

## Case Study for Academic Advising

**Title** - Academic Professional Advisor Role

**Strapline** - How the Sport Business Management team support UG students.

**Overview** - Within the UG teaching team academic members of staff are assigned as Academic Professional Advisors (APAs) to students when they join the course at level 4 (roughly 4-6 students per member of staff). During the first 6 weeks at level 4 a formative assessment is undertaken by students which is marked by the APA and feedback is given 1-1 for each student to help identify areas to focus on to improve academic attainment. An End of Year Performance Review to consider a wide range of attainment and achievement areas, including: academic, employability, personal, work/life balance and placement aspirations is held at the end of Level 4 with one of 5 letters sent to students following the meeting to identify attainment/engagement to date. APAs normally stay with the students, building a supportive and advisory relationship through level 5 where they act as placement supervisor, into level 6 and through to the conclusion of their studies where an Exit Interview is held.

**Benefits** - Over the course of three years a trusting relationship can be built between APA and student providing significant opportunity for personalised support and guidance to be provided.

- Students have a named person to turn to when in need of guidance in relation to academic studies and professional guidance.
- The APA system enables personal issues raised with APAs to be effectively channelled to SSOs who provide pastoral care and administrative academic support.

**Aim** - The underlying aim was to provide students with a tailored support system where students felt that they were supported throughout their studies and were provided with a 'first point of contact' for any academic/professional issues that arose.

### Approach

BSc (Hons) Sport Business Management, UG - with PG adopting a similar model.

75-80 students per year.

Non Credit Bearing

#### 1. *Student contact hours*

		Seminars / small groups	one to one student tutor meetings
Level 4	Sem1	10 mins	20 mins
	Sem2		20 mins + 20 mins
Level 5	Sem1	20 mins	Placement supervision
	Sem2		20 mins
Level 6	Sem1	20 mins	20 mins
	Sem2		20 mins

2. ***How do you describe the purpose of the scheme to staff and students?***

To provide 1-1 support for students over the course of their studies - students like feeling like someone knows them and has their best interests at heart rather than being a face in a crowd.

3. ***Staff work time allocation per student***

One hour per student per level

4. ***How do you support continuity in staff student relationships?***

- Academy-wide briefing document on roles provided at the start of year to both students and staff
- Briefing in team meetings, spreadsheets and information packs prior to end of year meetings.
- Proformas for action plans provided.
- Students briefed in lectures at various points in relation to meetings/requirements.

5. ***Which additional resources do you use?***

- Careers service to forward students for guidance (specifically Eric Thompson, Sport Careers Advisor).
- Student Support Officers (Tessa Borg and Anna Benjamin).
- Administrative support to send out personalised letters following Level 4 End of Year Performance Review.

6. ***Do you monitor attendance?***

Engagement is monitored by PDP co-ordinator and students followed up if unresponsive to APAs. At the recent level 4 End of Year Performance Review, despite poor attendance at taught sessions in recent weeks, only 7 students did not attend without re-arranging meeting due to EC's.

**Outcomes** Overall the role has been seen as a success, and the experience for many students has been a positive one. The PDP coordinator is currently collecting feedback from level 6 students who are the first cohort to have been assigned their APA from level 4 so can provide more comprehensive information on this in the near future.

It is clear however that student experiences vary depending on the APA they are assigned. Staff buy in is essential for this to be a successful process and it is evident that it is higher on the agenda of some staff than others which translate into different experiences for students. Overall though there has been positive feedback from both staff and students on the process and they support the activities undertaken.

**Recommendations**

- That one person has responsibility for co-ordination of the process with regular discussions with CL to ensure coherent direction.
- Students remain with their APA throughout their studies
- Only staff committed to the role to be allocated as APA

**Future Developments** Continuation of good practice with slight adjustments in action planning next year.

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