

Academic Advisor - role profile

The University of Bath is committed to supporting the educational, academic skills, health & wellbeing, and employability development of all students. Our Academic Advising system has an important role to play in delivering on this commitment and forms a key part of our support network for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Its key principles are outlined in the Quality Assurance Code of Practice statement: [QA33 Academic Advising](#). Heads of Department are responsible for the delivery of academic advising with support from the Senior Academic Advisor(s).

Being an academic advisor is not the same as being a lecturer or unit convener. Whereas lecturers/unit conveners may develop a rapport with students, their responsibility is defined in relation to the delivery of the curriculum through a particular unit/course. Similarly, Directors of Studies are responsible for the day-to-day management of a course or courses. Directors of Studies oversee, in collaboration with the Director of Teaching, and other colleagues, aspects of the delivery of the course including support for students, working in close collaboration with Senior and Academic Advisors.

Whilst specific responsibilities may differ by department, an indicative role profile is provided below.

General responsibilities

1. Support students to take responsibility for developing the skills and capacity necessary to achieve their desired outcomes concerning their education, academic skills, health & wellbeing, and employability & careers.
2. Be the first point of contact within their students' academic department for information, advice, and guidance on issues impacting their education experience throughout their student journey (including during placements/study year abroad and periods of suspense and return to study).
3. Offer an open, understanding, and compassionate approach to all students presenting problems, ensuring the relationship has clear boundaries and is not therapeutic or personal in nature.
4. Offer advice and guidance to their students on how to function effectively in the University environment, and signpost students to specialist academic and support services when the support needed is outside their area of competence or role boundary. Make referrals in consultation with the student, ensuring that it best meets the needs of the student, or raise concerns immediately with the student support services where there are possible risks of harm.
5. Explain to students how the Academic Advisor role forms one part of a wider support and advice network provided by the University for students (e.g., Director of Studies, Unit convenors, Student Experience/Support Officers, Placements Officers, Advisors/practitioners from Student Support & Safeguarding, Careers, & Skills, Security/ResLife colleagues). Explain the boundaries of their role and confidentiality, as early as possible, to help build trust and understanding. While meetings between advisor and student are confidential there will be the need to make referrals to relevant colleagues throughout the student journey which will include sharing information on a need-to-know basis. This is so the student can receive the most appropriate advice and support. Adhere

to confidentiality protocols and seek further guidance from the Student Support Advice line (ext. 4321 or 4321@bath.ac.uk).

6. Offer to discuss any additional support or adjustments that may be required with students. This could include how learning, teaching, and assessments are delivered, the effectiveness of adjustments, and Disability Access Plans. Refer them to specialist support services (e.g., Disability Service, Student Support Advice) and their Director of Studies as required.
7. Support students to build relationships with other students and members of staff, fostering a sense of belonging to the University community.
8. Contribute to student induction and re-induction (including students returning from a period of placement, study abroad, suspension of study or repeat year) as provided by the Department/School.
9. Contact and meet with their students as outlined in QA33.
10. Contribute to the Department/School's overall student retention and success efforts. For example, contacting or meeting with students who have disengaged with their course, as required by their Director of Studies/Teaching.
11. Provide a reference for the student on request, for example for placements, internships, part-time work, and future careers and further study.

Training and development

1. Keep up to date with the range of Faculty/Department/School and central support services such that they can signpost/refer their students as appropriate to their needs.
2. Keep up to date with the latest staff guidance and training available in relation to academic advising, e.g., academic advising resources online, departmental guidance, QA33, Student Support staff training, policies, and advice for staff. This includes awareness of their Department/School's academic advising system and processes (provided by the Senior Academic Advisor).
3. If allocated a student who is under 18 years old then consult with the Senior Academic Advisor on any additional advising requirements and staff training, e.g., Safeguarding training and U18 Policy.
4. Welcome constructive feedback from students and colleagues and consider professional development opportunities as part of staff development reviews with their line manager.

Meetings and record keeping

1. Arrange academic advice meetings, providing an opportunity for regular contact (in accordance with the expectations outlined in QA33) between advisor and student(s) to discuss academic and professional development, and any arising issues or areas of concern impacting their success.
2. Increase the number of advisor-student meetings as appropriate to reflect contextual aspects such as a student's disability/health, return from placement, period of suspension, or personal circumstances.
3. While meetings may be held in small group format, Academic Advisors are required to explicitly offer all students the opportunity to meet individually as outlined in QA33.
4. Keep appropriate records of correspondence and meetings with students in accordance with QA33 to ensure continuity of support if staff change roles. This will normally be done using SAMIS Student Notes.

5. Record non-attendance at meetings, noting where a student exhibits a tendency for non-attendance or any other issues of concern in relation to individual students, and informing and liaising with the Director of Studies/Senior Academic Advisor to escalate as appropriate.
6. Notify both the Senior Academic Advisor and the Director of Studies if you will be absent for an extended period (e.g., due to parental leave, health reasons or sabbatical) so they can make appropriate adjustments.

Further information/resources

- [QA33 Academic Advising \(bath.ac.uk\)](https://bath.ac.uk/qa33/academic-advising)
- [Academic Advising Guidance \(bath.ac.uk\)](https://bath.ac.uk/qa33/academic-advising-guidance)
- [Student Support advice for staff \(bath.ac.uk\)](https://bath.ac.uk/qa33/student-support-advice-for-staff)
- [Director of Studies profile \(bath.ac.uk\)](https://bath.ac.uk/qa33/director-of-studies-profile)
- [Director of Teaching profile \(bath.ac.uk\)](https://bath.ac.uk/qa33/director-of-teaching-profile)
- [Student confidentiality - responding to calls from third parties \(bath.ac.uk\)](https://bath.ac.uk/qa33/student-confidentiality)

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