

2026

THE UKAT PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

For Academic Advising & Personal Tutoring



3rd Edition

UKAT

The UKAT Professional Framework

Purpose of academic advising and personal tutoring

Academic advising/personal tutoring supports students to achieve their academic and personal aspirations. A purposeful personal relationship with their advisor/tutor enables students to become autonomous, confident learners and engaged members of society. This ongoing and collaborative relationship connects students deeply to their institution, supporting them through their course and beyond.



Aims of the Framework

The UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring

Supports the continuing professional development of staff engaged in academic and pastoral advising or tutoring of students

Demonstrates to students and other stakeholders the professionalism that staff and institutions bring to supporting student development and attainment through advising and tutoring

Acknowledges the variety and quality of advising and tutoring practices which support students in their journey through tertiary education

Enables individuals and institutions to gain formal recognition for quality-enhanced approaches to supporting students through advising and tutoring



CORE COMPETENCIES OF ADVISING AND TUTORING

Academic advisors and tutors need to use a range of knowledge and skills to effectively guide the development and success of their students. The knowledge and skills which support academic tutoring can be broadly categorised into three aspects - Conceptual, Informational, and Relational. All academic advisors and tutors should possess or seek to develop this knowledge and skillset and will demonstrate competency in these three components.

Academic advisors and tutors act in accordance with the values of the Professional component of the Framework for the greater good of students, colleagues, institutions, and tertiary education in general. Their professional behaviour is informed and developed through reflective practice. They act honestly, transparently, and ethically and they are accountable to the student, their institution, and the profession.

Conceptual

The Conceptual component focuses on the ideas and theories that academic tutors must understand, and is concerned with

- C1.** Core values of academic advising and tutoring
- C2.** Theory relevant to academic advising and tutoring
- C3.** Academic advising and tutoring approaches and strategies
- C4.** Expected outcomes of academic advising and tutoring
- C5.** How equitable and inclusive environments are created and maintained

Relational

The Relational component focuses on the skills that tutors need to use concepts and convey information from the Conceptual and Informational components to their students. Specifically, advisors and tutors must be able to

- R1.** Build advising and tutoring relationships through empathetic listening and compassion for students, and be accessible in ways that challenge, support, nurture, and teach
- R2.** Communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner
- R3.** Motivate, encourage, and support students to recognize their potential, meet challenges, and respect individuality
- R4.** Plan and conduct successful advising and tutoring interactions
- R5.** Promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of the curriculum
- R6.** Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting
- R7.** Collaborate effectively with campus services to provide support to students

Professional

The Professional component focuses on the commitment that advisors and tutors make to the students they advise, their institutions, their professional practice, and the broader educational community. Advisors and tutors:

- P1.** Create and support environments that consider the needs and perspectives of students, and respect individual learners
- P2.** Appreciate students' views and cultures, maintain a student-centred approach and mindset, and treat students with sensitivity and fairness
- P3.** Commit to students, colleagues, and their institutions through engagement in continuing professional development, scholarly enquiry, and the evaluation of professional practices
- P4.** Understand the implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement, and engage in on-going evaluation and development of advising and tutoring practice

Informational

The Informational component refers to the knowledge that advisors must possess to guide a student through tertiary education. Specifically, this is concerned with knowledge of

- I1.** Education Provider mission, vision, values, and culture
- I2.** Curriculum, degree programmes and pathways, including options
- I3.** Education Provider policies, procedures, rules, and regulations
- I4.** Legal guidelines and tutoring practice, including privacy regulations and confidentiality
- I5.** The characteristics, needs, and experiences of major and emerging student populations
- I6.** Campus and community resources that support student success
- I7.** Data and information technology applicable to tutoring

Recognised Affiliate Advisor (RAA)

Demonstrates a solid understanding of effective approaches to high-quality advising and support for students. Applicants should be able to provide evidence of:

- 1** Successful engagement with at least competencies C2, C3, C4, C5 of the Conceptual competencies
- 2** Appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Informational competencies, including at least competencies I4, I6, I7
- 3** Successful engagement in academic advising and/or personal tutoring practices related to at least competencies R1, R2, R3 and R6 of the Relational competencies
- 4** A commitment to some of the Professional competencies, including at least P1, and P2
- 5** Incorporation of relevant scholarship of advising and tutoring into the above activities

Typical Individual/Role

Individuals who are affiliated with the normal personal tutoring/academic advising or student support practices who can provide examples of effectiveness in advising. Such individuals are likely to be relatively new members of one or more academic, academic-related teams, or student support teams with limited responsibility for advising students.

Those likely to be at this level include:

- Assistant teaching staff (such as doctoral students, lab demonstrators, technical support staff)
- Specialist support advisers offering advice within a narrow focus
- Individuals offering advice in a partnership with education provider staff (e.g. workplace mentors)
- New academics/teachers new to UK tertiary education, with limited advising experience

Recognised Practitioner in Advising (RPA)

Demonstrates a broad understanding of effective approaches to high-quality advising and support for students. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:

- 1** Successful engagement across all five Conceptual competencies
- 2** Appropriate knowledge and understanding across all Informational competencies
- 3** Successful engagement in academic advising and/or personal tutoring practices related to the Relational competencies
- 4** A commitment to all the Professional competencies
- 5** Incorporation of relevant scholarship of advising and tutoring into the above activities

Typical Individual/Role

Individuals able to provide evidence of broad effectiveness in student support, academic advising and/or personal tutoring role(s). Such individuals are likely to be established members of one or more academic, academic-related teams, or student support teams.

Those likely to be at this level include:

- Academic (teaching) staff
- Academic-related and/or support staff holding substantive academic advising and/or personal tutoring responsibilities
- Experienced academics/teachers relatively new to UK tertiary education

Recognised Senior Advisor (RSA)

Demonstrates a broad understanding of effective approaches to high-quality advising and support for students. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:

- 1** Application of all five Conceptual competencies in leading local academic advising and/or personal tutoring practice
- 2** Knowledge and understanding of the Informational competencies, and application of them into local academic advising and/or personal tutoring provision
- 3** Leadership in embedding of Relational competencies into local academic advising and/or personal tutoring practice
- 4** A leadership commitment to all the Professional competencies through the successful co-ordination, support, management and/or mentoring of others (whether individuals and/or teams) in relation to advising and tutoring
- 5** Incorporation of relevant scholarship of advising and tutoring into the above activities

Typical Individual/Role

Individuals able to provide evidence of a sustained record of effectiveness in student support, incorporating for example, the organisation, leadership and/or management of specific aspects of academic advising and/or personal tutoring provision. Such individuals are likely to lead or be members of established teams.

Those likely to be at this level include:

- Experienced staff able to demonstrate, impact and influence through, for example, responsibility for leading, managing, or organising academic advising and/or personal tutoring provision
- Experienced mentors and staff who support those new to academic advising and/or personal tutoring
- Experienced staff with departmental and/or institutional advisory responsibilities relating to student support, academic advising and/or personal tutoring

Recognised Leader in Advising (RLA)

Demonstrates a broad understanding of effective approaches to high-quality advising and support for students. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:

- 1** Successful, strategic leadership to enhance academic advising and/or personal tutoring, with a focus on enhancing advising quality in institutional, and/or (inter)national settings
- 2** Establishing effective organisational policies and/or strategies for supporting and promoting others (e.g. through mentoring, coaching) in delivering high quality student support through academic advising and/or personal tutoring
- 3** Active commitment to, and championing of, the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring in institutional or wider contexts
- 4** A sustained and successful commitment to, and engagement in, continuing professional development related to academic advising and personal tutoring practices
- 5** Incorporation of critical scholarship of academic advising and/or personal tutoring into the above activities

Typical Individual/Role

Highly experienced academic advisors and/or personal tutors, able to provide evidence of a sustained and effective record of impact at a strategic level in relation to student support through academic advising and/or personal tutoring. This may be within their institution or wider (inter)national settings.

Those likely to be at this level include:

- Highly experienced and/or senior staff with wide-ranging academic advising and/or personal tutoring-related strategic leadership responsibilities
- Staff responsible for institutional strategic leadership and policymaking relating to academic advising and/or personal tutoring provision
- Staff who have strategic impact and influence in relation to academic advising and/or personal tutoring that extends beyond their own institution

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The UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring is based on the NACADA Core Values and Core Competencies of Academic Advising and the presentation of it is inspired by the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education.

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