

Academic Mentoring Code of Practice

1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice is for both students and staff and sets out the University's Academic Mentoring system and the expectations for both mentors and mentees.

The Academic Mentoring system is designed to ensure that all students have regular opportunities to review their progress and development. An Academic Mentor is an academic member of staff who will encourage students to reflect on their experience and performance and encourage them to set goals for the future. The Mentor's primary purpose is to give advice and guidance relating to their mentees' educational journey, and to signpost them to appropriate sources of specialist advice and support as appropriate within the university. This will include referring students to the named Student Experience and Support Officers for their school.

1.1 Purpose

The Academic Mentoring system is designed to ensure that all students registered on taught programmes have an Academic Mentor who can be their point of contact and assist in guiding them through their studies during their time at Keele. Academic Mentors are in a position of trust and so should be aware of their responsibilities towards their mentees and committed to maintaining a positive professional relationship. Students have a responsibility to attend their academic mentoring meetings.

This Code of Practice makes reference to the University's Attendance and Engagement Policy and the Support to Study Process.

1.2 Scope

This Code of Practice covers all students on taught programmes at Keele University at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This includes apprenticeship students on taught programmes.

All staff with a role in the Academic Mentoring system, either in their capacity as Academic Mentor or Senior Academic Mentor or in a supporting role named in this document, must comply with this Code of Practice.

1.3 Definitions

- SESO = Student Experience and Support Officer
- SESM – Student Experience and Support Manager
- HOS = Head of School
- AM = Academic Mentor
- SAM = Senior Academic Mentor
- Mentees – this refers to students who are allocated an Academic Mentor

- My Keele Journey Engagement Dashboard - A piece of software with a dashboard view which provides a measure of a student's level of engagement and attendance across their programme of study which can be viewed by the student and by certain professional services staff, and academic staff in specialist roles.

2. ACADEMIC MENTORING

2.1 Other Sources of Support

- 2.1.1 All students on taught programmes will be allocated an Academic Mentor. However, in addition there may be other roles complementary to the role of Academic Mentor which contribute to student support, for example, in providing study skills or specific support or advice for those on programmes which have Professional Body or Statutory Requirements.
- 2.1.2 Student Experience and Support Officers who are managed by Student Services provide support on pastoral issues and can identify where a student may need more specialist support and refer on to specific support services as appropriate.

2.2 Expectations of the Mentoring Relationship

- 2.2.1 Academic Mentors are expected to offer their student mentees the opportunity to meet with them on a minimum number of occasions as specified below (see 2.3.1). This may be in either in group format or on an individual basis.
- 2.2.2 Students may request to meet their Academic Mentor as needed at other times during the year.
- 2.2.3 Students have a responsibility to attend Academic Mentoring meetings and to use this contact point as an opportunity to reflect on their own learning and academic progress.
- 2.2.4 Students are expected to prepare for their Academic Mentoring meetings by considering their academic progress and attendance/engagement, including preparing any questions they may have for their Mentor.
- 2.2.5 Academic Mentors are expected to make a record of the meeting, noting the main actions/outcomes agreed with the student at the end of the meeting. This will be possible through the My Keele Journey Engagement Dashboard which will be visible to both the Mentor and the mentee. <https://www.keele.ac.uk/intranet/education/mykeelejourney/>

2.3 Academic Mentoring Meetings

- 2.3.1 As a minimum, Academic Mentors are expected to offer their student mentees the opportunity to hold four formally recorded meetings within an academic year. These may be arranged as group or individual mentoring meetings, or a mixture of the two. Where group meetings are arranged, students must have the opportunity to meet their Academic Mentor individually.
- 2.3.2 The initial meeting in the academic year will be in the induction/welcome week at the start of Semester 1; a further meeting should be at or towards the end of Semester 1; two other meetings will be scheduled at appropriate points during the rest of the year. It is expected the timing of these meetings will be dependent on the specific requirements of the academic school and subject area.
- 2.3.3 At the first meeting the Academic Mentor and mentees should establish expectations of the mentoring relationship. This meeting will also explore students' experience of transitioning

into Keele or between years and explore ambitions, plans and concerns. The themes for subsequent meetings will be appropriate to the point in the academic year and stage of the student journey but are likely to include an update on experience, engagement academic progress over the semester, consideration of module choices and setting academic goals, plans for future skills development including study options, internships and preparation for career beyond university.

- 2.3.4 Academic Mentoring arrangements for part-time PGT campus-based students and on-line students will be appropriate to the study patterns of these students.
- 2.3.5 Meetings between Academic Mentors and students will normally be in person. By agreement between both parties, meetings may take place virtually (i.e., via Microsoft Teams).
- 2.3.6 For students on combined honours their Academic Mentor should support the mentee in accessing advice concerning their other combined honours subject (for example from the appropriate module lead) should this be useful.

2.4 Record of Meetings

- 2.4.1 Academic Mentors must make a record of the meeting including any actions/outcomes of the meetings agreed with the student at the end of the meeting.
- 2.4.2 The main actions/outcomes will be recorded in the My Keele Journey Engagement Dashboard which will be visible to both the Mentor and the Mentee. Videos and training guides on how to record meetings in the dashboard will be available on the Staff Intranet: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/intranet/education/mykeelejourney/>
- 2.4.3 A record of group meetings should be made as well as one to one meetings. For Group meetings where there are no specific actions it will be sufficient to make a note of the topics covered. This will need to be recorded on the dashboard against each student in the group. Again, Mentors and Mentees will be able to access these notes via the My Keele Journey Engagement Dashboard.
- 2.4.4 Records of meetings shall comply with Data Protection legislation (including the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 or any supplemental legislation) and be handled in accordance with University Information Governance Policies. Further details can be found in the University's Information Governance pages.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Role of Academic Mentors

- 3.1.1 To set expectations and orientate their mentees, supporting transition to Higher Education and through the stages of the students' career at university;
- 3.1.2 To provide information and guidance on academic choice, including programme options, module choice and further study;
- 3.1.3 To take an active interest in mentees' academic and personal success and engagement during their studies, acting as a guide and point of contact throughout their studies;
- 3.1.4 To use information accessible on academic performance and engagement (using the My Keele Journey Engagement Dashboard) to inform meetings with mentees and advise on strategies and actions to support success.

- 3.1.5 To offer academic advice to mentees on their progress and development, and to signpost relevant learning opportunities and skills development provision to enhance employability, including through the Careers team, Global Opportunities, and so on;
- 3.1.6 To work with the Student Experience and Support Officer (SESO) to ensure students are aware of the University's support services and to signpost students as appropriate;
- 3.1.7 To work with School based SESOs to enable appropriate information sharing and joined up working with respect to student concerns, actions and respond to any potential safeguarding issues;
- 3.1.8 To work alongside the School's Disability Liaison Officer to ensure effective and appropriate support and information sharing regarding reasonable adjustments and support for students with disabilities, long term health conditions and/or Specific Learning Difficulties;
- 3.1.9 To contribute to the Support to Study process through meeting with students where needed, taking any required follow up actions as part of that process;
- 3.1.10 To undertake actions to support student attendance and engagement as required by the Student Attendance & Engagement Policy;
- 3.1.11 To ensure that a brief record is kept of main issues and outcomes (with the mentee) and any follow-up actions recorded using the agreed University system (My Keele Journey Engagement Dashboard) to record this and share with the student;
- 3.1.12 To comply with the Code of Practice in committing to the minimum number of student engagements over an academic year, through individual or group meetings or a combination of both;
- 3.1.13 To be the point of contact for providing references, as appropriate;
- 3.1.14 To undertake relevant training for Academic Mentors;
- 3.1.15 To liaise with or seek guidance from the Senior Academic Mentor as required;
- 3.1.16 To ensure adequate briefing/handover should it be necessary to relinquish mentorship of a student (for example, due to research leave).

3.2 The Role of Students

- 3.2.1 Students are expected to attend all meetings arranged with their Academic Mentor and make every effort to inform their Mentor if they are unable to attend a meeting;
- 3.2.2 Students should be proactive in contacting their Academic Mentor should there be any circumstances affecting their academic work;
- 3.2.3 Students should be self-reflective of their academic progress and agree to complete any actions, as agreed with their mentor, following their mentoring meetings;
- 3.2.4 Students undertake the responsibility for their own studies and to follow appropriate University procedures accordingly (e.g., it is the responsibility of the mentee to submit an exceptional circumstances claim if needed);
- 3.2.5 Academic Mentors can signpost students to the exceptional circumstances process if appropriate.
- 3.2.6 Students should be informed that they can, with appropriate reason, change their Academic Mentor. Students should contact the Senior Academic Mentor if they wish to change their Academic Mentor.

3.3 The Role of Student Experience and Support Officers

- 3.3.1 To support the Faculty and Student Services in delivering accessible early intervention support to students as well as ensuring the delivery of student wellbeing initiatives and activities to enhance the student experience;
- 3.3.2 To provide effective, professional advice and guidance to students on a range of issues, in particular issues relating to welfare, health, personal problems, and student progression;
- 3.3.3 To work in close partnership with colleagues across the University including with Academic Mentors and Senior Academic Mentors to ensure they feel confident and supported when dealing with student wellbeing concerns, offering training and advice opportunities as appropriate;
- 3.3.4 To follow up any concerns about a student's wellbeing; and facilitate a referral to further appropriate support if required, providing confidential feedback to referrers as appropriate. They work with that student to ensure appropriate support is in place or to provide guidance around temporary leave.

3.4 The Role of Senior Academic Mentors

- 3.4.1 To have oversight of and manage the Academic Mentoring process within the school, ensuring consistency and the smooth operation of the process in accordance with the Code of Practice;
- 3.4.2 To monitor student uptake of Academic Mentoring, and present a report to School Education Committee on a regular basis on the operation of the Academic Mentoring system, reflecting on any implications from the report;
- 3.4.3 To ensure the reassignment of Academic Mentors where necessary and contacting the School Co-ordinator, to ensure the new Academic Mentor is assigned appropriately on the Student Record System;
- 3.4.4 To ensure students and staff are regularly reminded of the importance of engaging with the Academic Mentoring process;
- 3.4.5 To support the induction of new academic staff in relation Academic Mentoring training, and lead on regular training for Academic Mentors;
- 3.4.6 To advise Academic Mentors on their role within the Support to Study process;
- 3.4.7 To work with the Faculty Student Experience and Support Manager to ensure effective working relationships and lines of communication across SESOs and Schools;
- 3.4.8 To attend University level meetings and fora in relation to Academic Mentoring;
- 3.4.9 To ensure any issues raised concerning an Academic Mentor are dealt with, including escalation of any line management issues to the relevant Head of School where required.

3.5 The Role of the Head of School

- 3.5.1 To work with Faculty and School professional services colleagues to ensure the allocation of Academic Mentors within their School is carried out efficiently;
- 3.5.2 To ensure that students are given the name of their Academic Mentor in advance of the start of the new academic year;

- 3.5.3 To ensure that support provision and the Academic Mentor and Senior Academic Mentor roles within the University are clearly explained in course handbooks and that students are informed as to where they can obtain advice if their Mentor is not available;
- 3.5.4 To ensure opportunities for incoming students to meet their Academic Mentor during induction/welcome week;
- 3.5.5 To identify an appropriate member of academic staff, who should not normally be the Head of School or Director of Education, to act as Senior Academic Mentor;
- 3.5.6 To identify an appropriate member of staff (e.g., a Programme Director, or a designated individual) to oversee the day to day running of the Academic Mentoring system for Postgraduate Taught Students;
- 3.5.7 To overseeing the operation of the Academic Mentoring system within the School, led by the Senior Academic Mentor;
- 3.5.8 Given the importance of the Academic Mentor and Senior Academic Mentoring roles, to provide appropriate recognition of these roles when allocating time in their school's workload allocation model.

3.6 The Faculty's Role

- 3.6.1 Each Faculty Professional Services Management to ensure that the process for assigning Academic Mentors at the start of the academic year is undertaken within their Schools;
- 3.6.2 For students on combined honours programmes the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences work together to ensure students are allocated one academic mentor from one of their principal subjects;
- 3.6.3 To ensure Professional Services colleagues record Academic Mentors and Senior Academic Mentor names in the Student Record System SITS as soon as possible once these are assigned, as this will give the staff access to appropriate systems (e.g., the Engagement Dashboard).

3.7 The University's Role

- 3.7.1 To provide a regular programme of training for Academic Mentors which may consist of either online or face to face sessions or both. Academic Mentors are asked to complete compulsory training where required and encouraged to attend other supplementary training and read applicable guidance documents where provided;
- 3.7.2 To develop a system of feedback from staff and students on the operation of the Academic Mentoring system i.e., organising meetings of Senior Academic Mentors to review and develop the system in the light of feedback and experience and to share good practice. In addition, asking for feedback from students via the Student Voice Committee.
- 3.7.3 To acknowledge and recognise the contribution Academic Mentors and Senior Academic Mentors make to the provision of student advice and support;
- 3.7.4 To communicate with students to inform them of the Academic Mentoring system and their responsibilities .

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4.1 This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the University's Attendance and Engagement Policy, the Support to Study Process and the Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice.

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

5.1 This Code of Practice should be reviewed every 3 years, with consultation through the Education Committee and the Student Voice Committee.

5.2 The University's Education Committee would ultimately be responsible for approval.

5.3 This Code of Practice will be published on the University's Policy Zone.

6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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SUPPORTING AND SIGNPOSTING STUDENTS

