FALL 2020 ACADEMIC ADVISING GUIDANCE

Last updated August, 7, 2020

Iowa State University’s Academic Advisers play a critical role in fostering student success and supporting our student retention efforts. As the campus reopens this fall, we encourage advisers and departments to develop working procedures that will preserve the important role that advisers play while ensuring that our staff and students operate in a manner that reduces the risk posed by COVID-19.

FALL OPERATING GUIDELINES

1. **What general operating procedures should advising offices follow this fall?**

   All adviser-student meetings should only occur via appointment. We ask that colleges require students to make appointments for both virtual and in-person meetings. Establishing this expectation will help reduce in-person traffic in reception areas. An exception to this requirement may be made in cases where a unit elects to establish virtual drop-in rooms during set time periods. Some colleges are encouraging advisers to work on campus this fall to model safe behaviors to students and to demonstrate that we are all in this together.

   In terms of COVID-related protection measures, because advising offices may experience some student walk-in traffic, reception areas should be separated from high traffic areas with plexi-glass partitions. In addition, hand sanitizer should be available in reception areas.

2. **Should advisers meet face-to-face with students?**

   Our current campus recommendations permit both virtual and face-to-face meetings. However, due to the small size of most advising offices, it will not be possible to hold face-to-face meetings while maintaining adequate physical distancing. It is important to recognize that both advisers and students have reported that the virtual advising services offered this past spring met student needs. In-person meetings may only be held if a meeting room offers sufficient space for physical distancing, there are sufficient cleaning procedures in place, and the adviser is comfortable with face-to-face meetings.

3. **What can advisers do to encourage students to set up virtual appointments?**

   Advisers may wish to reach out to newly enrolled students and provide instructions on how students may set up an advising appointment. Students should also be encouraged to input a phone number where they can be contacted in case a virtual connection cannot be established and the meeting needs to occur by phone.
4. What procedures should I follow if a student shows up to an appointment and they are not wearing a mask?

The Dean of Students Office has issued Guidance for Supporting Community Expectations During COVID. The Guidance specifically addresses a scenario in which a student enters an advising area without a face covering to check for a meeting. The guidance suggests that:

“Staff can share with the student that, for health and safety reasons, and in alignment with university expectations, the student will need to wear a face covering in the office until otherwise advised and ask the student if they have a face covering to use. If the student does not have a face covering, the office can provide one where possible, or indicate to the student where they can obtain their own face covering, or arrange for the meeting to take place virtually.

If the student indicates that they are not required to wear a face covering for medical or health reasons as approved by Student Accessibility Services (SAS), then if meeting space available accommodates physical distancing the meeting may take place or arrange for the meeting to take place virtually.”

5. How will other academic/student support services will be delivered this fall?

As information becomes available, we will update it.

A. Academic Success Center: Please see the Fall 2020 Academic Support Services Guidance.

B. Learning Communities: Encouraging virtual meetings. Please see the Fall 2020 Academic Support Services Guidance.

C. Office of International Students and Scholars: Accepting video conferencing, in-person and phone appointments. NO WALKINS.

D. Accounts Payable: Appointments by phone only.

E. Multicultural Student Affairs: In-person, video conferencing, and phone calls.

F. Center for LGBTQIA+ Success

G. Office of Financial Aid: WebEx and Phone appointments. Front desk is open for students to drop by for quick questions.

6. What type of EAB-related training will be available this fall?

Our EAB student success staff is ready to provide trainings on a number of topics including: how to use EAB to set up appointments, conducting targeted outreach campaigns, and using the “cases” function to boost student success. Please contact Jessica Van Winkle to schedule.
7. **Will FERPA requirements impact my virtual advising meetings?**

You should conduct your virtual meetings in a closed room (i.e. do not allow partners, friends, etc. to be in the background). Encourage students participating in a virtual meeting to also be in a closed room. Pets are okay. Finally, please ensure that your advising practice, meetings, and interactions in no way divulge information about individual students.

8. **What accommodations are available for students who self-identify as being high risk?**

Those students are being asked to complete a form available on this webpage by August 16, 2020. Once students complete that form the form is routed to the student’s college. The college student services director will work with the adviser to help the student select available online courses.

9. **What resources are available for students who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?**

Testing is available at Thielen Student Health Center (TSHC) for students, faculty, staff, and employees with COVID-19 symptoms consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria. They will need to complete a pre-screening questionnaire to help determine whether they need to be tested. For those who do not meet the testing guidelines for TSHC, we hope that other testing options will be available soon through Test Iowa.

**STUDENT SUCCESS EFFORTS**

While college is a successful experience for many students, new research suggests that the COVID-19 crisis has further increased students’ anxiety and depression rates. Our academic advisers play a critical role in identifying struggling students and in connecting those students to the appropriate resources.

1. **How can I encourage my advisees to sign up for advising meetings?**

You can continue to use your normal process of setting up your advising appointments. Due to changes made in the EAB platform this summer, depending on an adviser’s availability, students will be able to schedule virtual, phone, or face-to-face appointments. All students should be encouraged to schedule appointments in advance. Where feasible, advisers may wish to create virtual drop-in times to accommodate students who need immediate service. Given that the COVID outbreak has created additional uncertainty and stress in our academic community, we encourage advisers to increase their use of EAB campaigns to encourage students to schedule appointments. We are specifically encouraging advisers to reach out to students who receive progress reports this fall. We are expanding the classes added to the progress report effort to include some key student success indicator courses in each college.
2. **What can advisers do to boost student success this fall?** Iowa State’s academic advisers play a critical role in our academic engagement and student success efforts. The Office of the Provost works in strong partnership with UAAC to supplement college-level training and technical support to ensure that our advisers have the tools they need to help our students succeed.

   A. **Team Meetings:** Because some advisers may not be on campus full-time and large in-person meetings may be reduced, we encourage advising teams to meet virtually using the Teams platform to share ideas, troubleshoot hurdles, and to coordinate common outreach strategies.

   B. **Progress Report Effort:** Instructors in our high DFW rate courses as well as our key student success indicator courses will be sending out progress reports at the 3-4-week mark to students to highlight low engagement/attendance or to signal performance issues. In order to help students troubleshoot performance problems, we strongly encourage advisers to reach out to those students who receive a progress report and to encourage them to schedule an appointment. We will be working with some advising groups to use the “cases” function in EAB so that we can determine whether these follow-up appointments positively impact student success. For information on how to run an appointment campaign, please see these instructions.

   C. **Strategic Advising:** For more information on initiatives that advisers may take to manage their student caseload, please see:


3. **How can I improve my ability to support students who are struggling with mental health issues?**

   ISU WellBeing and Student Health have partnered with the health simulation company, Kognito, to provide their mental health training to employees. The training launched in Learn@ISU on July 1.

   The interactive training provides practice conversations through role-plays with virtual students and teaches users how to recognize the signs of emotional distress, initiate a conversation leveraging evidence-based communication strategies and how to make a referral to support services. To access the training, visit Learn@ISU, sign in with your ISU ID and enter the keyword "At-Risk" to find the training.

4. **What resources are available to help me work with students affected by the killing of George Floyd and systematic racism?**

   The UAAC Canvas site contains a resource page of videos and articles that you may find helpful.
5. How can I manage my own stress level?

In an airplane emergency, passengers are instructed to put their own mask on first, before helping anyone else. Because it is easy to prioritize student problems, this summer we sponsored a helpful webinar entitled “Supporting Others and Ourselves: Promoting a Community of Care in the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Please see the Wellness section of the UAAC Advisers CANVAS site to find the video.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

1. What platforms are available for video chat conferencing?

Video chats are typically conducted via a computer, tablet or smartphone device, and may involve one-to-one interaction or one-to-many interaction. Although many platforms are available ISU recommends using WebEx or Zoom. Both WebEx and Zoom are FERPA COMPLIANT.

2. How can I access Zoom or WebEx?

Please see: https://www.it.iastate.edu/remotework

3. What kind of equipment do I need for Zoom?

During your meeting you will need access to a computer with video chat capabilities (internal or external camera) and a microphone. You can use your smartphone or tablet for virtual advising if necessary; however, access to a computer is preferable as you may want to share, receive, or view documents and resources that are easier to view and save them on a computer.

4. How can I prepare for a virtual advising meeting?

A. Review your advisee’s notes

B. Formulate a preliminary agenda using an advisee’s request for a meeting or your proposed meeting outcomes.

C. Be prepared to encounter an advisee who is experiencing high stress. One of the best things you can do for students is to model healthy behaviors.

D. If a student requires professional counseling, please refer them to Thielen Student Health Center:

   Appointments: 515-294-5801
   After Hours Advice: 800-524-6877