

## 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 three times a year (in addition to the meeting with Part 1 tutees that must take place during Welcome Week) to reflect on their academic progress and support their personal and professional development. There should be one meeting in Semester 1 and two in Semester 2, with the first Semester 2 meeting scheduled to take place soon after students receive their results from the first assessment period.
- 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, Academic Liaison Librarians, 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.
  - As a minimum, record attendance at Academic Tutor meetings on RISIS. In addition, it is good practice to make brief notes on the content of the meeting (e.g. the areas discussed, and next steps agreed); and to retain email communications with tutees.
  - 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.