

Peer Advisor Guide 2019



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*Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.
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UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



UFS·UV
CENTRE FOR TEACHING
AND LEARNING (CTL)
ONDERRIG-EN-LEERSENTRUM
(OLS)

Content

A student with curly hair, wearing a yellow sweater, is sitting at a wooden table. She is writing in a notebook with a red pencil. There are sticky notes and other papers on the table. Another person's hand is visible in the foreground, pointing towards the notebook.

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“There are countless ways of achieving *greatness*, but any road to achieving one’s maximum potential must be built on a bedrock of *respect* for the *individual*, a commitment to *excellence*, and a rejection of mediocrity.

-Buck Rodgers



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Dear Peer Advisor

Thank you for making the commitment to serve at the University of the Free State (UFS) as a peer advisor!

Whether you are a tutor, P3 mentor, RC member, facilitator, teaching assistant, student assistant or SRC member, you are contributing towards supporting our students and connecting them to the right services in order to succeed. In order for you to be the best student leader on campus, it is important that you understand how and where you fit in the academic advising network at the UFS.

The UFS, strives towards helping its' students reach success in their personal, academic and career goals. Research indicates that connecting students to first-year programmes and the institution, and effective academic advising are all elements crucial in improving student motivation, satisfaction and success (Drake, 2011, p. 9; Nutt, 2003, p. N.P.; Pargett, 2011, p. ii; Tuttle, 2000, p. 16). By understanding your role as a peer advisor within the academic advising network, you hold a great deal of potential to help connect and guide especially the first-year student reach academic excellence.

As a UFS peer advisor, it is important that you have grounded knowledge base of academic advising as a concept, practice and most importantly a central feature contributing towards student success. The aim of this peer advisor guide is to provide you with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to provide basic advice and refer students.

We trust you acquire the skills and can extend academic advising services across the institution.

You are valuable to us!

The Advising Team



What Peer Advisors *Should Know*

Overview of Peer Advisor Training

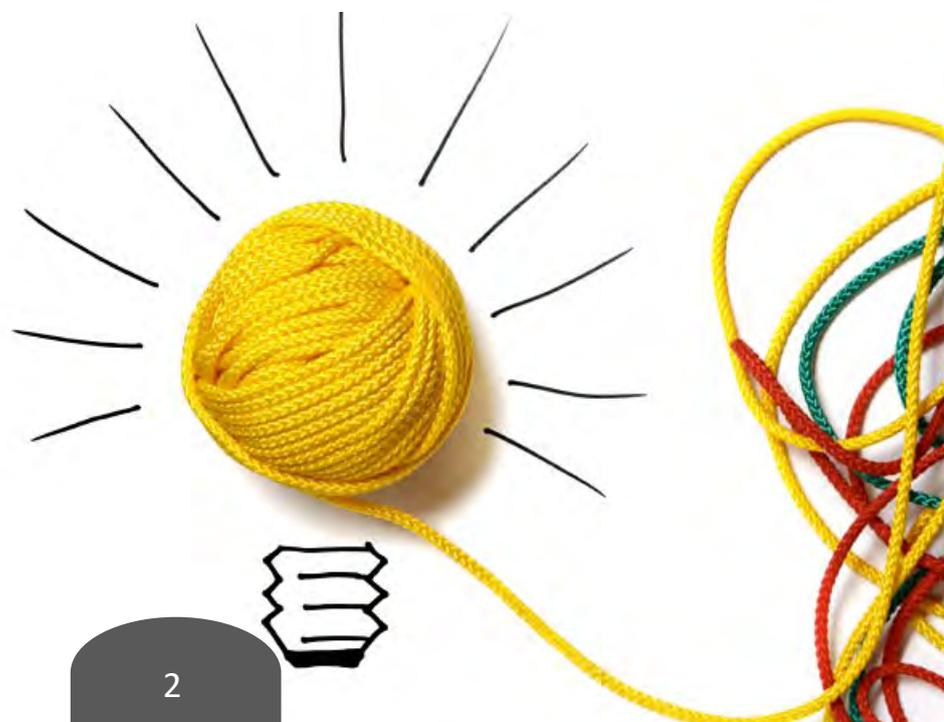
Peer advisors at the UFS are trained according to the introductory academic advisor training and professional development framework of Habley (in McClellan, 2007) consisting of three advising components namely: **conceptual**, **informational** and **relational**.

The conceptual component describes the context of UFS peer advisors. This refers to what is meant by academic advising at the UFS, and what your role is as a UFS peer advisor within the UFS advising network.

The informational component addresses the question of: “What do I need to know in order to be a peer advisor?”

Lastly, the relational component refers to the interpersonal-, communication- and ethical skills necessary to develop a trusting and meaningful relationship with students as a peer advisor.

The content of this guide elaborates on these three components and draws on the practice of academic advising at the UFS and how to best serve as a peer advisor. Figure 1. below provides an overview of everything you will learn under the three foundational components of Habley’s framework. Once you have studied this guide, you will be confident in all three these areas, and can start making a real difference in the lives of students.



Components to Academic Advising Training

UFS Advisor training

- Communication skills
- Self-knowledge
- Relationship of trust
- Decision-making strategies
- How to handle difficult student situations
- Active listening
- Questioning techniques
- Referral skills



Conce



Relational



- **Concept of academic advising**
- **Advising principles**
- **University advising vision, mission and objectives**
- **The advising cycle**
- **The role of the peer advisor in the institution**
- **Ethical Responsibilities**



- **University policies and procedures**
- **University calendar**
- **University resources and support services**
- **Knowledge about student populations**
- **Technology used in advising (E.g. Blackboard, webpage)**



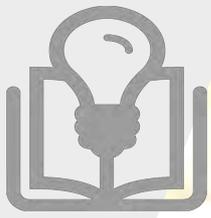
C Conceptual

C Component

Academic Advising as a Concept

Knowing that effective academic advising is at the core of institutional efforts to retain students (Tinto, 2011), the task remains to define academic advising as a concept. George Kuh (2005) defined advising as a “*way to connect students to the campus and help them feel that someone is looking out for them.*” Academic advising is thus more than merely helping students with module choices at registration (prescriptive). Advisors serve as institutional representatives that give students insight or direction towards their academic, social or personal goals (Kuhn, 2008). In order to help our students be successful in their studies, academic advisors at the UFS help students get insight or direction about their personal, academic and career goals.

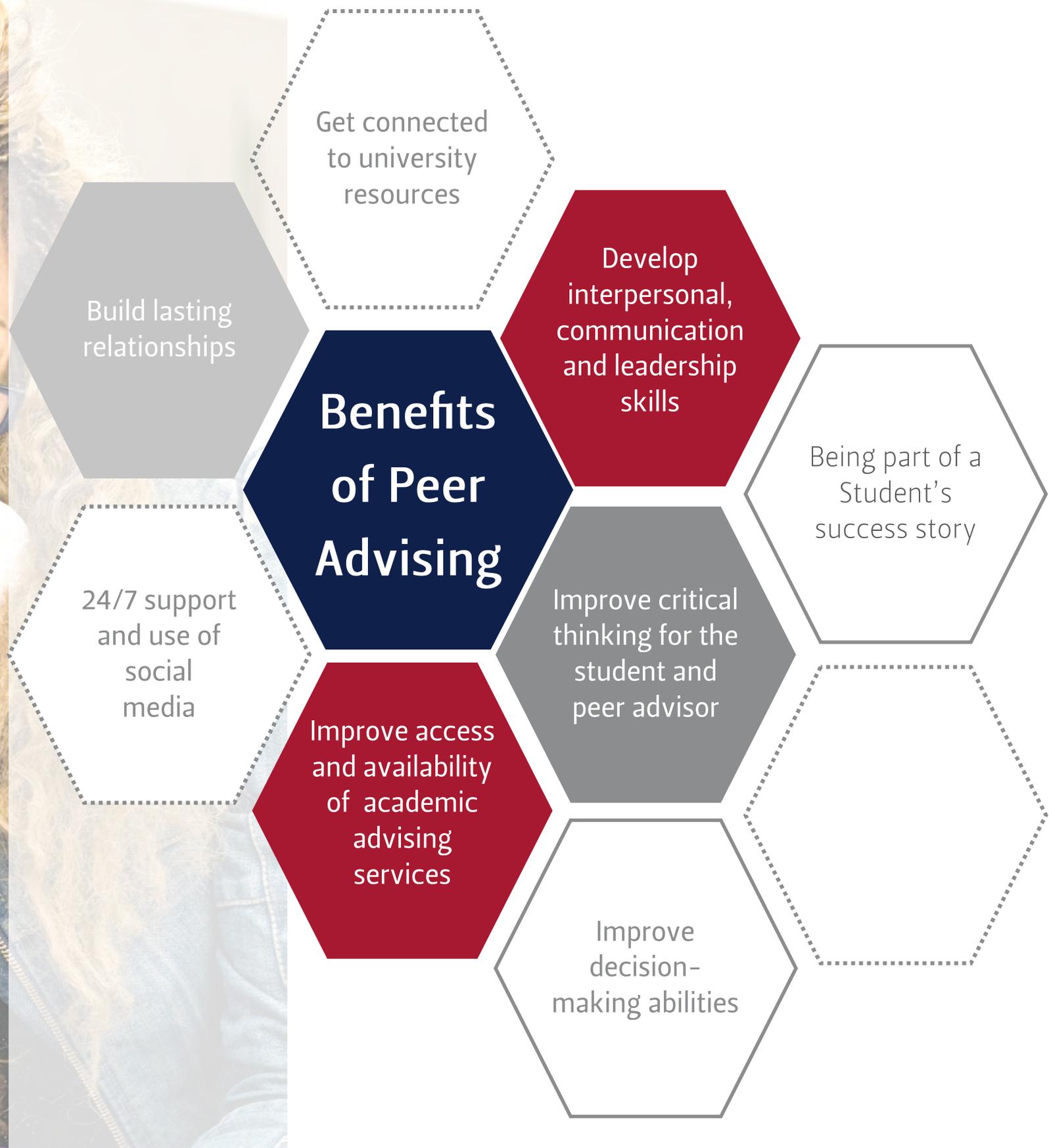
Academic advisors can assist students to understand options, determine resources and, where necessary, identify alternatives. They guide students to plan their educational path and curriculum that aligns their personal, educational and career goals, and connect to the UFS support network. Central to this is that advising is a mutual relationship of trust between the advisor and the student.

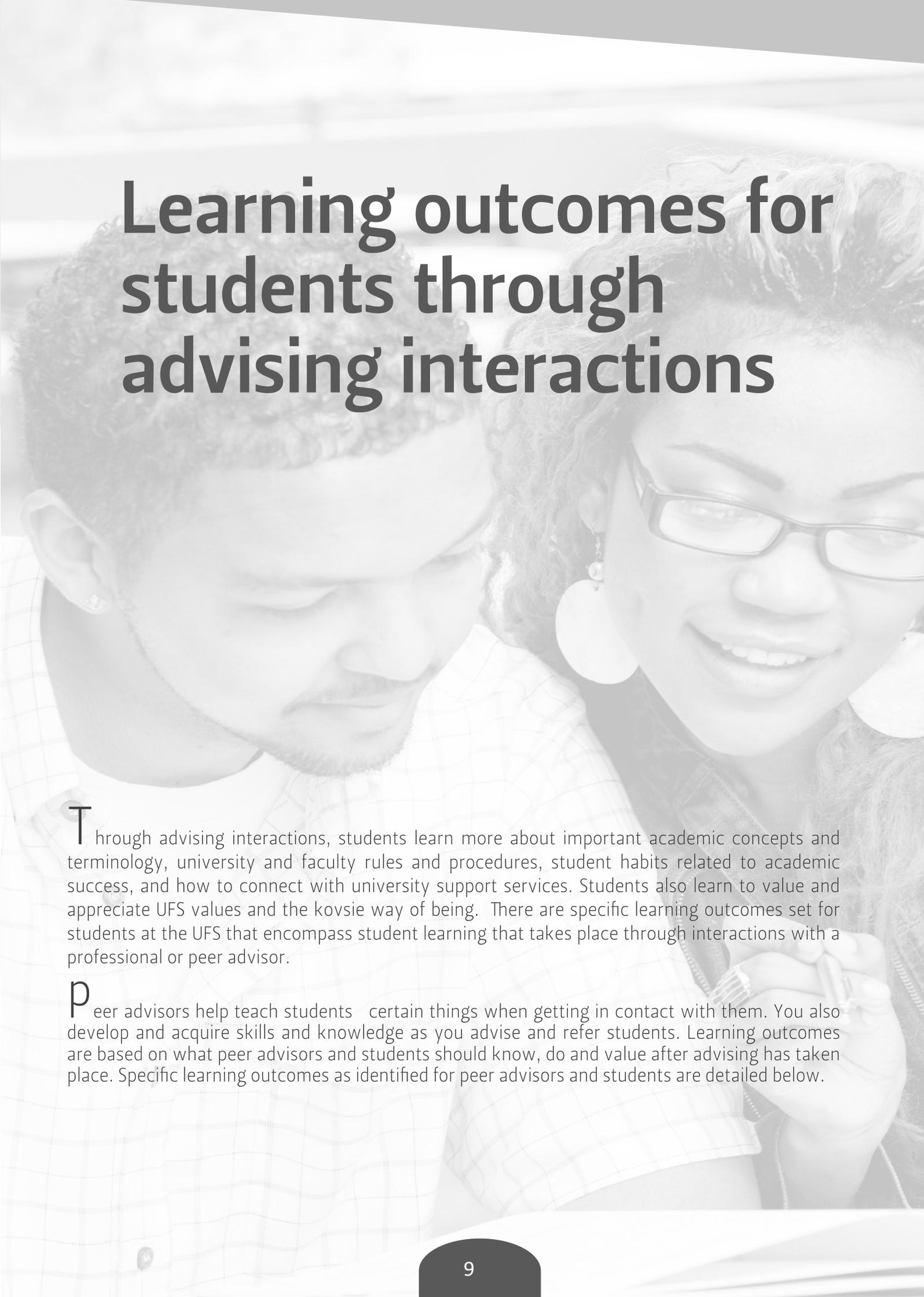


Conceptual

The advising relationship between peer advisors and their students has mutual benefits for both parties. Being a peer advisor is not only about giving, but also about benefiting and learning yourself. Here are some of the benefits included for you and your students.

“Focus on connecting with the people, and the tools will all make sense.” - Chris Brogan





Learning outcomes for students through advising interactions

Through advising interactions, students learn more about important academic concepts and terminology, university and faculty rules and procedures, student habits related to academic success, and how to connect with university support services. Students also learn to value and appreciate UFS values and the kowsie way of being. There are specific learning outcomes set for students at the UFS that encompass student learning that takes place through interactions with a professional or peer advisor.

Peer advisors help teach students certain things when getting in contact with them. You also develop and acquire skills and knowledge as you advise and refer students. Learning outcomes are based on what peer advisors and students should know, do and value after advising has taken place. Specific learning outcomes as identified for peer advisors and students are detailed below.

Advising Student learning outcomes (SLOs)

Guided by the UFS advising mission and vision, the academic advising SLOs are developed as indicators of what students are expected to know, be able to do and value and appreciate as a result of their engagement in academic advising initiatives and other student high impact practices. Knowing what student should learn through their advising interactions with you, can help you develop creative ways in helping them achieve this.

What students will KNOW:

- ◆ Understand the concept of academic advising at the UFS.
- ◆ Know who to contact and where to get academic advice.
- ◆ Know who to contact and where to access institutional support services.
- ◆ How to use the enrollment system of the institution.
- ◆ Where to find institutional and faculty rules and regulations.
- ◆ Understand the admission and progression requirements of their chosen degree/academic programme.

What students will DO:

- ◆ Meet regularly with an academic advisor (peer/professional).
- ◆ Commit to an educational plan and graduate timeously.
- ◆ Engage in social learning communities.
- ◆ Take responsibility for knowing and adhering to institutional and faculty policies and procedures.
- ◆ Take responsibility and make informed decisions regarding their educational and career path.
- ◆ Setup and pursue an educational and career path.



Conceptual

What do you expect to learn and acquire by serving as a peer advisor?

Not only do students learn and acquire knowledge and skills, but you as a peer advisor will learn through serving as a peer advisor at the university. Learning outcomes can provide you with an indication of the specific things you need to know, be able to do, and value as a peer advisor. Learning outcomes set for peer advisors are set out below.

Learning outcomes for Peer Advisors

What Peer Advisors should KNOW:

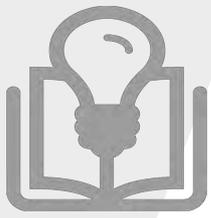
- ◆ What academic advice is, and when to refer to an advisor;
- ◆ How advising is done;
- ◆ Where and what type of services are provided across campus;
- ◆ The difference in your primary peer leader and peer advisor roles;
- ◆ How to follow up with students referred; and
- ◆ Where to find academic rules & regulations.

What Peer Advisors should DO:

- ◆ Meet with students on a regular basis;
- ◆ Build supportive and informative relationships with their students (Council on Academic Advising, 2011, p. 7);
- ◆ Refer students to the appropriate person/department;
- ◆ Act professionally;
- ◆ Share own experiences as a supportive strategy; and
- ◆ Keep record of students assisted.

What Peer Advisors should VALUE:

- ◆ Inclusivity – peer advisors should respect and communicate acceptance towards students from diverse racial, economic, cultural, and religious traits (Marter, 2016, p. 30)
- ◆ Integrity – peer advisors should always act in an ethical manner
- ◆ Empathy – peer advisors should value an attitude of putting themselves in another person's shoes to not be judgmental, but show acceptance and understanding (Marter, 2016, p. 30)
- ◆ Respect—peer advisors should see students as capable of making their own informed decisions.



Conceptual

The 3R's of Peer advising

As a peer advisor, it is important that you are familiar with the 3R's of advising students. In order to be an effective peer advisor, you need to have the necessary resources available, take responsibility for yourself and your students, and maintain good relations with the students you advise.

Responsibility

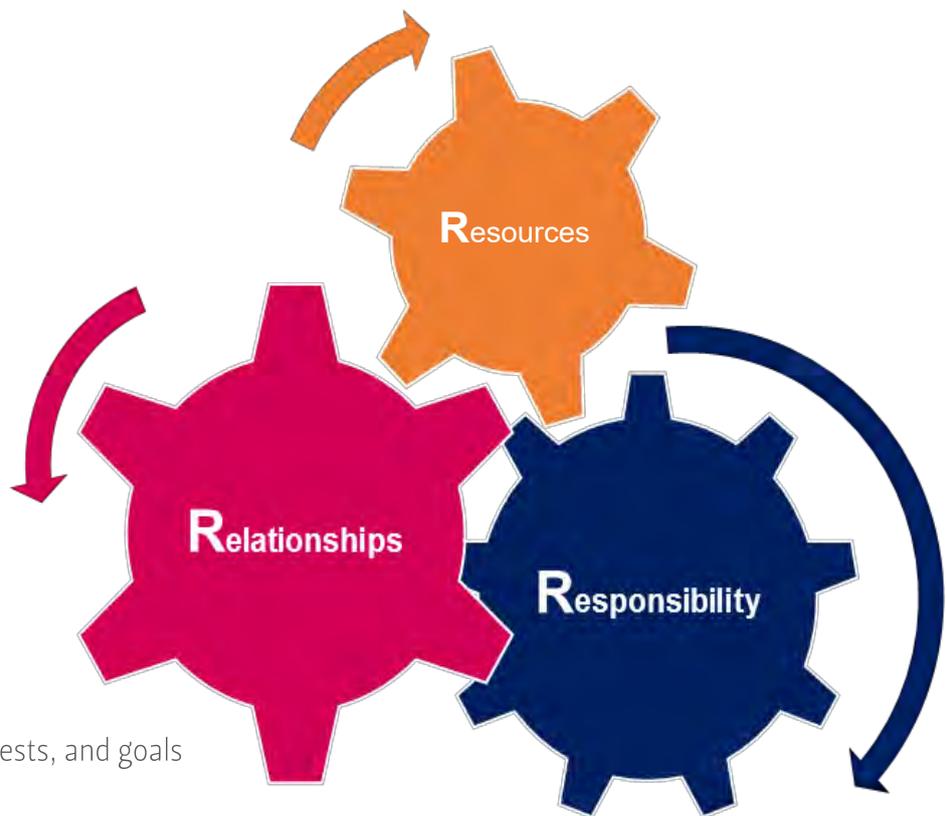
- ◆ Take ownership
- ◆ Be prepared
- ◆ Be punctual (Be on Time)

Relationships

- ◆ Foster open communication
- ◆ Clarify your values, abilities, interests, and goals
- ◆ Build a connection
- ◆ Remember: advising is a two-way street

Resources

- ◆ Know policies, procedures, and requirements
- ◆ Use academic advising tools—prospectus, faculty handbook, Web site, BlackBoard, etc.
- ◆ Use professional advisors.



The Advising Vision, Mission and Objectives

The UFS advising vision, mission and objectives are aligned with the Institutional vision, mission as well as the teaching and learning strategy of the institution.

Vision

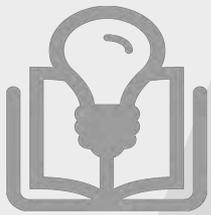
To be a leader in academic advising as a high impact practice that is recognized nationally and internationally for excellence in promoting student engagement and success from the students' point of enrollment to beyond graduation.

Mission

By leading academic advising practices through excellence, research and innovation that promote student engagement and success. Academic advising at the UFS is a teaching and learning process that empowers students to connect with the institution and align their educational and career aspirations through shared advisor-advisee responsibilities.

Objectives

- ◆ Professionalization of academic advising at the UFS.
- ◆ Connecting students to academic and support networks at the UFS.
- ◆ Connecting students to peer-facilitated social learning communities.
- ◆ To provide basic academic advising training to peer advisors at the UFS.
- ◆ Research, develop and implement innovative academic advising strategies.
- ◆ Empower students to navigate and align their educational and career pathway.
- ◆ Monitor and evaluate academic advising practices.
- ◆ Research and develop data-informed advising practice.



Conceptual

Initial contact
with prospective
students



Provide advice
specific to
admission
requirements



Advisors /
programme
directors
provide advice
specific to the
curriculum /
course



Provide general
academic advice

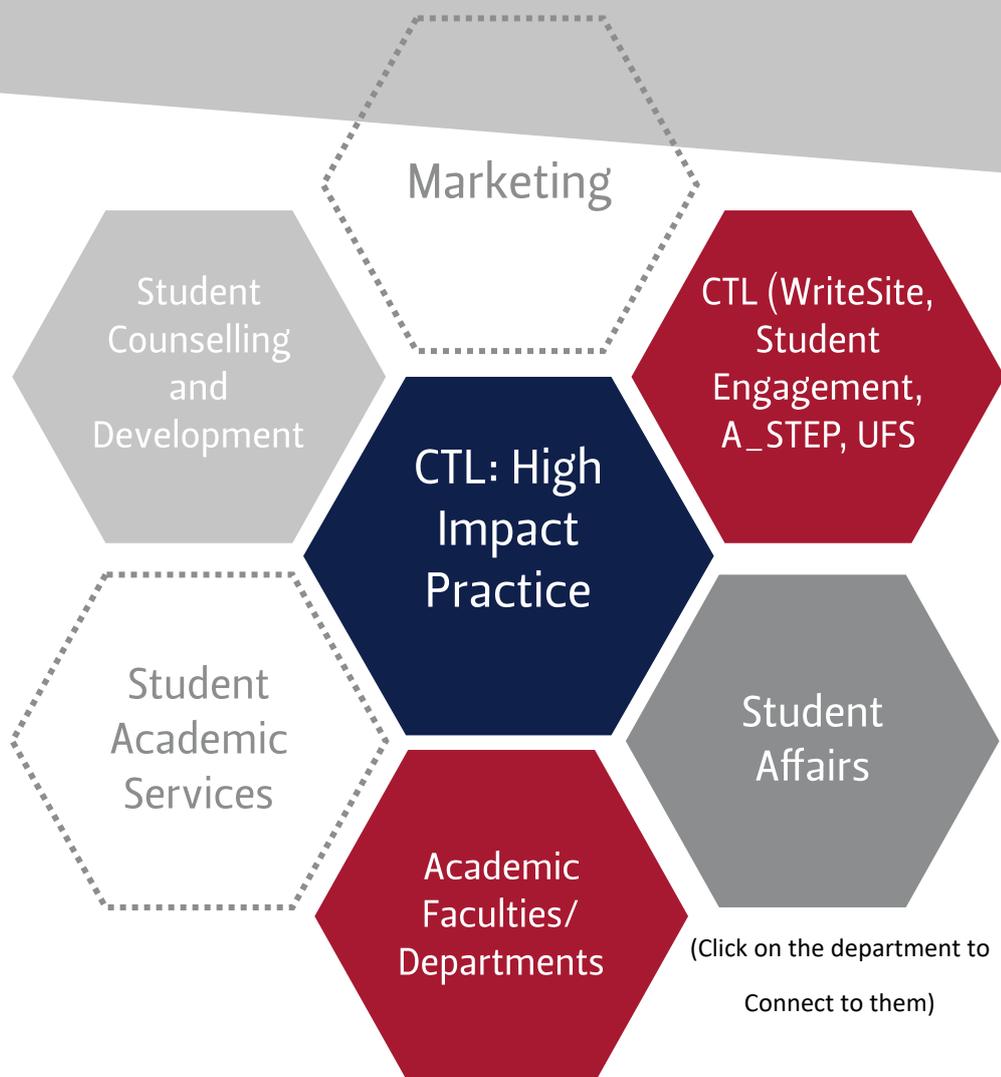


Act as referral
points for advice



Types of academic advisors at the UFS

The UFS Academic Advising network



Koring and Campbell (2005) stated that students rely more on other students than on staff for information about campus policies, procedures, subjects, lectures and academic programmes. Therefore, students will be more likely to ask for your assistance with academic and personal concerns than to seek academic advice from a professional advisor that they do not know.

Peer advising can be an effective strategy for meeting student needs on a peer-to-peer basis. War Soldier (2002) noted that students are able to understand the various lived experiences of their peers.

This is not to say that professional/faculty advisors are not able to understand students and their experiences, but that peer advisors can help expand the reach of advisors to connect with their peers (Zahorik, 2011). This is a clear indication that students are likely to be more comfortable to request assistance from their peers and build relationship with them as opposed to lecturers and other institutional staff. It is vital for peer advisors to undergo training so that they know and understand the institutional policies and advising guidelines.

Peer advisors are *not expected to provide curriculum (module) advice to students*, but rather to *play a supportive and referral role to students*. Peer advisors need a rudimentary understanding of academic advising principles, as well as thorough knowledge of the institution's support network. Peer advisors often help students locate campus resources, provide them with basic information, connect them to the appropriate support network, and refer them to professional advisors for academic and/or career advice.



Conceptual

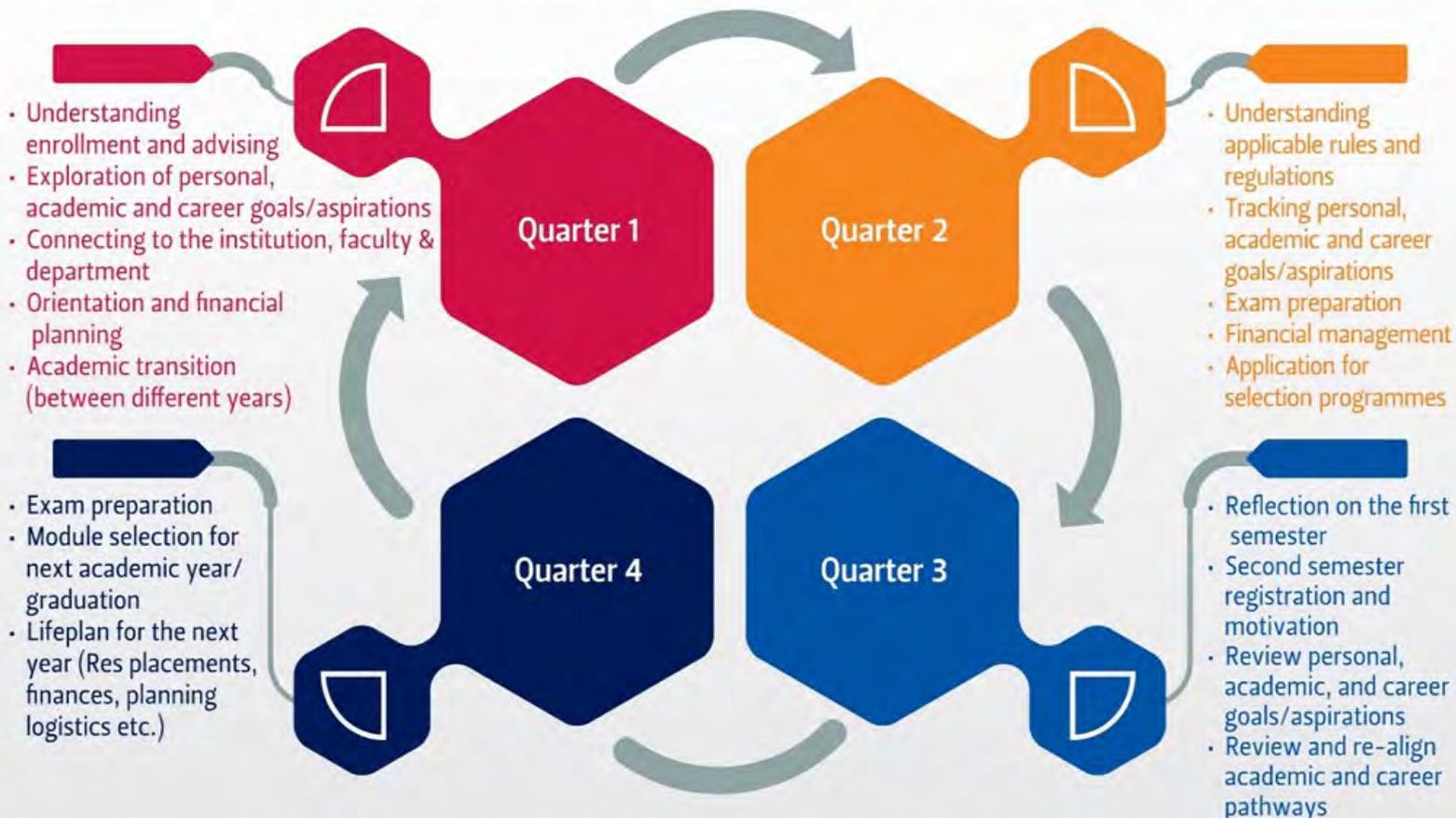
The UFS Academic Advising Cycle

Academic advising activities at the UFS are mapped against critical points in students' academic year in order to ensure that all students receive the support and advice they need at the most critical time to promote academic success. The academic advising cycle at the UFS is outlined in the figure below per quarter (academic term).

It is important that all peer advisors understand the academic advising cycle in order to best help students navigate through their year of studies. Peer advisors need to do the following:

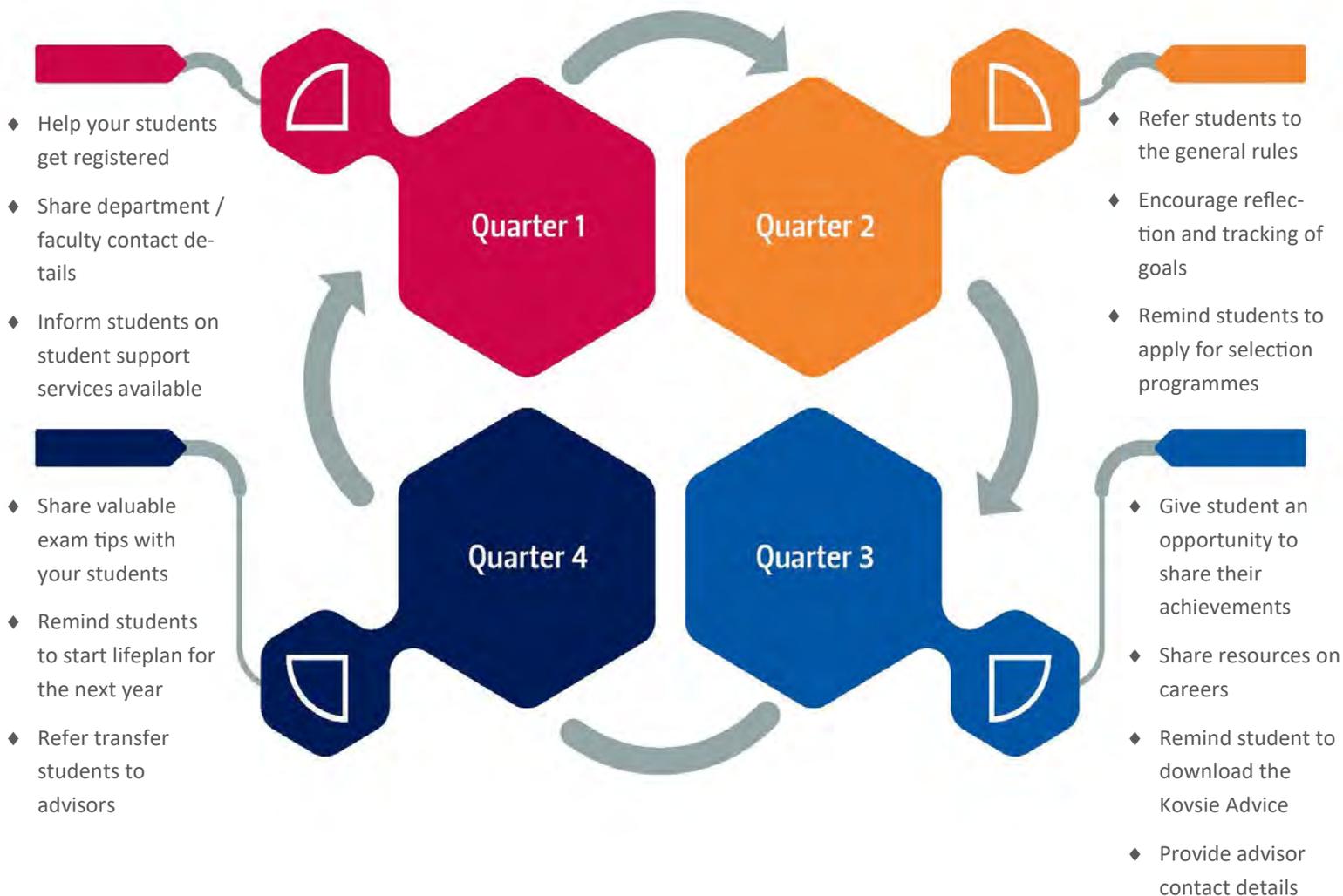
- ◆ Stay abreast of institutional changes;
- ◆ Be resourceful;
- ◆ Be knowledgeable; and
- ◆ Help students navigate their way through the actions in the academic advising cycle.

ACADEMIC ADVISING CYCLE



Helping students through the advising cycle

Here are some ideas of small things you can do in your class, group to ensure that your students move through the advising cycle, and gain the necessary information.





Conceptual

Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Advisors

Ethical responsibilities of peer advisors

Why make a fuss about ethics?

Ethical behaviour refers to the 'right' way of doing things. As with any other formal employment, academic advisors are subject to certain laws protecting people and guiding conduct. In other words, there is a legal element to ethical behaviour which all advisors need to adhere to. But beyond the legal aspect of ethics, there is also a moral responsibility which advisors – who are in a position of power – should adhere to. You need to know what ethical responsibilities you have towards your students. Let's take a closer look at these.

Legal responsibilities

Legally, South African higher education institutions – and therefore even you as peer advisors – are bound by the Constitution, the Higher Education Act of 1997, the Consumer Protection Act, contractual law, and the Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013 (also known as the POPI Act).

The South African Constitution is considered the fundamental law in which the shared values, human rights, national identity, and responsibilities of citizens and Government are stipulated. In essence it is a (legally binding) guide to what we as South Africans and as a country should strive towards. Some of the basic values the Constitution notes early on include: human dignity, equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism, non-sexism, security, privacy, freedom of religion an expression, and living in an environment not harmful to our well-being. When working with people, you need to be cognoscente of your responsibility to uphold the laws that guide our interactions with each other.

The Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013 (POPI)

During registration, students enter into a contract with the University where they are informed that their personal information will be used for institutional tracking, research, and interventions to improve the study experience. This means that the University (and all those who act as representatives of the University) should help keep the University's end of the bargain as stipulated in the vision, mission and value statements, which are reinforced by policies, strategic plans, and marketing content.

Furthermore, the recent implementation of the Protection of Personal Information (POPPI) Act stresses that personal information has to be limited to what is necessary for the purpose of use; that data access and pathways need to be secure; that data will be available to 'data subjects' on request; and that data users need to be held accountable for responsibly working with people's data. As a peer advisor, you represent the university, and should therefore always keep your students data secured, and deal with personal information in a confidential manner.

Moral obligations

The moral obligation of academic advisors are grounded in a sense of integrity – or doing things the right way. Key principles underpinning an advisor’s moral obligation include:

2.1 Beneficence

Beneficence refers to actions which are done to the benefit of others. Beneficence consists of two aspects: first, acting in ways that further others’ well-being; and second, to balance the potentially harmful consequences of an action against the potential benefits.

2.2 Non-maleficence

Most of us with some background in social sciences have probably come across the principle of not doing harm. Non-maleficence refers to the prevention, or at least the minimisation of possible harmful consequences resulting from the advising relationship.

2.3 Respect

Having respect for others implies a recognition of autonomy, in other words, seeing people as capable of making their own informed decisions.

2.4 Justice

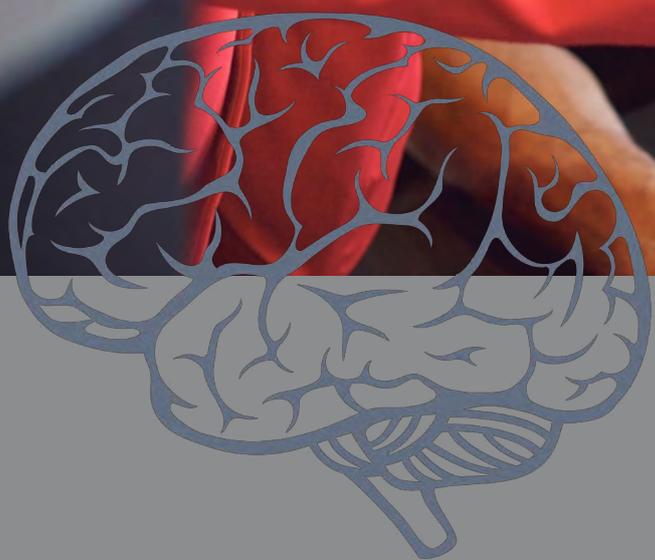
To be just means to be fair. That implies treating everyone equally and not discriminating against anyone for any reason. The realisation of justice as an academic advisor demands the recognition of human dignity – thus recognising the ‘humanness’ of others through seeing and treating each of them as another human being – irrespective of gender, race, class, sexuality, age, abilities, generational status, and the list goes on.

2.5 Fidelity

Fidelity in the advisor-advisee relationship implies trust, in other words, living up to commitments, being true and acting with integrity.

Student Responsibilities

It is very important to note that both the peer advisor and student share responsibility within the advising relationship. For example, the peer advisor has the responsibility to refer the student and the student has the responsibility to go to the person he/she is referred to. Just as peer advisors have moral obligations towards students, students also have a moral obligation towards their peer advisor and themselves.



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University policies and procedures

You will now be expected to know all university rules, policies and procedures, but it is paramount that you are able to tell students where they can locate important policies and procedures of the university.

[Click here to access the UFS general rules for 2019](#)

The University Calendar

It is critical for you as a peer advisor to have a basic overview of important academic deadlines and calendar dates at the UFS. The UFS calendar can be found on the UFS webpage. The academic calendar is also posted on the academic advising Blackboard Organisation.

[Click here to access the official UFS calendar for 2019](#)



Informational

University Resources and Support Services

Support services and resources are in abundance at the UFS, it is thus important that you have an overview of the available academic and social support resources/services available to students.

University resources may include:

- ◆ Student Affairs
- ◆ CUADS
- ◆ Student Counselling and Development
- ◆ Campus Ministries
- ◆ Housing and Residence Affairs
- ◆ Protection Services
- ◆ Emergency services on Campus
- ◆ Student Health and Wellness
- ◆ Kovsie Social Work Services
- ◆ HIV and Aids support

Click here to read more

Academic degree/programme Information

As a peer advisor, you are not expected to know academic programme requirements, selection information, curriculums etc. Should you encounter a student that is in need of advice with regard to their academic path, you should refer the student to professional advisor. Students can consult their faculty/departmental rulebooks for more information on their curriculum. Rulebooks can be accessed from this link:

<http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/yearbooks>

Click on the Faculty logo to download the Rulebook



Academic advising at the Centre for Teaching and Learning

Who is the Centre for Teaching and Learning?

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is focused on scholarship driven advancement of innovation and excellence in teaching and learning at the UFS.

What is academic advising?

Based on student engagement research, academic advising at the UFS is defined primarily as a high impact teaching and learning practice. The developmental academic advising approach adopted from The Global Community of Academic Advising (NACADA) fosters an advising relationship among students and staff. This relationship develops through mutual trust, shared responsibility, and a commitment to helping students identify, clarify, and realise their life goals through the higher education system and the dynamic, 21st century world of work.

Who is able to make use of advising services:

Academic advising provides all registered students at the UFS a platform to engage for free with a professional/faculty advisor in order to address the challenges that the student might be facing academically or otherwise. Academic advising services are free.

How to connect with academic advisors

Academic advisors at the UFS are available at various levels, there are advisors located in the Centre for Teaching and Learning and also in academic faculties/departments. Advisors are also accessible online via Blackboard, email, phone call and ace-to-face (student walk-in/appointments). Student advising and support (Advising Network) directory:

**Have you read
the latest
Kovsie
Advice?**

**Click here to
email a CTL
advisor**

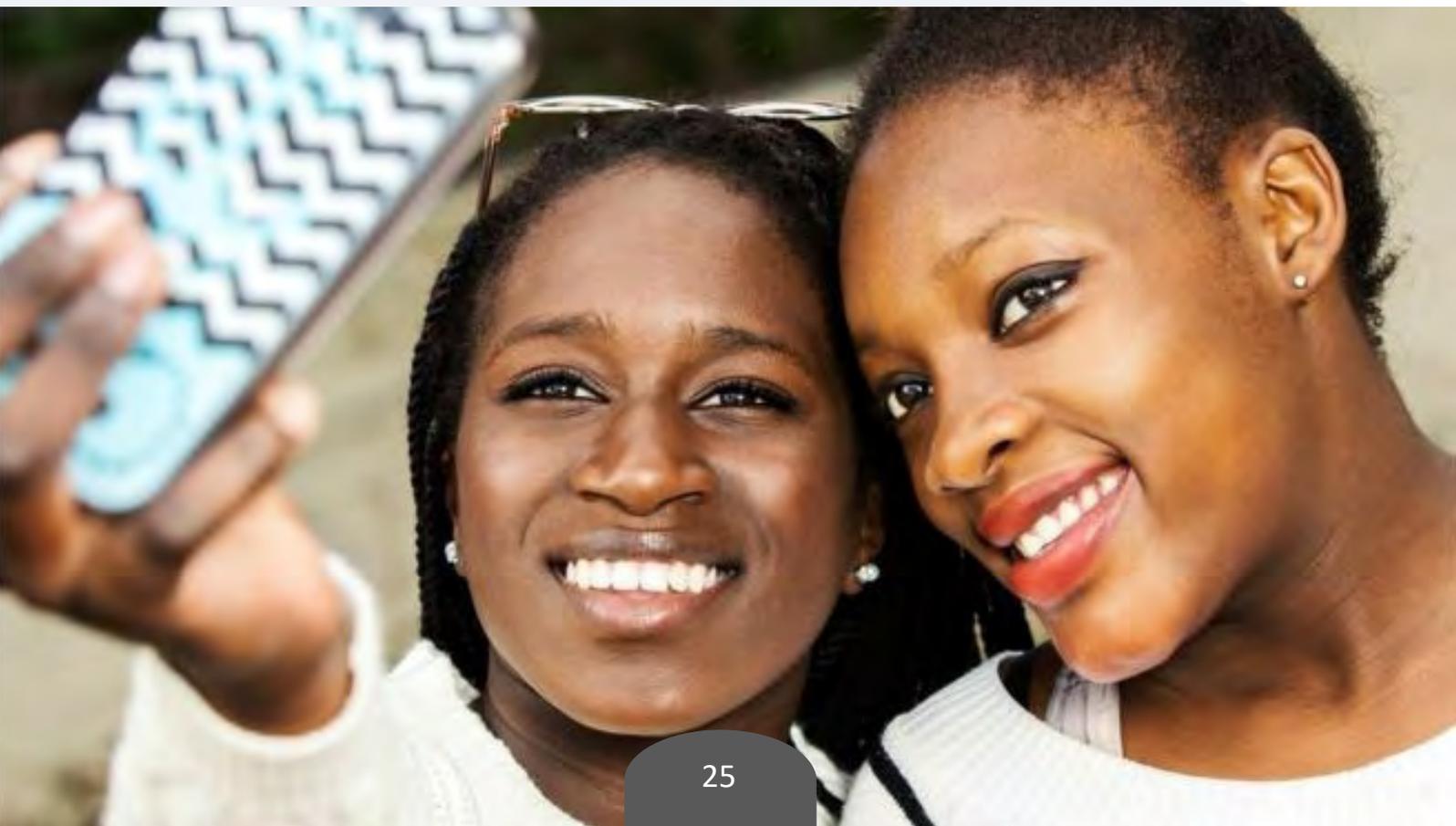


Informational

Understanding the Student Population

During your time as a peer advisor, you will come across students from various cultures, backgrounds, belief systems, gender etc. It is important to treat each student as a unique individual with a unique story. At the UFS we embrace diversity, and it is therefore important that you treat all students equally.

At the centre of treating everyone the same, you need to note that age also plays a role in the viewpoints of people. Research has identified and characterised various generations of people based on the year they were born. Understanding how various generations view the world, approach a task, and relate to their environment will help you better understand and get along with those around you. Generations that you are most likely to come into contact with are the following:



 Generation Z	 Generation Y (Millennials)	 Generation X	 Baby Boomers
Born After 1995	Born 1981–1995	Born 1961–1980	Born 1946–1960
21 yrs and Younger	21–37yrs	38–49 yrs	50–68 yrs
Traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Technology a part of life ◆ Multi-profiled ◆ Multi-collaborators ◆ Multi personality ◆ Multi locations ◆ Mistrust in political systems ◆ Always connected ◆ Multi-Taskers 	Traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Value diversity ◆ Technologically superior ◆ Embrace Change ◆ Want meaningful work ◆ Embrace selected technologies and don't let go ◆ Family Centric ◆ Optimistic 	Traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Need a work/life balance ◆ Career portability ◆ Flexible ◆ Some anxiety ◆ Dislike micro-management ◆ Individualistic ◆ Skeptical of Authority 	Traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Idealistic ◆ Competitive ◆ Questions authority ◆ Dislike change ◆ Recognition ◆ Explore ◆ Optimistic ◆ Work Centric

Most of your students will belong to generation Y and generation Z, whilst many lecturers will be characterised as baby boomers and generation X.



Informational

Technology *and Advising*

Click here to
visit the
Success Portal
for resources

Click here to
send an email
to
advising@ufs.ac.za



It is important that you have an idea of technological systems used in advising. Although most advising sessions take place face-to-face, students are also advised online through various media, eg. Email, facebook and BlackBoard. Academic Advising will have an online presence on the Student Success Portal, where students can access resources, contact advisors, and find important information. There is also a Peer Advisor Blog on your Blackboard organisation. You can use this space to connect with other UFS peer advisors, and share your insights and experiences.

[Click here to visit the Peer Advisor Blog](#)

[Click here to visit our Facebook page](#)

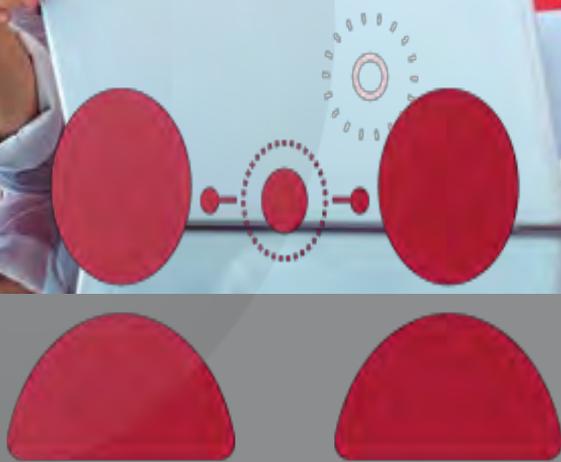


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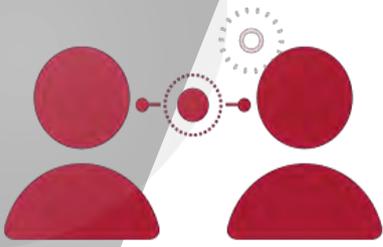
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omponent



An advising relationship is one of mutual trust and respect. In order for peer advisors to maintain this relationship, they need to develop a set of personal skills. These skills include, but are not limited to self-knowledge, interpersonal skills, decision-making strategies, leadership skills, time management and referral skills. This section will focus on a few crucial skills needed to be a successful peer advisor at the UFS.



Relational

Self-knowledge

Each advisor (even peer advisors) have their own unique style of approaching advising conversations with students. Knowing your personal strengths, personality, preferences, and teaching style will help you be more at ease when working with students, and thus build relationships in which you feel confident.



[Click here to learn more
about self-awareness](#)

Building a relationship of trust

Ensure that you have supportive relationships with your students. Trust is often deserved rather than received automatically. Prove to your students that they can trust you by:

- ◆ Speaking the truth, and not lying to students
- ◆ Being open and honest in your group approach
- ◆ Sharing past experiences that students might relate to
- ◆ Being diligent in your role as a peer advisor

Interpersonal skills

In order for you to develop a lasting relationship of mutual trust with your students, you will need to be equipped with good interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills, otherwise known as personal skills, refer to the way you communicate and interact with other people. This includes skills such as active listening, communication skills, empathy, cultural awareness, collaboration, creative thinking, and many more. To read more about interpersonal skills, [click here](#). In this guide we will discuss a few of these skills that are paramount to peer advising.

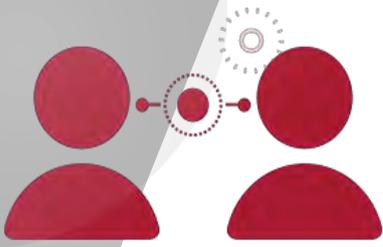
Active listening and questioning

Often, students are not sure about their academic and personal challenges, and might need you to apply questioning techniques to help them explore their problem. Remember to ask open-ended questions when listening to a student, so that you can get the full picture of the situation.

Research has proven that only a small amount of what we say is communicated in words, and that our body language fills many conversational gaps. When talking to a student, focus on applying active listening by:

- ◆ Putting everything else aside, and focusing your full attention on the student
- ◆ Maintaining eye contact with the student
- ◆ Not interrupting the student before finishing their sentence
- ◆ Clarifying with the student if you are not sure you understood correctly
- ◆ Having an open body language toward the student (for example: not crossing your arms, or turning your body away from the student)
- ◆ Listening with empathy





Relational

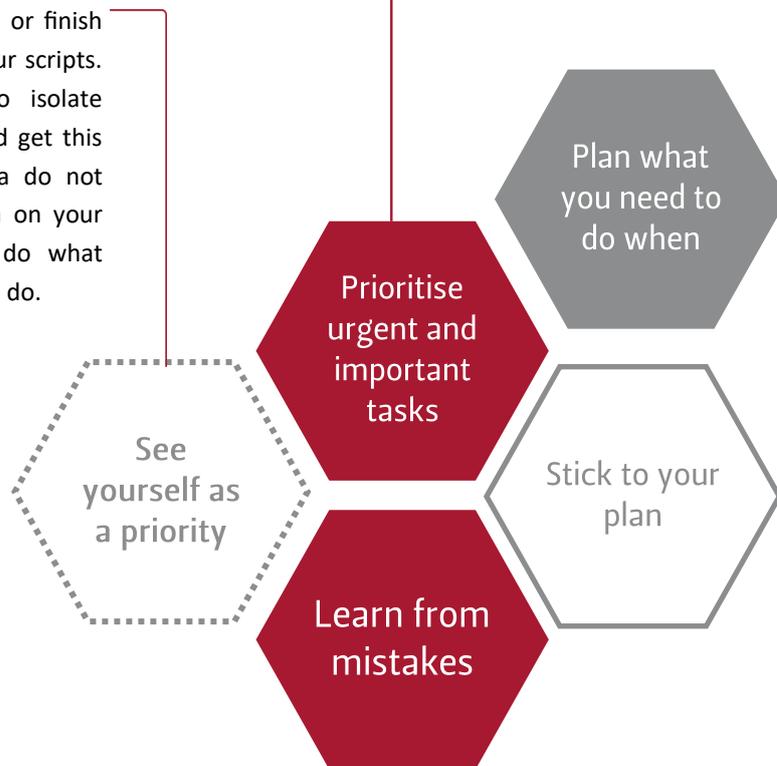
Decision making strategies

Although most important decisions regarding your students' academic career will be made in consultation with professional advisors, you will still need effective decision-making strategies when deciding how to best assist a student with a problem. It is also important that you help students build their own decision-making strategies by helping them explore pros and cons, looking at various angles of a situation, and having a balance between rational and emotional decisions. Some decisions you might encounter as a peer advisor may include:

- ◆ When to avail yourself to students and when not
- ◆ What knowledge and personal experiences you share with students
- ◆ What personal style you will adopt as a peer advisor
- ◆ How much of your personal efforts you will put in to help a student
- ◆ Whether to assist the student yourself or refer
- ◆ Who to refer the student to
- ◆ Actions taken to assist your student

Self-Management

There will be times when you need to take the time to focus on your studies, get physical rest, complete your assignment, or finish marking your scripts. It is ok to isolate yourself and get this done. Put a do not disturb sign on your door, and do what you need to do.



When you are experiencing a bottleneck with everything that needs to be done, categorise your to do list according to this strategy by Eisenhower ([click here to read more about this strategy](#)):

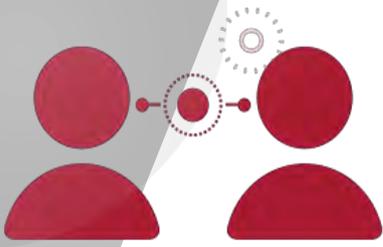
- ◆ Urgent and important = Do it first
- ◆ Urgent, but not important = Do it second
- ◆ Important, but not urgent = Do it when you can
- ◆ Not urgent, not important = Don't do it at all (Mindtools, 2018)

Remember, if you do not plan for it, you will end up not doing it. In this case, practice really makes perfect. Start by using a diary to plan your week. Add all your classes, appointments and commitments. Also plan for attending class, completing assignments and studying. If you would like a CTL advisor to help you with this, email advising@ufs.ac.za. Remember to plan for unforeseen circumstances as well. Do this by also allowing a little extra time to deadlines.

A solid plan without execution is still no plan at all. Review your diary every morning and plan what you need to do for the day. Stick to what you have planned, and be disciplined. You will be glad later!

If things do not go as planned, and you do drop the ball, reflect on what went wrong, and change your strategy. Being a peer advisor is also a process of learning and developing yourself. Reflecting on your mistakes is not a weakness, but rather a way of self-improvement.

Being both a peer advisor and a student yourself might be strenuous at times. Not only are you responsible for the well-being of your peers, but your own academic success and personal development should also take priority. Being good at managing yourself and your time will take a conscious effort. But remember, the academic advisors at CTL are there to support you on this journey.



Relational

Setting a Timetable for Yourself

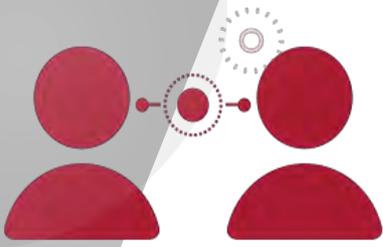
Create a timetable for yourself. Remember, a timetable does not only have to consist of your classes, but all your fixed commitments. Fixed commitments are activities and appointments that happen on a regular basis and that you are obliged to take part in. This can include: Your classes or student contact sessions, attending training, going to the gym, study time, group activities, church etc. Plan a schedule that includes all the hours of your day. Remember to be realistic. We suggest a student calendar from 06:00 in the morning until midnight, because many students operate during these hours.

Alternatively, you can make use of an electronic calendar that synchronises with your phone, such as [Google calendar](#). This will allow you to access and adjust your calendar anywhere and anytime. You can also use the repeat function for activities that repeats itself daily, weekly, or annually.

Click here for
useful time
management
apps

Example of a Peer Advisor Schedule

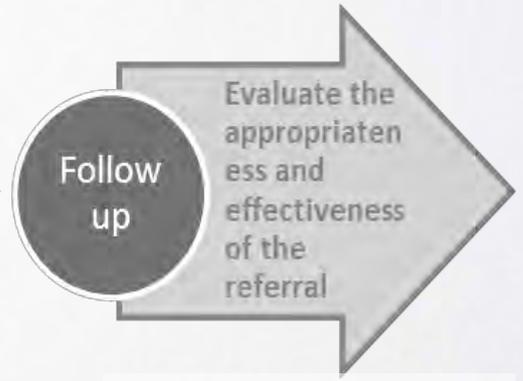
Time Table							
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
07:00- 08:00	MATA 2634						
08:00 - 09:00	Tutorial class	Tutorial class		MATA 2614 Prac	MATM 2654		
09:00 - 10:00	Tutorial class	Tutorial class	MATM 2614 prep	MATA 2614 Prac	MATA 2614		
10:00 - 11:00	Mata 2634 prep		MATM 2614 prep	Lunch	MATM 2654 prep		
11:00-12:00	MATA 2634	Lunch	MATM 2614	MATM 2614	MATM 2654 prep		
12:00-13:00		MATM 2614	MATA 2614	MATM 2614	MATM 2654 prep	Mark student scripts	
13:00-14:00	MATM 2654		MATA 2614	MATM 2614 Prac	MATM 2654 prep	Mark student scripts	
14:00-15:00	Lunch	MATA 2634 Prac	Lunch	MATM 2614 Prac	Lunch	Mark student scripts	MATM2654 lab
15:00-16:00	Mata 2634 prep	MATA 2634 Prac		MATM 2654 Prac	Teekan		MATM2654 lab
16:00-17:00	Mata 2634 prep	MATA 2634 Prac	MATA 2614 prep	MATM 2654 Prac			
17:00-18:00	Mata 2634 prep	Chill	MATA 2614 prep			Mark student scripts	
18:00-19:00	Mata 2634 prep		MATA 2614 prep	Tutorial class		Mark student scripts	
19:00-20:00		MATM2654 lab		Tutorial class	MATA 2614 prep		MATA 2634 prep
20:00-21:00		MATM2654 lab			MATA 2614 prep		MATA 2634 prep
21:00-22:00	Housemeeting		Sub Committee meeting				MATA 2634 prep
22:00-07:00							



Relational

Referral skills

As a peer advisor, you will be a crucial connection point between the student and academic and support services across campus. This will mean that you might have to refer students. It is important to note that there are specific steps in referring a student and ensuring that the student receive the necessary support. The image below outlines the three basic steps that you need to follow in order to refer a student:



- ◆ Determine problem(s)
- ◆ Determine whether or not you can help and/or are qualified
- ◆ Determine possible agencies/persons for referral

- ◆ Explain why you feel it desirable/necessary to refer
- ◆ Explain the services fully that can be obtained from the resource person/agency
- ◆ Reassure student about capability and qualifications of resource
- ◆ Attempt to personalize the experience
- ◆ Discuss any need for transfer of data & obtain consent & approval for the transfer
- ◆ Assist in formulating questions to ask / approaches to take
- ◆ Transmit all the information essential for helping the student to the referral

- ◆ Determine if the student kept the appointment.
- ◆ Discuss with the student his or her evaluation of the help received from the agency or person.
- ◆ Determine whether you selected the appropriate source of help for the student



Relational

Understanding Diversity

In your role as a peer advisor, you will come across students from different groups, different languages, and with different

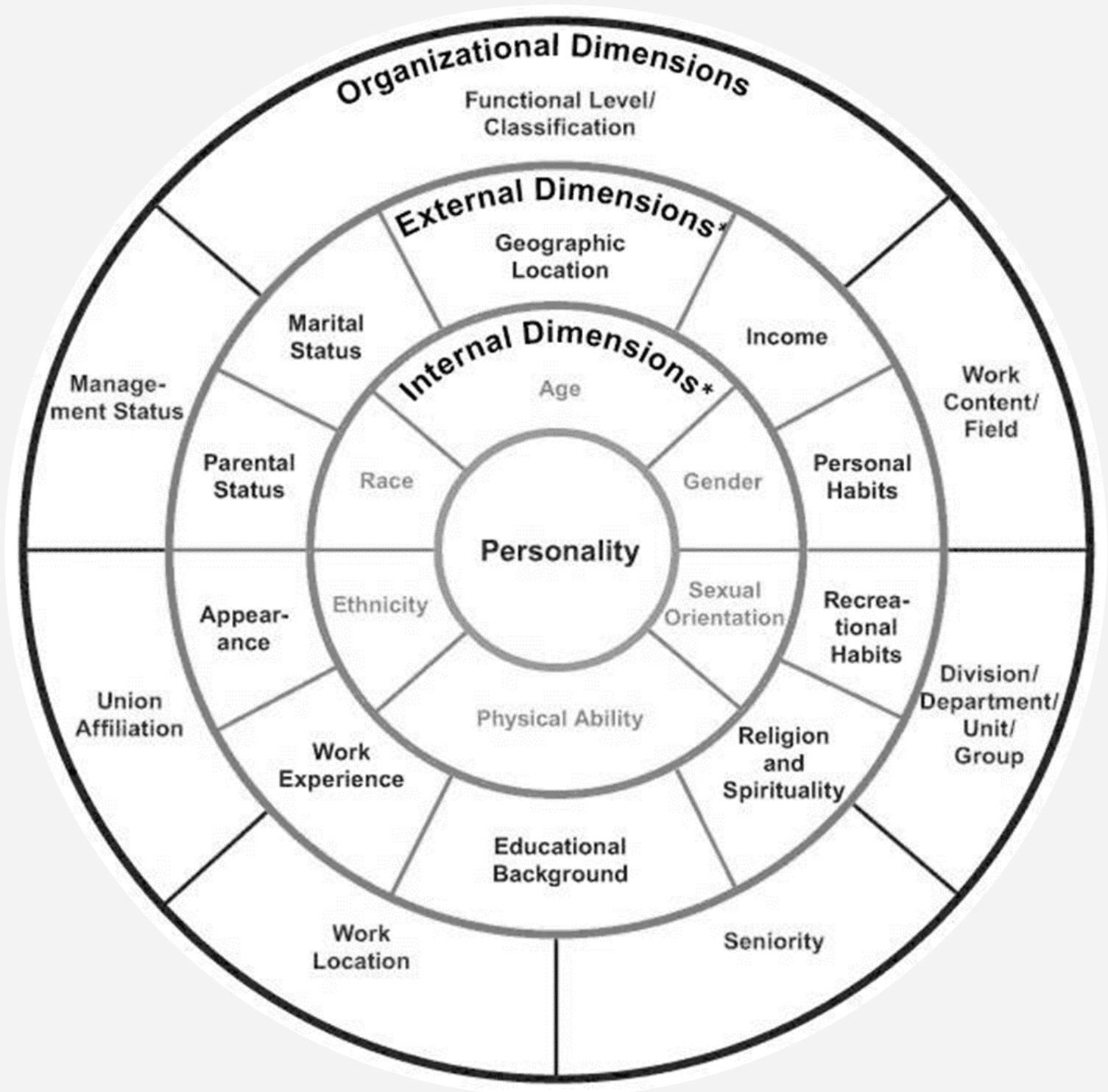
world views. Each student brings a unique way of being human, a unique way of approaching life, and their studies. Understanding these differences, and placing value on each person for



uniqueness, requires a level of competency in dealing with diversity. It further requires cultural competence, openness, and understanding for the differences and sameness of people. Diversity

is more than merely religion, gender, race and age. Diversity encompasses many layers of being. See the diversity wheel on the next page.

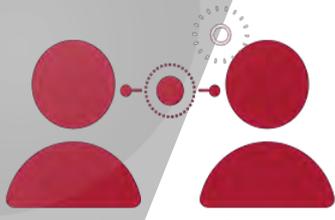
The Diversity Wheel



The Dimensions of Diversity Wheel is an illustration of the way in which various diversity aspects contribute to the way in which we process stimuli, make assumptions, and ultimately behave in certain ways towards other people (Rowe & Gardenswartz, 2003). Each of the four layers of the wheel will briefly be discussed (Rowe & Gardenswartz, 2003):

- ◆ **Personality:** This layer is formed early in life, and influences and is influenced by the other three layers throughout life.
- ◆ **Internal dimensions:** We typically have no control over these aspects of diversity in ourselves. Furthermore, these are the aspects which we usually notice first about people, and on which we often make assumptions about others.
- ◆ **External dimensions:** We at least have some control over aspects in this layer, and many of these aspects also change over time. The aspects in this layer also often play a role in who we develop friendships with.
- ◆ **Organizational dimensions:** This dimension relates to aspects of diversity and culture that are relevant in the work setting.

The Diversity Wheel can assist you to become more aware of the ways in which you hold certain assumptions, and how these assumptions influence you and your behaviour.



Relational

Practical example of a referral:

John is a peer advisor tutoring students. After class, one of his students, Peter asks to speak to John in private. Through the course of this conversation, Peter discloses to John that he feels depressed, and is not coping with his studies. Peter indicates that he does not know if he is possibly in the wrong degree, or just feeling that way because of his emotions of distress. This is how John can possibly handle this situation:

Determine what the referral need is: Sometimes students will not ask for help directly, or sometimes they ask for help in one area but you can see the problem is more basic or in another area. John will realise that he is not a school counsellor, and might need to refer Peter to a person who can better assist him with his situation.

Talk with the student about the purpose/goal of the referral (cognitive aspect of referral) and how success will be measured. John shares his concern for Peter, and explains to him that the best option might be to refer him to Student Counselling and Development.

Reassure the student about his or her right to the service requested and the referral source's ability to provide it (affective aspect of referral). John explains to Peter that the services are available to all UFS students, and free of cost.

Help the student outline the process (steps to be taken) and try to keep the referral chain as simple as possible. John will provide Peter with the contact details for Student Counselling and development and explain to him how the procedure works for a student to make an appointment.

Explore with the student crucial questions that he or she needs to ask and perhaps even role play a part of the process with the student. John discusses with Peter what they would be able to assist him with.

Make the telephone call or send an email to set up the initial appointment with the referral source while the student is with you. Perhaps you need to explain the situation or perhaps you can give the telephone to the student to do so. If the referral source is not accessible by telephone, agree with the student on a time frame within which he or she will contact the referral source. In this example, Peter will have to go to Student Counselling and Development for an appointment himself.

Make an appointment with the student for a return contact session to *follow up* on with the student. After a few days, John will follow up with Peter in order to make sure if he has been assisted.

When the student returns for the next advising session, discuss results and how he or she feels the referral went. If the student did not follow through, discuss the reasons. Re-examine the problem again. Consider whether you need to take a more or less active role. Consider whether a different referral is necessary. John will follow up with Peter by asking him in private if there is anything else he can still assist him with.

Advising Case studies

Case study 1

Tshepo just joined the association that you are a member of and he seems to be having a lot of personal issues that are affecting his academic performance. How would you help Tshepo?

Case study 2

Anna is a first year student in your residence and she is a first generation student. She does not seem to understand what is required of her to pass her first year, and she feels like everything is just too much for her to take in, in terms of semester tests and assignment deadlines. How would help Anna?

Case study 3

You are helping out at Gateway Orientation during registration and you come across a student who applied for a selection course and she has not heard anything from the faculty and she assumes that she is registered for that specific degree. She has a bursary letter that funds the selection program. Where would you refer the student?

Case study 4

Busi is a second-year B.Soc.Sci student. She wants to drop one of her majors because she is uncertain regarding the degree she is currently registered for. How would you advise Busi, especially on her decision to drop a major subject?

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“It doesn’t matter what happens between the *starting line* and the *finish line*. All that matters is that you *cross both*.”

-Tracey Maher-