



Center for Teaching and Learning: Teaching Tip



Advisor Essentials

Potential Advisor Roles:

- Liaison – Identify campus support services (here is a Google Doc with a list of resources)
- Teacher – Help students explore interests, values, and purpose; make connections between university and future goals; collaborative research or creative projects; develop study skills
- Mentor/Counselor – Be a source for advice or counsel beyond academics; help to establish priorities; etc.
- Long-Term University Representative – Be the one consistent contact throughout the advisee's university career.
- Resource Person – offer guidance on policies, procedures, general education & program requirements, extra-curricular, travel abroad, internships, graduate school, resume writing, etc.
- Culture Agent – socialize students to university expectations, standards of the profession, and advisor-advisee relationship.

Crucial to Know:

- Have a thorough understanding of graduation requirements including general education, university, and program.
- Be able to communicate how general education is essential to developing students as life-long learners.
- Help to acculturate students to the goals of university education.
- Most departments have their own checklists which they fill out for their advisees.
- With integration, we will be advising students under the new program who matriculate in fall 2023, students who will decide to adopt the new program, and students who will want to retain their current program. For students who matriculate before fall 2023, we will need to help them make choices.
- Students enroll in courses each semester based upon a schedule established by the University (several factors including credits earned, athletics, honors, etc. affect the timing).
- At least at the Bloomsburg campus, [Academic Advisement](#) works with undeclared students.

Advising Tips:

- Seek out advisees; do not wait for them to come see you.
- Banner places holds on advisees automatically, which then must be released by the advisor.
- Do not expect a one-and-done conversation about requirements, opportunities, etc.
- Avoid dictating requirements; choice is crucial to developing autonomy.
- Set time limits to one-on-one meetings.
- Be willing to admit you do not have the answer and you will discover it.
- Group advisees into class year or status in major and hold group sessions to disseminate basic information, when serving as a resource person or culture agent.

- Create an advisee group organization in Brightspace.
- Develop an **"Advising Syllabus"** that outlines advisor and advisee expectations and responsibilities. In a class with majors, spend a few minutes periodically to talk about career options, internship opportunities, study abroad, etc.

Potential Goals with All Advisees:

- Before the semester begins, consider reviewing students' schedules to determine if they are making progress on their course goals.
- Never rely upon students' recollections; review their official transcripts.
- If you fill out a curricular check sheet for your advisees, after drop/add ends (presently seven days after the start of classes), begin updating these in small numbers in preparation to advise them for future semesters.
- Encourage students to bring their updated advising folder/portfolio to any meeting.
- Some departments require ePortfolios, a collection of student work and reflections, that they create within Brightspace. Review periodically with students.
- Encourage students to take responsibility by scheduling appointments in a timely manner. Yet a friendly reminder two and four weeks before scheduling begins might increase response rates to scheduling appointments with you.
- To make the department curricular check sheets a learning experience, have the advisee update the check sheet while in your presence. This might create teaching moments and help the student take ownership of the process.
- In consultation with the student, project future course loads given general education and program requirements.
- Discuss regularly extra-curricular, travel abroad, internship opportunities far in advance.

Document the Effectiveness of your Advising for Yearly Evaluations:

- Describe the strategies that you employ to advise.
 - If you have group meetings, end the session with a brief *anonymous* evaluation using Google or Office 365 Forms
 - With Google and Office 365 Forms you can survey anonymously one-on-one advisement sessions.
 - Provide your "Advisement Syllabus."
 - Provide documentation: Advisement Syllabus, letters/emails that you send out to students (with names removed), thank you notes, etc.
 - Discuss your advising techniques with your Department Chair and Evaluation Committee.
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Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania General Education

In Fall 2023, the new General Education comes into effect. Visit [My CommonwealthU](#) for links to resources for registration, class lists, Banner, crosswalks or course equivalencies between legacy courses and the Commonwealth courses.

[Commonwealth University General Education \(for Students Enrolled Fall 2023+\)](#)

[Bloomsburg University's General Education](#)

[Lock Haven University's General Education](#)

[Mansfield University's General Education](#)

Useful Off-Campus Resource:

- The [National Academic Advising Association](#) offers a number of resources, especially in the Clearing House, that helps faculty contemplate their roles as advisors.
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Meeting a New Advisee?

- Ask students to share a bit about themselves, what they call home, interests, etc.
- Discuss the advising relationship including expectations on both sides.
- Discuss with new advisees their goals? Motivations? Perceived strengths and weaknesses?
- Make them aware of the variety of campus services.
- Encourage them to explore careers and maintain an advising and an academic portfolio (best work, notable learning experiences, [career-ready skills](#) being developed, internships, etc.)
- Discuss skills and attributes that will be developed in the program and why they are important to the major.

Some Common Mistakes in Graduation Checks

- With the transition to Banner, we will lose access to our legacy systems at BU, LH, and Mansfield.
 - Failed courses do not count towards graduation or credits earned. When the course is listed in unofficial transcripts and course history, this can confuse advisors and advisees.
 - With the adoption of the new Commonwealth University curriculum, students will have a choice between adopting the new general education and/or program requirements or stick with the legacy general education and/or program. This will require patience and vigilance to help students make a choice that is best for them.
 - **BU Only: General Education Points** are distinctive from credits earned. [General Education Points](#) are assigned to courses across ten goals though the course may be worth 1, 2, or 3 credits. For example, History 270, Hollywood and History, is a 3-credit course that can count towards the total 120 minimum to graduate, but it earns 2 GEPs (Graduate Education Points) in Analytical & Quantitative and 1 GEP in Arts & Humanities.
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Useful Resources, Policies and Procedures

This [google doc](#) is a list of resources that you might share with students and offers a list of policies and procedures found on the websites of each campus. The Center for Teaching and Learning will strive to update it before the beginning of each semester and when we are made aware of changes.
