



## ACADEMIC ADVICE TO STUDENTS POLICY

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<b>First Approved by:</b>	University Council		
<b>Custodian title &amp; e-mail address:</b>	Director, Academic Quality and Standards Unit (AQS) <a href="mailto:quality@uow.edu.au">quality@uow.edu.au</a>		
<b>Author:</b>	Academic Quality and Policy Specialist		
<b>Responsible Division &amp; Unit:</b>	Academic Quality and Standards Unit (AQS) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Life)		
<b>Supporting documents, procedures &amp; forms:</b>	<a href="#">Coursework Rules</a> <a href="#">Records Management Policy</a>		
<b>Relevant Legislation &amp; External Documents:</b>	<a href="#">United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2002). The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education</a> <a href="#">State Records Act, 1998</a>		
<b>Audience:</b>	Public		

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## 1 Purpose of Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the provision of advice to students on academic matters and to ensure that staff who provide academic advice are authorised and qualified to do so and that a record of the advice is appropriately maintained. 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)
Advice on Academic Matters	<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"><li>1. their academic discipline or area of study;</li><li>2. the rules, policies, codes and standards that apply to a course or a program of study and a student's progress through it;</li><li>3. other matters that impact on the student's progress;</li><li>4. learning development advice that supports students with their studies;</li><li>5. the professional requirements and attributes for the professions affiliated with the academic discipline.</li></ol> <p>Advice on academic matters may be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. general information (refer to definition below); or</li><li>2. academic advice provided by an Academic Advisor.</li></ol>
Academic Advisor	<p>A person approved to provide academic advice and advise students on programs of study who has been authorised by the relevant delegated authority or who holds a position noted in section 5.3 and 5.4 of this policy.</p>
Academic Advice	<p>Discipline specific or individually tailored advice that requires the exercise of academic judgement, or discretionary advice relating to a student's circumstances, that varies from general, published or standardised information.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• detailed course or subject planning and/or selection advice, particularly where advice varies from the course requirements explicitly stated within the Course Handbook</li><li>• interpretation and application of course or subject requirements to the student's individual circumstances (for example subject substitution)</li><li>• interpretation of academic policy or procedures to the student's individual circumstances</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• advice on Majors, Minors and Course Transfer that may be standard and published, but which requires academic advice to understand the full implications for the student in the discipline area</li></ul>
Academic Matter	A matter relating to the policy or processes that govern a student's academic progress at the University.
Administrative advice	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, withdrawal or deferral, timetabling, scholarships, examinations, course progress processes, conferrals, graduation, or University policy documents. This advice is non-discretionary, and is not based on the exercise of academic judgement.
Delegated authority	A person given authority to perform a function or task under the Delegations of Authority Policy.
Electronic records	Includes emails using an UOW account, SOLS Mail, electronic versions of letters, memoranda and other records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment.
General information on academic matters	<p>The provision of non-discipline specific information that describes and clarifies relevant University rules, codes, policies, standards, processes and/or published or standardised information on academic matters,</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• general information on the requirements of a course or subject, based on the relevant course rules or subject outline</li><li>• general information on the requirements for major and/or minor studies within a course</li><li>• general information on honours requirements</li><li>• general information on the operation of a University policy or procedure</li></ul>
Policy documents	University rules, policies, codes, standards, guidelines and procedures.
Staff	Employees of the University, and/or the UOW College Australia 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.



### 3 Application & Scope

This policy applies to the provision of information on academic matters and academic advice provided to all current or prospective students of the University regardless of the location or mode of study with the exception of students studying at UOWD.

### 4 Policy Principles

1. In order to support the student experience, students will have access to timely advice on academic matters that enables them to make informed decisions about their program of study at the University.
2. Information provided to students on academic matters must be:
  - a. Current, relevant and accurate and informed by the discipline/s or study area within which the subject/course is situated;
  - b. validated from information in University student systems or relevant year of the Course Handbook;
  - c. in line with the course requirements so as not to disadvantage the student's progress;
  - d. provided as promptly as possible, based on the details provided;
  - e. based on the information provided by the student (where advice is provided by a staff member to a student);
  - f. ethical and impartial;
  - g. provided directly by staff to the student, and not through an intermediary;
3. Academic advice should only be provided by an academic advisor or persons properly authorised and qualified to provide the advice as outlined in section 5.3 and 5.4 of this policy and recorded on a University student system.
4. Students studying online should have access to appropriate academic advice as provided by electronic means.

### 5 Providing Advice

#### General Information on Academic Matters

1. General information on academic matters may be provided to students by Professional Services Staff whose responsibilities include the provision of information on academic matters. For example services staff who support faculties, faculty administration, Professional Services Staff within the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Students) portfolio or the Student Accommodation and Services Division and regional and metropolitan Campus Managers. Authorisation may also be given by the relevant Executive Dean or Director at the Faculty or Division, or UOW College Australia.
2. All staff listed in clauses 5.3 of this policy (below) as being authorised to provide Academic Advice may provide general information on academic matters that relate to their areas of expertise.



### **Academic Advice**

3. The provision of academic advice may be provided by the following staff, known as Academic Advisors:
  - a. Discipline Leaders, Academic Program Directors, Course and Honours Coordinators, UOW College Program Managers, Head of Students, Heads of School, Deputy Heads of School, Deans, Associate Deans and Executive Deans in relation to the program of study;
  - b. Subject Coordinators and Lecturers (not including Guest Lecturers) in relation to advice on a subject which they teach or coordinate;
  - c. Supervisors, Heads of Postgraduate Studies, Associate Deans Research and the Director, Graduate Research School in relation to higher degree research students; and/or
  - d. Members of University Ethics Committees and the Ethics Manager on ethics issues in relation to higher degree research students.
4. Academic Advisors listed in 5.3 above may authorise another academic staff member in their discipline authority to provide academic advice to help manage high volume student enquiries, provided that staff member has received specialist training or experience in the area they are providing advice on.
5. Where academic advice is provided to students in relation to double degrees, the Academic Advisor should consult with the relevant Academic Advisor in the other degree.
6. Professional Services Staff must not provide academic advice unless they have received specialist training or experience and have been authorised by the Executive Dean or an Associate Dean of the Faculty, General Manager of UOW College Australia or a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The authorisation should be provided in writing and may include restrictions on the nature or scope of the advice to be provided. Where issues are complex, consultation must be undertaken with the relevant Academic Advisor/s.
7. Academic Advisors should liaise with the relevant administrative staff to provide the appropriate advice where administrative or general information on academic matters is also sought.

### **Administrative Advice**

8. Administrative advice will be provided to current students by staff of the Student and Accommodation Services Division singly or in conjunction with an Academic Advisor.
9. Administrative advice to prospective or 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 and/or Student recruitment division.

## **6 Record Keeping**

1. Where academic advice is provided to a student, it should be provided electronically via student email or via a SOLSMail message.
2. Where academic advice is provided to a student, a record can be made directly on the student's record on the Student Administration Interface (SAI) or student CRM. If it is not possible to make such a



record directly, the record should be made in written form and retained consistent with University record keeping obligations outlined below.

3. Under the State Records Act 1998, University records relating to academic 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.
4. Faculties, Divisions and Units are required to maintain records of authorisation for staff to provide academic advice, as outlined in sections 5.6 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 their degree requirements, relevant policies and deadlines as well as requirements for course completion;
  - 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 non-confidential background information that they believe is relevant to the issue on which academic advice is sought to the person providing the academic advice; and
  - e. the actions that students take contrary to academic advice provided, and the consequences of such actions.
2. Faculties the Student and Accommodation Services Division and Student Recruitment 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 and general advice on academic matters is:
    - i. accurate
    - ii. current
    - iii. appropriately presented to assist students to access and understand the information
    - 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 academic advice under this policy.
  - c. making information readily accessible to students on who they can seek academic advice from within the Faculty.



4. 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.
- maintaining appropriate records of advice given to students, particularly where this advice relates to program rules and/ or course choice.
  - using judgement about what information needs to be kept as a record noting sensitive information related to case management (e.g. disability support, misconduct) are recorded in separate systems. This is to restrict access to personal information to only those who need to know.

## 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.  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.
10	25 January 2022	Vice-Chancellor	Amendments to policy definitions, update list of academic advisors and removal of reference to Review of Academic Decisions Policy. Rescind the Guidelines on Good Practice Provision of Academic Advice.