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| Version number: | 1.1 |  |
| Policy owner: | Director of Students, Support and Information Systems |
| Effective date: | 01/03/2021 |
| Review date: | 30/06/2023 |

Policy on the role of the Academic Adviser

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| Date of Issue | 28 February 2021 |
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| This is a new policy |
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| Equality Analysis |  |
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| Adopted by Academic Board |  |
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| LT&SE Team |  |
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**University of Chichester Policy on the role of the Academic Adviser**

# Statement of intent

The University believes that its students should have regular opportunities to review the academic, personal wellbeing and employability aspects of their development as they progress through their programme. The Academic Adviser role complements both direct programme delivery by academic staff and specialist support by various student services. It involves systematic contact throughout their degree with an appropriately supported member of academic staff. This is to ensure that appropriate advice and support are provided, student concerns are quickly identified and addressed, and causes of student withdrawal are minimised.

# Student entitlements

All students of the University of Chichester are entitled:

1. To take part in an induction process which prepares them for their programme of study and gives information concerning both their programme and the support systems that are available. As a minimum this should include the following information:
* A statement that each new student is assigned an Academic Adviser on arrival, and where information about who this is can be found; for example, programme notice boards or Moodle.
* A description of how students meet their Academic Adviser for the first time, and the nature of arrangements for subsequent meetings; the description might include reference to a booking system for meetings, regular tutorial hours, or the use of email for setting up meetings or resolving issues online.
* A description about how Academic Adviser arrangements differ as students progress from year one of the programme; for example, while arrangements might be formally timetabled for first year students, second or third-year students may be encouraged to take more responsibility for maintaining regular contact.
* A statement about the availability of Academic Advisers; individual tutors should publicise times when they are available and times for meetings; for example, by use of Moodle and/or the use of social media.
* Information about other sources of guidance and advice within the Department such as Head or Director of Department, Year Tutor, Programme Leader, Department and Programme Administrators, to whom they may speak as an alternative to the Academic Adviser if they so wish.
* Students should be told where they can find out about the University-wide specialist support services to whom they may speak as an alternative to the Academic Adviser if they so wish. These include Student Support and Wellbeing services, Careers and Employability, Academic Skills Advice and the Accommodation Service. Students should also be made aware of the Students’ Union and other professional services support.
* A statement of reassurance about the confidentiality of meetings with Academic Advisers, with the proviso that matters that have to be dealt with more formally may need to have confidentiality extended.
1. To have access to the above information in a variety of formats, such as the programme handbook, online and an introductory letter/email from the Academic Adviser to tutees.
2. To have a member of staff (not necessarily a tutor on the student’s programme) regularly available to offer Academic Advising support, as defined in 1 above. This should normally be one individual for the duration of an academic year or the entire programme, based in the student’s own department, although there may be occasions where it would be more appropriate for a student to change their Academic Adviser for academic reasons. Programme or Year Leaders should give consideration to how this may be facilitated within their Academic Department.
3. As appropriate, to have personal development planning (PDP) and the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)[[1]](#footnote-1) or equivalent incorporated into the personal, academic tutoring session
4. To have access to Academic Adviser support from their allocated member of staff as a formal session at least once per semester as a minimum. This should be scheduled in a way appropriate to the specific mode of learning and may include comparable arrangements for those programmes associated with professional standards/requirements.
* For first year (L4) students the first meeting should be scheduled to take place within 3 weeks of arrival with another meeting scheduled to take place to discuss progress based on marks from the first semester
* Meetings with second years (L5) should be scheduled within 5 weeks of their returning
* Arrangements for students in their third or subsequent year may be more flexible, reflecting other sources of academic support available e.g. for final year dissertation.
1. To be given reasonable (at least a week) notice of their scheduled academic advisory sessions, with reasonable efforts being made to ensure students attend the meetings to which they have been invited. Some Academic Departments highlight such sessions to students at the commencement of each Semester.
2. To request an ad hoc tutorial meeting where the student has grounds for seeking advice from their Academic Adviser.
3. To have in place procedures which will be followed if they fail to attend scheduled tutorial meetings (for example, what efforts will be made to contact them, whether the Programme Leader or Year Tutor will be alerted if they are not responding, and what checks will be made on their academic performance). Tutorial meetings are normally managed by Academic Advisers and do not form part of the timetable. They are therefore not usually monitored via the SAM (Student Attendance Monitoring) system and so are not subject to the same follow up procedures.
4. To have in place procedures which will be followed if they fail to attend scheduled programme sessions (eg lectures, seminars, workshops) as identified by the SAM system or other established attendance monitoring processes. These procedures are documented in the ‘Student Attendance and Absence Policy’. In some Departments the Academic Adviser will be responsible for following up students so identified. In other Departments this will be the responsibility of the Programme Leader or Year Tutor.
5. To have any reasonable request for a change of allocated Academic Adviser considered seriously, and an alternative proposed where possible. Programme or Year Leaders should give consideration to how this may be facilitated within their Academic Department.
6. Where necessary, to be encouraged to self-refer by their Academic Adviser to one or more of the specialist Student Support and Wellbeing services or other appropriate professional department such as Finance, Student Records or Academic Quality and Standards Service (AQSS).

# Staff entitlements

**Staff acting as Academic Advisers are entitled:**

1. To have a clear specification of the Academic Adviser role (see statement of intent), including how the role fits with other student support roles within the Department and University.
2. To have access to a designated lead person responsible for personal, academic tutoring within the Department (normally the Programme Leader or Year Tutor) for advice on referral issues and crisis situations.
3. To be provided with training where necessary to assist with the specified role. For example, procedures to be followed if students fail to attend scheduled programme sessions (eg as identified by the SAM system) or tutorial meetings, including the efforts to be made to contact the student.
4. To receive guidance on what records should be kept to record the meeting and how to record other information as agreed between the student and adviser/tutor.
5. To decline to act as Academic Adviser to an individual student in exceptional circumstances.

**Staff responsible for leading on academic tutoring (normally the Programme Leader or Year Tutor) within the Department are entitled:**

1. To have specialist support and training from the Student, Support and Information Services Directorate on the boundaries between Academic Advising and specialist support.
2. To have information updates from Student Support and Wellbeing on serious matters relating to student safeguarding and welfare, including Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise.
3. To receive training on dealing with crisis situations as appropriate.

# Commitments relating to Academic Adviser Support

Academic Adviser support is not a ‘stand-alone’ add-on, but is intertwined with academic support and guidance delivered through the Academic Department structure. The delivery of Academic Adviser support will reflect the spirit of equal opportunities through the following commitments.

Academic Departments will:

1. Ensure that the mechanisms for delivery of Academic Advisory Tutorial support will be fair and non-discriminatory.
2. Ensure that Academic Advisory Tutorial support is delivered sensitively, objectively and in a non-judgmental manner, recognising and responding to a diversity of needs and situations.
3. Provide opportunities for students to give feedback on personal support issues and take steps to ensure that students are aware of these opportunities such as ‘Student Voice’ consultations having a remit for Academic Adviser support.
4. Ensure that those following combined programmes are not disadvantaged within the tutorial system and that there is an overview of the student’s experience. It is expected that one Department will lead and this should be agreed between the relevant Programme Leaders/Year Tutors.
5. Ensure that Academic Advisers are well informed in relation to cultural diversity and other equal opportunities issues.
6. Inform students with disabilities of appropriate University support services, as part of the Department’s overall information to students (see section 2.a. and b. above).
1. [The HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Report)](http://help.chi.ac.uk/hear-higher-education-achievement-report) is a University-verified, electronic document which records broader achievements in addition to programme and module details and results. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)