Title:	***LTC Review of the Advising System***
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Issue

A review of the Advising System was carried out as part of the Learning and Teaching Committee's routine periodic review of policies and practice. The project team has compiled a report, which includes a number of recommendations in the form of a proposed new Advising Policy.

Recommendation

Members are asked to

(1) receive and note the Report on the review of the Advising System, and
(2) consider and approve the proposed Advising Policy (Appendix 9.8 of the Report).

Resource Implications

There may be resource implications associated with the implementation of the new policy and associated recommendations:

(1) Advisers are required to invite their advisees to three meetings per year, in addition to any introductory meeting, which may be more than is the current practice in some Schools;
(2) Advisers will be expected to be trained and refresh their training regularly (every three years);
(3) There will be some development of the student record system to enhance the record keeping and management information associated with the Advising System.

Risk Implications

Low

Equality and Diversity

The new policy is not expected to have any E&D implications.

Timing of decisions

After LTC consideration, the approved version of the Advising Policy will be implemented for taught undergraduate and postgraduate students from academic year 2015/6. Following consideration of the policy, the project team will continue to work on resources and training for advisers, to be available in time for the launch of the new policy.

Further Information

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Background

This review of the Advising System was carried out as part of the Learning and Teaching Committee's routine periodic review of policies and practice. The review took place between June 2014 and March 2015.

Discussion

(1) Taking into consideration the views of students and Advisers, through consultation and student feedback, the project team noted that there were some excellent examples of good practice across the University, but there were also areas that could be improved upon.

(2) The Advising System was found to be well used, but some students were unclear as to the purpose of the System, and some reported that they did not hear from their Adviser following the initial meeting. There were some frustrations from students over the length of time it took some Advisers to respond to emails, and the number of different Advisers some students had experienced.

(3) The project team identified the need for a more explicit statement on the purpose and rationale of the Advising System, to improve engagement with the system and better realise the benefits. The proposed statement, building on the UEA's commitment to student success is:

> 'The purpose of the Advising System is to ***maximise opportunities for student development and help students to realise their full potential***, through
>
> a. Academic development and support
> b. Professional development to secure a graduate job or place for further study
> c. Personal development and support'.

(4) The project team reiterated the importance of recognising advising as integral to the delivery of Learning and Teaching and not an add-on, and as such should be incorporated into any workload allocation.

(5) The project team was in favour of giving Advisers support to enable them to put more structure into the advising meetings, to include more proactive support for professional, academic and personal development.

The main changes to the Policy are:

1. Change in emphasis to supporting academic, personal and professional development.
2. The expectation that Advisers will take an active part in helping their advisees reflect on their assessment and feedback.
3. The requirement for Advisers to see advisees who have not been attending when referred to them by their Senior Adviser/Engagement officer.
4. The requirement to offer 3 meetings a year, plus an introductory meeting for all new students.
5. The requirement for Advisers to be trained, including periodic refresher training.
6. The expectation that Advisers respond to contact from their advisees within 48 hours.
7. The expectation that advisees keep the same Adviser wherever possible (but still permitting changes at the request of the advisee).
8. The requirement for each School to have both a Senior Adviser and a Deputy (one of whom could be the Disability Liaison Officer).
9. Re-establishment of the requirement for Senior Advisers to report annually on how the system is running in their School.
10. The development of an Advising Meeting Framework to facilitate discussions at each meeting.
11. Improved system functionality to improve information to staff and students, including engagement with the process.

Attachments

The Report of the 2014 Review of the Advising System, incorporating the new Advising Policy (appendix 9.8).

University of East Anglia

Learning and Teaching Committee

Review of the Advising System 2014 Report

Contents

1. **Introduction**

   1.1. This review of the Advising System was carried out as part of the Learning and Teaching Committee's routine periodic review of policies and practice. The review took place between June 2014 and March 2015. The previous review was commissioned in 2006/7 with ensuing changes to the Advising System being implemented from 2008/9.

   1.2. This review of the Advising System has included consideration improvements to enhance the University's performance in Learning and Teaching, as measured by Good Honours, Student Satisfaction, Student Retention and Employability.

   1.3. Past surveys suggested low levels of advisers actively inviting students to meetings.

   1.4. The University's academic ambitions have evolved significantly since the last review. The student: staff ratio has markedly improved, with considerable investment in this resource in the past few years. The student: staff ratio (SSR) in 2007/8 was 18.1: 1 and in 2013/4 is now 13.7: 1. There has also been a significant increase in the number of ATS staff employed, from 86 in 2007/08 to 332 in 2013/4.   While student growth has been of the order of 20% over this period, student-facing academic staff resources have increased roughly in the order of 80%.

   1.5. New priorities in employability and personal and professional development, including graduate employers' expectations of structured skills development programme, are in operation, and recommendations from this review are intended to help support employability initiatives.

2. **Review Process**

   2.1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs (PVC-Acad), commissioned the project in 2013/4. A project initiation meeting was held on 25 June 2014 to define the project. Notes of this meeting, including membership of the project team, are available in the Appendix 9.1. The Project Manager drew up a plan, based on the deliverables, timescales and success criteria established at the initiation meeting. The Project Team met on three occasions to consider the current system, review the feedback and other information detailed below and recommend changes. The Project also benefitted from a Project Steering Group involving the relevant directors of university services and Academic Directors (Taught Programmes and Learning & Teaching Enhancement).

   Sources of Information:

   2.2. The Senior Advisers were consulted on a number of questions raised at the initiation meeting. Details of the questions asked and a summary of responses are given in Appendix 9.2

   2.3. Students' views were gathered through:

   i)   A survey by the Dean of Students (DOS) of continuing students on their experiences of the Advising System in 2013/4 (the main findings are detailed in Appendix 9.3)

   ii) The National Student Survey 2014 (Qualitative comments pertaining to advising are in Appendix 9.4)

iii) Focus groups run by the Business Intelligence Unit (BIU) ostensibly to discuss the Staff-Student Liaison Committees; Comments raised by students regarding the Advising System are in Appendix 9.5.

2.4. A meeting of the Senior Advisers held on 11 November 2014

2.5. A meeting with the Dean of Students held on 9 September 2014

2.6. A meeting with the Joint Head of Careers, James Goodwin held on 6 October 2014.

2.7. A meeting of the Project Steering Group was held on 8th December 2014.

2.8. Examples from other institutions (Information on the systems run at the Universities of Bath, Surrey and York are available in Appendix 9.6.

2.9. A schedule of meetings and attendance is in Appendix 9.7.

3. **Key Principles Emerging**

3.1. The Project Team identified the need for a more explicit statement on the purpose and rationale of the Advising System, to improve engagement with the system and better realise the benefits.

3.2. A key feature of the new UEA Plan for 2016-20 currently under development is its focus on 'student success.' The Advising System is a key mechanism for supporting students. The purpose of the Advising System is to *maximise opportunities for student development and help students to realise their full potential*, through

- Academic development and support

- Professional development to secure a graduate job or place for further study

- Personal development and support

3.3. For our academic staff, advising is integral to the delivery of Learning and Teaching and not an add-on, and as such should be incorporated into any workload allocation.[1]

4. **Feedback on the Current Operation of the Advising System**

4.1. The findings from the Survey of continuing students supported the view that the Advising System was well used, and more students were being invited to meetings. However, there was a sense that students did not know the purpose of the Advising System and a proportion of students were reporting that they did not hear from their Adviser after the initial meeting.

4.2. Although 85% of those responding were satisfied or very satisfied with the academic support they received from their advisers, and 81% were similarly satisfied with the

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[1] *'Advising students, either on academic matters or on personal matters' is evidence which can be drawn on for Promotion Committee consideration, as defined in the 'Green Book', Appendix B: Evaluation of Teaching, Research, Enterprise and Engagement and Related Administration, Management and Leadership, Section 6, Administration, management and leadership related to teaching and learning and related student facing activity…', 6.3.3.*

personal support, there was no room for complacency and we should work to improve this, especially as 93% considered that academic advice and support in Schools was important or very important.

4.3. Students had occasionally been frustrated at the poor timeliness, or lack, of responses from staff.

4.4. There were several comments about the number of different advisers some students had experienced. Schools should do more to ensure continuity where possible.

4.5. Some students did not currently feel the need to engage with the Advising system, either because they did not feel they needed support, or they were getting it from elsewhere (other academics for academic support; DOS for personal support).

4.6. Two Schools, MTH and ART, had students who were particularly satisfied with the support. The accessibility of academic staff, coupled with the relatively small size of student cohorts and a strong culture of staff-student engagement were felt to explain these high levels of satisfaction.

4.7. The particular requirements of students on joint honours courses delivered across two or more Schools needed to be better recognised and accommodated.

4.8. Senior Advisers had a significant role to play in ensuring that their advisers followed the policy, and some were more proactive than others.

4.9. Where there were positive comments from students, this correlates with overall satisfaction measured in the National Student Survey, but where the students' experience had been poor regarding the Advising system, it would influence their overall satisfaction.

5. Structure, Uniformity and Prescriptiveness

5.1. It was found that although the University had a single policy for the Advising System, implementation does vary considerably across Schools and Faculties. Apart from the start of Year 1, there was little expectation of mandatory meetings.

5.2. A minimum standard of advising, stating obligations and expectations, was supported. This would set out, for example, the minimum number of meetings expected to be arranged each year. It is recognised that calling meetings may not necessarily result in students' attendance, but would help identify those students who were not engaging with the Advising System. (It should be deemed acceptable for a student to e-mail and decline the invitation to a meeting if they are able to explain that things are going well with their studies and they have no issues to raise).

5.3. The Project Team was in favour of giving Advisers support to enable them to put more structure into the meetings, to include more proactive support for professional development, along with academic and personal development and support.

5.4. There was much discussion about the need and/or effectiveness of advertising a minimum of two advising hours a week as set out in the current policy. This worked in some Schools, but not in others. The Project Team felt that this should be replaced in the policy with a requirement for advisers to offer a minimum number of meeting opportunities each year

and to respond to advisees' requests for a meeting in a timely way. (This need not mean that those Schools who operate a 'two advising hours/office hours a week' policy have to cease to continue to do so).

6. **Delivery, Monitoring and Reporting**

6.1. Any new System would require a suitable infrastructure for delivery and monitoring.

6.2. The Project Team felt that the students' evaluation of the new system could be via a survey, either linked to an existing survey run by BIU such as the student experience survey, or standalone, but run annually through the BIU to fit in with the annual cycle of surveys.

6.3. The Senior Adviser had a role to ensure that his or her School provides an adequate system, and individual advisers delivered on the University's commitments. There should be routine evaluations of the effectiveness of the System delivered in each School and Faculty. Although the current policy requests an annual report from the Senior Adviser, this requirement is not currently adhered to across all Schools.

6.4. The Project team saw the production of the Senior Adviser's annual report as an important mechanism for ensuring the effecting implementation and functioning of the reformed Advising System. A guide to what the annual report might cover would be helpful to Senior Advisers.

7. **Support for Advising**

The Project Team reviewed the current support and training provision for Advisers and Senior Advisers and identified a number of areas which could be improved:

7.1. Information on the website was hard to find, missing or out of date. The Team felt that a single area of the website, possibly on the Learning and Teaching pages, where Advisers and Students could refer to, would be helpful.

7.2. The current policy and associated guidance has been interpreted in different ways for different audiences. It was felt that bringing the policy and guidance into a single document, in more accessible formats (through the web), would make the guidance easier to follow and adhere to.

7.3. Advisers would find it helpful to have structured resources and materials to help them discuss professional development and academic progress with their advisees at key times in the students' studies. This may include suggested content for each meeting.

7.4. Advisers did not have access to all the information they required, such as prizes and support requirements. They would like to be able to schedule meetings into students' timetables, and to be able to record that meetings had taken place, and the brief content of those meetings. They were keen to keep this on the Student Information System so that these could be shared securely, especially if advisers had to be changed.

7.5. It was noted that some Advisers did not realise that marks and attendance information were available to them (through the 'My Advisees' section on eVision, along with their advisees' student details and the ability to email students directly). More should be done to ensure Advisers are aware of this (e.g. through training, staff induction, and updated help-sheets).

7.6. Although there was training for new Advisers run through CSED, which is open to established advisers who wish to refresh their practice, this is not heavily promoted, and currently there is no requirement for advisers to refresh their knowledge regularly.   Some thought should also be given to having an online training resource for all advisers, which has to be completed every two or three years.

7.7. There is currently no annual meeting of Senior Advisers to share knowledge and best practice, although this was a feature of the existing policy. There was a strong view that this annual meeting should be reintroduced. LTS should call and service the meeting, and DOS should be represented at it. It should be chaired by either an Associate Dean or relevant Academic Director.

8. **Recommendations**

8.1. Rewrite the **Advising Policy** which is web-friendly and easy to understand, to include

- a statement on the purpose and rationale of the Advising System, to improve engagement with the System and realise the benefits, specifically including academic, professional and personal development and support.

- the expectations of the students and Advisers along with the Senior Adviser and Disability Liaison Officer roles, including:

    - the expectation that Advisers will invite advisees to at least three meetings per year (in addition to any meetings with advisees, in groups or individually, that might be called at the start of their studies).

    - a framework for Advising Meetings which provides structured guidance as to what to be discussed at each meeting.

    - the expectation that Advisers engage with their advisees over i) assessment and feedback ii) attendance and engagement and iii) career development and professional and personal development

The revised Advising Policy, incorporating the recommendations, is in Appendix 9.8

8.2. Provide **Training**

8.2.1. Develop online training to cover academic, professional and personal development and support

8.2.2. Require new Advisers to undergo this training before undertaking the role

8.2.3. Ensure that current Advisers refresh their training at least every three years.

8.3. Provide **Support**

8.3.1. Develop and provide an Advising Meeting Framework to assist advisers in structuring advising meetings.

8.3.2. LTS and ITCS need to work to develop systems to ensure that Advisers have all the information they require easily to hand, such as achievements (marks, prizes), attendance, and any support requirements.

8.3.3. Where there is online assessment and feedback, ITCS and LTS should explore whether Advisers can be given access to coursework feedback comments too.

8.3.4. Develop the SITS System to enable students and advisers to book slots

8.3.5. Develop the SITS System to enable the recording of meetings which had taken place and to keep notes of meetings in a secure way on the system.

8.3.6. Set up a repository of advice for Advisers on the LTS website

8.4. **Monitor and Evaluate** the Advising System annually:

8.4.1. Evaluate the students' experience of the Advising System annually via the BIU

8.4.2. Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the Advising System in each School via annual reports from the Senior Advisers to FLTQCs/LTC

8.4.3. Ensure that Advisers are keeping up with the training requirements.

9. **Appendices**

Appendix 9.1: Notes of the Project initiation meeting held on 25 June 2014

Present: PVC Academic, AcDTP, Director of LTS, Dean of Students, Lisa Williams, Caroline Sauverin

The following were agreed:

a) The Project commission
b) Project definition
c) Project deliverables and timescales, success criteria
d) Inclusions and exclusions
e) Interfaces with any other projects
f) The stakeholder group
g) Project team membership
h) Frequency of meetings
i) Research available and research required to be commissioned

Commission

The Project has been commissioned by the PVC Academic as a routine LTC periodic review of policies and practice. The advising system was last reviewed in 2006/7 and the report considered by LTC in June 2008. This current review had been scheduled to commence in 2013/14 with an acknowledgement that it would report in 2014/15.

Project Definition

To review the University's policy and practice in relation to the Advising System and where necessary and appropriate to make recommendations to LTC to improve or enhance the system.

Project deliverables, timescales and success criteria

The Review should be completed such that the final report and recommendations can be considered by LTC on 28th January 2015.

Key constraints – 1) time and 2) quality

Inclusions

The Review should include an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system and consider if and how the role of Adviser could be enhanced to improve the student experience and will include consideration of the following (NB this list is not exhaustive):

- The current Advising policy
- Role of School Advisers and School Senior Advisers
- Relationship to other role holders including Disability Liaison Officer, DOS Division staff, Resident tutors, SU Advice Centre staff, Heads of Schools, Careers, SSLCs and the Learning and Teaching Service.
- The role of Advisers in attendance monitoring and academic engagement
- Whether Advisers have a role in improving feedback on assessed work and the return of non-collected coursework

- Whether training of Advisers should be mandatory and what training should be provided
- Adviser E-vision access to advisees' information
- Student induction arrangements re UEA Advising system
- Internal marketing of the system – staff and students
- Advising students registered on on-line courses
- Advising students on placement (Year Abroad, Year in Industry, Professional placements)
- Links to other student services
- Link to Skills Award and Employability
- Systems to support these students, including a record of the meetings eg on SITS.
- Look at 2008 review by Geoff Moore and the DOS document "Helping students with difficulties".
- Consideration of a "standard advisee load" ie how many advisees per adviser, for consistency of support to advisees and parity for academic staff.
- The review will cover both undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, but it is noted that any revised policy may have separate processes to support different groups of students.

Exclusions

Postgraduate Research Students: A student registered on a research degree programme is allocated a supervisory team whose role is to provide academic and pastoral guidance as set out in the Code of Practice: Research Degrees: https://www.uea.ac.uk/pgresearch/regsandforms
A research student is required to attend the initial and formal supervisory team meetings as set out in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

Although PGR students are excluded from this review, the outcome would be considered by the PGR Exec to include in any review undertaken for PGR students.

Interfaces with any other on-going projects/reviews

These are covered under the 'inclusions' above.

The Stakeholder Group

- Students
- Academic staff as Advisers,
- Senior Advisers,
- Course Directors
- Teaching Directors,
- Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching
- Head of Schools
- Disability Liaison Officer
- Dean of Students
- CSED
- SSLCs
- Careers

Project Manager	Project Steering Group	Project team
Head of LTS, Caroline Sauverin	PVC Academic (project Sponsor)	Local Support manager (TBC)
	Ac DTP	Senior Advisers (TBC)
	Dean of Students	Advisers, from Faculties not represented by Senior Advisers if appropriate
	Director LTS	Head of Careers
	SU Education Officers, Connor Rand and Liam McCafferty	Education Officers, Connor Rand and Liam McCafferty and Student reps
Frequency of Meetings	Launch meeting (this meeting), and 'review of recommendations' meeting at end of project (early December)	Monthly
	PVC Acad and Head, LTS to meet fortnightly from September to December	

Risks

The greatest risk to achieving the aim of completing the review and reporting in January 2015 will be slippage due to the slow gathering of information or the research stimulating further questions. .

Research to be undertaken:

1. A short staff survey (PM to discuss with PVC Acad)
2. A student survey and focus groups (PM to progress)
3. Interviews with key roleholders including members of the steering group.
4. Memo to all Senior Advisers to set out project, invite thoughts on what is working/ not working/ what could be improved, and seek volunteers to be members of the Project Team.

Current data availability

2008/9 Student survey of the advising system available on DOS website
https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/0/Academic+advising+survey+report.pdf/378a185f-3c04-4dd7-957c-62a4ff096260

LTC (18.3.10) considered an oral report from the Dean of Students and resolved:

a) that the survey should be undertaken every other year.
b) Key issues from the survey should be investigated at Faculty/School level
c) The PGRPG should review the exclusion of PGR students from the system

SES surveys 2012, 2013 and 2014 have asked about ability of students to contact academic staff when they needed to and the availability of good advice.

Key Documents

	Document	Location
1	Advising: undergraduate & taught postgraduate policy	https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/0/UEA+Advising+system+policy.pdf/76b9dc85-b81f-43b3-8ead-fef46f9f4968
2	Advising: a guide for academic staff	https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/0/academic+advising+leaflet.pdf/f7d7aea2-ce7b-4372-817b-0f5c2cf80701
3	Advisory system: role descriptions	https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/0/Advising+job+descriptions.pdf/bb6a45a3-1dd1-4fb3-9ae2-accdc9774d6e
4	Advising: Information for students	https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/0/student+advising+leaflet.pdf/d659519e-3676-4969-93b9-63854bc1897a
5	Advising: some further questions and answers	https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/0/advising_some+further+QAs.pdf/d3359712-82a1-4270-8b3a-21c82109e2c8
6	LTC 07DD106 – LTC Review – recommendations arising from the review of the Advising System. Includes details of changes to previous policy, the new policy	LTC Committee archive – LTC meeting 10.6.08

7	LTC07M007 – LTC Minutes of 10.6.08 – Minute 76 refers	LTC Committee archive – LTC meeting 10.6.08
8	LTC 08M006 – minute 86 refers	LTC Committee archive – LTC meeting 27.5.09
9	LTC 09D010 – Revision of guidance for students seeking a change of Adviser	https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombds/ltc/ltc0910/281009/divideraltc09d010
10	LTC 09M005 – LTC Minutes 18.3.10. Minute 53 refers: Enhancing the student experience – the Advising System	https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombds/ltc/ltc1011/081210/ltcmins271010

Extract from General Regulation 13 Attendance, Engagement and Progress

(3) A student registered on a taught programme is allocated an Academic Adviser who is ready to give advice and help at any mutually convenient time in accordance with the advising policy. A minimum of three individual meetings per year will be offered with a student's Adviser at appropriate times and with the purpose of the meeting made clear at the time they are offered. It is essential that a student attends at least one of these meetings each year.

Members of the Project Steering Group:

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Professor Neil Ward

Academic Director for Taught Programmes, Dr Adam Longcroft

Dean of Students, Dr Annie Grant

Director of Learning and Teaching Services, Dr Andrea Blanchflower

Academic Director for Learning Enhancement, Helena Gillespie

Head of Learning and Teaching Services, Caroline Sauverin

Students' Union Undergraduate Education Officer, Connor Rand

Students' Union Postgraduate Education Officer, Liam McCafferty

Members of the Project Team:

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Professor Neil Ward

Senior Adviser, Norwich Law School, Karen McCullagh

Senior Adviser, School of Economics, James Watson

Senior Adviser, Norwich Business School, Alfonso Avila-Merino

Senior Adviser, School of Computing Sciences, Pierre Chardaire

Associate Dean for Employability for the Faculty of Science, Steve Dorling

Senior Adviser, School of Health Sciences, Michael Pfeil

Senior Adviser, Norwich Medical School, Maggie Bunting

Senior Adviser, School of Art, Media and American Studies, Michael Lengsfield

Senior Adviser, School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, Mike Gough

SU Undergraduate Education Officer, Connor Rand.

SU Postgraduate Education Officer, Liam McCafferty.

Faculty Manager, Norwich Business School, Kirsty Walne

Joint Head of Careers, James Goodwin

Head of Learning and Teaching Services and Project Manager, Caroline Sauverin

Appendix 9.2: Main findings of the Senior Advisers' consultation

LTC Review of UEA Advising System:
Main Findings of the Senior Advisers' consultation, September 2014.   There were 10 School responses, from CHE, CMP, MTH, ECO, LAW, NBS, SWK, AMA, HSC, MED
1. Overall, how effective do you think the current Advising System on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'poor' and 5 is 'excellent'.
There were 10 responses to this; the average score was 3, although 2 Schools (HSC and SWK) considered the advising system in their Schools to be excellent.   Senior Advisers who commented thought that where students needed support, most advisers did a good job. They also commented that students sought and received support from elsewhere, in the School, or from support services. It was also recognised that some students did not engage with the system at all.
2. What are the student induction arrangements re UEA Advising System in your School? Do you have an input into this?
Most Senior Advisers give talks during the induction programme, explaining the advising system to new students and oversee the arrangements for students to meet their advisers during the induction period. In other Schools, the Advisers explain the system at the first meeting, or the Teaching Director does during Induction.
3. Is there any 'best practice' in your School in terms of the practical implementation of the current system which you feel could be usefully shared?
One School reported that any issues with the advising system at both the SSLC and School Board meetings each term. One has used an online booking system for meetings. One-to-one meetings work well. Requiring students to bring in a cv once a year also works well, with appropriate guidance from the Careers Service. One School mentioned a 'newsletter' to advisers detailing specific aspects of the programme that their specific students are about to cover. One Senior Adviser took the opportunity to list improvements that are not yet in place: increase contact time, monitor attendance, develop a clear framework for each year of study, centralise record keeping.
4. How do you see the Senior Adviser's role in a) supporting Advisers and b) supporting students?
Senior Advisers help his/her colleagues understand their role as Advisers, sometimes through informal training sessions and ad hoc advice if an Advisee is in a difficult situation and the Adviser does not know how to deal with it. The Senior Adviser has a role in allocating Advisers, and ensuring students can switch Advisers if issues arise and is on hand to advise students if their Adviser is unavailable. Students need to know that Senior Advisers exist and how they can help.

5. How often does the Senior Adviser role change in your School and is this a help or a hindrance?
'Not often' was the most common response to this question. This didn't appear to be a problem, and continuity was considered to be useful. One School changed annually, and no School seemed to have a fixed term of office. Suggestions ranged from annual (one School), to 3-4 years, to 5 years.

6. Do you have a deputy Senior Adviser? 7. As Senior Adviser, are you also the Disability Liaison Officer in your School, or that a separate role holder? How do you ensure coordination in responsibilities if there are two of you?
Most Schools who responded did have a deputy, and this was usually someone of the opposite gender, but not all Schools did . In one School there was a Senior Adviser and a Disability Liaison Officer, who deputised if necessary. In 6 out of the 10 Schools, the DLO duties were carried out by the SA. In the four Schools where there was a separate DLO, that person worked closely with the SA.

8. How well do you think Senior Advisers and Advisers' relationship to other role holders including Disability Liaison Officer, DOS Division staff, Resident tutors, SU Advice Centre staff, Heads of Schools, Careers, SSLCs and the Learning and Teaching Service works? What could be improved?
This works well across the board, although Senior Advisers are not normally in direct contact with the SU advice centre or resident tutors. Relationships with the DOS and LTS Hubs are good when dealing with student problems. The DOS used to have Senior Adviser meetings to share problems and solutions, but these have not been arranged recently.

9. Do you think there are particular issues with advising international students?
Senior Advisers reported that, on the whole, International students did not have particular issues which required particular attention through the Advising system.

10. Specifically, how do you think the Advising System should link to Employability?
There was mixed opinion in the answers to this question. It is not considered the main purpose of the advising system, but they are perfectly placed to bring individual attention to the process, helping to implement the Careers and Employability staff's plans. Advisers have an important to role to play in providing references for employment and further study in a timely way.

11. Do you have access to the information you need on the Student Information System?
It would be extremely helpful as a Senior Adviser to have access to past students transcripts electronically, as I am often asked to write references for students with whom I had no interaction. (Indeed, on several occasions, I have been asked to write references for students who graduated before I joined the UEA.)

Senior Advisers mentioned:

1. accurate attendance information

2. marks for students who have left

3. easier navigation/search for advisees.

12. Would it be helpful for advisers to be able to record meetings with advisees on the Student Information System?

7 of the respondents thought this would be helpful, another raised access problems for clinicians, and another thought that the personal nature of some of the discussions should not be recorded. One School thought this would work best if Especially if the student were allowed to "approve" the notes i.e. there is a shared understanding of what took place in the meeting

Appendix 9.3: Headline results from the UEA Advising System Survey 2014

Key findings

1. Overall, the results of the survey suggest that the Advising System is working well for most students but that there remains room for improvement.

He is always friendly and approachable, and willing to meet with me should I need it.

He has gone above and beyond to help me out as much as possible, asking around for advice when he was unsure himself.

2. Only a small, but still concerning, proportion of students (13%) rated the advice and support offered by their Adviser as poor (Table 14). The majority (81%) were either very satisfied or satisfied with the support offered.

I am disappointed in my adviser and would like to change – however I feel so embarrassed at having to meet this teacher again…that I probably won't change them out of fear of offending them.

I have not heard anything from my adviser over the past two years. I know others that have a good relationship with their advisers and go consistently to get help and seek advice. I feel it would be difficult to do this, as I have not really had any encouragement to, or just a reminder that my adviser is there if I need them. So it would be nice if there was more consistency with the level of help that advisers can provide.

3. Levels of satisfaction with the overall academic support available in students' Schools was also high (85% very satisfied or satisfied) with 11% dissatisfied and 4% very dissatisfied.

Most of the academic staff in my school are only too happy to help at any time with issues I have had understanding lecture material etc.

My academic adviser provides a good level of support/academic advice. Additionally, I am a member of a small school who make great efforts to get to know their cohort - therefore, my school HoD team know me well enough to provide additional support should I require it.

Support from adviser is too minimal to have much of an effect.

4. Satisfaction levels for the personal support offered by the School are similar but very slightly lower than for academic support: 81 % were very satisfied or satisfied, 13% dissatisfied and 6% very dissatisfied.

I was satisfied with personal advice as I felt I was given time and taken seriously…

Always helped with any queries I have and has always made time to meet me should I require assistance with anything.

5. The survey confirmed the importance to students of the academic advice and support provided in Schools as part of their overall student experience: 93% of respondents felt it to be very important or important, and only 1% not important.

Academic support is vital within all Schools – the adviser sessions really help to cement that.

Academic support is important to me because I feel it's the responsibility of the university to ensure that their students are having a positive academic experience. Listening to the needs of students is important. I do not have family to support me academically at all, so this is something that is especially important to me.

Being able to contact someone I know personally to ask for help or to explain any difficulties gives me peace of mind, and makes the process of studying far less stressful.

6. The proportion of student for whom personal support was as important was lower than for academic support, but still high (75% rating it as very important or important, and only 7% as not important.

I also do not have any personal support, so having this as an option available from the university is also important. Stress management is very difficult for anyone who doesn't feel they are able to be supported on personal issues by their peers, which include the people they are at university with; both staff and students.

I feel that academic support is more important than personal support from my adviser. This is because there are other people I can go and see if I need personal support, e.g. the Dean of Students office, although it is very helpful to have this support from your adviser.   Academic support from the school is more important to me, because there is nowhere else I can gain this academic support from.

Personal support is not really important as I would seek it from elsewhere, but a sympathetic attitude if it was affecting my studies would be important.

Appendix 9.4: Comments about Advisers from the 2014 NSS

School	Negative comment
NSC	... Support for assignments is limited particularly by the fact that different academic **advisors** provide different levels of support and often advise totally different criteria to pass assignments…
NSC	I think that some of the lecturers/personal **advisors** are quite cold and very professional. I don't feel I could come to them for support because this is a "degree" and should be able to tackle issues alone.
NSC	Academic **advisor** on annual leave for approximately 6 weeks of the time given for the dissertation, therefore not much support.
NSC	I felt my academic **advisor** was quite unsupportive in his role, often stating he was too busy to meet and not being very helpful with obtaining information for me when I asked questions he didn't know answers to. I often resorted to asking a housemate to ask their AA to get answers. I feel the support given by AA's varied substantially which was clearly evident in some assignment results. I feel AA's should have the option to not be **advisors** if they don't feel they wish to be or have time to be.
NSC	Isolated incidents have shown a lack of consistency in the messages communicated by the university such as in relation to dissertation word limits and advice given by academic **advisors** in relation to summative assignments.
NSC	..this is another example of the poor communication seen across the school, and between academic **advisors** and those setting the exams and assignments.
NSC	Marking of assignments is not in keeping with UEAs marking system making it difficult to seek help from outside **advisors** such as the dean of students.
N/A	I also don't think the academic **advisor** system works particularly well, I haven't felt very supported.
N/A	It also came to the attention of some students that other students were getting a great deal more help from their **advisors** down to the books they should use and topics they should cover within their dissertation, whereas some only received the most basic editing. I think this system of dissertation advising need to be better monitored and regulated so that every student receives the same amount of help.
N/A	I was completely alone on my overseas module. I didn't hear anything from my **advisor**.
N/A	My **advisor** (who has been the same for my whole time here) looks blankly at me if I say hello to him in the corridor, for example. It really makes you want to make an effort (detect the sarcasm here).
N/A	Non-existent relationship with academic **advisor**, would have liked to been able to go and ask advice.
N/A	My academic **advisor** did not provide enough and good advices when I choose my postgraduate courses.

N/A	Found that at times support from staff not as available as could have been I.e., from personal **advisor** during personal issues. However, this support was beyond expectations from course director.
N/A	My **advisor** has been very hard to get a hold of. There are either ill or away for a month at a time.
N/A	even though I had fun undertaking the Final Year Project (Dissertation) I feel that my **advisor** for this was particularly unresponsive to questions and pleas for advice, which caused a lot of undue stress and anxiety.
N/A	My personal **advisor** was a bit disengaged and I didn't feel she took particular interest in how I was doing, achievements, disappointments along the way, etc. As a result, I never approached her for help.
N/A	Advisor was nearly impossible to contact.
N/A	I feel that with my Joint Honours degree in Mathematics with economics, not enough choice is given with the modules I could pick and my **advisor** did not help at module at all when I was finding module decisions difficult.
N/A	The contact between student **advisors** and students is inadequate.
N/A	I'm disappointed with my **advisor**, lack of up-to-date teaching examples.
N/A	More emphasis on pastoral sessions with **advisors**.
N/A	I emailed my **advisor** for help and received no response.
N/A	IIf possible, in the case of **advisors**, it will be very useful to make assign students to staff that are around most of the week.
N/A	Personal **advisor** interaction has been poor as they do not ask how anything is going or checked in, the only time I've been to see them they were not helpful.
N/A	My academic **advisor**, who I've not seen since my first week of first year, told the group of us that he was not there for pastoral care, and we were only to go and talk to him about the course subjects. The general hostility really put me off ever wanting to see him, so when I've need advice I've had to independently find people I'm comfortable with.

School	Positive comment
NSC	I had a specific academic **advisor** who helped me a lot. He was very good.
NSC	My academic **advisor** is brilliant on all fronts. Placement officer was extremely understanding and helpful regarding my personal life. Facilitators were very supportive.
NSC	Most of the lecturers are very friendly and approachable. My Academic **advisor** is very supportive and is quick at responding to any of my emails. I think the course is very clear on assessments and what is required of us from then. We are always told about assignments in plenty of time, get examples of them and are given the marking criteria and subsequent lectures to help us.
NSC	Academic **advisor** would promptly reply to emails and would meet up if required. The placement organiser (???) has been extremely helpful throughout the course, giving advice and providing placement information. Practice areas were excellent.
NSC	We were always well supported. Our academic **advisor** was good.
NSC	The whole course has overall been really enjoyable and I feel that it has enabled me to develop and grow. My academic **advisors** have been supportive and always there if I needed help or advice.
NSC	My support from my personal **advisor** has been brilliant, being able to help and support me with issues I've faced. The change in EBL packages.
NSC	Academic support was excellent. My **advisor** was constantly available for queries and face to have meetings. The theory directly related to placements, which allowed me to see the benefit of evidence based practice. We were given lots of skills sessions, which have me confidence for practice.
NSC	Very supportive academic **advisor**. Generally supportive mentors.
NSC	Mostly good lecturers and external speakers. Good support from my academic **advisor**.
NSC	I'm well supported by academic **advisor**.
NSC	A very good course where the staff seem genuinely interested in how I am developing as a professional. An excellent academic **advisor** who always responds promptly to my queries, and who gives very good feedback in terms of academic work. Excellent opportunities to work practically and practice scenarios using good equipment.
NSC	I am thoroughly grateful for my personal adviser, I think towards the end of my course she understood me more and was able to give me the support that I need. Skills and drills days, I felt were very valuable.
NSC	Academic **advisor** support.
NSC	My personal **advisor** was fantastic.

NSC	. Feedback from **advisor** always prompt and helpful.
NSC	Fantastic academic **advisor**. Good support with additional needs.
NSC	Support is available from any of the academic staff.
NSC	. My academic **advisor** has always been there for me when I have needed it .
NSC	The support from our lecturers and personal **advisors** has been amazing and I have always had support or advice when I needed it.
NSC	My personal **advisor** at the university has been fantastic support for me during my course.
NSC	Supportive, knowledgeable, motivated mental health academic staff and academic **advisor**.
NSC	I was given an extremely helpful and supportive academic **advisor** in my third year therefore writing my dissertation I have managed to feel more confident about.
NSC	My academic **advisor** has been very supportive throughout the course.
NSC	Able to change **advisor** to someone that cared!
N/A	I've thoroughly enjoyed and relished their help, teaching and creating relationships with my tutors and **advisors**.
N/A	I had a very good dissertation **advisor**.
N/A	**advisors** are always there to help and offer their opinions and advice if it has been needed.
N/A	I feel that I have received support and advice when I have needed it especially from my personal **advisor**, which I am grateful for.
N/A	I have been especially helped and supported by the then senior **advisor** whilst I have been studying. Her care for individual students concerns and welfare is exceptional as is her enthusiasm and knowledge of her subject areas. I honestly do not think anything was too much trouble for her to assist us as a student body.
N/A	Course is well organised. Library staff are easy to reach and provide help. Teaching staff are friendly and thoughtful.
N/A	The use of a personal **advisor** has been exceptionally useful allowing me to communicate properly with a lecturer of my course who is always free as a neutral point of view.
N/A	My **advisors** were really good.
N/A	My student **advisor** was very helpful with all sorts of things (applications, etc).
N/A	My final year project **advisor** has been brilliant.
N/A	I have got a good **advisor**.

N/A	I think the course is very well organised and I feel that whenever you need help or need to talk to your **advisor**, they are always available.
N/A	Brilliant personal **advisor** who was invaluable at times.
N/A	The third year modules are interesting and my **advisor** was very helpful and gave advice when I applied to do modules that resulted in an uneven weighting in the two semesters.
N/A	. My **advisor** was fantastic & greatly improved my transition to university.
N/A	My academic **advisor** has been fantastic as well, though I realise this is likely due to him, rather than a characteristic of the school as a whole.
N/A	I have also received amazing support from my academic **advisor** who has helped me with any troubles I have had at a moment's notice.
N/A	Academic support is very good – academic **advisor** they've been very helpful. Very helpful about extensions.
N/A	I have been fortunate in having an excellent academic **advisor**. He has provided extensive careers advice, support in postgraduate options, and help with academic issues and advice regarding module selection. As a result, I have not experienced any situations in which I have been uncertain of where to go and who to talk to.
N/A	The…. School is very supportive & lecturers & **advisors** are very helpfully & respond quickly & effectively to emails & queries.
N/A	Academic **advisors** have been easily contactable throughout the course.
N/A	Asides from the academic stuff, the pastoral care on my course has been amazing. I've always felt I could approach **advisors** and tutors, there's always someone to talk to.
N/A	I have also been fortunate to have a great personal **advisor**
N/A	Good support from the **advisors** and lecturers.
N/A	At least my **advisor** is a extremely helpful lady,
N/A	The lecturers at the university are always willing to help and explain any problems or issues, especially your student **advisor**, whom is always available to discuss and issues.
N/A	My **advisor** has been really helpful throughout the course and provided support when needed.
N/A	**Advisor** system is a great idea, in theory, however I did not feel I had a particularly good **advisor**. I've placed this in the positives, because it was very reassuring to know that I did have someone I could reach out to if I needed to.
N/A	Staff and personal **advisor** have been a fantastic support and have worked hard to meet my needs. T

N/A	The support from staff is excellent. If you ever have a problem, however big or small there is always someone to help. In particular, our **advisors**.
N/A	Felt that lecturers were always willing to go out of their way to accommodate students' needs (especially my **advisor**).
N/A	All lecturers were friendly, helpful, insightful and willing to help when I needed it. The sports teams are amazing.
N/A	My lecturers and **advisors** were always available to meet, which was very helpful.
N/A	I would highly recommend the practices of the academic **advisors** both in terms of academic and personal advice.
N/A	Being allocated an **advisor** relevant to your area of study.
N/A	I was able to build up a good relationship with my **advisor**, which meant I felt I could approach him with any problems I may have.
N/A	The personal support from my personal **advisor** has been outstanding especially through difficult periods, b
N/A	When my elective placement was cancelled, I received fantastic support from my personal **advisor** and the placement team lead. This made the process of finding a new placement and accommodation much easier and I really appreciated it.
N/A	Each student is given the opportunity to develop through support from personal **advisors** and staff are always prompt in returning emails.

Business Intelligence Unit (Planning Office)   Market Research

Student Engagement Focus Groups November 2014 – Findings regarding Advisory System

Background

The BIU and Union ran a series of four focus groups (one per Faculty) with non-first year undergraduate students to explore levels of awareness, requirements and involvement in student engagement at UEA focussing on those not currently involved in the SSLC.

- These included participants from a range of Schools but not all were represented.
- Across the groups there was representation of domicile, gender and age but with a female and home bias.
- Those taking part were recruited via promotion in the e-bulletin and portal so were engaged and confident enough to put themselves forward.

Whilst not the main focus of these discussions, comments on the Advisory System were common. The following outlines the key headlines for input into the review of the advisory system currently taking place.

Headline findings regarding Advisory System

- In the SCI, SSF and FMH groups the Advisory System was spontaneously mentioned as a way of feeding back to the University but with very mixed experience reported.
- **When done well this is an extremely positive element of the students experience** – Across the groups there were extremely positive reports of very visible and active advisors – when this is working well it was clearly a positive and much relied upon support for students which aided in both their academic studies but also in the more emotional feeling of security.
- **However, a range of issues were raised by participants – these can be summarised as a perceived**

1. **Lack of contact** - Several respondents across the groups reported never having met their advisor and perceived that they have never even been contacted by them.
   - Several mentions of not hearing from advisor until second year.
   - This was of particular concern to two final year students who raised concern regarding who they would be able to approach for a reference.
   - Several mentions of advisors not responding to student emails.

2. **Lack of action** – In several groups there were discussions regarding the perception that "nothing really happens" when report issues to advisor
   - **Slow response times** - Some respondents reported going straight to a specific lecturer/module convener with academic queries/ issues as this was quicker/more effective than going to the advisor.
   - **Lack of signposting knowledge** - Several groups raised the issue of advisors not being able to respond to/ advise on/ find out more about student issues beyond their studies e.g. wider UEA issues.

- **Emotional support -** One group talked about feeling that advisors are OK for academic issues but less so for personal/emotional problems (they felt this would depend entirely on the people skills of individuals)

3. **Lack of choice** – The SSF group raised the issue of not being able to choose an advisor (even if a student has requested a change) - they felt that it was very difficult to maintain a relationship with an advisor that you have not chosen.

Appendix 9.6: Information from other Universities

1) The University of Bath: http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA33.pdf

2) *The University of Surrey: Extract from the University of Surrey's Civil, Chemical and Environmental Engineering General Handbook 2012-3*

4.35 Who are Personal Tutors and what is their role?

During Introduction Week you will be assigned a Personal Tutor, who is a member of the academic staff. The role of the personal tutor is to monitor and appraise the academic progress of his or her personal tutees and to take a particular interest in their general welfare. Any problems you may have in your studies or in your University life in general should be raised in the first instance with your personal tutor. Your personal tutor will probably want to meet you at intervals throughout the year, firstly to get to know you a little better and, secondly, to check that you are alright and making satisfactory progress academically. These personal tutoring sessions are quite informal and should not be regarded as some sort of ordeal. Some personal tutors organise fixed appointments, others prefer you to drop in when it suits you. In any event, do keep in regular contact. As with all academic staff, if you wish to see your Personal Tutor but he/she cannot be found in his/her office, do please leave a note or send an e-mail to let them know that you would like to meet.

We understand that problems arise from time to time. Whether your difficulty is interfering with your work or your general well-being, please do see your personal tutor as soon as possible. **It is impossible for the University to consider circumstances it knows nothing about.** Your personal tutor may not be able to resolve the difficulty by him- or herself, but should know how you can get guidance or practical help. Any matter that you discuss with your personal tutor is treated as being strictly confidential.

4.36 How often should I see my Personal Tutor?

You must have at least one meeting each semester with your personal tutor. This will normally be a face-to-face meeting, unless you are studying away from the University or on professional training placement. In Year 1 the expectation is that you should meet your tutor at least two to three times per semester, and in fact some of these meetings may be linked to PDP (see Section 9 in Part A of this Handbook).. In later years, the onus is more on you to keep in contact.

Section 9:

9. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Personal development planning (PDP) is a very important aspect of your degree studies at the University of Surrey. The process should give you a range of skills that will support your lifelong learning. PDP is about:

- Enabling you to become an independent learner in an increasingly complex and fast changing environment
- Helping you to get the most out of your time at University
- Increasing your ability to find and get the job you want when you graduate

These core concepts mean that you need to be able to identify how best you learn and be proactive in assessing your own learning needs. You will also have opportunities to become familiar with all the opportunities that life at Surrey can offer, and decide how to make the most appropriate use of them.

Finally PDP should help you to decide what type of job or career you seek when you leave and know more about how employers assess graduate applicants for such posts so that you can present your skills and achievements most effectively.

These objectives imply an increasing mastery of certain core or transferable skills. The following list is all built upon the basic skills of numeracy, literacy, personal communication and IT.

Core or transferable skills for personal development planning (PDP)

PDP will help you to:

1. Identify your preferred learning styles and know how to maximise the approaches which will be most helpful for you

2. Identify appropriate strategies for study organisation and time management

3. Make effective use of the Library and other resources

4. Find out what is available through the University and make appropriate choices about how and when to get involved

5. Plan ahead and identify the elements necessary to manage projects

6. Know how to analyse data in a relevant manner

7. Want to keep up with changes and new developments both in your own academic sphere and more generally

8. Demonstrate the ability to work in a team

9. Understand academic writing: how to plan, structure and complete essays, coursework and examinations to meet University requirements

10. Develop skills in oral presentation techniques and know how to be appropriately influential

11. Have a broad understanding of what jobs or careers might interest you.

12. Understand what competencies their preferred employers are looking for and know how to demonstrate strength in relevant areas.

Activities that relate to your personal development planning are available through a wide variety of sources. These include your faculty, course and tutor, the library, the student zone on the University web site http://portal.surrey.ac.uk/skills/students, the Student Union and the careers department. Working on these skills and through these and other resources will also help your tutor to give you more complete reference when you leave the University. The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences has, for many years, provided opportunities for the development of personal transferable skills – both through explicit modules and by embedding opportunities for development in various parts of the syllabus. PDP is, in a sense, formalising something that we have done and believed in for a long time. Where appropriate, you will hear more about PDP in your modules on Transferable Skills.

3) The University of York:
   http://www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/monitoring-review/University%20Policy%20on%20Undergraduate%20Supervision%202011-2016.pdf

Appendix 9.7: Review Meetings and Attendance

1) The Project Initiation Meeting was held on 25 June 2014. Attendees: Professor Neil Ward (PVC Academic), Dr Adam Longcroft (Academic Director of Taught Programmes), Dr Andrea Blanchflower (Director of Learning and Teaching Services), Dr Annie Grant (Dean of Students), Lisa Williams (Assistant Registrar), Caroline Sauverin (Head of Learning and Teaching Services).

2) The Project Steering Group met on 8/12/14. Attendees: Professor Neil Ward (PVC Academic), Dr Annie Grant (DOS), Helena Gillespie (Academic Director of Learning Enhancement), Dr Andrea Blanchflower (Director, LTS), Dr Adam Longcroft (ADTP), Connor Rand (Education Officer, Union of Students), Caroline Sauverin (Head, LTS).

3) The Project Team met on 15/10/14, 21/11, 14, 9/1/15. Attendees: Professor Neil Ward (PVC Academic), Karen McCullagh (SA - LAW), James Watson (SA - ECO), Pierre Chardaire (SA - CMP), Michael Pfeil (SA - HSC), Stephen Dorling (Employability lead - ENV), Alfonso Avila-Merino (SA - NBS), Michael Gough (SA - PPL), James Goodwin (Joint Head of Careers - CCEN), Kirsty Walne (Faculty Manager - SSF), Michael Lengsfield (SA - AMA), Margaret Bunting (SA - MED), a representative of the SU (Connor Rand (Education Officer, Union of Students) or Josh Clare), Caroline Sauverin (Head, LTS).

4) A meeting of the Senior Advisers was held on 11/11/14. Attendees: Neil Ward (PVC Acad), Adam Longcroft (EDU), Alfonso Avila-Merino (NBS), Gareth Spark (LAW), James Watson (ECO), Manoj Joshi (ENV), Maggie Bunting (MED), Mike Gough (PPL), Michael Pfeil (HSC), Caroline Sauverin (LTS), Tom Licence (HIS), Yvonne Johnson (SWK), Annie Grant (DOS), James Goodwin (Careers), Jo Spiro (UUEAS), Kirsty Walne (NBS), Pierre Chardaire (CMP), Michael Wormstone (BIO).

5) The draft policy was considered at UEA Heads meeting on 23/2/15

6) The report and draft policy to be considered by LTC on 18/3/15.

Appendix 9.8: Proposed Advising Policy for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students

University of East Anglia

Advising Policy for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students

The Purpose of the Advising System

UEA has an excellent reputation for the student experience, and our students report high levels of satisfaction with the academic and pastoral support they receive from staff. Central to the University's approach to student support is the Advising System. The UEA Advising System aims to support students in achieving their academic and personal development and prepare students for graduate employment or further study by offering academic, professional and personal advice, guidance and support.

The Scope of the Advising System

The Advising System is available to all taught students, including visiting and part-time students. Each student will be allocated an Adviser at the start of their studies and each school has a Senior Adviser whose role it is to oversee the operation of the Advising System in their School. (Senior Advisers are supported by a Deputy Senior Adviser and a Disability Liaison Officer). The principal mechanism of advising students on campus is face-to-face meetings with their individual academic Adviser. For students studying away from the University, on distance-learning courses, placements, study abroad or in industry, the nature of the support may be different, and alternative methods of communications including Skype, email and telephone will be offered.

Advising – What students can expect:

1. All Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students are allocated an Adviser who is a member of teaching staff in the students' School of Study. Advisers will invite students to meet with them at the start of their course and regularly throughout their period of study.

2. Students who are studying a joint honours course delivered by two Schools will be assigned a lead Adviser from the School hosting the course, plus a named link person, normally the deputy Course Director, from the other contributing School.

3. A student's Adviser will offer advice and guidance to support the student's academic, personal and professional development. This will include helping the student to reflect upon and benefit from the feedback they receive on their work, along with the person who provided the feedback. The Adviser helps students reflect on their academic and professional development at each stage of their course so that by the time they successfully complete their degree, students not only have the skills, knowledge and experience to secure the next opportunity in their career, but also are able to articulate this to prospective employers, or to Universities if they wish to go on to further study.

4. Students may also choose to speak to their Advisers about personal issues affecting their studies or their welfare. The Adviser will be open and receptive to offering initial support, but will also be knowledgeable about the professional services provided by the Dean of Students' Office and the Student Union Advice Centre and will refer students to these services whenever appropriate.

5. Students should note that where they have discussed extenuating circumstances with their Adviser, they would still need to request any subsequent extension or other adjustment via their Learning and Teaching Hub.

6. A student's Adviser is the most likely person to write references to accompany job applications and applications for postgraduate courses. If a student does not attend meetings with their Adviser, then the effectiveness of references is likely to be hampered. An Adviser who has rarely seen a student should inform that student that they are unlikely to be able to write an effective reference.

7. Students will be invited to at least three meetings per year in order to provide the opportunity to help them reflect on their academic performance and future career preparation and goals, and ask for advice on addressing any difficulties they may be facing. Students are expected to attend these meetings, but if a student explains in writing to their Adviser that things are going well with their studies and they have no issues to raise, their Adviser may cancel the request to meet.

8. Advice on making these meetings as effective as possible is available in the Advising Meeting Framework, which suggests topics to cover at each meeting (LINK). Schools may add to or adapt these topics, as appropriate for particular disciplines.

9. Students can contact their Adviser at other times if they would like to discuss pressing matters impacting on their UEA experience. Advisers will ensure that their advisees are informed about their availability and their preferred contact method(s).

10. If the School has concerns about a student's attendance and engagement, the student may be invited to a meeting with their Adviser to discuss these concerns. This may be part of the routine meeting, or an extra meeting may be arranged. The student is expected to attend any such meeting.

11. The University will endeavour to ensure that students have the same Adviser throughout their period of study, but there may be times when another Adviser has to be allocated to a student. If this is the case, the student will be told, usually by the Senior Adviser, the reason for the change, whether it is temporary or permanent, and the arrangements for meeting the new Adviser.

12. If a student wishes to change their Adviser, the student should initially speak to their Learning and Teaching Hub, which will initiate the process with the School's Senior Adviser. The student's School will try to accommodate all such requests and will not insist that the student gives a reason for the request to change.

13. If a student has any difficulties with the Advising System this should be raised initially with the Senior Adviser. If the Senior Adviser cannot resolve the issue the student should raise their concerns with the Head of School, the Dean of Students' Office or the Students' Union Advice Centre.

14. Students will be invited to comment on their experience of the Advising System annually, via their Staff-Student Liaison Committees, and online surveys.

15. There may be instances when Information discussed in confidence with an Adviser is shared with others, confidentially, to ensure the student receives the best support, in accordance

with advice from the Dean of Students. The advisee will be informed of this. Records and documentation regarding students are held securely and access to them controlled.

Advising –the role of the Adviser

1. Advisers will arrange to see their new advisees as part of their induction onto their new course, and regularly throughout their studies.

2. Advisers will invite their advisees to at least three meetings each year, in addition to the initial meeting at the start of their course; in some Schools (particularly, but not exclusively, professional Schools) this may be more.

3. Where a student has provided their Adviser with an assurance in writing that their studies are going well and that they have no issues to raise, they may decline to attend the meeting; whether an Adviser subsequently cancels the meeting, or still expects the student to attend will depend on factors such as the student's performance and attendance to date, their course and the stage of their studies. Meetings specifically convened to discuss attendance and engagement are not optional.

4. Advisers will ensure that they offer opportunities for students to discuss any concerns at other times. Advisers are expected to respond within 48 hours to such requests so advisees can be given timely advice, reassurance or further referral as required.

5. Advisers should ensure that their advisees know how to contact them and to whom to go to when they are unavailable, including out of semester time.

6. Advisers of students studying a joint honours course delivered by two Schools should ensure they keep in regular contact with their advisee's link person in the other School, including joint meeting(s) with the student if appropriate, to ensure such students are well supported and advised.

7. A good Adviser listens, avoids making judgements, is proactive when difficulties become apparent, and is fully aware of UEA regulations and sources of further advice and guidance.

8. Advisers will provide ongoing support to advisees. They are expected to discuss academic progress, personal and skills development and general wellbeing at the meetings, and an 'Advising Meeting Framework' to help them with this is available. (*This is under construction*). Schools may add to or adapt these topics, as appropriate for particular disciplines.

9. It is expected that Advisers will be able to assist their advisees in interpreting and reflecting upon feedback on their assessments, especially in a holistic way across modules. Helping support students in their studies is a key component of the Advising System. Where the Adviser does not have sufficient detailed technical expertise, they may facilitate a meeting with another relevant academic.

10. Advisers are expected to meet with any advisee where the School has concerns about the student's attendance and engagement[2], as part of the Attendance, Progress and Engagement Regulation (LINK).

11. Advisers should ensure that they are fully briefed on the requirements of the role, have undergone appropriate training at the required frequencies, and are able to refer advisees to the other specialist support services as required. It is the responsibility of the University to offer Adviser training opportunities and of Heads of Schools, normally through their Senior Adviser, to highlight training requirement for Advisers and ensure Advisers attend at the required frequencies (at least once every three years).

12. Advisers are expected to write references for those advisees who have regularly attended Advising Meetings. An Adviser who has rarely seen a student should inform that student that they are unlikely to be able to write an effective reference.

13. Advisers will have access to their advisees' student record information, and will be expected to record meeting attendance to monitor the operation of the Advising System[3].

14. Advisers are expected to make brief notes on the student record system[4] of the main points covered in meetings and any action points to inform future discussions with their advisee. These records will be available to the advisee, the Adviser and the Senior and Deputy Senior Adviser in the School.

15. Advisers will respect student confidentiality and be aware of when it is and when it is not appropriate to share information with others. Advice on the latter can be found in DOS's Responding to Students in Difficulty guidance publication and from DOS staff.

Advising – the role of the Senior Adviser

1. Every Head of School will appoint a Senior Adviser and a Deputy Senior Adviser to manage the Advising System within their School.

2. The Senior Adviser allocates advisees to Advisers, working with their Learning and Teaching Service Hub, reviewing allocations each year and being mindful of study leave and other academic commitments. Senior Advisers should review the number of advisees each Adviser has annually, so that the load is manageable alongside the Adviser's other academic commitments. Students tend to like to have the same Adviser each year, so if a change is necessary, due to non-availability of the original Adviser, or an uneven load, the Senior Adviser must ensure that the students are informed of the change in a pro-active manner, and that arrangements are put in place for the students to meet their new Adviser. Senior Advisers will also support students who wish to change their Adviser.

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[2] In some Schools this responsibility lies with the Engagement Officer.

[3] This is dependent on a development of the Student Record System.

[4] This is dependent on development of the Student Record System; in the meantime, Advisers will keep notes locally.

3. Senior Advisers will ensure that students know about the Advising System through induction presentations, handbooks and/or initial advising meetings and they know who their Adviser is.

4. Senior Advisers will ensure that all the Advisers in their School are up to date with the training requirements and are briefed on any School-specific aspects of their advising role. They will keep abreast of up to date information on advising and sources of additional information and support, disseminating to Advisers appropriately.

5. Senior Adviser can expect to pick up some more complex referrals from Advisers, and they should be available for advisees if they are having problems with their Advisers or cannot get hold of them.

6. Senior Advisers are expected to act as Adviser to any students who are under 18, or allocate such students to another Adviser in the School who has had a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

7. Senior Advisers will report annually on the effectiveness of the Advising System in their School to the School's Staff Student Liaison Committee, the School Board and the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee. To this end, they will attend the School's Staff Student Liaison Committee and they may chair the Committee.

8. Senior Advisers will have a Deputy Senior Adviser with whom to share the responsibilities.

Advising – the role of the Disability Liaison Officer

1. The Head of School will appoint a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) for their School. For some Schools, the Senior Adviser or Deputy Senior Adviser takes on this responsibility. Where it is a separate person, the Senior Adviser and Disability Liaison Officer work closely together.

2. The DLO will act as a referral and information point for all other members of staff and students in the School about disability issues and support.

3. The DLO will liaise with the Disability Co-ordinator in the Dean of Students' Office concerning University policy, procedure and strategy and other matters related to provision of effective support for students with disabilities, including specific learning difficulties, or with mental health difficulties with respect to the learning and teaching environment.

4. The DLO will promote and disseminate central staff development initiatives in relation to the impact of disability issues on a student's academic performance and the adjustments that can be made to minimise the impact of their difficulties.

5. The DLO will have broad knowledge of disability legislation and the University's response, and be able to inform other staff of current initiatives and requirements.

6. The DLO will attend staff development courses in the area of disability to ensure up to date familiarisation with current developments.

Advising – Further information and resources

(1) Further resources are available on the Learning and Teaching Services' website:(under construction – to be added)

(2) Responding to Students in Difficulty: a guide for advisers and other UEA staff, Dean of Students' Office. Available in hard copy from Dos and at (website to be added)

(3) Advising Meeting Framework (to be developed by James Goodwin/Caroline Sauverin/Senior Advisers/ Associate Deans)