

## **A Scoping Review of the Multidimensional Outcomes of Academic Coaching in Higher Education**

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### **Research Domains**

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

### **Abstract**

This scoping review examines the multidimensional outcomes of academic coaching in higher education. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as constructivist learning, self-efficacy, retention, and social capital theories, the study synthesises findings from 100 peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2025. Results reveal that academic coaching positively influences psychological, educational, research, cultural-social, and professional domains. Coaching enhances students' motivation, self-efficacy, emotional well-being, performance, research productivity, social integration, and career preparedness. It is especially impactful for marginalised student populations, promoting equity and inclusion. Despite these benefits, existing theories often fail to capture the holistic impact of coaching fully. The review identifies gaps in the literature, such as the limited focus on minority experiences and technology-based platforms. Implications suggest the need for multidimensional coaching models and institutional investment in evidence-based support systems. This study contributes to the field by offering a comprehensive framework for understanding and advancing academic coaching practices in higher education.

### **Full paper**

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study explores the multidimensional impacts of academic coaching in higher education through a comprehensive scoping review. Academic coaching has become an essential mechanism for supporting students' academic, personal, and professional growth (Alzen et al., 2021). While existing theoretical frameworks—such as constructivist learning, self-regulated learning, self-efficacy, retention, and social capital theories—offer insights into coaching's effectiveness, they often prioritise cognitive development and academic performance, neglecting broader outcomes.

To address this gap, the review critically examines how current theories conceptualise academic coaching and identifies underexplored dimensions. It proposes a more inclusive approach, integrating psychological, cultural-social, and professional perspectives. By synthesising research across these domains, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of coaching's impact and aims to guide scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in developing multidimensional coaching models that better serve students in higher education.

## **Theoretical Background**

Academic coaching extends beyond traditional advising by addressing students' cognitive, emotional, social, and professional needs. Several theoretical frameworks support its application.

Constructivist learning theory highlights learner-centred, experience-based knowledge construction. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development emphasises scaffolding through guided support. Self-regulation theory focuses on goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflection. Bandura's self-efficacy theory underscores belief in one's capabilities. Tinto's retention theory emphasises academic and social integration to reduce dropout, and social capital theory stresses the importance of relationships and networks for academic and career advancement (Almuhsin et al., 2023; Gamoran et al., 2021; Pechac & Slantcheva-Durst, 2021; Pekkan, 2018; Singhani et al., 2022).

Despite the diversity of these theories, most emphasise singular dimensions. This review argues for a multidimensional theoretical framework to better understand and implement effective academic coaching.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

Using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-step framework for scoping reviews, this study followed these stages: (1) identifying the research question, (2) locating relevant literature, (3) selecting studies, (4) charting data, and (5) synthesising findings. A comprehensive search across Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar was conducted using the query:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (function OR outcome OR effect\* OR result\*) AND ("academic coaching" OR "success coaching" OR "student coaching") AND ("higher education" OR university OR college).

Only peer-reviewed English-language articles published between 2000 and 2025, focused on higher education, were included. Studies on K-12 education, organisational training, or sports coaching were excluded. The final selection consisted of 100 studies. Data were

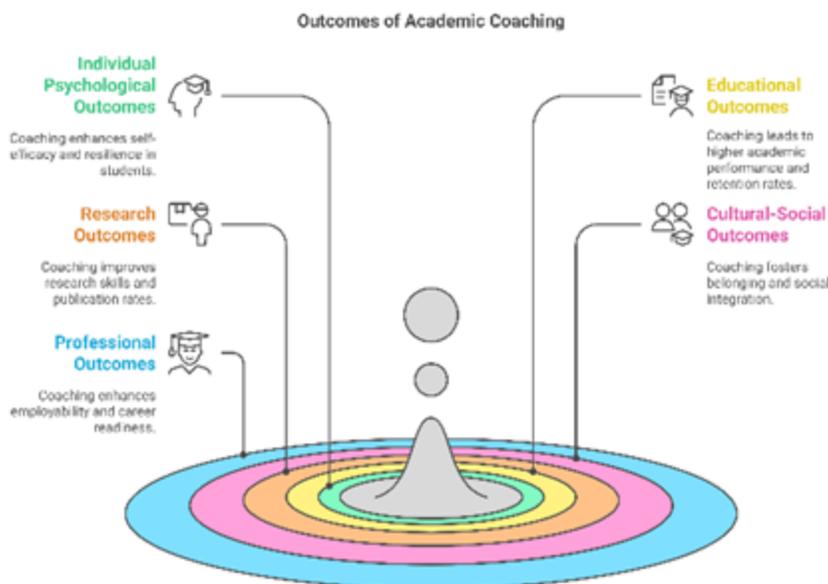
categorised into five outcome domains: psychological, educational, research, cultural-social, and professional, enabling the identification of trends, strengths, and research gaps.

## Findings

Academic coaching is a multidimensional intervention that significantly benefits various areas of student development. Psychologically, it enhances motivation, self-efficacy, emotional well-being, and resilience. Techniques such as personalised goal-setting and reflective dialogue help students adopt a growth mindset and manage academic stress (Sepulveda et al., 2020; Saethern et al., 2022).

Academically, coaching improves time management, study strategies, and problem-solving, contributing to better GPAs, academic persistence, and reduced dropout rates (Bettinger & Baker, 2014; Brown et al., 2021; Craig et al., 2022). In research, coaching supports critical thinking, creativity, and scholarly output, resulting in higher-quality research and increased publications (Maritz et al., 2013; Petrus, 2022).

Cultural and social benefits include strengthened student-faculty relationships, peer collaboration, and inclusivity. Coaching is particularly impactful for international and marginalised students by promoting integration and belonging (Passmore & Law, 2009). Professionally, coaching develops communication, leadership, and adaptability skills that bridge academic learning with career demands, enhancing students' employability and professional networks (Ganapati & Ritchie, 2021; Otu, 2024).



## **Research Limitations and Implications**

While this review offers a thorough synthesis, it is limited to English-language publications and includes studies with diverse methodologies, which may hinder direct comparison. Future research should examine the long-term and intersectional effects of academic coaching, especially for underrepresented groups and in digital contexts.

Institutionally, the findings suggest integrating coaching into student support systems. Policymakers should allocate funding to evidence-based programs, while researchers are encouraged to explore technology-enhanced coaching and its equity implications across diverse student populations.

## **Practical and Social Implications**

Academic coaching contributes to student success by enhancing academic achievement, personal development, and career preparedness. It supports retention, diversity, and equity, particularly among disadvantaged students. Coaching also strengthens institutional ties with employers and communities by aligning student skills with societal needs. Implementing structured coaching programs enables universities to cultivate competent, adaptable, and socially responsible graduates.

## **Conclusion**

This scoping review establishes academic coaching as a transformative, multidimensional support strategy in higher education. By mapping outcomes across five interconnected domains—psychological, educational, research, cultural-social, and professional—it advances a comprehensive framework for understanding coaching's role in student success.