

# THE ACADEMIC TUTOR SYSTEM

## Policy

*This Policy was approved by the University Board for Teaching and Learning in October 2018 for implementation in the academic session 2018-19 [and revised in January 2020].*

*[In the case of the Henley Business School, the principles of the ATS apply with minor variations as indicated in the text.*

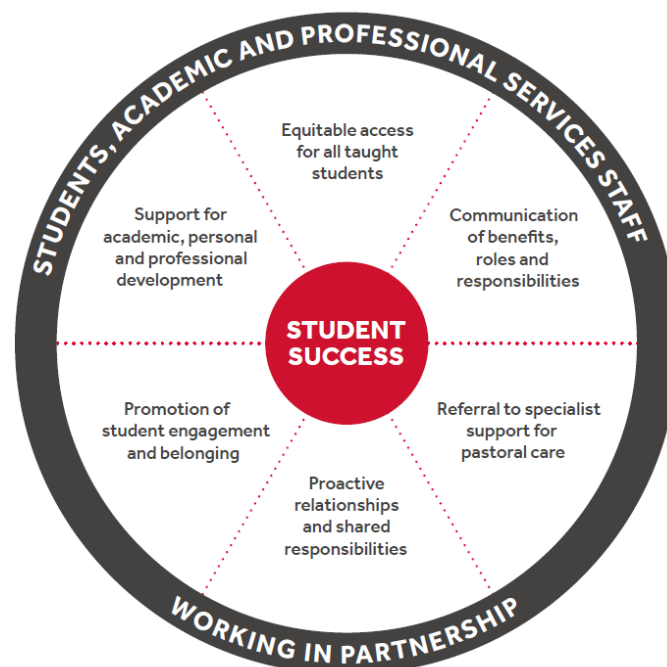
*In the case of international partners, local variations may apply.*

*In the case of UoRM, from the academic session 2019-20, the Principles of the Academic Tutor System will be applied as appropriate to the UoRM context, supported with local systems and processes.*

## The Principles of the Academic Tutor System

1. The Academic Tutor System (ATS) will help to ensure that the University provides a consistent level of academic and pastoral support to students that:

- integrates effectively with the wide range of support available to students at Reading;
- is appropriate to the context of the discipline;
- has clear and congruent expectations from students and staff; that
- with staff who are adequately trained and supported to execute important roles; and that
- those roles are valued across the institution.



The ATS is underpinned by the following principles to provide consistency of experience for staff and students across the University:

- 1. Equitable access for all taught students (UG, PGT, DL and PT)<sup>1</sup>:** All taught students have access to effective academic and personal support, including a named Academic Tutor, and understand what minimum contact they can expect.
- 2. Supporting students' academic, personal and professional development:** 'In-School'<sup>2</sup> student support focuses primarily on supporting students' academic, personal and professional development, aligned to discipline needs and requirements and delivered in partnership with relevant professional services. Roles and responsibilities enable academic and professional services staff to focus on their areas of expertise and signpost students to other members of staff or specialist services as appropriate.
- 3. Communication of benefits, roles and responsibilities:** All students and staff understand the benefits of academic tutoring and the shared responsibilities of all of those involved. With support from central communications teams, Schools take a proactive approach to articulating the importance of tutoring to students and staff, promoting engagement. Communication activities also underpin principles 4 and 5.
- 4. Proactive relationships and shared responsibilities:** Academic Tutors establish proactive, effective and long-lasting relationships with their tutees that promote positive engagement within the academic community. Students ensure that they are active participants, working in partnership with their tutor to support their academic, personal and professional development. Schools work in partnership with colleagues in student support services to monitor engagement with the ATS and embed a proactive programme of academic, personal and professional development support in the School (see Figure 1).
- 5. Promoting student engagement and belonging:** Academic, personal and professional support is for all students, not just those facing issues or in need of help, it is integral to the student experience and empowers students to make the most of their time at University, engaging fully with their studies, developing essential graduate attributes and fulfilling their potential.
- 6. Referral to specialist support for pastoral care:** Academic Tutors, School Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDATs), Student Support Coordinators (SSCs) and Student Welfare Officers (SWOs) are able to identify student support needs and refer students to specialist support services using risk-based referral systems. Schools and Functions identify common issues being faced by specific student groups and adjust the provision of or access to support as needed.

## School roles and responsibilities

### Academic Tutors

2. Academic Tutors will act as a key contact for their tutees within their School / Department, establishing effective and long-lasting relationships that promote positive engagement within the academic community. Academic Tutors will play a crucial role in upholding and embedding the principles of the Academic Tutor System, working in partnership with their tutees to support their academic, personal and professional development through proactive relationships and structured academic conversations informed by student data (e.g. RISIS Tutor Card). Academic Tutors will be responsible for signposting students to specialist central services for pastoral support as appropriate (see also *Appendix 1 Role of the Academic Tutor*). A suggested agenda template for Tutee meetings is attached as *Appendix 2*.

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<sup>1</sup> UG—Undergraduate students, PGT—Post Graduate Taught students, DL—Distance Learning students, PT—Part-Time students.

<sup>2</sup> 'In-School' support: School/Departmental Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDATs); Academic Tutors; academic and wellbeing programmes/initiatives for students supported centrally but delivered in-School (e.g. PAL, Positive Minds, etc.); and central support for SDATs/Academic Tutors (e.g. development opportunities, evaluation/impact, etc.).

3. At appropriate points in the student journey, Academic Tutors are responsible for providing support across the following themes:
- **Academic support and study skills:** Academic Tutors will assist students to reflect on their academic progress to date, including working with students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in relation to academic study skills and encouraging students to make plans and/or take up opportunities to develop these (e.g. Study Advice, Liaison Librarians, Maths Support, English Language Support, etc.). Academic Tutors will also help students to make decisions in relation to their course and to connect with other academics in their field of study.
  - **Assessment and feedback:** Academic Tutors will 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. Academic Tutors will work with students to identify consistent patterns in feedback (e.g. poor referencing/structure, insecure research base, etc.) and discuss the steps they can take to improve their performance in future assessments.
  - **Careers and employability:** Academic Tutors will discuss students' career ambitions and employability goals., encouraging students to work towards establishing and realising those goals whilst at Reading, including: signposting relevant opportunities (e.g. gaining work experience, careers training participation, study abroad, student societies, volunteering, etc.); helping students to identify and overcome barriers through tutor referral to specialist Careers support; and reflecting on progress made to maintain motivation and build resilience. When requested, Academic Tutors will write references for students.
  - **Engaging beyond the programme:** Academic Tutors will raise awareness of extra-curricular opportunities to encourage students to engage beyond their programme 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:** Academic Tutors will establish proactive and effective relationships with their tutees that help to identify student support needs and refer students to specialist support services as appropriate.
4. Academic Tutors are expected to maintain regular contact with their tutees, meeting with them at least once a term (in addition to the meeting with Part 1 tutees that must take place during Welcome Week) to reflect on their academic progress and personal and professional development. Academic Tutors will liaise with other members of academic and student support staff as appropriate to support students' academic, personal and professional development, including acting as a key contact for professional services staff providing support to their tutees.
5. Academic Tutors are **not** responsible for:
- Resolving administrative problems relating to a student's studies (e.g. timetabling, submission issues, etc.) but should direct students to the appropriate place for further guidance (e.g. Student Support Coordinator).
  - Providing counselling or specialist advice but should refer students to the appropriate specialist support service on campus (e.g. Student Financial Support, International Advisory Team, Counselling and Wellbeing, Student Welfare Team, RUSU Advice Service, etc.).
  - Replacing subject-specific academic staff in providing specialist academic guidance on aspects of the student's programme of study but should advise on how to get guidance, including connecting students to other academics in their field of study.

### **School Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDATs)**

6. SDATs will provide School-level leadership for student academic, personal and professional development and maintain strategic oversight of students' engagement with studies, student

success and retention across the School. An SDAT will be assigned to provide School-level leadership and direction to the Academic Tutor System including in Schools where a Director of Academic Tutoring is assigned at Department-level. SDATs are accountable to the Head of School for their roles and responsibilities (see *Appendix 4*). [Except in the Henley Business School where the SDAT is accountable to the School Director of Teaching and Learning]

7. SDATs are responsible for:

- **Strategic oversight of the Academic Tutor System within the School:** SDATs will oversee the ongoing quality management, evaluation and enhancement of the ATS in the School. SDATs will act as first contact for the ATS and ensure that the School embeds the University principles for academic tutoring. SDATs will report regularly on the progress made towards delivering the commitment to academic tutoring, including to School Boards of Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (SBTLs) and the DAT Community of Practice.
- **School-level leadership of initiatives to support student engagement with their studies and student development:** SDATs will oversee, monitor, facilitate and lead the School's engagement with University initiatives to support student engagement with their studies and student academic, personal and professional development (e.g. Peer Assisted Learning, University of Reading Red Award, etc.).
- **Academic leadership and decision-making in relation to student success and retention:** SDATs will undertake School-level responsibilities and make School-level decisions in relation to policy and procedures concerning extenuating circumstances, academic engagement and fitness to study/practise.
- **Support for Academic Tutors within the School:** SDATs will ensure that Academic Tutors are appropriately supported, communicating and disseminating relevant information and best practice to assist them in their roles. SDATs will promote partnership working between Academic Tutors and central support services to support student success and retention, including raising awareness of referral systems, processes and procedures.

8. In recognition of the extent and significance of the role, the selection and appointment process for SDATs is formal, transparent and accessible, and consistent with the process for appointing other School leaders, for example School Directors of Teaching and Learning (SDTLs) or Heads of Department (see *Appendix 3*).

9. SDATs are **not** responsible for:

- Administration relating to the delivery of the Academic Tutor System (i.e. arranging Tutor/tutee meetings and recording attendance at meetings). This is the responsibility of Academic Tutors, with help from Support Centres where required. RISIS can be used to record Tutor/tutee meetings.
- Operational oversight of the extenuating circumstances procedures and escalation processes (e.g. fitness to study), SSCs ensure students are notified of the procedures and deadlines in liaison with relevant staff and Committees.
- Ensuring support is in place for students suspending, withdrawing or transferring. This is the responsibility of SSCs.
- Providing ongoing pastoral support to students experiencing welfare or wellbeing issues affecting their studies. This is the responsibility of specialist student support teams including the Student Welfare Team, Counselling and Wellbeing, and the Disability Advisory Service.

## Reporting

10. SDATS will provide termly updates on the ATS to their School Boards for Teaching and Learning and the Student Experience, including on the provision of academic, personal and professional development across the School and flagging any particular successes, challenges and emerging risks to that provision.

11. Heads of School and School Directors of Teaching and Learning will provide updates on the ATS in their annual School Planning and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (SPELT) Reports.

### **Heads of School**

12. Each Head of School has ultimate responsibility for ensuring an excellent student experience of academic tutoring in their School. Although in practice this is delivered by SDATs and Academic Tutors, the Head of School (SDTL in the Henley Business School) must work with the SDAT and School Director of Teaching and Learning (SDTL) to report on progress towards enhancing the student learning experience, including embedding the ATS, through the School Planning and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (SPELT) process.
13. Heads of School must ensure that an appropriate time allocation is made for Academic Tutors and SDATs (see *Appendix 3*) when considering workload models.

### **Students**

14. Students are active partners in their learning and development at the University of Reading. Students work in partnership with their Academic Tutor to support their academic, personal and professional development. The online [Student Academic Tutor Toolkit](#) provides guidance for students on how to work with their Academic Tutor. The [Student Charter](#) provides a helpful summary of the expectations staff have of students at Reading. The list below captures those most relevant to academic tutoring. The University expects students to:
  - Work hard at their studies and to be active partners in shaping their experience of Higher Education.
  - Seek out opportunities to enhance their understanding and to develop practical and intellectual skill.
  - Take advantage of the wealth of activities (social and developmental) provided by the University and Reading University Students' Union (RUSU).
  - Be pro-active in managing their learning and in seeking help when needed.
  - Keep appointments and to communicate with staff in a timely and courteous manner.

### **Partnership**

The foundation of our academic community

15. The following principles underpin student-staff partnership at Reading

Partnership:

- Is based on values of trust and respect
- Is empowering and inclusive
- Enables the collaborative development of meaningful change
- Creates a sense of belonging to an academic community

## **Support for Schools and students**

### **Welfare support for the ATS**

16. The Student Welfare Team are responsible for providing specialist advice, guidance and signposting for students who are experiencing difficulties outside of their studies. Students should be referred to the Team when they need practical guidance relating to a specific incident or problem.
17. The Student Welfare Team, managed by the Student Welfare Manager, are located centrally in Student Services in the Carrington Building and are dedicated to working with students in particular Schools, working closely with SDATs, Academic Tutors and SSCs to monitor and track students receiving their support. Academic Tutors may refer students to Student Welfare Officers directly for

pastoral/welfare support.

18. Student Welfare Officers are responsible for:

- Providing specialist advice, guidance and signposting for students who are experiencing difficulties of a non-academic nature affecting their ability to study, e.g.
  - severe home-sickness,
  - friendship/house-mate conflicts,
  - family crisis/conflict,
  - bullying/harassment,
  - concern about a friend,
  - problems settling in,
  - victim of crime,
  - domestic violence,
  - substance abuse,
  - struggle with caring responsibilities,
  - concerns relating to radicalisation, exploitation (Prevent), or safeguarding.
- Working in partnership with academic and professional services colleagues, to establish reasonable and effective methods of support or adjustments for students in situations of difficulty or with complex or unusual circumstances.
- Making referrals/signposting students to other specialist services within the University/Students' Union, support groups, external agencies and treatment providers where necessary.
- Undertaking individual case work to limit the impact a problem could have on a student's studies as well as supporting the administrative dimension of student welfare support.
- Investigating 'notifications of concern' and considering concerns raised through University Prevent<sup>3</sup>, safeguarding and harassment policies.

19. Student Welfare Officers are **not** responsible for providing:

- An 'emergency service', but the Student Welfare Team will operate a 'drop - in' service during the working day to provide a key contact for enquiries. Otherwise, Student Welfare Officers will use an appointment system to meet and follow-up with students receiving their support.
- Counselling and specialist mental health support. This is the responsibility of the Counselling and Wellbeing Service.
- Advice on disability to either students or staff. This is the responsibility of the Disability Advisory Service.
- 'Care' for students, such as that which should be provided by Social Services, a carer, a mentor, a relative or a non-medical helper.
- Specialist practitioner support or clinically qualified treatment.

### **Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) support for the ATS**

20. CQSD provides support to SDATs and Academic Tutors, and is responsible for identifying and sharing best practice, delivering training and developing helpful resources/support materials (e.g. Academic Tutor Toolkit).

21. Working with Schools and Functions, CQSD will coordinate the evaluation of the ATS, providing evidence of impact on student engagement, success and retention and staff engagement, workload and recognition as well as identifying opportunities to make improvements on an ongoing basis.

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<sup>3</sup>The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places an obligation on the University to "in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This is known as the Prevent Duty. The University has prepared a Prevent Policy Statement containing a process for reporting concerns relating to Prevent, which you can [read](#).

## **Administrative support**

22. Academic Tutors should develop strong relationships with student-facing staff in the Support Centres, Henley Helpdesk and the ISLI Administration Office to ensure the effective communications that they and students need for processes to work smoothly. These staff will work closely with Academic Tutors and SDATs, escalating issues as appropriate and providing administrative support. They provide advice and guidance to students and staff on the administrative process relating to students and their studies. They manage the key processes, including:

- Extenuating circumstances requests including providing support to the University Standing Committee on Special Cases.
- Module selection and registration.
- Changes to students' status, for example, suspensions, withdrawals, programme transfers, changes to mode of study.
- Support for SDTL/SDAT with extenuating circumstances, student academic engagement, academic misconduct and fitness to study and fitness to practise cases.
- Welcome Week activities in Schools.
- Communication with students using Essentials and Me@Reading student portal.

Professor Orla Kennedy, outgoing Chair of the ATS Steering Group and Academic Lead for the ATS

Professor Clare Furneaux, Chair of the ATS Steering Group and Academic Lead for the ATS 2018-19

1 October 2018

**(Revised 13 January 2020)**

## ATS Policy Appendix 1: ATS Role of the Academic Tutor

(For inclusion in the Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning).

# ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC TUTOR

The Academic Tutor System has a vital role to play in enhancing students' academic, personal and professional development, and is essential in ensuring students make the most of their time at University.

The role of the Academic Tutor focuses primarily on working in partnership with students to support their academic, personal and professional development.

For example, Academic Tutors help students to:

- Make decisions in relation to their course.
- Formulate plans to support their academic, personal and professional development.
- Connect with other academics and opportunities in their field of study.
- Connect with other support services as appropriate.

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

### Responsibilities

In order to carry out their responsibilities an Academic Tutor will normally be expected to undertake the following:

- Maintain regular contact with each tutee, meeting with them at least once a term (in addition to the meeting that must take place during Welcome Week) to reflect on their academic progress and support their personal and professional development.
- Assist students with their academic and professional development by providing support across the following themes:
  1. **Academic support and study skills:** Assisting students to reflect on their academic progress to date, including working with students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in relation to academic study skills and encouraging students to make plans and/or take up opportunities to develop these (e.g. Study Advice, Liaison Librarians, Maths Support, English Language Support, etc.). Academic Tutors also help students to make decisions in relation to their course and to connect with other academics in their field of study.
  2. **Assessment & feedback:** Supporting students to review and reflect holistically on feedback they have received on assessed work, developing their ability to build on knowledge and progress successfully. Academic Tutors work with students to identify consistent patterns in feedback (e.g. poor referencing / structure, insecure research base, etc.) and discuss the steps they can take to improve their performance in future assessments.
  3. **Careers & employability:** Discussing students' career ambitions and employability goals. Encouraging students to work towards establishing and realising those goals whilst at Reading, including: signposting relevant opportunities (e.g. gaining work experience, careers training participation, study abroad, student societies, volunteering, etc.); helping students to identify and overcome barriers through tutor referral to specialist Careers support; and reflecting on progress made to maintain motivation and build resilience. When requested, Academic Tutors write references for students.
  4. **Engaging beyond the programme:** Raising awareness of extra-curricular opportunities to encourage students to engage beyond their programme 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.).



5. **Specialist support services:** Establishing proactive and effective relationships with tutees to help identify student support needs and refer students to specialist support services as appropriate.
- Follow up with students who are not making satisfactory progress.
  - Liaise with other members of academic and student support staff as appropriate to support students' academic, personal and professional development, including acting as a key point of contact for Student Support Co-ordinators and Student Welfare Officers.
  - Maintain awareness of referral systems, processes and procedures and other sources of support available to students within the University and the Students' Union.
  - It is good practice to document tutorial support, including: recording tutee attendance / non-attendance; brief notes on the content of the meeting (e.g. the areas discussed, and next steps agreed); and retaining email communications with tutees. RISIS can be used to record Tutor/tutee meetings.
  - Engage proactively with training and development opportunities offered by School Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDAT), the Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) and People Development to support continued professional development.
  - Seek opportunities to share good practice in academic tutoring.

## ATS Policy Appendix 2 ATS Sample Agenda Templates for Academic Tutor/Tutee Meetings

(For inclusion in the Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning).

### SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR WELCOME WEEK MEETING WITH TUTEES

Timing	Suggested Agenda / Areas of discussion	Things you could bring to show/give the students
Welcome Week – Initial meeting with tutees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explain your role as an Academic Tutor:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help students reflect on their academic progress</li> <li>▪ Work with them to identify strengths/weaknesses in relation to their studies</li> <li>▪ Encourage them to develop their study skills (by signposting to Study Advice, Liaison Librarians etc)</li> <li>▪ Help them make decisions in relation to their course</li> <li>▪ Support them to review, reflect and act on feedback received</li> <li>▪ Discuss career ambitions and signpost relevant opportunities and services</li> <li>▪ Write references, when necessary</li> <li>▪ Help students identify appropriate extra-curricular opportunities</li> <li>▪ Refer them to specialist support services as and when necessary</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Expectations for future meetings, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Group or one-one</li> <li>▪ When are you available, and how can students contact you?</li> <li>▪ Who will arrange the meetings?</li> <li>▪ What students should prepare/bring</li> <li>▪ How you/they should keep records</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Choice of modules/options.</li> <li>▪ Role of Support Centres</li> <li>▪ Transition to university (academic, social, accommodation etc.).</li> <li>▪ Remind students about <a href="#">Study Smart</a> and their <a href="#">STaR mentors</a>.</li> <li>▪ Have they been able to access RISIS/Blackboard?</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Student Charter</a></p> <p>Student signposting document</p> <p>Postcard about the Academic Tutor System</p> <p>Template for students to record meetings</p> <p>Information about Study Smart  <a href="https://www.futurelearn.com/institutions/university-of-reading/study-smart/9yv6vr9jpa2tupv35eveqdsuj7gp">https://www.futurelearn.com/institutions/university-of-reading/study-smart/9yv6vr9jpa2tupv35eveqdsuj7gp</a></p> <p><b>Materials to support you</b></p> <p><a href="#">Guide for Academic Tutors</a>          (see this Guide for an expanded explanation of the role of the Academic Tutor)</p> <p><a href="#">Academic Tutor Toolkit</a></p>

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR PART 1 ACADEMIC TUTOR MEETINGS

Timing	Suggested Agenda / Areas of discussion	Things you could ask students to prepare/bring with them
Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First impressions of University coursework / workload (including assignment deadlines) and study methods.</li> <li>▪ Ask if they have completed <a href="#">Study Smart</a>, discuss what they have gained from the course and reinforce the benefits of doing Study Smart if they have not yet done so.</li> <li>▪ Any strengths or weaknesses that may affect their academic progress and feedback on assignment(s) so far.</li> <li>▪ Disclosure of any disability (if relevant).</li> <li>▪ The <a href="#">Student Charter</a>– discuss the Charter, and what it means for them.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to engage with University-wide/School/Department specific personal or professional development programmes.</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A schedule of your assignment deadlines for the term/year.</li> <li>▪ Identify any particular strengths and weaknesses that are likely to affect your academic progress.</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / placement(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> </ul>
Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 1 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Expectations and experience of the course so far.</li> <li>▪ Study skills development, including assignment deadlines and exam preparation.</li> <li>▪ Feedback on assignment(s).</li> <li>▪ Attendance record for term 1 etc. (using data on RISIS)</li> <li>▪ Look ahead to Year Abroad options, placement arrangements and Part 2 option choices (as appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Consider summer plans and possible career development (work experience, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Non-academic matters: accommodation, societies, social development etc.</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider your progress in Term 1, Year Abroad / placement options (if appropriate) and summer plans / work experience and links to future career.</li> <li>▪ Reflect on the effectiveness of your existing study skills.</li> <li>▪ Identify any particular difficulties (academic, social or personal).</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / placement(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> </ul>
Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 2 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Exam and placement results (if appropriate), degree programme progress so far.</li> <li>▪ Options for Part 2 (if appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Summer plans and possible career developments/work experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider your Part 2 option choices and Part 1 progress.</li> <li>▪ Identify any particular difficulties (academic, social or personal).</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / exam papers to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> </ul>

### Suggested outline for PART 2 Academic Tutor meetings

Timing	Suggested Agenda / Areas of discussion	Things you could ask students to prepare / bring with them
Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflection on achievements in Part 1 / summer, identification of any future developmental steps or targets for continued improvement and where students can seek advice and support to achieve these (e.g. <a href="#">Study Advice</a>).</li> <li>▪ Transition to Part 2 – discuss any implicit or explicit step-ups in expectations, workload, and level of understanding.</li> <li>▪ The <a href="#">Student Charter</a>– revisit the Charter.</li> <li>▪ Option choices (if appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Coursework / workload (including assignment deadlines) and study methods.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to engage with University-wide/School/Department specific personal or professional development programmes.</li> <li>▪ Placement arrangements (if appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Career Development and other non-academic matters.</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify particular strengths and weaknesses that are likely to affect your academic progress.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a schedule of your assignment / placement deadlines for the term/year.</li> <li>▪ List your extra-curricular activities and work experience over the last year.</li> </ul>
Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 1 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Academic progress, including feedback on assignment(s), placements, attendance record for term 1 etc.</li> <li>▪ Study skills development, including assignment deadlines and exam preparation.</li> <li>▪ Summer plans, possible career development (work experience, etc.) and non-academic matters.</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any particular difficulties (academic, social or personal).</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / placement(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Consider your summer plans and any links to future career(s).</li> </ul>
Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 2 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Academic progress, including feedback on assignment(s), placement(s), attendance record for term 2 etc.</li> <li>▪ Exam preparation and revision techniques (if appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Dissertation plans and planning for Part 3 (options).</li> <li>▪ Summer plans and possible career developments/work experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider your Part 3 option choices, placement(s) and project/dissertation topic (as appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / placement(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> </ul>

Suggested outline for PART 3 / PART 4 (Final Year) Academic Tutor meetings

Timing	Suggested Agenda / Areas of discussion	Things you could ask students to prepare / bring with them
Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflection on achievements in Part 2 / summer, identification of any future developmental steps or targets for continued improvement and where students can seek advice and support to achieve these (e.g. <a href="#">Study Advice</a>).</li> <li>▪ Discuss expectations of transition to Part 3.</li> <li>▪ Option choices and dissertation / project.</li> <li>▪ Coursework/ workload (including assignment deadlines) and study methods.</li> <li>▪ The <a href="#">Student Charter</a>- revisit the Charter.</li> <li>▪ Career plans, work experience, personal / professional development opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Placement arrangements (if appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Intentions for employment / further study, including information for references (e.g. CV).</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify particular strengths and weaknesses that are likely to affect your academic progress.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a schedule of your assignment / placement deadlines for the term/year.</li> <li>▪ List your extra-curricular activities and work experience over the last year.</li> </ul>
Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 1 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Academic progress, including: assignment schedule for this term, feedback on assignment(s) and attendance in term 1, final stages of dissertation/project/placement and preparation for final examinations (as appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Improvements to their CV and intentions for employment/further study.</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify particular difficulties (academic, social or personal).</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / placement(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Prepare an updated version of your CV.</li> </ul>
Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 2 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Attendance and academic progress in Term 2, including feedback on assignments.</li> <li>▪ Preparation for final examinations, including revision plans, techniques and special circumstances.</li> <li>▪ Intentions for employment / further study, including information for references (e.g. final CV).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any concerns in planning for finals.</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) / placement(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a final version of your CV.</li> </ul>

Suggested outline for initial first-term group meeting with postgraduate Tutees

Timing	Suggested Agenda / Areas of discussion	Things you could bring to show/give the students
<p>Early in first term – Initial meeting with tutees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explain your role as an Academic Tutor:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help students reflect on their academic progress</li> <li>▪ Work with them to identify strengths/weaknesses in relation to their studies, and related supports</li> <li>▪ Encourage them to develop their study skills (by signposting to Study Advice, Liaison Librarians etc)</li> <li>▪ Help them make decisions in relation to their course</li> <li>▪ Support them to review, reflect and act on feedback received</li> <li>▪ Discuss career ambitions and signpost relevant opportunities and services</li> <li>▪ Write references, when necessary</li> <li>▪ Help students identify appropriate extra-curricular opportunities</li> <li>▪ Refer them to specialist support services as and when necessary</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Expectations for future meetings, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Group or one-one</li> <li>▪ When are you available, and how can students contact you?</li> <li>▪ Who will arrange the meetings?</li> <li>▪ What students should prepare/bring</li> <li>▪ How you/they should keep records</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Choice of modules/options.</li> <li>▪ Role of Support Centres</li> <li>▪ Role of relevant RUSU student society (e.g. Law Society) and discipline relevant social events throughout year.</li> <li>▪ Transition to postgraduate studies and differences from their previous institution (academic, social, accommodation etc.)</li> <li>▪ Have they been able to access RISIS/Blackboard?</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Student Charter</a>            Student signposting document            Postcard about the Academic Tutor System            Template for students to record meetings</p> <hr/> <p><b>Materials to support you</b></p> <p>Guide for Academic Tutors (see this Guide for an expanded explanation of the role of the Academic Tutor)</p> <p><a href="#">Academic Tutor Toolkit</a></p>

## Suggested outline for Postgraduate Academic Tutor meetings

Timing	Suggested Agenda / Areas of discussion	Things you could ask students to prepare/bring with them
Later in Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First impressions of University coursework / workload (including assignment deadlines) and study methods.</li> <li>▪ Any strengths or weaknesses that may affect their academic progress and feedback on assignment(s) so far.</li> <li>▪ Disclosure of any disability (if relevant).</li> <li>▪ The <a href="#">Student Charter</a>– discuss the Charter, and what it means for them.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to engage with University-wide/School/Department specific personal or professional development programmes.</li> <li>▪ Career Development and other non-academic matters.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Including early deadlines for graduate schemes</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A schedule of your assignment deadlines for the term/year.</li> <li>▪ Identify any particular strengths and weaknesses that are likely to affect your academic progress.</li> </ul>
Early in Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 1 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Expectations and experience of the course so far.</li> <li>▪ Study skills development, including assignment deadlines and exam preparation.</li> <li>▪ Feedback on assignment(s).</li> <li>▪ Attendance record for term 1 etc. (using data on RISIS)</li> <li>▪ Non-academic matters: accommodation, societies, social development etc.</li> <li>▪ Intentions for employment / further study, including information for references (e.g. CV).</li> <li>▪ Agree action points based on the above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider your progress in Term 1, and initial thoughts of project/dissertation topics.</li> <li>▪ Reflect on the effectiveness of your existing study skills.</li> <li>▪ Identify any particular difficulties (academic, social or personal).</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Prepare an updated version of your CV.</li> </ul>
Very early in Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on action points from term 2 meeting.</li> <li>▪ Assignment results and degree programme progress so far.</li> <li>▪ Planning for dissertation / project (noting that during term 3 the student will primarily receive individual academic support from the dissertation / project supervisor, and it is not the role of the academic tutor to act as an additional supervisor).</li> <li>▪ Intentions for employment / further study, including information for references.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any concerns in planning for project/dissertation.</li> <li>▪ Identify assignment(s) to discuss feedback - bring feedback to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a final version of your CV.</li> </ul>

# ATS Policy Appendix 3 ATS Selection and Appointment process for School Directors of Academic Tutoring

*(For inclusion in the Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning).*

## 1. Appointment Process

School Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDATs – formerly Senior Tutors) will provide School-level leadership for student academic, personal and professional development and maintain strategic oversight of student engagement with their studies, success and retention across their Schools from September 2018. In the current Higher Education environment, it is essential that that we appoint those best qualified for the SDAT role with the appropriate experience, knowledge, skills and attributes. Furthermore, it is important that the selection and appointment process for SDATs is formalised, transparent and accessible and is consistent with the process for appointing other School leaders, for example School Directors of Teaching and Learning (SDTLs) or Heads of Department.

For new appointments:

- The relevant Head of School remains responsible for the appointment of the SDAT.
- The Head of School should invite members of staff within the School to submit a formal expression of interest for the role, usually at least 6 months before the incumbent is due to step down. If no expressions of interest are received by the specified deadline, the Head of School will then have discretion to approach a member of staff they feel is appropriate to undertake the role to make a direct appointment. For continuity, the Head of School should ensure that there is an SDAT in post at all times.
- The Head of School should establish an Appointment Committee comprising key individuals from within the School and the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean.
- The Head of School and the Appointment Committee shortlists interested candidates in cases where there is significant interest for the role.
- The Appointment Committee interviews candidates and makes a recommendation to the Head of School.
- The selected individual should be appointed for a minimum two-year or a maximum three-year term in the first instance.
- The Head of School should inform the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) and the Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) of the new appointment.

Agreement to serve for a further term or for an extension to the term would be made where there is consensus from the incumbent SDAT, and the School Management team.

The University is committed to having a diverse and inclusive workforce, is a Stonewall Diversity and Global Diversity Champion, and supports the principles of the Race Equality Charter and Athena SWAN. Applications for job-share, part-time and flexible working arrangements are welcomed and will be considered in line with School needs. If you need any advice in relation to this please contact your [HR Advisor/Partner](#).

## 2. Time allocation and remuneration

In recognition of the extent and significance of the role, it is suggested that the role of SDAT is appointed at a minimum of 0.2 FTE but it is recognised that in some Schools the role could be greater in scope and require a greater allocation.

Appropriate remuneration should be agreed in accordance with agreed practice, as determined by the Staffing Committee.



### **3. Support and Development**

It is important that, once appointed, SDATs have access to ongoing development training and support. Before taking up the role, new appointees should be invited to discuss the role with the current SDAT and relevant Teaching and Learning Dean.

In taking up the role, the new appointee agrees to attend the relevant termly SDAT Community of Practice meetings and other related events, as well as attend relevant Committee meetings.

To support SDATs in their roles, a programme for training and development is offered by the Centre for Quality Support and Development and People Development.

## **ATS Policy Appendix 4 ATS Roles and Responsibilities of the School Director of Academic Tutoring (SDAT)**

*(For inclusion in the Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning)*

School Directors of Academic Tutoring provide School-level leadership for the Academic Tutor System. They are accountable to the Head of School *[in the Henley Business School the SDAT is accountable to the School Director of Teaching and Learning]* for their roles and responsibilities as described below.

### **Purpose**

School Directors of Academic Tutoring provide School-level leadership for student academic, personal and professional development and maintain strategic oversight of student engagement with their studies, success and retention across the School. In particular, School Directors of Academic Tutoring are responsible for:

- Strategic oversight of the Academic Tutor System within the School.
- School-level leadership of initiatives to support student engagement with their studies and student development.
- Academic leadership and decision-making in relation to student success and retention, including policy and procedures concerning extenuating circumstances, academic engagement and fitness to study.
- Support for Academic Tutors within the School.

### **Main duties and responsibilities**

Below is a more detailed outline of the role and responsibilities of School Directors of Academic Tutoring. It is recognised there will be variation in practice depending on implementation and administrative structures within Schools. In Schools where a Director of Academic Tutoring is assigned at Department-level, a School Director of Academic Tutoring should be assigned to provide School-level leadership and direction to the Academic Tutor System.

#### *Strategic oversight of the Academic Tutor System within the School*

- Act as first point of contact for the Academic Tutor System, providing proactive leadership and strategic oversight of student engagement with their studies and student development within the School.
- Ensure that the School plays its full part in fulfilling the University's principles for the Academic Tutor System, as set out in the guidance for Schools and Functions.
- Take overall responsibility for the ongoing quality management, evaluation and enhancement of the Academic Tutor System in the School.
- Represent and report on the Academic Tutor System at Boards of Studies and School Boards of Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (SBTLs), providing updates on student and staff engagement with ATS and the delivery / impact of academic, personal and professional development initiatives for onward communication to the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE).
- Take an active role in the School Directors of Academic Tutoring Community of Practice, including sharing best practice, contributing to the development of new systems / processes and communicating issues and concerns about the Academic Tutor System.
- Ensure that all Academic Tutors are aware of their responsibilities and are notified of any updates and changes to the Academic Tutor System.
- Contribute to the student induction process, this could include: communicating the benefits, roles and responsibilities of Academic Tutors; promoting academic, personal and professional development opportunities; and providing information on student support services.
- Ensure equitable access to Academic Tutors for all taught students, including re-allocating tutors where the tutor-tutee relationship is not functioning as it should.

*School-level leadership of initiatives to support student engagement with their studies and student development*

- Oversee, monitor, facilitate and lead the School's engagement with University initiatives to support student engagement with their studies and student academic, personal and professional development.
- Liaise with colleagues in student support services to develop and embed a proactive programme of academic, personal and professional development support in the School.
- Ensure that Academic Tutors are aware of the various student academic, personal and professional development opportunities available within the School and across the University.

*Academic leadership and decision-making in relation to student success and retention*

- Undertake School-level responsibilities and make School-level decisions in relation to policy and procedures concerning extenuating circumstances, academic engagement and fitness to study.
- Liaise with other academic and professional services staff in the management of extenuating circumstances (in cases of escalation to Stages 2 and 3), complex cases and appeals.
- Attend and report to the: University Standing Committee on Special Cases (USCSC); USCSC Appeals Panels; Standing Committee on Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study (SCEAFS); Standing Committee on Fitness to Practise (SCFP); Standing Committee on Exam Results (SCER); and Programme Examiners' meetings as appropriate.

*Support for Academic Tutors within the School*

- Ensure Academic Tutors are aware of referral systems, processes and procedures, so that they are able to refer and signpost students to other services in the University as appropriate.
- Encourage and promote partnership working between Academic Tutors and central support services to support students' academic, personal and professional development.
- Promote the identification and dissemination of good practice in academic tutoring to support the continued improvement of the Academic Tutor System in the School.
- Support the continued professional development of Academic Tutors by providing opportunities to share good practice.
- Ensure that relevant information from the wider University, in particular from the School Directors of Academic Tutoring Community of Practice, is communicated to Academic tutors in the School.
- Meet with new Academic Tutors as part of the induction process.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title	School/Department
School Director of Academic Tutoring	

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<b>Skills Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to identify and tackle issues</li> <li>• Strong administrative and organisation skills</li> <li>• An ability to work and influence across all disciplines in the School</li> <li>• Ability to analyse problems and broker solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to articulate strategic direction and vision</li> <li>• Ability to communicate School and University priorities in a clear, consistent and effective way</li> </ul>
<b>Attainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate academic credentials to be able to lead academic tutoring developments in the areas covered by the School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good understanding of the School's tutoring provision and University's student support systems / development opportunities</li> <li>• A good understanding of the key Academic Tutor System challenges faced by the School</li> <li>• A good understanding of the University's aims for academic tutoring</li> <li>• An interest in academic tutoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good understanding of University policies and procedures relating to extenuating circumstances, academic engagement and fitness to study</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of specific issues relating to matters affecting students' academic, personal and professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A previous administrative role within the Department or School</li> <li>• Track record of effective tutoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing successful T&amp;L change</li> <li>• Effective leadership of initiatives to support student academic, personal and professional development</li> <li>• Personal innovation in T&amp;L</li> </ul>
<b>Disposition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspire and motivate others</li> <li>• Committed to enhancing the effectiveness of T&amp;L and tackling difficult T&amp;L issues</li> <li>• Be a role model of University Values and Behaviours</li> <li>• Proactive approach to problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in developing in a leadership role</li> </ul>

