



ACADEMIC ADVICE TO STUDENTS POLICY

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First Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor		
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Responsible Division & Unit:	Academic Quality and Standards Unit (AQS) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)		
Supporting documents, procedures & forms:	Coursework Rules Review and Appeal of Academic Complaints Policy Procedures for the Review and Appeal of a Mark, Grade or Other Academic Decision (Coursework) Guidelines on Good Practice Provision of Academic Advice to Students Higher Degree Research Student Academic Complaints Policy Records Management Policy		
Relevant Legislation & External Documents:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2002). The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education State Records Act, 1998		
Audience:	Public		

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1 Purpose of Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the provision of academic advice to students and to ensure that staff who provide specialised academic advice to students maintain appropriate records of this advice.
2. This policy is designed to support faculties to implement effective systems to ensure that academic advice is accessible, accurate and timely.

2 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Academic advice	<p>Advice or information on academic matters that is provided to a student or potential student and on which the student or potential student relies, or can be expected to rely regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. their academic discipline or area of study;2. the rules, policies, codes and standards that apply to a course or a program of study and a student's progress through it;3. other matters that impact on the student's progress;4. the learning skills required for the course or subject and student support services available to help students with their studies; and/or5. the professional requirements and attributes for the professions affiliated with the academic discipline. <p>Academic advice may be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. general academic advice; or2. specialised academic advice. <p>Academic advice does not include consideration of formal applications for determination relating to academic matters, such as academic consideration, applications for credit or advanced standing or applications to vary a course or program of study.</p>
Administrative advice	<p>Advice that may have implications for a student's or a prospective student's study and or progression, relating to legislative requirements, admission, enrolment and related visa and/or financial matters, leave of absence or deferral, timetabling, examinations or graduation, or University policy documents. This advice is non-discretionary, and is not based on the exercise of academic judgement</p>
Administrative Advisor	<p>A person having sufficient expertise to provide administrative advice to students or prospective students, as outlined by sections 4.6-4.8 of the policy</p>
Academic Complaint	<p>A complaint by a student concerning a decision, act or omission of a member of UOW staff or committee which affects the student's academic progress.</p>



Electronic records	Includes emails, electronic versions of letters, memoranda and other records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment.
General academic advice	<p>Advice that describes and clarifies relevant University rules, codes, policies or standards and/or published or standardised information on academic issues,</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• general advice on the requirements of a course or subject, based on the relevant course rules or subject outline• general advice on the requirements for major and/or minor studies within a course• general advice on honours requirements• general advice on the operation of a University policy <p>Any advice on academic matters provided to prospective students is general academic advice.</p>
General Academic Advisor	A person authorised by the relevant authority to provide general academic advice to students or prospective students, as outlined in section 4.2 of the policy
Policy documents	University rules, policies, codes, standards, guidelines and procedures.
Specialised academic advice	<p>Individually tailored advice that requires the exercise of academic judgement, or discretionary advice relating to a student's circumstances, and varies from general, published or standardised information.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• detailed course or subject planning and/or selection advice• interpretation and application of course or subject requirements to the student's individual circumstances• interpretation of academic policy or procedures to the student's individual circumstances• tailored advice on learning skills or support services available to the student to meet the student's individual circumstances/ <p>All academic advice that is not general academic advice is specialised academic advice.</p>
Specialised Academic Advisor	A person who provides specialised academic advice to students or prospective students, who has been authorised by the relevant authority or who holds a position noted in section 4.5 of the policy
Staff	Employees of the University, UniAdvice and/or the UOW College and in respect of offshore programs, includes personnel involved in the delivery of UOW programs offshore.



Student	A person enrolled to study or registered for a course.
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3 Application & Scope

3. This policy applies to academic advice provided to all current or prospective students of the University:
 - a. When applying for a course of study delivered by, or on behalf of, the University;
 - b. while studying at an Australian campus or education centres of the University or offshore; or
 - c. while undertaking study at the University within a virtual or online environment; or
 - d. while studying a UOW course or unit of study at UOW College;
 - e. while studying at the University while on student exchange, Study Abroad or undertaking a cross-institutional program; and
 - f. whether undertaking coursework or research.
4. This policy does not apply to students studying at the University of Wollongong Dubai.

4 Policy Principles

1. In order to support the student experience, the University strives to ensure that students have access to appropriate academic advice to inform the decisions that students must make to progress their study at the University.
2. Student advice programs support the following objectives:
 - a. assisting students with decision-making and career direction.
 - b. providing clear and accurate information regarding institutional policies, procedures and programs, and assisting students in complying with these institutional requirements.
 - c. assisting students in the selection of courses and other educational experiences (e.g.internships, study abroad).
 - d. referring students to appropriate resources, on and off campus.
 - e. evaluating student progress towards established goals.
 - f. utilising a variety of supplemental systems such as online computer programs to deliver advising information.
3. Academic advice given to students must be:
 - a. current and accurate;
 - b. based on the information provided by the student (where advice is provided by a staff members to a student);
 - c. ethical and impartial;
 - d. provided directly by staff to the student, and not through an intermediary;
 - e. provided in a timely manner, responding as promptly as possible to student enquiries; and



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- f. provided only by those persons properly authorised and qualified to provide the advice.
4. Students studying online should have access to appropriate academic advice as provided by electronic means.
5. Any student who considers that they have been disadvantaged as a result of receiving academic advice that does not meet the requirements of this policy is entitled to lodge an academic complaint.

5 Providing Advice

1. Academic advice may be:
 - a. provided by a staff member to a student; or
 - b. information published by the University in printed form or on its website and/or systems.

General Academic Advice

2. General academic advice may be provided to students by all staff authorised to do so. Authorisation may be given by the relevant Executive Dean or Director at the Faculty or Division or at UOW College, or by the Manager of the University Education Centres. Authorisation must be in writing, and may be granted to individual staff or to staff holding designated positions.
3. General academic advice may be provided to prospective students by all staff authorised to do so by the relevant Executive Dean or Director with responsibility for Future Students, UOW College or the Faculty.
4. All staff members at Faculty Centrals and Student Central are authorised to provide general academic advice.
5. All staff listed in clauses 5.6 – 5.7 of this policy (below) as being authorised to provide Specialised Academic Advice may provide general academic advice on issues that relate to their areas of expertise.

Specialised Academic Advice

6. Specialised academic advice may be provided by the following staff, known as Specialised Academic Advisers:
 - a. Executive Deans, Head of Students, Deans, Associate Deans, Discipline Leaders, Course Coordinators, Academic Program Directors, Heads of School and Deputy Heads of School in relation to the program of study;
 - b. Lecturers and Subject Coordinators in relation to advice on a subject which they teach or coordinate;
 - c. Supervisors, Associate Deans – Research, Heads of Postgraduate Studies and the Director, Graduate Research School in relation to higher degree research students;
 - d. Members of University Ethics Committees and the Ethics Manager on ethics issues in relation to higher degree research students; and/or
 - e. Learning Development staff in relation to learning skills.
7. Specialised academic advice may also be provided to students by any member of general staff authorised to do so, who is known as a Student Adviser, subject to the following:



- a. Student Advisers must be authorised to provide specialised academic advice by the Executive Dean or Director of the Faculty or Division;
- b. Staff are not eligible to be authorised as a Student Adviser unless and until the Executive Dean or Director is satisfied that they have been trained to provide advice or are otherwise competent to do so on the basis of previous experience;
- c. The authorisation may include restrictions on the nature or scope of the advice to be provided by the Student Adviser, who must only provide advice in accordance with those restriction; and
- d. Student Advisers must consult with Specialised Academic Advisors or refer students to appropriate Specialised Academic Advisors where the issues are complex.

Administrative Advice

8. Administrative advice will be provided to current students by staff of the Student and Accommodation Services Division (in respect of leave of absence or deferral, timetabling, examinations or graduation, University policy documents) singly or in conjunction with any person authorised to provide specialised academic advice.
9. Administrative advice to prospective students relating to legislative and visa requirements, will be provided by designated staff of the Student and Accommodation Services Division.
10. Administrative advice to current students relating to legislative and visa requirements and that may have implications for an international student's study and or progression will be provided by designated staff of the Student and Accommodation Services Division.

Exclusions

11. Academic advice must not be provided to students by University staff or students who are not authorised to do so by the relevant Executive Dean or Director, or by clauses 5.6 – 5.7 (above).

6 Record Keeping

1. Students receiving Specialised Academic Advice are required to maintain a record of the advice that they have received for as long as they seek to rely on the advice.
2. Where staff provide specialised academic advice that impacts, or is likely to impact on a student's studies, it is recommended that the advice is confirmed in writing using a SOLSMail message or by providing it to the student in some other written, electronically recorded form.
3. Specialised academic advice provided during public and high activity periods such as during enrolment may be recorded and retained using batch forms, running sheets or using other efficient methods of recording information.
4. Under the State Records Act 1998, University records relating to specialised advice provided to students in relation to academic matters (teaching, enrolment, progression, assessments, disputes, course delivery, complaints, etc.) must be full and accurate, and retained for a minimum period of 6 years after completion or discontinuation of the student's course of study.
5. Faculties, Divisions and Units are required to maintain records of authorisation for staff to provide academic advice, as outlined in sections 5.2 and 5.5 of this policy.



7 Roles & Responsibilities

1. Students are responsible for:
 - a. seeking academic advice from appropriate sources identified by this policy;
 - b. familiarising themselves with relevant University rules, codes, standards and policies and for seeking academic advice when required from designated staff;
 - c. being proactive in seeking academic advice from those staff authorised to provide that advice before making significant decisions affecting their academic experience;
 - d. fully and accurately disclosing all background information that they believe is relevant to the issue on which academic advice is sought to the person providing the academic advice;
 - e. retaining records of academic advice they receive (e.g. retaining electronic or hard copies of specialised academic advice, making diary notations etc.);
 - f. the actions that students take contrary to academic advice provided, and the consequences of such actions; and
 - g. requesting that Specialised Academic Advice be put in writing and given to them in a format that validates its authenticity.
2. Faculties and the Student and Accommodation Services Division are responsible for:
 - a. ensuring that all information regarding courses, subjects, relevant University rules, codes, standards and policies and regarding how to access providers of administrative, general and specialised academic advice is:
 - i. accurate
 - ii. current
 - iii. appropriately presented to assist students to access and understand the information, and
 - iv. readily available on the University's website and on relevant student systems.
 - b. taking action to inform students of significant changes to the University's rules, codes, standards and policies affecting students' academic experience.
3. Faculties and Divisions are responsible for:
 - a. ensuring that all staff authorised to provide academic advice are provided with appropriate induction, training, resources and support to ensure this responsibility can be carried out; and
 - b. regularly reviewing and updating the staff authorisations to provide general or specialised academic advice under this policy.
4. Faculties are responsible for implementing, where appropriate, the Guidelines on Good Practice Provision of Academic Advice.
5. Staff authorised to provide academic advice are responsible for familiarising themselves with relevant University rules, codes, standards and policies, and for providing advice consistent with these University policy documents.



8 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	Autumn Session 2011	University Council 3rd December 2010	First Version
2	21 June 2011	Vice-Principal (Administration)	Updated to reflect change of name from Wollongong College Australia to UOW College.
3	13 February 2014	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Updated to reflect change from Dean of Students to Student Ombudsman.
4	Autumn Session 2015	University Council	Amendments to reflect the implementation of the new Coursework Student Academic Complaints Policy and Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Academic Complaints Policy, which replace the previous Academic Grievance Policy (Coursework and Honours Students) and Academic Grievance Policy (Higher Degree Research Students). Updated to reflect name change from Academic Registrar's Division to Student Services Division and Student Research Centre to Graduate Research School.
5	5 July 2016	Vice-Chancellor	Minor amendment to remove reference to Student Ombudsman (Clause 3.3(c)(ix) of Guidelines on Good Practice Provision of Academic Advice). Transfer to rebranded template.
6	Autumn Session 2017	Vice-Chancellor	Minor changes resulting from scheduled review, including removal of appended guidelines for inclusion on the policy directory as a separate document, minor changes to terminology and position titles.
7	1 January 2020 (Approved 9 June 2020)	Vice-Chancellor	Administrative/Consequential/Minor amendments to reflect the rescission of General Course Rules replaced by Coursework Rules and Higher Degree Research (HDR) Award Rules.
8	4 November 2020	Vice-Chancellor	Minor amendment to Section 4 to ensure policy language applies to online delivery of subjects.



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			Consequential administrative amendment to reflect rescission of Coursework Student Academic Complaints Policy with replacement of Review and Appeal of Academic Decisions Policy and Procedures for the Review and Appeal of a Mark, Grade or Other Academic Decision (Coursework)
9	18 December 2020	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Administrative amendments to reflect divisional and faculty realignments.