



Best Practices for Advising Notes

INCLUDE:

***INCLUDE* notes that will help current and future advisors understand your advisee's situation and the advice that you gave.**

- Discussed possible interest in dance minor. Encouraged him to take DAN.Q130 to explore that interest.
- Explained Integrative Studies and showed IS resources. Asked student to be prepared to select first IS course next semester.
- Taking only 12 credits this term due to her sport. Plans to take a course during summer.
- Taking PSY.Q101 as a pre-requisite of PSY221, which the student wants to use as an IS course.
- Recommended that he take BIO210 and lab this spring to stay on sequence in the program.
- Advised student to return for another advising appointment when she has prepared a tentative course schedule.

***INCLUDE* information shared with your advisee about possible consequences of not following through on advice given.**

- Advised student that by taking only 12 credits this semester, she will need to make up 3 credits or will be short total credits for graduation.
- Discussed importance of repeating HIS.Q205 to improve academic standing.
- Explained that SOC204 would be an elective-only for his program, and he may not have elective room.
- Reminded student that he needs to maintain a 2.75 GPA to remain in the program.

***INCLUDE* referrals of a non-sensitive nature.**

- Encouraged student to request tutoring through the CSS.
- Reminded student to file for commencement through the Registrar's Office.
- Referred student to Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs to get petition approved.
- Encouraged student to use professor's office hours to ask questions.
- Referred to CIE to explore study abroad opportunities.
- Referred to Financial Aid.

EXCLUDE:

EXCLUDE referrals of a sensitive or personal nature such as disability and/or health information. (May wish to use a separate file of personal notes for this.)*

- Student used accommodations in high school so referred him to Office for Students with Disabilities to find out what they need for documentation.
- Struggling with mental health issues. Referred to Counseling Center.
- Single mom. No financial support from family. Referred to Financial Aid.

EXCLUDE your advisee's personal concerns. (May wish to use personal notes.)*

- Student is struggling with financial issues.
- Parents are going through a divorce.
- Mom has cancer, and student is having trouble focusing on school.

EXCLUDE advisees' comments regarding their instructors, especially when negative. (May wish to use personal notes.)*

- Referred student to department chair to express concerns about Professor X.
- Student dropped X course due to unfair grading policy of instructor.

EXCLUDE your subjective judgments about your advisee, especially when they are negative.

- Student is struggling in all classes. Would be better off at MCC.
- Student is nice but not smart enough to make it in this program.
- Student has an attitude and is immature.
- Clueless.

IN GENERAL:

- If in doubt, leave it out.
- Describe, do not evaluate.

***Advising notes** are part of a student's educational record and therefore covered under FERPA. This means that the student has the right to view whatever is included in the advising notes. Best advice: if you do not want it reviewed, don't write it down. **Personal notes** that are never shared with anyone are considered "sole possession notes" and are not covered under FERPA. However, as soon as these notes are shared, the student has the right to review them. Again, it is best to be circumspect about documenting any sensitive observations or information about a student.

(Based on "Guidelines for Advising Notes" by Kathy Davis of Missouri State. This is included in Missouri State's Master Advisor Training Program.)