

### Guidance on the role of Academic Advisor

The implementation of Academic Advisors may vary according to specific local needs and so the following are intended to inform the development of specific implementation strategies that adhere to the principles of the Policy on Personalised Learning.

1. All students will be assigned an Academic Advisor at the beginning of their period of study.
2. Students are able to request a change of Academic Advisor at any time. Schools should clearly articulate the process within programme documentation, which should include an opportunity for the student to feedback on why they feel that a change of Academic Advisor is necessary.
3. A student would normally retain the same Academic Advisor throughout their studies but it should be recognised that some flexibility might be beneficial or indeed necessary. For example, there might be positive benefits to changing advisors as a student progresses through certain Programmes. However, in order to establish a meaningful relationship between advisor and advisee, it would seem appropriate that *Academic Advisors* would be assigned for a minimum of one academic year.

While it is envisaged that a student would normally have a single Academic Advisor at any given time, there might nonetheless be circumstances in which one or more of the roles of the Advisor might be devolved to suitably qualified staff. Any such devolution would require robust management policies to ensure that students were not disadvantaged.

4. Schools should consider having a senior member of staff acting as a 'Senior Academic Advisor' who would act as a point of reference to academic advisors in specific Programmes or Discipline Areas, would disseminate good practice, liaise with other academic advisors on implementation and policy, and would oversee any relevant quality assurance issues.
5. Some schools employ Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) to enhance the provision of small group teaching. These teachers represent a valuable resource that might contribute to the process of academic advisement.
6. The role of Academic Advisor should not be considered exclusive but might normally be expected to overlap with any of several existing roles; for example, where appropriate, an Academic Advisor might also act as an Academic Tutor for a given set of students.
7. Academic Advisors would be encouraged to make use of the communication tools available in the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment.
  - For example, an appropriate group-space could be created that would allow an Academic Advisor to 'meet' with their students on-line, either synchronously (at predetermined 'surgeries') or asynchronously via a bulletin-board. The built-in communication tools readily permit confidential one-to-one dialogue or group-based discussions between all registered members of the group. This would be an excellent vehicle with which to make regular contact with students. It would offer the further advantage of automatically tracking student engagement with the contributions of

individual members being easily isolated and tracked by either time/date or content.

8. Faculty/School administration might be expected to support the role of Academic Advisor by providing relevant information in a timely fashion (e.g. attendance/performance monitoring).
9. The Academic Advisor system should be subject to annual monitoring (including input from student feedback) in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Guidance on the role of Academic Advisor (part of the Personalised Learning Policy)
Date approved:	July 2008
Approving body:	Senate
Implementation date:	July 2008
Version:	1.2
Previous review dates:	June 2008
Next review date:	tbc
Equality impact outcome	Initial screening to take place during 2010/11.
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	N/A
Related Policies:	N/A
Related Procedures and Guidance:	The Manual of Academic Procedures (MAP) - <a href="http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/map/">http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/map/</a>
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