

LTC14D237

Title: LTC Review of the Advising System
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Issue

The review of the Advising System, including a proposed new Advising Policy, was considered at LTC on 18 March 2015. The meeting resolved that:

- (1) the Chair, the Head of LTS (Systems) and the ADTP would meet to reconsider the wording in paragraph 7 of the section relating to Advising- what students can expect;
- (2) the policy be approved, subject to the rewording of paragraph 7, as outlined above, and the development and implementation of further information and resources as outlined at the end of the report).

The Policy has been reworded, and is attached for final approval. The changes are:

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 (within the first two weeks) and regularly throughout their period of study.
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.~~ It is important that students attend these meetings, so their Adviser can support them through their studies and beyond, for example by writing references for jobs and further study.

Advising – the role of the adviser:

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.~~ Advisers are expected

to strongly encourage students to attend these meetings, so that a supportive and effective relationship can develop. Meetings specifically convened to discuss attendance and engagement are not optional.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the final Policy, as attached.

Resource Implications

As previously noted, 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 approval, the new Policy will be implemented for taught undergraduate and postgraduate students from academic year 2015/6.

Following approval of the policy, the project team will continue to work on resources and training for advisers in time for next academic year.

Further Information

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University of East Anglia
Advising Policy for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students
from 2015/6

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 (within the first two weeks) 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. It is important that students attend these meetings, so their Adviser can support them through their studies and beyond, for example by writing references for jobs and further study.
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. 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. Advisers are expected to strongly encourage students to attend these meetings, so that a supportive and effective relationship can develop. 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 development*). 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 engagement¹, as part of the Attendance, Progress and Engagement Regulation.
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

¹ In some Schools this responsibility lies with the Engagement Officer.

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 System².
14. Advisers are expected to make brief notes on the student record system³ 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.
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.

² This is dependent upon a development of the Student Record System.

³ This is dependent upon development of the Student Record System; in the meantime, Advisers will keep notes locally.

5. Senior Advisers 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

Further information is available on the Learning and Teaching Services website:

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/staff/teaching/advising>