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Birmingham



The Role of the Personal Advisors at Aston Business School

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Session Outline

- ▶ Aston Business School Background
- ▶ Personal Tutor Scheme
- ▶ Summary of Research
- ▶ Personal Advisor Scheme
- ▶ Feedback & Usage
- ▶ Future Developments

- ▶ Comments and feedback





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- ▶ Undergraduate Programme
 - ▶ 11 Single Honours Programmes (1 launching Sept 09)
 - ▶ Compulsory Placement Year (excluding International Students)
 - ▶ Approximately 2,400 students
 - ▶ Increasing Student Numbers from 2001
 - ▶ Increasing International Student Numbers





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Personal Tutor Scheme

- ▶ Assigned academic member of staff
- ▶ Meetings to be held termly
- ▶ Form completed by tutor, returned to the Undergraduate Office and held on the students' file



Summary of Research

- ▶ Undertaken during 2006 to review existing system
- ▶ Comparison to other Institutions and Good Practice
- ▶ Survey with Personal Tutors & Students
- ▶ Key areas of weakness identified:
 - ▶ Not always assigned an academic in subject area
 - ▶ Attendance poor
 - ▶ Expertise/knowledge
 - ▶ Appropriateness





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Personal Advisor Scheme

- ▶ Available 5 days a week
 - ▶ Monday - Thursday 10am - 5pm
 - ▶ Friday 10am - 4pm (reviewed yearly)
- ▶ Either a “Drop in” session (10mins) or bookable sessions (20mins+)
- ▶ Summary recorded on Case Worker software
- ▶ Currently 20 Personal Advisors
 - ▶ trained volunteers from Undergraduate Programme Office





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Feedback - Positive

- ▶ In all cases students were able to speak to someone when they wanted to with the longest wait recorded as approximately 10mins
- ▶ All students stated that they felt the advisors had been very supportive and helpful with regards to the issues they discussed
- ▶ Students did not want to be assigned a personal advisor and appreciated the drop in nature of the personal advisor scheme





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Feedback - Negative

- ▶ Greater promotion needed as not aware of scheme early enough
- ▶ Students reported that follow up promised in the meeting (i.e. an email) with an advisor had not always happened.





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Feedback & Usage

- ▶ 2006/7 - 487 visits (381 students)
- ▶ 2007/8 - 256 visits (205 students)
- ▶ 2008/9 - 102 visits (76 students) to date



Feedback & Usage – Why the difference?

- ▶ Changes in personnel
- ▶ Reporting software has identified key issues and we can create tailored help for students. i.e.
 - ▶ Introduction of Handbook on Blackboard
 - ▶ Exams Podcast & Booklet
 - ▶ New Blackboard module for Subject Advice
- ▶ Central Initiatives
 - ▶ Introduction of Aston Student Advice Point “ASAP”





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Future Developments

- ▶ Continual Promotion to Students
- ▶ Promotion of Scheme to Academic Staff
- ▶ Training for Personal Advisors – ongoing programme
- ▶ Undertake Evaluation end of year

