



**UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES**



**ACADEMIC ADVISING POLICY**

UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES  
**Directorate of Quality Assurance**



# **ACADEMIC ADVISING POLICY**

**March 2023**

## **FOREWORD**

The University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) is unique as its mission is to provide quality education, advance knowledge through scholarship and research that improves health and quality of life. UHAS is committed to achieving this mission and thus has defined ten (10) strategic objectives one of which prioritises the provision of adequate support services for all categories of people in our community and the provision of transitional and academic support to new staff, faculty members and students.

The Academic Advising Policy outlines guidelines and procedures for the implementation of an academic advising programme at UHAS with the aim of enabling every student to become the best scholar they can be in a culture of intellectual curiosity and growth which is consistent with the mission and vision of UHAS. The Academic Advising Policy defines the policy of the University of Health and Allied Sciences(UHAS) on the formalised provision of support and advice (both academic and pastoral advice) to students during their period of studies at UHAS. It is envisaged that this Academic Advising Policy will create an enabling environment for world-class student experience when implemented effectively.

It is believed that by using this Policy and other available resources, academic advisors can make their advisees' educational experiences more meaningful and significant. It is expected that students and advisors ensure the uniqueness of individuals so that relationships can be tailored to meet their preferences. In the long run, it will promote alumni commitment and their contribution to the development of the University. I, therefore, wish to encourage all stakeholders to consult this Policy often to become familiar with academic advising guidelines at UHAS which are outlined in the Policy document.

**Prof. Lydia Aziato**  
**Vice Chancellor, UHAS**

March, 2023

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Management would like to acknowledge the contributions of members of the Policy Review Committee and the Business Executive Committee of the Academic Board of the University, who were involved in the review of the draft policy document.

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## 1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1. As part of academic support for all students at the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), students are allocated academic advisers who will facilitate discussions on academic progress. Research students, by contrast, are allocated a supervisory team. UHAS believes that the collaboration between academic advisers and students is key in creating the most stimulating, challenging and rewarding university experience.
- 1.2. Academic advising at UHAS enables every student to become the best scholar they can be, in a culture of intellectual curiosity and growth which is consistent with UHAS mission and goals.
- 1.3. Academic advising supports and encourages each student to transition to the University and engage fully in the learning process. In doing so, this promotes a unique fusion of excellence in education, research and professional practice which inspires students to enrich the world and enable them to make a successful transition to the University, develop and achieve their goals and plans for academic success, including transitioning out of the University.
- 1.4. Academic advising supports institutional goals of excellence in teaching and learning, and students' success by:
  - assisting students in realising that UHAS has everything they need for success and that their transformation into successful graduates requires their commitment.
  - continually assisting students in understanding the nature, purpose and potential of higher education, and helping them to access and navigate this.
  - assisting in developing and implementing personalised goal-oriented student academic plans and educational experiences which are congruent with interests and abilities.
  - ensuring that students have access to knowledgeable and well-informed academic advisers who demonstrate care and respect.
  - signposting students to resources in order to maximise their unique potential and enhance their education.
  - providing students with the opportunity to monitor and evaluate their educational progress.
  - providing accurate information about educational research and professional practice opportunities, as well as academic requirements, policies and procedures.
- 1.5. UHAS has minimum standards with clearly defined responsibilities for the academic adviser, the student and the faculty as outlined in this Policy.
- 1.6. The academic adviser's role has been implemented to improve students' engagement and success and to provide consistency of advice and support across student cohorts.
- 1.7. Evaluation of success will be done through direct feedback from students about their experiences.

## 2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 School Quality Assurance Sub-Committees: to approve revisions to the Policy.

2.2 Faculties: to implement the policy and monitor effectiveness.

2.3 It is the Head of Department's responsibility to ensure that the Policy is implemented and that their department is fully compliant. Each of the Heads of Department will submit a short report which details arrangements for academic advising, including the allocation of academic advisers and the provision of student references to the School Quality Assurance Sub-Committee each academic year.

2.4 Students and Academic Advisers: the table below documents the responsibilities of staff and students with regard to the academic advising process.

<b>ADVISEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES</b> <b>Student Learning Outcomes</b> Student learning outcomes are what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of engaging in the academic advising process.	<b>ADVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES</b> <b>Academic Advising Delivery Outcomes</b> Academic advising delivery outcomes are what the faculty is expected to provide to students through academic advising process in order to help them meet their learning outcomes.
1. To develop their own academic goals and plans in order to support their transition to university and to independently manage their own progress towards degree completion. This includes initiating contact with the academic adviser to review progress, undertake reflection and help synthesise feedback from across the programme.	1. To offer each student the opportunity to create an academic plan in order to support their transition to university and to explain how they can manage their own progress towards completion. This includes reviewing the student's progress with them, prompting reflection and helping the student to synthesise their feedback across their programme.
2. To self-manage the transition from university to professional practice by taking full advantage of the resources offered by the University, to make use of the pre and post placement/vocational training activities that are offered, and to reflect on the placement/vocational training experience with the academic adviser.	2. To offer each student information about how to utilise the vocational training /career mentorship programme to help them to plan for their professional career, work in collaboration with the relevant UHAS staff to ensure that pre and post vocational training activities are in place, and to facilitate reflection on the vocational training experiences.
3. To understand how participating in the academic advising process will assist them in meeting academic goals. This is demonstrated through making regular contact and attending meetings with an academic adviser.	3. To develop meaningful relationships with students, proactively make regular contact with them, be available for meetings including face-to-face, group and virtual contact, and to inform them about how participating in the academic advising process will help them in meeting their academic goals.
4. To be knowledgeable about their chosen academic programme, relevant university policies and procedures, and support mechanisms/ services available.	4. To offer students information about their programme and help them to interpret university policies and procedures, and signposts to relevant support mechanisms/ services.

5. To know how to access university resources and services.	5. To explain how to access university resources and services.
6. To understand the importance of undertaking extra-curricular activities offered by UHAS, engage in these activities and take up the opportunities offered by them.	6. To offer students the opportunity to discuss the importance and value of undertaking extracurricular activities offered by UHAS and guide them in taking up these opportunities.
7. To understand the basic pastoral support offered by academic advisers and how to access student support services when issues are beyond the remit of the academic adviser.	7. To offer basic pastoral support and to signpost for the student to support services when issues are beyond the remit of the academic adviser.

2.5 Academic advisers are responsible for providing general pastoral support and importantly, signposting for the students relevant support services when appropriate. The role of an academic adviser requires that the academic adviser act in a manner which helps students to understand their own responsibilities and goals, and does not create unhealthy dependencies or 'learned helplessness'. It should be made clear to students what support can or cannot be provided to them by the academic adviser at the outset of their interactions.

2.6 Each academic adviser is responsible for adopting a proactive approach to advising and developing a personal connection with their students. This includes being approachable and welcoming to contact from students, active engagement in their roles, respecting confidentiality, privacy, cultural and personal values and boundaries as specified in the Sexual Harassment Policy of UHAS.

2.7 Academic advisers should organise group sessions as well as one-to-one meetings, and respond to students' requests for meetings or for advice in a timely manner. It is a good practice for group sessions to be placed on each student's timetable.

2.8 The course lecturers should always be the first point of contact for any specific learning issue or general concern related to an individual's piece of academic work or assessment within a course of study as these course lecturers will have specific subject knowledge and experience of working with the student. The academic adviser should be the next point of contact if the issue cannot be resolved by course lecturers.

### **3. ALLOCATION OF ACADEMIC ADVISERS**

3.1 Academic advisers will be assigned by the respective schools to every student at the commencement of their programme and the names of the academic advisers will be detailed at departmental orientation.

3.2 The same academic adviser should normally be available to students throughout the duration of their degree. The Head of Department has the authority to change a student's academic adviser in exceptional circumstances.



- 3.3 Vocational training (VT) coordinators will support students on VT placement within the spirit of the academic adviser's role. Students will also be supported by their allocated preceptors while on VT placement.
- 3.4 The department, in tandem with the school, will ensure that academic advisers have sufficiently been well prepared to undertake their roles and have completed any mandatory/relevant training. The Dean, in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee of the school, will provide an annual training workshop for all academic advisers.

#### **4. ACADEMIC ADVISER SESSIONS**

- 4.1 Fresh students will have a timetabled academic adviser session within the first three weeks of departmental orientation. In addition to this, academic advisers must invite students to meet them at least three times per year.
- 4.2 Meetings will be a mix of one-to-one and small group sessions. All schools should set aside a period of time to enable students to book one-to-one sessions with staff / an open-door policy. Students should be encouraged to have additional meetings when they consider it necessary and raise topics for group sessions with their peers as appropriate.
- 4.3 The content of group meetings throughout the year will be determined in advance within departments to ensure that they are structured to be useful. A degree of flexibility will be applied when necessary or in the event of an important topic which has not been planned being raised.
- 4.4 Students should understand the importance of creating a positive working relationship with their academic advisers as they may be responsible for providing references if required as per their departments' arrangements for this.
- 4.5 The academic adviser will accept the right of a student not to access support when offered even if this is perceived as not being in the student's best interest as the student may prefer to liaise with other academic colleagues.
- 4.6 Academic advisers are required to submit annual reports on students assigned to them to the Deans through the Heads of Department. The Deans are required to submit annual reports on academic advising within their respective schools to the Director of the Quality Assurance Directorate through the Chairpersons of the School Quality Assurance Sub-Committees.

#### **5. POLICY REVISION**

This Policy will be reviewed as and when the need arises.

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