Faculty Advising Handbook

Supporting Student Success Through Advising

Welcome to your role as a faculty advisor at Southern! As a faculty advisor, you are a key part of our students' success. Advising is a multi-faceted role that involves both the logistics of guiding students through their program of study and supporting them in meeting challenges along the way. Advisors also function as mentors for students, offering coaching on career and professional advice within the discipline.

This guide is designed to support you in your role as a faculty advisor by outlining the expected tasks and collecting resources for advising in one easy to reference location.

For links to additional resources, please see the "Faculty Resources" section on the Academic Advising homepage.

Support for Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors are directly supported by the Faculty Director of Academic Advising, Dr. Meredith Sinclair. Individual and group trainings are available upon request. Faculty can also reach out with any questions about advising, including how to support a particular advisee's situation.

For assistance, email advisement@southernct.edu.

Contents:

Southern’s Advising Model

Students are supported at Southern by their faculty academic advisor and our professional advising team in Academic Advising.

Faculty Advisors

- Assigned to first-year students in their second semester and to transfer students in their first semester. Academic departments are responsible for assigning advisors.
- Primary advisor for a student with a declared major; responsible for meeting at least once a semester with all advisees to discuss academic progress, future goals, and upcoming registration.

Professional Advisors

- Primary advisor for first-year students in their first semester; secondary advisor during a student’s second semester.
- Onboard transfer students.
- Primary advisor for students who are Exploratory (undeclared).
- Available for both drop-in and scheduled appointments for any student who has an advising related question, including during intersessions. Professional advisors can answer many student questions; however, they will not provide registration PINs for students with a faculty advisor as it is the faculty advisor’s responsibility to discuss appropriate registration with their advisees.

Defining Faculty Advising

The following definitions for faculty advisors were developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Advising commissioned by Faculty Senate in Spring of 2025.

The committee recognized that there are two distinct yet overlapping sets of tasks that all faculty advisors are currently responsible for: the formal logistics of **academic advising** and the more variable, often conversational and relationship-based, **mentoring and coaching.**

Faculty academic advisors are faculty within a student’s academic department who are responsible for guiding students through their academic program, monitoring their academic progress, and mapping a pathway to timely graduation. Key functions of academic advising include:

- Assisting advisees in developing their Degree Plans (path to graduation) and making appropriate course selections each term.
- Guiding advisees through their chosen degree program, including assisting in adding minors, accelerated pathways, internships, and other academic opportunities as appropriate.
- Monitoring advisees' progress towards degree completion including monitoring midterm and final grades; providing guidance on options for course retakes and course withdrawals as appropriate.
- Connecting advisees to campus resources as needed including CASAS, Financial Aid, the Office Career and Professional Development, the Wellness Center, and the Dean of Students office.
- Checking in regularly with advisees throughout the semester, including at least one meeting prior to registration; following up with unregistered advisees.
- Maintaining advisees' accurate Degree Plans; keeping accurate notes of advisee communications in Navigate.
- Providing support for advisees to create a successful plan for academic study at Southern and assistance in troubleshooting and modifying those plans as needed.

All faculty participate also participate as **faculty mentors or coaches for** students, particularly those in their programs. Key functions of mentoring and coaching include but are not limited to:

- Connecting with students in and out of class to create community and sense of belonging in programs.
- Offering general advice about post-graduation options including career pathways and graduate study.
- Working with students on specific projects: assistantships, research projects, independent studies, etc.

Key Advising Tools

Banner Faculty/Advisor

Most advising functions are located in Banner Faculty/Advisor (accessible through your SCSU MyApps). For a tour of features, please review the Banner Advisor Overview video.

The Advisee Search link will allow you to pull up the Banner record for each of your advisees (and any student on campus if you have advisor permission). The above video demonstrates how to use Advisee Search and outlines features of the Banner student homepage.

Banner is always the most accurate source of student information and is the official University student academic data repository. If you are looking for information about a student's grades or course registration, please refer to the information in Banner.

The Degree Evaluation & Degree Plans

A student's Degree Evaluation can be accessed from their Banner Student page as demonstrated in the Banner Advisor Overview video above. The Degree Evaluation is the official audit of a student's progress towards degree.

See the Degree Evaluation Overview video for a tutorial on reading a degree evaluation. This video also describes the structure of Southern's undergraduate degrees including our General Education Program (W Courses and LEP Courses), the major, cognates, and free electives. The Degree Evaluation for graduate students works the same way; it just has fewer components.

This short video demonstrates the What If Analysis feature, a helpful tool in the Degree Evaluation for students considering changes to their academic program.

You may also find this PDF guide useful; it is written for students but contains much of the same information as is in the video.

Degree Plans are covered in depth in this guide: Degree Plans Guide for Faculty. The checklist section of this document reminds you when you should be acting on Degree Plans.

The Academic Catalog & One Stop

Southern's Academic Catalogs are your go to source for always accurate information about all academic policies, including grading and registration policies.

Southern's OneStop page is a great place to start if you are looking for a resource. The One-Stop – Faculty/Staff page has many helpful links for faculty and advisors, including tutorials for Banner. This page also houses guides related to student records and registration, for example, how to use Schedule Planner or advise on Accelerated Pathways.

OneStop also links to student facing offices including Financial Aid, Billing, and the Registrar. If you have a student with questions for any of these offices, you can direct them to the contact information on these pages.

Navigate

Navigate serves two key features for advisors:

- It is a place to record student contacts and review a student's contact history.
- It provides a way to set up appointments for office hours and sync with your Outlook calendar.

Tutorials for relevant Navigate features will be linked in the material below. You can access the full Navigate User Guide here.

Checklist of Responsibilities for Faculty Advisors

The following section is designed to provide a checklist of advising responsibilities and to describe the tools and resources available to assist you. If you would like further instruction on anything here, please reach out as described in the Support for Faculty Advisors section above.

Start of Term

The following tasks should be done just prior to the start of each semester or during the first week of classes.

Check Important Academic & Registration Dates

Southern's Academic Calendar is an important resource with all dates relevant to advising including grade reporting dates and withdrawal deadlines. You can add these dates to your Outlook calendar; to do so, visit this page and use the large blue "subscribe" button on the right side of the page (select "academics calendar").

Registration Dates are posted to the [Registration Checklist & Dates page.](#) While it is helpful to note these dates, always advise students to use the yellow "find date & time" button to find their exact registration time and date.

Set Up Navigate Office Hours

Navigate makes scheduling office hours appointments easy – for you and for students. Navigate syncs with Outlook, meaning that when a student books an appointment with you, that appointment automatically appears on your Outlook calendar and blocks the time. You will also receive a reminder email prior to the appointment. You can create multiple appointment types, so you'll know if a student is requesting to meet for advising or for your class.

Once you've set up your office hours in Navigate you can:

- Add the generated link to your email signature; it is also helpful to list your office hours in your email signature.
- Share the generated link with your students (via Blackboard and/or your syllabus).
- Include the link in any emails you send to your advisees (Navigate does this automatically via campaigns).

For more information on setting up office hours in Navigate, see the tutorial here: Office Hours in Navigate

For technical assistance with Navigate office hours, contact navigatehelp@southernct.edu.

Check Your Degree Plan Report & Advisee List

You will receive an email at the start of the term with your current Degree Plan Status Report. This email will also provide a reminder of how to check and reconcile any off-track warnings on your advisee's Degree Plans.

You can also use this report to verify that your advisee list is correct. If you are missing a student or have students assigned to you that you believe are in error, please ask your department chair to make the correction.

You can view your advisee list in Banner at any time.

- Go to Banner Faculty/Advising

- Select Advisee Search
- Click the View My Advisee List link at the bottom of the search box.
    - Note, this list will by default include recently inactive students. You can use the filter if you wish to view only currently active students (select “student status” and “active” to filter).
    - Students will be listed as active if they were registered in the prior term. If they do not register for the current term and have not requested a leave of absence, they will be moved to inactive after census (attendance reporting).

Send Welcome Email to Advisees

You can use Navigate to send an email to all your advisees at once. It is helpful to welcome students back to campus, to remind them that you are their advisor and available to meet with them as needed, and to share your office hours for the semester.

Note that the default is for students registered for the current semester to be displayed. If you would like to include all active students, including those not currently registered, toggle the term to “all terms”. The email will be sent through the Navigate system.

You can also send an email to all or selected advisees from the advisee list in Banner.

- Go to Advisee Search
- Click the “View My Advisees” link
- Filter the list if desired. Remember this list will include recently inactive students (you may or may not wish to filter them out depending on your purpose for emailing).
- Click the “Email All” button at the top. This will launch an email through your Outlook (Outlook must be set as your default email app) with your advisees in the BCC line. You can edit as needed. This email will then come directly from you.

Ongoing Tasks & Student Support

In addition to monitoring Degree Plans and Midterm Grade reports as outlined below, you should be generally available to advisees who email or who need to meet during the semester. As an advisor, you are an important point of contact for students who may turn to you when they have a question they aren’t sure how to get answered. You aren’t expected to have all answers, but should be able to connect them with the team who does.

Availability

When on contract, faculty advisors should respond to student emails within 2 business days.

If you will be out of office during the semester, please set an auto-reply message in Outlook directing students to your department chair or to Academic Advising if they need immediate assistance.

Communication

Although not required, you may wish to Navigate to send an email with reminders to students at points during the semester (for example, reminding them to check midterm grades).

You can also use Navigate to send an email to an individual student.

Student emails are also available on a student's Banner homepage. You can also send an email to all or selected advisees from the advisee list in Banner.

- Go to Advisee Search
- Click the "View My Advisees" link
- Filter the list if desired. Remember this list will include recently inactive students (you may or may not wish to filter them out depending on your purpose for emailing).
- Click the "Email All" button at the top. This will launch an email through your Outlook (Outlook must be set as your default email app) with your advisees in the BCC line. You can edit as needed. This email will then come directly from you.

Issuing Alerts/Connecting Students to Resources

The Alerts feature in Navigate can be used to connect students with various campus resources including the Dean of Students, financial aid, CASAS, Career Services, and more.

You can read more about Alert types and find directions for using this feature here: Navigate Alerts

You should always let a student know that you are connecting them with a campus resource prior to issuing an Alert (and you need not use the language of "Alert"!). For example, you might say "I'm happy to connect you with the Dean of Students so they can talk to you about resources that might be able to help you with your financial situation." The only exception to this would be if a student has stopped communication and stopped attending class (in which case it would be difficult to let them know you are doing this outreach).

Letting the student know you are making the connection also makes it more likely that they will respond to the outreach they will receive. For example, if you refer a student to CASAS, they will get outreach from CASAS to set up an appointment; however, if YOU encourage the student to look out for this contact and respond to it, they are far more likely to follow through. Your influence matters!

FERPA, Sensitive Information, & Students In Crisis

Students have a right to the privacy and protection of their records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). You can read more about FERPA and access training via OneStop. Parents, guardians, or other parties can only be included in advising conversations if a student has authorized the release of their academic records to that person via Banner (see the link above for information on how to verify this). If you are ever unsure of how to respond to a request from a student on including someone else in an advising conversation, reach out to your department chair or academic dean.

You may occasionally need to use a Navigate Alert, contact the Dean of Students Office, or submit a Student Support Team referral to connect a student who has shared personal information to the appropriate resource. You are not expected to know the details of all available campus resources or take on the role of a counselor – the most important step is offering care and connecting students to the right support. You are in an excellent position to notice when a student may be struggling and to have an initial supportive conversations. It can be very meaningful to say: "I hear you, and I would like to help by connecting you with support."

If a student appears to be at risk, it is important to ask them directly if they feel safe or if they are having thoughts of harming themselves or others. Asking this question does not increase risk; instead, it creates an opportunity for honesty and timely help. Free, nationally certified, crisis management and suicide prevention training is available through the Wellbeing Center.

If a student appears to be in crisis or otherwise in need of immediate assistance, you can connect the student immediately to Counseling Services via walk-in appointments in EN

B219 from 8:30-4:30, M-F. Outside of business hours, you can call campus police for assistance at (203) 392-5375 or dial 919 from a University phone.

Please remember that under FERPA, information about students should only be shared with campus colleagues who have a legitimate educational need to know in order to provide appropriate support.

Finally, all employees, including faculty, are mandated reporters of sexual violence. Should a student disclose sexual violence to you, please follow the procedures outlined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Referring to Academic Advising

In some cases, it may be appropriate to refer students to our professional advising team. Reasons might include assistance with exploring other major options or questions about academic standing.

If you are referring a student to academic advising, make sure to leave a note in Navigate so that the advising team is aware of the conversation you've already had with the student.

Professional advisors are NOT substitutes for faculty advising. Although they are happy to meet with any student, they will refer students back to their faculty advisor for questions about course selection, sequencing, or anything related to an academic program. They will also not provide registration PINs to students assigned to a faculty advisor.

Faculty advisors with advising questions should reach out to the Faculty Director of Academic Advising (via advisement@southernct.edu) and not to the professional advising team.

Navigate History & Logging Contact

If you do have contact with a student or attempt outreach, it is useful to log this in Navigate. A student's Navigate history will show all logged contacts with faculty and offices across campus. This can be useful to review before meeting with a student.

After reaching out to or meeting with a student, you can log this as an appointment summary or a note using the directions here: Navigate Notes & Appointment Summaries

Please also review these guidelines which discuss how to handle student privacy and provide examples of helpful notes and summaries.

While ideally you will use the Appointment Summary feature to report on an appointment, it is most important that you record the contact, even if you do so using the Note feature.

Counseling Course Withdrawals

If one of your advisees withdraws from a course, you will be copied on the confirmation of withdrawal email. There are two reasons we do this:

- As the advisor, you are in the best position to counsel the student if they have made a hasty decision or if they need to be connected with support resources. It is helpful to check in with the student to make sure they had an accurate picture of their standing in the course. If they withdrew in error, they do have a small window of time to reenroll without penalty. More importantly, if they were struggling in one course we want to make sure they are on solid footing in their other courses.
- As the advisor, you are also in the best position to understand how a course withdrawal will impact a student's future registration plans. In some cases, the course does not need to be retaken, but in others it would be important to reschedule it on the plan AND to have a conversation with the student about how to best prepare for success.

Please see catalog policy on withdrawals for additional information.

You are not expected to be able to counsel students on how their aid, billing, or academic standing will be impacted by a course withdrawal. You can review information on these topics on the OneStop withdrawals page or refer students to Academic Advising.

Maintaining Degree Plans

Faculty advisors are expected to maintain accurate Degree Plans for all advisees. Degree Plans are a personalized academic map designed to help each student meet their academic goals on an appropriate timeline.

Degree Plans are a manual tool – this is by design! They are meant to facilitate conversations and decision making; they are NOT intended to tell students what to do. Students must "own" their degree plan, and advisors must help them do so.

Degree Plans also provide tracking data to alert students and advisors when a plan should be updated due to registration changes or course grades. They also provide data about course demand, allowing for more accurate course schedule construction.

For a full explanation of and tutorials on using Degree Plans, please see the Degree Plan Faculty Advisor Guide.

Degree Plan Status Reports

Degree Plan status reports will be delivered as an excel file via email on the 1st and 15th of each month as well as at the start of each term. These provide an opportunity for you to quickly check for any off-track warnings and take corrective action as needed.

For a full explanation of Degree Plans including how to use the status report, please see the Degree Plan Faculty Advisor Guide.

Midterm Grade Reports

Faculty are required to provide students with a midterm grade. Undergraduate instructors must report via Banner (same as final grades); graduate instructors are strongly encouraged to submit midterm grades via Banner.

These Banner reported midterm grades are used to generate midterm grade reports. You will receive a midterm grade report for your advisees 3 business days after midterm grades are due (this includes our 8-week terms and intersessions).

This report will provide advisors with a quick and easy way to check to see which advisees need additional support. While CASAS will continue to do outreach to all students who are struggling academically at midterms, **advisor outreach can help encourage students to take advantage of the supports available to them**. Advisors are also key as we have a more **comprehensive picture of the student**; for example, advisors are best positioned to see when students are struggling in all classes, are exhibiting a change in performance, or are experiencing difficulties in courses key to their current program.

To use this report:

- Review for students who have a D, F, or missing midterm grade (missing means the instructor did not submit a grade to Banner so the student is likely unclear of their standing).
- Review for students who are passing but not currently meeting program required grade minimums.
- Consider email outreach to these students encouraging them to take advantage of offered supports from CASAS and to utilize faculty office hours. As appropriate, connect them with additional supports including counseling or support for basic needs via Navigate alerts.
- If students are struggling in courses key to their program, consider what program interventions/supports would be appropriate (for example, if one of my advisees were struggling in a course required for program admission or that was a pre-req for another course I would remind them of how this course fits into their overall program).
- Use midterm grade information to inform conversations with advisees considering withdrawing from a course (as sometimes students withdraw from courses that they are comfortably passing).
- Use Navigate Notes to record actions taken.

The Registration Advising Meeting

Once a semester, you should meet with each of your advisees to discuss registration for upcoming terms and to have a broader conversation about the student's academic goals.

Typically, you should allow 30 minutes for a registration advising meeting.

Registration advising meetings are an opportunity to:

- check in with advisees on how current classes are going
- confirm choice of major (for newer students)
- review any program admissions requirements (if applicable); review requirements in the major (GPA, courses, etc.)
- discuss opportunities beyond the major (minors, second majors, internships, study abroad, accelerated pathways, etc.)
- check in with post-graduation plans for those nearing graduation (graduate school, connecting with Career Services)

And, of course, they are the time to discuss course choices for upcoming terms and to update the Degree Plan as needed.

Timing

Typically, registration advising meetings take place during October for Winter and Spring registration and during March for Summer and Fall registration.

For a full list of registration dates, see the Registrar's Registration Checklist page.

Advising Campaigns

You can use the campaigns feature in Navigate to send reminders to students to sign up for an advising appointment. For instructions, see the Navigate Campaigns tutorial. You should send these no later than the last week of September (for Winter/Spring) or the last week of February (for Summer/Fall) to avoid a backlog of last-minute appointments.

Navigate will continue to send periodic reminders to students until they schedule their appointment. You can change these settings using the information in the tutorial linked above.

Registration PINs & Registration Holds

Registration PINs will be available in Banner on October 1 (for Spring registration) and March 1 (for Fall registration). PINs are not required for Winter and Summer registration.

PINs will no longer be required once the priority dates for registration have passed (once registration for non-matriculated undergraduates opens).

PINs should never be given via email. The purpose of a PIN is to require the student to attend a meeting with their advisor to ensure appropriate guidance is given.

To find a student's PIN:

- Go to Banner Faculty/Advising.
- Click Advisee Search.
- Make sure you have selected the term the student is registering for on the search page. Search for your student by ID# or name.

- On the student's Banner homepage, click the Registration Notices link at the top right of the screen (right below your name).
- Student's PIN will be listed.

The Registration Notices link will also show a student's academic standing for the selected term. If their standing prohibits registration, that will be noted here.

The Holds link (directly beside the Registration Notices link) will show any holds the student may have that prohibit registration. If a student has a hold, remind them of this hold and make sure they know how to contact the relevant office (such as billing) to correct the hold.

Course Schedules

Although it is the student's responsibility to build their schedule, you likely will find it helpful sometimes to consult the course schedule during advising meetings.

Students typically use Schedule Planner to search for courses. This video provides an overview of Schedule Planner.

Faculty may find it easier to use the Banner schedule to search for courses. The Banner schedule is also linked under Helpful Links at the top of a student's Degree Evaluation. The Banner schedule can be filtered by subject code, instructor, modality, and LEP Category (including W courses).

Updating Degree Plans

The Degree Plan can be used to facilitate the advising meeting as it offers an opportunity to review current courses, discuss upcoming terms, revise/discuss the path to graduation, and discuss opportunities (accelerated pathways, internships, etc.).

For a full description of how to use the Degree Plan in a registration advising meeting, including how to review and reconcile warnings, see the Degree Plan Faculty Advisor Guide.

Reporting on the Meeting

Use the Navigate Appointment Summary (or Notes) feature to record any relevant information discussed with the student during the advising appointment. This serves as an important record and reminder for you (especially as you may not see the student again until the following term).

You can choose to have a copy of the summary sent to the student as well if you would like the student to have a record. You will need to toggle on the “send copy to student” box when creating the summary if you wish to do this.

Group Advising

Some departments utilize group advising sessions to deliver general information about a program (such as course sequencing) to students. This is perfectly fine to do **so long as each student also has an opportunity to meet individually with their assigned faculty advisor to receive guidance specific to their situation.** PINs should not be given out during group advising sessions.

Course and Program of Study Eligibility (CPOS)

Although faculty are not expected to be knowledgeable about the ins and outs of financial aid, it is useful to understand the basics of CPOS. If one of your advisees has an issue with their financial aid due to CPOS, you will be copied on the email notifying them of the issue.

Our comprehensive CPOS guide and FAQs will answer many questions; however, if you need additional guidance in how to help a student with a CPOS notice or would like to learn more about how this regulation might impact your students, you may reach out to advisement@southernct.edu.

Accelerated Pathways

All Southern undergraduate students with a 3.0 GPA and 90 earned credits can apply to take graduate courses to apply towards a Southern graduate degree. Permission to take graduate courses is always at the discretion of the graduate programs; students must also have permission from their undergraduate program to apply.

For additional information about how accelerated pathways work and tips for advising students, see our Accelerated Pathways Advising Guide.

Unregistered Students

Department chairs have access to an Argos report of all unregistered students. It is useful to run this report after priority registration and to reach out to those students. Academic Advising does additional outreach to unregistered students; however, an email from an advisor with whom the student has a relationship can be quite meaningful in helping them to register or in connecting them with resources (for example Financial Advising in the case of financial holds).

Intersessions

If you will not be checking email during intersessions, please set an out-of-office message in Outlook referring students to Academic Advising for assistance. The Academic Advising office is staffed any time the University is open.

In Closing

This guide is a work in progress. We would love to hear from you what additions or clarifications would be useful. If you have suggestions – or questions – please reach out to advisement@southernct.edu.

Thanks for your work in supporting Southern's students!