

The Creative Sanctuary Accord: Framework for Mind and Medium

Jawahar Lal Nehru Government College of Fine Arts

1. Rationale: The Psychological Vulnerability of Creative Labor

Unlike conventional academic fields where research exists independently of the scholar, a fine arts education demands that the creator manifest their internal world, emotional history, and raw vulnerabilities into tangible material. This distinct pedagogy introduces unique psychological pressures:

- **Identity Fusion:** The frequent blurring of boundaries between the critical evaluation of the artwork and the intrinsic value of the self.
- **Creative Exhaustion:** The psychological paralysis resulting from sustained, high-stakes aesthetic and conceptual output.
- **Sensory and Physical Isolation:** Fatigue stemming from extended periods working with volatile mediums, complex machinery, or repetitive physical postures.

This Accord establishes the institutional safeguards required to protect our student artists' creative resilience and personal sovereignty.

2. Structural Calibration of Studio Culture

The physical environments where art is generated—studios, darkrooms, workshops, and galleries—require specific structural parameters to protect individual wellbeing.

A. The Intent-Execution Split in Evaluations

To protect the emotional safety of students during critiques, evaluation panels must adhere to a strict objective boundary:

- **Decoupling the Persona:** Jurors must explicitly separate a student's personal narrative, identity, or expressed trauma from the technical execution, composition, and conceptual rigor of the work.
- **The Right to Alternative Presentation:** A student experiencing acute social anxiety or panic states may formally request a "Closed Review." This allows the student to present their portfolio privately to a panel of two faculty members rather than before a full audience of peers.

B. Workspace Boundaries and Physical Reclamation

- **Mandated Studio De-escalation Zones:** For departments utilizing heavy solvents, printing chemicals, or intense physical labor (such as Printmaking and Sculpture), a mandatory 15-minute open-air intermission is integrated

for every 2 hours of continuous studio work to clear physical and cognitive fatigue.

- **Preserving the Rest Cycle:** To dismantle the counterproductive culture of sleeplessness, all department studios will close strictly at 5:00 PM. Students are not permitted to use workspaces as overnight quarters.
- **De-escalated Mondays:** To ensure weekends are used for genuine rest rather than high-stress marathons, no final project submissions or formal jury reviews may be scheduled on a Monday. They may be scheduled for Saturdays instead.

3. The Institutional Care & Public Health Linkage

We will address psychological distress by optimizing our structural workflows and establishing direct pathways to established public health networks.

1. Faculty Care Representatives (Orientation)

Two designated faculty members within each department are trained in basic psychological first-aid. They serve as the initial, non-clinical point of contact for students navigating academic or emotional strain.

2. The 7-Day Creative Buffer (Accommodation)

Department Heads are authorized to grant a one-time, 7-day extension per semester for major studio submissions upon a student submitting a confidential self-declaration of psychological distress.

3. Public Infrastructure Integration (Clinical Pathway)

The college maintains a direct referral protocol with the psychiatry department of the nearest Government District Hospital and regional units of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP).

4. National Network Activation (Immediate Relief)

The toll-free contact information for the national Tele-MANAS helpline is permanently displayed prominently on the website and College Notice Board.

4. The "Art-Buddy" Network & Collective Care

The collective community forms our strongest support system. We utilize must internal networks to maintain a healthy social fabric across all disciplines.

- **Studio Pairings:** At the start of the academic year, students should be paired within their respective workshops. These pairs look out for one another's ergonomic habits during long projects, note sudden changes in daily attendance, and offer mutual support during rigorous submission cycles.
- **The Shared Material Bank:** To remove the stress associated with acquiring varied artistic mediums, departments maintain a "Shared Material Box." Students can voluntarily contribute leftover clay, canvas scraps, charcoal, or

pains, allowing any peer to access these resources anonymously for their coursework.

5. The Portfolio Firewall (Confidentiality Safeguard)

The Privacy Directive: All interactions, self-declarations, medical leaves, or referrals initiated under this framework are kept strictly confidential. These records are isolated entirely from a student's academic transcript, portfolio files, and graduation certificates, ensuring a student's personal health history remains completely invisible to external critics, residency boards, or future employers.

6. Oversight and Evolution

To ensure this framework remains highly responsive, a **Joint Creative Wellness Committee**—consisting of elected student representatives and faculty advisors—will meet at the conclusion of each term to evaluate studio workflows, assess the impact of jury schedules, and recommend adjustments based on student feedback.

The Student Wellbeing Cell

- Dr Kamayani Bisht (Principal)
- Dr Anjana Bhardwaj (DSW)
- Dr Pooja Bhardwaj

PEERS

- Nikhil Ranout
- Katyayini
- Jannat

Access the **Tele MANAS** helpline by dialing toll-free helpline number
1800-89-14416 or short code 14416.

Objectives

- **1. Decouple Artistic Evaluation from Personal Worth**

To establish evaluation standards that strictly separate a student's personal identity, vulnerability, and emotional expression from the objective, technical assessment of their artwork during critiques and juries.

- **2. Dismantle Counterproductive Work Practices**

To actively counter the "burnout culture" inherent in fine arts education by implementing structural limits on studio hours, establishing critique-free rest periods, and integrating physical breaks to protect students' sleep and physical health.

- **3. Provide Low-Barrier Academic Protections**

To offer immediate, non-punitive academic relief—such as confidential submission buffers and private jury options—that allow students experiencing acute psychological distress or creative blocks to recover without academic penalty.

- **4. Integrate Direct Pathways to Public Healthcare**

To establish a seamless, confidential routing system that links students to free, professional clinical resources, including regional District Mental Health Programmes (DMHP) and national tele-consultation networks (Tele-MANAS).

- **5. Foster a Culture of Mutual Creative Care**

To cultivate a resilient, peer-supported campus environment where students look out for one another through structured studio pairings and reduce material-related stress via communal resource sharing.