

Allow Associate Tutors to Supervise Dissertations at Undergraduate Level

Proposer: Eddi Kernoghan (Education Society)

Seconder: Thai Braddick (Non-Portfolio Officer)

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Summary: A motion that empowers the Students' Union to campaign with and for ATs to allow them to supervise dissertations at undergraduate level.

Council Notes

1. Associate Tutors (ATs) can supervise dissertations at MA and PHD level.
2. ATs have a range of experience in different areas.
3. In the academic year 2018/19, the University took in 7,563 new students and have released plans stating they intend on increasing their intake in the coming academic years. ¹
 - a. That whilst not every student will do a dissertation, many students do and each student deserves the highest quality standard of support available.
4. The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme acknowledges the need for flexibility of dissertation supervision and support. ²

Council Believes

1. Dissertations are a standard in Higher Education and must be flexible and evolve with the changing field of HE to be relevant and widely accessible.
 - a. The dissertation is coming under pressure for reform as student participation rates have increased, the number studying professional disciplines has grown, and staff-student ratios have deteriorated due to the marketisation of HE. ³
2. ATs are valued members of staff who have knowledge and experience other staff may not have.

¹ <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/planningoffice/biu/planning-and-management/facts-and-figures>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2011/jun/28/flexible-dissertations-for-undergraduates>

³ Ibid.

3. ATs should be able to opt in to supervising dissertations, as opposed to it being standard.
4. ATs deserve access to the same resources and support as other members of staff.

Council Resolves

1. Mandate the Union to work with the university and school faculties to allow ATs to have the opportunity to supervise dissertations at the undergraduate level, if they choose to.
2. That in the process of campaigning for this change, the Union must, in order to synthesise the best way forward and best practice for this change:
 - a. Consult with ATs.
 - b. Consult with UCU and other trade unions which represent ATs.
 - c. Consult with students with a vested interest in this – like members of Education Society, and students who will do dissertations.