

THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISER

A Guide for Staff

2026 / 27



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Preface

Academic Advisors are essential to student success in universities, providing guidance on academic planning, course choices, and career goals. They help students navigate challenges, access support services, and stay on track to complete their studies, contributing to both student achievement and progression. The purpose of this booklet is to offer advice and guidance to this role.

This guide is reviewed annually and supplemented by a range of resources and policies from professional service departments across the University.

In line with contemporary practice, this guide also draws on 'Higher Education Personal Tutor's and Advisor's Companion' (Lochtie, Stork & Walker, 2022), which provide practical examples and sector-wide insights for advising and tutoring roles.

1. Introduction

This guide is intended to offer practical advice and information, particularly for colleagues new to an Academic Advisor role.

We hope it will support you to:

- Build confidence as an Academic Adviser and enhance your ability to support students effectively;
- Become familiar with how the system works in your own department;
- Explore common issues students may raise, along with strategies for responding to them;
- Understand the range of support available for students through Student Support Services, professional services, and external agencies; know when and how to refer students appropriately.

2. What do Academic Advisers do?

As an Academic Adviser, your role is essential. You are a key point of contact between the student and University. You can offer specific support at an individual level that isn't sometimes possible within

large teaching groups. It is important that you understand what is expected of you but also how you'll be supported in the role.

Students arrive at university with a wide range of attitudes, prior learning experiences, expectations, and cultural and/or socio-economic backgrounds. Some students may have found academic success straightforward prior to attending university, but struggle to adapt to a more independent learning environment. Alternatively, some students may have experienced academic challenges in the past and arrive with low self-confidence.

In the early months of an academic year, many students will assume that everyone else is coping and that any difficulties they experience must be evidence that university isn't right for them.

As an Academic Adviser, you support students to put such anxieties into perspective, help them adjust, set realistic expectations, consider effective study habits, and become confident in their academic journey.

You may also provide continuity of support throughout a student's time at university and beyond. Academic Advisors are often asked to provide references or informal advice long after graduation, particularly if they are a part of a subject-specific network.

3. Implementation of the Academic Adviser role in your area

Things to discuss with colleagues

You may find it useful to discuss the following questions with your colleagues:

- *How are students informed about what to expect from their Academic Advisor (AA)?*
- *Are students normally allocated an AA for the duration of their programme, or is this assigned annually, or to a specific year group?*
- *How many students are AAs usually responsible for?*
- *Who is the designated member of staff responsible for supporting AAs within the area?*

It can be helpful to share your experience and suggestions for improving procedures and guidelines with your colleagues.

We expect the Academic Advisor system within your department to be reviewed regularly and for each student to have a named AA shortly after starting their studies.

Specific information for students should be outlined in the programme handbook; which is also reviewed and updated annually.

If you have any further questions about what is expected of you after reading this guide, please discuss these with your Head of School, Executive Dean, line manager, or an appropriate colleague.

4. Managing expectations

The role of an *Academic Adviser* can be interpreted differently by students and staff. When such expectations are not aligned, it can lead to confusion, frustration, or dissatisfaction on both sides. Reflecting on your own assumptions and considering if these are appropriate in such contexts, is an important first step.

Reflect upon own experience

- a) Think about your own experience as a student and the academic/pastoral support you received:
 - What was the most positive aspect?
 - What advice do you still remember?
 - What could have been improved?
 - What qualities did your academic advisor bring to the role?
- b) How would you like your students to perceive you as an Academic Adviser? *For example, a mentor, coach, supervisor...*

There are no right answers here. It matters to be reflective and develop awareness of your preferred tutoring style. Understand where this might conflict with student expectations, departmental norms, or the demands/needs of a particular situation.

Further guidance on setting boundaries, expectations and rules is provided later in this guide.

5. First meetings

All new students will be allocated an Academic Adviser at the start of their programme, so it is important to plan for an introductory meeting as soon as you receive your list of new tutees.

Ideally, this first session should be scheduled into your programme's induction week for all tutorial groups. This is a good way to introduce yourself and to set the scene for future meetings.

If these sessions are not yet a standard activity within your department, try to arrange a brief group meeting with your new students during induction week.

To help your group explore any questions and anxieties they may have, try to structure the discussion.

For instance:

- **Talk in pairs, then share with the group:** You could ask the students to talk in pairs for a few minutes about their expectations of the programme or starting University. Together they could make a list of any questions they have. Pairs can share with the group to compare their lists. Encourage them to share ideas on how to resolve any common issues. This reassures them that they aren't alone in their concerns, and that their fellow students will be a source of support.
- **Encourage self-reflection:** Encourage students to recall previous experiences of transitions (such as starting secondary school or a new job) and discuss the strategies that were most successful in helping them to settle in. This reassures them that they already possess the resilience and skills needed to navigate change successfully.
- **Acknowledge overwhelm:** Be open to answering any direct questions students may have related to the programme but keep in mind they are likely processing a lot of new information. Acknowledge this with them and aim to keep explanations clear and concise. Reassure them you will revisit and clarify important

information as they settle in. This helps to reduce anxiety about asking the same questions later.

The Programme Handbooks may include several other ideas for working with first year groups to help them find out about the programme and each other.

If you are unable to schedule a group tutorial at this stage, then send a welcome message to each one of your tutees, introducing yourself and inviting them to meet you individually. Let them know where and when they can find you, whether you offer regular 'drop-in' sessions and how they should sign up for an appointment.

Individual tutorials

The first 1:1 tutorial meeting is an important opportunity to start building a comfortable and supporting working relationship. It should set the tone and establish trust and open dialogue.

Here's some suggested conversation starters you could use:

- *Tell me something about yourself / what would you like me to know about you?*
- *How have your first few days/ weeks been?*
- *What's going well and what's been challenging?*
- *How does the University differ from your school or college so far?*
- *What support would you like from me as your AA?*
- *Have you considered joining any SU societies or groups?*
- *Is anything worrying you or that you are unsure of?*
- *What do you think will help you settle in and enjoy Uni life?*
- *What personal resources do you have that might help you to settle in here and enjoy yourself?*
- *Have you thought about what you might want to do after university?*

- *What action could we set for you to focus on before our next meeting?*

You may only use some of these questions or none at all, the goal is to show you are approachable, interested and able to support them.

In the early stages, it is helpful to agree ground rules and explain the purpose of the tutorial system. Students should understand that your primary role is supporting their overall academic progress and personal development. You might also wish to offer help when personal issues arise. (See page 113 on 'Personal Development Planning').

It can be useful for both of you to take notes of your discussions and any agreed actions. More on this on page 10 in 'Written records and confidentiality'.

6. Location of tutorials

It is always important to consider the space where you will hold your tutorial. It is important students feel respected, safe, and able to talk freely, particularly if discussing confidential matters.

If you share an office with colleagues, you might need to book an alternative location for a 1:1 meeting. If using your own room, consider using a 'meeting in progress' sign on the door to deter interruptions. You may also wish to minimise the risk of being overheard.

Additionally, offer your students a clear time frame that you have available and consider organising a gap between each student appointment.

If you do have any concerns about suitability of a space, discuss with colleagues to help you identify practical solutions. For instance, you could keep the door open, use a teaching room or one with a glass panel rather than a small, enclosed office, or arrange for a colleague to be nearby.

Using Microsoft Teams for Tutorials

It can be helpful to offer alternative methods to meet with students for their tutorials. Microsoft Teams can provide a flexible,

accessible, and secure platform. When using Teams, be sure to consider the following:

- Have you clarified the mode of communication: will you be using video call, audio call, or perhaps chat?
- Have you established the time frame by using the calendar function to schedule the meeting?
- Will you be in a quiet, private space to ensure background noise and interruptions are minimised?
- Are you using headphone to protect confidentiality where possible?
- How can you minimise risk of the meeting being recorded?

7. Written records and confidentiality

At the end of any tutorial, it is good practice to make brief notes that summarise the discussion and any agreed actions. These notes can help you track topics and progress over time.

Encourage students to keep their own notes of the summary and agreed action points. This encourages responsibility and self-managing behaviours shifting dynamic from a passive 'parent/child' to collaborative adult/adult relationship. Additionally, it supports students develop their problem-solving skills and autonomy.

Take care to handle tutorial records correctly. Notes should be factual, concise and securely stored; in line with the Universities data protection and confidentiality policies. Avoid including explicit information related to sensitive personal details unless relevant.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

How confidential are Academic Adviser tutorials expected to be?

It is important that students feel they can trust you enough to talk freely, but it is equally necessary to be clear about any limitations on this. The importance of clear guidelines on information about disability is discussed in the next section.

Similar principles should apply to any other personal information disclosed in tutorials. If it may affect the student's ability to fulfil the

demands of their programme, encourage them to let relevant staff know about it or ask if they would like you to do this on their behalf, but don't do so without explicit consent. Whatever is agreed about disclosure to staff, you should of course never discuss information from individual tutorials with other students without explicit consent.

You should not feel obliged to keep confidential any information where there is a genuine concern for the student's safety (for instance where they have expressed thoughts of suicide) requiring notification to a colleague in Student Support Services or to the safeguarding lead within your department. There is a section on difficult situations and referrals on page 32.

8. Students under 18 years

Each year a small number of students will be under 18 at the start of their undergraduate programme. These students need particular care in academic and other settings such as University managed accommodation. Departments will be informed if a student is under 18 at the start of their programme, and your Head of School or Programme Leader should notify you if one of your tutees is under 18.

In whatever capacity staff and students engage with under 18s they must be aware of the special duty of care which must be provided to them. Please see the University Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Policy which can be found under the 'Academic, Admissions and Student Support Policies' on the main Policies web page:

<https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support>. Section 6 addresses further issues in relation to under 18s.

9. Students with disabilities or medical conditions

9.1. Reasonable Adjustments

Many students may have a disability, health condition (including mental health conditions) or a specific learning difference (such as dyslexia) which requires reasonable adjustments to how they are taught and/or assessed. These adjustments are intended to ensure

they have equitable access to learning and can achieve their academic potential.

If during the UCAS process a student shares information about their disability, or condition, they will be referred to an appropriate advisor within Student Support: i.e., Disability Advisor or Mental Health Advisor. Following this, any identified 'reasonable adjustments' will be agreed and documented on a Student Additional Requirements Agreement (SARA). Reasonable adjustments will be agreed by academic areas and circulated to relevant academic colleagues.

The agreed reasonable adjustments will also be logged on a student's ChiView student page. You can access this information by clicking on the 'details' link where the 'Disability / Add Info' is 'Y'. (Please note, if you do not have the 'details' link you may need to request this permission from your Head of School).

The information will not contain details of the student's disability but will simply log their teaching and learning requirements and their exam and assessment adjustments. There are also two tiles on your ChiView page 'Student Additional Req' by course and by module which list all students with reasonable adjustments by course and year or by module.

Requirements for adjustments to teaching and learning may include physical access requirements, adjustments to handouts and course materials and/or human/technological assistance.

If you have any questions about this process or how best to ensure students' adjustments are provided, please contact the Disability Service within Student Support via email: disability@chi.ac.uk.

9.2. Tutorials

It is especially important for students with disabilities to meet their Academic Adviser early in the programme. This allows for timely discussion of any support needs or adjustments to teaching and/or assessments, and to establish the relationship for ongoing progress reviews.

However, it is important not to assume that all students with disabilities experience difficulties. Some may have effective strategies in place prior to entering higher education and may simply

benefit from reasonable flexibility and clear communication with academic staff.

You should be notified by your Department Administrator if any of your tutees has a SARA, but it is good practice to check a student's record on ChiView for Staff to see if the Disability Flag is visible.

Practical considerations and inclusive communication

Be proactive. Check that you are aware of any individual students with declared disabilities, so that your initial communications are accessible and appropriate. For instance, consider whether a student with a visual impairment be able to use a sign-up sheet on your door, or whether a deaf student may lip-read or use the support of a sign language interpreter during your meetings.

Try to create an environment that students feel comfortable to share any new or emerging conditions; such as a long-term illness or mental health difficulty. Provide clear, supportive guidance for how students can seek further assistance from Student Support services if appropriate.

If you have questions or uncertainties about advising and supporting students with disabilities, discuss these with your Head of School or Programme Leader and other colleagues.

Student Additional Requirements Agreement (SARA)

It is important that any agreed reasonable adjustments documented in the SARA are provided. In your regular meetings with the student, you should check that the adjustments are in place and that they are receiving the required support they need to make the most of their time at university.

If the student has concerns about a lack of adjustments or are not receiving the ones recommended in the SARA, you should try to identify why this is the case. If it is something that can be implemented by the department then you should raise this within your team or with the appropriate colleague. If, however, it is because you feel the adjustment is not possible for you or your department to achieve then you should discuss this with the Head of School or Programme Leader as they would have agreed that this could be achieved. It would be necessary then to discuss this further

with the student and the service which raised the SARA in the first place (Disability, Wellbeing etc).

- If work experience or a placement is included as part of the programme the student may also require 'Reasonable Adjustments for Work Experience' (RAWEx). It is helpful if you can encourage the student to ensure that any such adjustments have been identified and documented by the relevant Student Support service and that their Placement Coordinator has been notified.
- If you need specific advice, talk to the Disability Service within Student Support by email: disability@chi.ac.uk

9.3. Student disclosures of disability

Legislation and institutional guidelines protect equality of educational opportunity but have shifted the balance between confidentiality and disclosure. For instance, under the Equality Act (2010), if a student discloses a disability to any member of staff, then the institution as a whole is considered to be aware of this and could therefore be in breach of its duties if reasonable adjustments are not made in response. The Equality Act defines a disability as "a physical or mental impairment" that "has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". Please note that the disclosed disability does not always need to be medically diagnosed. The focus is on how a student's condition affects their daily functioning, not just whether it has been formally diagnosed.

As an Academic Adviser you need to be aware of what to do if a student declares a disability during a tutorial or develops an impairment or physical or mental health condition during their studies. Where this happens, you should explain to the student that this information will need to be shared with relevant colleagues in the Disability Service. You should then send the student's details to the service at disability@chi.ac.uk.

If the student refuses permission for the information to be passed on, you are advised to keep a record of this and explain to the student that we are obligated to share this information with relevant

colleagues as the University has a legal duty to ensure, once a disability or medical condition is known, that reasonable adjustments are implemented in support of them. Although these situations are rare, prior to sharing student details with relevant colleagues, further support should be sought from senior Student Support Services colleagues (i.e. the Student Support Services Manager or Director of Student Services & Digital Experience). These conversations can take place, initially, without disclosing the student's name to protect confidentiality. The student should be kept informed that these conversations are taking place. In these cases, the specific details of the disability do not need to be shared, just the adjustments or accommodations that will be made in support of them.

10. Arranging regular appointments

The University expects that all students are entitled to at least two scheduled meetings per academic year with their Academic Adviser to review progress. It is your responsibility to arrange these meetings.

Best practice is to schedule tutorials early in the programme for all students and follow up on non-attendance. Early contact can help identify concerns before they escalate.

If a student:

- *Has not signed up or has missed a tutorial,*
- *Hasn't responded to an invitation,*
- *Is causing concern due to low attendance or performance,*

You should follow up and consider discussing next steps with your colleagues and/or Student Support Services.

Benefits of scheduled reviews

Particularly in the early stages of the programme, it is best practice to schedule meetings for all students and follow up any non-attendance. Research into retention has shown that an early appointment or informal discussion encourages a relationship and structure for progress reviews and support needs and helps identify issues related to engagement and retention early on.

Another advantage is both Academic Adviser and student can prepare in advance. You can look over the student's assessment results and attendance, and they can be encouraged to identify recent successes and areas for improvement, to help focus the discussion. The introduction of personal development planning (see next section) can help to provide a useful focus and framework for these regular reviews.

Group Tutorials

Consider holding a group tutorial at key points in the academic year when many students are facing common issues, such as examinations, module selections, end of final year. Group tutorials can be time-efficient and help to normalise common concerns.

When arranging structured tutorials, consider:

- *When might be the best times in the year for these two regular meetings?*
- *What topics typically arise at each at each stage of your programme?*
- *Could group tutorial sessions be helpful at key points?*
- *Are there opportunities to promote student-led support or peer groups?*
- *Would it be useful to invite colleagues from Student Support: such as Wellbeing, Student Health, Student Money, Student Engagement, or Careers to support group discussions?*

11. Personal Development Planning

It is strongly encouraged that university students in the UK engage in a process known as personal development planning (PDP). PDP has been implemented by academic areas in different ways depending on the requirements of different programmes. Some programmes have introduced PDP within specific modules, while others have embedded it across the programme and/or through the tutorial system. Check with your Head of School or Programme Leader if you are not sure how PDP is expected to link to the tutorial system.

PDP is designed to encourage students to take more responsibility for themselves and their own development, and to make connections

between their programmes and life beyond the University. It can also foster a more pro-active and mature approach to academic work, reducing support needs and making tutorials more purposeful and enjoyable for you both. Encouragement from staff is an important success factor, so it is helpful to invite students to go through their achievements at tutorials as a starting point for your discussion. However, they also need to understand that ownership and responsibility for their personal development planning belongs with them.

A pre-arranged agenda can form part of regular tutorial meetings at each stage, dependent on the programme structure. For instance, following on from the suggested topics for a first meeting a scheduled review towards the end of Level 4 might include attendance or discussion of coursework results using feedback from module assignments to help the student identify areas for development. Later meetings might focus on such topics as module choices, preparation for placements, dissertation subjects and career plans. Careers and Employability are key and should be embedded into a student's programme.

12. Listening and other tutorial skills

Two essential skills for an Academic Adviser are listening and asking open-ended questioning. Instead of asking *"Is everything OK?"* try *'how are you finding the different aspects of the programme?'* to encourage meaningful conversations.

At the start, set a brief agenda together, perhaps ensure you discuss highlights, concerns and agreed actions. Give student time to explore issues and to reflect. Avoid offering advice too readily. Listen carefully and summarise what you heard and how you witnessed the student express this information. Summarising back to the student shows you listened and provides opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings.

You may wish to use open questions such as:

- *What's working well/not working?*
- *What would you like to change?*
- *What options could we consider?*

- *Tell me more about....*
- *What would help you feel better about...?*

Towards the end, agree realistic action points and, if appropriate, a follow up meeting. After each tutorial, take a few minutes to reflect and make notes.

Reflections and development

If you wish to improve your approach, you may consider discussing anonymous cases with colleagues; sharing ideas and approaches. It may be possible - with advance permission - to record some tutorials. Both you and your students can benefit from this reminder of your discussions, and it may improve your practice.

It may be possible (with student permission), to observe a colleague's scheduled tutorial, or ask them to observe one of yours. This can broaden your experience and help you identify the kinds of tutorial contributions which seem most effective.

13. Unscheduled meetings

Even with scheduled tutorials, students may occasionally need to see you at other times. Some departments use online booking systems or designated 'drop-in' hours. Check what the usual system in your department is.

If you notice students regularly request unscheduled meetings, consider the following:

- *How are students able to make appointment with you?*
- *Is it straightforward and accessible for part-time, remote, or disabled students to contact you?*
- *Could your booking system be improved?*
- *Do you prefer Teams, email, or phone? (note: avoid giving out personal contact information)*

Aim to be accessible but set boundaries. Being available at all times is not sustainable. Consider:

- *How you can handle unplanned requests*
- *How to recognise a real emergency*

- *Do students feel welcome to see you with general queries, not just problems?*

Find a balance between being supportive and encouraging independence. Discuss options with colleagues and reflect on how your approach aligns with the expectations covered in this guide.

14. Non-attendance at sessions or tutorials

14.1. Non-attendance at programme sessions

Student absence (particularly from two or more scheduled sessions) is viewed as a sign that a student may potentially be experiencing some difficulty. Your department should have clear mechanisms for responding to student absence based on the [Student Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy](#). You may find this responsibility within your department lies with Academic Advisors and if this is the case, you should familiarise yourself with the policy and procedures.

The SAM (Student Attendance Management) system produces more accurate registers of student attendance at timetabled sessions held face-to-face as well as indicating how many times the student has been absent which will facilitate decision making. Online/remote sessions should also have attendance registers. However, your personal knowledge of the student is also an important factor in evaluating the level of non-attendance or non-engagement. In any case, all non-attendance or non-engagement should be followed up with the student.

14.2. Non-attendance at tutorials

Whilst Academic Advisers should recognise and encourage students to be independent and in control of their learning, you have a responsibility to ensure that general non-attendance and non-attendance to any tutorial is followed up. Non-attendance could be due to forgetfulness, illness, or student misconceptions that non-attendance isn't a 'big deal'. There is always a real chance, however, that their absence is due to a more serious matter.

Your department should have guidelines on monitoring attendance at tutorial sessions and general attendance and provide clarity on how to handle this. However, it is expected that all non-attendance

should be followed up with the student. Good practice is to record dates and note all the attempts made to contact the student via may email, Teams, telephone, and/or face to face interactions.

If no response is forthcoming and there is reason for concern, you should discuss the matter with your Programme Lead or Head of School and, if relevant, complete an online referral to Student Support services (using the [referral form](#)). A record of actions agreed and taken should be kept.

15. Academic Processes

If a student is experiencing a serious physical or mental illness, bereavement, or another situation which could have a substantial negative academic impact, they may need to apply for an extension and/or submit a Mitigating Circumstances claim. In many circumstances an extension will be more beneficial for the student as they might just need a little more time to complete assessments. Should the situation be more complex, a student might need to apply for Mitigating Circumstances.

Extensions

An **extension** is extra time to complete an assignment. The regulations for Undergraduates are:

At the discretion of the Programme Leader/Year Tutor, students may be permitted an extension. A formal record of the extension and the reason it was agreed must be kept. Extensions will not be granted for the submission of assignments beyond the date of the next Board of Examiners for the programme. As an Academic Adviser you may well be consulted but the decision rests with the Programme Leader.

The Programme Leader can determine the length of an extension at their discretion, but this should not exceed that which allows the mark to be submitted to the next Board of Examiners.

The student should discuss their needs for an extension with their Programme Leader. The Programme Leader might decline the request if the reason for non-completion of the work is not deemed sufficient. The Programme Leader may alternatively recommend that an extension will not give the student a reasonable chance of success and they should apply for mitigating circumstances. They

might also provide an extension but additionally advise the student to apply for mitigating circumstances as a precaution.

15.1. Mitigating Circumstances

On many occasions an assignment extension would be more appropriate and supportive offer. However, if something has seriously affected a student's performance, whether in a single examination or over a period, students should apply for mitigating circumstances - preferably after discussion with you, the Programme Lead, or Student Support.

Guides on how to apply, eligibility, and appropriate supporting evidence (including a downloadable FAQ booklet) can be found on the University web pages:

<https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/education-policy-quality-and-partnerships/mitigating-circumstances/>

Students apply for Mitigating Circumstances through their ChiView for Students page. The online form is submitted to the Mitigating Circumstances Team and will require supporting documentary evidence.

A list of acceptable supporting evidence is given in the FAQ document which includes a medical certificate from their GP or letter from an authorised member of Student Support Services such as a Mental Health Adviser or Nurse Health Adviser. Please note there **must have been prior engagement** for a member of Student Support Services to write a supporting statement. **Academic Advisers are advised to read this document regularly** as information can change each year.

All claims are reviewed in advance of the Examination Board to decide if they are well-founded and the Board will only be informed of the decision itself so that the details are kept confidential. The Examination Board may take this decision into consideration when making judgments about progression.

15.2. Intermission

Sometimes a student may wish to "pause" their study. This is called an intermission. Intermission is a supportive action that provides an

approved break from study for up to two years. Students can only intermit while they have scheduled taught study. A student might need to apply for intermission due to health reasons, personal reasons, or other factors that suggest taking a break might be beneficial. They can apply online via ChiView.

After taking a break, they will return at the beginning of the semester/block of study that they left, unless they are retaking the year (which is only permitted if all other attempts to progress have been exhausted and must be approved by the board of examiners separately to the intermission). Since this will be in a new academic year, this is likely to be with a new cohort. For example, if they last attended in April of semester 2 before going on intermission, they would return at the beginning of semester 2 in the next academic year.

Academic tasks cannot be set during an intermission. If the student will trail any assessments or placements, deadlines will need to be set after their return.

You can find guides that contain more information and guidance regarding intermission on the Student Support website:

<https://wellbeing.chi.ac.uk/engagement/>

It is good practice to signpost students considering intermission to Student Support to ensure the root cause of reason to intermit is addressed and to encourage ongoing support options.

Your Responsibilities

Once as student has submitted an intermission request to Student Records, the form is passed to the academic programme for approval. The programme coordinator, and AA would have input on the intermission being approved. Be sure to respond swiftly to any intermission requests sent to you by Student Records.

If the student has not discussed the intermission with you prior to you receiving the request, it may be beneficial to meet with them to discuss the intermission and plans to support them with their academic study when they return. If there are any further concerns, please contact Student Engagement (contact details on page 38)

If you are unsure on any processes, please enquire by emailing Student Records (sturecords@chi.ac.uk)

Conditions of return from intermission

Some students intermit following complex health or financial situations. In some cases, the programme and/ or Student Support colleagues might be keen to ensure a student has engaged with a set of conditions that will enhance the success of any return to study. Conditions to return are not essential, nor is any action plan for a student on voluntary intermission; however, the student and/or Student Support Advisor may feel setting conditions would be a supportive action. Please note, any actions you set must be SMART and you will need to monitor this and then inform Student Records if the student can be invited to re-register. Please direct any questions about conditions to Student Engagement (studentengagement@chi.ac.uk)

Returning from intermission

Prior to a student's return to study, it is good practice for an Academic Advisor to make contact and offer a tutorial focused on return to study plans. You may wish to include a Student Support Advisor in these meetings to ensure all the appropriate and available support in place for the student.

Mitigating Circumstances vs. Intermission

Students with extenuating circumstances affecting their study usually either intermit or submit a claim for mitigating circumstances, depending on the status of their studies. Mitigation is submitted if a student has attended the module but cannot submit the assessment; intermission is requested if a student has not attended/is not attending enough of the module to be able to pass the assessment. To explain further:

- If a student has attended most of their modules, but cannot do the assessment, a claim for **mitigating circumstances** should be considered with an understanding this may delay the assessment to a later date.
- If a student has stopped attending their modules (particularly if they are close to de-registration), they should consider **intermission** and return at a later date to resume/restart studying, potentially picking up any outstanding assessments upon return.

15.3. Change in Registration

Course Transfer

A student may be able to change to a different programme of study. However, any change will be dependent upon admission requirements for the new programme, the availability of the programme including timetabling constraints, and the amount of credit achieved at the point of transfer.

Please advise them to check with the new Academic Department whether this option is available before completing a Change in Registration request.

Change in Mode of Attendance

Students can elect to slow down or speed up their pace of study by switching between full and part-time study.

It is good practice to consult with Student Records colleagues to ensure your guidance is correct and to discuss any complex situations.

If a student would like to both intermit and change either course or mode of attendance, the change in registration should be completed first.

If a student wishes to change both their mode of attendance and course they can select “Change your Course AND Mode of Attendance” on the form.

Financial Liabilities

Students need to carefully consider whether there will be any financial implications in changing mode of study (e.g. tuition fees, council tax) and are advised to discuss this with the Student Money Advisors (contact details on page 37).

Financial liability is based on last recorded attendance at a timetabled session (last date of attendance). Fees will follow the [Student Tuition & Accommodation Fees Policy](#).

Please note that there are financial consequences for students with extended non-attendance, which may result in an “overpayment” to be immediately repaid by a student to their loan provider. This may

result in the student owing a large sum back to their student loan company.

It is essential that you inform Student Records (sturecords@chi.ac.uk) and Student Support as soon as you are aware a student intends to intermit or withdraw. This helps us to prevent the student from unknowingly owe any funds back to their loan company.

Students are only entitled to a certain number of years of funding. Therefore, it is important to signpost any student considering intermission to their student loan company to discuss. Student Money is also available to provide further guidance (see their contact details on page 37).

If you know a student lives in halls but will intermit or withdraw; please prompt them to inform the university accommodation/allocations team that they will be intermitting (or withdrawing) to minimise rent liabilities.

16. Common concerns

In addition to developing your tutorial approach, it's helpful to anticipate the concerns students are most likely to raise. Be prepared with practical suggestions and relevant contact information. Don't hesitate to seek additional support from Student Support Services.

See below for advice for common student concerns:

16.1. Problems with academic work

Worries about programme choice

It is common for new students to question whether they are on the right programme, especially during the first month when they are settling in. Often, the doubts may be related to other anxieties and will be resolve with reassurance and time. If concerns persist, you can signpost them to the Careers and Employability Service, who offer impartial guidance and help student explore alternative options. Contact details can be found on the staff intranet, Moodle, and at on page 36.

Difficulties with particular modules

Encourage students to discuss concerns directly with the module leader. If they are hesitant, talk through the issues with them, help identify the root of concern without inviting criticism of colleagues. Root concerns might be: inappropriate module choice, specific academic difficulty, interpersonal issues, etc. Encourage students to explore possible solutions for themselves, as this will build confident and resilience.

General academic skills

Some students may struggle with skills such as essay writing, or exam preparation. The [University Study Skills pages on Moodle](#) offers resources including workshops and timetables for the study skills workshops offered on both sites. These resources are designed to complement programme-specific guidance on academic study.

You can contact the Academic Skills Adviser for help arranging tailored workshops for your tutorials or programme (contact details on page 36).

Time management

Time management is a frequent concern- particularly with first year students. Many students are adjusting from being closely guided by parents or teachers prior to university. Help them to create a sensible study plan at the beginning of every Semester but avoid taking on a 'parental' role. [The University Study Skills Moodle pages](#) also have advice on time management and organisation.

If a student mentions they have always struggled with time management, prioritisation of tasks, and/or regularly experience procrastination; you may also wish to signpost them to discuss these concerns with Student Support.

Interpersonal and social difficulties

Disagreements can arise during group projects or collaborative learning activities. Stay neutral, listen carefully and help students towards a compromise (if appropriate). As with other transferable skills, the ability to work well with others takes practice and some support. You are welcome to seek advice from Student Support (see page 37 onwards) if

you perceive the issue to be more complex or rooted in personal rather than academic matters.

Disabilities and specific learning differences

If you suspect a student may have an undiagnosed condition such as dyslexia or ADHD, encourage them to contact the Disability Service for support as the student may be entitled to additional funding, support, or specialist skills tuition. See page 37 for more information about the service and for contact details.

General advice:

- **Be proactive:** familiarise yourself with common student challenges and prepare supportive responses.
- **Explore programme-specific support** that is available so you can signpost students effectively. Don't forget: [University Study Skills Moodle page](#)
- **Keep track of recurring concerns** and consider building some subject-specific study skills into first year modules or offer optional sessions in collaboration with Student Support colleagues.

16.2. Financial difficulties

Financial pressures are increasingly common among students and can significantly impact academic performance. Stress, anxiety and a need to work in part-time employment can reduce students' capacity to engage fully with their studies, sometimes resulting in underachievement or failure.

If a student shares with you information about their financial difficulties, you should refer them to the Student Money service, who can offer relevant advice, and possible assistance in the form of emergency loans or funds from the University Support Fund. Student Money contact details can be found on page 36.

As an Academic Advisor, your role is to offer a sympathetic and non-judgemental ear. You can support the student by encouraging them to reflect on whether certain types of spending / budgeting might ease their situation.

Many first-year students struggle to find a balance between study, work, and social life. A gentle reminder to prioritise academic commitments may be helpful.

16.3. Personal problems

If you have built up a good relationship, it is quite natural that students will see you as their first port of call if they have any personal problems. Although you should expect to give advice on academic matters, do **not** attempt to take on the role of a personal counsellor.

When a student comes to you with a serious medical, mental health, financial or other personal problem, listen sensitively to what they are telling you, but **avoid the temptation to offer well-intentioned but non-specialist advice**. Instead use open questions to help the student clarify the issues and encourage them to contact the appropriate Student Support Service.

You can use the [Student Support Services Referral Form](#) to share your concerns with Student Support.

Please note Wellbeing Advisers are usually busy with appointments and cannot offer an immediate response. If the concern is urgent, please call for First Aid (01243 81) x **6363** or consider calling NHS 111 or 999 if relevant.

See the section on 'Sources of specialist advice and support' from page 36 and keep the contact details easily available for reference in tutorials.

16.4. Complaints about a programme of study or a service provided by the University

If a student comes to you with a complaint about a programme of study, a university service, or a member of staff, you should advise them to discuss the matter with AQSS (acadvice@chi.ac.uk) as they manage the formal complaints procedure.

Students can also seek advice or assistance from the Students' Union particularly if they are unsure how to complain, if they are unsure who to complain to, or need help in making their complaint. You should also direct the student to the [Academic Regulations, Section 3 - Part 2](#)

Confidentiality can be an issue and if you are unsure what to do in the given circumstances you can seek advice from your Head of School, Programme Leader or from the Director of Student Services & Digital Experience or one of the Student Support Managers.

17. Advice on difficult situations and referrals

Supporting students through emotionally challenging situations can be complex. If you are unsure how to proceed, staff within Student Support are available to advise you. All information shared is treated as confidential within data protection guidelines.

You can submit concerns using the [Wellbeing Referral form for Staff](#) even if you are uncertain whether Student Support is the right service. This ensures your concern is seen and directed appropriately. Please also familiar yourself with the University's [Safeguarding and Prevent Duty policy](#) which provides details on how to raise concerns with appropriate senior colleagues if you have a either a safeguarding or Prevent concern, requiring the University to act.

A list of services and contact details can be found on page 36 onwards.

Responding to challenging situations

The following advice is based on Counselling Services guidance for handling difficult or emotionally intense interactions with students:

- **Remain calm and listen.** If someone is upset or angry, let them speak without interruption. Try to stay calm yourself. Ensure you understand their concerns. Ask them for clarification in a calm and respectful manner. Avoid making judgments or offering immediate solutions.
- **Acknowledge their emotions.** Show empathy and validate their feelings; *'I can see you are upset / angry, and I would like to help if I can'*. Remember their emotional reaction is unlikely to be personal to you but will be a result of accumulated stress and pressures.

- **Create a supportive environment.** Offering them a glass of water, cup of tea or coffee (if appropriate) will help calm the situation and provide you some time to consider the best way forward.
- **Share support service information.** Show them information about the services that you feel might be helpful and, if appropriate, offer to support them to make an appointment - be sure not to book the appointment yourself, and never without their consent. Students are far less likely to attend appointments made by others. However, if you are worried that they may avoid seeking the necessary professional help and the matter seems urgent, offer the appropriate contact details so they can make initial contact immediately (or as soon as possible).
- **Be honest about your time.** If you are unavailable to deal with the situation immediately, be honest and propose an alternative time: *'I do want to support you but I'm due in a lecture shortly. Can we meet later at X time, when I can give you the time you need?'*
- **Be honest about your expertise.** If you don't know how to help, be honest and offer to find someone better placed to support: *'I'm not sure I'm the best person to help, but I can find out who is. Give me some time to make enquires; I'll keep your details confidential at this stage.'* It is important that they don't feel you are trying to offload them and their problems, but that you are genuinely concerned to ensure they get the most appropriate support.

After a referral

- **Arrange a follow up.** Support the student by following up to check on their wellbeing and if they have any issues seeking support to let you know. This reinforces your genuine concern for their wellbeing.

You may not receive any feedback from Student Support about the outcome of a referral, as all professionals are bound by confidentiality. You might wish to ensure the student understands this as some might assume you will be automatically updated and be anxious about privacy.

If students wish for you to be updated, encourage them to do so with you directly.

18. Sources of specialist advice and support

Please familiarise yourself with the areas covered by Student Support (outline details in the next section). It is also helpful to discuss with colleagues the boundaries between your own role and that of Student Support services. You might also use hypothetical case studies to explore your responses to a range of issues and to consider where and when a specialist referral would be the most appropriate action. If you have any questions regarding Student Support services, please contact wellbeing@chi.ac.uk.

Student Support Services can arrange student-facing introductory talks to raise awareness of the support services available. Additionally, staff training sessions can be provided if there's a group within your department who would benefit. Such training is in partnership with Staff Development and includes topics such as Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Sexual Assault, Academic Adviser Training, Retention and Engagement and Safeguarding and Prevent training. Please contact the service for more details.

18.1. Student Support Services

Student Support offer a Student Support Portal to all registered (non-partner) students. This is accessible via the Student Support website: <https://wellbeing.chi.ac.uk/>, from the 'other links' section of their ChiView account, from the 'Wellbeing' page on Moodle, and via the below QR:



Students can self-book appointments with any of the services or view available drop-in options and follow self-help support pathways such as disclosing a disability/ health condition or seeking screening for a specific learning difference.

Students can also find the link for the Student Support Portal via: studentsupport.chi.ac.uk.

Staff can access information about Student Support Services via:
[https://mailadminchi.ac.sharepoint.com/sites/Staffnet/Dept StudentSupport](https://mailadminchi.ac.sharepoint.com/sites/Staffnet/Dept%20StudentSupport)

To make a referral to Student Support, staff are strongly encouraged to use the [Wellbeing referral form for staff](#)

For ease of reference, information regarding all the services with within Student Support can be found via:
<https://wellbeing.chi.ac.uk/>

Key contact information

Please note that Student Support does not operate an emergency service.

If you believe the student is at immediate risk, call the University emergency number 01243 81**6363** and/or call 999 for emergency services.

Wellbeing and Mental Health Service wellbeing@chi.ac.uk

Student Health Service studenthealth@chi.ac.uk

Disability Service
01243 812076 disability@chi.ac.uk

Student Money Service
01243 816038 studentmoney@chi.ac.uk

International Advice
01243 812146 international@chi.ac.uk

Student Engagement studentengagement@chi.ac.uk

Wellbeing and Mental Health Service

The team provide daily, term-time, online advice and guidance appointments offering a confidential space to talk through any worries or concerns. Advice includes signposting and access to a range of services including Mental Health, Counselling, Wellbeing Mentoring, and a range of other intervention groups.

It is always preferable for students to access the services for themselves and book their own appointments, but members of staff may refer students to the service using the [Wellbeing referral form](#)

[for staff](#). This ensures the key information is fast-tracked to the appropriate advisor.

It is considered good practice to use the referral form because Student Support receive a high volume of emails daily and referral sent by email may not be seen or actioned promptly.

Student Health

Our Nurse Health Advisers provide an approachable and confidential service with daily term-time appointments. They work closely with local NHS services and offer support and guidance on a range of health and wellbeing issues: including supporting students with GP registration, sexual health issues, pregnancy, and management of medication.

For students with chronic health conditions, such as epilepsy and diabetes, individual support arrangement can be agreed in consultation with the student to ensure they their safety and wellbeing while at university.

Disability Service

The Disability Service provides a range of support to students with disabilities, enduring health conditions, specific learning differences (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, etc.) and any additional learning need that requires support or adjustment in teaching, learning and exams. The team recommend suitable reasonable adjustments which are documented and shared with academic departments in the form of SARAs (Student Additional Requirements Agreement) and RAWEs (Reasonable Adjustments for Work Experience).

The team also arrange for qualified note-takers, study skills tutors and mentors for students who are funded from the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

The team can advise the Accommodation team if a student needs a particular type of room in halls because of a disability or medical condition.

Student Money Team

The Student Money Advisors assist with queries about student loans and other sources of funding, including how and when to apply for

funding, and dealing with associated problems. They administer the University Support Fund (which provides grants to students in financial need) and an emergency loan facility. They can offer advice to student on budget planning and how to manage financial difficulties.

Chichester International Advice

The University of Chichester offers support for international students through its International Student Advisory Service (ISAS).

This service provides assistance with visa and immigration matters, employment regulations, and guidance on opening UK bank accounts and registering with a GP. Additionally, ISAS organises orientation events and activities to help students adjust to life in the UK. Also see: <https://beprepared.chi.ac.uk/>

Student Engagement

Helping students stay connected, motivated, and involved in university life, Student Engagement Advisors can guide students on matters such as practical academic guidance, attendance concerns, de-registration, intermission, Support to Study, and withdrawal.

18.2. Other Professional Services Departments

Accommodation Team

Help and advice on accommodation issues both for students in Halls and for students in private sector housing. The Moodle page has contact details and links to private sector housing sites for students seeking housing for their second and third years:

<https://moodle.chi.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=70251>

The Accommodation webpages are also very helpful:

<https://www.chi.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation>

Accommodation contacts:

accommodation@chi.ac.uk

Chichester on campus and Millfield Close, Lewis Road,
Spitalfield Lane01243 793477

Bognor Regis (on campus and Villa Maria, Prince of Wales,
Garth House).....01243 793488
Stockbridge.....01243 533356 / 07824 349543
Fishbourne01243 790279 / 07791 692966
Westgate 01243 812931 / 07795 257068

Careers and Employability Service

Supports students at all stages of their programme and after graduation with a range of information, advice and guidance including advice on changing course as well as on writing CVs and making job applications. A bookable service is provided and there is an online careers and jobs portal including placements, part-time work and graduate opportunities: <https://careers.chi.ac.uk>

01243 816035, careers@chi.ac.uk

Chaplaincy

The University Chaplain is Rev. Dr. Alison Green, who offers confidential, non-judgmental and compassionate advice.

01243 816041 Alison.Green@chi.ac.uk

Skills Team

The Skills Team offers support, advice, and training for students and staff on several topics, covering; IT skills, study skills, creative skills, and learning technologies.

They are available to support in a variety of different ways, including one-to-one, group workshops and online training.

You can request support at the SIZ, or contact the IT Skills Team:

01243 793535 ITSkills@chi.ac.uk

Academic Skills Adviser

The Academic Skills Adviser offers workshops and one-to-one advice appointments focusing on the important skills needed to be successful in studies, including essay planning and structuring, academic writing, referencing, time management, critical thinking and exam revision techniques.

01243 816040

Alison.Wright@chi.ac.uk

The University of Chichester Students' Union (UCSU)

Advice and representation, particularly in relation to student disciplinary procedures, complaints and appeals.

Visit <https://www.ucsu.org/> for further information or email:

studentsunion@chi.ac.uk

THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISER
A Guide for Staff
2026 / 27



UNIVERSITY OF
CHICHESTER
