SEDA Professional Development Award in Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising

HANDBOOK

An award delivered by the Centre for Recording Achievement
A. Rationale

The increase in tuition fees and Government interest in placing ‘Students at the Heart of the System’ (BIS, 2011, 2015) has ensured a renewed emphasis on the nature of the offer made by institutions to incoming students. A key factor highlighted in the literature (Chickering and Gamson 1987; Gibbs 2010) is the type and extent of the relationships between students and staff: ‘Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement’ (Chickering and Gamson 1987).

A QAA study of students' perceptions of HE undertaken by Kings College, London (Kandiko et al 2013) also reported that students value face-to-face interactions for learning and support; and that students’ concerns relating to employability lead them to focus on ‘process’ and development opportunities rather than ‘product’ statistics’ (Recommendation 8). From earlier evidence relating to Personal Development Planning and e-portfolio implementation we have already recognised the importance of the role of the mentor or ‘significant other’ in supporting effective practice; this picture is likely to be repeated with more formal and developmental approaches to the implementation of the HEAR.

A key recommendation from the Kandiko et al. study was that ‘the role and function of personal and academic tutors may need to be revised at some institutions. Students should have clear avenues for support that they are comfortable using for personal and academic concerns’ (Recommendation 20).

Given all of the above, strategies for implementing more effective and meaningful support for students in relation to both their academic and wider development is rising up institutional agendas. Whether characterised as ‘personal tutoring’, ‘academic
advising’, ‘academic health checks’ or ‘HEAR reviews’, such student support activities require new strategies and support structures for staff in a near-mass HE context.

B. Award Summary:

This award has therefore been developed to address a national demand for the continuing professional development of higher education staff in the field of Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising. As with other SEDA Awards, it supports professional engagement with the implementation of enhanced practice in respect of personal tutoring/academic advising in evidence informed ways, and in the presentation of the learning and outcomes from this in the form of a Portfolio for accreditation.

The programme is offered jointly between the Centre for Recording Achievement and SEDA at a national level and supports the educational aims of both organisations via a common dedication to the continued development of those who work in higher education, the sharing of good practice and the professionalism of the sector. It promotes continuing professional development of HE staff through goal setting, planning, acting, recording, reflecting and reviewing their development work.

Under the agreement between the organisations:
1. SEDA will act as the awarding institution for the period of the Memorandum of Understanding;
2. The CRA will develop, market, deliver and assess the Award.

The offer of the award on a national/cross-institutional basis provides benefits in terms of:

a. Promoting sharing of issues, practices, experiences and policies between institutions to enrich the development process.
b. Allowing access to the provision for both individuals and institutional teams or groups.
c. Providing support for personal and academic tutors and for those tasked with enhancing policy and practice with regard to personal and academic tutoring at their institution
d. Addressing A4 of the UKPSF; ‘Developing effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance’.

This award is intended for those who are involved in personal or academic tutoring of students in post-compulsory, adult education and HE settings. It is a requirement that participants of the award are actively undertaking personal/academic tutoring as part of the learning. The provision aims to:

- Develop enhanced professional practice in personal and academic tutoring
- Encourage a student-centred approach to personal and academic tutoring
- Explore the theory, concepts and practices involved in personal and academic tutoring
- Support participants in dealing with issues they face in their role in relation to personal and academic tutoring
• Foster a critically reflective approach to tutoring practice
• Promote a scholarly, research-informed and evidence-informed approach to personal and academic tutoring
• Enhance participants skills to support, coach and develop others as personal and academic tutors

C. Values and Outcomes:

1. Underpinning Values

Participants must show, within their Portfolios, how their work is informed by:

a. A developing understanding of how people learn, whether about themselves or their engagement with the wider world (incl. programme of study)
b. Practice that is scholarly, professional and ethical
c. Working with and developing learning communities
d. Valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity
e. Continually reflecting on practice to develop ourselves, others and processes

2. Core Development Outcomes

The emphasis in the development outcomes is on the reflective process of professional development. The outcomes put the onus on the individual to take responsibility for their own development and suggest a process for this.

On completion of the award successful participants will have demonstrated their ability to:

a. Identify their own professional development goals, directions or priorities
b. Plan for their initial and / or continuing professional development
c. Undertake appropriate development activities
d. Review their development and their practice, and the relations between them.

3. Specialist Outcomes

On successful completion of the award successful participants will have demonstrated their ability to:

a. Reflect on the nature and limits of the personal/academic tutoring role in their setting
b. Support individual student personal, academic and/or career development, as appropriate.
c. Apply appropriate personal and academic tutoring skills to work with students
d. Advise and guide students appropriately on issues arising whilst they are studying and, where relevant, direct them to the broader range of services available at the institution
e. Analyse and apply relevant research, literature and theory about personal and academic tutoring to inform, evaluate and enhance practice.
D. Award Structure:

The award is predicated upon a model of professional learning and development through a cycle of reviewing, planning, monitoring, recording and evaluating enhancements in professional practice in the participants working setting. The assessment is intended to be authentic in that is will be based on, and will draw from, a real-world enhancement or enhancements to professional practice in personal and academic tutoring on the part of the participant.

The assessment strategy of the award is based on a series of scaffolded requirements presented with an overarching critical and reflective commentary explaining how the portfolio content individually and collectively addresses the learning outcomes for the Award. Each task will receive formative feedback from a CRA Programme Tutor or Institutional Member and peer support and feedback will also be actively encouraged.

The use of a portfolio-based approach will explicitly require candidates, with support from tutors and peers, to:

1. adopt the 'plan-do-review' model appropriate to the overall SEDA Core Development Outcomes;
2. identify appropriate targets for, and undertake key tasks related to the Specialist Outcomes of the Award which are commensurate with their own role(s);
3. report upon the outcomes of this work, making claims for accreditation supported by evidence.
4. provide, within the portfolio, an appropriate holistic narrative (1,000-1.500 words) which draws upon the evidence presented in 1-3 above.

Within this framework there are five elements which seek to facilitate the representation of a range of practice within a common development and presentational structure as represented within the core development outcomes, specifically:

Review their current experience and evidence informed expertise in the areas covered by the Award, with reference to the institutional policies and practices;

Plan: on the basis of this review, with supporting evidence, identify their professional development goals directions and priorities and plan to work on these within the timeframe of the award;

Do: undertaken the development activities specified, whilst allowing for unanticipated learning from contexts which may not have been recognised in the plan;

Review: their development/practice and the relationship between these;

Present: a final portfolio which demonstrates how they have met the core and specialist outcomes of the award.
E. Learning Support

Core support will be delivered through:

**An initial briefing meeting**, either face-to-face or online.

A **support programme of webinars**, accessible on demand, for each of the five stages above.

A **scaffolded series of portfolio pages**, again referenced upon the five stages above, which will guide and shape but not confine participants in their portfolio building activities – including reviewing previous practice, developing, conducting and evaluating planned enhancement activity.

**Mentor support**, including

- Individual tutor support – each programme member will be allocated a named tutor who will work with them on formative activities including formative feedback on a draft of the final evaluative assignment
- Summative feedback – All work will receive feedback including, if necessary, advice on recovering work that does not initially satisfactorily address the requirements of the named award.

In addition,

- Peer mentoring groups will be supported as a means of developing each other and together
- Access to collated personal and academic tutoring guidance and development materials will be made available through the programme’s web pages on the CRA site.

F. Resources:

To make finding key information in a broad field a little more straightforward, we’ve searched the web for online access to some important references and list these below. Some will require access via institutional subscription, but hopefully this will help you access the perspectives of others.


Jelfs, Anne, Richardson, John TE and Price, Linda. (2009) "Student and tutor perceptions of effective tutoring in distance education." Distance Education 30.3, 419-441. At: http://oro.open.ac.uk/17891/2/PET_Distance_Education_revised.pdf


Relevant websites and web resources include:

- Atherton, James, Learning teaching and heterodoxy website. A very helpful resource by a National Teaching Fellow, which provides the basics of learning and teaching in HE - and also critiques of them. http://www.learningandteaching.info/

- Centre for Recording Achievement, including the supporting webpages at http://www.recordingachievement.ac.uk/higher-education/tutoring.html

- Higher Education Academy: huge amounts of guidance by learning and teaching theme, ‘knowledge hub’ search engine for learning and teaching research and access to individual subject centre resources for learning and teaching in your discipline. http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/

- JORUM: a free online service providing access to teaching and learning resources, for teaching and support staff in UK Further and Higher Education Institutions http://www.jorum.ac.uk/

- Learn Higher: providing quality assured support materials for many aspects of learning support in Higher Education, such as Group work, assessment, academic writing, PDP, etc. http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/

- Quality Assurance Agency: keepers of the academic infrastructure but also contains reports on good practice in learning and teaching that has emerged from the HE quality assurance process. http://www.qaa.ac.uk/
SCIPS: Provides tailored support on addressing the needs of disabled students in your discipline. Addressed by learning activity and specific disability.  
http://www.scips.worc.ac.uk/

SEDA: Provides guidance on the programme values and links to its useful magazine [Educational Developments], conferences and events.  
http://www.seda.ac.uk/

Jisc Guides, previously Tech Dis helpful and approachable guidance on using technology to support disabled student learning  
https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides?f[0]=field_project_topics%3A5A569

Finally, the the URLs for the old Subject Centre resources which still endure can be found at http://www.mickhealey.co.uk/resources

G. Location and time of study

This is a work-based award. Webinars will be scheduled but also be made available to programme participants online; materials will be available via the CRA website and the portfolio, and mentor support and feedback agreed with participants.

Depending upon the degree of institutional support, participants will be able to access up to three mentoring opportunities with a member of the CRA team1. Each such meeting, which will be virtual, will require the submission of portfolio material in advance as a basis for discussion.

In all cases, given the pilot nature of the Award, and its national availability, all participants will:

1. have access to the CRA Briefing.
2. are offered external formative feedback on their Portfolios from a member of the CRA team once, in order to ensure that no unforeseen difficulties at the point of final submission

H. Assessment:

A structured assessment task will be associated with each stage of the programme, as follows:

Task 1: Review (c. 800-900 words)

Write an account of your current experience in the areas covered by the Award, with reference to the policies and practices of your institution. Specifically:

a) List the roles that you currently undertake which explicitly support student development e.g. personal tutor, academic adviser, supervisor, student support officer, skills development tutor, research supervisor.....

1 This, of course, does not preclude email enquiries.
b) In relation to the role you wish to focus upon for the purposes of this award, describe the purpose and boundaries of this role in your institution. You will probably want to refer to institutional policy documents and/or student handbooks but as far as possible, describe the role as you would explain it to one of your students (c.300 words)

c) Think about your recent experience in this role. Which ideas and models from the literature – if any - inform your current practice? Are there any aspects of this practice which make you dissatisfied? What do you think of your own skills in the role (strengths and weaknesses)? Have you thought about ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the role, either in relation to your own practice and/or to institutional policy? Write a few sentences to capture your ideas about potential enhancements (c.500 words)

Task 2: Plan

On the basis of the review in Task 1, identify your professional development goals, directions and priorities. In consultation with either an institutional mentor or a member of the CRA programme team, draw up an initial plan for enhancement of your practice within the timeframe of the award. The plan should conform to SMART criteria, i.e. there should be specific, measurable and achievable targets relevant to the role and a clear time scale.

This plan should be revisited and reviewed at least twice during the Award with your institutional mentor/member of the CRA programme team. Adjustments to the plan should be noted with justification and date.

Task 3-6 (or more if necessary): Do (c.500 words each)

Undertake the development/enhancement activities specified, whilst allowing for unanticipated learning from contexts which may not have been recognised in the plan.

Provide at least four accounts of these activities, at least two of which should relate to work directly with students (whether individually or in group settings). The latter should provide evidence of your ability to:

- listen carefully to a student/students
- check your understanding of any issue with the student e.g. by reflecting back what you have heard in your own words
- interact with the student with the aim of clarifying and enlarging their understanding, helping them to identify and make choices or otherwise contributing to their personal, academic and/or professional development
- give appropriate advice on issues which are (a) personal (b) professional and (c) academic.
- refer a student sensitively to another more appropriate service e.g. a central support service

Each account of working directly with a student/students will briefly describe what took place, but the focus will be on reviewing for yourself what happened, considering what

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2 This could be a record of the meeting, with the learner’s permission and suitably anonymised,
was done well and what could have been done better, using your knowledge of relevant theory to interpret interaction and outcomes.

Accounts may also be included which relate to working with institutional managers and/or staff, developing policy and/or carrying out professional development activities. (c. 500 words for each account). Again the focus should be on reviewing for yourself what happened, considering what was done well and what could have been done better, using your knowledge of relevant theory to interpret interaction and outcomes.

**Final Task: Review and Present (c.1000-1500 words).**

Before submission of your portfolio, write a reflective account of how you have enhanced your practice. This should:

- draw upon the previous evidence to pull together your key learning (this should be less the repetition of previous evidence and more a drawing together of the most significant elements from your current perspective);
- review the extent to which the intentions within your plan have been met, including any changes you agreed;
- reflect on problems that arose and how they were overcome;
- describe and assess the degree of personal/professional development achieved, identifying achievements and the implications of the experience for further development/progression.

Feedback from related programmes suggests that participants should pay particular attention to a number of key criteria when producing their final critically reflective commentary. This should be:

a. **Practical** – discussing worked examples of your support of student learning in sessions;
b. **Personal** – reflecting your values and personal theory of learning and teaching through self-aware, critical reflection;
c. **Structured** – to ensure you have explicitly addressed the full range of module learning outcomes and values;
d. **Scholarly** – including references to, and critique of, key literature and relevant recent research articles.

Finally, complete the matrix in the appendix which claims how and where you have demonstrated that the learning outcomes of the programme have been met. Attach this to the front of your portfolio.

The matrix below provides a mapping as to where evidence relating to SEDA values and core and specialist outcomes is likely to be evidenced within the portfolio. This should be seen as indicative rather than prescriptive.

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<th>Specialist outcomes</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<td>Reflect on the nature and limits of the personal/academic tutoring role in their setting.</td>
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*ideally with reflective commentary from the candidate.*
Apply appropriate personal and academic tutoring skills to work with students. | Tasks 3-6
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Advise and guide students appropriately on issues arising whilst they are studying and, where relevant, direct them to the broader range of services available at the institution. | Tasks 3-6
Analyse and apply relevant research, literature and theory about personal and academic tutoring to inform, evaluate and enhance practice. | Final Task

**Core outcomes**

| Activity | Task 
---|---
Identify their own professional development goals, directions or priorities. | Task 2
Plan for their initial and / or continuing professional development. | Task 2
Undertake appropriate development activities. | Task 3-6
Review their development and their practice, and the relations between them. | Task 2 Final Task

**Core values**

| Value | Throughout
A developing understanding of how people learn, whether about themselves or their engagement with the wider world. | Final Task
Practice that is scholarly, professional and ethical. | Tasks 3-6 Final Task
A commitment to working with and developing learning communities. | Throughout
A commitment to valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity. | Throughout
Continual reflection on practice to develop ourselves, others and processes. | Throughout

The Award will be assessed on the basis of ‘pass’/‘learning outcomes not yet demonstrated’.

**Evaluation and Quality Enhancement**

The tutors on this programme are experienced Higher Education academics and practitioners with expertise in portfolio development and assessment for SEDA and other awarding bodies. While not based in a particular HEI the programme will draw on accepted HE structures of moderation, examination and review. All summative assessment will be subject to blind double marking by two members of the programme team. An external examiner will be appointed to the programme who will sample and moderate across the assessments but also look at all work deemed not to have met the requirements of the Award.

Programme participants will have the right to

- re-submit work that does not initially meet the requirements for the Award;
- appeal to SEDA as set out below.

In respect of appeals, SEDA would hope to resolve issues via a conversation between participant and tutor(s). If you wish to raise a complaint about SEDA’s work or appeal a decision you should note the following process, which was approved by SEDA’s Executive Committee in February 2011:

*Programme participants will have the right to*

- re-submit work that does not initially meet the requirements for the Award;
- appeal to SEDA as set out below.
Those seeking to make a complaint or initiate an appeal against an activity of SEDA should in the first instance contact the SEDA Office who will inform Prof. James Wisdom (Company Secretary) of the notification. Based upon the nature of the complaint, appeal or grievance the Company Secretary will establish an independent panel to receive and review relevant materials and advise upon the outcomes on the investigation. You will be informed within 14 working days about the process being established to resolve the complaint and the likely timescale for completion.

**Appeals process flowchart**

1. Complainant makes first approach for appeal to course tutors

2. Complainant and tutors work together seeking to resolve appeal issue
   - Appeal resolved?
   - NO
   - 3. Passed to SEDA Company Secretary; established an independent panel to review the appeal

3. NO further action(s) required
   - 4. Complainant notified of panel outcome directly in writing

The external examiner will feed a report into the annual monitoring. The external examiner will be provided with the opportunity to contact and discuss the programme with participants in the preparation of their report. Annual monitoring reviews the quality of the programme and will provide action points emerging from analysis of recruitment, engagement, progression and completion data, feedback gathered from participants and the external examiner’s report.

Appraisals of tutors and peer mentoring amongst the tutoring team will provide an important means of updating and monitoring the development of teaching on the programme. Programme tutors are involved in research, evaluation or scholarly practice which impacts on the teaching of the award and will serve to ensure that the programme is research-informed, addressing the issues of personal and academic tutoring in an appropriately critical and innovative manner.

**Non anonymous marking**

Due to the nature of the assessment approach adopted on this module and the emphasis placed on peer and tutor formative assessment, it is considered conducive to learning to show student identity on assessment pieces.
Evaluation and Development

This is a new programme and it will inevitably benefit from your developmental input. Your views matter to the programme team. If you have any comments please let us know. The sooner we have the feedback the quicker we can act upon it. Informal evaluation will be undertaken during the module and you will be invited to give your formal module evaluation on its completion and via contact with the external examiner. All such formal evaluations remain confidential.

Disclosure Statement

We endeavour to design the module to make it as accessible as possible and we are committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, are treated fairly. All reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged. Please inform your tutors of any issues you may have in relation to this statement.

Non-Submission, Late Submission and Reassessment

For the initial period the first submission date will be November 15th 2016, in order that Awards can be confirmed by the Winter meeting of the Assessment Board. Portfolios may be submitted electronically or – in specific circumstances and by agreement – via hard copy. The Assessment Board will be convened by the CRA.

Subsequent meetings of the Assessment Board will be held, subject to demand, on a twice yearly basis with information as to when and how Portfolios may be submitted provided at least three months in advance. Such meetings will confirm a list of successful applicants for whom certification is claimed.

All submissions, including any re-submissions, will be considered at the subsequent meeting of the Assessment Board providing such submissions are made by the publicised date.
Appendix 1 - Work Based Learning Contract

This is derived from work on an earlier work-based programme, we would propose to retain as a optional tool for securing line manager support of this is necessary.

The Award is an experiential work based learning programme that takes place alongside, and complements, employment supporting HE student learning. This means that your learning experience is an arrangement made up of yourself, your employer and this programme. Each of these partners has different responsibilities:

Programme member
It is your responsibility to plan and manage your learning and portfolio building. You should ensure, in negotiation with your employers, that you are undertaking enough work in support of HE student learning [as set out in the award criteria] to engage effectively with the programme. If you have concerns over this, please discuss it with your employer and contact the programme leader. You are also responsible for reflecting on your learning and being motivated to take advantages of the opportunities offered for development through webinars and peer-peer interaction as well as formal tutorial support.

The Employer
The key supporters of your work place learning should be your line manager. Line manager support for your undertaking the programme should be established from the outset, including any remission from working hours. You should ensure your line-manager is aware of the requirements of the programme and the range and quantity of work you need to be undertaking to generate examples of practice towards the assignments. Ongoing employer support for your engagement with this programme should be clearly and openly agreed in advance.

The Team
It is our role to facilitate your learning on the programme. We do this by providing support through webinars, direct tutorial interaction and formative feedback upon portfolio contributions.

Programme member declaration
I have shared this document and discussed the work based learning aspect of this programme with my line manager.

Signed and dated: ________________________________

Line manager declaration
I have discussed the work based learning aspect of this programme with my colleague undertaking the programme.

I understand that I can ask the CRA programme leader for an update on colleagues’ progress on the programme throughout the year.

Mentor’s name: ________________________________

Signed and dated: ________________________________
Appendix 2: Self Assessment of Final Portfolio

The matrix below provides a mapping as to where evidence relating to SEDA values and core and specialist outcomes is likely to be evidenced within the portfolio. This should be seen as indicative rather than prescriptive.

A copy of this will be provided in the Google Sites Portfolio.

Participants are recommended to use this document on a formative basis and part of the planning and reviewing activities which will inform their activities and Portfolio Building. ³

Participants will be required to indicate in submitting their final Portfolio where these outcomes are demonstrated and where evidence to support such claims may be located.⁴

<table>
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<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>Support individual student personal, academic and/or career development, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Tasks 3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply appropriate personal and academic tutoring skills to work with students.</td>
<td>Tasks 3-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advise and guide students appropriately on issues arising whilst they are studying and, where relevant, direct them to the broader range of services available at the institution.</td>
<td>Tasks 3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse and apply relevant research, literature and theory about personal and academic tutoring to inform, evaluate and enhance practice.</td>
<td>Final Task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ For example, by referring to the learning outcomes and values and assessing their current position as a basis for further planning.

⁴ We will provide a set of rating indicators to support this formative and summative self-assessment process, as indicated below. Descriptors A and B must be demonstrated in all outcomes for the Award to be made:

- E I have not really considered how to do this nor do I have any direct experience to reflect on. I can thus produce no evidence of achieving this outcome/value.
- D I have started to think about this but I have only limited experience to draw upon. I can produce little or no evidence to demonstrate I have achieved this.
- C I have thought about this and I have experience of doing it. However I can produce little or no evidence to demonstrate that I have achieved this outcome/value.
- B I have thought carefully about this and have had experience of doing it. I can produce some examples that demonstrate I have achieved this.
- A I have thought carefully about this and have various experiences of doing it. I can produce a range of examples that demonstrates I have achieved this outcome/value.
## Core outcomes

<table>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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## Core values

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<tr>
<td>Final Task</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks 3-6, Final Task</td>
<td>Practice that is scholarly, professional and ethical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>A commitment to working with and developing learning communities.</td>
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<td>Throughout</td>
<td>A commitment to valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity.</td>
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<tr>
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## Appendix 3 – Matrix for signposting to and claiming evidence

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