Guidance on Advising

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1.0   Introduction and Purpose

1.1   The advising guidance provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities for academic advising as well as a framework for advisor meetings.

1.2   This document should be read in conjunction with the *Policy on Advising Taught Students*.

2.0   Scope and Definitions

2.1   An Advisor is an appropriately trained member of academic staff. They will be a student's first port of call for advice or direction to further support on academic and wellbeing matters.

3.0   General Guidance

3.1   Roles and Responsibilities

3.1.1   **Role of the Academic Advisor**
   a)   To assist students with the process of induction and orientation into academic life and the University community and respond promptly to any communication

from them (i.e. normally within 2-3 working days, with Advisors providing out of hours signposting information within their email signature);

b) To work with students to improve their academic success;

c) To retain an interest in their students' personal and general academic and professional development throughout their academic careers while at the University, providing information and guidance on academic choice;

d) To monitor both academic performance and student engagement in a proactive manner and advise on constructive strategies to enable improvement for example through the use of a personal portfolio or personal development plan;

e) To offer general academic advice to their allocated students on their general progress and development towards the fulfilment of the Purposes of a Manchester Education, and to signpost relevant careers and skills development provision to enhance employability;

f) To listen and offer students help and advice about wellbeing/non-academic matters and to signpost or refer students to other student services for further assistance if necessary*;

g) To flag issues of concern around wellbeing or other matters to Student Support (within the School or centrally, as appropriate);

h) To ensure that a note is kept of discussions at each meeting (with the student) and any follow-up actions agreed with the student;

i) To provide references for students when requested.

* If a student discloses a disability to an Academic Advisor, or the Academic Advisor becomes aware that the student has a disability, the Academic Advisor must seek the student's consent to make a referral to the DASS. If the student gives consent in an Academic Advising meeting, the Academic Advisor may offer to complete the online referral form in the meeting. Advisors can also encourage students to send any existing medical evidence they have to dass@manchester.ac.uk. The Academic Advisor must write to the student to formally acknowledge the disclosure and to record the student's response the request for consent to make a referral to the DASS. The Student Support and Welfare Team in the student's home School must be sent a copy of this formal communication. Further information on referring students to DASS can be found at: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/working-with-disabled-students/policies-and-procedures/referring-students-to-the-dso/. This page contains a link to online referral form for staff members to complete once consent has been given by the student.

3.1.2 Professional Services

In order to support the work of Advisors, PS staff in appropriate roles may carry out some tasks as part of their day-to-day roles, e.g. as part of Student Hubs or in capacity of Student Support and Wellbeing colleagues.

Role of the student

3.1.3 Students are expected to:

   a) Attend and prepare for all arranged meetings with their Advisor and respond promptly to any communication from them;

   b) Make appropriate use of all the support and guidance offered at the University;

   c) Take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties (academic or personal) at the earliest possible opportunity;

   d) Report promptly to their School or Advisor when they are ill or have other good reason for non-attendance or failing to meet deadlines;

   e) Keep records of meetings and agreed actions.

3.1.4 Students can expect:

   a) To be given an Advisor who:

      i. Will assist with the process of induction and orientation into academic life and the University community;

      ii. Will retain an interest in their personal and general academic development throughout their academic career;

      iii. Will offer general academic advice on their general progress and development and signpost relevant careers and skills development provision;

      iv. Will offer help and advice about wellbeing/non-academic matters and signpost students to other student services for further assistance if necessary;

      v. May be approached to provide references;

      vi. May be invited to offer guidance or advice on University processes, e.g., disciplinary procedures, mitigating circumstances.

   b) To request to change their Advisor should they so wish; students should, however, provide specific reasons for any such request and it should be noted that it may not always be possible to accommodate the request.

3.1.5 **Frequency and format of meetings** (also see 3.2: Timetables and Agendas for Advisor Meetings)

   a) All students should be contacted by their Academic Advisor at regular intervals during their studies (e.g. twice a semester, and three times in Semester 1 for new students).

   b) At least one of these contacts per Semester should be an in-person meeting (this may mean on campus or online e.g. via Zoom or Teams, but there should be good quality one-to-one communication).

   c) Staff members are encouraged to offer group meetings, recognising that at least one individual one-to-one meeting per semester must also be offered.

d)   Students should be proactive in setting up any further meetings that are considered necessary. Advisors should also take the initiative in arranging an initial Advisor meeting for first year students in welcome week, or as soon as is practical thereafter.

e)   All meetings should be structured with a clear and agreed agenda.

f)   An Advisor may initiate a meeting where there are reports of unsatisfactory attendance or progress from unit coordinators or in the event of any other cause for concern.

Role of the School

3.1.6   Each School is expected to:

a.   Ensure that all students on taught programmes are assigned appropriately trained Advisor prior to or on arrival; (this includes completing the New Academics programme and the online Academic Advising module);

b.   Ensure that a colleague with Workload Allocation Model (WAM) responsibility / authority is involved in assigning advisee numbers to Academic Advisors;

c.   Ensure that accurate information about the purpose and operation of the Advising system is drawn proactively to the attention of students via degree programme handbooks and other sources and during the first meeting with the Advisor;

d.   Ensure that all staff undertaking Advising have been given appropriate information on the expectations of the role and the supporting resources available and offered training if required;

e.   Evaluate annually the operation of the Advising system within the School (collating student feedback through Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), Boards of Studies or other relevant forums where general feedback on the operation of the Advising system should be reviewed annually, and through questionnaires where these are used), indicating the ways in which University expectations are met; this should then be reported on, via the Senior Advisor, to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent); the quality of the Advising system should also be monitored as part of the continuous monitoring process; SSLCs should have Academic Advising on their meeting agendas as a standard item, to ensure that it is discussed;

f.   Ensure the Advising system is well communicated to students and all staff;

g.   Ensure that the School/Division has arrangements in place to deal with cases where students don't engage with their Academic Advisor;

h.   Co-ordinate Advising provision within the School;

i.   Provide a document/webpage resource that sets out how Advisors can navigate local teams that feed into current structures, to enable easy access to relevant teams/colleagues;

j.   Ensure continuity of Advising throughout a student's degree programme as far as is possible. Where the role is re-assigned, the student should be informed immediately.

3.1.7   Role of the Head of School

a) To allocate Advisors to students in line with institutional principles and in accordance with the School's Workload Allocation Model (WAM); this role may be delegated to an appropriate member of staff. The recommended minimum time commitment per student. adjusted depending on local agreement on tutorial formats (e.g. group Advising meetings), is as follows
  i. Minimum two meetings in Semester 1*
  ii. Minimum one meeting in Semester 2*
  iii. Meeting preparation/record-keeping time - 1 hour per student
  iv. Additional time may be required of Advisors in relation to associated work such as writing references for students
  v. These meetings should be reflected in the WAM.
b) To identify a Senior Advisor for the School;
c) To ensure that appropriate training is provided for all Advisors;
d) To consider requests by students to change their Advisor (though this could be delegated to the Head of Department/Subject, the Senior Academic Advisor or the School Information, Advice and Guidance team – Schools should have a designated role/team who will consider any requests from students to change their Advisor).

3.1.8   **Role of the Senior Advisor**

a) To act as a co-ordinating point for general communication between the School and central student and academic services, e.g., disseminating information about institutional student support and services;
b) To act as a point of contact for other Advisors, provide guidance in the event of complicated issues and be involved in training of Advisors;
c) To report to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee on the annual evaluation of the operation of the Advising system within the School;
d) If requested by the Head of School, to consider requests by students to change their Advisor.

3.1.9   **Role of the Faculty**

a) To monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the University's expectations of the Advising system, via annual reports from the Senior Advisor to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee on the implementation of the Advising system; the quality of the Advising system should also be monitored as part of the continuous monitoring process.

3.1.10 **Role of the University**
a) To maintain an overview of the implementation and effectiveness of the University's Advising provision;
b) To support Advisors and Senior Advisors, the University will provide easily accessible information regarding relevant student support services as well as training and guidance on the areas expected to be covered by the Advising system;
c) To enable Advisors to easily access to relevant student information and data;
d) To ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to recognise high quality performance in Advising via recognition within the academic promotions criteria, and an institutional award scheme for Advisors.

3.2 Timetables and Agendas for Advisor Meetings

3.2.1 As outlined in the Policy on Advising Taught Students, advisors are expected to make contact with their student advisees *at least twice per semester during each year of study and at least one of these contacts per semester should take the form of an in person/ one-to-one meeting (either on campus or online, e.g. via Teams)*. For undergraduate students, an in person meeting between the Advisor and the student should also be arranged in Year 1 welcome week, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Sequence of Meetings
3.2.2 The following tables set out the expected pattern of *in person/face-to-face meetings* between advisors and students:

Undergraduate students	Welcome Week	Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 1	1 Meeting	2 Meetings	2 Meetings
Years 2 and beyond		2 Meetings	2 Meetings

Postgraduate taught students	Semester 1	Semester 2
All years	2 Meetings	2 Meetings

3.2.3 Advisor contact and meetings should take place in all years of student enrolment, including study abroad years (or Semesters) and placement years. When students are away from The University as part of their studies, flexibility in the format of advisor meetings will be employed. For example, a Teams meeting may be considered the best format for all Advisor/advisee meetings under these circumstances.

Group Meetings:
3.2.4 It is recognised that the approach to Advising should be adapted to local School arrangements in order to take advantage of local expertise and to build on existing

good practice. It is recognised that group meetings can take place in order to provide updates and to share information (for example as part of an induction to Advising) and that they can also provide a valuable networking opportunity to students. Group meetings should be used only to supplement the minimum number of meetings outlined in the Policy.

Indicative Agendas for Meetings:

3.2.5   Suggested timetables and agendas for meetings are provided below. It is acknowledged that topics for discussion will reflect the needs and context of the specific student and their stage of studies, so additional topics or discussion areas may be appropriate.

3.2.6   The timings of these meetings can be adapted to fit programmes running on different annual patterns and of differing lengths. Beyond this, students can request *additional* meetings with their Advisor which will be arranged within a reasonable time.

3.2.7   It is acknowledged that topics for discussion will reflect the needs and context of students' studies

Table 1: Indicative agenda for undergraduate programme meetings

Undergraduate Programmes	
Year 1 Meeting 1 (in Welcome Week)	**Welcome and Introductions** • Discuss and confirm unit choice/registration and advise as necessary • Explain the Advising system - how it supports students in the normal course of academic personal and professional development; how the referral role works to help support students through particular difficulties; how the Advisor is a student's first point-of-contact within the School • Explain that effective Advising is a partnership between Advisor and student where the student must also fulfill their responsibilities • Introduce the range of student support and development opportunities at the University of Manchester • Explore with the student their achievements so far, their hopes for University, and what ambitions they have after their degree • Please note, some of the topics mentioned above may be more appropriate for discussion/covering in group meetings with more than one advisee
Year 1 Meeting 2 (before the end of Semester 1)	**Settling in** • Reaffirm that the Advisor is first point of contact on all matters relating to a student's general academic experience and performance • Discuss how the student is settling into university life • Highlight the range of opportunities available in Manchester (including Peer Support, Stellify and future study), and discuss what might be of

	interest to the student
	• Review student's potential careers, and any plans for work placements, internships, *etc.*, in the vacations
Year 1 Meeting 3 (towards the end of Semester 2)	**Your Studies and Personal Development** • Review Semester 1 overall experience and progress and discuss the student's progress in Semester 2 • Discuss feedback on units taken in semester 1 • Discuss marks from Semester 1 assessments • Discuss unit choice process and options for next year • Reflect on the development of graduate skills and attributes • Remind students of the range of support and development opportunities at Manchester • Recommend students to the Careers Centre drop-in service.
Subsequent years of study Meeting 1 (Semester 1)	**Planning for the Year ahead, and beyond** • Check unit choice/registration and advise or refer to local specialist as necessary • Review overall academic progress on the programme to date, including discussion of feedback and marks for all units from the end of previous session • Academic planning (including balancing of students' extra-curricular work and commitments) • Reflect on the development of graduate skills and attributes • Recommend students to the Careers Service • Remind students of the range of support and development opportunities at Manchester
Subsequent years of study Meeting 2 (Semester 2)	**Year 2: Thinking about your Studies and Progress** **Final Year: Transition to Graduate Life** • Review academic progress to date including feedback and marks for Semester 1 work from all units • Discuss and confirm unit choice (Year 2) • Reflect on the development of graduate skills and attributes • Recommend students to the Careers Service.

Table 2: Indicative agenda for postgraduate taught programme meetings

Postgraduate Taught Programmes	
Meeting 1 (within first two weeks of the start of Semester 1)	• Explain the role of the Advisor • Explore what the student aims to achieve during their degree and highlight the opportunities available to them • Discuss the content of the programme, including details of any optional units and when the choices need to be taken • Confirm the various other sources of Student Support available at the University, including the Careers Service
Meeting 2/3 (start of Semester 2) *(Meetings*	• Discuss an overview of the student's progress including the feedback on any units taken in the previous semester. • Discuss the next stages of the programme • Discuss/confirm options, ideas and arrangements for dissertation

should continue as appropriate to the Programme)	supervision • Encourage reflection on the development of skills and attributes, and signposting the Careers Service as appropriate

4.0 Supporting documents and sources of support

4.1 Advising Taught Students Toolkit:
https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/toolkits/academicadvising/

Version amendment history box and Document control box

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Document control box	
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