

Academic Advising Policy

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Middlesex University

Academic Advising Policy

Introduction and Scope

1. This policy explains how Academic Advising works at Middlesex University, what students can expect from it, and how it is managed.
2. The policy applies to all undergraduate taught programmes across all Middlesex University campuses, with local contextualisation where appropriate (e.g. at the international campuses).
3. Academic Partners of the University are expected to provide a similar mechanism for the academic support of students, making use of local resources and infrastructure to do so.
4. Academic Advising is how Middlesex supports students with their personal, academic and professional development, helping them feel part of the university, staying engaged with their studies, and progress towards employment.

Policy Principles

5. Every student will have scheduled Academic Advising sessions throughout the year covering digital literacy, community and belonging, academic skills, wellbeing and employability.
6. Every student will have an Academic Advisor: a named member of academic staff who is their consistent point of contact throughout their studies.
7. The approach is shaped by nationally recognised professional frameworks for advising and tutoring, so students receive consistent, high-quality support.
8. Academic Advising will be delivered in ways that offer a baseline of consistent provision which can be adapted to meet the needs of different cohorts, mode of study, campuses, and professional requirements.
9. The University will actively monitor how students are engaging and will reach out proactively if concerns arise, drawing on engagement data and student feedback.
10. Academic Advising is not a substitute for specialist student support. The effectiveness of the model depends on clear role boundaries. If a student needs more than their Academic Advisor can offer, they will be connected to the right service promptly.
11. Scheduled Academic Advising sessions will be delivered to Student Clusters as per the 2031 Learning Framework Principle 4 on Student Groups. Exact numbers may vary according to how each programme is delivered.

Roles and Responsibilities Academic Advisor

12. Academic Advisors are there to support students with their academic and personal development, point them towards relevant services, and stay in touch proactively throughout the year.
13. Students should always know who their Academic Advisor is and how to reach them.

Advisors are responsible for making sure of this.

14. Advisors must monitor relevant engagement data and will follow up if something is wrong. In some cases, Faculty Operations will help with this and flag concerns to the Advisor.

15. Advisors must act as a central 'point of contact', ensuring continuity even when other staff initially receive a student query.

16. Academic Advisors are there to support students with their academic journey in settling in, staying on track and moving forward. They are not specialists in mental health, disability, safeguarding or financial hardship, and students needing support in these areas will be referred to the right support, for example in relation to wellbeing, mental health, disability, safeguarding, or financial hardship.

17. If an Advisor has concerns about a student's wellbeing or safety, they will refer the student to the Student Success and Support team as quickly as possible.

18. Academic Advisors are responsible for explaining the purpose of referral, encouraging student engagement with specialist services, and maintaining appropriate academic follow-up, but do not replace or duplicate specialist intervention.

Programme Leader and Programme Coordinator (international campuses)

19. Programme Leaders and Programme Coordinators are responsible for ensuring delivery of the Academic Advising model within their programme, in collaboration with the Academic Advising Lead.

20. Programme Leaders and Programme coordinators must complete the Academic Advising Delivery Matrix annually, confirming staffing, AA function responsibilities, and the scheduling of timetabled sessions.

Academic Advising Lead

21. Each Department or School (or sub-unit where appropriate, e.g. directorate) must designate an Academic Advising Lead. This may be the Director of Programmes or a delegated academic member of staff.

22. The Academic Advising Lead has overarching responsibility within their area for planning, coordination, compliance monitoring, and liaison with key professional service teams.

23. The Academic Advising role is embedded in workload allocation planning.

Professional Services (or Campus equivalent service)

24. Faculty Operations: responsible for organising and maintaining advisor allocations, ensuring annual completion of the delivery matrix, and supporting engagement tracking; where expedient Faculty operations may also support the engagement monitoring function. Where this is the case, this is to be noted in the delivery matrix as per 4.4.4.

25. Student Success and Support: responsible for receiving and triaging referrals from Academic Advisors and other members of the academic community, providing specialist support and coordinating support across services, monitoring referral data, reporting on themes and

patterns at programme level to inform enhancement.

26. Campus Life: responsible for monitoring student trust indicators (e.g. pre-arrival survey; returners survey) and supporting initiatives that strengthen a sense of belonging.

27. Strategic Planning & Performance: responsible for longitudinal evaluation of outcomes (continuation, attainment, confidence metrics) which may be correlated to Academic Advising delivery, change, enhancement.

Student Partnership

28. The University is committed to co-creation of academic advising content, practice, and evaluation, achieved through the Student Partnership Board.

29. The Student Partnership Board (SPB) will:

- a. Review the institutional advising framework, drawing on feedback from SVLs and PVGs (as a standing item).
- b. Provide critique of evaluation methodologies.
- c. Support co-design of session materials.

30. Programmes should incorporate opportunities for student feedback on AA delivery throughout the year via Student Voice Leaders and Programme Voice Groups.

Academic Advising Delivery Requirements

31. All programmes must deliver a minimum of five timetabled group advising sessions each academic year, scaffolded by level to support year-to-year transition. Ideally Academic Advising sessions are delivered by the cohort's Academic Advisor, but where this is not possible responsibility is captured by the delivery matrix and these sessions always include signposting to the cohort's Academic Advisor for potential follow up queries or one-to-one meetings.

32. Group advising sessions must embed personal and professional development, including independent learning, reflective practice, employability skills, and awareness of support services. Attendance is compulsory.

33. Design and emphasis of academic advising delivery may vary across campuses, but core expectations, session themes, and minimum contact standards must be consistent.

34. Each programme must produce an Academic Advising Delivery Matrix (using a standardised pro forma) that includes:

- a. Named advisor/s for each cohort.
- b. Confirmation of mandatory training compliance.
- c. Schedule and ownership of timetabled group advising sessions.
- d. Engagement monitoring responsibilities and workflows.
- e. How practice-based and apprenticeship based academic support roles (e.g., assessors, supervisors, placement tutors) integrate with AA for PSRB and Ofsted regulated programmes.

Referral Escalation Principles

35. Academic Advising works on a simple principle: identify concerns early, offer support, and refer to specialist services when needed.
36. Referral to Student Success and Support is required where there are indicators of:
- a. Declining engagement linked to wellbeing;
 - b. Repeated or escalating personal difficulties;
 - c. Safeguarding concerns;
 - d. Risk of leaving the course (withdrawal);
 - e. Support to Study or professional competency concerns (such as Fitness for Practice)
37. Student Success and Support will assume responsibility for specialist assessment, coordinated support planning, and, where appropriate, case management.
38. Academic Advisors remain a supportive academic contact but must avoid duplicating specialist support or acting outside of their role as Academic Advisors.

Campus-Specific Considerations

39. Campuses may tailor advising approaches, where justified by local cohort characteristics, professional requirements, or support models.
40. All local adaptations must:
- a. Meet the minimum institutional requirements as per section 4 above
 - b. Be included within the Delivery Matrix.
41. Campus feedback will be incorporated annually through reporting and monitoring at ESE Committee.

Training and Professional Recognition

42. All Academic Advisors must complete training covering how to support students effectively, responding to concerns, safeguarding and data protection.
43. Training will be delivered collaboratively by the Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement (CAPE), Student Success and Support, and external facilitators where appropriate.
44. Fulfilment of and Leadership of Academic Advising will be referenced in role descriptions and contribute to staff development pathways. This activity can be included in staff appraisal, promotion and development conversations and may be used to support fellowship applications through Advance HE.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

45. Academic Advising will be evaluated using a multilayered approach, assessing long, medium, and short-term outcomes.

46. This includes reviewing:

- a. Continuation and retention analysis.
- b. Student confidence surveys at pre-arrival and welcome back stages.
- c. Analysis of the relationship between Academic Advising activity and student take-up of Student Success and Support services, including referral source, timing, and outcomes.
- d. Attendance at group advising sessions.
- e. Student trust and belonging indicators.
- f. Process evaluation via Delivery Matrix compliance.

47. Local evaluation responsibilities sit with Faculties who collaborate with Strategic Planning and Performance, Faculty Operations and Student Success and Support to gather and report on data at ESE Committee. CAPE will offer thematic evaluation of the institutional delivery of academic advising to support internal and external reporting. Reporting will include evaluation of how effectively Academic Advising supports early identification and appropriate referral, and the impact this has on continuation, confidence and engagement.

Governance and Reporting

48. The Academic Advising policy and function is overseen by Education and Student Experience (ESE).

49. Annual reporting on AA delivery and outcomes will be submitted by Faculties and Campuses to ESE Committee for scrutiny.

50. Faculties and Campuses must ensure AA is included as part of annual monitoring processes including National Student Survey (NSS) action planning, Educational Monitoring Enhancement (EME) reporting, Apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) reporting and Faculty and Campus Business Planning.

51. Policy revisions will be made in consultation with key stakeholders, including the Student Partnership Board (SPB), Faculties, Campuses and Education and Student Experience Directorate (ESE).