

Academic Tutor meeting guide:

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



From beginning your journey at university to moving through your programme and into your final year with us, this guide helps make the most of your Academic Tutor meetings with suggested themes, topics and preparation activities. The conversations you have with your tutor aren't limited to our suggestions, these are just some ideas to fall back on if you're ever not sure.

Your Academic Tutor is here to support you with your academic, personal and professional development throughout your studies. Your first meeting with your Academic Tutor should be in Welcome Week and, after that, you are expected to meet up once a term to talk about your progress. If ever you find you're struggling with your studies, you can speak to your Academic Tutor. They can advise you on what to do and let you know how to get the right support.

Try to keep a personal record of your meetings, what you discussed, and any actions to take from them. Keeping a record of your development will help you to reflect on your performance and progress – you can revisit these at a later date by yourself, or in future meetings.

Your Academic Tutor may also make confidential notes during your meeting and add them on RISIS where you can also access them, which can help with keeping track of your meetings. If notes are available, you will get an email to let you know. If you feel that something has been misinterpreted, you can ask to edit them.

To help you record your meeting, download a printable copy of our **Academic Tutor meeting template**.

Welcome

Suggested topics for Welcome Week

Get to know each other

- What are you excited about experiencing at Reading?
- What modules have you chosen and why?
- Do you have a disability, specific learning difficulty, or any other commitments that may be relevant to help your tutor best support you (for example, if you are a parent or carer)?
- What are your interests, and do you have any free time activities? Does your Academic Tutor?
- Do you have any ideas yet about what you might do after university?
- Have you thought about activities you can get involved in outside the classroom?

Ideas and resources

- Find out who your Academic Tutor is – have a look on **RISIS**.
- Take a look at the **Student Charter**.
- Look at the Essentials pages on the **Academic Tutor System** including the **Frequently Asked Questions**, and view the video-clip '**Our Academic Tutor System**'.
- Review the information about Academic Tutors on **Study Smart**.
- Have a look at our programme of **Life Tools talks**.
- Think about the opportunities you can get involved in.

Part 1

Suggested topics for Term 1

How's it going so far?

- Are you settling in well? What are you enjoying about being at Reading?
- How are you adapting to the style of teaching, lectures / seminars / practicals, coursework, workload, studying independently, or living away from home? Has this been an easy transition?
- Do you have any assignments yet? What are they? Have you done anything similar before?
- Have you considered any other opportunities offered at Reading to get more out of your experience? You might think about what other personal and professional skills you can start to build on.

Talking about feedback

- Have you got any feedback so far? You can share and talk about your feedback from lecturers or other students on your course. Try to be honest in your discussion to get the most support you can and be constructive. Your Academic Tutor can help you understand this.
- How could your feedback help you study and keep improving for your next assignment?

Next steps

- Plan and reflect. Think about how you approached discussing your feedback and how it can help you. Make a note of action points you can work on to create an Action Plan. You can use our meeting template as a guide.

Ideas and resources

- Think about your life at Reading – how well you are doing, what are you enjoying and what could you enjoy more?
- If you have one, take a list of your assignment deadlines and prepare to discuss time-management and prioritisation.
- Review recent feedback on your work and pick out any themes or topics you'd like to discuss, take a step back and think about what you're doing to help yourself get better at understanding your feedback.
- Have a look at our programme of **Life Tools talks**.
- Take a look on Essentials at the **Study Support page**.
- Take a look at the **Careers** webpages and see what's available.

Suggested topics for Term 2

How are things going?

- How are you settling in? Have you been meeting new people?
- How's your course been so far compared to your expectations?
- What has Reading offered you so far in terms of fun, excitement and opportunity?

Making progress

- How are you managing to keep up with lectures/ seminars/practicals? What are you enjoying about them and learning about what you love?
- How are you getting on with independent study and any issues such as deadlines, time management, exam preparation or presentations?
- Talking about feedback
- Have you received any feedback on your work in class or any assignments? You could share and talk openly about your feedback from lecturers or other students on your course. Has feedback been useful so far?
- How can your feedback help you study more effectively and keep improving for your next assignment?

Looking ahead

- What you are doing alongside studying to enhance your experience and gain new skills. Think about societies, volunteering, part-time work, caring for family and friends.
- Do you have any ideas yet about what you might do in the summer? Have you considered what might help to develop career skills or any work experience?

Next steps

- Think about working on your Action Plan and creating goals from what you have discussed and experienced so far.

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- Have a look at our programme of **Life Tools talks**.
- If you've received any feedback on your work, take it with you.
- Take a look on Essentials at the **Study Support page**.
- Think about possible placements or work experience or year abroad. What options does Reading provide for you?
- Take a look at the **Careers** webpages.

Suggested topics for Term 3

Reflection

- How have you felt about your progress over the year? How have your assessments gone so far? You could discuss your feedback, marks or exams results – try to be honest and open about it.
- What has been a big achievement for you this year? Have you been working on developing your strengths?
- Have you been involved in anything alongside studying to enhance your experience and gain new skills?

Looking ahead

- Do you have module choices to make for Part 2? You can talk about different options with your Academic Tutor.
- Have you got any plans for the summer and career skills/work experience/holidays? Have you been in contact with any of our Student Services?
- How are you feeling about next term? Are you looking forward to it? Do you have any ideas of things you might do differently?

Next steps

- Think about any Action Plan points you have completed and feel proud! How will you record your progress next year?

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- Think about your progress and your Part 2 module option choices if you have them.
- Identify any particular issues or things that you might find challenging (academic, personal, or professional).
- Check the **Study Support page** on Essentials.
- Take another look at our programme of **Life Tools talks**.
- Pick out any themes or topics from feedback you've got on your work.
- Think about plans for placements or work experience or year abroad.
- Have a look at the **Careers** webpages.
- Think about societies, volunteering, part-time work, caring for family and friends.

Part 2

Suggested topics for Term 1

Reflections and planning

- How are you doing? Did your Action Plan from last term work out for you?
- Did you do any other activities last year? For example, any work experience or volunteering? What kinds of skills do you think you've developed and how could they be useful in the workplace?
- How do you feel about your progress in Part 1 and how well prepared do you feel for the transition to Part 2? What were the highlights for you last year? Share your hopes, ambitions and concerns for this coming year.
- How are you doing with planning your work? Are you easily meeting deadlines or has this been quite difficult? You could ask what extra help and support is available.

Looking ahead

- Have you begun to think about your Dissertation? Be proactive in seeking feedback.
- Have you got any ideas you about future career planning – where can you get help with these ideas?
- Are you doing anything alongside studying such as societies, volunteering, part-time work, caring for family and friends? Consider how you're building collaborative relationships.
- What skills are you gaining from these activities? Should you continue with them or start something new? How can you prioritise what you enjoy and what will be useful to you in the future?

Next steps

- You could work on Part 2's Action Plan. Take all the ideas you are coming up with and work out how you can put them into practice.

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- What are you excited about this year?
Participating in more social activity?
A module you are really looking forward to?
Volunteering or gaining other experience?
- Think about the progress you made in Part 1 and note down what you think are your strengths and weaknesses that might affect your academic progress this year.
- Revisit the **Study Support page** on Essentials.
- Prepare a schedule of your assignment/ placement deadlines.
- Keep a record of what other activities you did last year, and any work experience and skills you have gained.
- Take a look at the **Careers** website to see what's available to support your career planning.

Suggested topics for Term 2

How are things going?

- How are you feeling about this term? Have you been getting involved with any new activities?

Making progress

- How do you feel about your academic progress? Have you felt clear about what your feedback is telling you? Can you see any patterns emerging? Talk openly and realistically about how you can act upon your feedback to make improvements.
- Think about your Dissertation proposal, you could talk through your ideas and what you're looking forward to learning more about.

Looking ahead

- Have you had any ideas about future career planning – where can you get help with these ideas?
- Are you thinking about what you might do during the summer? Do you have any plans to develop your work experience this year?
- Consider talking about how you can balance the things you would like to do and how you can get the most benefit from your plans.

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- Identify any particular issues or things that you might find challenging (academic, personal, or professional).
- Take another look at our programme of **Life Tools talks**.
- Review recent feedback on your work and pick out any themes or topics you'd like to discuss.
- Think about plans for the summer and for your future career.
- Have a look at the **Careers** webpages.

Suggested topics for Term 3

How are things going?

- Have you been able to follow up on your meeting(s) and have you used your Action Plan?
- What have you enjoyed this term, and what plans have you got for Part 3? Do you feel you need more support? What could be useful for you?

Talking about feedback

- What type of feedback have you been getting? Be open about your academic progress, and whether it is clear what your feedback is telling you. Can you see any patterns emerging? Talk about how you can act upon your feedback to make improvements.

Looking ahead

- Have you thought about how you'll prepare for your exams? Do you need to find some information on revision technique? Be honest with yourself and your tutor about how you are working towards this important milestone.
- What have you considered already for your Part 3 options?

Next steps

- What could you do now to put your ideas into practice? Reflect on your meeting and you could begin working on your Action Plan for Part 3.

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- Think about your Part 3 module option choices, placement(s) and project/dissertation topic (as appropriate).
- Identify assignment(s)/placement(s) to take the feedback along to your meeting where you can make the most of the advice your Academic Tutor can give you.
- Check the **Careers** webpages to get inspired and motivated.

Part 3

Suggested topics for Term 1

Reflection and planning

- Have you spent any time thinking about your Action Plan from last term? How was your vacation?
- Did you do any activities over the last year like work experience or volunteering? What skills have you developed and how would you describe your achievements?
- How do you feel about your progress in Part 2? Do you feel well prepared for the transition to Part 3?
- What do you expect to be different this year? Are you looking forward to anything in particular?

Looking ahead

- Have you thought about module option choices and dissertation/project? You could talk about what you think will be challenging and what you're excited to learn about.
- How are you going to plan your work and do you think you'll be able to meet deadlines? You could ask your Academic Tutor if you think you might need extra help, and they can advise where you could find support.
- How is your revision technique coming along?
- Are you thinking about your career? Have you been in contact with the Careers Service? Have you attended any Careers Fairs?
- You can ask your Academic Tutor to act as a referee, so talk about your aspirations for future employment or further study. If you have a CV, even in draft form, you could talk about what it conveys about your experiences, your skills and your strengths. Is it clear how these could transfer into the workplace? What gaps need to be filled?

Next steps

- Begin working on your Action Plan for this year. What have you learned from planning ahead so far? Has it helped you?

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up? Have you started doing anything new like social activities, hobbies or experiences?
- Think about the progress you made in Part 2 and note down what you think are your strengths and weaknesses that might affect your academic progress this year.
- Revisit the **Study Support page** on Essentials.
- Prepare a schedule of your assignment/ placement deadlines – be realistic.
- Keep a record of what other activities you did last year, and any work experience and skills you have gained, and anything else you did during the vacation.
- Thinking about the experience and skills you have gained over the past couple of years. How will you describe this in your CV and job applications? Make contact with the **Careers Service**.
- If you have put together a draft CV, take it along to your meeting.

Suggested topics for Term 2

How are things going?

- Are you enjoying your experience at Reading? Have you done anything outside your studies to get the most out of your time here?
- Do you feel you are managing your workload well? Do you think you are prioritising the right things to meet your assignment/dissertation/ project deadlines? Be honest about this and talk through any challenges and strategies you could adopt to meet them.

Making progress

- How do you feel you're progressing academically? Have you been learning from your feedback? Can you see any patterns emerging? How can you act upon your feedback to make improvements? Noticing this and talking about it can lead to great success!

Looking ahead

- Do you have any plans for future employment or further study – are you excited about finishing your course?
- Look at your updated CV and discuss how well it describes how your experiences, skills and strengths. Does it show how they would be valuable and applicable to the type of roles you will apply for? What gaps need to be filled?
- Does your Academic Tutor have enough information to be able to write a reference for you?

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- What other opportunities are available that you can take advantage of?
- Identify any particular issues or things that you might find challenging (academic, personal, or professional).
- Take another look at our programme of **Life Tools talks**.
- Take along the feedback you have received on assignments/placements.
- Think about your aspirations for future employment and/or further study, checking the **Careers** pages.
- Prepare an updated version of your CV and take it with you.

Suggested topics for Term 3

How are things going?

- How are you feeling about this term? Do you feel ready?
- What have you been doing to prepare for your final assessments? Do you think your revision plans are working for you?
- Has your feedback been useful so far? Have you found ways to act upon your feedback to make improvements? Remember to speak openly about your feedback and marks, if you do you can learn a lot.

Looking ahead

- Do you have any plans for future employment or further study?
- How is your CV looking? Bring along your latest version and you could ask your tutor for any suggestions. They can also refer you to specialist careers services.
- Does your Academic Tutor have everything needed to write a reference for you?
- Do you feel you need any help or advice about special circumstances? You could talk through your options with your Academic Tutor.

Next steps

- You're nearly there! Think about how your experiences have been with your Academic Tutor – what have you learned?

Ideas and resources

- Refer to your Action Plan from last term – check what you have done since – did you follow up?
- Think about how you are planning for final exams – do you have any concerns?
- Take along the feedback you have received on assignments/placements – keep an open mind and be ready to make positive changes.
- Think about your aspirations for future employment and/or further study.
- Check **Careers** and prepare a final version of your CV and take it with you.