Best Practices in Undergraduate Academic Advising

Advisor Responsibilities: Core responsibilities.

Best Practices: How individual advisors should fulfill their core responsibilities.

Advisor Responsibilities

Faculty and staff advisors have the responsibility to
✓ provide accurate and timely information about degree and career-related requirements.
✓ be available during publicized office hours.
✓ respond to students’ inquiries within 2 business days.
✓ empower each student to make independent and informed decisions.
✓ be knowledgeable about policies and procedures.
✓ serve as a guide, teacher, facilitator, coach, and counselor.
✓ make appropriate referrals.
✓ encourage active engagement in the curriculum-based advising process by using the CAPP degree audit.
✓ advise from an integrated perspective of general education, major(s), minor(s), experiential learning, study abroad.
✓ ensure smooth transition for students declaring and changing majors.
✓ keep accurate and up-to-date advising records in Niner Advisor.
✓ provide realistic options for students’ decision making and encourage reasonable time to degree.
✓ be resourceful, utilizing web-based resources, advising tools and professional development opportunities.

Best Practices: Advising In General

Scheduling and Preparation of Advising Appointments
✓ Have dedicated advising hours; increase availability during peak advising times.
✓ Schedule advising appointments to accommodate a variety of students’ schedules in relation to the academic calendar.
✓ Update availability for advising appointments on Niner Advisor regularly.
✓ Send students reminders about when they need to schedule appointments and encourage them to see all their advisors.
✓ Meet with current students at least once per semester.
✓ Have students upload advising worksheets to Niner Advisor prior to appointment.
✓ Require or encourage students to complete/update an academic plan including when they intend to take courses and bring it to appointment.
✓ Require or encourage students to complete a CAPP degree audit immediately prior to the appointment. This can either be pulled up on a computer during the advising session (to save paper) or students can bring it to the appointment.
Time-to-Degree/Withdrawals/Repeats

✔ Address time-to-degree by advising which courses need to be taken immediately and which can be taken later for proper progression.

✔ Steer students into courses for which they are prepared (e.g., avoid high D/F/W courses for those who may not be prepared).

✔ Inform students about possible pitfalls of changing majors (e.g., time-to-degree; tuition surcharge; financial implications).

✔ Discuss consequences of withdrawing (from a single course and/or the University) and repeating a course; help them to understand the consequences (e.g., time-to-degree; tuition surcharge; financial implications; unique consequences per college/department). Send emails regarding these topics as appropriate.

✔ Consider placing a hold before students can withdraw from a course (currently being done by Athletic Academic Center).

General

✔ Review and reference Advisor Manual (located on Banner Self-Service Advisor Tab and the Academic Affairs website).

✔ Provide major and General Education advising in one advising session so that students do not need to make multiple advising appointments or see different advisors.

✔ Discuss unsatisfactory mid-term grade notifications, semester warning alerts, implications of academic probation, and refer to academic support resources (refer to Advisor Manual).

✔ Discuss undergraduate research opportunities, study abroad, internships, and other forms of experiential learning.

✔ Encourage engagement in the University and local community (e.g., clubs, student government, recreation, community service).

✔ Demonstrate that you care about the students’ academic success and be patient.

✔ Communicate regularly with students through emails about appointments and appointment preparation (this can be automated through Niner Advisor).

✔ Ensure that students have access to updated curriculum worksheets and information on departmental websites.

✔ Utilize departmental worksheets for major and General Education requirements.

✔ Participate in advising workshops for faculty, provided by the department/college as well as the University.

✔ Seek an advisor mentor, a more experienced faculty/staff mentor, in your department that you can go to with advising questions or concerns.

✔ Utilize developmental advising practices (refer to Advisor Manual).

✔ Evaluate your advising and make improvements by seeking students’ input through appointment evaluations.
Best Practices: Advising New Students (Freshmen and Transfers)

✓ Adhere to the previous section “Best Practices: Advising in General.”
✓ Review TR/AP/IB credit to ensure students have not repeated credit for equivalent coursework they are transferring in either as a freshman or transfer.
✓ Clarify degree requirements as outlined in the Academic Plan of Study for the degree.
✓ Educate students about course scheduling (e.g. process, timeline, sequencing).
✓ Discuss course load (number of courses; type of courses), sequencing, and implications. Note: students on probation should not necessarily take fewer courses.
✓ Discuss “Major fit” in relation to skills, interests and abilities.
✓ Discuss decision-making process in relation to major and career exploration, and make appropriate referrals to facilitate students’ decision-making process.
✓ Discuss students’ responsibilities in advising such as utilizing CAPP & reading emails.

Best Practices: Advising Upper-Class Students

✓ Adhere to the previous section “Best Practices: Advising in General.”
✓ Review entire transcript to ensure students have not repeated credit for equivalent coursework. This includes courses repeated at UNC Charlotte and TR/AP/IB credit (together with transient study).
✓ Continue to discuss “Major fit” in relation to skills, interests and abilities.
✓ Continue to make appropriate referrals in relation to career exploration and career development.
✓ Assess students’ progression toward degree.
✓ Have students leave advising appointment with a plan to enroll in the exact courses needed to graduate.
✓ Encourage students to consider Summer School as a method for staying on track.
✓ Discuss plan for finishing before reaching 140 attempted hours (tuition surcharge).
✓ Conduct graduation clearance checks prior to the end of the drop/add period.