

## **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 to set goals for the future. The Mentor's primary purpose is to give advice and guidance relating to their mentees' educational journey, to contribute to the academic support of students through appropriate interventions and to signpost them to sources of specialist advice and support as appropriate across 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 identified academic member of staff who acts as their point of contact and assists in guiding them through their studies with Keele. Academic Mentors must be aware of their responsibilities towards their mentees and be committed to maintaining a positive professional relationship within appropriate boundaries of the role. Students have a responsibility to attend their academic mentoring meetings.

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

#### **1.2 Scope**

This Code of Practice applies to all students on taught programmes studying with and at Keele University at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including those studying a Keele programme through an educational partner, where a variation of the provisions set out in this Code of Practice will apply. Fully on-line programmes are exempt from this Code of Practice,

unless stated at programme level. In the case of any exception, relevant guidance will be provided at the programme level.

All staff with a role in the Academic Mentoring system, either in their capacity as Academic Mentor or Student Engagement and Retention Lead 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
- SERL = Student Engagement and Retention Lead
- Mentees –Students who are allocated an Academic Mentor
- My Keele Journey (MKJ) Engagement Dashboard - A piece of software presenting a dashboard view of students' level of across their programme of study. This dashboard 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 Students in scope of this Code of Practice will be allocated an Academic Mentor at the commencement of study with Keele. 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).
- 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 An initial meeting with mentees must be held at the start of the academic year, typically during Welcome Week; a further meeting should typically be held 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 programme.
- 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 a university degree programme with 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 and 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 campus-based Postgraduate taught students and on-line students (with the exception of fully 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 Students on integrated single honours (and pre-existing combined honours) programmes will have a single Academic Mentor who should be equipped to advise on the programme as a whole.

## **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 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 Academic Mentors and students based at an educational partner will not normally be able to utilise the My Keele Journey dashboard and, as such, Academic Mentors will be expected to implement local arrangements for making a record of student meetings.
- 2.4.5 Records of all meetings, regardless of where and on what digital platform they may be held, 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**

The following roles and responsibilities refer to those at Keele University for taught programmes delivered at Keele, a variation of which will apply to educational partners according to the relevant structures at each educational partner. In each case the overarching structure as set out below and the range of roles and responsibilities will broadly be replicated to ensure the responsibilities are implemented appropriately at an educational partner.

### **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 dashboard) to inform meetings with mentees and advise on strategies and actions to support success.
  - 3.1.5 To offer advice to mentees on their academic 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 Inclusion Tutor 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 organise and chair Support to Study Stage 1 and 2 meetings, contributing an academic profile of the student and offering academic support throughout the meeting with students where needed, and taking any required follow up actions as part of that process;
  - 3.1.10 To undertake required actions to meet with students when attendance falls below the required thresholds, as outlined in the [Student Engagement & Attendance Policy](#), [Student Attendance Monitoring Procedure](#) and [Attendance Policy & Procedure for Student Route Visa holders](#);
- 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;
- 3.1.11 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;
  - 3.1.12 To be the point of contact for providing references, as appropriate;

- 3.1.13 To undertake relevant training for Academic Mentors;
- 3.1.14 To liaise with or seek guidance from the Student Engagement and Retention Lead as required;
- 3.1.15 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 Student Engagement and Retention Lead (or designated Programme Director if studying at an educational partner) if they wish to change their Academic Mentor.

### **3.3 The Role of Student Experience and Support Officers (SESOs)**

- 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 (and those based at educational partners) including with Academic Mentors and Student Engagement and Retention Lead 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;

- 3.3.5 To attend appropriate academic school meetings such as School Education Committees and Student Voice Committees as appropriate.

### **3.4 The Role of Student Engagement and Retention Leads (SERLs)<sup>1</sup>**

- 3.4.1 To receive fortnightly reports on attendance and engagement, with flags for those studying on a sponsored visa. Action is to be taken on those students flagged for intervention due to falling below threshold attendance;

To receive an updated list of students deemed to be in a risk category including: students returning after a leave of absence, repeating assessment or assessments, with or without attendance, on an exceptional repeat arrangement. These students should be actively supported by academic mentors and SESOs whether or not they appear flagged for non-attendance/engagement;

To liaise regularly with SESOs regarding any at risk students known to Student Services;

To be responsible for required actions in relation to students whose attendance falls below the required thresholds, as outlined in the [Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#), [Student Attendance Monitoring Procedure](#) and the [Attendance Policy for Student Route Visa Holders](#), and to be responsible for action for students at a designated MKJ engagement threshold (for example, None or Very Low);

In accordance with the policies stated above, to be responsible for conducting the relevant contact/'progress' meeting with identified students, or for ensuring the designated school role holder (e.g., School Director of Education, Programme Director or other designate) conducts such meetings in a timely manner, within two weeks of notification. The relevant Academic Mentor should be notified and able to attend these meetings<sup>i</sup>;

To ensure a record of the outcomes of the contact meeting is made and maintained by the Student Engagement and Retention Lead;

- 3.4.7 Where the meeting does not lead to required improvement, to be responsible for escalating the case to formal warning, in accordance with policy ; \*
- 3.4.8 Collate and apply relevant data to contribute to School and/or Faculty retention strategy;
- 3.4.9 As a member of the School Executive Group, to produce regular reports to the Head of School and School executive on the numbers of students at risk, interventions and outcomes in terms of termination of studies;

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<sup>1</sup> Note where \* is indicated, for students studying on a Student Route Visa, the action is undertaken by Immigration Compliance and Advice in accordance with the Attendance Policy and Procedure for Student Route Visa holders

- 3.4.10 To support the induction of new academic staff in relation to the Academic Mentoring process, and lead on regular training and guidance to all staff on their Academic mentoring responsibilities;
- 3.4.11 To have oversight of the implementation of the Academic Mentoring process within the school, ensuring consistency and the smooth operation of the process in accordance with the Code of Practice and report on this to School Education Committee;
- 3.4.12 To ensure students and staff are regularly reminded of the importance of engaging with the Academic Mentoring process;
- 3.4.13 To work with the Faculty Student Experience and Support Manager to ensure effective working relationships and lines of communication across SESOs and Schools;
- 3.4.14 To attend University level meetings and fora in relation to Academic Mentoring;
- 3.4.15 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;
- 3.4.16 To work with the Immigration Compliance and Advice team to ensure effective working relationships and lines of communication across SESOs, Schools and Professional Services.

### **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 smooth communication to students of the allocation of their Academic Mentor at the start of the new academic year.
- 3.5.3 To ensure that support provision and the Academic Mentor and Student Engagement and Retention Lead roles within the University are clearly explained to students and their importance underlined;
- 3.5.4 To ensure opportunities for incoming students to meet their Academic Mentor during 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 Student Engagement and Retention Lead and to ensure that the importance of these roles is appropriately reflected in workload allocation;
- 3.5.6 To ensure that a deputy or alternative Student Engagement and Retention Lead is identified in order to provide continuous cover during periods of absence;
- 3.5.7 To ensure the smooth running of the Academic Mentoring system across all student groups within the School;



### **3.6 The Faculty's Role**

- 3.6.1 Each Faculty Operations Team 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 integrated single honours programmes in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, to ensure that Academic Mentors are briefed to be able to advise on all areas of the integrated programme;
- 3.6.3 To ensure that Faculty Operations Teams record the names of Academic Mentors and Student Engagement and Retention Leads in the Student Record System as soon as possible once they are assigned as this will give the staff relevant access to appropriate systems, such as MKJ dashboard.

### **3.7 The Role of Immigration Compliance and Advice**

- 3.7.1 To provide visa related assistance to students and staff across the University;
- 3.7.2 To take ownership of attendance and engagement issues for any student studying on a Student Route Visa at the indicated contact point, in accordance with the Attendance Policy & Procedure for Student Route Visa holders.

### **3.8 The University's Role**

- 3.8.1 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;
- 3.8.2 To develop a system of feedback from staff and students on the operation of the Academic Mentoring system i.e., organising meetings of Student Engagement and Retention Leads 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.
- 3.8.3 To acknowledge and recognise the contribution Academic Mentors and Student Engagement and Retention Leads make to the provision of student advice and support;
- 3.8.4 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 Attendance Policy & Procedure for Student Route Visa holders, the Support to Study Policy and Procedure 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

<b>Document Name</b>	Academic Mentoring Code of Practice
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## SUPPORTING AND SIGNPOSTING STUDENTS

