The 2013-14 Student Partnership Agreement between the University and DUSA committed the University and DUSA to a review of Advisers of Studies as follows:

'It is recognised that Advisers of Studies should be an important component of pastoral provision within the University. To ensure that the current system is delivering for the needs of students the University and DUSA will work together to review School-based student support and consider options for future developments. This review will encompass all aspects of School-based support systems, identify opportunities for enhancement and consider the development of a University-wide framework for student support at the level of Schools and programmes.'

Accordingly a review group was established, jointly chaired by the president of DUSA and the Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching, with representation from DUSA, PGLA and academic and administrative School staff. Its remit was as follows:

- to review the current provision of support across every School in the University, specifically the role and use of personal tutors and advisers of studies;
- to consider what the expectation of an adviser of studies should be and what areas of student support they should be engaged in;
- to survey the student body, or representatives of, to find out what students expect from personal tutors and advisers;
- to find areas of best practice which can be expanded to other Schools;
- to decide how and where the University can develop its current provision;
- to review whether a University-wide framework for student support is feasible, and if so what form it should take.

The group met twice. It gathered evidence from School Presidents and from Schools about current arrangements and their effectiveness, seeking to identify excellent practice as well as opportunities for enhancement. It also conducted research on arrangements at other universities.

In line with the University's devolved structure and the different contexts and needs of Schools, arrangements in Schools vary. The review group concluded that a devolved approach was appropriate, but in light of the ELIR 2013 recommendation to be mindful of the challenges as well as strengths of a devolved model, together with feedback from students that the arrangement in Schools were not always clear, especially to students studying in two or more Schools, it was agreed that the Group would recommend the adoption of a general framework. The purpose of this framework is to set out for Schools a set of principles and baselines which all Schools should adhere to. The draft framework is attached as an appendix.

The Group also agreed that there needs to be support for the Advisers themselves as there is a burden of responsibility on them. It was agreed that the University should develop a Handbook for Advisers which will detail the support services available across campus from both the University and DUSA, as well as contact details for these services. In addition, it was agreed to update the Student Handbook template to include details of the general framework detailed in Appendix A, which Schools will then customise to inform students of the particular arrangements pertaining in the School.
The Group also agreed that mechanisms need to be identified to gather and disseminate best practice in individual Schools, Colleges and subject areas that could be utilised in other areas.

Approved by Senate May 2014

Professor Karl Leydecker, Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching and Iain MacKinnon, President of DUSA.
**Student Support System Guidance**

The Student Support System ensures all students are assigned an Academic Adviser when they join the University. This system is provided within Schools and through the central University services.

1. **Academic Advisers**

1.1. An Academic Adviser is a member of the academic staff at the University who in addition to teaching and research commitments supports students to help them achieve their full academic potential. They meet with all students at or before matriculation to discuss the choice of subjects and modules and are there to offer impartial advice and guidance. During the semester students can make an appointment to meet to discuss any aspect of their studies and the Academic Adviser will help wherever they can, or refer students to the appropriate University Service.

1.2. Academic Advisers have two main roles:

   a) Academic – will be available to give advice and guidance at key stages to help students make course choices. They will support students with their personal development planning, review and give advice on academic progress and skills development, offer useful improvement strategies and opportunities for engagement and professional development.

   b) Pastoral – to offer advice and ensure that students who are experiencing difficulties are supported through referral to the appropriate central service(s). Brief details on these services are shown below.

All Advisers will be provided with a handbook which details the support services available across campus from both the University and DUSA, as well as contact details for these services.

1.3. New students will be sent details of their Academic Adviser and advising appointment time in advance of the start of the academic year. Continuing students can visit My Dundee to find out who their Academic Adviser is. At the first meeting, Academic Advisers should encourage students to look at modules outside of their School (e.g. careers, languages) if the student is interested and has capacity in their study calendar.

2. **School Responsibilities**

2.1. Each School will establish a clear system of academic support and progress monitoring for all its students (full and part-time).

2.2. Each School will communicate clearly and comprehensively to all its students the arrangements for academic support and progress monitoring, indicating the range and detail of support available. These arrangements will include the details of named officers within the School who can be consulted for all of the following areas:

   2.2.1. Academic programmes, including:
   - change of module or programme
   - further/advanced study
   - module choice and programme structure
   - progression routes.

   2.2.2. Academic support, including:
   - academic integrity/discipline
• academic problems/difficulties
• learning resources
• study skills.

2.3. Each School will ensure that the information at 2.2 above is published to all students on the School website, including details of the single point of contact for enquiries on these matters outside office hours. Where possible, enquiries should be responded to by the next working day.

2.4. Each School will ensure that Academic Advisers meet with their students on a minimum of two occasions in the first semester of study and thereafter a minimum of one occasion per semester.

2.5. Each School will establish and publish a consistent system of monitoring student attendance at formal teaching sessions (e.g. lectures, workshops, seminars and laboratory classes) and individual student progress, including the submission of compulsory coursework. Where appropriate, Schools will look at ways to improve poor attendance. The monitoring system will ensure that:

2.5.1. Attendance issues are picked up at an early stage;
2.5.2. Academic progress per student is monitored at least once per semester;
2.5.3. Academic progress per student is monitored across all modules;
2.5.4. Students with progress issues are interviewed by an officer of the School at the earliest opportunity.

2.6. At least once a semester, each School will review any general issues highlighted by the monitoring of individual students' progress and notify the Academic Adviser, who may choose to refer the student to specialist advice and/or support.

3. References

3.1. Each School is responsible for establishing an appropriate procedure to provide references for students upon request.

3.2. Students are responsible for maintaining an up-to-date CV and making this available to their School so that an accurate reference may be written.

4. Central Support Services

4.1. As part of the Student Support System, the University provides professional services to meet a variety of student needs. The University will ensure that the range and availability of these services is well publicised to students and School staff. These include:

• Student Services (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/studentservices/)
• Library & Learning Centre (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/library/)
• UoD IT (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/it/).

5. DUSA Support Services

5.1 In addition, students and School staff should be aware of the extensive range of support services provided by DUSA (http://www.dusa.co.uk/about-us/).