

UCD Definition, Objectives and Principles of Academic Advising



Definition of Academic Advising

Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals.

Objectives of Academic Advising

1. To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals.
2. To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals.
3. To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions.
4. To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices)
5. To know what the most appropriate research opportunities are to support their educational and professional goals
6. To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goal

The principles underpinning academic advising are represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Principles of Academic Advising



1. Culture

An inclusive, positive and proactive academic advising culture will be developed in UCD. Students will be proactively approached about academic advising and will be expected to proactively participate. Important elements of this culture will be the engagement of all taught students with academic advising so that students expect and know that they are entitled to, and could benefit from, academic advising. This should help to overcome some of the barriers to students engaging with academic advising identified in the consultation.

- **Individual students' academic needs and interests will be central to the advising process** as per the objectives of academic advising. Over and above specific module queries, all students should feel that there is a member of faculty that they can approach, and to whom their educational developmental matters.
- **The development of all students is valued equally.** A positive and inclusive culture will be fostered, to extend academic advising to all UCD students.
- **Students will have a safe space in which to have developmental conversations with faculty.** The extension of academic advising to all taught students should help change the culture, where some students are reluctant to seek advising due to stigma, not wanting to bother faculty or fear of rejection. Part of the creation of this safe space for students will be the creation of an expectation that academic advising is part of the role of every member faculty. If it is the norm for all students to engage with academic advising then, hopefully students who are struggling will avail of assistance earlier.
- **Students and advisors will work in a respectful partnership.** Although academic advising is broad and happens in multiple ways including group prescriptive and developmental advising, the development of a personal relationship between the student and a dedicated academic advisor is ultimately desirable from a student perspective. This should be put in place where student-faculty ratios permit it.
- **Embedding academic advising in university systems** will help to change the culture and expectations around academic advising. Academic advising will be regular and structured. Clear information will be provided to students about how, when, and in what format they will receive academic advice and, where dedicated academic advisors are available, who their advisor is and how and when they can be contacted.

2. Student Agency

- Students will play an active role in the academic advising process. As part of the expectations of students in the advising process, students will be expected to attend meetings and engage in preparatory activities. Resources will be provided to facilitate students to embark on self-assessment, reflective goal setting and planning exercises.
- Through academic advising students will be empowered to become increasingly responsible and autonomous. The advisor will adopt a coaching and signposting role to support and enable students to solve academic issues for themselves.

3. Coherence

- Academic and professional staff will work together to ensure a holistic experience for students. Information will be organised coherently so that students are able to inform themselves on prescriptive advising matters and use their sessions with their advisors for maximum benefit for both students and advisors.
- UCD IT systems will be leveraged to maximise efficiency for advisors and students in organising and tracking advising sessions.
- It will be important for UCD IT systems to have the functionality for advisors to refer student to other services seamlessly and to track referrals.

4. High Quality

- Clear roles and expectations will be established to ensure objectivity and consistency of experience.
- Academic advising will be relevant and timely.
- The quality of academic advising will be monitored at programme level, reporting to UPB. A collaborative annual review and improvement process will be put in place drawing on available evidence and data with a strong focus on benefits for students.

5. Customised Locally

- The provision of academic advising will be shaped locally, reflecting the needs of the discipline and other local factors such as faculty-student ratios.
- Local provision will align with the principles and objectives of academic advising.
- Decisions around assigning advisors and students will be made locally and differences will need to be supported by any UCD advising IT system.

6. Faculty Supported

- Academic advising will be part of the workload model for faculty and recognised in the Faculty Development Framework.
- Faculty will be supported to deliver high quality academic advising through training, resources and clear expectations.
- Expectations for advisors and students will be clearly communicated and will establish what is academic and what is pastoral.
- A UCD IT system will be put in place to enable seamless referral of students to pastoral supports as appropriate. Processes will be automated as much as possible to save faculty time.
- An academic advising peer network or community of practice will be established to support excellence in advising, collaboration and sharing of good practice and to develop UCD systems and processes.
- Decisions around assigning advisors will be fair, transparent and in line with UCD's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Part of the annual review of academic advising will report on the distribution of the workload of advising across genders.

Figure 2: Summary of Principles of Academic Advising

<p style="text-align: center;">CULTURE</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual students' academic needs and interests are central to the advising process. • The growth of all students is valued equally. • Students have a safe space in which to have developmental conversations with faculty. • Students and advisors work in a respectful partnership. • Academic advising is embedded in university systems. 	<p style="text-align: center;">STUDENT AGENCY</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students play an active role in the academic advising process. • Through academic advising students are empowered to become increasingly responsible and autonomous. 	<p style="text-align: center;">COHERENCE</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic and professional staff work together to ensure a holistic experience for students.
<p style="text-align: center;">HIGH QUALITY</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective • Consistent • Relevant and timely • Clear roles and standards 	<p style="text-align: center;">CUSTOMISED LOCALLY</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of academic advising will be shaped locally, reflecting the needs of the discipline and other local factors such as faculty-student ratios. 	<p style="text-align: center;">FACULTY SUPPORTED</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty are supported (training, resources, clear boundaries for what is academic and what is pastoral, referral system, advisor peer network) • Transparent • Recognised in the Faculty Development Framework • Part of workload model for faculty • Advising is distributed across genders

Figure 3: Objectives of Academic Advising

Objectives of Academic Advising

