
Guidance 3xxii Academic Advising

Academic Advising is a core component of supporting students in their learning environment and wellbeing. The value of the Academic Adviser role is firmly located within the academic sphere encompassed as a part of the programme on which the student is on. Although aspects of academic advising might operate differently accounting for disciplinary differences and cohorts' needs, the principles to enhance academic advising are as follows:

Principles

- Academic advising is viewed as a part of the teaching programme with timetabled tutorials (interactions) scheduled at points throughout the academic year.
- Advising as an enhancement all, embedded as a developmental approach.
- Group tutorial approach to foster a sense of belonging and peer cohesion.
- Scheduled learning conversations following a tutorial curriculum mirroring the student lifecycle and transitions.

Enhancements

- Timetabled group tutorials (interactions) structured around meaningful learning conversations throughout the year with a particular focus following the natural timeline of the student lifecycle. A minimum of 4 advising interactions are recommended over the academic year.
- Scaffolded by a 'flipped' approach utilising the University health and wellbeing support and well-being resources.
- Utilising learner analytics (StREAM data, survey information Programme Voice Groups) to personalise conversations and activities for the interactions.
- Academic Advisors are those that teach their tutees during the current academic year.
- Streamlined process of referral to three channels (UniHelp, Progression and Support and Care and Concern)

Rationale

Timetabling in Academic Advising tutorials within the timetable moves to a proactive approach whereby tutorials are for everyone, to enhance the learning experience for all students. Providing opportunities for scheduled group tutorials (interactions) can help to create a sense of cohesion and belonging for students and assist them in navigating the challenges presented. Enhancements to your delivery of advising can help you to develop cohort and peer support, foster a sense of belonging and community and assist in facilitating routes to support. It is understood that unless a part of the student's timetable, they are unlikely to be able to see it as something essential but as a choice of its importance in deciding if they can allocate time to attend. Embedding it into the programme alleviates this and moves away from the deficit models of addressing problems, to providing enriching learning conversations.

Students often go to their tutors for advice. This approach draws upon this relationship to be able to promote dialogue beyond advice on modular aspects and elements to enhance their learning and opportunities. Advisors are likely to require to signpost to other support services and also to tutors should specific questions around modules be raised. The proposed interactions each have a particular focus to mirror aspects of the student lifecycle – you may wish to reconfigure the focus of these interactions to elements you know are of importance within your programme at particular points in time. Students must have access to this dialogic space and be aware of who their advisor is and how their advisor can be contacted.

The inclusive curriculum underpins thinking in all that we do. The design of the academic advising scheme has inclusion principles embedded within the design of the activities. The questions related to academic Advising are shown for you to consider beyond the structure presented how you can make your AA approach more inclusive.

Using the Inclusive Curriculum questions (end of this document) around Academic Advising ask yourself the following questions:

To what extent do you:

1. Get to know each student cohort in advance (through data and other insights) to inform your approach to academic advising?
2. Create space and a dynamic within your advising sessions (individual or group) to build trust with your students?
3. Ensure the direction and/or pace of developmental focus is determined by the student?
4. Ensure that your learning support is contextualised, relevant and/or sensitive to the student's life circumstances?
5. Empower students to be self-advocates and/or, when necessary, advocate on their behalf?
6. Foster a growth mindset within advising, as foundational to academic success?
7. Support students' transitions within the curriculum and/or to relevant additional professional services?
8. Support students to set goals and break them down into achievable chunks?
9. Ensure your language is accessible in your advisory role?
10. Support wellbeing as an integral part of academic advising?

What is required of me as an Academic Advisor?

The core element is to:

- communicate with students who their Academic Advisor is for the year and how they can access them;
- ensure as a minimum there are 4 **points in the academic year** where space is given to group tutorials;
- a schedule of interactions is provided for the interactions and you may select which areas of focus are appropriate for your programme and students. Please note the learner analytics to support these conversations;
- review the engagement data via StREAM regularly (weekly) to identify students within your tutor group that are showing signs of disengaging. These are students to reach out to. Should you be unable to get hold of students that you fear are disengaging please contact the progression and support team to assist.

Consider this as a checklist of how you are addressing these:

Department and Programme Name	How many interactions are scheduled for the year?	Are interactions timetabled into the student's programme?	Are you able to utilise Learner Analytics? (StREAM, Tableau, Fika)	Has AA been able to be aligned with the students they teach?

For all guidance and resources on Academic Advising please see the CAPE intranet pages [Academic Advising \(mdx.ac.uk\)](http://mdx.ac.uk)

Interactions

Please note

There is no requirement to follow this Level 3 interactions exactly. What is essential is for time to be allocated to have a dialogic group tutorial space at certain points throughout the academic year to discuss key issues. Provided here is a guide for these conversations and activities. Should you wish to add or amend to make the content more disciplinary specific or include another topic relevant to your students and programme, please do so. In creating the activities for the academic advising process of your programme, we would suggest that you:

- Identify existing modules into which these activities could fit.
- Identify and adapt any existing teaching activities that already exist in your programme which could form the basis of the activities. Depending on how existing activities are distributed across modules, this may require you to move some existing activities between modules.
- Make use of other pre-existing activities, resources and services wherever possible to minimise the amount of new content and activities you need to create (seek these sections on MyMDX e.g. [Wellbeing](#) services, [Mdx Works](#), etc.)
- Do not assume that all aspects of these activities have to be delivered by the tutor in an in-person or online, face-to-face session. Consider how some aspects of these activities could be delivered asynchronously online (e.g. through My Learning) to achieve the flipped and blended approach the enhanced process is aiming for.

The same interactions and activities can be adapted for both Foundation (level 3) and first-year UG students (level 4). Please identify the students who have come through a Foundation year at MDX to assist them in their next steps when considering their overall plan for the following year (if they wish to complete their programme at Middlesex or use Foundation year before moving to another institution). For the interactions for Level 4 students please identify students that have come through a foundation year at Middlesex and use their experience of the year at Middlesex to inform the discussion and reflect on their answers now, in order for them to see their progress during the last year.

Topic areas for interactions at Levels 3 and 4:

Starting out - welcome and introduction. Clarifying the advisor role, who their advisor is and how they can be contacted. Showing a variety of support areas students can access. The pre-arrival survey can be completed in class if this has not been completed. The results of this can assist in better understanding the context of your students (aspects they are juggling alongside their programme) and what areas they feel they require support in.

Welcome continued – settling in and welcoming for late arrivals (reiterating some messages from interaction 1, the pre-arrival survey, etc.). Strong motivations are key to helping people through challenging times. Encourage students to reflect on their own motivations for entering HE, selecting Middlesex, their programme. Take time to pause for students to identify aspects they have enjoyed during this early period.

Clarifying expectations – There are often myths surrounding what studying in higher education looks like. Use this time to Often aspects such as attendance, engagement, and study hours that are not easily known – help to clarify some of the misconceptions associated with your programme/HE. Students will also need to think about the support they have available to them beyond university, depending on their situation and need. They may draw support from friends, family, and places of employment. In understanding what their support network looks like they can hopefully see that coupled with Middlesex support structures they have a vast network to assist them on their university journey.

Goal setting and motivation – Helping students to understand themselves as learners. How do they learn? VARK questionnaire can be completed in session but students can discuss what learning tips work for them. How do they create the space to learn? Do they prefer to work at home, on campus, in a quiet space, or with background noise, doing a set amount daily or chunks of time at once? Ask them to think about what learning environment helps them and how they can build this into their independent study time.

Understanding terminology for university study – Within higher education and disciplines language can act as a barrier. As a student to identify the language they wish to have clarified and consider some of the languages that students struggle with in your area. Time-dependent, students can also think about opportunities within their programme and Middlesex to get involved in things they are interested in – volunteering, placements, and university-wide opportunities (SLAs, PVG leaders, etc.).

Understanding assessment and feedback – The NSS highlights a number of aspects that are raised sector-wide around the clarity of assessments and feedback. Unpack how feedback is given on your programme (disassociated with assessments) and the different voices they may receive feedback from. Discuss assessment deadlines within your area and tips for students in approaching these.

Open session – Student-led. Pause to let students dictate how this session is used. What aspects do they wish to bring up to address. This can be approached pre-session to have some topic areas to discuss or in session.

Navigating challenges – wellbeing and mental health, self-care strategies. This is to pause to recognise that students are juggling a number of aspects impacting their programme. A reminder of the wealth of self-care resources on My MDX

Assessment and Feedback – Unpacking feedback they have received in order to engage and feed it forward. This space can be used to help students to engage with the feedback they have received so far to highlight positive aspects and areas for improvement. Ask the student to plan how they would feed this forward into their approach moving forward. Would they benefit from support from other areas?

Your network of opportunities – growing your talent. What opportunities are there for students on your programme to help grow in areas that would be beneficial to them to engage in the sector they wish to be in or develop skills useful to them. You might encourage them to engage in particular networks/highlight podcasts/volunteering opportunities that you feel would benefit them. Share ideas about what others are involved in and how it assists them. Hearing from other students (alumni, 2nd or 3rd-year students) can

help to see students where they want to be and the pathways others have taken.

Open session – Student-led. Pause to let students dictate how this session is used. What aspects do they wish to bring up to address. This can be approached pre-session to have some topic areas to discuss or in session.

Preparing for the second year (either at Level 4 or 5)– “first-year outduction”. Completing their first year is a reason for celebration and is a proud achievement. Get students to think about their next steps of what they need to achieve in their breaks before re-entering for the following year and what steps would help put them in a positive space for their next element. Some students may have module choices still to make or have complexities that are likely to impact their progression. The Progression and Support Team can be a source of advice but this session is to see what elements need tying up to help them to re-enter for year 2.

Topic areas for interactions at Level 5

(Re)Connecting
Seizing opportunities
Levelling up
Skills mapping
Wellbeing
Being digitally aware
Reflecting on achievements
Considering your large-scale project/dissertations

Topic areas for interactions at Level 6

Welcome back - priorities for the year
Proactively seeking help
Self care as a life skill
Time management
Articulating your strengths
Keeping on track
Prioritising wellbeing to enable success
Bringing it all together

Inclusive Curriculum Questions

Community

Student Voice and Engagement (c.f. Students as Collaborators Framework)

To what extent do you:

1. get to know your students to understand them as individuals (including their background, prior educational experiences, current context, needs, interests and/or preferences)?
2. consider the accessibility and inclusivity of your language and terminology in partnership with students?
3. build relationships and trust with your students?
4. create opportunities, giving space for respectful and productive discussions and disagreements with your students and between your students?
5. adapt the pace, place or mode of your teaching/support to the diversity of the student cohort as a means of facilitating engagement?
6. engage students in deciding the actions taken following their feedback?
7. ensure that your Student Voice Leaders are representative of the diversity of the student cohort, using the current nomination process?
8. encourage and/or support your students to engage with leadership roles available across the University (pertaining to the curricula, co-curricular, extra-curricular and quality assurance/enhancement)?
9. utilise mechanisms to close the feedback loop to students to overview what has or has not changed following their feedback?
10. seek to continually enhance your knowledge of student partnership and engagement?

Learning Community

To what extent do you:

1. enable ongoing dialogue with students to encourage their engagement in person and/or online?
2. foster a sense of belonging across the entire student cohort?
3. tailor what you do to your students' diverse learning journeys and/or professional development aspirations?
4. facilitate the development of cohort relationships to aid students in peer and group working?
5. provide and/or promote co-curricular activities for students to further build relationships with their cohort?
6. monitor and/or evaluate diversity in emerging cohort relationships and student communities?
7. encourage and enable students to explore their academic interests with the wider learning community?
8. foster an environment which encourages students to be inclusive in their support of one another?
9. promote and/or model a learning environment where ethics, caring, integrity and professional conduct are valued?

10. support your student learning community to behave in equitable ways?

Design

- **Learning Outcomes**

To what extent do you:

1. design learning outcomes that are congruent with the range of different cultures to which your students belong?
2. confirm your learning outcomes are understood by your students as intended?
3. ensure learning outcomes are achievable by all students, recognising intersectionality, the diverse range of backgrounds, disability entitlements, modes and/or preferences for learning?
4. provide a variety of ways to enable students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes?
5. ask students to reflect on the relevancy of learning outcomes to them as individuals and/or to the curricula?
6. create learning outcomes that encourage students to reflect upon a wide range of viewpoints and/or sources of bias?
7. set learning outcomes which provide options for students to assign their own meaning drawing on their cultural, educational and heritage backgrounds?
8. consider the relevancy of learning outcomes to other global, disciplinary and/or professional contexts?
9. find a range of ongoing ways to co-create learning outcomes with your students?
10. create the context in which students can ask questions, and be critical of learning outcomes and/or how they best demonstrated without concern about the consequence of doing so?

- **Curriculum Content**

To what extent do you:

1. ensure that the topics covered are inclusive of your students' diverse interests and/or prior learning experiences?
2. review what is taught or covered to ensure that the topics remain relevant to your students?
3. seek students' input on the topics being covered during your sessions?
4. make sure that the themes covered within your subject or service area are varied in breadth and depth?
5. include different perspectives or needs in what you teach and/or support?
6. help connect key topic areas to ensure alignments are made evident and are covered robustly?
7. ensure topics are taught logically to promote clarity and a greater understanding of the subject or area of support?
8. review what is taught or covered to eliminate and address any areas of bias, assumptions or prejudice so to ensure the content is not primarily influenced by traditional beliefs or principles?

9. encourage students to critically evaluate the themes, topics or areas covered?
10. cross-reference your themes with other module, programme(s), disciplines, or services, where relevant?

Learning

- **Pedagogic Practice**

To what extent do you:

1. reflect on your own identity in your pedagogic/support practice in relation to equality, diversity, inclusivity?
2. seek, reflect on and constructively act on a range of feedback on your practice (from students, peers and any other stakeholder) in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusivity?
3. enable all students to express their identity within their learning environment?
4. design active learning activities to engage and motivate all your students?
5. co-create an active learning environment with your students?
6. constructively align your teaching approach to meet the wide variety of needs and goals of your students?
7. make your language accessible, clear, sensitive and inclusive of all students when facilitating learning?
8. offer a breadth of learning experiences and approaches inclusive of different styles, preferences and interests?
9. integrate cultural, sensory and/or emotional intelligence into your teaching and/or support activities?
10. keep in good standing with current and contemporary debates about inclusivity within the context of your discipline and/or institution, so to remain critically reflective?

- **Assessment and Feedback**

To what extent do you:

1. seek out a variety of student viewpoints, experiences and/or perspectives to inform your assessment topics?
2. flexibly design your assessments to minimise the number of reasonable adjustments required for particular students?
3. create safe spaces for students to discuss the assessment process to raise queries and ideas?
4. facilitate students to explore their own perspectives and/or prejudices within assessment?
5. enable students to co-create and/or negotiate assessment tasks, so they can demonstrate meaning and understanding for themselves?

6. offer student choice of assessment (e.g. approach, topic area)?
7. review your use of language within all assessment materials for terms which are inappropriate to the context and level of study (such as stereotypes, use of idiom, cultural reference or colloquialisms)?
8. set time aside for the students to discuss and/or understand written feedback on their work?
9. provide feedback that is timely, constructive, professionally developmental and/or supportive?
10. check in with your students to ensure that the assessment process is not impacting adversely on their health and wellbeing?

Support

- **Academic Advising**

To what extent do you:

1. get to know each student cohort in advance (through data and other insights) to inform your approach to academic advising?
2. create space and a dynamic within your advising sessions (individual or group) to build trust with your students?
3. ensure the direction and/or pace of developmental focus is determined by the student?
4. ensure that your support for learning is contextualised, relevant and/or sensitive to the student's life circumstances?
5. empower students to be self-advocates and/or, when necessary, advocate on their behalf?
6. foster a growth mindset within advising, as foundational to academic success?
7. support students' transitions within the curriculum and/or to relevant additional professional services?
8. support students to set goals and break them down into achievable chunks?
9. ensure your language is accessible in your advisory role?
10. support wellbeing as an integral part of academic advising?

- **Academic Support**

To what extent do you:

1. signpost students to the full range of academic support provision available across the University?
2. support students' self-determination in accessing the support they can benefit from to succeed?

3. develop your understanding of the remit and/or offer of support services which your students can benefit from?
4. draw on the expertise of colleagues with specialist knowledge in developing your practice?
5. contribute to the development of support by representing student concerns and issues with their support experience?
6. encourage students to take a holistic view of their education, making connections between their classroom and online learning; support; co-/extra-curricular; leadership; social and/or study experiences?
7. facilitate peer support within your discipline or service area?
8. enable students to identify their own support needs?
9. tailor your academic support to your students' discipline, needs and/or study preferences?
10. help your students to draw on their own internal and external support mechanisms?

Resources

- **Learning Resources**

To what extent do you:

1. ensure that students of different backgrounds are fairly and/or authentically represented in the reading material?
2. provide reading material that addresses a topic from diverse perspectives?
3. ensure that the language and/or terminology in the material you use is suitable for all students so that it is unlikely to offend and/or has been understood as intended?
4. ensure that the materials you use can be accessed by all students physically and are accessible in digital format?
5. use a range of different types of learning resources in your sessions, including learning technologies, multi-sensory activities, games etc?
6. regularly review your learning materials with your community to ensure they are contemporary, relevant and meaningful to your particular students?
7. create safe spaces for respectful and productive disagreement to enable students to feel confident and/or able to critical review your learning resources?
8. ensure that your resources motivate and/or support diverse your students, given the range of ways that they learn?
9. model how to engage effectively with online learning resources to be able to maximise the benefits of learning online?
10. consider students' well-being in your selection and/or use of resources?

- **Technology (c.f. Technology Enhanced Learning Framework)**

To what extent do you:

1. make use of technology, including assistive technology, to complement your pedagogy and/or development practice?
2. ensure that all students can access and/or know how to use the technology you are applying?
3. develop students' digital literacy?
4. purposefully integrate technology to enable active learning, including peer and collaborative learning?
5. engage students to evaluate how effective their use of technology is in developing their learning and development?
6. promote and model approaches to avoiding digital fatigue in equitable ways (such as through multi-media content, short, bitesize materials) accounting for disability, caring, working and other characteristics and/or responsibilities?
7. approach the use of technology with students with an inclusive mindset that includes respect for others, open-mindedness, curiosity, cultural competence, and kindness?
8. Provide choice of technologies, recognising students have differential access, preferences and/or capabilities in the technology they use?
9. take into consideration changes and innovations in technology?
10. use technology to enable students' learning and wider achievements in diverse external learning environments (e.g. placements and internships)?

Employability

- **Employability and Progression**

To what extent do you:

1. help your students to routinely reflect on how their learning (e.g. knowledge, skills, aptitude) is transferable to a range of relevant work-based contexts?
2. take account of your students' personal career choices and aspirations in your teaching and/or support of learning?
3. create opportunities for your students to gain work experience, placement and/or voluntary work in their chosen careers in collaboration with MDXworks?
4. monitor and/or support take up of work-based learning opportunities to ensure equity of access for all your students?
5. facilitate access to a wide range of employers, professionals, and/or alumni aligned to students' aspirations?
6. feature a diverse range of role models and/or examples (such as alumni, industry) within your discipline area or context?

7. provide pathways to support progression for your students into further study?
8. routinely provide authentic, experiential learning opportunities (including work-placements, volunteering, visits) linked to potential work-related scenarios or contexts?
9. build students' confidence and/or resilience to set and maintain high aspirations for the future?
10. support students to record their achievements (including University, co-curricular and/or broader accomplishments)?

- **Entrepreneurship**

To what extent do you:

1. promote a growth mindset to encourage your students to be flexible and open to a range of possibilities for learning and development?
2. facilitate students to make connections and build their networks?
3. enable your students to recognise shifting individual identities in different contexts and over time?
4. help your students to consider how respect manifests in different professional and cultural contexts?
5. provide diverse ways for students to access and develop entrepreneurship skills, such as being innovative, creative, risk taking, communication, leadership?
6. connect practice-based learning to real world examples and their implications in context?
7. encourage students to consider how their actions might impact their own and/or others wellbeing?
8. work with your students to recognise and respond to uncertainty?
9. build skills to respond creatively to challenges experienced as part of the entrepreneurial process?
10. collaborate with students in designing entrepreneurial opportunities to further their career and/or future aspirations?