Technical & Science Expo - AVISHKAR**. Each year more than **300 entries are received out of which 50-55 best ideas** are showcased before the juries. The best innovations are awarded with cash prizes and processed for publication of patents. More than **50 student ideas have published as patents** so far.
- VRF has been given to **64 full time Research scholars** with a stipend of **Rs 20,000 / month** and **contingency grant of Rs 10,000/ year**. Besides VISTAS offers financial incentives for research papers published and Patents granted.
- **VELS Success Day** – VISTAS encourages the toppers and rank holders of the various disciplines. During every academic year, around **500 students received various scholarships** under VSAT scholarship (10% to 100%), Vels Alumni scholarship (10%), Merit scholarship (10% to 100%), First Graduate scholarship (10%), Ex-Service man scholarship (10%) and Sports scholarship (100%).
- The University organizes a number of extension activities to promote institute neighbourhood community to sensitize the students towards community needs. The students of our university actively participated in **505 social service activities** in the last five academic years leading to their overall development.
- NSS Units in VISTAS participated in Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) and contribute to the holistic development of rural areas by leveraging its expertise, resources, and knowledge to address local challenges and promote sustainable development. **18 UBA programs** were organised in the last five years by our **3485 NSS volunteers**.
- VISTAS demonstrates its commitment to community engagement and social responsibility by adopting five villages in Chengalpet & Kancheepuram district (Kovilambakkam Gram Panchayat, Nanmangalam Gram Panchayat, Vengaivasal Gram Panchayat, Polichalur Gram Panchayat, Thiruneermalai, Panchayat)
- The Vels Medical College and Hospitals under VISTAS adopts various families in nearby villages in Manjakaranai Taluk. Each undergraduate medical student

is allotted with three families. Totally **1,200 families** were adopted by **400 medical students** and an average of **12 visits** were performed per year.

- International yoga day was grandly celebrated every year. In addition, **15 different yoga** related programs were conducted & **593 peoples** were benefitted.
- Access to well-equipped gyms, playing fields, and recreational areas encourages students to engage in regular physical activity, which is essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Our students bagged **7 international awards, 27 national awards, 20 state awards and 18 regional awards** in various sports events conducted last five academic years.
- **Varun Thakkar**, a dedicated student of VELS University, made headlines by representing India in sailing at the **Tokyo 2020 Olympics**. Competing in the challenging 49er class, Thakkar teamed up with his sailing partner to showcase their skills on one of the world's most prestigious sporting stages.
- Organizing health and wellness programs educates the university community about the importance of physical health and provides resources and support for maintaining well-being. Several health and wellness programs were conducted for the students and staff benefit during last five academic years.
- Personalized student mentoring with a ratio of **1:20**, fostering individual growth. **11.46 lakhs** mentor-mentee meetings were conducted by **3,542 mentors** for **62,393 students** in the last five years which is a unique one in nature of monitoring and career guidance.
- Counselling services promote emotional well-being, self-awareness, and effective stress management among students. VISTAS appointed the female counsellor for motivate to empower female students and faculty members, address all issues related to women to facilitate enabled working environment in the campus.
- Alumni shared their career trajectories, lessons learned, and advice for personal and professional development, inspiring students and offering valuable perspectives on emotional resilience, perseverance and goal setting.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Problems Encountered:

1. **Participation Limitations:** The increasing prevalence of sedentary lifestyles and screen time among the student community lead to the reluctance of involvement and co-operation.
2. **Parental Convincing:** Parental involvement and encouragement play a crucial role in student's holistic development. Few challenges have been encountered in getting female students' parents to support outreach programs; however this has been improved through regular interactions with parents.

3. **Balancing Schedules:** Difficulties in managing academic and social activities, especially for science and computer science students due to intensive curricular schedules.
4. **Communication Barriers:** Initial communication challenges in career guidance for students educated in regional languages.

Resources Required:

1. **Sensitization Lectures for Students:** Need more sensitization lectures to educate students on the importance of social extension activities and their societal impact.
2. **Faculty Sensitization:** The Faculty members and supporting staffs need to be sensitized in emphasizing the importance of these activities for student's holistic development by Heads of Departments and senior Faculty members
3. **Motivation Initiatives:** Motivating the students to participate in large numbers in Wellness programs including fitness classes & health screening, leadership programs, Programs and events that promote inclusivity and multicultural understanding and collaboration with NGOs and Government agencies for community projects.

VISTAS is dedicated to overcoming these challenges and continuously creating an environment that nurtures all aspects of practices to ensure the holistic development of every student.

VISTAS is committed to the holistic development of its students, focusing on intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth.

Through diverse programs, it equips students with the tools for personal and professional success.

By fostering resilience, leadership, and civic responsibility, VISTAS shapes well-rounded individuals ready to tackle modern challenges with confidence, transforming the future leaders of the country, one student at a time.