

The Academic Tutor System

A guide for tutors
2026/27

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Background

The Academic Tutor System enables students, academic and professional services staff to work together in partnership to enhance students' academic, personal and professional development.

Support provided by Academic Tutors is appropriate to the context of the discipline and integrates effectively with the wide range of other support available to students at Reading.

ACADEMIC

Support Centres/
Programme and Student
Support Administration
Academic Tutors
Study Advice
Liaison Librarians
Peer Assisted Learning
English Language
Support



LIFE

RSU Advice Service
Wardens
STaR Mentors
International Student
Advisory Team
Chaplaincy Centre
Life Tools



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Student Welfare Team
Counselling and
Wellbeing Team
Disability Advisory
Service
Medical Practice



CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Careers Team/Henley
Careers Team
Campus Jobs
Placements and
Internships
THRIVE Mentors
Red Award



Key features of the Academic Tutor System

- Focuses on students' academic, personal and professional development.
- Works in partnership with our professional support services to support students with any personal challenges that may impact their studies
- School-level leadership is provided by School Directors of Academic Tutoring.



Your Role as an Academic Tutor

Academic Tutors work in partnership with their tutees to support their academic, personal and professional development.

As an Academic Tutor, you are responsible for providing support across the following themes at appropriate points in the student journey:

Academic support and study skills

- Help students to reflect on their academic progress to date using tools such as the Student Progress Dashboard.
- Work with students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in relation to academic study skills.
- Encourage students to develop their study skills through Study Advice, Liaison Librarians, English Language Support, etc.
- Help students make decisions in relation to their course and to connect with other academics in their field of study.

Assessment and feedback

- Support students to review and reflect holistically on feedback they have received on assessed work, developing their ability to build on knowledge and progress successfully.
- Work with students to identify consistent patterns in feedback (e.g. poor referencing/structure, insecure research base, etc.).
- Discuss the steps they can take to improve their performance in future assessments.

Careers and employability

- Discuss students' career ambitions and employability goals, and encourage students to work towards realising those goals whilst at Reading.
- Signpost relevant opportunities (e.g. gaining work experience, careers training participation, study abroad, student societies, volunteering, etc.).
- Help students to identify and overcome barriers through tutor referral to specialist Careers support.
- Reflect on progress made to maintain motivation and build resilience.
- Write references for students, when requested.

Engaging beyond the programme

- Raise awareness of extra-curricular opportunities to encourage students to engage beyond their programme in order to develop transferable skills, build social networks and contribute to the development of the University (e.g. Course/School Representatives, discipline societies, STaR Mentoring, sports clubs/societies, etc.).

Specialist support services

- Establish proactive and effective relationships with your tutees that help to identify student support needs.
- Refer students to specialist support services as appropriate (**see flowchart on p9**).



Your Responsibilities

You will act as a key contact for your tutees within your School / Department, establishing proactive, effective and long-lasting relationships that promote their positive engagement within the academic community.

You should:

- Invite students to meet at least once in Semester 1 (plus the Welcome Week meeting for Part 1) and twice in Semester 2, and arrange the meetings.
- Help students reflect on their academic progress and personal and professional development – discuss work, feedback and marks (using the Student Progress Dashboard), attendance, careers etc.
- Actively encourage engagement of all your tutees.
- Get to know them as individuals to enable you to write references.

See the **ATS policy** for further details of the role.

Meetings

In your Welcome Week meeting with tutees:

- Explain your role and how you can support and work with them.
- Explain how you plan to run future meetings (e.g. one-one or group tutorials, possibilities for Teams/ phone meetings), and how they can contact you.
- Find out how they're settling in.
- Ask if they've been able to access RISIS, Blackboard etc, and if not explain where to go for help.
- Remind students about Study Smart, and their STaR mentors.

See the **"Suggested Outline for Academic Tutor Meetings"** document on the Academic Tutor toolkit for more suggestions.

sites.reading.ac.uk/academictutors

Suggested topics for discussion are also provided for students on the tutor toolkit on **Essentials**.

In all meetings:

- Listen and ask questions about their academic, personal and professional development.
- Agree action points.
- Signpost students to other services where appropriate (e.g. for welfare support, or academic study advice).
- Keep records of meetings on RISIS (e.g. of action points and signposting advice provided). Use the confidentiality button when appropriate.



As an Academic Tutor, you can refer students to other services for:

Administrative problems relating to their studies



Direct to Student Support Coordinator or Programme Administrator in HBS

Counselling or specialist advice



Refer to the appropriate specialist support service on campus (see flowchart on last page)

Module-specific or specialist academic or practice guidance



Advise how to get guidance, including connecting students to other academics in their field of study, Study Advice, Library etc



The role of the Disability Advisory Service

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) offers advice and guidance to students with any disability, health condition, mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty (SpLD).

DAS may be able to assist in study related support for students in the following ways:

- assessing the impact of a disability on the student's studies and recommending any reasonable adjustments. These are then shared with the School/Support Centre through Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).
- providing information on funding for study support, including the Disabled Students' Allowance and how to apply.
- liaising with Departments/Schools/Hubs including SDATs and Disability Representatives on reasonable adjustments, including extensions to deadlines and alternative modes of assessment where appropriate.
- providing assistance on arranging non-medical helpers e.g. one to one support arrangements such as mentors and specialist study skills.
- liaising with the Exams office re special exam arrangements which are then confirmed by the Exams team.
- assisting with referral and signposting to other appropriate services.

As an academic tutor you can liaise with DAS for any clarification needs around disability and reasonable adjustments. You should encourage students to register as soon as you become aware of a disability and as early as possible to ensure exam adjustments are in place in time.

You can refer disabled students to DAS directly by completing the Schools' Observed Indicators MS Form, where necessary. Please familiarise yourself with the Guidance on Implementing Reasonable Adjustments on the Disability Information Pages, ensure you complete the e-Module on Implementing reasonable adjustments, and make use of the Disability Resources Teams area for good practice guides and discussions. **Information for staff**

The Role of the Counselling and Wellbeing Service

Counselling & Wellbeing provide specialist short term support for specific areas of emotional or mental health difficulties, and work throughout the year to help students manage a wide range of issues, working to minimise the impact of any problems on their academic progress and wellbeing.

We assess and review the needs of students who connect with our service and liaise with external teams to provide a holistic support mechanism.

Counsellors aid students in better understanding themselves and their behaviours in order to be able to focus on their studies.

Issues they can support include:

- depression or anxiety
- attachment disorders
- identity/ gender identity
- relationships/family conflicts.

Mental health advisors provide emotional support for students with a mental health diagnosis and will encourage them to develop the practical skills to manage their lives and their studies.

Issues they can support include:

- psychosis/early onset of psychosis
- personality disorders
- autistic spectrum disorder
- obsessive compulsive disorders
- eating disorders
- trauma.

The Counselling & Wellbeing service is based in the Carrington building on Whiteknights campus and is free of charge.

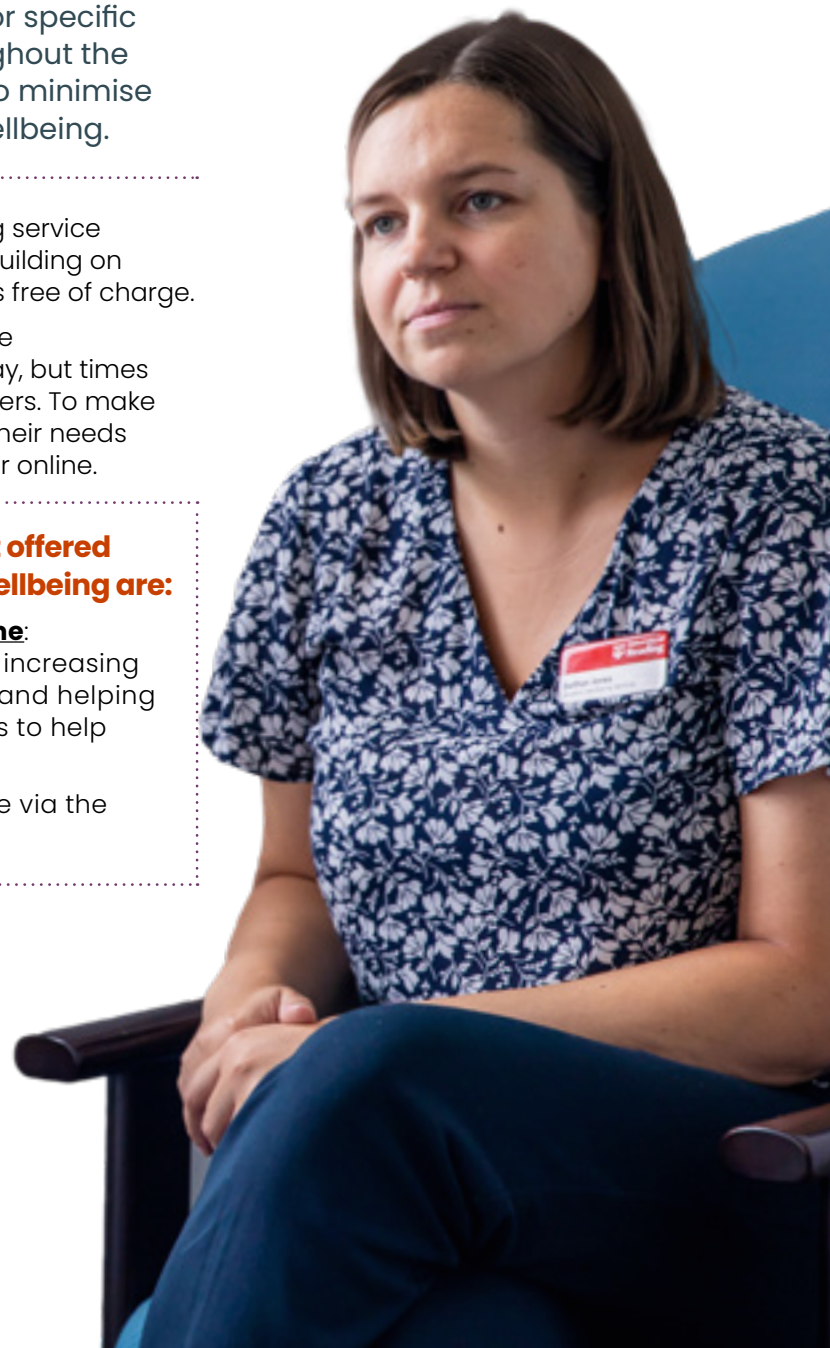
Reception opening times are 09:00–17:00, Monday to Friday, but times may vary outside of semesters. To make an appointment to assess their needs students will need to register online.

Other types of support offered by Counselling and Wellbeing are:

The Life Tools programme:

free talks with the aim of increasing student self-awareness and helping them learn practical skills to help achieve their potential.

Other support is available via the **Essentials pages**



The Role of the Student Welfare Team

The Student Welfare Team are responsible for providing advice, guidance, support and signposting for students who are experiencing a level of personal difficulties outside study that may have a significant impact on their studies if not supported.

Students should be referred to the Team when they are seeking practical guidance relating to a specific incident or problem, often which has just arisen.

The team work closely with Academic tutors, support centre staff as well as a range of other professionals across the University to ensure all presenting support needs for students are joined up and well co-ordinated to try and mitigate any impacts on their studies and experience of University life.

Issues the Welfare Team are likely to deal with include:

- severe home-sickness/problems settling in
- friendship/house-mate conflicts
- family crisis/conflict
- bullying/harassment
- concern about a friend
- victim of crime
- domestic violence
- substance abuse
- struggle with caring responsibilities
- concerns relating to radicalisation, exploitation (Prevent) or safeguarding.

The Student Welfare Team are centrally located in the Carrington Building, with each team member dedicated to working with students in particular Schools.

Students can access support directly through a “Drop in” service and speak to a duty Welfare Officer. For current drop-in hours see our page on **Essentials**. Students can also request guidance and appointments by email using **studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk**

As an Academic Tutor you can:

- Suggest that your student makes contact with the Student Welfare Team through the direct contact options.
- Contact the Student Welfare Team directly on **4777** or by email (**studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk**) to discuss any concerns and consider appropriate next steps.
- Speak to your SSC (or Programme Administrator in HBS) about submitting a notification of concern which the team will then follow up.



Support for Academic Tutors

The online Academic Tutor Toolkit (sites.reading.ac.uk/academictutors) contains information to support you in your role, e.g. suggested meeting outlines, links to policies and training, and information about student support services.

The Teaching & Learning programme of workshops and events, run by CQSD, includes many sessions that will be useful for Academic Tutors. The programme varies each year, but recent sessions have included:

- Being an Academic Tutor: Tools and Techniques
- Supporting and signposting your students
- Supporting students with specific learning differences
- Inclusive teaching for well-being

For more information, and to book, visit UoRLearn.

Your **School Director of Academic Tutoring** is responsible for strategic oversight of the ATS within your School, and for supporting you as an Academic Tutor.

The Role of the Support Centres

The Support Centres are your students' first point of contact for all questions, help or advice throughout their time at the University. They are able to advise or point students in the right direction for a range of academic and non-academic issues, including:

- Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study; Fitness to Practise
- Academic misconduct
- Coursework and exams queries
- Assessment Adjustments
- Module selection and registration
- Transfers, suspensions and withdrawals
- Timetable queries
- Disability, Welfare and wellbeing (signposting to a specialist team).

There are four Support Centres located across the Whiteknights and London Road campuses. See the **Essentials** pages for their contact details and opening times.



Support in Henley Business School

Henley Business School students should visit the Help Desk in the Henley main building for all support.

Programme administrators can advise students and staff on a range of topics, including:

- modules & programmes
- timetables
- coursework & exams
- Disability: support for implementing reasonable adjustment

Henley Student Support Team can assist with:

- Welfare and wellbeing (initial conversation and possible direction to a specialist team)
- Assessment Adjustments
- Transfers, suspensions and withdrawals
- Appeals and complaints (signposting to specialist teams).

Support for Home Foundation Students

Students who are in part 0 of a Home Foundation Year Programme can be directed to their Success Partner in Study Advice, if you have any concerns with their engagement or attendance, or their dedicated Study Adviser, if they would benefit from academic skills development.

This team is new for 2026, and so more details on the support we can provide for your students will be added to the toolkit and the **Study Advice** website as we progress.

Students can also access support and advice through the **Ask a Question** portal

Where to get help/support/information about...

Personal

An emergency or immediate risk of harm	→	999 Campus security 0118 378 6300
Disability, chronic health condition and/or diagnosed mental health condition	→	Disability Advisory Service Carrington Building, 0118 378 4202 disability@reading.ac.uk
Mental health, emotional difficulties	→	Counselling & Wellbeing Carrington Building, 0118 378 4216 counselling@reading.ac.uk
	→	24/7, 365 Student Support line
International student support	→	International Student Experience Manager
Immigration or visa issues	→	International Student Advisory Team Carrington Building, 0118 378 8038 immigration@reading.ac.uk
Accommodation or housing: University Halls	→	Halls Hotline 0800 029 1984 Hall Wardens: wardens@reading.ac.uk
Private sector	→	
Financial issues	→	Student Financial Support team Carrington Building, studentfunding@reading.ac.uk blackbullion.com 24 hour access to financial education for students
Effects of bullying/harassment, victim of crime, abuse, sexual violence, drugs/alcohol	→	Report incidents via Report and Support
Radicalisation and exploitation	→	Student Welfare Team Carrington Building, 0118 378 4777 studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk
Difficult issues e.g. homesickness, loneliness conflict with friends, difficulties adjusting to Uni life	→	Chaplaincy Park House Lodge 0118 378 8797
Faith/religion (any), belonging, meaning and values, food parcels & practical support	→	

Academic/Professional

Assessment Adjustments, suspension/withdrawal	→	Support Centres Edith Morley – x4243 JJ Thompson – x4101 Earley Gate – x8020 London Road – x2608 <i>see details on previous page</i>
Coursework and exam queries	→	Ask a Question In HBS: Please contact the Henley helpdesk in the HBS building for all support: x4007
Advice on/support through university policies and procedures (including appeals, complaints etc)	→	RSU Advice Service* Students' Union Building, 0118 378 4100 advice@readingsu.co.uk
Work experience, job hunting, career advice & training, placements	→	Careers Carrington Building 0118 378 8359 careers@reading.ac.uk Henley Careers HBS Room 107 henleycareers@henley.ac.uk
Academic language skills for international students (incl. academic writing)	→	University of Reading Global Academy – Academic English Programme 0118 378 7760 aep@reading.ac.uk
Assignments, exams, coursework	→	Teaching Staff, Module Convenor, Programme Director
Screening for specific learning disability Reasonable adjustments to teaching and/or assessment	→	Disability Advisory Service Carrington Building, 0118 378 4202 disability@reading.ac.uk
Academic study skills e.g. academic writing, critical thinking, time management	→	Study Advice Library studyadvice@reading.ac.uk https://libguides.reading.ac.uk
Motivation/productivity	→	Life Tools Programme Support with concentration, avoiding procrastination, and skills to manage academic work
Maths or statistics	→	Maths support resources
Information Skills e.g. finding, using and referencing information and Library resources for your studies	→	Academic Liaison Librarians reading.ac.uk/library/finding-information/subject
Blackboard/IT	→	Digital Technology Services (DTS) Library first floor 0118 378 6262 dts@reading.ac.uk

If you are unsure who to contact or to refer your student to, please talk to your School Director of Academic Tutoring , or refer your student to their Support Centre/Programme Administrator (HBS). Phone Student Services Reception (0118 378 5555) for help signposting to specialist services.

The **24hr Student Support Helpline** (0800 023 2466) and **Wisdom Wellbeing App** can help your students with any personal questions, worries or advice they might need.

Principles of the Academic Tutor System

The ATS is underpinned by six core principles to provide consistency of experience for staff and students across the University.

Communication of benefits, roles and responsibilities

All students and staff understand the benefits of academic tutoring.

Referral to specialist support for pastoral care

Academic Tutors and other staff are able to identify student support needs and refer students to specialist support services.

Equitable access for all taught students

All taught students have access to effective academic and personal support, including a named Academic Tutor, and understand what minimum contact they can expect.

Supporting students' academic, personal and professional development

Support is aligned to discipline needs and requirements and delivered in partnership with professional services.

Academic and professional services staff are able to focus on their areas of expertise.

Promoting student engagement and belonging

Support from Academic Tutors is for all students, not just those facing issues or in need of help.

Students are supported to engage fully with their studies, developing essential graduate attributes and fulfilling their potential.

Proactive relationships and shared responsibilities

Students are active participants, working in partnership with their tutor to support their academic, personal and professional development.

