



SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC ADVISING HANDBOOK

Academic Advising

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WHAT IS ACADEMIC ADVISING?

“Good advising is one of the key conditions that promotes retention for it reflects an institution’s commitment to the education of students” (Tinto, 1999, Fall NACADA Journal).

Academic advising is a collaborative relationship between students and academic advisors committed to ensuring students accomplish their academic and career goals. Recognizing the diversity of ages, backgrounds, and needs of our students, SC State University is committed to providing the advice and resources that students need as they progress through their degree program curriculum from initial admission to graduation. Although Academic Advisors will be available to guide the advising process, students have the ultimate responsibility for completing academic requirements as outlined in their academic curriculum.

This document outlines the minimum advising policies and procedures to be implemented by all undergraduate academic programs at South Carolina State University. Academic programs may have additional requirements and procedures unique to their programs of study.

ADVISING POLICIES

All newly admitted and transfer students with declared majors are assigned an academic advisor in their academic department. Undeclared majors are advised by the Academic Advisor in the Student Success Retention Program until a major is declared, which should be done by the end of the Freshman year. The assigned faculty remains the advisor throughout the student’s matriculation unless the student petitions for a change in advisor, changes his/her major or a faculty member leaves the University. Chairs and Program Coordinators will provide advising assistance when the designated advisor is not available.

Students are required to meet with their Academic Advisor at least once each semester during the pre-registration period prior to registering for the next semester. In addition to these regular advising sessions, students must complete a *Degree Audit/Junior Status Report and Eligibility for Graduation* at specified times as indicated below:

Degree Audit/Junior Status Report (*new policy*)

Upon the completion of 90 semester hours, students must meet with their *Academic Advisor* to complete a *degree audit*. To conduct the audit, the student's academic transcript will be used to record grades on the program curriculum sheet. The online **CAPP** is also available to assist with this process. All requests for course substitutions should be completed and approved at this time. (**NOTE:** The course substitution policy (see below) should be strictly adhered to). The degree audit will be used to complete the *Junior Status Report* and determine eligibility for graduation. The report will outline remaining courses needed and status of other requirements such as the English Proficiency Exam to complete degree requirements. A signed copy of the report is given to the student and a copy maintained on file with the advisor. Students will not be allowed to register the following semester until this process is completed. Athletes, Honor College students, cadets and other special groups must complete this process with the *Academic Advisor in their degree program*.

Students are expected to follow the curriculum outlined in their academic program as closely as possible, particularly during the first two years when they are satisfying basic degree requirements and prerequisites.

Students complete requirements under the curriculum that they enter the University or change degree programs. If degree requirements are changed by the department or college, students enrolled in the current program must meet these new requirements provided they do not necessitate taking courses below class levels or in excess of those normally required for graduation. Any exceptions to this regulation must be approved by the student's dean. A transfer student and a student returning after an absence of one or more semesters must meet the graduation requirements as specified in the current catalogue.

Eligibility for Graduation (*new policy*)

In the semester students expect to graduate, the Academic Advisor must complete the *Eligibility for Graduation form* for students who have submitted an *Application for Graduation*. Upon completion of this form, the Advisor forwards to the Chair and Dean for approval before submission to the Registrar's Office.

Applications for graduation are submitted in the semester prior to the expected graduation date. This will be **February 15** for July and December graduates and **September 15** for May graduates. Late fees will accrue after these dates. *The absolute latest date for filing is September 15 for December graduation and February 1 for May graduation. Failure to file by*

the absolute latest date will result in graduation during the next period and filing of a new application.

Course Substitution Policy

Substitution of courses from a prescribed curriculum will be permitted only under unavoidable circumstances. The request to waive curriculum requirements or to change curriculum requirements should begin with the department chair, then the dean of the college and finally to the Office of Academic Affairs.

THE ADVISING PROCESS

Role and Responsibilities of Advisors

For the **ADVISOR**, academic advising is an essential component of the role as a professor here at South Carolina State University. Faculty **ADVISORS** are generally responsible for developing a thorough knowledge of the degree requirements in the students' programs of study and a working knowledge of academic options and resources throughout the University. Advisors are expected to apply the principals of developmental advising to assist students in making the best decisions as they move through their academic curriculum. Advisors should engage students by encouraging them to ask questions, gather information, and explore options so that they may develop an appropriate and meaningful academic program of study. Advisors should be available to students on a regular basis, monitor their advisees' progress, assist them in considering career options, and make appropriate referrals to other campus offices.

The Advisor's responsibility to guide students dictates accessibility throughout the semester and particularly during pre-registration and registration periods at the beginning and end of semesters. Moreover, the advisor must be aware of curriculum requirements for the degree program, curriculum changes, and **monitor individual advisee progress** so as to assist students effectively in making curriculum choices and academic decisions. The Advisor should document the content of their advisement sessions and get the date of the student advisee. *As indicated in the Faculty Handbook, page 183, "When it can be documented that poor or improper academic advisement by a faculty member causes academic problems for the advisee, the faculty member may expect consequences, which may range from reprimands up to dismissal for cause."* The advisor should refer students to the Chair only in unusual situations that suggest the need for additional expertise to solve a problem.

Specifically, **Advisors** should:

- Be accessible for meeting with advisees
- Understand and effectively communicate the curriculum, graduation requirements, college policies and procedures
- Conduct a degree audit at the completion of 90 semester hours
- Assess the eligibility of students for graduation prior to filing application for graduation
- Evaluate curriculum requirements and determine if course substitutions are appropriate
- Refer students to available resources and services on campus
- Monitor and accurately assess students' progress toward meeting academic goals
- Maintain a record of student academic progress
- Maintain confidentiality

Role and Responsibilities of Students

For **STUDENTS**, **academic advising is not just a drop-in to obtain a PIN that allows one to register.** Academic advising is an educational process that, by intention and design, facilitates students' understanding of curriculum requirements and fosters progress toward academic success and lifelong learning. Students are responsible for scheduling, preparing for, and keeping advising appointments; for seeking out contact and information; and for knowing the basic requirements of their individual degree programs, especially as found in the appropriate University catalog and/or curriculum sheet. *Students bear final responsibility for making their own decisions based on the best information and advice and, ultimately, on their own judgment.* Properly implemented, the curriculum should be reviewed each semester with the advisor. This review should be part of the permanent record maintained by the student and advisor, and should be updated each semester.

To make the most of the advising relationship, students should:

- Take the initiative to contact the advisor to schedule regular appointments each semester. Learn advisor's office hours each semester, phone number and email address. It may require more than one attempt to connect. Be conscientious and thoughtful. Keep scheduled appointments or call if you need to cancel.
- Choose a major field of study and identify courses to enhance skills and interests
- Become familiar with the University catalog and degree requirements for chosen major;

- Keep current on academic regulations, policies, procedures and requirements by reviewing catalog and curriculum sheet
- Accept responsibility for the decisions made in consultation with the advisor
- Maintain personal copies of academic records and bring to meetings with the advisor
- Prepare a list of questions or concerns before each meeting with the advisor
- Ask questions – get to know advisor and let advisor get to know you
- Understand course choices within available course offerings
- Maintain the required grade point average
- Make timely and satisfactory progress towards a degree
- Know the academic calendar and deadlines for completing certain requirements
- Register for classes on time

PRE-REGISTRATION ADVISING PROCEDURES

During the Pre-registration period, faculty should:

1. Post an Advisee Sign-up Sheet on office door two weeks prior to pre-registration period
2. Email all advisees and announce and encourage students in all major courses to sign-up with their advisors before pre-registration period begins. Faculty should also inform students they must see advisor during pre-registration period before they leave for the Christmas or summer break to get their PIN regardless of their financial status. Students should get their PIN whether they use it to register now or later.
3. Be available during student's scheduled appointment time. Faculty maintains additional office hours during the first two weeks of pre-registration to accommodate students. The Sign-up sheets should reflect the times the faculty will be available.
4. Meet with student; review transcript and update grades on curriculum sheet before giving student a PIN number.

Below are some basic guidelines and tips for Advisors:

1. Be able to access and use the Banner system to assist students with registration and view records for advising. We are completely on Banner now. If you have not had training or have an ID number for access, please do so immediately.

2. Know who your Advisees are. You can locate your list of Advisees in Banner, which includes their ID #; PIN and student information. You will also be able to access student schedule, transcript, and CAPP.
3. Establish office hours and keep them on a consistent basis. During the registration period at the beginning of the semester and during pre-registration, additional office hours must be kept to assist students.
4. Students should not be given a PIN number until you have reviewed their transcript and provided advice on what courses they should enroll in. The Department Chair WILL NOT do this. **All students will be sent to their ADVISORS.**
5. Inform students in classes of their responsibilities as an Advisee. They must determine who their Advisors are; during the semester or prior to pre-registration, they should schedule a time to see the Advisor during scheduled office hours.

Below are some basic guidelines and tips for students:

1. Students must make an appointment to see advisor two weeks prior to start of pre-registration period.
2. Students must meet with advisor during scheduled time to review and update curriculum and obtain PIN number
3. Check banner or Department for Advisor's name.
4. Schedule an appointment with Advisor using signup sheets on their doors for scheduling. Make an appointment EARLY for advisement! Develop a preliminary course schedule BEFORE your advisement appointment. You must meet with your faculty advisor each semester to discuss your academic progress

Core Values of Academic Advising

NACADA Core Values of Academic Advising Statement

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) is an organization of professional advisors, faculty, administrators, students and others from a variety of settings who do academic

advising or otherwise work to promote quality academic advising on college and university campuses. As members of this organization or of the profession of academic advising, or as others who advise or provide related programs and services to students, we must recognize our responsibility not only to students and the institutions in which our advising is done, but to society, to colleagues, and to ourselves.

While not all those who do academic advising are professional advisors, anyone carrying out advising functions should be expected to perform in a professional manner. The Core Values identified and discussed here provide a framework against which those who advise can measure their own performance.

In no way does this Core Values statement try to dictate that all academic advising needs to be done in precisely the same way by everyone, or that there is one particular advising philosophy or model. Instead, these are reference points for professionals to use. Furthermore, the Core Values do not carry equal weight. Advisors will find some Core Values more important than others, depending on their own philosophies and those of their colleges or universities.

The Power of Academic Advising

Few experiences in students' postsecondary career have as much potential for influencing their development as does academic advising.

Through regular contact with students--whether face-to-face, through the mail, on the telephone, or through computer mediated systems--advisors gain meaningful insights into student's academic, social, and personal experiences and needs. Advisors use these insights to help students feel a part of the academic community, develop sound academic and career goals, and ultimately be successful learners.

Because of the nature of academic advising, advisors often develop a broad vision of the institution. Advisors can therefore play an important interpretive role with administrators, faculty, and staff, helping them further understand students' academic and personal development needs. Advisors can teach others to identify students who, with additional attention from academic support staff, may achieve their goals to succeed academically and personally.

Students place a great deal of trust in their advisors. That trust warrants quality programs and services. It is through our Core Values that students' expectations of academic advising are honored.

Beliefs about students

Like other educators, academic advisors work to strengthen the importance, dignity, potential, and unique nature of each individual served within the academic setting. Our work as advisors is guided by our beliefs that:

- students can be responsible for their own behavior;

- students can be successful as a result of their individual goals and efforts;
- students have a desire to learn;
- learning needs vary according to individual skills, goals and experiences; and
- students hold their own beliefs and opinions.

Why our Core Values are important

Out of these beliefs grow our Core Values. Regardless of our professional preparation and experience, each of us in the field of academic advising is ultimately guided in our work by what we perceive as important, what we value, and what we believe about those we serve--primarily students, but also others in the institutions within which we work, and even the institutions themselves.

We recognize the complex nature of academic advising, the wide variety of settings and tasks for which academic advisors are responsible, and the diverse backgrounds and experiences of academic advisors. Yet, while values and beliefs are by their very nature individual, there are many that are subscribed to by those who advise students. Through this statement of Core Values we communicate to others what they can expect from us. These Core Values may be used to validate our conduct in our diverse roles and our relationships within the academic community.

The Core Values

Students deserve dependable, accurate, respectful, honest, friendly, and professional service. In order to serve students well, academic advisors understand that they are responsible to many constituents who comprise our academic communities. This is the foundation on which the following Core Values rest.

Advisors are responsible to the students and individuals they serve. The cooperative efforts of all who advise help to deliver quality programs and services to students. These include, but are not limited to, giving accurate and timely information, maintaining regular office hours, and keeping appointments.

Advisors help students develop a perception of themselves and their relationship to the future. Advisors introduce students in a nurturing way to the world they are entering--teaching them to value the learning process, put the college experience into perspective, become more responsible, set priorities and evaluate sequences of events, and be honest with themselves.

Advisors encourage self-reliance by helping students make informed and responsible decisions, set realistic goals, and develop thinking, learning, and life management skills to meet present and future needs. Advisors work with students to help them accomplish the goals and objectives they have established for themselves. Advisors encourage students to be responsible for their own success and progress. They respect students' rights to their individual beliefs and opinions but are not dictated to by them.

Advisors work to modify barriers to student progress; identify burdensome, ineffective, and inefficient policies and procedures; and work to effect change. When the needs of students and the institution are in conflict, advisors seek a resolution that is in the best interest of both parties. Advisors inform students about appropriate grievance procedures in cases where students find the resolution unsatisfactory.

Advisors recognize the changing nature of the college and university environment and student body. They support students in appropriate ways (e.g., advocate at the administrative level for recognition of these changes; offer varied office hours; and acknowledge the special needs of all students and the pressures on them to juggle study with work, family, and other interpersonal demands).

Advisors are knowledgeable about and sensitive to federal, state, and their own institution's policies and procedures, especially those governing such matters as sexual harassment, personal relationships with students, privacy of student information, equal treatment, equal access, and equal opportunity.

Advisors respect the rights of students to have information about themselves kept confidential. Advisors share information with others about students and their programs only when both advisor and student believe that information is relevant and will result in increased information or assistance, assessment, and provision of appropriate services to the student.

Advisors gain access to and use computerized information about students only when that information is relevant to the advising they are doing with that particular student. Advisors enter or change information on students' records only when legitimately authorized to do so.

Advisors need to document advising contacts adequately to aid subsequent advising interactions.

Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process. Effective advising requires a broad-based, or holistic, approach to working with students. Academic advisors develop crucial ties with others who assist students in diverse areas, such as admissions, orientation, financial aid, housing, health services, athletics, course selection and satisfaction of academic requirements, special physical and educational needs (e.g., disabilities, study skills, psychological counseling), foreign study, career development, co-curricular programs, and graduation clearance.

Advisors are facilitators and mediators. Responsible academic advisors recognize their limitations and use their specialized knowledge effectively.

To make connections between academic advising and other aspects of students' lives, advisors seek out resources provided by others. Referrals to these resources provide students with further assessments of their needs and access to appropriate programs and services. With others, advisors are responsible for helping students integrate the information they are confronted with and for helping students make well-informed academic decisions.

If peer advisors are used, the supervising advisor will closely monitor the peer advisor regarding

adherence to appropriate policies and practices.

Advisors are responsible to the college or university in which they work. Advisors respect the opinions of their colleagues; remain neutral when students present them with comments, questions, or opinions about other faculty or staff; and are non-judgmental about academic programs.

Advisors increase their collective professional strength by sharing their philosophies and techniques with colleagues.

Advisors keep administrators who are not involved directly in the advising process informed and aware of the importance of academic advising in students' lives, and of the need for administrative support of advising and related activities.

Advisors abide by the specific policies, procedures and values of the department and institution for which they work. Where injustices occur and might interfere with students' learning, advisors advocate for change on behalf of students with the institution's administration, faculty, and staff.

Advisors are responsible to higher education generally. Academic advisors honor (and are protected by) the concept of academic freedom as practiced on our campuses. In this spirit, advisors hold a variety of points of view. Academic advisors are free to base their work with students on the most appropriate and optimum theories of college student development and models of delivery for academic advising programs and services.

Advisors accept that one of the goals of education is to introduce students to the world of ideas. One goal of academic advising is to establish a partnership between student and advisor to guide students through their academic programs so they may attain the knowledge gained and offered by faculty.

Academic advisors believe that it is ultimately the responsibility of students to apply what they learn to everyday situations. Advisors help students in understanding this process.

Advisors advocate for students' educational achievement at the highest attainable standard and support student goals, as well as the educational mission of the institution.

Advisors advocate the creation or strengthening of programs and services that are compatible with students' academic needs.

Advisors are responsible to the community (including the local community, state, and region in which the institution is located). Academic advisors interpret the institution's mission, standards, goals, and values to its community, including public and private schools from which the college or university draws its student body. Likewise, advisors understand their student body and regularly inform the schools from which their students come about appropriate preparation so that students may perform successfully in higher education.

Advisors are sensitive to the values and mores of the surrounding community, sharing these with

and interpreting them to students. Advisors are aware of community programs and services and may become models for students by participating in community activities themselves.

Advisors are responsible to their professional role as advisors and to themselves personally. To keep advising skills honed and interest high, advisors are encouraged to seek opportunities for professional development through classes, workshops, conferences, reading, consultation with others, and interaction in formal groups with other advisors (e.g., professional organizations like NACADA).

Advisors understand the demands on themselves that emerge from the service nature of the work they do. Advisors develop skills for taking care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They learn how to detach themselves from students' problems while maintaining a keen listening ear and providing sensitive responses. They establish and maintain appropriate boundaries. They need to be nurtured by others within the profession and they need to nurture their colleagues. They seek support for themselves within and outside the institution.

Academic advising lends itself well to research. Advisors may engage in research related to advising, and are encouraged to engage in research related to their own particular training and disciplinary backgrounds. Each research agenda must honor the institution's safeguards for privacy and humane treatment of subjects.

Source:

NACADA. (1994). NACADA Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising. Retrieved – June 6, 2012- from NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web site: http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Research_Related/corevalues.htm