

**The University of Iowa
Academic Advising Center**

Additional Information about AAC and the Position of Academic Advisor

1. General Operations: The Advising Center is a large, busy office serving over 9,500 undergraduate students, most of them first-year students and sophomores. AAC advises Open Majors (students who have not declared a major); students seeking admission to a selective program (e.g., Journalism Interest, Nursing Interest); pre-professional majors (e.g. pre-law, pre-medicine); students with declared majors in other Liberal Arts and Sciences departments; and students in academic crisis (changing goals, experiencing academic difficulties). AAC also administers a number of student retention programs.

The AAC staff currently includes 37 advisors, 5 support staff members, 10 work-study students, and a 6-person administrative team. The Academic Advising Center is located in the Pomerantz Center, on the east side of campus.

2. Philosophy and Goals: The Center was established to provide students with advising support as they plan their programs of study. Advisors pursue a proactive philosophy, monitoring students who are experiencing academic difficulty and students who have special needs.

An important goal of the Center is to support students as they choose their majors and develop academic plans. Advising support includes helping advisees to set goals and teaching them how to gather information, how to use that information to make viable decisions, and how to evaluate those decisions. Advisors try to help students learn to be their own best advisors, and to negotiate a large, complex university successfully.

3. Characteristics of Advisors. We seek individuals who:

- Are genuinely interested in becoming involved in the details of students' lives (during most of the year, the entire workday is spent talking with students);
- Understand the typical situations of entering students and the demands of the classroom;
- Work well one-on-one with students and are not overly directive or judgmental;
- Are able to solve problems and teach students how to solve problems;
- Are direct, diplomatic, and compassionate;
- Are emotionally resilient enough to experience and control a range of emotions (including frustration, joy, pity, anger, sorrow, and triumph) in the span of a single day and in no particular order, as one student replaces another in the office chair;

3. Characteristics of Advisors (continued). We seek individuals who:
- Function well in stressful situations and are resourceful and capable when faced with angry or distressed persons;
 - Work well with details, and are able to adjust quickly when those details change;
 - Respond flexibly and constructively to changing or unexpected circumstances;
 - Work quickly and accurately against deadlines;
 - Collaborate well with teams of other advisors;
 - Are able to work in a professional manner with AAC colleagues as well as faculty and staff throughout the University;
 - Have well-developed group presentation skills;
 - Are committed to ongoing professional development in the field of academic advising.
4. The Position of Academic Advisor
- Academic Advisor is a 3/4-time to full-time professional appointment with fringe benefits. An AAC advisor appointment may be 3/4, 7/8, or full-time. Appointments are negotiated when employment offers are made and are based on Center needs and funding.
 - Each advisor is responsible for a caseload of approximately 210 to 330 students (caseloads are prorated by the advisor's percentage of time). Advisors schedule at least two conferences per semester for each advisee; in addition, advisors track and contact students on probation, students who receive delinquency notices, and students who have special advising needs.
 - Advisors are responsible for keeping detailed records for each student and for writing a detailed report of each contact with a student.
 - Advisors are expected to contribute to professional service for the office (e.g., develop and present recruitment and retention programming, serve as liaison to an academic department, program, or college). Advisors are also expected to serve on AAC committees in addition to direct work with students.
 - Advisors participate in an intensive training program, followed by an extensive staff development program. Advisors are expected to learn the course and major requirements for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, and specific majors and programs, and to become familiar with campus resources and with University rules and regulations. Advisors are also expected to learn and to use advising skills and attitudes appropriate for advising undergraduates at The University of Iowa.

4. The Position of Academic Advisor (continued)

- Advisors need to be able to present concise, accurate information to students, faculty, staff, and/or parents at meetings and programs.
- Advising activity peaks during Summer Orientation in June and July and during planning and registration periods in mid-August, September, October, November, early December, mid-January, March, and April. The position requires the ability to work rapidly under pressure, the capacity to exercise responsible professional judgment, and the flexibility to adapt rapidly to changing situations.
- The Advising Center is open from 8-5 daily and has some evening hours as well during the academic year. Advisors work at least four hours each weekday and may be requested to work at specific hours to provide adequate staff coverage. During peak traffic periods, advisors should expect to work additional hours.
- Vacation may be taken during times when the University is not in session (late May, late July, early August, late December, early January, and mid-March), and is not ordinarily taken at other times.
- The work Academic Advisors are asked to perform at the Center is very demanding. Traffic at the Center is heavy during most of the year, and the crises and problems in students' lives tend to be unpredictable. The entire workday is filled with student appointments for periods of weeks at a time. Because the Center works by appointment, advisors have little flexibility in their schedules during the workday.
- Many factors that influence students' academic progress are not under the advisor's control. At times, the work may be emotionally draining, but it has many high points and rewards as well, including the opportunities to make a difference in students' lives and to work with diverse colleagues in a collaborative work environment.