

# Empowering Student Success



## School of Law

Academic Advising Case Study 2024-2025

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### At a Glance

Overview of the academic advising pilot



Stage 1  
Students



Academic Advisors



Student-to-Academic  
Advisor Ratio

### The Academic Advising Model

Structured approach with two meetings in Trimester 1

**Trimester 1:  
Group Meeting**

Held in Week 4, usually  
over Zoom



**Trimester 1:  
Individual Meeting**

Held in Week 10,  
generally in-person or  
via Zoom by agreement



**Academic Advisor  
Allocation**

Students retain their  
advisor for the duration  
of their programme

### Key Meeting Focuses

Focus on developing key Stage 1 law academic skills and the transition to a university learning experience

#### Core Topics

- **Skills Development:** Focus on a key number of skills law students are expected to develop in Stage 1
- **Skills Checklist:** A Stage 1 skills checklist was developed and discussed during the group meeting
- **Reflective Template:** Students complete a self-assessment on their skills progress to discuss in the individual meeting
- **Support Signposting:** Academic advisors can identify and direct students needing further support (e.g. Programme Directors, Access and Lifelong Learning, UCD Writing Centre)

#### Academic Focus

- **Module Association:** Academic advising is associated with a core first year module in law
- **Credit Awarded:** Students receive a small credit award (5% for each meeting) on a pass/fail basis for attendance, leading to high student participation
- **Expectations:** Helps set out the expectations that the School of Law has of students
- **Guidance:** Academic advisors offer general guidance on skills' development

### Connecting with Students

Methods for introducing academic advising and maintaining contact

#### Introduction

Academic advising is introduced in the core modules, with dedicated class time to explain the process and show student videos on the purpose and benefits.

#### First Meeting Goal

An opportunity for advisors to introduce themselves, make students feel welcome, and allow students to ask questions about studying law or university life.

#### Communication Platform

Most academic advisors communicated with students using the e2s Academic Advising System.



## Workload and Allocation

Integration of advising into the School of Law workload model

- Academic advising is taken into account in the School of Law workload model for staff
- All full-time faculty are expected to take on advisees, unless they are on research sabbatical
- The number of advisees allocated to each advisor is noted on the school workload spreadsheet

## Lessons Learned

Key insights and takeaways from the implementation of the Academic Advising approach

### Strengths of the Approach

- **Strong Messaging to Students:** The purpose and benefits of academic advising were introduced to students in class and other communication channels
- **Clear Academic Advising Role:** Well-defined responsibilities for academic advisors and for each meeting
- **Key Legal Skills Checklist:** Clearly identifies ten skills that Stage 1 students need to develop, from finding relevant sources to how to engage with feedback on their work
- **Student Self-Reflection:** The self-reflection allows students to rate their progress in developing each of the key skills

### Areas for Consideration

- **Allocation Timeline:** Although earlier meetings are desirable in general, it is important to factor in the administrative workload related to the allocation of stage 1 students joining via later CAO rounds and various edge cases and to bear in mind the complexity around tying academic advising to module timelines if using a curriculum-based academic advising approach
- **Senior Advisor Role:** Consideration could be given to include the role of the Senior Academic Advisor within the School of Law workload model
- **Student Anxiety:** Students are very anxious when it comes to meeting their academic advisors, making it important to ensure all students feel welcome and included

