



Advising Do's and Don'ts

DO ...

- ▶ **Make your advisee feel known and welcome** - Many surveys tell us that students want to feel known, and so one way you can help your advising relationship is to learn your advisees' names. This is difficult for some of us who see so many students and advisees, but taking the time to do this can really pay off. Welcome students to your office when they arrive for an appointment or come by during office hours.
- ▶ **Be an active listener** - Acknowledge what your advisee says to you and repeat important information back to him or her. Take good notes during the meeting (or encourage your advisee to do it) so that you both know what you have discussed during the meeting and so that your advisee feels heard. Follow up on any questions you were unable to answer.
- ▶ **Ask follow-up questions** - You can learn more as well as show your advisees that you understand their concerns if you ask questions about what they are telling you. This can help them open up and allow you both to address the main topics of concern.
- ▶ **Be aware of your advisee's non-verbal cues** - Body language and facial expressions can tell you a lot about what your advisee is thinking. Be conscious of whether or not your advisee is making eye contact, or is showing classic body signs of closing off (crossed arms or legs). Use these signals as indicators as to whether or not you are understanding each other - and whether or not you are helping your advisee.

- ▶ **Be aware of your own non-verbal cues** - Are you making eye contact? Or are you checking the clock or your email every few minutes? Please be aware of how your non-verbal language tells your advisees whether or not they are valued. Examples of positive non-verbal communication:
 - ▶ Rise and greet the student as he/she enters the office.
 - ▶ Remove physical barriers by positioning your chair away from your desk so that you are facing the student.
 - ▶ Place your arms and legs comfortably so you appear relaxed and open to communicate. Leaning slightly forward in your chair, without exaggeration, serves to underscore your appearing interested in what the student has to say.
 - ▶ Maintain eye contact with the student through your conversation.
 - ▶ Use appropriate body motions. Move in response to the speaker. Avoid nervous or distracting gestures.
 - ▶ At the meeting's end, rise and accompany the student to the door as he/she leaves your office.

Adapted from [University of Central Florida](#)

DON'T ...

- ▶ **Talk so much; let your advisee talk** - As classroom teachers, we are accustomed to talking for much of our time with students. However, the advising relationship requires that we spend more time listening, making suggestions in response to student ideas, and asking follow-up questions.
- ▶ **Interrupt** - Let your advisee finish her or his statements. Sometimes even leaving a short pause after s/he speaks can help you both reflect on what s/he has said and think of options for help and referral.
- ▶ **Judge your advisee** - Work on addressing the person behind the attitude; work on helping solve the problem. You can't "fix" this person, especially when it might simply be your perception that is broken.
- ▶ **Assume that one solution fits all** - Learn about the different ways problems have been solved in the past by speaking to your chair and other advisors.
- ▶ **Rush** - This is easier said than done, given all of our pressing responsibilities! You can help your advisee not feel like a burden by making sure you both know the length of the appointment beforehand while making sure your advisee knows that the opportunity for a follow-up meeting is always an option.