

## The Academic Advising Relationship: Principles and Practices

### *Guiding Principles for Advisers*

1. **Get to know your advisees.** Learn about their academic histories, areas of strength or weakness, and intellectual and extracurricular passions. Encourage advisees to speak honestly about their interests, abilities, and goals.
2. **Be familiar with the University's general education requirements and convey the purpose of a liberal arts curriculum.** Encourage advisees to study what they love and to explore a wide range of disciplines, in addition to fulfilling requirements. Remind advisees that their major need not determine their career options.
3. **Be accessible, and a gateway to other resources.** Make sure advisees know how to reach you during office hours and by email. Advisers are not expected to have an answer for every question but to direct advisees to the appropriate University resource.
4. **Refer students in difficulty to academic services.** Encourage students to make use of academic support resources, including meetings with their director of studies or dean.

### *Guiding Principles for Advisees*

1. **Help your adviser get to know you.** Reflect on your interests, experiences, and goals, and be frank about your plans, concerns, and hopes. Update your adviser on your academic experiences and any new or changing interests.
2. **Prepare for advising meetings.** Read through the *Course Offerings*, familiarize yourself with University requirements, and bring any necessary forms or planning worksheets.
3. **Take initiative and get connected.** Get to know your instructors and build a web of connections to academic advising and support resources. Talk with peer academic advisers, attend workshops at the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning, and get to know your college dean and director of studies. If you encounter difficulty, ask for help immediately.
4. **Take responsibility for making informed choices.** Make time to learn about a range of departments and opportunities by attending departmental Open Houses and the information sessions offered by such offices as Study Abroad, Health Professions, and Fellowships Advising. Attend residential college dinners, Advising Fairs, and Major Choices programs.

## The Advising Relationship in Practice: Frequently Asked Questions

**How often are academic advisers and freshman advisees expected to meet?** The first required meeting is during Freshman Orientation, when advisers meet as a group with their advisees, and general introductions are made. The following day, each advisee will have an individual, 30-minute appointment with his or her adviser at Registration. The next formal meetings are in November, during course selection for the spring semester, and in April, during fall course selection.

**When are additional meetings appropriate?** During the first two weeks of the semester, advisees may request follow-up meetings to discuss placement and course drops and adds. Advisees are encouraged to contact academic advisers at any point during the semester, especially if there are changing interests or any signs of difficulty. The sooner advisees ask for help, the more options they have available to them.

**Can an advisee request an adviser from a particular department?** No. While every attempt is made to pair a student with a faculty adviser in his or her general area of interest (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences), all advisers are trained and trusted to assist advisees in making decisions about distribution requirements, workload, departmental prerequisites, and placement. The role of the adviser is to give general advice and refer his or her advisees to the many resources on campus. Advisees are expected to seek out more specific guidance about their departments of interest by taking courses and attending departmental open houses.

**What role does the academic adviser have in the Residential College?** All advisers become Faculty Fellows of a residential college and have meal privileges in the Dining Hall, in order to facilitate informal meetings with advisees. During the first two weeks of the semester, advisers are sometimes available to meet with students in the Dining Hall over lunch or dinner, where students can stop by to get drop/add forms signed. Advisees are encouraged to invite academic advisers to meals.

**Are academic advisers the only persons who can approve dropping or adding courses?** The adviser should be the first person consulted on an academic change. But if the adviser is not available, or has a question about whether a course change is appropriate, the dean or director of studies can approve course changes.

**Are e-mail approvals of course changes an acceptable practice?** If the change is relatively minor and can be explained fully in an email message, an adviser may approve it by email. Advisees should then print out the email and attach it to the course change form in lieu of a signature. But for significant or multiple changes, especially those that might adversely affect a student's progress toward degree (e.g., dropping a language course), advisees should expect to meet with their adviser or dean or director of studies.

**Do academic advisers have access to their advisee's grades?** Yes. Advisers may view their advisees' student records, including test scores, AP units, and grades. Midterm grades are sent to advisers directly from the Registrar's office.

**Is my academic adviser involved in granting paper extensions or exam postponements?** No. Students encountering difficulty in meeting course deadlines should speak directly to course instructors. If advisees are unsure about whether a request is appropriate, or how to approach an instructor, they should consult the college dean or director of studies.

**Who are the academic advisers?** Academic advisers are faculty members who enjoy getting to know students outside the classroom and beyond their academic departments. They serve for a full academic year and advise both freshmen and sophomores.

**What is the role of a peer academic adviser?** A peer academic adviser offers advice and shares experience from his or her perspective as a successful member of the senior class (Class of 2010). They offer advice around a full range of issues: sensible workloads, their experience of courses and their chosen academic concentration, study strategies and resources, the nature of junior and senior independent work, and internship experiences. They will be available at registration, advising fairs, and by email. As upper-class students, they can take occasional meals in the residential college as well.

## ACADEMIC ADVISING CHECKLIST (for A.B. students)

- Prepare for Course Registration
  - Request that all your IB, AP, and A-Level scores be reported to Princeton
  - Read the *Freshman Academic Guide*
  - Take the appropriate placement exams
  
- Prepare for your first conversation with your adviser
  - Read through the *Course Offerings* on the web
  - Attend relevant Orientation events – Health Professions, Advanced Placement, Lewis Center for the Arts, Integrated Science, department open houses, & more
  - Attend your residential college Advising Fair on Monday evening to talk with peer academic advisers from a range of departments
  
- Consider how and when you plan to fulfill the following:
  - Writing requirement (are you assigned to the fall or spring?)
  - Language requirement
  - Distribution requirements
  
- In selecting your four courses, strive for a reasonable and varied workload. Enroll in courses with a variety of different kinds of graded assignments: papers, examinations, labs, presentations, and projects. For example, avoid choosing four courses where most of the grade is based on four long research papers due on Dean's Date. Also, you should enroll in four courses from four different departments.
  
- Make sure you schedule courses at hours and times that will work for you. Choose courses based on your interest in the subject, not on times they meet. If you encounter a conflict between extracurricular activities and academics, discuss options with your adviser or director of studies.
  
- Look for courses to help you explore disciplines, fulfill departmental prerequisites, and decide on an area of concentration. Visit the Major Choices website (<http://majorchoices.princeton.edu>) for links to departmental websites and student perspectives on their majors.