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

370	**34**	**11:1**
Stage 1 Students	**Academic Advisors**	**Student-to-Academic Advisor Ratio**

The Academic Advising Model

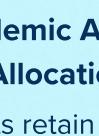Structured approach with two meetings in Trimester 1

Trimester 1: Group Meeting
Held in Week 4, usually over Zoom

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Trimester 1: Individual Meeting
Held in Week 10, generally in-person or via Zoom by agreement

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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