

2150 Academic Support at UEA

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Union Notes

1. The 2017 results of the Guardian's Annual Student Experience Survey found that 87% of first year students struggle to cope with social or academic life .
2. uea(su)'s Student Union Survey 2017 uncovered that out of 16 factors (ranging from money, to mental health, to accommodation), UEA students' highest priority was academic achievement; with 76% of respondents rating it as their number one concern.
3. Since 2014 UEA's NSS results have seen a steady decrease in satisfaction with academic support, with the sharpest drop being between 2016 and 2017.
4. Of all NSS comments featuring the words 'advisor' or 'adviser', 28% of them were negative. Of these negative comments, over half were specifically about lack of availability of advisors.
5. Students have also shown a decrease in satisfaction with support available to them more generally when needing to make study choices.
6. All schools with the exception of MTH and EDU have seen a decrease in satisfaction with the NSS question "good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course". CMP, LAW and BIO have seen the most significant drop, with -19%, -15% and -13% respectively.
7. Of 1,000 that should have received training, less than 200 of UEA's academic advisors have completed training.

Union Believes

1. Students within the same schools are having completely different experiences when it comes to academic advisors which brings into question the systems by which advisors are allocated, trained and monitored.
2. A factor that has contributed to a decrease in satisfaction of academic support is students' difficulties with deadlines and extenuating circumstances.
3. Academic advisors should play a key role in providing advice or at least being a first point of contact for students in need of guidance.
4. UEA should also consider the role of Careers Central and any staff with employability responsibilities within each school.
5. UEA should review its system for training academic advisors and ensure that none can begin to practice as advisors until they have had correct, up-to-date training.
6. UEA should review information provided to students around academic support, setting out clearly the standard of what they can expect. This should include centralised provision through SSS, provisions within their school (such as academic advisors), and support via the students' union.

Union Resolves

1. To mandate the Education Sub Committee to pursue the above objectives through lobbying and committee membership.

2. To brief faculty convenors, school convenors and student reps on the detail applicable to their faculty or school and encourage them to pursue the issues within faculties and schools.
 3. To report back on progress on these issues later in the term.
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