



# Report of the UCD Academic Advising Working Group



April 2022

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# 1 Background

## 1.1. Introduction

UCD is committed to providing a holistic and student-centred educational experience to a growing population of domestic and international students. Our students currently have access to a range of advice and support services, with some operating at programme/school level and others provided centrally by the University. Students have identified a number of issues with reference to their academic experience. In *Learning from students' comments UCD Undergraduate Feedback 2012-17* (Clarke and McGinn), receiving feedback on their progress was a key issue, the reviews of the Student Survey reports conducted since 2017 have each year highlighted the fact that students want more interaction with faculty. The *Education and Student Success Strategy 2020-2024* contains at its core a commitment to student success. It is also mandated by the Higher Education Authority through its performance compact statements that each Higher Education Institution has a student success statement in place. It is clear from research already conducted in UCD that students require personalised academic advice at different points in the student lifecycle; they need guidance and assistance in navigating programme structures and making choices relating to major/minor/specialism options, and in making decisions about pursuing certain pathways that are best for them in relation to professional journeys and in becoming independent learners. It is also clear from this consultation that the introduction of academic advising across the university needs to recognise the diversity of contexts across the university, the imbalances in terms of staff / student ratios (see appendix 10) that currently exist across and within schools and the need to support this initiative with the necessary funding and resources in order to make it work well and be a worthwhile experience for both students and faculty.

## 1.2 Working Group on Academic Advising

In order to address the issue of academic advising in the university the Academic Council Executive Committee agreed to establish a Working Group to inform university-wide policy on academic advising. Professor Marie Clarke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies was appointed chair of this group which had representation from faculty, professional staff and students. The work plan agreed by the Working Group included the following stages:

- To agree a working definition of academic advising which was adopted from NCADA (National Academic Advising Association) to suit the UCD context
- To employ a research assistant to complete a literature review on academic advising which explored the different definitions and approaches used in HEIs internationally
- To conduct a survey and consultation with students from across the institutions at different stages on both undergraduate and taught graduate programmes
- To conduct a survey of faculty to capture their ideas and views about the implementation of academic advising across the university and a consultation with

the School Heads of Teaching and Learning and the Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning

The literature review was completed by Ciara Jennings who was employed by UCD Teaching and Learning as a research assistant on this initiative. UCD Teaching and Learning led on the design of the student and faculty surveys, with input and oversight provided by the Working Group. UCD Institutional Research issued the surveys via Qualtrics. Both surveys were analysed by UCD Teaching and Learning. The student consultation and analysis were conducted by SPARK Consulting.

### **1.3 Adopted Definition**

“Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals”.

This definition was adopted from NCADA and was discussed and refined by the Working Group to reflect the UCD context. Once that was completed, this was the agreed definition used during the consultation processes.

### **1.4 Student Consultation**

An invitation to participate in a university wide survey on academic advising was circulated to all students in January 2022. The timing of the survey was challenging and there was still considerable disruption due to COVID-19. The questions focussed on a number of areas including their awareness and use of current supports; the goals and topics they would like included as part of academic advising and their preferred ways of accessing academic supports. They were also asked to respond to a range of objectives underpinning academic advising and their perspectives on the proposed definition of academic advising. The survey was administrated through Qualtrics and was analysed in Excel. The second part of the student consultation was a series of focus group interviews conducted by SPARK. This included 7 focus group interviews, one per college, except for the College of Health and Agricultural Science where there were two, lasting 90 minutes on Zoom with each group consisting of 6-8 students, representative of different demographics. A total of 44 students participated in the focus groups. The fieldwork took place between 7-10 February 2022. UCD managed the ethical submission and recruitment of participants directly and informed consent and GDPR procedures were applied.

### **1.5 Faculty Consultation**

A faculty wide survey was issued at the end of January 2022. The circumstances were particularly challenging due to the pressures of COVID-19 and in particular the additional assessments that were provided for students in January who were unable to complete their assessments in December due to COVID-19 related circumstances in addition to the timely



completion of the assessment process in order to issue grades on time. A consultation was held with the School Heads of Teaching and Learning and Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning in March 2022 to explore the issues related to academic advising from their perspective.

## **1.6 Institutional Projects on Academic Advising**

In addition to the establishment of the Working Group it was also decided to allocate HEA funding totalling €404,000 to 17 academic advising projects across the university for the academic year 2021/22. This initiative was managed by UCD Teaching and Learning. Evaluation criteria were agreed by the Working Group and an adjudication panel was established, chaired by Professor Marie Clarke to identify qualifying proposals for funding. The projects are very significant in that they cover each college in the university and are directly supported by each College Principal. Thirteen different schools are directly involved in at least one pilot project. A further three projects are coordinated at college-level, focusing on academic advising across an entire college and or a large-scale undergraduate programme. The projects were evaluated at the mid-point of their implementation with external evaluators from UKAT (UK Advising & Tutoring Association). The work of the projects reflects the different approach and contexts in which academic advising takes place. One of the distinguishing features of these projects from the outset is the direct involvement of students in their design and development.

## **1.7 Technology Enhanced Advising**

A subgroup of the Working Group was established to explore the potential for leveraging technology to support the delivery of high-quality academic advising at scale. The subgroup considered a number of potential applications of data and technology to support academic advising and made recommendations on priority areas for action in the short to medium term.

## **1.8 Principles and Framework**

From that evidence-based consultative process the Working Group agreed a set of Principles and a framework that should underpin an institution-wide approach to academic advising, acknowledging the different contexts, challenges and approaches that are present both structurally and culturally in UCD.

## 2 Academic Advising – Perspectives from the Literature

Ciara Jennings

### 2.1 Introduction

An exploration of the international literature around academic advising (AA) showed that the United States and the United Kingdom have respectively produced the largest bodies of work. Contributions to research from Australia, where AA has a less defined role, and the UAE where a model similar to that of the US is emerging, are also present in the literature. Overall, findings regarding effective practice, desired outcomes, and challenges are aligned across the bodies of research. The US has gone through many iterations of the advising process, and like institutions universally, is adapting and developing to the ever-diversifying student body and growing complexities associated with the student experience across the board (McFarlane, 2016; Walker, 2020).

Examining AA, with a focus on students and faculty advisers, the dominant themes which emerged from the literature, and will be presented in this review, are as follows:

- paradigms of approaches which inform wider objectives
- challenges faced regarding institutional organisation of academic advising
- common issues and obstacles to advisers providing effective quality AA
- student expectations and experiences of AA
- the rapidly evolving role of technology in the field

The perspectives of academic advisers and personal tutors are presented in numerous small scale institutional studies. Although the scale of the studies must be considered a significant limitation, many reflect trends in the literature and present informative insights.

### 2.2 Origins

AA became a conceptualised practice in the US from the 1970s in order to help students navigate the new higher education (HE) elective system (Khun, 2008). Advisers began comparing practices and the National Academic Advising association (NACADA) was established. In 1972, seminal articles by Crookston and O'Banion conceptualised the ways in which AA is carried out and established the terms 'developmental' and 'prescriptive' advising which remain central to US practice today.

In the UK context, personal tutoring (PT) arose from the Oxford and Cambridge *in loco parentis* moral tutor system used since the sixteenth century. Due to its history, the scope of the personal tutor role is wider than that suggested by the NACADA definitions (Grey and Osbourne, 2018, p.286). However, PT has evolved and adapted considerably since its origins in the University of Oxford's tutorial system (Walker, 2020, p.2), and has seen a renewed interest in recent years from UK HE institutions (Grey and Osbourne, 2018). Much of the research and literature from the UK makes reference to the UK Advising and Tutoring association (UKAT), which is 'a body of professional practitioners and researchers interested

in all aspects of student advising and personal tutoring' and is allied with NACADA (UKAT, 2021).

### **2.3 Theoretical Underpinnings**

In seeking recognition as a legitimate academic pursuit in the US, some have sought an overarching theory of AA. Yet, it is widely established that there is no single theory of AA (Hagen and Jordan, 2008). AA approaches and models have drawn upon many theories from a broad range of disciplines; from education, psychology and sociology, to philosophy. Similarly, the lack of a universal definition is subject to discussion in the literature. Both NACADA and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) have defined advising as a teaching and learning activity (White, 2015, p.273), and there is an overall consensus that AA can serve to maximise the student experience and professional life beyond HE, providing a source of support and information which they otherwise may not have access to.

### **2.4 Approaches to Academic Advising**

The theme of 'approaches' is ubiquitous across US literature and the subject of considerable debate. While PT literature does not subscribe to the depth of analysis regarding approaches, rather referring to three 'models', one of which dominates the practice, there appears to be some interchangeability between the terms style, approach, and even sometimes theory - as Hagen and Jordan (2008, p.18) refer to 'developmental theory'. This disparity in usage is evident in a remark by Grites (2013, p.13), in reference to one of the two most frequently employed frameworks: "Developmental academic advising is not a theory. It is based on developmental theories and perspectives, but the practice is an advising strategy, a method, a technique, an approach, a way of doing advising."

### **2.5 Developmental Advising**

The developmental approach, coined in 1972 from the seminal works of O'Banion and Crookston, is fundamental to practice today (Lema and Agrusa, 2019). The dominant assertions from the literature regarding this widely used approach are as follows:

- It is a student-centred approach which takes a more holistic view of student development in HE.
- It is largely favoured by students due to the more personalised and supportive relationship it fosters (Holland et al, 2020).
- The model encourages student reflection - a lack of which is problematic to effective progression (O'Banion, 1972).

- The academic advisor and the advisee are partners in educational discovery, in which responsibility is shared between the participants (Hessenauer and D'amico Guthrie, 2018. p.15).

Common elements cited in defining developmental advising include:

- A process which encourages self-reflection.
- Focus on setting and achieving goals through a collaborative process.
- Student engagement in using problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills.
- An understanding of shared responsibility in the advising process.
- Fundamentally establishing a rapport from which trust is built.

NACADA cites the elements of Developmental advising as: exploration of life goals; exploration of vocational goals; program choice; course choice; scheduling of courses (NACADA, 2018).

The holistic view of student development is also more likely to affirm a sense of connection to the institution than through the one-way directive approach of purely prescriptive advising; this approach also holds great potential to increase minority student engagement and sense of belonging (Harris, 2018).

## 2.6 Prescriptive Advising

Prescriptive advising, also coined by Crookston (Lowenstein, 2005), was the original approach to academic advising (Fricker, 2015, p.4). The dominant assertions from the literature regarding this widely used approach are as follows:

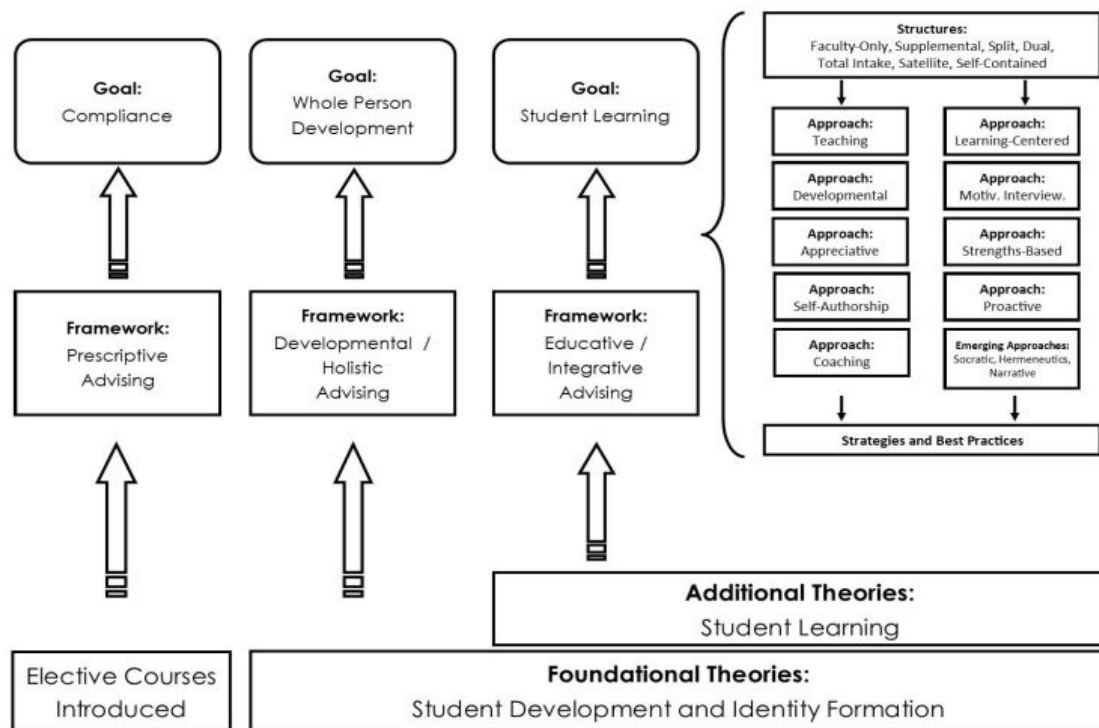
- Prescriptive advising is compared to the doctor-patient dynamic (Appleby, 2008, p.85).
  - The adviser provides the student with the information needed in order to navigate the more administrative side of their academic experience.
- In some circumstances students prefer to have a prescriptive advising experience, to receive a comprehensive range of required information once and without feeling the need for multiple sessions and in-depth personal discussion which developmental advising demands (Harris, 2018).
  - Some research suggests that incoming 1st-year students prefer or only need prescriptive advising, wanting primarily to know what classes they need to take their first semester, while developmental advising is more useful for further into college trajectory (Robins, 2012, p.220; Grey & Osbourne, 2020).
  - In contrast, there are many who posit that developmental AA is most crucial at the beginning of University (Harris, 2018) in order to foster integration, a sense of belonging, and retention.
- In light of continuously diversifying student populations, the practical nature of prescriptive advising should not be overlooked - in spite of a general student preference for developmental advising.

- The instructive nature and linear communication which characterises prescriptive advising, with the responsibility solely on the adviser, is potentially suited to the intervention of technology to fulfil relevant responsibilities to deliver information of an academic description (Lowenstein, 2005, p.66). A general consensus among all veins of the literature, particularly in more recent thinking, cites a need for flexible approaches to AA, as opposed to a one size fits all view, in light of the rapidly diversifying student populations and the growing complexity of the student experience, in addition to the tensions experienced regarding time and resource constraints (Walker, 2020; Stuart et al., 2021).

## 2.7 Other Advising Styles and Approaches

- **Advising as Teaching** - Lowenstein (2005) challenges the developmental approach by asserting that advising through a learning-centred paradigm better explains the similarities between advising and teaching. This approach sees the adviser's work taking a central role in enhancing a student's education and Lowenstein (2005, p.65) shows that 'the paradigm allows the advisor's role to be elevated to a position of the utmost importance in higher education'. This approach may suit institutions which employ primary role advisers, as opposed to those based on the UK model of faculty personal tutors, who already hold various responsibilities and are not available enough to take such a central role.
- **Proactive advising** - formerly known as 'Intrusive advising' (Grites, 2013, p.12). Deliberate personal outreach from advisers to provide information or support, often as a direct response to an identified academic crisis (Williams, 2007). This approach also tackles student reluctance or hesitancy to initiate contact with an adviser - often due to lack of understanding.
- **Further approaches cited in the US literature** - many take from the developmental and prescriptive models: strengths-based advising; Coaching; Group Advising; and Peer Advising.

Figure 1. Graphic Organizer for Advising Frameworks, Structures, and Approaches.



## 2.8 Organisational Models

Institutional organisation of AA in the US is strikingly more established in comparison to PT in the UK. The way in which AA is organised in a HE institution is often referred to as a 'model' in the US literature, and there is noted to be no single approach (Hagen & Jordan, 2008), nor one which is deemed most effective (Moore et al., p.5), as all exhibit strengths and weaknesses. King (2008) highlights the classification of three broad approaches of the organization and delivery of advising:

### 2.8.1 Decentralised models

Faculty-only model where students are assigned a faculty adviser from their department and there is no central advising office.

- Satellite model, in which each academic unit has an advising office, from which primary role advisers operate.

Strengths: Its support of departmental autonomy and variation in advising approaches in response to local contexts, which is preferable for students due to the subject area expertise of faculty members.

Issues: Ensuring adequate communication and coordination across advising units.

### 2.8.2 Centralised models

One central advising office, with primary role advisers in turn maximizing adviser resources and coordination.

- Strengths: Having trained advisers who prioritise AA, easy accessibility to a central location, increased ability to provide training, evaluation and rewards more easily - all of which are suggested to contribute significantly to adviser engagement (King, 2008, p.245).
- Issues: Student frustration stemming from a lack of advice and knowledge specific to their discipline, as this model is centred on primary role advisers and not faculty advisers.

### 2.8.3 Shared models

The shared advising structure involves a combination of decentralized and centralized components for a hybrid approach (Barron and Powel, 2014, p.14). There are four combinations of central advising offices and faculty advisers or academic unit advising offices (Moore et al., 2018; Fricker, 2015).

The decentralised model offers a potentially more informative and personalised AA experience due to the expertise of faculty in the students' field of study. Institutional studies highlight a range of challenges faced in relation to interdepartmental coordination and communication, which can negatively impact the student experience within this model. One study examined the decentralised model of AA across the multiple campus sites of California State University (Moore et al., 2008), where staff felt the decentralised model 'made sense' but lacked coordination. A pervasive lack of clarity across their campuses regarding those ultimately responsible for advising and the roles different advising units and advisers are expected to play was highlighted, to which a lack of accountability for advising processes and outcomes was attributed.

Implementation of the following recommendations was advised to optimize the decentralised model:

- Establish advising councils, committees, task forces, and summits to build community and align plans and efforts.
- Utilisation of eAdvising tools to support workflow and analytical functions across the campus; develop CPD.
- Creation of cross-functional advising teams in colleges, where specialized staff from different units collaborate to address students' needs more holistically.
- Employment of a senior administrator to coordinate campus wide advising efforts across a decentralized environment (Moore et al., 2018, p.16).

CAS (CAS, 2006) indicates the importance of purposeful structure and effective management; and while the organisational structure is part of the broad range of considerations concerning AA within an institution, and arguably secondary in nature to the quality of the advising practice (Fricker, 2015), it can serve to facilitate the consistent quality of delivery across campus.

## 2.9 The Purpose of Academic Advising

Many emphasise the importance of not labelling AA as a service but acknowledging that it is as much a part of an institution's educational mission as is disciplinary instruction (White, 2015). The principal purposes of AA identified in the literature are:

- Student engagement and retention, in turn decreasing attrition and boosting graduation rates (Moore et al., 2018, Walker et al., 2017; Hessenauer and D'amico Guthrie, 2018.)
- Providing clarification around reason for study and the nature of the curriculum.
- Helping students to avail of the variety of experiences a HE institution offers (White, 2015).
- Connecting the entire curriculum with students' individual goals, and when formally structured, it can support a broad range of learning outcomes, helping to support the institutional mission (Hu, 2020).
- Assisting in the adjustment from school to an HE environment (Chan et al, 2019; Watts, 2011; Yale, 2019; Harris, 2018.); thus, first year students have a greater need for AA as early as possible (Young-Jones et al.,2013).

## 2.10 The Unique Value of Academic Advising

AA's unique contribution to the student experience lies in the provision of one-to-one student-faculty interaction. Holland et al. (2020) describe advisers as 'individuals who are able to assist socialization into the HE environment, aid with the navigation of the HE maze, including developing the academic skills and knowledge to succeed and guiding them to make thoughtful decisions about future careers' and terming them 'cultural navigators'. The holistic approach to goal setting and planning engages students' development of rational processes, critical thinking and reflection skills, which facilitates self-discovery, helps students to make sense of their education path and can serve to build self-esteem (Harris, 2018; Chan, 2019; Megyesi Zarge et al, 2018).

The significance of a personal and consistent relationship as a point of connection, which quality AA hold the potential to create, is linked to multiple benefits; the most significant being:

- Student satisfaction – AA impacts more than any other type of involvement in HE and is noted to be key in predicting student success (Young-Jones et al., 2013).
- Fostering increased student engagement and in turn a sense of connectedness to the institution (Young-Jones et al., 2013; Hart-Baldrige, 2020).
- Powerful learning opportunities outside the classroom are facilitated through building meaningful relationships (Young-Jones et al., 2013).

Furthermore, there are indications that certain cohorts stand to benefit significantly from the support provided by AA in aiding the transition to HE; notably, those from low-income households and first-generation university students. Research in the US demonstrates that



AA increases chances of graduation among historically marginalised cohorts of students (Walker et al., 2017). Nonetheless, its impact is greatly dependent on structure, content, intensity, and advisor availability (Hu, 2020. pp. 914-915).

## **2.11 Objectives**

The cited objectives of AA are numerous. Within the broader purposes of retention and supporting student success, quality AA from a developmental perspective encourages self-reflection in order to make sense of one's educational path and future ambitions, helping to develop higher order thinking skills, further to supporting the navigation of the institutional systems and processes. Additional objectives include:

- Meeting student expectations, satisfaction and aspirations regarding employability and attainment in a climate, particularly in the UK, where HE is shifting towards marketisation and massification (Holland et al., 2020, p.128).
- Introducing the student to campus resources.
- Tracking student progress.
- Assisting in student personal development.
- Developing a rapport with the student (Hessenauer and Damico Guthrie, 2018).

Hu (2020, p.915) notes that often professional AA is only offered at surface level and its positive developmental impact hindered by lack of student reflection. If engagement of both the adviser and advisee is achieved, AA objectives of maximizing student experience, creating meaning, focus, and purpose within a HE trajectory, and establishing goals in the short and long term can be successfully met. The belief that high quality AA goes far beyond helping a student to make course-related decisions, and, that academic advisers can potentially build social and emotional well-being in addition to supporting academic and career goals, predominates throughout the literature.

## **2.12 Who Fulfils Advising Responsibilities?**

The roles of AA and PT are broadly synonymous (Grey and Osbourne, 2018). Although the roles of primary role academic adviser, faculty adviser, and personal tutor exhibit a range of nuances, they largely serve to fulfil similar responsibilities. Significantly, McGill et al. (2020, p.9) state that "Personal tutoring and academic advising, and our practice and understanding of it, is informed by the regional context in which it is practiced." Walker (2020) observes that AA and PT are, at the core, relational processes - with compassion and valuing of students central to the findings, which also emphasise the idea throughout the literature that a solid relationship between an academic adviser or personal tutor and a student forms the basis of all the interventions that may be applied in AA and PT.

Defining the parameters of PT is somewhat more challenging than defining those of AA as a result of the 'pastoral care' model which is integral to many perceptions of the practice due to its history (Grey & Osbourne, 2020). The literature suggests that a personal tutor, who is

an active member of academic staff, provides holistic guidance on an academic and personal level including:

- Information about higher education processes, procedures and expectations.
- Academic feedback and development.
- Personal welfare support, referral to further information and support.
- A relationship with the institution and a sense of belonging (Grey & Osbourne, 2020, p.285).

### **2.13 Challenges to Faculty Advisers**

Although many of the identified challenges faced by both primary role and faculty advisers are comparable, for the purpose of this literature review those attributed to faculty advisers, predominantly personal tutors, will remain the focus of analysis. The ubiquitous challenges faced in this context, presented in the existing literature are:

- A general consensus that among faculty there are mixed levels of interest and expectation around advising responsibilities (Hart-Baldrige, 2020, p.10).
- Faculty advisers also express concern that AA detracts from heavy workloads of teaching, research, and service (Hessenauer and D'amico Guthrie, 2018. p.28).
  - In turn, issues with adviser availability due to high adviser-advisee ratios and additional responsibilities.
- In the UK almost all academic staff are asked to undertake the role of personal tutor. The widely employed pastoral model can be problematic in a context where it is assumed that the role will 'come naturally' to any academic staff member (McGill et al., 2020).
  - This indicates a need for further research into the impacts on faculty advisers of such responsibilities in addition to preparation for such responsibility.
- Professional boundaries of personal tutors (Walker, 2020).
  - Questions relating to the parameters for the support they are expected to provide due to difficulty disentangling from a student's personal life, as personal issues can 'spill over' into the academic context (Grey and Osbourne, 2020. p.290).
- Systematic obstacles to quality AA which inhibit consistent success include:
  - Insufficient training: training which does occur is mostly informational (Xue Kohlfeld et al, 2019)
  - Need for clearer frameworks which clarify expectations.
  - Lack of time to fit in quality AA due to heavy workloads.
  - Negligible recognition and compensation for performing such duties.
  - Lack of coordination or connection between advisers and departments, resulting in student frustration due to misinformation and a lack of consistency in messaging.
  - There is often a lack of specialist knowledge from advisers for students in specialised areas such as nursing and engineering (Walker et al., 2017. P.47).

## **2.14 Strategies to Address Challenges**

The question of ‘buy-in’ from faculty members (Walker, 2020) is critical in order to create an AA system in which all stakeholders are engaged and stand to derive benefit from.

Suggested ways of facilitating faculty engagement include:

- Establishing clear expectations in relation to the responsibilities of the role (Grey and Osbourne, 2020. p.290) to provide a workable provision.
- Planning the time within a faculty adviser’s workload through a predetermined agreement - see working hours agreement (Morillas & Garrido, 2018. Table 1).
- Training which develops skills, establishes professional boundaries, and outlines protocol for referring students to other support services (Stuart et al., 2021).
- Development of a network amongst faculty advisers to provide support and advice regarding academic advising (McFarlane, 2016, Walker, 2020).
- Policies which recognize advising as a significant responsibility for professors, establish the importance of advising to the institution, and reward the faculty advisers for engaging in this important reflective learning work (Hart-Baldrige, 2020, p.12).

## **2.15 Technology in Academic Advising**

The potential for technology to both increase student engagement in AA and facilitate a more efficient practice is ever increasing. The literature suggests that the technology must be carefully selected and used alongside a face-to-face advising experience rather than replacing it (Grey & Osbourne, 2020, p.290). Although the importance of maintaining personal human contact is central to the AA experience, Gaines (2014) suggests that in light of the current generation of students’ uninterrupted access to online resources and information, their expectations transfer to AA - which would make a technology-integrated AA system preferable.

## **2.16 Means and Models of Technology in Academic Advising**

For one-way flows of information there are those who advocate for the use of everyday technologies which can also be leveraged to connect students to supports even prior to seeing an adviser (Lawton, J., 2018, p.39). These technologies include:

- Text
- Instant chat
- Mobile application

Other more robust and versatile platforms and tools which help evaluate student learning and potentially generate data to inform future learning are:

- LMS (learning management systems) or VLEs (virtual learning environments), e.g., Moodle.

- e-Portfolios - which are a powerful tool for capturing student progress where students learn to apply reflective thinking to their experiences. The e-portfolio makes explicit the lifelong learning path and professional career trajectory of each individual (Steele, 2018a; Morillas and Garrido, 2018).

The additional use of early warning systems signal alerts to academic advisers to indicators of student disengagement, for example failing exams/assignments, failing to register for courses on time (Steele, 2018a).

Students' preference for receiving important information from an academic adviser was predominantly via e-mail, while, conversely, disinterest was expressed in receiving announcements or interacting via social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and also podcasts (Gaines, 2014, p.46). It is advisable to review and assess student preferences regularly to inform advisers and maximise engagement, and consequently generate positive outcomes.

## **2.17 Blended / Flipped Advising**

Many of the routine (one-way flow of information) and transactional aspects of advising, relating to operational and administrative elements of a HE institution, are suited to flipped learning - a methodology which has gained traction in recent years. Flipped advising utilizes a pedagogical approach, similar to that of a flipped classroom, in which students preview material, complete self-assessments and prepare their educational plans before the advising session through varied multimedia resources.

Consequent benefits of blending online prescriptive learning and reflection with face-to-face meetings include:

- Enabling advisers to dedicate more time and energy to fostering an adviser-advisee relationship building (Lema & Agrusa, 2019; Hu, 2020) by alleviating the burden of more prescriptive tasks.
- Engaging students in self-assessment and planning activities, facilitating a reflection process before meeting with an adviser, and potentially enabling a more effective, deeper engagement between adviser and advisee (Steele, 2018a; Grey & Osbourne, 2020).
- Freeing up time to focus on the application of the information learned prior to the meeting (Amini et al., 2018).
- Increased potential for positive outcomes by providing a structured approach for students to hone in on their pursuits, academic progress, and areas of weakness (Amini et al., 2018).
- A self-directed flipped approach allows the student to control the time and pace of activities (Lema & Agrusa, 2019), allowing greater flexibility for engagement.

The literature indicates that flipped advising can add significant value to AA as students work through informational modules online. Overall, this blended approach is advocated as

the most effective use of time and initiating student engagement (See Amini et al., 2018 Table 1).

## **2.18 Challenges Presented by Technology**

Primarily, the need for training for those in advising roles due to challenges navigating software and data is striking (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Moore et al., 2015). Steele (2018a) advocates that technology training should be undertaken within the broader conceptual framework of advising as teaching; technology training for advisers should not occur in isolation from the informational, conceptual, and relational components of training (Steele, 2018a, p.320) - serving to overcome the challenge of faculty advisers viewing academic advising as an isolated process (Hart-Baldrige, 2020).

Additional challenges relating to data management and data use are also cited; using data to identify student success requires training (Moore et al., 2015), and as data is generated by the tools and is collected it is important to also get data into the hands of those who can use it, from frontline advisers to senior administrators (Megyesi Zarge et al., 2018).

The need for a considered process in the selection of technology is paramount, which, as highlighted, must support the learning outcomes of the institution, its missions and goals (Steele, 2018a; Gaines, 2014).

## **2.19 Conclusion**

The purpose of this literature review has been to inform the Working Group by contributing to an evidence base which will help to develop a set of AA policies and establish a system of faculty-led academic advising in UCD.

The research demonstrates unequivocally that AA has the potential to positively impact the student HE experience. In addition to assisting with the navigation of programme structures, making course-related decisions, and fostering a sense of connection and belonging to the institution, AA can help students to develop a clearer understanding of their present and future paths, while fostering overall personal development and resilience. These outcomes support the UCD vision for graduates' holistic student-focused educational experience, in addition to aligning with the second core objective in particular, which aims to prepare graduates to thrive in present and future societies. In the context of the increasingly complex student experience, and the sociocultural and economic pressures on current undergraduates, the need for effective student support has never been greater (Yale, 2017).

A number of key recommendations have emerged from the literature which the Working Group may consider in order to facilitate high-quality effective AA within UCD:

- The advisees' need for specialised advice relating to their field of study suggests that a decentralised model is most effective regarding student needs, which are inclined to differ according to the academic subject.

- An AA framework in which students are assigned a faculty adviser from their own faculty is highly preferable; thus, coordination and consistency of AA policy, protocol, policy and delivery across faculties should be paramount.
- When considering approaches, there is a place, and a necessity, for both prescriptive and developmental advising.
  - The former may be suited to an online 'flipped' format, leaving more time for developmental rapport building in one-on-one meetings which has been shown to be imperative in facilitating effective and meaningful AA.
  - A blended online/face-to-face approach has been proven to potentially increase student engagement and alleviate adviser workload, while informing students as to the objectives and purposes of AA prior to a meeting.
- Policies which recognise and reward faculty engagement with this vital activity should be developed, which in turn establish the importance of AA to the institution.
- The provision of clearly defined expectations, responsibilities, and professional boundaries for faculty advisers relating to pastoral care are of great importance.
  - Additionally, protocol for referring students to other campus professional support services, when and if necessary, should be established.
- Due to the nature of the work, AA responsibilities may not be suited to or appeal to all academic staff. Thus, it may be positioned as a potential form of service within a faculty member's workload - to which sufficient time and reward is allocated (One study suggests integrating 25 hours over the course of an undergraduate degree programme).

Adequate skills-based training, for example in pastoral care and technology, and the development of a support network amongst advisers is necessary to ensure a consistent level of quality support and content delivery

### 3 Student Consultation

#### 3.1 Introduction

The student consultation process was established to ascertain students' awareness of current supports, uncover student preferences about what, when and how they access supports and what suggestions did they have in relation to academic advice. The first stage of the consultation was a student survey (see appendix 3) which was followed by focus group interviews (see appendix 4).

#### 3.2 Student Profile

A total of 509 students responded to the survey, the majority being female (71%) and in first year (60%). Two thirds (66%) of respondents came from the undergraduate cohort. Response rates across the colleges varied as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Response Rates Across the UCD Colleges

College	% Responses
Arts and Humanities	13%
Social Sciences	25%
Science	20%
Engineering and Architecture	8%
Business	10%
Health and Agricultural Sciences	23%
Academic Affairs	1%

#### 3.3 Awareness of Current Supports

Students were offered an indicative list of current services to establish if they were aware of these services and if they had availed of any of the services listed. Table 2 presents the data.

Table 2: Awareness and availing of supports in their studies

Which of the following are you aware of, or have availed of for support with your studies? Please add additional supports that you are aware of or have availed of that do not appear in the list.					
#	Question	Not aware of	Aware but haven't availed of	Have availed of	Total no. of responses
1	Academic advisor	43.98%	41.16%	14.86%	498
2	Module coordinator	4.34%	38.46%	57.20%	507
3	Programme director	25.45%	52.71%	21.84%	499
4	Associate Dean	46.98%	46.77%	6.25%	496
5	Tutor or demonstrator	19.72%	28.69%	51.59%	502
6	Stage coordinator	64.85%	28.48%	6.67%	495
7	Head of subject	47.89%	37.83%	14.29%	497
8	Student advisor	32.39%	43.06%	24.55%	497
9	Peer mentor	33.73%	39.36%	26.91%	498
10	Programme office staff	34.61%	38.43%	26.96%	497
11	UCD Careers Network	21.91%	59.96%	18.13%	502
12	UCD Library	1.98%	25.54%	72.48%	505
13	Class rep	25.30%	43.23%	31.47%	502
14	Alumni mentor	73.89%	21.05%	5.06%	494
15	Writing Centre	10.32%	71.23%	18.45%	504
16	Maths Support Centre	25.75%	62.58%	11.67%	497
17	Access & Lifelong Learning Disability Support	30.06%	54.91%	15.03%	499
18	Microsoft Office Training via UCD IT Services	52.71%	40.48%	6.81%	499
19	UCD Welcome Booklet	32.60%	32.40%	35.00%	500
20	"Introduction to UCD" Brightspace Course	17.80%	28.80%	53.40%	500

Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents viewed the library as a support, over half (57%) had availed of supports offered by Module Coordinators and a similar proportion (53%) had used the 'Introduction to UCD' module on Brightspace and supports offered by tutors or demonstrators. Students were conscious of a range of other supports that they had not availed of such as the Writing Centre (71%); Maths Support Centre (63%) and UCD Careers Network (60%).

In the focus group discussion students offered a number of perspectives about their current experiences of academic advising. A number of students, particularly from small schools or programmes related positive experiences. Lecturers were their first port of call, as they saw them most frequently and were unsure as to where else to go. Students were happy to meet with teaching staff who were approachable and helpful and provided bespoke, immediate support. In larger or busier schools or programmes, this worked less well. Students were exposed to advice from a diverse range of sources and where advice came by



email, were unsure to whom it applied. The Programme Director was referred to by many students as a source of support when they were trying to balance work and study timetables.

### 3.4 Reasons for not Availing of Supports

A number of reasons were offered as to why they had not availed of existing supports which is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Reasons for not availing of supports

When you haven't availed of supports, how likely is it to have been for the following reasons?							
#	Question	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Total no. of responses
1	You were not aware of the supports	5.86%	17.37%	19.19%	39.19%	18.38%	495
2	There may have been limited availability	12.86%	25.71%	28.57%	24.29%	8.57%	490
3	You felt embarrassed	19.55%	26.27%	18.94%	25.87%	9.37%	491
4	You were procrastinating	13.77%	21.26%	18.02%	33.81%	13.16%	494
5	You found the process of accessing support intimidating	15.21%	19.27%	18.46%	33.06%	14.00%	493
6	You had low confidence that you would benefit from the support	14.49%	24.08%	20.61%	28.37%	12.45%	490
7	You did not know what to expect	8.47%	16.94%	17.94%	41.53%	15.12%	496
8	You had a negative experience with the support	41.87%	28.05%	19.31%	6.91%	3.86%	492
9	You were afraid of being exposed	33.81%	31.77%	17.72%	14.05%	2.65%	491
10	You were afraid of being judged	25.20%	31.30%	16.26%	22.36%	4.88%	492
11	You may not have realised that you need the support	10.55%	17.04%	16.02%	43.00%	13.39%	493
12	You did not know that you were eligible for the support	11.97%	16.43%	18.66%	37.32%	15.62%	493
13	You did not find the support accessible	15.16%	23.16%	31.76%	22.13%	7.79%	488
14	You felt that your question was too trivial	14.55%	19.26%	21.72%	33.61%	10.86%	488

Students did not avail of supports for a number of reasons. Over half (58%) were not aware of supports, they did not know what to expect (57%) and did not realise that they needed support (53%). In the focus group sessions students were of the view that some lecturers needed to encourage students to seek advice either from themselves or with support services especially in cases where there were large classes. A common theme in the focus groups was that many students could not find their lecturers' contact details and office

hours. They expressed a strong desire for a uniform location for this information across the university. For some students, they did not wish to appear weak if they sought advice particularly if lecturers were not perceived as approachable. Students were conscious that lecturers were very busy and had additional commitments outside the classroom (e.g., research) and didn't want to take up their time but this created a distance and they felt isolated. Reference was also made to teaching staff who had commitments elsewhere and this was an additional barrier to approaching them in the context of intruding on their time. Email was viewed as an easier approach than asking questions, but responses could take time and were sometimes sporadic. A view also emerged from the focus groups that they did not need support/academic advice – that was only for students who were in trouble. Reference was also made to the challenges posed by having to work to pay for their college and keeping up with the requirements of the courses that they were studying. Due to time pressures and busy schedules, a number of students said that they would not be able to avail of academic advising unless it was timetabled.

### **3.5 Goals of Academic Advising**

Students were asked to consider their levels of agreement with a number of goals of academic advising. Table 4 presents the data.

Table 4: Goals of Academic Advising

In a context where each student has a member of faculty as a dedicated academic advisor, do you agree with the following goals for academic advising.							
#	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total no. of responses
1	To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals	0.84%	1.05%	9.49%	54.43%	34.18%	474
2	To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals	0.63%	2.11%	10.99%	51.80%	34.46%	473
3	To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions	0.85%	2.33%	9.75%	47.03%	40.04%	472
4	To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices for example)	0.43%	1.92%	9.59%	44.35%	43.71%	469
5	To know what the most appropriate research opportunities are to support educational and professional goals	0.86%	1.50%	10.92%	52.46%	34.26%	467
6	To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goals	0.85%	1.27%	12.31%	40.55%	45.01%	471

For the majority of respondents (88%) having the opportunity to evaluate their personal interests in the context of developing realistic academic and professional goals was important as was knowing the most appropriate research opportunities to support educational and professional goals (86%) and the development of an educational plan to support the completion of their studies (85%).

Within the focus groups students had the opportunity to explore the goals of academic advising in an in-depth way. They were generally of the view that students should be viewed as individuals with specific needs, potential and interests. In relation to critical thinking (referenced in goal 3) this had a strong appeal to students in the mid to later stages of their studies recognising that it makes the difference between grades but stressed that critical thinking should be encouraged in early stages of their studies. Critical thinking was viewed a key element in “empowering students”. Students also considered it important that they made appropriate choices concerning modules and suggested that this could be supported by sharing alumni stories/careers with them. They also stressed the need for this to be delivered in a timely manner so that students do not miss opportunities by not being well informed. Educational planning was considered very important especially with reference to assessments and examinations to support revision, to signpost improvements

and additional supports that may be available. Internships, study abroad, research and co-curricular options were viewed as very important, and students were of the view that they required support from someone more experienced especially in developing their CVs. However, they also pointed to the need for supports that fitted into their course and were available to them through their modules (examples being research for science courses or internships for Commerce students).

### **3.6 Academic Advising Areas**

Students were next asked to consider the areas that would be most helpful in an academic advising context. Table 5 presents the data.

Table 5: Areas within an academic advising context

For students to succeed, what are the most important academic advising topics? Please add any further items which do not appear in the list.							
#	Question	Not important	Of little importance	Of average importance	Very important	Absolutely essential	# Rsp
1	How to take the best lecture notes?	1.61%	5.02%	25.90%	43.57%	23.90%	498
2	How to use Brightspace?	1.41%	8.05%	20.12%	30.78%	39.64%	497
3	How to use Microsoft programmes such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint?	1.81%	6.43%	22.49%	40.16%	29.12%	498
4	How to use other computer programmes?	2.41%	11.67%	35.61%	37.42%	12.88%	497
5	How to set long term study goals for beyond this year?	2.21%	3.22%	26.36%	43.46%	24.75%	497
6	How to give useful feedback to my peers?	3.42%	15.69%	33.80%	36.02%	11.07%	497
7	How to approach group assignments?	1.82%	2.02%	18.18%	44.65%	33.33%	495
8	How to contact a lecturer?	1.82%	5.06%	18.02%	44.94%	30.16%	494
9	How to write essays?	1.21%	2.62%	12.90%	31.25%	52.02%	496
10	How to plan my time?	1.01%	3.03%	13.13%	40.00%	42.83%	495
11	How to stay motivated?	0.40%	2.21%	9.66%	37.42%	50.30%	497
12	Advice about withdrawing from a programme or transferring to a different programme	3.45%	10.14%	30.43%	35.90%	20.08%	493
13	Help assessing my strengths	1.21%	6.26%	24.65%	44.85%	23.03%	495
14	Information on research opportunities	1.83%	6.10%	23.58%	39.63%	28.86%	492
15	Advice on internships, work placements or career opportunities	0.81%	3.45%	11.97%	35.50%	48.28%	493
16	Advice on choosing modules, majors or post-graduate degree options	1.41%	3.23%	9.70%	34.55%	51.11%	495

The majority of students identified staying motivated (87%) as being a very important area, followed by advice on choosing modules, majors or postgraduate options (85%) and support

in writing essays (83%). Within the focus groups it emerged that course assessment impacted on the type of supports sought. Where students are on examination assessed modules, they felt there was less need to ask for help but would welcome mid-point check ins through quizzes and mock examinations which could serve as a useful touchpoint.

### 3.7 Periods When Academic Advice Was Important

Students were asked when is the most important time in their studies to receive academic advice. Table 6 presents the data.

Table 6: Points in time when academic advising is most important

When is academic advising most important? Please add further important points in time which do not appear in the list.							
#	Question	Not important	Little importance	Average importance	Very important	Absolutely essential	Total no. of responses
1	At the start of term in first year	2.72%	5.44%	15.90%	31.80%	44.14%	478
2	At the start of each year of study	0.42%	3.14%	19.04%	45.61%	31.80%	478
3	Mid-trimester	4.01%	10.76%	42.19%	32.28%	10.76%	474
4	Halfway through the academic year	2.12%	6.36%	34.96%	42.16%	14.41%	472
5	After trimester 1 assessment	2.54%	7.19%	27.06%	46.51%	16.70%	473
6	After trimester 2 assessment	2.97%	8.92%	26.75%	44.59%	16.77%	471
7	Final year, trimester 1 decision points	0.64%	3.60%	12.08%	34.96%	48.73%	472
8	Final year, trimester 2 decision points	0.64%	4.26%	12.13%	34.26%	48.72%	470

The vast majority of respondents (83%) indicated that final year trimester 1 and 2 decision points was the most important time to receive academic advice, followed by over three quarters (77%) who indicated that it should be provided at the start of each year of study. Within the focus groups students concentrated on the different points in their programmes. In the early stages they were of the view that practical information was important, such as, how to use Brightspace, who to contact for support, where to get information, what were the expectations concerning assignments, examinations, course planning to fulfil career objectives. They also felt it was important in the early stages to set expectations, build in consistent standard of advice irrespective of the source, explain UCD standards, guarantee a response to queries within a set time frame to manage expectations and ensure that the emphasis is on the personal dimension speaking to them as individuals.

At the mid-point of their studies students were of the view that the emphasis should shift to developing critical thinking skills, group work, identifying areas of weakness that require improvement and facilitating students to think strategically in terms of mapping out their post UCD pathway. They also suggested that there was a need at this stage to adopt a holistic approach to address fears of choosing the wrong modules for long-term goals and individual student's interests – examples were given of choosing between Erasmus, internship or research and provide appropriate supports in relation to these areas. At the later stage in their studies, they focussed on the need for preparation for the transition phase out of UCD, where they needed support in setting realistic expectations, identifying a clear road map, learning how to self-market, network and prepare for the employment context. They also suggested that students need advice about the challenges in a post university context and suggested the need for connections to be developed between alumni and final year students.

### 3.8 Effective Ways of Accessing Academic Advice

Students were next asked to consider a number of different approaches to accessing academic advice. Table 7 presents the responses.

Table 7: Effective ways of accessing academic advice

Which ways do you think would be most effective for students to access academic advice? Please add additional effective ways which do not appear in the list.						
#	Question	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Effective	Very effective	Total no. of responses
1	Individual meetings with a dedicated academic advisor	1.04%	8.14%	38.41%	52.40%	479
2	Group meetings with a dedicated academic advisor	19.24%	31.08%	34.88%	14.80%	473
3	Talking to their lecturer/module coordinator at the end of class	12.32%	34.24%	36.33%	17.12%	479
4	Talking to their lecturer/module coordinator online during virtual office hours	11.06%	29.44%	41.13%	18.37%	479
5	Talking to the lecturer/module coordinator in a face-to-face meeting during their office hours	2.09%	15.48%	46.23%	36.19%	478
6	Meeting tutor/demonstrator	3.79%	17.47%	47.37%	31.37%	475
7	Self-assessment online tools	17.78%	39.54%	25.10%	17.57%	478
8	Online resources in Brightspace	18.79%	33.82%	28.81%	18.58%	479
9	A UCD Website dedicated to academic advice	13.96%	31.04%	33.13%	21.88%	480
10	Learning analytics which show you how you are doing compared to other students	21.66%	23.35%	35.03%	19.96%	471

The vast majority of respondents (90%) indicated their preference for individual meetings with a dedicated academic advisor. Office hours was also considered by a majority (82%) as effective as well as meeting with tutors or demonstrators (78%). In the focus groups students referred to a number of different approaches. They felt that face-to-face and one-to-one consultations fostered positive relationships. They also suggested the need to increase access through in person or virtually. Some students referred to the need for a dedicated website/webpage for Academic Advice to streamline, curate and combine all information for students and suggested SISWeb or Brightspace as being the best options. They felt that the "Chat" function in Virtual Classroom worked well when classes were delivered online during Covid-19 as it provided anonymity and instant answers but buy-in to this was required by all teaching staff. Other students felt that office hours could be online and flexible to accommodate busy programme timetables.

### **3.9 Student Responses to the Academic Advising Definition**

Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals.

Students responded positively to the proposed definition considering it appropriate as it speaks to the individuality of the student, recognising their strengths, weaknesses, interests and dislikes. The definition was also viewed as realistic as it captures the student's capabilities and potential. The inclusion of professional goals was also welcomed as it has a long-term focus, and this was especially important for those in the later stages of their studies. It was suggested that the term 'timely' should be included in the definition.

### **3.10 Attributes of an Academic Advisor**

Students in the focus groups were asked to identify the attributes of an academic advisor that they considered to be very important. They identified the following characteristics: dedicated, down to earth, amicable, easy to understand, ability to foster independence and empower and encourage students to find their own unique path as opposed to just giving answers. They also considered it important that faculty would be receptive to being approached for advice. Students wanted academic advisors to provide support on day-to-day matters, be a link between the different moving parts of their programme, signposting as to where to go, be aware of all parts of the degree that it doesn't work in a silo and that they understand how advice can be practically used i.e., to avoid module clashes. They wanted to be able to establish a real relationship and connection where the academic advisor was able to understand the individual and recognise their circumstances, understand individual student goals and their ambitions (strategic mindset).



## **4 Faculty Consultation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The faculty consultation process sought to gain faculty insights into the following areas: the type of topics that they provide advice on currently, when academic advising is most important for students, what are the challenges in implementing academic advising, their agreement with the objectives of academic advising and how it would impact on their individual schools and what are the ranges of supports necessary in order to develop academic advising in UCD.

### **4.2 Faculty Profile**

A total of 121 completed the survey in full, evenly split between male (49%) and females (50%). One respondent did not identify their gender. The majority of respondents (52%) spent 15-30 minutes on academic advising per student per trimester. Following this, 18% spent less than 15 minutes, and 16% spent 31-45 minutes.

### **4.3 Topics**

Faculty were asked to indicate the range of topics that students sought advice about. Table 8 presents the data.

Table 8: Frequency of academic advising topics

In your experience of providing academic advice, how frequently do the following topics occur?						
#	Question	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Total no. of responses
1	Self-reflection and/or self-assessment	13.04%	28.70%	40.00%	18.26%	115
2	Personal development planning	13.91%	26.96%	40.87%	18.26%	115
3	Goal setting	11.21%	19.83%	38.79%	30.17%	116
4	Module/subject/major choices	6.84%	16.24%	33.33%	43.59%	117
5	Study abroad	14.53%	29.06%	37.61%	18.80%	117
6	Work placement/internship	11.97%	22.22%	35.04%	30.77%	117
7	Clinical workplace settings	64.29%	10.71%	12.50%	12.50%	112
8	Workplace skills	23.48%	21.74%	33.91%	20.87%	115
9	Graduate study opportunities	4.31%	7.76%	60.34%	27.59%	116
10	Research opportunities	9.48%	20.69%	45.69%	24.14%	116
11	Careers	3.45%	19.83%	32.76%	43.97%	116
12	Changing or withdrawing from a programme, appeals, leave of absence	8.62%	27.59%	40.52%	23.28%	116
13	Struggling with a part of a module or programme	5.22%	15.65%	35.65%	43.48%	115
14	Workload management	7.76%	11.21%	42.24%	38.79%	116
15	Learning resources	8.62%	24.14%	43.97%	23.28%	116
16	Approaching assignments	6.96%	20.00%	37.39%	35.65%	115
17	Exam preparation	12.93%	17.24%	31.90%	37.93%	116
18	Academic literacy	12.93%	32.76%	38.79%	15.52%	116
19	Digital skills	20.87%	42.61%	27.83%	8.70%	115
20	Self-directed learning	18.42%	31.58%	38.60%	11.40%	114
21	Networking	32.17%	33.91%	26.96%	6.96%	115
22	Special needs	10.34%	35.34%	42.24%	12.07%	116
23	Access supports	12.93%	31.03%	45.69%	10.34%	116

The most frequently occurring topics were module/major/subject choices and careers (44%); followed by struggling with part of a module or programme (43%), workload management (39%) and exam preparation (38%).

#### 4.4 Timing of Academic Advising

Faculty were asked to consider the different points at which academic advising was most beneficial for students. Table 9 presents the data.

Table 9:Timing of academic advising

When is academic advising most important for students?								
#	Question	Not important	Of little importance	Of average importance	Very important	Absolutely essential	Not applicable	Total responses
1	Before/at the start of term in first year	4.27%	4.27%	21.37%	36.75%	31.62%	1.71%	117
2	At the start of each year of study	4.24%	2.54%	20.34%	44.92%	26.27%	1.69%	118
3	Mid-trimester	7.02%	16.67%	44.74%	26.32%	3.51%	1.75%	114
4	Half way through the academic year	7.89%	8.77%	43.86%	32.46%	4.39%	2.63%	114
5	After trimester 1 assessment results	3.42%	7.69%	28.21%	41.88%	16.24%	2.56%	117
6	After trimester 2 assessment results	4.35%	8.70%	33.04%	36.52%	14.78%	2.61%	115
7	Final year, trimester 1 decision points	4.46%	7.14%	20.54%	40.18%	24.11%	3.57%	112
8	Final year, trimester 2 decision points	4.42%	7.08%	23.89%	42.48%	18.58%	3.54%	113

For the majority (71%) of faculty students require academic advising at the start of each year of study, and during final year trimester 1 (64%) and 2 (61%) decision points. Over half (57%) were of the view that students required academic advice after trimester 1 assessment results.

#### 4.5 Challenges

Faculty recognised the impact that academic advising can have on students but were very conscious of the challenges that currently exist in relation to providing this to students. Table 10 presents the data.

Table 10: Challenges of academic advising for faculty

If academic advising is provided or introduced what are the challenges for faculty? Click on the items below then drag and drop to rank in order of the greatest challenges first.										
#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total responses
1	Students won't engage	13.51%	13.51%	17.12%	17.12%	17.12%	8.11%	12.61%	0.90%	111
2	Time pressure for faculty	54.05%	27.03%	9.91%	4.50%	3.60%	0.90%	0.00%	0.00%	111
3	High student to staff ratio	18.92%	27.93%	24.32%	14.41%	9.91%	3.60%	0.90%	0.00%	111
4	No experience of academic advising	4.50%	5.41%	9.01%	17.12%	14.41%	20.72%	24.32%	4.50%	111
5	I am only confident to advise for my own specialism	0.90%	4.50%	8.11%	11.71%	27.03%	26.13%	21.62%	0.00%	111
6	Uneven allocation of advising workload	1.80%	13.51%	17.12%	19.82%	10.81%	25.23%	10.81%	0.90%	111
7	Low cultural value placed on academic advising	4.50%	5.41%	13.51%	14.41%	16.22%	15.32%	27.93%	2.70%	111

Over half of respondents (54%) indicated that time pressures would present the greatest challenge to academic advising. In the open text commentary faculty offered a number of different views in relation to the challenges that exist in relation to providing academic advising, while acknowledging its importance and potential positive impact on students. The following comments are illustrative of this view:

*Students do appreciate one-on-one time and I think knowing the same student for their entire college cycle is important.*

*Face to face meetings are essential. Devising academic plans for students works well when the students are receptive...*

*Students need to be given greater advice and personal contact at programme level, and be given better advice as to the pressures of a over congested curriculum...*

While face to face meetings were acknowledged as being important it also added to an already challenging workload as the following comments indicate:

*One to one meetings with MSc students (beginning of term) - but it is an immense workload for the staff involved.*

*Giving the students time and being prepared to listen to talk a holistic approach to the students needs... However, the time requirement would be unsustainable as resources are currently deployed.*

A recurring theme emerging was the workload involved in addition to existing expectations:

*There is little university or college level recognition for the hours we put in on this, most of which is informal, but it makes a difference.*

Others felt that qualified people needed to take on this role due to the burdens that currently exist:

*Appoint suitably qualified people to do this job. Staff are already overburdened.*

Others expressed the view that academic advising cannot be seen in isolation, that it forms part of an overall supported holistic experience. The following comment illustrates this view:

*It will be key not to think of dedicated academic advising in isolation, they are part of a broader much more integrated strategy - many of the areas noted in question one are points of expertise already dealt with by others - so avoiding mixed messages and directing students to the correct advice is important...*

Some faculty were of the view that their current mentoring activities were not valued by the university:

*Academic staff should be valued more for their contributions in teaching and mentoring activities. Currently, it is as if only research performance, especially grants, is deemed important for many.*

#### **4.6 Objectives of Academic Advising**

Faculty prioritised a range of objectives for academic advising. Table 11 presents the data.

Table 11: Objectives of academic advising

In a context where each student might have a member of faculty as a dedicated academic advisor, do you agree with the following objectives for academic advising?							
#	Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total no. of responses
1	To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals	8%	8%	10%	40%	33%	118
2	To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals	10%	8%	9%	32%	40%	117
3	To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions	11%	10%	12%	31%	35%	116
4	To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices, for example)	9%	3%	9%	34%	45%	116
5	To know what the most appropriate research opportunities are to support educational and professional goals	9%	9%	14%	41%	27%	117
6	To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goals	15%	10%	13%	42%	21%	115

Almost three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed that supporting students in evaluating their personal interests leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals was important, followed by the development of educational plans that lead to the timely completion of educational goals (72%).

#### 4.7 Appropriate Approaches for your School

Faculty were next asked to consider academic advising in their own school or programme. Table 12 presents the data.

Table 12: Approaches to academic advising

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on academic advising for your /programme?							
#	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Total responses
1	It should be mandatory for students	20.69%	18.10%	29.31%	20.69%	11.21%	116
2	All faculty should participate	12.82%	17.95%	13.68%	30.77%	24.79%	117
3	Students should be allowed to opt-in	10.53%	14.91%	14.91%	39.47%	20.18%	114
4	Students should be allowed to opt-out	10.53%	9.65%	10.53%	47.37%	21.93%	114
5	Students should be randomly matched to faculty advisors	20.18%	18.42%	32.46%	20.18%	8.77%	114
6	Students should have the same advisor throughout their programme	6.19%	18.58%	32.74%	30.97%	11.50%	113
7	Students should have a different advisor for each stage	16.81%	22.12%	44.25%	15.04%	1.77%	113
8	Academic advising should be offered from stage two onwards	19.47%	20.35%	24.78%	31.86%	3.54%	113
9	It is important for students to have advisors from their degree discipline	2.63%	5.26%	16.67%	42.98%	32.46%	114

Over three quarters of faculty (76%) were of the view that students should have an advisor from their degree discipline, over two thirds (69%) felt that students should be allowed to opt out of academic advising and over half (59%) expressed the view that students should be allowed to opt in and that all faculty should participate (56%).

#### 4.8 Training and Supports

Faculty were asked to rate the importance of training and supports for academic advising. Table 13 presents the data.

Table 13: Importance of training and institutional support for faculty

How important would the following training or institutional support for faculty be for effective academic advising?							
#	Question	Not important	Of little importance	Of average importance	Very important	Absolutely essential	Total no. of responses
1	Instructional videos	23.89%	21.24%	27.43%	22.12%	5.31%	113
2	A training manual	17.86%	16.96%	40.18%	18.75%	6.25%	112
3	A training course	16.36%	12.73%	31.82%	29.09%	10.00%	110
4	A peer network of academic advisors	9.82%	8.93%	29.46%	47.32%	4.46%	112
5	A clear policy on the roles and expectations for academic advising	5.22%	4.35%	12.17%	35.65%	42.61%	115
6	Including academic advising in the workload allocation model	7.83%	0.87%	11.30%	29.57%	50.43%	115
7	Recognition for academic advising in promotions	6.14%	6.14%	12.28%	28.07%	47.37%	114
8	A UCD Award for academic advising	34.78%	12.17%	27.83%	13.04%	12.17%	115

The majority of faculty (79%) expressed the view that academic advising should be included in the workload allocation model. Over three quarters (78%) were of the view that there should be a clear policy on the roles and expectations around academic advising and three quarters were of the view that recognition for academic advising should be included in the faculty promotions system. In the open text comments faculty further expanded on these views. The following comments illustrate these perspectives:

*Begin a culture where interested academic staff are given credit in their workload model (rather than forcing every staff member to get involved). Without the recognition of the effort involved for staff, little progress will be made – as staff are all incredibly busy with so many other tasks.*

*Provide the necessary resources for academic staff to engage in academic advising and include it in the workload model. I can't see how academic advising can be pushed onto faculty who are already overloaded.*

*Ensuring lecturers are able to find the time to meet with students i.e., recognizing it as part of a lecturer's workload.*

*Where the staff student ratio exceeds 32:1 and class size can exceed 350, 1:1 academic time is necessarily limited. So the obvious answer is reduce SSR.*

Faculty expressed concerns about the level of resourcing required to support academic advising. The following comments are illustrative of the different viewpoints offered:



*At present, support has been resourced on an ad-hoc basis. I would like to see sustainable resources made available for school-based academic advisors...*

*Better structures should be in place so that both staff and students are compelled to engage, e.g., fixed times and reporting back online...*

*Mechanisms for students to gain support where academic advisor is not responsive (a very significant issue in my school) This adds hugely to other colleague's workloads when policy in paper is excellent but so many colleagues do not engage.*

Faculty also wanted clear statements about the aims and objectives of academic advising to allow for different approaches:

*Clearer articulation of the aims and objectives of academic advising. Broadening out our understanding of what academic advising encompasses.*

*A clearer purpose that is communicated effectively to both faculty and students  
Meet your advisor informal social events*

Some respondents did not agree with the introduction of academic advising in a structured way:

*None really - I think there is a limit to what a structured programme can do. Students need to be proactive in the seeking of advice.*

*No structured academic advising takes place. Not all faculty have the ability, experience, or interest in a formal system...*

## **4.9 Technology Supported Academic Advising**

Faculty were asked their views about the importance of technology in supporting academic advising. Table 14 presents the data.

Table 14: Importance of IT systems or developments for effective academic advising

How important would the following IT systems or developments be for effective academic advising?							
#	Question	Not important	Of little importance	Of average importance	Very important	Absolutely essential	Total no. of responses
1	Individual student performance data	6.14%	8.77%	17.54%	42.11%	25.44%	114
2	Individual student engagement data	7.89%	7.89%	20.18%	46.49%	17.54%	114
3	A system to allocate students to advisors	8.18%	8.18%	24.55%	33.64%	25.45%	110
4	A system to record and share academic advising session information	17.70%	12.39%	35.40%	28.32%	6.19%	113
5	Self-directed learning resources	17.12%	9.01%	27.03%	35.14%	11.71%	111
6	Self-assessment tools for students	14.29%	7.14%	16.07%	40.18%	22.32%	112
7	Academic planning templates for students	9.91%	7.21%	14.41%	44.14%	24.32%	111
8	A system to refer students to other supports	1.77%	3.54%	14.16%	38.94%	41.59%	113

Over three quarters (80%) of faculty were of the view that a system was required to refer students to other supports, over two thirds (68%) indicated that academic planning templates for students was very important and (67%) of respondents felt that having IT systems to access individual student performance data was very important. These views were further reiterated in the open text question, the following commentary being illustrative of the general view:

*Investment in technology to support allocating advisees, appointments and tracking interactions.*

#### 4.10 Consultation with School Heads of Teaching and Learning and Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning.

A further consultation to gauge faculty views was held with School Heads of Teaching and Learning and Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning (35 in total) attended this session in March 2022. This consultation was facilitated by Professor Marie Clarke and Áine Galvin, Director UCD Teaching and Learning. The participants were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What types of academic advice are students looking for? (i.e., main topics).
2. What approaches do you currently take to providing academic advice?
3. Do you think that all students would benefit from academic advice?

4. What should the University put in place to support/enable the formalised provision of academic advice?

#### **4.10.1 Advice that Students look for**

Faculty identified a number of recurring areas where students sought support. Career paths and internships was an emerging theme, reference was made to students seeking advice on finding jobs and internships, the contribution of school modules to specific career goals, interview preparation and professional requirements. Reference was also made to students who sought advice about module choices and workload management, basic study skills and time management, examination and assessment related issues, registration and guidance from senior students or alumni in relation to Erasmus or career related opportunities.

#### **4.10.2 Current Approaches**

Reference was made to the different approaches adopted in schools for example students in more practical subjects receive more contact time in which more valuable informal one-to-one advising can occur. Some faculty commented on the Intermittent large group advice provided in person and through general information. Others referred to the interventions that were present to support students who had failed a number of modules and the different faculty members such as Stage Coordinator, Programme Director/Dean supporting students in developing an academic plan to support students through their academic progress.

#### **4.10.3 Students who Benefit**

Some participants expressed concerns about those who would benefit most from academic advising especially in relation to students who were passive and did not have the foresight or maturity to seek advice until it is too late. It was generally accepted that the 'star' students and the 'strugglers' often receive academic advising, while those in the middle are often left out. For final year students who need to choose between a research and career focus very often required programme specific support. Some faculty pointed to the needs of international students who required extra supports navigating the systems in UCD. It was generally agreed that all students in general would benefit from one-to-one academic advice - and ideally all would receive it.

#### **4.10.4 Supports for Academic Advice**

A number of suggestions were offered in relation to providing appropriate supports for academic advising. These included having dedicated and trained members of faculty who can give programme and career specific advice and guidance - both for undergraduate and postgraduate students. It was generally agreed that subject-specific knowledge is key. It was also considered important that academic mentors would be assigned from the beginning of first year when students are most receptive to advice and guidance, so they can establish relationships with academic staff. Reference was made the role that peer mentors and graduates could play in supporting students.

#### **4.10.5 Who Should Undertake Academic Advising?**

Faculty expressed the view that all members of faculty should share the workload benefitting from interacting with students (awareness of issues students are facing and understand student expectations, etc.) even though they may not be as engaged or effective as other faculty. Otherwise, those who are more disposed to giving time and energy will end up overburdened. All participants were in agreement, that academic advising should be included as part of the faculty workload model.

#### **4.10.6 Issues And Concerns Around Academic Advising**

A number of challenges were identified in relation to developing academic advising across the university. Reference was made to the fact that if all faculty members do not take on advising responsibilities a divide will emerge between those who are viewed as better 'teachers' and those who are viewed more 'researchers'. The view was also expressed that if academic advising, although understood to benefit students, is added to faculty workload it must be clear what is being removed in exchange. It was also acknowledged that finding suitable time slots was challenging in order to have faculty-student meetings.

#### **4.10.7 Successful Engagements with Academic Advising**

A number of contributors highlighted past and present initiatives/engagements which they considered valuable in an academic advising context. These included alumni speaking to current students about their careers and the power of informal student and faculty coffee mornings. One member referenced their previous institution in the UK where academic advising was part of workload and found it very beneficial for student integration, building trust with faculty and enhanced understanding of programme modules. Faculty also benefitted and developed strong relationships as a result of their interaction with students.

## **5 Academic Advising Projects across UCD**

### **5.1 Introduction**

It is not envisaged that a 'one size fits all' model of academic advising will work in UCD. There are examples of different approaches to academic advising, already established across the University, which reflect the distinct advising contexts, student cohorts and disciplinary needs. The availability of HEA funding presented an invaluable opportunity to support academic advising pilot projects across the University in the academic year 2021/22. Coordinated by UCD Teaching and Learning with oversight from the Working Group, an internal funding call was devised and launched in May 2021. The objectives of the funding call were to:

- Support the collaborative development and piloting of academic advising approaches that are responsive to students' needs and aligned to strategic educational priorities.
- Facilitate research-informed and evidence-based decision-making about academic advising in UCD.
- Explore opportunities for leveraging technology to support personalised and flexible approaches to academic advising.
- Promote the value and importance of high-quality academic advising as a fundamental element of the UCD educational experience.
- Highlight and disseminate the learning from the pilot projects and to capture key findings across the spectrum of projects.

### **5.2 Funding Call**

Proposals were invited for projects that would introduce or expand academic advising systems for undergraduate and or taught graduate students. The scope for potential applications was broad, and creative approaches to academic advising accompanied by a well-designed project plan were encouraged. Application guidelines included the following:

- Proposals will be clearly focused on academic advising as an integral part of the teaching and learning mission of the university.
- Projects will involve collaborative teams working together at the level of the programme, stage, subject, school or college.
- A student-centric approach is critical; meaningful engagement of students in the design and/or implementation of the project must be evident.
- Project teams should consider how they will evaluate their pilot project to build an evidence-base to inform future decisions and actions.
- The sustainability of the academic advising approach, beyond the pilot phase, should be factored into the project design and implementation decisions.

- Value for money is a key criterion and applicants should only seek amounts that are reasonable for the delivery of projects.

A total budget of €475,000 was available and to encourage university-wide engagement in piloting academic advising approaches, an allocation of funding is ring-fenced for each of the six colleges. Evaluation criteria were agreed by the Working Group and published as part of the funding call (see appendix 5). An adjudication panel was established, chaired by Professor Marie Clarke, to review the 24 applications received.

A total of €403,685 was awarded to 17 projects and all six UCD Colleges are represented in the projects selected. The projects are time-bound and due for completion in end May 2022. As part of the terms and conditions of funding, each project team is required to develop a project case study and complete final report in June 2022. The pilot projects were reviewed midway through their cycle so that teams could receive supportive and constructive feedback.

### **5.3 Mid-term Review and Support for Project Teams**

The mid-term reviews took place over four half-day sessions and were organised in such a way as to bring projects from the same College together in a session. Each of the four review panels was chaired by Professor Marie Clarke and included representation from the relevant College(s), the Academic Advising Working Group, students and UCD Teaching and Learning. Importantly, the relevant College Principal(s) joined the review panel, along with an external reviewer from [UKAT](#).

The main purpose of the review was to provide constructive and supportive feedback to project teams towards maximising the outcomes and learnings from their pilot project. The project teams prepared documentation in advance which was shared with the review panel. At the review meeting, the project lead presented their progress to date, and this was followed by an opportunity for questions and dialogue with panel members. The four review sessions were open to all project teams to attend to facilitate shared learning. Members of the Academic Advising Working Group were also invited to attend. The review panels took time at the end of the session to discuss each project and compose written feedback for each team. This was issued post-review to each project team and a copy was sent to the relevant college principal. See appendix 6 for a summary of key themes emerging from the mid-term reviews.

An online community was set-up by UCD Teaching and Learning to connect the various project teams and support the sharing of resources and learnings over the period of the pilot projects.

## 5.4 Pilot Projects

The 17 pilot projects span the six UCD Colleges and include direct involvement by 13 different schools. A further three projects were coordinated at college-level, focusing on academic advising across an entire college and or a large-scale undergraduate programme.

Table 15: Pilot academic advising projects

Project Lead	School/College	Project Title
Dr Conor Buggy	Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science	<a href="#">Toolkit for Impactful Lifelong Learning in the 21st Century</a>
Dr Carmel Davies	Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems	<a href="#">Academic Literacy Support for Student Success: Designing an Academic Advising Disciplinary Framework</a>
Dr Linda Dowling-Hetherington	Business	<a href="#">Global Leadership Programme – UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School</a>
Dr Rachel Farrell	Education	<a href="#">ConnectED - Connecting Advisory Supports for Students in the School of Education</a>
Dr Niamh Harbourne	Agriculture and Food Science	<a href="#">Finding your way in Food Science</a>
Dr Maeve Houlihan	Business	<a href="#">Building Back Better: Community focused advisory and mentoring interventions for a redefined post pandemic reality</a>
Dr Jennifer Keenahan	Civil Engineering	<a href="#">Formalizing and expanding academic advising practices in the School of Civil Engineering.</a>
Dr Cliona Kelly	Law	<a href="#">Evaluating, Enhancing and Expanding Academic Advising in the School of Law</a>
Associate Professor Jorie Lagerwey	English, Drama, Film and Music	<a href="#">Transitions: Better Supporting BA and BA Hum Students to Make Key Programme Decisions</a>
Dr Lai Ma	Information and Communication Studies	<a href="#">Development of Self-Assessment Protocol</a>

Dr Denise McGrath	Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science	<a href="#"><u>TESLAA: Technology supported Student Learning and development through Appreciative Advising</u></a>
Dr Sarah Morton	Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice	<a href="#"><u>Beyond Progression: Academic Advising for Community Drugs Programme Students</u></a>
Associate Professor Conor Mulvagh	History	<a href="#"><u>ADAPT Humanities (Academic Development and Assistance Programme Team)</u></a>
Associate Professor Sara O'Sullivan	College of Social Science & Law	<a href="#"><u>Building meaningful relationships through structured and reflexive dialogue: Academic advising in the Social Sciences undergraduate curriculum</u></a>
Associate Professor Sue Rackard	Veterinary Medicine	<a href="#"><u>A Framework to Support Student-Academic Advising Interactions for Students on Clinical Work Placements in the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine</u></a>
Dr Gavin Stewart	Biology & Environmental Science	<a href="#"><u>Enhancing academic advice here at UCD: Is it simply a matter of time?</u></a>
Associate Professor James Sullivan	College of Science	<a href="#"><u>Determination of science student's academic advice needs, and development of living module advisory resources</u></a>



## 6 Leveraging Technology to Support Academic Advising

### 6.1 Introduction

A subgroup of the Working Group was set-up to explore the potential for leveraging technology to support the delivery of high quality advising at scale and to put forward priority actions that could be progressed in the short-to-medium term. The subgroup comprised four members of the Working Group along with two other colleagues with specialist expertise. Full terms of reference of the subgroup are available in appendix 7. In brief, the group considered the role of technology in different facets of academic advising including:

- **Prescriptive advising** to provide students with the information needed to negotiate the more administrative side of their academic experience and to assist them to navigate programme structures and make choices relating to major/minor/module options.
- **Operational aspects of delivering advising at scale**, including a system to allocate students to advisors, set-up meetings, make and track referrals, display office hours, etc.
- **Relationship management** between advisors and students to support personalised interactions and shared responsibility for the academic advising process.
- Enabling the **capture, manipulation, presentation and sharing of data** in an accessible way that would be helpful to students and advisors as part of a programme of academic advising. This could include data on student engagement and progress; student self-assessment and planning templates; and follow-up notes, reflections and records.

The group met on three occasions and completed focused work between meetings, including the drafting of a discussion paper on different aspects of technology enabled advising (see appendix 8).

Over the course of its deliberations the subgroup was cognisant of the wider university context and current strategic focus on 'Digital Transformation of Operations'. This may present opportunities to deliver on some operational aspects of academic advising, though this would only become clear once detailed scoping of technical requirements is completed and implementation timelines determined.

### 6.2 Discussion Paper

Members of the sub group prepared a discussion paper which was informed by the experiences of subgroup members and examples of international experience. It formed the starting point for subgroup discussions, leading to initial recommendations to the Academic Advising Working Group.

Key points of discussion:

- It's important that the focus remains firmly on how academic advising could be enabled and or enhanced through the use of technology, not technology for its own sake.
- Detailed recommendations on the technology elements of academic advising should not precede more fundamental decisions on a UCD framework/policy on academic advising. The latter will determine and feed into the technical requirements.
- Two options were identified that could be further explored in terms of identifying a suitable solution:
  - In-house development by EAG, adapting existing functionality in InfoHub/SISweb etc. or
  - Procure an external 'best in class' solution specific to academic advising. There are cost and timeline implications associated with both of these options.
- Whatever system(s) are put in place to support academics advising, it's critical that the solution can be customised locally to suit the needs of different schools/programmes. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach will not work.
- A system for allocating students to advisers is essential if UCD is to proceed with academic advising at scale. It would not be tenable to do the allocations manually.
- InfoHub/SISWeb is currently used for allocating first year students to their peer mentors. Similar functionality may suit an academic advising allocation system.
- It was agreed that a type of Customer Relations Management system (CRM) would add real value to academic advising. Such a system would support the relationship and interactions between the student and their advisor. Functionality would include setting-up and tracking appointments, recording high level content about an advisory session, making and tracking referrals, etc.
- The CRM system could also facilitate the sharing of content between student and advisor, such as, pre-meeting self-reflection form completed by the student.
- UniShare is currently used, predominantly by administrators and support services, to refer students to further support services and to track these referrals. It serves this purpose well, however, it's not a system that is used by faculty. If UniShare were to be adapted for academic advising referrals, steps would need to be taken to support faculty engagement with this system.
- The subgroup considered the potential of developing a dashboard that would provide a concise up-to-date overview (or picture) of a student's academic performance to their academic advisor. Such a dashboard would draw on data captures across multiple systems (e.g., Banner, Brightspace, SISWeb) on students' progress, performance, engagement and status. The subgroup identified a number of concerns in relation to development of such a dashboard including:
  - In the context of developmental advising, key areas of focus include goal setting, exploring academic and professional pathways and options, seeking guidance on careers and further studies, etc. This type of advising conversation can proceed without the advisor having access to performance/engagement type data. An overview of the student's progress to date (module grades & GPA) and current registration status may be sufficient and is already available via UView.

- Students who are struggling with their studies tend to be identified by Programme Offices/Deans/Directors/Stage Coordinators. Detailed performance and engagement data would be relevant in order to advise and support this specific cohort. This is currently managed through the Continuation Process and wouldn't necessarily be the focus of university-wide provision of academic advising.
- Arguably it would be preferable for the student to share their own information with their advisor as part of the academic advising process. This might include a self-reflection piece as well as grades and feedback on their work. The advisor could specify for the student what information would be useful to bring to an advisory meeting.
- It would be challenging to develop a concise dashboard that would serve the needs of all programmes/schools - they are likely to have different data requirements, linked on different metrics for reviewing/evaluating a student's progress. In addition, the complexity of some programmes would make it difficult to develop programme level views of student progress.
- As much of this data is personal data, there would be significant GDPR implications around its widespread use.
- It is acknowledged by the subgroup that prescriptive advising may be enhanced through investment in the redesign, organisation and navigation of information on various UCD systems and platforms. However, this would be a very significant undertaking and not something that this subgroup could progress within the specified timeframe of the academic advising initiative.
- The subgroup noted that a review of current literature on module/course recommender systems has shown that the technology has, so far, failed to live up to its early promise. Recommender systems are developed around 'big data' and would require significant investment to scope and develop. The subgroup agreed that this would not be an advisable route to progress at this point in time.

### 6.3 Key Recommendations

- The sub group agreed that there is a critical/pivotal role for technology to enable academic advising at scale in the university.
- A technical system would be key to supporting the administrative overhead associated with delivering an academic advising programme at scale. It would remove a burden of work from faculty advisors and staff involved in the organisation of advising.
- A technical system could also support the communication and relational aspects of advising, between advisor and student.
- The subgroup recommended two initial priority areas of focus, subject to ACEC approval of the Working Groups recommendations:
  - Development/sourcing of an IT system/platform for matching students to advisers at scale. The matching system would need to be sufficiently flexible to allow different types of matching arrangements (e.g. by school/programme).

- Development/sourcing of a Customer Relations Management system (CRM) that would support the relationship and interactions between the student and their academic advisor. Key functionality would include making and tracking appointments; storing/recording high-level content relating to advisory meetings; referral to other support services and tracking of referrals.
- Areas for longer-term developments:
  - The role of student performance, assessment and engagement data in the advising process
  - The value of a recommender system to guide module selection and programme-related choices using big data and AI.

## **7 Academic Advising Framework for UCD**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The structured provision of academic advising is consistent with the student-centred approach outlined in UCD's *Education and Student Success Strategy 2020-24* and is in line with international best practice. Where academic advising is already working well, that good practice should be maintained. Where it is inconsistently available, every effort should be made to develop structured provision.

### **7.2 Definition of Academic Advising**

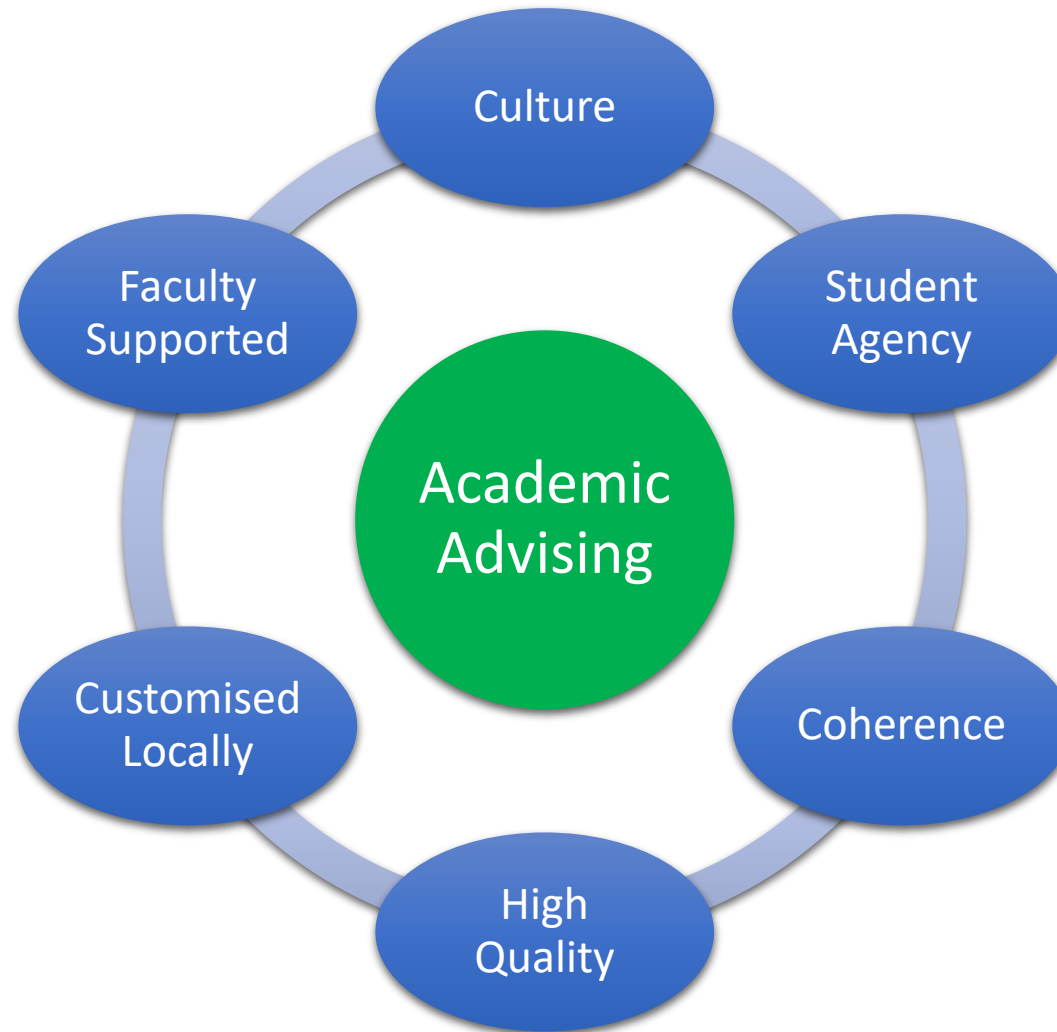
Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals.

### **7.3 Objectives of Academic Advising**

1. To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals.
2. To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals.
3. To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions.
4. To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices)
5. To know what the most appropriate research opportunities are to support their educational and professional goals
6. To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goal

The principles underpinning academic advising are represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Principles of Academic Advising



## 7.4 Culture

An inclusive, positive and proactive academic advising culture will be developed in UCD. Students will be proactively approached about academic advising and will be expected to proactively participate. Important elements of this culture will be the engagement of all taught students with academic advising so that students expect and know that they are entitled to, and could benefit from, academic advising. This should help to overcome some of the barriers to students engaging with academic advising identified in the consultation.

- **Individual students' academic needs and interests will be central to the advising process** as per the objectives of academic advising. Over and above specific module queries, all students should feel that there is a member of faculty that they can approach, and to whom their educational developmental matters.
- **The development of all students is valued equally.** A positive and inclusive culture will be fostered, to extend academic advising to all UCD students.
- **Students will have a safe space in which to have developmental conversations with faculty.** The extension of academic advising to all taught students should help change the culture, where some students are reluctant to seek advising due to stigma, not wanting to bother faculty or fear of rejection. Part of the creation of this safe space for students will be the creation of an expectation that academic advising is part of the role of every member faculty. If it is the norm for all students to engage with academic advising then, hopefully students who are struggling will avail of assistance earlier.
- **Students and advisors will work in a respectful partnership.** Although academic advising is broad and happens in multiple ways including group prescriptive and developmental advising, the development of a personal relationship between the student and a dedicated academic advisor is ultimately desirable from a student perspective. This should be put in place where student-faculty ratios permit it.
- **Embedding academic advising in university systems** will help to change the culture and expectations around academic advising. Academic advising will be regular and structured. Clear information will be provided to students about how, when, and in what format they will receive academic advice and, where dedicated academic advisors are available, who their advisor is and how and when they can be contacted.

## 7.5 Student Agency

- Students will play an active role in the academic advising process. As part of the expectations of students in the advising process, students will be expected to attend meetings and engage in preparatory activities. Resources will be provided to facilitate students to embark on self-assessment, reflective goal setting and planning exercises.
- Through academic advising students will be empowered to become increasingly responsible and autonomous. The advisor will adopt a coaching and signposting role to support and enable students to solve academic issues for themselves.

## **7.6 Coherence**

- Academic and professional staff will work together to ensure a holistic experience for students. Information will be organised coherently so that students are able to inform themselves on prescriptive advising matters and use their sessions with their advisors for maximum benefit for both students and advisors.
- UCD IT systems will be leveraged to maximise efficiency for advisors and students in organising and tracking advising sessions.
- It will be important for UCD IT systems to have the functionality for advisors to refer student to other services seamlessly and to track referrals.

## **7.7 High Quality**

- Clear roles and expectations will be established to ensure objectivity and consistency of experience.
- Academic advising will be relevant and timely.
- The quality of academic advising will be monitored at programme level, reporting to UPB. A collaborative annual review and improvement process will be put in place drawing on available evidence and data with a strong focus on benefits for students.

## **7.8 Customised Locally**

- The provision of academic advising will be shaped locally, reflecting the needs of the discipline and other local factors such as faculty-student ratios.
- Local provision will align with the principles and objectives of academic advising.
- Decisions around assigning advisors and students will be made locally and differences will need to be supported by any UCD advising IT system.

## **7.9 Faculty Supported**

- Academic advising will be part of the workload model for faculty and recognised in the Faculty Development Framework.
- Faculty will be supported to deliver high quality academic advising through training, resources and clear expectations.
- Expectations for advisors and students will be clearly communicated and will establish what is academic and what is pastoral.
- A UCD IT system will be put in place to enable seamless referral of students to pastoral supports as appropriate. Processes will be automated as much as possible to save faculty time.
- An academic advising peer network or community of practice will be established to support excellence in advising, collaboration and sharing of good practice and to develop UCD systems and processes.
- Decisions around assigning advisors will be fair, transparent and in line with UCD's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Part of the annual review of academic advising will report on the distribution of the workload of advising across genders.



Figure 3: Summary of Principles of Academic Advising

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CULTURE</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual students’ academic needs and interests are central to the advising process.</li> <li>• The growth of all students is valued equally.</li> <li>• Students have a safe space in which to have developmental conversations with faculty.</li> <li>• Students and advisors work in a respectful partnership.</li> <li>• Academic advising is embedded in university systems.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STUDENT AGENCY</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students play an active role in the academic advising process.</li> <li>• Through academic advising students are empowered to become increasingly responsible and autonomous.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COHERENCE</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic and professional staff work together to ensure a holistic experience for students.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH QUALITY</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Consistent</li> <li>• Relevant and timely</li> <li>• Clear roles and standards</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CUSTOMISED LOCALLY</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of academic advising will be shaped locally, reflecting the needs of the discipline and other local factors such as faculty-student ratios.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACULTY SUPPORTED</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty are supported (training, resources, clear boundaries for what is academic and what is pastoral, referral system, advisor peer network)</li> <li>• Transparent</li> <li>• Recognised in the Faculty Development Framework</li> <li>• Part of workload model for faculty</li> <li>• Advising is distributed across genders</li> </ul>

Figure 4: Objectives of Academic Advising

## Objectives of Academic Advising



## 8 Recommendations

The structured provision of academic advising is consistent with the student-centred approach outlined in UCD's *Education and Student Success Strategy 2020-24* and is in line with international best practice. The following recommendations are agreed by the Working Group on Academic Advising **to enable the implementation of an institutional policy on academic advising by September 2024**. The provision of personalised advising to support the holistic development of all UCD students is essential to their success. The adoption of an institutional policy on academic advising will be successful if it is endorsed by faculty, staff and students, and appropriately resourced. The Working Group recommends the following:

### **Recommendation 1: Approve the Academic Advising Framework for UCD**

The Academic Advising Framework, incorporating a UCD definition, objectives and principles of academic advising, is proposed as the basis for the development of a formalised university policy on academic advising. The framework is evidence-based, drawing on the consultation process with students and faculty and informed by international best practice.

### **Recommendation 2: Invest in an IT System to enable academic advising at scale**

In order to operationalise the provision of academic advising for all UCD undergraduate and taught graduate students, in a way that is effective and efficient, a bespoke IT system is a critical requirement. The technical requirements would need to be fully scoped, however, the priority functionality areas would be:

- to enable the matching of students to advisors, allowing for flexibility for schools/programmes/other structures to nuance the matching process within their own context.
- to enable the academic advising sessions, managing the relationship between student and advisor, capturing any shared resources, notes, outcomes, actions, referrals, and any other key functionality identified in a full requirements gathering process as part of the wider implementation of academic advising at scale.
- to facilitate unit/university level reporting on the implementation of academic advising for the purpose of review and continuous enhancement of academic advising processes.

### **Recommendation 3: Put in place appropriate governance structures for academic advising**

It is recommended that overall responsibility for academic advising will lie with the Registrar and Vice President Academic Affairs and that strategic oversight and development of academic advising will be within the remit of UMT Education Group. To ensure that academic advising is developed according to the appropriate norms of the discipline and subject area it is recommended that:

- Each College will put in place a process to ensure the implementation of the university policy on academic advising is appropriate to their own context.

- The College Principal will take responsibility for the implementation of the policy being cognisant of the faculty/student ratios that exist in each School.
- The College Principal will with the Head of School ensure that each School receives the appropriate supports to make academic advising a reality for students in the respective Schools.

#### **Recommendation 4: Take steps to ensure recognition of academic advising in faculty workload models and faculty promotion**

Academic advising must be recognised as part of the faculty workload model and as part of the faculty promotion system. Therefore, it is important that

- Faculty are recognised for the time that they invest in academic advising.
- Faculty have the opportunity to engage with the appropriate supports to facilitate the development of their own skills in an academic advising role.
- In each School workload model time is allocated to academic advising in the form that is appropriate to the discipline and subject area.
- Academic advising is recognised as part of the teaching commitment in the Faculty Promotions Framework.

#### **Recommendation 5: Commit to the development of an inclusive, positive and proactive culture of academic advising**

Academic advising must operate within UCD EDI principles and associated Dignity and Respect policies. In order to achieve this, it must be recognised that:

- The growth and development of all students is valued equally. The University must commit to fostering a positive and inclusive culture that extends academic advising to all taught students.
- Students should expect to participate fully in and benefit from academic advising.
- The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion will be embedded in the policy and practice of academic advising on the part of students and faculty.

#### **Recommendation 6: Develop structures and tools to support academic advising sessions and student self-reflection**

In order to benefit from academic advising students and faculty require support. Therefore:

- The development of guidance, resources and training for faculty advisors will be crucial to embedding high quality advising and consistency of experience for students.
- Students will be expected to be active partners in the advising process and undertake all required preparatory activities.
- Students will be provided with the appropriate resources to facilitate self-assessment, reflective goal setting and planning exercises.

#### **Recommendation 7: Streamline, simplify and organise information coherently**

In order to support the academic advising process, it is recommended that:

- Information on various UCD systems and platforms be organised coherently so that students are able to inform themselves on prescriptive advising matters and use their sessions with their advisor for maximum benefit. This will require an investment of resources to streamline, simplify and reorganise information pertinent to academic advising.
- Faculty and staff also require clear and up-to-date information on the breadth of supports available to students so that they can refer students to the most appropriate service/support and ensure a holistic and joined-up experience for students.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of Academic Advising Working Group

Appendix 2: Research Studies in the areas of academic advising

Appendix 3: Surveys

Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Guide (to be inserted)

Appendix 5: Funding Call for Academic Advising Pilot Projects

Appendix 6: Mid-term Review of Pilot Projects: Summary Report

Appendix 7: Terms of Reference of Subgroup on Leveraging Technology to Support Academic Advising

Appendix 8: Discussion paper on the potential applications of technology to support academic advising

Appendix 9: Proposal to IT Services on Technology Enabled Academic Advising

Appendix 10: Student-Faculty Ratios March 2022

## **Appendix 1: Academic Advising Working Group – Terms of Reference**

With the approval of the Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC), the Registrar has established a Working Group under the chair of Professor Marie Clarke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies to inform university wide policy on academic advising.

As UCD begins to implement its *Rising to the Future* strategy and allied Education Strategy, planning for the future based on what we are learning from the COVID-19 context, our commitment to digital transformation and providing for increasing domestic and international students, there is a significant policy gap with reference to the formalised provision of academic support and advice, to undergraduate and taught graduate students in UCD. It was a stated objective in our Education Strategy 2015-20 and is also included in our proposed Education Strategy 2021-24. The need for such a policy is to ensure that all students are provided with high-quality academic support through a proactive academic partnership with mutual expectations of faculty and students. This will need to evolve in a carefully managed way.

It is expected that the policy will set out the basic requirements and expectations of academic advising in the university while acknowledging that Colleges may implement alternative advising systems that provide an equivalent level of support in the context of the needs and requirements of programmes in different schools and that there exists a diverse range of academic supports available in College and Programme Offices and at central level in the university.

Institutional funding awarded by the HEA/National Forum through the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement fund 2020 will be used to support a number of work streams guided by the Working Group.

The Working Group will deliver its final report and recommendations in May 2022 and ACEC has directed that an implementation timeline should be included.

### **Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the Academic Advising Working Group is to oversee and steer the development of an evidence-based policy on academic advising for UCD. The working group will:

- Agree general principles to establish the expectations of academic advising across the university.
- Consider existing models of academic advising in comparator universities internationally.
- Explore effective use of technology to develop personalised and flexible models drawing on the analytics data available.
- Establish the nature and type of current provision across UCD.
- Conduct a university wide consultation ensuring meaningful engagement of students.
- Consider the introduction of an Academic Advisor role(s) within schools and programmes, and associated role descriptors.

- Identify the professional development needs of those appointed to academic advisory role(s) and make recommendations on the training and resources required and recognition of this roles as part of the University Faculty Promotions system.
- Clarify the role and responsibilities of the student in the academic advising relationship and develop guidelines to inform and support student engagement in academic advising.
- Consider data privacy and protection issues pertinent to the implementation of academic advising and make recommendations regarding, in line with UCD's GDPR obligations.
- Oversee a funding scheme to support schools in piloting different models of academic advising in partnership with students.
- Develop an evaluation and dissemination strategy to maximise the learning from the pilot projects and to capture key findings across the spectrum of projects.
- Report and make recommendations to AC with reference to a university wide policy on academic advising.

### **Academic Advising Working Group Membership**

Professor Marie Clarke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies **(Chair)**

Ms Judith Archbold, Projects Officer, UCD Teaching and Learning

Ms Aoife Bracken, UCD SU Education Officer

Dr Carmel Davies, Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Dr Bairbre Fleming, Deputy Director, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

Ms Áine Galvin, Director, UCD Teaching and Learning

Ms Carla Gummerson, UCD SU Graduate Officer

Dr Oliver Kinnane, School Head of Teaching and Learning, School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy

Ms Trish Mountjoy, Head of Educational Technology Services, IT Services

Ms Nicola Fortune, Career & Skills Consultant, UCD Careers Network

Ms Jenny Murphy, Director, College of Social Science and Law Office

Professor John O'Connor, School Head of Teaching and Learning, School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science

Mr Lee O'Farrell, Specialist Officer, UCD Registry

Ms Aisling O'Grady, Head of Student Advisory Service

Assoc Professor Gillian Pye, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

Assoc Professor Paul Ryan, Vice Principal of Teaching & Learning, College of Business

Assoc Professor Emma Sokell, School Head of Teaching and Learning, School of Physics



**Committee Support**

Ms Olga Kierans and Ms Claire Walsh, Office of the Registrar

**Meeting Schedule**

The Working Group will meet four times per academic year.

## **Appendix 2: Research Studies in the area of Academic Advising**

The following tables illustrate the various lines of enquiry, feedback, impacts of pilot studies within institutions, and general preferences and issues held by students and faculty advisers/personal tutors respectively.

Table 16: Student experiences

Authors	Institution	Focus of Study	Scale	Main Findings	Other
Prowse et al., 2020	Unknown (UK)	Student perceptions of personalised support to create a design tool for student engagement with a system of personalised student support via tutoring.	130 students (informal conversation)  10 students (written detail of experience)	5 design considerations of a <b>personalised student support system</b> are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose</li> <li>- Structures</li> <li>- Communications</li> <li>- Perceived sincerity of the support proposition</li> <li>- Perceived value (to students &amp; staff)</li> </ul>	
Yale, 2019	UK university in the North West of England	A focus session with first year undergraduate students explored expectations & experiences of PT from the student perspective.	11 participants (10 females and one male) 1st year undergraduate psychology students	Developing a <b>positive and genuine relationship</b> found to 'buffer' against some of the <b>first-year challenges</b> and <b>contribute towards a sense of belonging</b> - genuine caring most valued by students  <b>Poor PT is worse than no PT.</b>  Most participants felt that they used a mixture of previous experiences, <b>guesswork</b> , and trial and error to work out what their PT was for.	Those participants who had a positive experience of their PT tended to use them more frequently  Tutors and students need to be prepared for their roles as early as possible, with explicit articulation of expectations of the roles
Ghenghesh, 2018	British University in Egypt	Identify factors (negatively) affecting PT system in the university	309 students from different faculties	Factors which impact PT system: the <b>students' lack of awareness</b> of the system and personal tutor role  <b>Lack of contact</b> and meetings between both parties	Recommended change from centralised to decentralized system  Establish a central support system for students with learning disabilities and also a counselling service.

Walker, R. et al., 2017	US large Great Lakes state institution	Students Perceptions of Academic Advising	162 first year students	4 overarching themes: <b>student difficulty making the distinction</b> between roles of high school guidance counsellors and postsecondary academic advisers, <b>adviser communication</b> , student <b>desire for a relationship</b> , and <b>adviser accessibility</b>	Institution employs full-time primary role advisers (not faculty members as advisers)
Gaines, 2014	University of West Florida	162 students, 118 from online certification programmes	Student preferences & level of usage with respect to technology as a part of the academic advising experience	Strong <b>student preference</b> for accessing important information via student <b>email</b> (98.8%) as opposed to social media or podcasts.  <b>Face-to face appointments preferred</b>	
Morillas and Garrido, 2018	The Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV)	After 3 years; 6,883 students tutored 473 tutors	Implementation of a Tutorial Action Plan (TAP) through a virtual tutorial space	<b>Students and tutors appreciate e-tutoring</b> due to individual tracking & makes group sessions more individual. However, most prefer face-to-face tutoring.  Specific <b>training programs are necessary</b> - technology and methodology  Students only call a meeting on their <b>own initiative in a very low percentage</b> of cases (29%).	Tutee-Tutor ration is 15:1  2011-2012 13 training sessions for tutors, attended by 134.  All degrees at the URV plan for 25 hours of guidance with the tutor and include other agents in the process when necessary.  Implementation is very different in each faculty/school

Table 17: Faculty adviser experiences

Author(s) & Date	Institution(s)	Focus of Study	Scale	Main Findings	Other
Walker, B, 2020 (a)	Multiple (UK)	<p>Significance of pre-existing standards</p> <p>Necessity for, &amp; potential benefits of, distinct tutoring standards</p> <p>Extent to which they felt tutoring to be valued, rewarded, and recognized</p>	57 responses were received from participants representing 26 UK universities.	<p>Almost 75% believed it is <b>necessary for professional standards for PT</b> &amp; advising to be established</p> <p>A perception of PT as <b>under-valued, under-recognized, &amp; under rewarded</b> at both institutional &amp; sector level emerged</p> <p>Theme of <b>professional recognition</b> being wanted and needed emerged</p>	
Woods, 2020	University of Warwick (in 2018)	Development and design of an interactive digital training resource for personal tutors in the Arts Faculty		<p>Demonstrates the <b>value and appreciation of online training and resources</b> for supporting personal tutors</p> <p><b>Online training often preferred to face-to-face</b> training due to flexibility</p> <p>Substantive <b>improvement in student satisfaction</b> concerning “academic support” in the subsequent year</p>	<p>Developed within Moodle</p> <p>PT is organized locally by departments.</p> <p>Staff engagement with institutional training more likely successful if delivered through digital systems which staff are already familiar with and easy to access</p>

Stuart et al., 2021	University of Cumbria	Faculty advisers' PT role perceptions & practice	20 academic Staff across 2 University departments	<p><b>Execution</b> of the PT system by personal tutors <b>varied enormously</b></p> <p>Consistent <b>lack of policy knowledge</b></p> <p>Recognised <b>need for relational &amp; communication skills</b></p> <p>Acknowledgement of the <b>challenge of managing personal tutoring</b> within the Workload Allocation Model</p>	<p>It was identified that 'time is a factor' in delivering the provision</p> <p>No induction or training meant staff feel unsure if they are practicing PT properly</p> <p>Useful compilation of practical recommendations stemming from issues identified</p>
Ghenghesh, 2018	British University in Egypt	Identify factors (negatively) affecting PT system in the university	<p>76 academic staff</p> <p>14 teaching assistants</p>	<p><b>'Buy in' &amp; the qualities</b> of the tutors impacted PT</p> <p><b>Length of time taken to disseminate information</b> to tutees impacted PT</p>	
Walker, B, 2020 (b)	University of Lincoln - four colleges	Impact of developmental support on Personal Tutors	8 Personal Tutors	<p>Tutors' <b>perceptions of their effectiveness</b> in the role <b>varied</b></p> <p>More <b>training and support on the pastoral side</b> of the role needed according to tutors.</p> <p>Perceived <b>confidence &amp; competence was increased, &amp; role confusion reduced</b> by providing definition &amp; structure</p> <p>Positive impact of certain <b>professional development practices</b>: one-to-one conversations &amp; coaching.</p>	<p>Approach and early intervention aided effectiveness</p> <p>Issues measuring the impact/effect, causal factors, limited confidence impeded effectiveness</p> <p>50% of responses showed importance of informal support from colleagues</p>



Hart-Baldrige, 202	A US mid-western institution	Faculty Adviser Perspectives of Academic Advising	11 faculty members	Faculty consider their greatest advising responsibilities to be: Fulfilling graduation requirements; explaining graduate school & career exploration; teaching students to navigate systems; empowering students.	<b>Faculty advisers' challenges:</b> navigating software, AA as an isolated process, unclear expectations, & observe workload inequity  <b>The majority incorporate holistic or developmental advising</b> into their AA approach
C.Y Chan, 2015	School of Nursing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	An exploration of participants' experiences (student and faculty advisers)	5 Academic Advisers	<b>Lack of time</b> and <b>personality mismatch are problematic</b> in mentoring relationships.  Need to <b>encourage first year students</b> to have more input in the relationship	Advisers must also have the ability to look for & handle freshmen's personal and psychological issues

## Appendix 3 Academic Advising Surveys

### Student Survey

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#### Introduction

##### **UCD Student Survey on Academic Advising What is this survey about?**

This survey is about student needs and preferences for academic advising in UCD.

##### **What is academic advising?**

Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals.

##### **Why are we carrying out this survey?**

UCD students have access to a range of advice and support services, however, not all students have formal academic advising. This survey is part of a needs analysis which seeks to understand student needs and preferences for academic advice to best support them with their studies.

##### **Who is carrying out this survey?**

This survey is being conducted by UCD Teaching and Learning as part of the [Academic Advising Initiative](#).

##### **What will my participation involve?**

This survey will take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. You may close the survey at any point. Please note that if you withdraw from the survey, the data collected up to your withdrawal will be used.

##### **Benefits of participation**

By choosing to participate in the survey, you will get the chance to reflect on your academic-related experiences. Your participation will inform policy and help UCD to put in place the appropriate and effective academic support for our students.

##### **Is the survey anonymous?**

Yes, this survey is anonymous. The survey will not collect any personal identifiable information about you. Data will be collated and reported on anonymously. Please do not provide any information (e.g., name, surname, etc.) that could be used to identify you.

##### **How will the data be used?**

The findings from this survey will be shared with UCD staff and students, and will be used to inform policy and practice in UCD. The findings may also be used for writing papers for publication in educational journals or presented at academic conferences.

##### **How will the data be stored?**

The survey answers will be stored securely using passwords for the survey software and will not be accessed by anyone outside of [UCD Teaching and Learning](#) and UCD Institutional Research.

**Who can I contact for further information? For further information contact UCD Teaching and Learning at [tl@ucd.ie](mailto:tl@ucd.ie)**

I give my consent to participate in this survey  
 Click to give consent

Q1 Which of the following are you aware of, or have availed of for support with your studies? Please add additional supports that you are aware of or have availed of that do not appear in the list.

	Not aware of (1)	Aware but haven't availed of (2)	Have availed of (3)
Academic advisor (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Module coordinator (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programme director (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Associate Dean (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tutor or demonstrator (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stage coordinator (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Head of subject (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student advisor (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer mentor (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programme office staff (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UCD Careers Network (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UCD Library (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class rep (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alumni mentor (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing Centre (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths Support Centre (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access & Lifelong Learning Disability Support (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Microsoft Office Training via UCD IT Services (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UCD Welcome Booklet (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Introduction to UCD" Brightspace Course (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 When you haven't availed of supports, how likely is it to have been for the following reasons?

	Very unlikely (6)	Unlikely (7)	Neither likely nor unlikely (8)	Likely (9)	Very likely (10)
You were not aware of the supports (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There may have been limited availability (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You felt embarrassed (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You were procrastinating (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You found the process of accessing support intimidating (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You had low confidence that you would benefit from the support (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You did not know what to expect (24)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You had a negative experience with the support (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You were afraid of being exposed (26)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You were afraid of being judged (27)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You may not have realised that you need the support (28)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You did not know that you were eligible for the support (29)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You did not find the support accessible (30)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You felt that your question was too trivial (31)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 For students to succeed, what are the most important academic advising topics? Please add any further items which do not appear in the list.

	Not important (11)	Of little importance (12)	Of average importance (13)	Very important (14)	Absolutely essential (15)
How to take the best lecture notes? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to use Brightspace? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to use Microsoft programmes such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to use other computer programmes? (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to set long term study goals for beyond this year? (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to give useful feedback to my peers? (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to approach group assignments? (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to contact a lecturer? (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to write essays? (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to plan my time? (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to stay motivated? (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice about withdrawing from a programme or transferring to a different programme (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Help assessing my strengths (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information on research opportunities (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice on internships, work placements or career opportunities (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice on choosing modules, majors or post-graduate degree options (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q4 Thinking about your own programme, are there any other supports, currently not available, that would help students with their studies? If yes, please specify.

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Q5 In a context where each student has a member of faculty as a dedicated academic advisor, do you agree with the following goals for academic advising.

	Strongly disagree (6)	Disagree (7)	Neither agree nor disagree (8)	Agree (9)	Strongly agree (10)
To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices for example) (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To know what the most appropriate research opportunities are to support educational and professional goals (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goals (10)	o	o	o	o	o
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Q6 When is academic advising most important? Please add further important points in time which do not appear in the list.

	Not important (9)	Little importance (10)	Average importance (11)	Very important (12)	Absolutely essential (13)
At the start of term in first year (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At the start of each year of study (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mid-trimester (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Half way through the academic year (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After trimester 1 assessment (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After trimester 2 assessment (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final year, trimester 1 decision points (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final year, trimester 2 decision points (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Which ways do you think would be most effective for students to access academic advice? Please add additional effective ways which do not appear in the list.

	Not effective (27)	Somewhat effective (28)	Effective (29)	Very effective (30)
Individual meetings with a dedicated academic advisor (9)	0	0	0	0
Group meetings with a dedicated academic advisor (12)	0	0	0	0
Talking to their lecturer/module coordinator at the end of class (13)	0	0	0	0
Talking to their lecturer/module coordinator online during virtual office hours (14)	0	0	0	0
Talking to the lecturer/module coordinator in a face-to-face meeting during their office hours (15)	0	0	0	0
Meeting tutor/demonstrator (16)	0	0	0	0
Self-assessment online tools (17)	0	0	0	0
Online resources in Brightspace (18)	0	0	0	0
A UCD Website dedicated to academic advice (20)	0	0	0	0
Learning analytics which show you how you are doing compared to other students (19)	0	0	0	0
Other, please specify (10)	0	0	0	0

Q8 In a 2019 student survey, student access to lecturer advice was the most cited area for UCD to improve student engagement with learning. How can UCD improve student access to lecturer advice?

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Q9 During the pandemic, academic supports moved online. If you availed of academic support, which of the following did you find helpful for accessing it? Please add anything additional which you found helpful that does not appear in the list.

	Not at all helpful (28)	Slightly helpful (29)	Moderately helpful (30)	Very helpful (31)	Extremely helpful (32)
Email (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible timeslots for meeting with faculty/advisers (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Virtual classroom (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online office hours (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone conversations with faculty/advisers (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Chat" function in the Virtual Classroom (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Ask a Question" in your Brightspace module (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 What, if any, support for your studies did you miss due to the pandemic?

*(Display This Question: If COURSEYR >= 3)*

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### Introduction

#### **UCD Teaching & Learning Survey on Academic Advising**

**What is this survey about?** This survey is about needs, preferences and practices around academic advising in UCD. Student consultation is also being conducted and the results of both will provide an evidence base to inform the principles and expectations of academic advising in UCD as part of the [Academic Advising Initiative](#).

**What is academic advising?** Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making informed choices from a wide range of opportunities to help them achieve realistic academic and professional goals.

**Why are we carrying out this survey?** UCD students have access to a range of advice and support services, however, not all students have formal academic advising. This survey is part of a needs analysis which seeks to understand needs and preferences for effective provision and receipt of academic advice in UCD.

**Who is carrying out this survey?** This survey is being conducted by UCD Teaching and Learning on behalf of the Academic Advisory Working Group established by the UCD Registrar and Deputy President. The Working Group is chaired by Professor Marie Clarke.

**What will my participation involve?** This survey will take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. You may close the survey at any point. Please note that if you withdraw from the survey, the data collected up to your withdrawal will be used.

**Benefits of participation** - By choosing to participate in the survey, you will get the chance to contribute your views on academic advising and share your experience of providing academic advice to students. Your participation will inform policy and help UCD to put in place a framework for academic advising.

**Is the survey anonymous?** Yes, this survey is anonymous. The survey will not collect any personal identifiable information about you. Data will be collated and reported on anonymously. Please do not provide any information (e.g., name, surname, etc.) that could be used to identify you.

**How will the data be used?** The findings from this survey will be shared within UCD and will be used to inform policy and practice in UCD. The findings may also be used for writing papers for publication in educational journals or presented at academic conferences.

**How will the data be stored?** The survey answers will be stored securely using passwords for the survey software and will not be accessed by anyone outside of UCD Teaching and Learning and UCD Institutional Research.

**Who can I contact for further information?** For further information contact UCD Teaching and Learning at [tl@ucd.ie](mailto:tl@ucd.ie)

I give my consent to participate in this survey and understand that I may withdraw from the survey at any point.

Click to indicate consent

Q1 In a context where each student might have a member of faculty as a dedicated academic advisor, do you agree with the following objectives for academic advising? If you think anything is missing from the objectives, please specify in the box marked 'Other, please specify' at the end of the question.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices, for example) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To know what the most appropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

research opportunities are to support educational and professional goals (5)					
To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goals (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q2 In your experience of providing academic advice, how frequently do the following topics occur?

	Never (2)	Rarely (3)	Occasionally (4)	Frequently (5)
Self-reflection and/or self-assessment (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal development planning (24)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal setting (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Module/subject/major choices (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study abroad (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work placement/internship (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clinical workplace settings (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workplace skills (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduate study opportunities (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research opportunities (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Careers (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing or withdrawing from a programme, appeals, leave of absence (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Struggling with a part of a module or programme (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workload management (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning resources (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approaching assignments (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exam preparation (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic literacy (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Digital skills (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-directed learning (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special needs (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access supports (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q3 When is academic advising most important for students? Please include additional times which do not appear on the list.

	Not important (1)	Of little importance (2)	Of average importance (3)	Very important (4)	Absolutely essential (5)	Not applicable (6)
Before/at the start of term in first year (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At the start of each year of study (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mid-trimester (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Half way through the academic year (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After trimester 1 assessment results (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After trimester 2 assessment results (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final year, trimester 1 decision points (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final year, trimester 2 decision points (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 What gaps, if any, are there in the academic advice that students on your programme/in your school receive?

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Q5 During the pandemic academic supports moved online. In your experience, what did students seem to find helpful for accessing academic support? Please add any further items which do not appear in the box marked 'Other, please specify'.

	<b>Not at all helpful (1)</b>	<b>Moderately helpful (2)</b>	<b>Very helpful (3)</b>	<b>Extremely helpful (4)</b>	<b>Not applicable (6)</b>
Email (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Chat" function in the online lectures or tutorials (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible timeslots for meeting with faculty (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Virtual meetings (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online office hours (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone conversations with faculty (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Ask a Question" Brightspace module feature (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making informed choices from a wide range of opportunities to help them achieve realistic academic and professional goals. Where you have met with students,

online, face-to-face or by telephone, to provide academic advice how long generally is spent per student per trimester?

- Zero minutes (6)
  - Less than 15 minutes (1)
  - 15-30 minutes (2)
  - 31-45 minutes (3)
  - 46-60 minutes (4)
  - More than one hour (5)
- 

Q7 Approximately how many students have you met with per trimester?

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Q8 Over the last 12 months: how much time did you spend on academic advising on average per week during term?

- Zero minutes (9)
  - <30 minutes (10)
  - ≥30 minutes but (4)
  - ≥1 hour but < 2 hours (5)
  - ≥2 hours but < 3 hours (7)
  - ≥3 hours but < 4 hours (8)
-

Q9 How important would the following training or institutional support for faculty be for effective academic advising? Please add any further items which do not appear in the list.

	<b>Not important (1)</b>	<b>Of little importance (2)</b>	<b>Of average importance (3)</b>	<b>Very important (4)</b>	<b>Absolutely essential (5)</b>
Instructional videos (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A training manual (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A training course (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A peer network of academic advisors (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A clear policy on the roles and expectations for academic advising (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Including academic advising in the workload allocation model (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognition for academic advising in promotions (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A UCD Award for academic advising (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q10 How important would the following IT systems or developments be for effective academic advising? Please add any further items which do not appear in the box marked "other, please specify".

	<b>Not important (1)</b>	<b>Of little importance (2)</b>	<b>Of average importance (3)</b>	<b>Very important (4)</b>	<b>Absolutely essential (5)</b>
Individual student performance data (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individual student engagement data (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A system to allocate students to advisors (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A system to record and share academic advising session information (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-directed learning resources (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-assessment tools for students (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic planning templates for students (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A system to refer students to other supports (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 To what extent do you agree with the following statements on academic advising for your school/programme?

	<b>Strongly disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Undecided (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly agree (5)</b>
It should be mandatory for students (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All faculty should participate (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should be allowed to opt-in (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should be allowed to opt-out (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should be randomly matched to faculty advisors (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should have the same advisor throughout their programme (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should have a different advisor for each stage (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic advising should be offered from stage two onwards (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important for students to have advisors from their degree discipline (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Any other comments (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q12 How can UCD improve student access to lecturer advice?

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Q13 If academic advising is provided or introduced what are the challenges for faculty?  
Please add any further items which do not appear on the list. Click on the items below then  
drag and drop to rank in order of the greatest challenges first.

- Students won't engage (4)
- Time pressure for faculty (7)
- High student to staff ratio (8)
- No experience of academic advising (9)
- I am only confident to advise for my own specialism (10)
- Uneven allocation of advising workload (11)
- Low cultural value placed on academic advising (12)
- Other, please specify (6)

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Q14 If any form of academic advising has taken place in your college/school/programme  
what worked well?

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Q15 If structured academic advising has taken place in your college/school/programme what improvements would you suggest?

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Appendix 4: Student Focus Groups Discussion Guide



**SPARK**

The Human Truths Agency

Discussion Guide  
UCD Academic  
Advice Focus  
Groups

Jan 2022



## Discussion Guide Overview:

UCD wishes Spark to carry out research to inform their needs assessment on Academic Advising and provide an evidence base to inform the principles and expectations of academic advising in UCD

### Intro & Warm Up

*10 mins*

1

Make everyone feel comfortable, lay down ground rules and key info

### Needs Mapping

*20 mins*

2

Explore current supports, the need for Academic Advice in UCD and identify gaps

### Academic Advice

*25 mins*

3

Gauge reactions to Academic Advice

### Exploring the Ideal

*25 mins*

4

Explore which approaches would be more effective for Academic Advice and uncover student preferences about the who, what, when, and how they access supports

### Wrap Up

*10 mins*

5

Share final thoughts & thank participants for their participation



## Intro & warm up

10 mins



*Objective: Make everyone feel comfortable, lay down ground rules and key info*

Thanks for agreeing to take part in this focus group. My name is Dearbhla/Christine/Alexandra and I work for Spark Market Research. Judith Archbold from the UCD Teaching and Learning is also with me as she has been coordinating the project and is interested in what you have to say.

We're here today to talk about Academic Advice in UCD and to get your thoughts on how this can be developed across the university.

*GDPR: We're recording this session and we're working on behalf of UCD but as we've pointed out in the consent form we will not identify you and we will delete the recording once the analysis is complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Your lecturers, tutors, classmates won't see or hear any of this so please share all your thoughts and opinions with me! We've collected your consent already but let me know if you have any questions.*

Before we start, let's do a quick introduction:

- Tell me your first name
- What programme you're studying
- What Year you're in
- Describe UCD to me / Tell me one thing that you love about UCD

### Materials/ Stimulus

- Make sure to RECORD!
- Check everyone has a pen & paper



## Needs Mapping

20 mins

2

*Objective: Explore current supports, the need for Academic Advice in UCD and identify gaps*

### Support

I want you to think about all the learning and academic support you get in UCD as a student – tell me them LIST (ENSURE L&D v pastoral)

- **PROBE with Stimulus 1**: from your tutors, lecturers, programme office, school office, mentors, library, central professional services, careers
- Tell me about each, what are your main thoughts on these? (General)
  - What kind of support do they give – examples of types of help they've given you
  - What works well?
  - What works less well?

### Support Gaps/Needs

- Can you think of examples where students may need a steer or extra advice with their studies – around decisions/progression
  - An aspect of your studies
  - Your academic or professional goals e.g. internship/study abroad
  - Decisions about your choice of subject/modules, etc.
- Any other support/help that's missing?
- **Prompt with Stimulus 2**
- Thinking about the supports we've noted, why do some people not avail of them?

\*NB – distinct from student advisory service (social/personal/pastoral)

### Materials

Stimulus 1 – Support Provision

Stimulus 2 – Type of Support

Sought



## Academic Advice

25 Mins

3

*Objective:* Gauge reactions to Academic Advice

### Defining Academic Advice

- What do you think of when you hear the words '*Academic Advice*'? LIST – tell me everything that comes into mind
- **Now I want to show you a definition...**  
**SHOW DEFINITION – Stimulus 3**
- When we read out this definition of Academic Advice – what are you most drawn to?
- Anything that you don't understand? Any questions?
- Who would be open to using Academic Advice? Why/why not?
- Why do you think UCD would offer Academic Advice ?

### Task – Objectives

Imagine each student has a member of faculty as a dedicated academic advisor – tell us your thoughts on each of these objectives (rotate order)

#### **SHOW OBJECTIVES – Stimulus 4**

- What is working well? Why?
- What is working less well? Why?
- What do you think could be improved?
- If you were to rank these please say what would be your top 3
- Any other objectives that should be included?

Now that you know more Academic Advice, what appeal do you think this has for students? What would put them off?

What are the key differences between a dedicated academic advisor and other relationships with your lecturer/tutors?

#### Materials

- Stimulus 3: definition
- Stimulus 4: objectives



## Exploring the Ideal

**Objective:** Explore which approaches would be more effective for Academic Advice and uncover student preferences about the who, what, when, and how they access supports

25 Mins

4

### Building Blocks

If you were in charge of UCD policy (and had a magic wand), how would you like the Academic Advice? Bear in mind, the sky is the limit here...so no idea is off limits - Talk me through the building blocks:

- **Who should deliver it?** (e.g., lecturers, dedicated advisors, tutors, other students, alumni etc? – describe some who would be a good academic advisor – anyone come to mind? (knowledge, expertise, approach/characteristics)
- **Who should avail of it** *PROBE*: undergrads, postgrads, mature, Access, international students, 1/final etc.
- **When is it needed** – start of each academic year, once per term, points in academic journey
- **What Advice should be given** - essay writing, assignments, improving grades, etc. Anything that's course-specific? (recap on earlier stimulus 2/objectives)
- **How should it be accessed:** Online/Brightspace/email/phone vs drop-in, book by appointment, individual vs group, online vs in-person, events, in class visits
- **Prompt – Stimulus 5**
- NB – not always person to person

### Communications

Imagine you're in charge of drawing students into Academic Advice...

- What **message** needs to land? *PROBE*: General messaging & messaging specific to your programme/school
- **How or where would you share it?** *PROBE Stimulus 6* social media, posters on campus, UCD website, in-class, Brightspace, etc
- **Look and feel** of the comms that would work for your programme/school
- **Tone of voice** that works well

### Materials

Stimulus 5: How to Access Academic Advice  
Stimulus 6: Comms



## Wrap Up

*Objective:* Share final thoughts & thank participants for their participation

10 Mins

5

Thinking of your programme what approach would you advise UCD to take to communicate this service to students

In a 2019 student survey student access to lecturer advice was the most cited area UCD to improve student engagement with learning.  
How can UCD improve access to lecturer advice?

Before we wrap up are there any final thoughts, comments, or recommendations that you would like to share with me?

Thank you for taking part. Your comments and feedback will go on to help other students.

Materials

n/a



## Stimulus 1 Support provision

Academic  
advisor

Module  
coordinator

Programme  
director

Associate Dean

Tutor or  
demonstrator

Stage  
coordinator

Head of subject

Student advisor

Peer mentor

Programme  
office staff

UCD Careers  
Network

UCD Library

Class rep

Alumni mentor

Writing Centre

Maths Support  
Centre

Access &  
Lifelong Learning  
Disability  
Support

Microsoft Office  
Training via UCD  
IT Services

UCD Welcome  
Booklet

"Introduction to  
UCD"  
Brightspace  
Course





## Stimulus 2: Type of support sought

How to take the best lecture notes

How to use Brightspace

How to use Microsoft programmes such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint

How to use other computer programmes

How to set long term study goals for beyond this year

How to give useful feedback to my peers

How to approach group assignments

How to contact a lecturer

How to write essays

How to plan my time

How to stay motivated

Advice about withdrawing from a programme or transferring to a different programme

Help assessing my strengths

Information on research opportunities

Advice on internships, work placements or career opportunities

Advice on choosing modules, majors or post-graduate degree options

Setting up study groups



### Stimulus 3: Definition of Academic Advice

Academic advising is part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals.



## Stimulus 4: Objectives of Academic Advice (rotate order)

To evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals

To develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of educational goals

To develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions

To understand the most appropriate choices to make in order to achieve goals (module or major choices for example)

To know what the most appropriate research opportunities are to support educational and professional goals

To know what the most appropriate internship, study abroad and or co and extra-curricular opportunities are to support educational and professional goals



## Stimulus 5: How to access Academic Advice

Individual meetings with a dedicated academic advisor

Group meetings with a dedicated academic advisor

Talking to their lecturer/module coordinator at the end of class

Talking to their lecturer/module coordinator online during virtual office hours

Talking to the lecturer/module coordinator in a face-to-face meeting during their office hours

Meeting tutor/demonstrator

Self-assessment online tools

Online resources in Brightspace

A UCD Website dedicated to academic advice

Learning analytics which show you how you are doing compared to other students

Email

Flexible timeslots for meeting with faculty/advisers

Virtual (Zoom) classroom

Online office hours

Telephone conversations with faculty/advisers

"Chat" function in the Virtual Classroom

"Ask a Question" in your Brightspace module



## Stimulus 6: Communicating about Academic Advice

Social media

Posters on  
campus

UCD website

In-class by  
lecturer

In class by a  
student who  
has used it

Brightspace

## Appendix 5: Funding Call for Academic Advising Pilot Projects

### Context and Background

As UCD begins to implement its *Rising to the Future* strategy and allied Education Strategy, planning for the future based on what we are learning from the COVID-19 context, our commitment to digital transformation and providing for increasing domestic and international students, there is a significant policy gap with reference to the formalised provision of academic advice to our undergraduate and taught graduate students. The need for such a policy is to ensure that all students are provided with high-quality academic support and advice through a proactive academic partnership with mutual expectations of faculty and students.

At the request of the Registrar/Deputy President a university-wide working group has been established, under the Chair of Professor Marie Clarke, to inform university-wide policy on academic advising. HEA/National Forum funding is being leveraged to support the development of an institutional framework for academic advising for student success. An initiative team, based in UCD Teaching and Learning, is responsible for the management and coordination of the funded initiative, with high-level oversight provided by the Working Group. The initiative has a number of work strands; one of these strands is focused on piloting different approaches to academic advising across the University.

### Existing Supports for UCD Students

Our students currently have access to a range of advice and support services/roles, with some operating at programme/school level and others provided centrally by the University<sup>1</sup>. Notwithstanding the range and breadth of supports available to our students, the consensus is that there are gaps, such as:

- Personal academic advice to students at different points in the student lifecycle.
- Academic advice to support individual students with decision-making and goal setting based on their academic performance, interests and talents.
- Guidance and assistance in navigating programme structures, making choices relating to major/minor/specialism options.
- Academic advice and support for students considering withdrawal/transfer from their programme.
- Academic support/advice relating to professional practice, clinical placements and internships.

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<sup>1</sup> These may include: Module Coordinator; Stage Coordinator; Associate Dean; Programme Director; Programme Office; School Office; School Head of Teaching & Learning; Clinical Tutors; Student Advisers; Careers Network; ALL; Chaplains; Study Abroad Coordinators; Ad Astra Academic Mentors; Maths Supports Centre; Writing Centre; Library Guides; Student Counselling; UCD SU; Student Desk; and Peer Mentors.

- Support to assist students to become independent learners and to address any academic issues as they arise.

### The Concept of Academic Advising

Drawing on a comprehensive set of definitions of academic advising from the literature, NACADA - *The Global Community for Academic Advising* developed a statement on the concept of academic advising. Academic advising is positioned as an integral part of the teaching and learning mission of higher education.

*Through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated as citizens of a democratic society and a global community.*

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2006)

The NACADA statement identifies three components of academic advising: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (the results of academic advising).

- The ***curriculum of academic advising*** is defined broadly and ranges from the ideals of higher education to more practical matters such as selection of academic courses and goal setting.
- The ***pedagogy of academic advising*** incorporates the preparation, facilitation, documentation, and assessment of advising interactions. The relationship between the adviser and student is fundamental.
- The ***learning outcomes of academic advising*** articulate what students will demonstrate, know, value, and do as a result of participating in academic advising. Some examples cited by NACADA include:
  - Craft a coherent educational plan based on assessment of abilities, aspirations, interests, and values
  - Assume responsibility for meeting academic programme requirements
  - Cultivate the intellectual habits that lead to a lifetime of learning.

### Ireland's National Understanding of Student Success

In 2019 the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning published Ireland's first national understanding of student success, which was the outcome of a review of student perspectives, institutional and national policies, and related literature and an extensive consultation process.

*Student success optimises the learning and development opportunities for each student to recognise and fulfil their potential to contribute to, and flourish in, society.*

*To be achieved, this requires a culture in Irish higher education that values inclusivity, equity and meaningful engagement between students, staff, their institutions and the wider community.*

Ireland's National Understanding of Student Success, 2019

### **Focus of this Funding Call**

It is not envisaged that a 'one size fits all' model of academic advising will work in UCD. The focus of the funding call is to develop and pilot different approaches to academic advising, reflecting distinct advising contexts, student cohorts and disciplinary needs.

The specific objectives of this internal funding call are to:

- Support the collaborative development and piloting of academic advising approaches that are responsive to students' needs and aligned to strategic educational priorities.
- Facilitate research-informed and evidence-based decision-making about academic advising in UCD.
- Explore opportunities for leveraging technology to support personalised and flexible approaches to academic advising.
- Promote the value and importance of high-quality academic advising as a fundamental element of the UCD educational experience.
- Highlight and disseminate the learning from the pilot projects and to capture key findings across the spectrum of projects.

### **Application Information**

#### *Project Proposals*

- Proposals are invited for projects that will introduce or expand academic advising systems for undergraduate and or taught graduate students.
- The scope for potential applications is broad, and the review panel welcomes creative approaches to academic advising accompanied by a well-designed project plan.
- Proposals will be clearly focused on academic advising as an integral part of the teaching and learning mission of the university.
- Projects will involve collaborative teams working together at the level of the programme, stage, subject, school or college.
- A student-centric approach is critical; meaningful engagement of students in the design and/or implementation of the project must be evident.
- Project teams should give careful consideration to how they will evaluate their pilot project to build an evidence-base to inform future decisions and actions.
- The sustainability of the academic advising approach, beyond the pilot phase, should be factored into the project design and implementation decisions.
- Value for money is a key criterion and applicants should only seek amounts that are reasonable for the delivery of projects.



## Eligibility

Applications are invited from teams and must fulfil the following criteria:

- All team members must be either employed by UCD or a UCD student for the duration of the funding award.
- Each team must have a minimum of two UCD faculty members (Lecturer/Assistant Lecturer; Associate Professor; Professor; Full Professor), one of whom will be project lead.
- Each team must have at least one student member.

## Grant Information

A total budget of €475,000 is available to support academic advising pilot projects. The funding will be allocated in August 2021 and must be spent by 31st May 2022.

To encourage university-wide engagement in piloting academic advising approaches, an allocation of funding is ring-fenced for each of the six colleges. Cross-disciplinary projects, spanning two or more colleges will also be considered and will be jointly funded by the participating colleges. The amounts are presented below.

College/ Area	Amount Available
UCD College of Business	€72,289
UCD College of Social Sciences and Law	€87,485
UCD College of Arts and Humanities	€66,810
UCD College of Science	€85,165
UCD College of Engineering and Architecture	€65,917
UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences	€97,334
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>€475,000</b>

Grants will be allocated on a competitive basis and it is anticipated that up to 15 projects will be funded university wide. Awards will be made in accordance with the allocation per college, subject to the quality and quantity of applications received. Funding can be directed towards:

- Staff costs (e.g., teaching, research or administrative assistance)
- Student bursaries and other expenses that facilitate the involvement of students
- Organisation of workshops, seminars and training
- Consumables/materials specifically required for the project
- Equipment specifically required for the project (must not exceed 20% of total spend)
- Travel and subsistence where it is directly related to the achievement of project deliverables.

## Application Procedure

1. Download and complete the application form.
2. Confirmation of support from your College Principal for the proposed academic advising pilot project is required. The completed application forms must be forwarded to your College Principal for their electronic signature.
3. Submit the signed application via email to [tl@ucd.ie](mailto:tl@ucd.ie) by Tuesday 16th July 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.

## Key Dates

Call for applications	Thursday 20th May 2021
Submission deadline for applications	Tuesday 6th July 2021
Notification of results	Friday 23rd July 2021
Completion of project (all funding spent)	Tuesday 31st May 2022

## Evaluation of Applications

Applications will be evaluated and scored against the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Scored out of
<p><b>1. Quality of the project proposal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project aim and objectives are clearly articulated and are aligned to the focus and objectives of this funding call.</li> <li>• The project addresses an authentic academic advising need and the population(s) that will be impacted upon is clearly defined.</li> <li>• Key deliverables are clearly articulated and include concrete positive outcomes for students.</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>
<p><b>2. A student-centric approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of each member of the project team, including student member(s), is clearly stated.</li> <li>• The project methodology promotes the engagement of students as partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.</li> <li>• The project recognises and accommodates diverse student needs.</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>
<p><b>3. Achievability and sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project plans and timelines seem achievable.</li> <li>• The project clearly demonstrates potential for sustainability, beyond the pilot phase.</li> <li>• A comprehensive evaluation methodology is in place to build an evidence-base to inform future decisions and actions.</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>4. Budget and value for money</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear and reasonable budget justification is provided.</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ● The project represents good value for money. |  |
|--|--|

### Adjudication Panel

All eligible applications will be evaluated by an adjudication panel, with members drawn from the following roles:

- Dean of Undergraduate Studies & Chair of the Academic Advising Working Group
- College Principal
- Vice Principal for T&L
- Dean/Associate Dean
- Programme Office Director
- Student representatives (x2)
- External expert
- Director of UCD Teaching & Learning

### Review and Reporting of Project Outputs

All projects receiving funding will be reviewed at least once during the funding period. The project teams will be invited to present their work to a review panel, including representatives from their college and international experts in the field. Project teams will be required to submit a detailed work plan and an up-to-date budget report prior to this review.

At the end of the funding period, project teams will be required to present their work in the form of a short report and a case study for wider dissemination. Full details of the budget spend signed-off by the relevant College Finance Manager must also be submitted. Templates will be provided by UCD Teaching & Learning for all three outputs.

### Terms and Conditions

1. This scheme covers all disciplines.
2. Only team applications are eligible under this funding call.
3. All team members must be either employed by UCD (i.e., a member of UCD faculty or staff) or a UCD student for the duration of the funding award.
4. Each team must have a minimum of two UCD faculty members (Lecturer/Assistant Lecturer; Associate Professor; Professor; Full Professor), one of whom will be project lead.
5. Each team must have at least one student member.
6. Consent must be obtained prior to inclusion of team members in the application.
7. Application forms must be complete. Do not exceed the specified word count or add supplementary information (including web-links) to the application form as it will not be considered by the adjudication panel.

8. It must be clear from the application that the focus and objectives of this funding call have been taken into account.
9. Funding received under this funding call must be used for the project outlined in the application.
10. Applicants may not apply under this funding call to reclaim expenditure for items/activities that have already taken place (i.e., before notification of the award).
11. Successful applicants must apply in writing to the chair of the Academic Advising Projects adjudication panel to make changes to their application and or the approved project budget following receipt of an award.
12. Successful applicants will be required to take part in a review process at least once during the implementation of their project. The review will require the project team to submit a detailed work plan and an up-to-date budget report prior to this review, for discussion with the review panel.
13. At the end of the funding period, successful applicants will be required to present their work in the form of a short report and a case study for wider dissemination. Templates will be provided by UCD Teaching & Learning for the report and case study.
14. Successful applicants will be required to provide the full details of the budget spend signed off by their College Finance Officers. Auditable back-up documentation, including receipts or purchase order numbers, cost allocations, etc. must be maintained by all successful applicants.
15. All funding must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022. Any under-spend must be returned to the funder (i.e., HEA/National Forum) – this will be arranged by UCD Teaching & Learning.
16. The awardee is responsible for ensuring spending does not exceed the budgetary allocation. Any over-spend will be covered by the relevant school/college.
17. The grant may be spent on equipment providing the total equipment spend does not exceed 20% of the overall project budget.
18. Any equipment or software purchased with funding received under this funding call will remain the property of UCD.
19. All resources generated by project teams arising from this funding call must be made available under a Creative Commons licence.
20. All decisions of the adjudication panel are final and not open to appeal.

## Appendix 6: Mid-Term Review of Pilot Projects – Summary Report

### Introduction

As part of the Academic Advising Initiative, [17 project teams](#) received funding in August 2021 to pilot approaches to academic advising in their school/college. A total of €403,685 was awarded on a competitive basis and all six UCD colleges are represented in the projects selected. The project teams have until end May 2022 to complete their pilot project and midterm reviews were scheduled for late January-early February.

### Midterm Review Process

The reviews took place over four half-day sessions and were organised in such a way as to bring projects from the same college together in a session. Each of the four review panels were chaired by Professor Marie Clarke and included representation from the relevant college(s), the Academic Advising Working Group, students and UCD Teaching and Learning. Importantly, the relevant College Principal(s) joined the review panel, along with an internal external reviewer from [UKAT](#).

The main purpose of the review was to provide constructive and supportive feedback to project teams towards maximising the outcomes and learnings from their pilot project. The project teams prepared documentation in advance which was shared with the review panel; this included a short PowerPoint presentation on progress to date, their work plan and a financial report on project spend up to the end of December 2021. At the review meeting, the project lead presented their progress to date, and this was followed by an opportunity for questions and dialogue with panel members. The four review sessions were open to all project teams to attend to facilitate shared learning. Members of the Academic Advising Working Group were also invited to attend if their schedule allowed. The review panels took time at the end of the session to discuss each project and compose written feedback for each team. This was issued post-review to each project team and a copy was sent to the relevant college principal.

### Key Observations and Feedback

- The project teams were commended for their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to enhancing the student experience through innovations in academic advising.
- Overall, there is evidence of good involvement of students in the design and implementation of the projects. Project teams were encouraged to continue to engage with students in reviewing, testing and evaluating project outputs.
- The projects have adopted a diversity of approaches to academic advising to suit their local context and needs. Furthermore, the projects have focused on different aspects of advising, e.g., technology enabled advising, career-focused advising, developing a culture in which advising thrives, advising focused on retention/progression, etc.
- Many of the projects pointed to gaps in students' awareness of existing supports and the challenges they experience trying to navigate UCD systems and services to find the information and support that they need.
- Projects that had planned a consultation process with their community/cohort of students highlighted challenges in engaging students through standard methods such

as surveys and focus groups. GDPR and Research Ethics considerations would seem to have given rise to barriers in this regard.

- There was evidence of ‘mission drift’ in some projects, leading to the review panel providing directive feedback to assist project teams to refocus their work to align more closely with the objectives of the original funding call.
- While acknowledging that the overall timeline for the pilot projects is very compressed, the review panels urged the project teams to give adequate time and attention to the project evaluation feeding into future decisions and an evidence-base that would be useful to their programme/school/college and the overall University academic advising initiative.
- Linked to the preceding point, projects teams were advised to consider and articulate what success in their project would look like, ensuring alignment with the goals of their project and the funding call.
- The question of sustainability beyond the funded pilot period arose in relation to many projects. The review panels offered feedback and suggestions to project teams that focused on embedding the project into existing structures, drawing on other sources of support (e.g., alumni) and exploring complementarity with other funded projects to achieve sustainability.
- All project teams were asked to consider how their project has helped them reflect on the NACADA definition of academic advising (as per original funding call). Leading on from that they are asked to consider how they would define academic advising for their programme/school/college.
- There is a lagging spend or underspend on the vast majority of projects (see figure 1). Project leads were urged to address this as soon as possible and to ensure that all funds are spent by the 31st of May 2022.
- Overall, the review process was very worthwhile. The project teams participated in a positive and open manner and the review panels were engaged and constructive in their feedback.

**Figure 1:** Spend as a proportion of award received on 31st December 2021



## Appendix 7: Subgroup on Leveraging Technology to Support Academic Advising

### Terms of Reference

Our students have access to a range of advice and support services. Notwithstanding this, the University has identified a significant policy gap with reference to the formalised provision of academic advice. To address this the Registrar has established an Academic Advisory Working Group, chaired by Professor Marie Clarke, to inform university wide policy on academic advising and to provide high-level oversight for a strategic initiative focused on the development of an institutional framework on academic advising. The initiative is coordinated by a team in UCD Teaching and Learning and has a number of work strands, including one on technology enhanced advising. Funding from the HEA/National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning is being leveraged in support of this initiative.

*The terms of reference of the Academic Advising Working Group include the following:*

- *Explore effective use of technology to develop personalised and flexible models drawing on the analytics data available.*
- *Consider data privacy and protection issues pertinent to the implementation of academic advising and make recommendations regarding, in line with UCD's GDPR obligations.*

### Statement of Purpose

The University has prioritised the provision of academic advising for all students as part of its educational mission and its commitment to student success. The purpose of this subgroup is (i) to explore the potential for leveraging the available UCD technologies (with or without enhancements) to support the delivery of high quality advising at scale and (ii) to put forward priority actions with high-level plans that could be progressed in the short-to-medium term. Any developments should align with the overall goal of streamlining information for students and leveraging high-use areas of the UCD website or systems such as SISWeb and/or Brightspace, so that academic advising is embedded for **all** students. The focus is on the provision of academic advising

The subgroup will consider the role of technology in different facets of academic advising including:

- **Prescriptive advising** to provide students with the information needed to negotiate the more administrative side of their academic experience and to assist them to navigate programme structures and make choices relating to major/minor/module options.
- **Operational aspects of delivering advising at scale**, including functionality to allocate students to advisers, set-up meetings, make referrals, display office hours, etc.
- **Relationship management** between advisers and students which supports personalised interactions and shared responsibility for the academic advising process.
- Enabling the **capture, manipulation, presentation and sharing of data** in an accessible way that would be helpful to students and advisers as part of a programme of academic advising. This could include data on student engagement and progress; student self-assessment and planning templates; and follow-up notes, reflections and records.

**Subgroup Members:**

Diane Cashman, Lecturer/Assistant Professor, UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

Áine Galvin, Director, UCD Teaching & Learning (convenor)

Leone Gately, Educational Technology Coordinator, UCD Teaching & Learning

Trish Mountjoy, Head of Educational Technology, IT Services

Jennifer Murphy, Director, UCD College of Social Science and Law

Lee O'Farrell, Senior Team Lead, UCD Registry- Administrative Services

**Reporting to:** An initial report will be presented to the Academic Advising Working Group in May 2022.



## **Appendix 8: Discussion Paper on the Potential Applications of Technology to Support Academic Advising**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this brief paper is to give a concise overview of some of the potential applications of data and technology that could be deployed in support of UCD's academic advisory strategy. This list is based on conversations between members of the Subgroup on Leveraging Technology for Academic Advising and draws on their experience in areas such as managing the process of academic advising at an overall level, good practice in enabling effective academic advising and providing accurate, up-to-date information to academic staff.

In broad terms, there are four high level areas in which such resources could be of benefit. These are listed below in greater detail.

### **Managing academic advisory process at scale**

There is an identified need for a data system with the capacity to link students with the most suitable academic advisors. Currently, in areas that provide academic advising at scale, this process is done manually and has proven to be highly time-consuming and resource heavy. A relatively simple database could be used to link students to suitable advisors based on characteristics such as degree, subject, availability, areas of specialism and so on. It could also record other key information such as contact details, preferred method of communication, staff contact hours and staff availability by term (e.g., to exclude staff that are on sabbatical).

It would be optimal if this system could also link in with staff and student calendars to enable scheduling of appointments.

### **Arranging and tracking advisory meetings**

There is also an identified need for a CRM (Customer Relations Management)-style system through which appointments between students and advisors could be tracked. It would be ideal if such a system included the ability to record high-level content such as preparations, topics covered and actions agreed (similar to the functionality that supports the P4G process in Infohub) and to refer students to further support services and track these referrals (similar to *Unishare*). This latter feature is critical for ensuring that students receive the targeted, professional supports they require, while enabling advisors to ensure students' welfare, while recognising the limits of their own expertise and professional responsibility.

It would be ideal if this could link in with the management system above to ensure as seamless an experience as possible for advisors, students and administrators.

### **Understanding students' current position**

In order to understand how best to advise and support a student, advisors need to have an understanding of their current situation in terms of academic achievement, engagement etc. A dashboard that could give a concise overview of a student's current status would be very valuable. It would be ideal if this platform could pull live data from multiple sources to give

advisors as up-to-date and detailed a picture as possible. Potential sources of data could include:

- Brightspace
- Banner
- Library
- Infohub (e.g., the existence of extenuating circumstances applications)

It would be helpful if the data visualisation could contextualise this data to show its meaning in a broader sense (e.g., showing the student's engagement over time, flagging comparators to class averages etc). While their descriptive data should be made accessible to students, providing comparative data directly to them may prove counterproductive. Hence this aspect should be visible to advisors only.

It may be useful to review some of the existing platforms that currently compile and visualise this kind of data. Systems such as Nottingham Trent University's [NTU Student Dashboard](#) are designed with this descriptive function in mind, rather than the predictive identification of students deemed to be at risk.

### **Recommender systems**

Although the topic of recommender systems to help students to select modules, subjects and majors at which they are likely to succeed was raised in discussions, a quick review of current literature has shown that this technology has, so far, failed to live up to its early promise (<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-03-15-are-you-still-there-how-a-netflix-model-for-advising-lost-its-luster>). Consequently, it may not be an advisable path to follow further at this point.

## Appendix 9: Project Proposal to IT Services – Technology Enabled Academic Advising (13<sup>th</sup> April 2022)

### Section 1: Business Request

Project Details	
Project Sponsor(s)	Prof Marie Clarke
UMT Sponsor	Registrar
Key Stakeholders	Students, Academic Advisors (Faculty), Teaching & Learning, IT Services
Strategic Theme / Objective / Enabler	Enhancing Educational Excellence / Digital Transformation
Data Protection Impact Assessment	xDPIA required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> , DPIA not required <input type="checkbox"/>
Primary Author – Section 1	Ms. Áine Galvin, UCD Teaching & Learning

#### Context - Business Need / Problem / Opportunity –

There is a significant policy gap with reference to the formalised provision of academic support and advice, to undergraduate and taught graduate students in UCD. The need for such a policy is to ensure that all students are provided with high-quality academic support through a proactive academic partnership between faculty and students. The Academic Advising Working Group has been established by the Registrar/Deputy President to progress the policy development. A subgroup has also been formed to review the role of technology in enabling the academic advising process. The Working Group will put forward a series of recommendations to ACEC in May 2022, including an institutional framework for academic advising.

The subgroup will recommend where technology can play an effective role in the academic advising process and will recommend priority actions. Potential uses for technology in the advising process could be categorised as follows:

- Operational aspects of delivering advising at scale, including functionality to allocate students to advisers, set-up meetings, make referrals, display office hours, book appointments etc.
- Relationship management between advisers and students which supports personalised interactions and shared responsibility for the academic advising process.
- Enabling the capture, manipulation, presentation and sharing of data in an accessible way that would be helpful to students and advisers as part of a programme of academic advising. This could include data on student engagement and progress; student self-assessment and planning templates; and follow-up notes, reflections and records.
- Prescriptive advising to provide students with the information needed to negotiate the more administrative side of their academic experience and to assist them to navigate programme structures and make choices relating to major/minor/module

options.

This project is being initiated to scope, recommend and implement suitable technology solutions to underpin the academic advising provision in the University.

### Outcomes / Benefits

The intended outcome of the project will be to understand the tangible value technology can create in the academic advising process, to recommend priority areas for action, to source and implement suitable solutions and to establish their impact and effectiveness to enable academic advising at scale in the University.

It is anticipated that the initial priority areas will be:

1. Managing academic advisory process at scale
  - A system for matching students to advisors would be essential if UCD is to proceed with academic advising at scale. It would not be tenable to do allocations manually.
  - A matching system would need to be sufficiently flexible to allow different types of matching arrangements (school/programme/stage)
  
2. Arranging and tracking advisory meetings
  - A CRM type system would all real value to the advising process. It would support the relationship and interactions between the student and their advisor. Functionality would include:
    - i. Tracking appointment/scheduling
    - ii. Recording high level content pre and post meeting, agreed actions etc.
    - iii. Referral to other student supports and tracking of referrals
  - The ability to store and share templates documents which would form the basis of the f2f meetings. Flexibility required to allow localised customisation of templates.

Type of Outcome (Select all that apply)
Improved Productivity <input type="checkbox"/> , Process Improvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> , Improved Student Experience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> , Improved Staff Experience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> , Increased Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> , Reduced Costs <input type="checkbox"/> , Compliance <input type="checkbox"/> , Mitigate Risk <input type="checkbox"/> , Research Impact <input type="checkbox"/> , Research Activity <input type="checkbox"/> , Reputation/Profile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> , Strategic Positioning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Risk of Doing Nothing

Academic Advising is a priority area identified in the [Education & Student Success Strategy](#) as a key action in the Student -Centred Educational Experience theme. A commitment has been made to devise a policy to embed academic advising into the academic experience of all students.

There are existing examples of academic advising already in some programmes/schools, however, the ability to support advising at scale and for all students on taught programmes will not be feasible without underlying solutions to facilitate some administrative and logistical aspects of the process.

## Funding Source

*How will this project be funded? Please give details.*

*If there is not any existing funding: > After IT Services complete Section 2 of this document (Solution Proposal with costs and resources), include project funding requirements in your Unit's Financial Plan.*

*Please note if cost savings are / are not expected from this project.*

Ongoing budget will need to be found if a third-party solution is recommended by the project team.

Some possibility that the work could be achieved via development and integration of existing systems (peer mentor allocation, Unishare and P4G), while there may be no OpEx this would require development time and resources.

The benefits and limitations of each approach will be considered by the project team.

Note: €100k available now (April 2022), but must be committed by end May 2022 (not likely to be available for the timeframe of this project)

Potentially more HEA project funding downstream – scale unknown and will not be available annually.

## Appendix 10: Student-Faculty Ratios March 2022 Descending Order of Highest Ratio

School	Taught Student FTE	Academic Staff FTE	Taught Student FTE per Academic
College of Business	3967	115.1	34.5
Economics	775	23.8	32.6
Information and Communication Studies	448	14.0	32.0
Politics and International Relations	693	22.5	30.8
Law	959	32.8	29.2
Education	499	17.5	28.5
Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems	1525	54.6	27.9
Computer Science	1033	43.3	23.8
Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice	628	26.4	23.8
Sociology	505	21.5	23.5
Mathematics and Statistics	1281	55.2	23.2
Chemical and Bioprocess Engineering	280	13.8	20.3
Geography	252	13.0	19.3
Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science	925	48.8	19.0
Agriculture and Food Science	1328	70.4	18.9
Biology and Environmental Science	566	31.0	18.2
English, Drama and Film	896	49.4	18.1
Chemistry	446	25.0	17.8
Psychology	418	23.6	17.7
History	537	31.0	17.3
Biomolecular and Biomedical Science	706	44.1	16.0
Classics	127	8.0	15.9
Philosophy	286	18.0	15.9
Medicine	2245	142.5	15.8
Mechanical and Materials Engineering	467	30.8	15.1
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	311	22.3	13.9
Civil Engineering	212	16.0	13.3
Archaeology	200	15.4	13.0
Physics	356	28.5	12.5
Music	112	9.0	12.4
Art History and Cultural Policy	123	10.5	11.7
Irish, Celtic Studies and Folklore	168	14.5	11.6
Languages, Cultures and Linguistics	433	38.0	11.4
Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy	561	50.1	11.2
Veterinary Medicine	910	89.2	10.2
Earth Sciences	153	15.5	9.9
Biosystems and Food Engineering	131	13.6	9.6
<b>Schools total</b>	<b>26,100.3</b>	<b>1,330.5</b>	<b>19.6</b>

Source: Student FTE file March of academic year. Staff FTE file Feb 2022

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