Core Competencies for Academic Advising at UW-Madison
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What is academic advising?

Academic advising at UW-Madison is a process where students partner with professionally prepared staff and faculty to develop educational and post college plans.

How should these competencies be used?

These competency statements were developed to provide guidance for hiring, training, professional development, and performance review of individuals with academic advising responsibilities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

These statements are intended to reflect a core set of competencies common across schools, colleges and advising units at UW-Madison. They are articulated with the understanding that individual advising units may interpret the competencies somewhat differently and can add additional competencies depending on the advisor’s role and the student population(s) with whom the advisor works.

What do advisors need to be professionally prepared for the role?

1. Knowledge of undergraduate students
   For example:
   a. Know student development, career development, and student learning theories
   b. Understand demographic characteristics of UW-Madison students
   c. Understand the unique characteristics of specific student populations (first-generation, minorities, international, returning adults, transfers, etc.)
   d. Are familiar with generational characteristics and trends

2. Understanding of higher education in general and UW-Madison in particular
   For example:
   a. Are familiar with the purpose and goals of higher education
   b. Are aware of equity, access, and achievement issues in higher education and at UW-Madison
   c. Understand the “Wisconsin Idea” and the “Wisconsin Experience”
   d. Are familiar with the Essential Learning Outcomes from “Liberal Education – America's Promise” (LEAP)

3. Knowledge of academic disciplines, requirements, policies and options
   For example:
   a. Have a fundamental understanding of the academic discipline(s) in which advising takes place
   b. Help students make the connections between requirements and educational/disciplinary objectives
   c. Know degree and major requirements
d. Understand program admission requirements and processes  
e. Know academic policies, procedures, deadlines

4. **Familiarity with the advising profession**  
   *For example:*  
   a. Understand the role of advising in undergraduate education  
   b. Understand the structure of academic and career advising at UW-Madison  
   c. Are familiar with campus and national advising trends

5. **Demonstration of ethical advising practice**  
   *For example:*  
   a. Effectively apply FERPA guidelines and confidentiality protocol  
   b. Understand professional liability and legal issues in advising  
   c. Exhibit appropriate boundaries with students

6. **Effective use of campus resources**  
   *For example:*  
   a. Understand, utilize, and collaborate with campus units such as academic dean’s offices, Office of the Registrar, Office of Student Financial Aid, etc.  
   b. Appropriately refer students to academic and learning support resources  
   c. Are familiar with enrichment, leadership and co-curricular options  
   d. Appropriately refer students to mental and physical health resources

7. **Effective use of career resources**  
   *For example:*  
   a. Understand the career development process  
   b. Are able to begin a career conversation with students  
   c. Appropriately refer students to career advising resources on campus  
   d. Help students make the connection between their educational experience and post-graduation options

8. **Cultural competency**  
   *For example:*  
   a. Engage in self-reflection  
   b. Are aware that cultural identities (nationality, race, social class, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexual orientation, etc.) influence thinking and behavior  
   c. Exhibit the relational skills to advise effectively across differences

9. **Communication skills**  
   *For example:*  
   a. Employ active listening techniques  
   b. Ask effective questions  
   c. Encourage student reflection
d. Demonstrate effective presentation skills
e. Exhibit effective written and email communication
f. Communicate effectively across cultural differences

10. Interpersonal skills
   For example:
   a. Exhibit multicultural competence
   b. Establish rapport
   c. Establish appropriate boundaries
   d. Balance challenge and support with students
e. Make appropriate and effective referrals
f. Collaborate effectively with colleagues
g. Empower students to develop educational and career planning skills

11. Effective use of advising technologies and tools
    Including the following systems/tools:
    a. Undergraduate Catalog
    b. Student record systems
c. Enrollment tools
d. Effective documentation

12. Knowledge of self
    For example:
    a. Practice self-reflection and exhibits self-awareness
    b. Articulate a personal advising philosophy
c. Recognize his/her own professional strengths and limitations
d. Demonstrate a healthy work-life balance
e. Exhibit self-direction
f. Engage in ongoing professional development