

Academic Advising Policy

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1 The purpose of this policy

1. Ensure fair and equal access to academic support for all students through the Oxford Brookes Academic Advising system.
2. Contextualise academic advising within national guidelines and regulations.
3. Establish clear governance and lines of responsibility for the functioning of Academic Advising.
4. Provide a set of principles to underpin the practice of Academic Advising at Oxford Brookes.
5. Outline the expectations of Oxford Brookes University for all its staff who have responsibilities relating to academic advising.
6. Signpost relevant information for Academic Advisors and Academic Advisees (students).

2 Introduction

Academic Advising is a vital academic function which personalises the Higher Education experience for each student (Owen, 2002). Through regular contact with Advisees, Academic Advisors offer a space in which positive relationships are built, confidence is nurtured, queries are addressed, and support is offered and clearly signposted. The personalised connections with the learning community and programme of study nurtured through Academic Advising have a positive impact on student resilience and persistence (Drake, 2011), and increase student retention (Swecker, 2013).

The [Conditions of Registrations](#) (2022) set out by the Office for Students (OfS) states that providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all students have access to resources and support to ensure a high quality academic experience, and enable them to succeed in and beyond Higher Education. Academic Advising is integral to our realising the OfS conditions. Academic Advising as it is defined in this policy reflects the guiding principles of 'connectedness, inclusivity and confidence' outlined in the [Oxford Brookes 2035 strategy](#) and underpins the Education and Enterprise pillar, supports [Oxford Brookes' Academic Framework](#), and is aligned with the [United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring \(UKAT\) standards](#).

Oxford Brookes Vision for Academic Advising is to achieve a high-quality and inclusive academic support system which engages all students to (pro) actively participate in their own self-development so they have every opportunity to benefit from HE.

3 The Purpose of Academic Advising

The purpose of Academic Advising at Oxford Brookes is to enable all students to take responsibility for their academic progress, grow self-awareness of their academic abilities and where necessary aid students in identifying appropriate academic, professional and personal development opportunities and support.

4 The Academic Advising Offer at Oxford Brookes

- 4.1 Student Advisees and Staff Academic Advisors will be allocated at the start of each academic year.
- 4.2 There will be a minimum of two hours of scheduled Academic Advising Tutorials that each Advisee is expected to attend, spread across the academic year.
- 4.3 Academic Advising Tutorials will be embedded within Academic Advisor and Advisee timetables and pushed into individual calendars.
- 4.4 Timetabled Academic Advising may include group and/or 1-2-1 tutorials. The format will vary across disciplines to best fit the needs of each programme. They may be in person, or online.
- 4.5 Participation in the timetabled Academic Advising Tutorials will be documented for monitoring purposes.
- 4.6 Advisees will receive communications from their Academic Advisor across the academic year offering timely signposting to relevant information advice and guidance and reminding advisees of the role, availability and contact details of their advisor.

- 4.7 Advisees are invited to contact their Academic Advisor to discuss their academic progress, successes or concerns that they might need to address.
- 4.8 The Academic Advisor might sign post the Advisee to other more specialised University services and support when and where appropriate, for example when their developmental or support needs exceed the academic responsibility and expertise of the Academic Advisor.

5 Principles of Academic Advising at Oxford Brookes

| Principle The Oxford Brookes Academic Advising system provides: | Detail |
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| 5.1 A key element of integrated academic and pastoral support | <p>Academic Advisors and Advising Tutorials are positioned as one element of a support network. It is clear to Advisees how those staff work together to provide holistic support.</p> <p>Tutorials should be consistent with or contribute to the delivery of the Education and Enterprise Pillar of <i>Oxford Brookes University Strategy 2035</i>.</p> |
| 5.2 Personalised support | Every Advisee has a named Advisor for the duration of their studies. Should it be necessary, Advisees and Advisors can be re-allocated. |
| 5.3 A structured advising programme by discipline or subject | Subject areas should offer advising programmes that are timetabled and collectively planned. Flexibility will be shown for specific Advisee groups. |
| 5.4 Regular structured interactions that are based on clear agreed expectations | Tutorials need to be purposeful and planned. Academic Advising Tutorials and contact time are spaces to recalibrate expectations of support with a view to developing Advisee autonomy. |
| 5.5 Advisee reflection, development and recognition of achievement | Tutorials and contact time are spaces to support shared and personal reflections and stocktaking. Staff are trained to listen and to appreciate the unique background and profile of each Advisee |
| 5.6 Academic and career goal setting | Tutorials address academic and long-term career goals as well as support Advisees who feel unsure about their future. This can be in partnership with the Careers Service as appropriate. |
| 5.7 Support for effective learning | Advising is teaching and Tutorials provide a space devoted to learning to learn within the discipline. The background and starting point of each Advisee will be taken into account. |
| 5.8 Proactive monitoring of Advisee progression | Institutional data on Advisee attendance and performance (as proxies for engagement) can inform advisors' discussions with Advisees. This discussion can be Advisee led. |

These principles have been informed by the [NUS's Academic Support Benchmarking Tool](#) (NUS, 2015a) and [Charter on Personal Tutors](#) (NUS, 2015b), the UK Advising and Tutoring association's [Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring](#) (UKAT, 2019) and a consultation exercise with Oxford Brookes staff and students.

6 Governance

- 6.1 Strategic oversight of and ultimate responsibility for the function of Academic Advising sits within the portfolio of the PVC Education.
- 6.2 The PVC Education will delegate university wide strategic oversight to a senior academic leader, the Associate Dean Student Outcomes, who will report into QLIC and represent the PVC Education in matters relating to Academic Advising.
- 6.3 Each Faculty will appoint a Senior Academic Advisor, responsible for the function in their Faculty, supported by the Delegated Officer and reporting to Associate Deans Education and Student Experience (ADESEs) and into Faculty Quality Learning Infrastructure Committee (QLIC). This is a seconded Senior Lecturer or Principal Lecturer Education and Student Experience role, 0.3fte and with a tenure of three-years.
- 6.4 Academic Advisors report to their Faculty Senior Academic Advisor with regard to their advising responsibilities.
- 6.5 Complaints relating to the practice or administration of Academic Advising should follow the university's [Student Complaints](#) procedure. All complaints should be recorded in annual Academic Advising Reports and used to evaluate and enhance the Academic Advising offer and experience.
- 6.6 Should the need arise to re-allocate an Advisee/Advisor a reallocation request should be made and the Faculty Senior Academic Advisor should be notified. All reasonable steps will be made to reallocate Advisor-Advisees no later than the following semester. In exceptional circumstances a swifter re-allocation may be actioned, at the discretion of the Senior Faculty Academic Advisor.
- 6.7 The [Oxford Brookes Data Protection Policy](#) and guidance applies to all data relating to Academic Advising
- 6.8 Students at immediate risk of harm must be referred to appropriate emergency services (see [emergency support contacts](#)) and reported to the [student support service](#) and/or Student Support Coordinators (SSCs) depending on the level of need. Students who disclose distress should be sign posted to the [student support service](#) and reported to SSCs. SSCs will record a log for individual students and refer to appropriate university services. Advisors should follow up with SSCs within 5 working days to ensure that case is being addressed. Academic Advisors should seek support from their Faculty Senior Academic Advisor if further guidance is needed.
- 6.9 Systematic evaluation of Academic Advising will be the responsibility of Senior Faculty Academic Advisor and considered in an annual report at Faculty QLIC. This will integrate existing data from NSS and BSS and also measure the quality of, engagement with and administrative effectiveness of supporting processes of Academic Advising. Evaluation should also identify good practice to share and, where necessary, include plans to enhance provision.

7 Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Academic Advisor will:

- 7.1.1 Familiarise themselves with and follow the governance, principles and practices outlined in this policy.

- 7.1.2 Engage with Academic Advising Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities including Academic Advising workshop updates, mandatory asynchronous learning and web guidance at regular intervals.
- 7.1.3 Ensure their group and/or 1-2-1 Tutorials with Advisees are timetabled.
- 7.1.4 Communicate their contact details and availability to their cohort of advisees.
- 7.1.5 Meet and make contact with advisees at regular points through the academic year and document this engagement for monitoring purposes.
- 7.1.6 Help advisees identify specific issues which might be a barrier to progress and discuss potential avenues of support. This may include but is not limited to the programme administrator; [student support service](#); the [Centre for Academic Development](#).
- 7.1.7 Identify and monitor students who are at risk of academic attrition and/or personal wellbeing (for example where Advisee engagement in study or GPA dips, or have made repeated use of [Exceptional Circumstances](#)) and make contact, signposting appropriate support services and inviting engagement.
- 7.1.8 Report issues that exceed the academic responsibilities and expertise of the Academic Advisor. For example students at immediate risk of harm must be referred to appropriate emergency services (see [emergency support contacts](#)) and reported to Student Support Coordinators (SSCs). Students who disclose distress should be sign posted to the [student support service](#) and reported to SSCs. Advisors should follow up with SSCs within 5 working days to ensure that case is being addressed.
- 7.1.9 Seek support from their Faculty Senior Academic Advisor if further guidance is needed.
- 7.1.10 Report to the Faculty Senior Academic Advisor with regard to their advising activity, for example sharing information on Academic Advising Tutorial attendance rates.
- 7.1.11 Seek guidance and support from the Faculty Senior Academic Advisor when needed.

7.2 The Academic Advisee will:

- 7.2.1 Take personal responsibility for their academic, professional and personal development
- 7.2.2 Attend 1-2-1 / group Academic Advising Tutorials
- 7.2.3 Identify goals for the short, intermediate and long term, and steps towards achieving these
- 7.2.4 Monitor and critically reflect on their own academic, professional and personal progress
- 7.2.5 Share their successes
- 7.2.6 Discuss their concerns
- 7.2.7 Seek support when it is needed, for example by booking onto their Advisors' Student Support Hours should they need support between timetabled Tutorials

7.3 The Faculty Senior Academic Advisor will:

- 7.3.1 Familiarise themselves with the governance, principles and practices outlined in this policy
- 7.3.2 Uphold the principles of Academic Advising outlined in this policy within their Faculty
- 7.3.3 Engage with Academic Advising Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities including Academic Advising workshop updates, mandatory asynchronous learning and web guidance at regular intervals.
- 7.3.4 Lead the continuous improvement of Academic Advising within their faculty.
- 7.3.5 Have strategic and operational oversight of Academic Advising processes and functions within their faculty, including investigating and resolving complaints.

- 7.3.6 Support Academic Advisors in managing serious concerns relating to specific Advisee cases such as progression, engagement, health and wellbeing.
- 7.3.7 Report to Associate Deans Education and Student Experience.
- 7.3.8 Review Academic Advising allocation practices and liaise with Heads of School and Administrators to ensure fair, timely and equitable allocation, and manage re-allocation should the need arise.
- 7.3.9 Provide, support and monitor engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the continuous improvement of Academic Advising within their faculty in collaboration with relevant university partners.
- 7.3.10 Report on the Faculty wide practice of Academic Advising, including staff engagement with CPD, Advisee engagement and satisfaction with Academic Advising and any escalated complaints and appeals to Faculty QLIC, Associate Dean Education and Student Experience.
- 7.3.11 Work with the PVC-Education's Delegated Officer, the Associate Dean Student Outcomes, and fellow Faculty Senior Academic Advisors to ensure consistency of annual reporting mechanisms across the institution.

7.4 The Academic Administration Managers (AAM) will:

- 7.4.1 Familiarise themselves with the governance, principles and practices outlined in this policy.
- 7.4.2 Engage in relevant CPD activity, including working collaboratively with appropriate university teams to support the administrative operations that underpin academic advising.
- 7.4.3 Ensure staff and student details are correct in the supporting digital platform, removing staff who have left, adding new staff, programmes etc.
- 7.4.4 Oversee allocation of advisees and advisors with overall capacity limited to 30 Students per FTE Advisor, and reallocation where necessary, escalating to the Faculty Senior Academic Advisor any capacity issues.

7.5 Timetabling Team will

- 7.5.1 Familiarise themselves with the governance, principles and practices outlined in this policy.
- 7.5.2 Engage in relevant CPD activity, including working collaboratively with appropriate university teams to support the administrative operations that underpin academic advising.
- 7.5.3 Facilitate timetabling Tutorials and pushing Tutorials into advisor and advisee calendars.

7.6 The PVC Education's Delegated Officer will:

- 7.6.1 Uphold the governance, principles and practices outlined in this policy across the university.
- 7.6.2 Complete the short course Academic Advising at Oxford Brookes' and Introducing Faculty Senior Academic Advising CPD activity.
- 7.6.3 Have strategic oversight of Academic Advising across the institution.
- 7.6.4 Report on the university wide practice of Academic Advising to university QLIC including staff engagement with relevant CPD, student engagement and satisfaction with Academic Advising and any escalated complaints, making recommendations for enhanced practice.

- 7.6.5 Lead the continuous improvement of Academic Advising across the institution, taking advice from QLIC.
- 7.6.6 Respond to external queries relating to Academic Advising on behalf of and in collaboration with the PVC Education.

8 Support and Guidance for Academic Advisors, Administrators and all staff involved in Academic Advising

- 8.1 Current, up to date information about Academic Advising at Oxford Brookes is provided on the [Academic Advising at Oxford Brookes](#) webpages. This includes [sector leading guidance](#), the Oxford Brookes [Academic Advising Curriculum](#) that Advisors can adopt in timetabled Tutorials, and [‘nudge’ email templates](#) signposting relevant information, advice and guidance that can be adapted and sent to Advisees at crucial points across the academic year.
- 8.2 All Advisors and administrators involved in the functioning of Academic advising will complete academic advising training every 3 years, and within 2 months (CPD activity) or 6 months (short courses) of taking up the role.

9 Signposting further support for Advisees

The Academic Advising system is designed to engage Advisees to (pro) actively participate in their own self-development to enable them to become successful learners and graduates. Other support is also available to support Advisees through their journey in Higher Education. Advisors should be well-informed and able to signpost Advisees according to individual needs. Wider support includes:

Student Drop-In Hours: these are offered by all academic staff, on a regular basis, for any student to drop in for an informal discussion

Programme Teams: Subject Co-ordinator, Programme Lead, Module Leaders, Academic and Technical Staff and Administrators

[Student Central Advice Team](#)

[Your academic studies](#): this webpage links students to a range of support networks including Student Support Coordinators; Student Central Advice Team; Academic Advisors; as well as Moodle; Student Information; and email log in.

[Library](#)

[Careers](#)

[Centre for Academic Development](#)

[student support service](#) including:

[Counselling](#),

[Multifaith Chaplaincy](#),

[Inclusive Support Service](#)

[English Language Support](#)

[Brookes Union Advice Centre](#)

10 Links to related policies and guidance

Office for Students [Conditions of Registration. B2](#)

Oxford Brookes [Strategy 2035](#), Education and Enterprise pillar

Oxford Brookes [University Statement on Academic Guidance](#)

Oxford Brookes [Academic Framework](#)

[National Student Survey](#)

United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring ([UKAT](#)) [Standards](#)

11 References

Drake, J. K. (2011). "The Role of Academic Advising in Student Retention and Persistence." *About Campus* 16(3): 8-12.

NUS (2015a). Academic Support Benchmarking Tool. Available at: www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/academic-support-benchmarking-tool

NUS (2015b) NUS Charter on Personal Tutors @ NUS Connect. Available at: <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/nus-charteron-personaltutors>

Owens, M. (2002). "Sometimes You Feel You're in Niche Time': The Personal Tutor System, a Case Study." *Active Learning in Higher Education* 3(1): 7-23.

Oxford Brookes University Strategy 2035. Available at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/strategy/current-priorities-and-strategies/guiding-principles/>

Swecker, H. K., et al. (2013). "Academic Advising and First-Generation College Students: A Quantitative Study on Student Retention." *NACADA Journal* 33(1): 46-53.

UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT) (2019) [The UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring](#).

Department: Oxford Centre for Academic Enhancement and Development (OCAED)

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