ACADEMIC ADVISING AT USC FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Philosophy and Goals

The University of South Carolina at Columbia considers advising to be an essential part of each student's college experience. The primary purpose of academic advising is to help students to develop suitable educational plans which are compatible with their career and life goals.

Organization and Administration

At the University of South Carolina at Columbia, undergraduate advising is the responsibility of the Colleges offering undergraduate degrees. The individual Colleges may choose how they carry out this important function; Colleges may choose a system of centralized advising, decentralized advising by departmental advisors or some combination of centralized and decentralized advising. Colleges may choose whether undergraduate advising is performed by faculty, professional staff advisors, or some combination of faculty and professional staff advisors.

It is the responsibility of each College to identify who does advising, to describe how advising takes place in that College, and to coordinate advising information and activities within that College.

Expectations Placed on Students and Advisors

Students: The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about career goals and educational plans rests with the student. It is the responsibility of each student to understand and complete all requirements for the degree. The student, in consultation with the advisor, will construct a program of studies that meets all departmental, Collegiate, and University requirements for graduation.

The advisor’s written approval of the student’s program each semester is a prerequisite for registration. In cases of disagreement between the advisor and the student, the student has the recourse of appealing to the appropriate person designated by the College.

The formal advising period is only one part of the total advising process. The student should endeavor to consult the advisor outside of this period on matters other than course requirements and scheduling, such as career decisions, plans for graduate or professional school, etc.
Advisors: The advisor serves as a resource for the student and should endeavor to assist the student to build a program of studies consistent with the student's interests and educational goals, within the framework of applicable academic regulations. The advisor should monitor the student's progress toward achievement of the desired degree. Advisors should familiarize themselves with the requirements and regulations of their degree program.

Advisors should remind students of the recourse available to them in case of disputes between the advisor and the student. Advisors should consult their College Office if they have questions concerning Collegiate or University regulations.

Finally, advisors should be sensitive to any special needs or concerns that a student may have, and should familiarize themselves with the support services on campus to which such students might be referred.

Evaluation of Advising

The University of South Carolina at Columbia is committed to a continuing evaluation of its advising process.
STUDENT CHECKLIST FOR ADVISING

PREPARATION

*Know your advisor's name and department.

*Review the curriculum of your major program. The University Bulletin, your College's advising guidelines, and your departmental handbook or sequence sheet are all good sources of information.

*Be familiar with the Master Schedule. Know what course numbers, section numbers, schedule codes, session codes are. Write down the dates for both the advising and registration periods.

*Develop a written list of questions to ask your advisor. This will help you remember the important points you want to cover with your advisor.

*Schedule an appointment with your advisor. Some advisors ask you to put your name on a sign-up sheet; others prefer you to schedule the appointment through the departmental secretary. You should ask at the front office of your advisor's department or your College office.

THE ADVISEMENT APPOINTMENT

*Be on time for your appointment.

*Help your advisor help you. If you're having trouble with a specific course or all of your courses, be prepared to discuss this matter. Be open to your advisor's suggestions for using the Academic Skills Center, Writing Center, Math Lab, etc.

*If you're undecided about your major or you're having second thoughts about the major you're currently in, ask your advisor's opinion. Your advisor can't make your decision for you, but he or she can suggest possibilities and new perspectives, and can refer you to other sources of help and information.

*Have an idea about which courses you would like to take the upcoming semester, and listen carefully to your advisor's recommendations. Familiarize yourself with prerequisites for the courses you wish to take. Be sure you've met prerequisites for your courses; the computer does not check prerequisites.

*Ask questions about your progress toward meeting general education requirements, major prerequisites, major and minor course sequences, and other course requirements for your degree. Review your progress toward graduation.
If you are in a College or major which has an upper/lower division structure, review with your advisor the requirements for entry to upper division. Develop a plan to satisfy any remaining requirements.

You may want to discuss possible career/graduate school plans with your advisor. This will become more important as you advance toward graduation. Be aware that the Career Center can offer you invaluable help in this aspect of your college career.

Be willing to make another appointment after the advising period is over if you have some long term concerns and questions. If you want to explore the idea of graduate school with your advisor, he or she may ask you to schedule another appointment to discuss this issue. Remember that advisors typically have a number of other students to advise, teaching and research responsibilities, committee work, etc.

Be aware that advising should change somewhat as you progress through your college career. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors will have greater emphasis on the major, minor or cognate requirements, and career/graduate school plans, while advising for freshmen will typically emphasize general education requirements and choice of major.

Be sure that you leave with a completed advisement form with your advisor's signature. Keep a copy in a safe place.

FOLLOW-UP

Bring your signed advisement form to the office designated by your Dean. The computer will not allow you to register unless this office enters an indicator on the computer system.

Use the TIPS worksheet in the Master Schedule to plan your schedule.

Use TIPS to register at or within 72 hours after your appointed time. (Call TIPS to find out your registration date and time.) Always write down your schedule before you terminate your TIPS registration call.

Let your advisor know if you are unable to register for any of the courses or alternates indicated on your advisement form.

Verify your schedule before the next semester's classes begin.

REMEMBER: The final responsibility of a successful college career belongs to YOU the student.
YOU are responsible for making decisions about your educational plans and career goals, and for meeting the requirements for your degree. Your advisor, your Major Department Office, your Dean's Office, the Career Center are all resources for you to use to provide you with additional information, to help you prevent and resolve difficulties, to give you insight into possible alternatives, and to suggest new opportunities.
ADVISOR CHECKLIST

PREPARATION

*Be sure that your official office hours are posted prominently on your office door and listed on each course syllabus. A record of your posted office hours should also be in the departmental office.

*If you are unable to keep office hours on a specific date, please leave a written note on your office door, announce in class, and inform the departmental office.

*Participate in defining how your department/College assigns advisers; conducts senior and graduation checks; distributes advisement materials such as preprinted advisement forms and student records; handles student advisement appointments (through sign-up sheets, the departmental secretary, or other means).

*Before the advisement period begins, be sure to post a schedule of available appointment times for advisement on your office door. Leave space for student telephone numbers so that students may be contacted if schedules change.

*Review the University Bulletin, the Master Schedule of classes, the advising handbook of the College or department, and any updated materials such as a new minor booklet, policy changes implemented by the department, College, or University.

*Be able to apply the progression requirements in your College and department and relate to prerequisites in other departments.

*Review the academic records of advisees.

THE ADVISEMENT APPOINTMENT

Be sure that you have at hand:

*A series of catalogs, since students claim the one under which they entered

*A current Master Schedule

*An advisor handbook, if available, from your department or College

*An advisement form for each student

*Departmental or sequence progression sheets

*Senior check forms
* **CUE episodes**

Also have available,

* **Special permission forms**

* **Transfer credit evaluation forms**

* **Graduation check forms**

* **Waiver forms**

* **Petition forms**

With the student as an active participant,

* **Review the record for problem areas that require immediate attention.**

* **Review the student's academic plan.**

* **Review the progress being made; update folder if necessary.**

* **Discuss potential academic difficulties and their possible remedies.**

* **Review progression and graduation requirements.**

* **Refer the student to other University resources if appropriate, such as:**
  > Career Center
  > Academic Skills Center
  > Financial Aid Office
  > Counseling and Human Development Center.

* **With prepared input from the student:**
  > **Discuss and approve future course selections.**
  > **Determine and approve any minor or cognate selections.**

* **As appropriate, be sure to discuss:**
  > **The student's career and/or graduate school plans.**
  > **The student's involvement in other campus activities.**
  > **Any additional concerns the student may have.**

* **Complete the appointment by:**
  > **Informing the student of the need to register and to come back during the next regular advising period.**
  > **Informing the student of regular office hours should more discussion be desirable.**
FOLLOW-UP

*Check the folder to be sure that all information is accurate and complete.

*Include written notes about any special conditions or discussions relevant to future sessions with the student.

*Be sure the folder is returned to regular storage so that it is available in the future.