

Academic Advising in the School of Science

Office of Academic Advising and Support

Updated May 7, 2012

(Approved in School Administrative Committee Meeting on May 10, 2012)

1. Rationale

Effective academic advising is the key to promote student learning and satisfaction, particularly during the early stages of a student's time at University. On August 1, 2011, the School established the *Office of Academic Advising and Support* (理學院學務輔導辦公室) (hereafter refer to as the Advising Office) to provide advice and support to students on the choice of majors, course selection and requirements, and possible major-minor combination suiting their interests, abilities, and career aspirations. The main feature of the School's academic advising system is that it is based upon one-to-one meetings throughout the student's first year. The Advising Office will work with faculty members from departments/division to provide students with academic advice and support.

2. Academic advising model

Students have different advising needs in different stages. We adopt a **student-based two-phase model** to better address their needs. The dividing point is the time when students choose their major programs. The two phases involved are:

Phase 1 (before students choose their major programs) – Academic advising will be provided by a team of faculties and professional staffs of the Advising Office. The advantage of centralizing advising activities to the Advising Office, as compared to distributing them to individual division/department, is that the Advising Office can provide a wider vision across different programs and schools. This is especially important if students plan to take second major and minor programs. Besides, staffs of the Advising Office will work with student peers to build up a student support network as a mean to enrich their learning experience. The success of this support network is extremely instrumental in understanding students' needs and in identifying problems in the earliest stage.

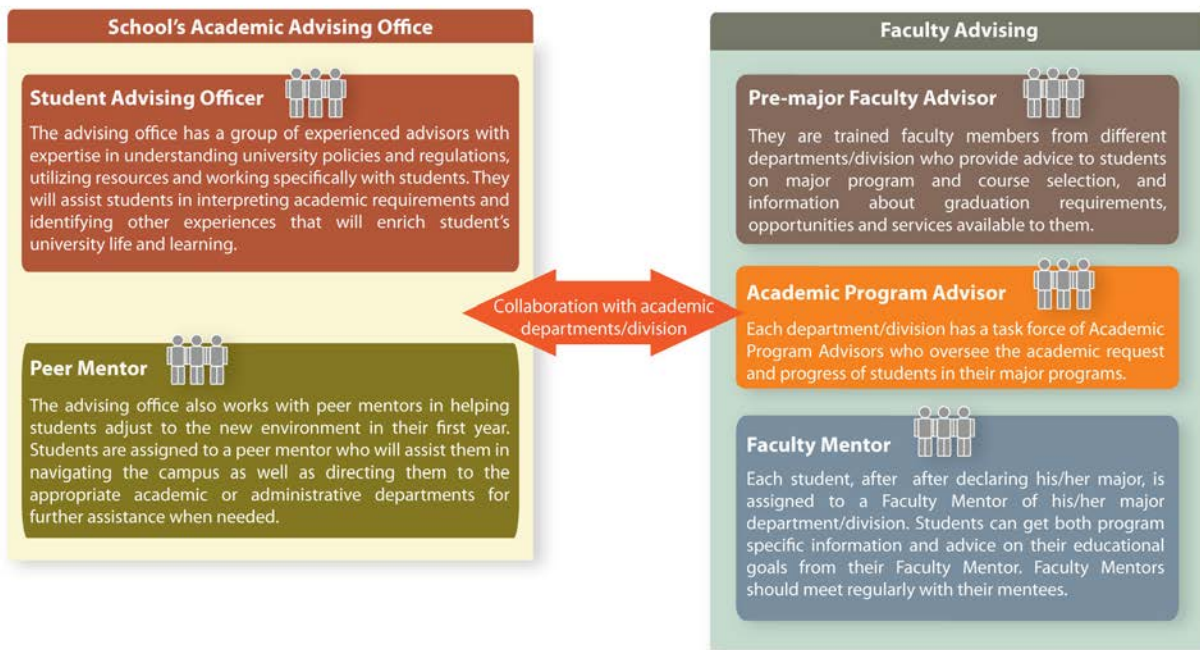
Phase 2 (after students choose their major programs) – Advising activities will mainly be distributed to their respective divisions/departments which can provide more program-oriented advice. The Advising Office will play a supportive role to enrich students' learning experience. This is especially important because our new 4-year programs put more emphasis on co-curricular activities. With the student support network in place, the Advising Office can help promoting co- and extra-curricular activities.

3. Delivery of academic advising to students

Different groups of personnel will be involved in delivering academic advising to students in the two phases described above. It is the Science School's belief that **all faculty members should**

involve in academic advising. Consequently faculty members will be heavily involved in both phases. We also recognize that individual faculty member may have different strengths and skills in delivering academic advising. Therefore we assign different responsibilities to different groups of faculty members in the two phases.

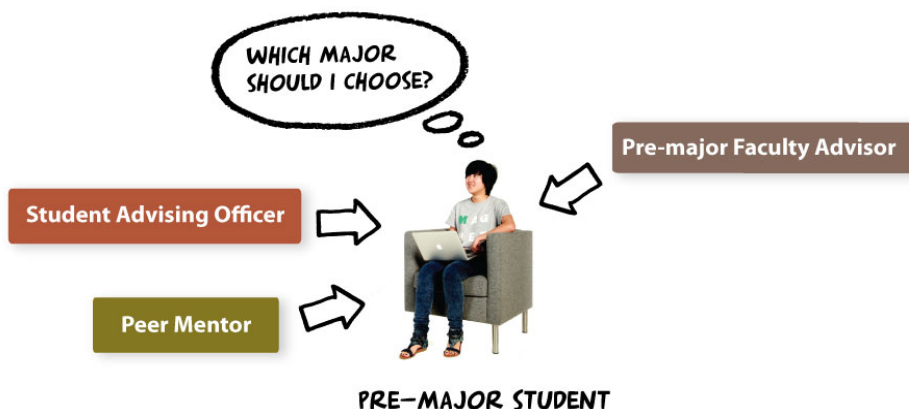
Academic Advising Delivery System in School of Science



3.1 Phase 1

Primary responsibility is in the Advising Office. Personnel in our academic advising structure will consist of:

1. Student Advising Officers
2. Peer Mentors
3. Pre-major Faculty Advisors



3.2 Phase 2

Primary responsibility is in the individual department/division. Personnel in our academic advising structure will consist of:

1. UG Program Coordinator
2. Academic Program Advisors
3. Faculty mentors

Their working relation is illustrated in the following diagram



4. Roles and Responsibilities of Different Groups

4.1 Staffs of the Advising Office (Director, Student Advising Manager/Officers)

The Advising Office has the overall coordinating responsibility and the director of the office, who is also a faculty, will have overall responsibility for liaising with Heads of Departments/Divisions and Faculty Advisors will monitor the operation of the advising system within the School and to facilitate the sharing of good practice between departments/divisions. Under the director, there is a Student Advising Manager and a group of Student Advising Officers. They are front line staffs who work with students and peer mentors.

A common set of duties and responsibilities of student advising manager/officers can include

- Advise students about academic requirements and selection of courses
- Disseminate information on institutional policies, regulations and procedures
- Know graduation requirements
- Assist students with career planning
- Monitor student registration activities and recommend solutions to academic difficulties
- Maintain systematic and frequent contact with advisees
- Maintain records of interactions with students
- Serve as a liaison and foster intentional relationships with other advisors, offices, colleges, and departments.

- Refer students to the appropriate specialized staffs for such issues as comprehensive counseling, financial assistance, study abroad, etc.
- Participate in the development, implementation, review, presentation, and revision of orientations for the freshmen
- Stay abreast of changing institutional information including admissions requirements, new programs, curriculum and course changes, deadlines, important dates, expanding facilities, updates in institutional-wide initiatives and transfer requirements
- Develop advising materials and presentations to support individual and group student sessions.

4.2 Peer Mentors

The Advising Office recruits, trains, and coordinates senior students as Peer Mentors to assist students in mastering their course content, sharpening their testing skills, and maximizing their potential for academic achievement. The Advising Office together with Peer Mentors will also help students to establish a sense of community by providing and exploring opportunities for social interaction and student participation in community life and governance.

The general roles and responsibilities of Peer Mentors include

- Have a clear understanding of all University policies, including the University Code of Conduct and abide by them.
- Attend all training sessions organized by the Office of Academic Advising and Support
- Be familiar with and provide referrals to campus resources and support services.
- Help organize study groups and mentor students on study skills, time management and other academic success concerns.
- Perform duties as assigned by the Office of Academic Advising and Support
- Assist in reaching out to “high risk” students and encourage them to contact their academic advisor. Peer Mentors are not trained in any one particular field. Rather, they are students who can listen supportively to students’ issues, offer sound advice and refer students to the appropriate campus offices for further assistance.

4.3 Pre-major Faculty Advisors

Each department/division should designate a small group of faculties as Pre-major Faculty Advisors. They will work as a group under the coordination of the Advising Office to provide academic advising to students before they choose their major program. It will be a big advantage if they will be teaching Science Foundation courses, but this is not an absolute requirement. Also, Pre-major Faculty Advisors should be appointed/re-appointed on a regular basis.

Their responsibilities to the Advising Office include

- Provide support to Student Advising Officers on matters related to academic programs and courses.
- Meet with Student Advising Officers to discuss and review any concern arises during advising
- Be the first contact point between the Advising Office and departments/divisions

In return the Advising Office should provide necessary trainings and logistic support. Awarding outstanding Academic Program Advisors is under consideration.

Their responsibilities to students include

- Run inductions on major programs for new students.
- Provide consultation on major programs and year one science courses.
- Oversee students' academic performance.
- Be the academic advisors of students admitted directly to programs.

Note: Advice given by Pre-major Faculty Advisors should not be limited to their programs only, and they should not be directly responsible for recruiting major students.

4.4 Academic Program Advisors and the Academic Advising Task Force

Each department/division should set up an Academic Advising Task Force to work with the UG Program Coordinator to oversee all academic issues arising from their major students. Members of the Academic Advising Task Force are Academic Program Advisors. They will be authorized through the course registration system to approve/disapprove exceptions during course registration. One possible division of labor is to assign one Academic Program Advisor to students of different programs and different years.

Responsibilities of Academic Program Advisors include

- Approve/Disapprove students' special request made through the course registration system during course registration, such as credit overload.
- To meet with students with unsatisfactory academic progress (UAP) and make appropriate recommendations to the UG Program Coordinator, such as reducing credit load.
- In possible dismissal cases, make collective recommendation to the Dean of Science after consulting with students' Faculty Mentors.

In addition, the Task Force should be responsible for implementing and overseeing the Faculty Mentorship system in its department/division.

Note: Since the Academic Advising Task Force and Academic Program Advisors are directly under their respective department/division, individual departments/division can tailor their functions and duties accordingly.

4.5 Faculty Mentors

To conform with the Science School's believe that all faculty members should participate in student advising activities, we suggest that, except for those who have been designated as Pre-major Faculty Advisors, all faculties be assigned as faculty mentors. Departments/division should assign a small group of students enrolled in their major programs to each faculty mentor. A student should be assigned to the same mentor until he/she graduates in order to ensure continuity. The Faculty Mentor's name should appear in the SIS record of his/her mentees to make sure that he/she can access mentees' academic records and transcripts easily.

Roles and responsibilities of Faculty Mentors include

- Meet individually with his/her mentees regularly[§] and keep a complete record for each mentee.
- Concern mentee's academic status, satisfaction, educational goal and career prospect.
- Give reference and suggestions to the department/division's Academic Advising Task Force if their mentees are involved in academic probation and/or dismissal.
- May refer students to their respective UG program coordinator and Academic Program Advisors for specific advice concerning academic regulation/requirements, and the Advising Office for co-curricular matters.

[§] First meeting between a Faculty Mentor and mentee should take place in the first semester after the student has registered a major program. Individual programs may require students to get the Faculty Mentor's signature in order to complete their registration in the major program. Subsequent meetings should be arranged once or twice per semester. During the meeting, a Faculty Mentor should

- Check the mentee's academic record in SIS for academic warnings, if any.
- Discuss with the mentee his/her plan in choosing courses, tracks/options, minor programs etc. in subsequent years.
- Discuss, and if necessary encourage the mentee to start thinking about career and corresponding preparations.

If a Faculty Mentor finds that a mentee has academic warnings and does not show up for meetings, he/she should alert the UG Program Coordinator, who may refer the case to the Advising Office for possible follow-up.

Note: Since Faculty Mentors are directly under their respective department/division, individual departments/division can tailor their functions and duties accordingly.

5. Current status of The Office of Academic Advising and Support (理學院學務輔導辦公室)

Location:

Permanent office will be ready in Aug 2012: Room 1041-1043 (next to coffee shop)

Interim office: Room 5492 and 5494 (Lift 25-26)

Website:

<http://advise.science.ust.hk>

Staffs:

Director (學務輔導辦公室主任)	Prof. P. W. Leung
Student Advising Manager (學務輔導經理)	Miss Tina Ko
Student Advising Officer (學務輔導主任)	Miss Su Ngai (Vacant)
Assistant Student Advising Officer (助理學務輔導主任)	Miss Yee Lai
Clerk	Ms Liza Mung

Science School Faculty Mentor's Meeting Record

Mentor's name		Dept/Div	
Mentee's name		Student ID	

Notes to Faculty Mentor:

1. Keep one file for each student mentee in your computer. For privacy reason, do not show this file in its entirety to anyone except the mentee.
2. Duplicate the following table for each subsequent meeting.

First Meeting					
Date		Current Program/Option		Current CGA	
Meeting notes, recommendation, etc					
Attachment (put down location and file names)					
Follow-up actions / referrals					

Second Meeting					
Date		Current Program/Option		Current CGA	
Meeting notes, recommendation, etc					
Attachment (put down location and file names)					
Follow-up actions / referrals					