

# RADFORD UNIVERSITY

## Academic Success Center

### Academic Advising Processes: 2021-2022

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides academic advising services to the following Radford University (RU) students:

- all students with fewer than 56 credit hours
- undeclared students
- first-year transfer students
- students who have been readmitted and are initially in poor academic standing.

Academic advisors work together to ensure all members of the ASC team are effectively trained, efforts are coordinated, and all RU students are supported and well-served. The ASC provides academic advising to students through multiple and diverse touchpoints, including in-person individual scheduled and walk-in appointments, Zoom meetings, telephone, and email consultations.

#### **Advising of New Freshmen**

New freshmen via Quest and students with fewer than 56 credit hours, regardless of major, are advised by an academic advisor in the Academic Success (ASC) until they reach 56 credits *and* declare a major\*. The ASC academic advisor serves as the student's primary advisor and is listed as the ASC Academic Advisor in Banner and Starfish. In those departments in which faculty advisors are also assigned to these students, a faculty member in the student's department will be assigned as the Faculty Advisor in Banner and Starfish.

#### **Advising of New Transfer & Readmitted Students**

New transfer students, including those students who participated in the New River to Radford University (NR2RU) Bridge program in the previous academic year, and readmitted students who are in poor standing, regardless of major and number of credits are assigned to an ASC academic advisor at new student orientation (Quest) and subsequently advised by an academic advisor in the ASC, in consultation with the academic department chair and the ASC Lead Academic Advisor for Transfer and Readmitted Students, for their first two semesters at Radford University (RU) or at least one semester and once they have earned 56 credits. Transfer students who have declared a major will also be assigned a faculty advisor. These measures serve as a safeguard to ensure that all of the students' transfer credits transfer in correctly and are being applied to their degree accurately. This also helps to prevent the incidence of students enrolled in courses for which they already have credit. Transfer students are reassigned to faculty as their primary advisor at the start of their second (if 56 credits have been earned) or third semester at RU.

Readmitted students who are on academic probation or do not meet the GPA requirement for their chosen program are required to comply with an academic success plan outlined by the ASC Lead Academic Advisor for Transfer and Readmitted Students and their assigned advisor. The ASC Lead Academic Advisor for Transfer and Readmitted Students ensures each re-admitted student is receiving necessary support to be successful at RU, particularly since this is a high-risk population.

### Advising of Undeclared (Academic Exploration) Students

Academic advisors in the ASC are responsible for advising all undeclared (Academic Exploration) students regardless of credit hours. Multiple ASC academic advisors specialize in working with Academic Exploration students; all ASC team members receive training regarding all majors and minors across campus. This cross-training ensures that advisors are able to guide students in the academic exploration process and discuss general information about each major offered at RU. This also ensures that students are declaring the major that best fits their goals and interests. ASC academic advisors also continue to refer students to academic programs for in-depth information about academic pathways and discipline-specific information.

### Declared Upperclassmen

Faculty advisors serve as the primary advisors for students with more than 56 credit hours and a declared major (unless they are new transfers or readmits in their first year at RU). The ASC academic advisor that the student worked with for the first 56 hours is no longer listed in Banner as an academic advisor to the student; all students, regardless of credits earned, are welcome to visit, participate in programming and be supported by the ASC as needed.

Student Population		Credit Hours	Primary Academic Advisor	Co-Advisor
Freshman	First Year Students	< 56 credit hours	ASC Advisor (P)	None
	First Year Students in departments with assigned faculty advisors	< 56 credit hours	ASC Advisor (P)	Faculty Advisor
Continuing	Second Year Students in departments with assigned faculty advisors	< 56 credit hours	Faculty Advisor (P)	Academic Success Center
Transfer	First Semester Transfer Students	All new transfer students	ASC Advisor (P)	None
	First Semester Transfer Students in departments with assigned faculty advisors	All new transfer students	ASC Advisor (P)	Faculty Advisor
	Continuing Transfer Students (declared)	< 56 credit hours	ASC Advisor (P)	Faculty Advisor
	Continuing Transfer Students in departments with assigned faculty advisors (declared)	< 56 credit hours	Faculty Advisor (P)	Academic Success Center
	Continuing Transfer Students (undeclared)	All undeclared transfer students	ASC Advisor (P)	None
	Continuing Transfer Students (declared)	≥ 56 credit hours	Faculty Advisor (P)	None

<b>Readmit</b>	First semester in good standing	< 56 credit hours	ASC Advisor (P)	None
	First semester in departments with assigned faculty advisors in good standing	< 56 credit hours	ASC Advisor (P)	Faculty Advisor
	First semester readmitted students in poor standing (declared)	All declared readmitted students in poor standing	ASC Advisor (P)	Faculty Advisor
	First semester readmitted students in departments with assigned faculty advisors in poor standing (declared)	All declared readmitted students in poor standing in departments with assigned faculty advisors in poor standing	ASC Advisor (P)	Faculty Advisor
	Undeclared Readmitted Students	All undeclared readmitted students	ASC Advisor (P)	None

### Advising Staff and Assignments

The ASC academic advising team is comprised of the following positions:

- Director/Lead Academic Advisor to Artis College of Science and Technology
- Director/Lead Academic Advisor to Davis College of Business and Economics
- Director/Lead Academic Advisor to the College of Visual and Performing Arts
- Director/Lead Academic Advisor to the College of Education and Human Development
- Director/Lead Academic Advisor to the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences
- Director/Lead Academic Advisor to the School of Nursing and Waldron College of Health and Human Services
- Lead Academic Advisor for Transfer and Re-admitted Students
- Associate Director of Training and Professional Development in Advising
- Academic Advisors (x10 with full-time caseloads)

ASC *Academic Advisors* with full-time caseloads are assigned to students in one to two colleges to ensure that the advisor is trained and can serve as a specialist in the area of degree requirements, department-specific practices, and course sequencing nuances. These assignments are flexible depending on the enrollment and unique needs of each department. In alignment with the holistic, appreciative advising approach, once a student is assigned to an ASC advisor, the student remains on the advisor's caseload regardless of (change in) major and/or acquisition of minors. Therefore, all ASC academic advisors are cross-trained to support students in all areas of the REAL Curriculum and in programs across all academic colleges. Consistent cross-training, communication, and collaboration among and between all ASC team members is an integral component of the success of this approach.

## **ASC Academic Advisor Responsibilities**

All ASC team members who serve as academic advisors provide appropriate and effective academic advising to an assigned caseload of students. Academic advisor responsibilities include the following:

- assessment and evaluation of academic abilities and goals and advising of students regarding academic programs and changes;
- conducting degree planning and course sequencing using newly updated degree pathways and checklists;
- developing academic plans and course selection;
- assisting students in major, minor, and career exploration;
- presenting academic information to new student orientation groups (including both students and families);
- analyzing applications, transfer evaluations, and transcripts for advising purposes;
- maintaining appropriate records (including the utilization of Starfish, the university's online student engagement tool);
- communicating and collaborating effectively with co-faculty advisors and mentors;

Those ASC team members serving in the specialized roles of *Director/Lead Academic Advisor* represent the ASC and serve as liaison to one academic college or program. Responsibilities related to these roles include those listed above as well as the following:

- attending the college Leadership Team meetings and Curriculum Committee meetings to discuss advising issues and updates on advising policies, procedures, and technology;
- resolving complex problems related to curriculum, course prerequisites, and eligibility by referring to university catalogs and other appropriate resources;
- supporting the academic petition process for the assigned college, based on requests by faculty advisors with upperclassmen for exceptions to university and college policies and procedures;
- reviewing and submitting edits regarding the Academic Success Center web page content, brochures, major/minor degree progress sheets, and other publications related to the assigned college-specific and/or assigned population (e.g. transfer and reenrolled students; RUC) curricula and advising;
- serving on the Suspension Appeals Committee on behalf of their assigned college;
- maintaining accurate data for reports and informed decision-making;
- assisting with the collection of data and analysis of enrollment and persistence patterns of students;
- participating in other relevant data collection and analysis supporting the monitoring, notification, and regular interaction with students and advisors regarding academic standing and student success;
- reviewing and completing graduation applications.

The *Lead Academic Advisor for Transfer and Re-admitted Students* serves as liaison and advocate for transfer students, re-enrolled students, and non-degree seeking students through the ASC. This position is responsible for collaborating with the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions, General Education, and Student Success to ensure transfer students, re-enrolled students, and non-degree seeking students are supported in regard to advising issues and updates on advising policies, procedures, and technology; working with Athletics Academic Advisors to ensure seamless transition

of transfer athletes to RU; collaborating with the New River Community College Bridge Success Advisor to ensure advising structures and supports are in place for NR2RU Bridge students.

The *Associate Director of Training and Professional Development in Advising* will design a comprehensive campus-wide academic advisor training plan to implement training and professional development for new and experienced advisors and faculty advisors and mentors, and conduct assessments of these programs. This position also serves as co-administrator of the Starfish platform. As the co-administrator, this position will assist the lead administrator with training, improving the ASC academic advisor and faculty advisor end-user experience, and conduct needs assessments for individual offices and departments.

### **ASC Academic Advising Processes**

All ASC academic advisors use a holistic advising approach to monitor their students' progress. PathwayU, the College Student Inventory (CSI, which was completed during Quest sessions), Starfish alerts, and ASC advisor and faculty co-advisor/mentor notes all aid academic advisors in developing meaningful and holistic relationships with their students. Understanding the full picture of a student's experience allows advisors to provide the best possible guidance, create intentional connections, and make meaningful referrals.

The ASC also creates and maintains a calendar of key student outreach/touchpoints, templates with communication narratives, and modality for each outreach (i.e. email, telephone call, meeting, text) across each semester; all ASC academic advisors proactively communicate with their assigned caseloads, and other students as assigned, according to this touchpoint schedule. ASC academic advisors are expected to meet with the students on their caseloads as follows:

First year students: Twice per semester;

Second year students: Once per semester.

Transfer students: Twice per semester in first semester; Once per semester in second semester (if not yet obtained 56 credits and transitioned to a faculty advisor)

The ASC academic advisors meet with their first-year students early in both the fall and spring semesters. ASC academic advisors will check in with and refer students as needed regarding their holistic and developmental needs. They will also present the students with course information, suggestions regarding registration for their next semester based on progress sheets, recommended courses provided by each program, and degree audits. The ASC academic advisors meet with all of their students (including both first and second year, as well as transfer students) later in the semester and prior to course registration; in academic programs in which students are assigned faculty co-advisors, they will require and subsequently confirm that the students have met with their faculty, prior to providing them with their registration PINs.

To the extent possible, the processes and pathways involved in declaring or changing a major and/or minor, submitting an academic petition, and completing an individual course withdrawal are streamlined and consistent across all academic programs. Current fillable PDF forms will be the same across programs and are available in multiple locations on the RU website; they will need to be completed, initiated, and routed for acknowledgements and approvals electronically. Petitions and Course Withdrawals must be initiated by a student's assigned academic advisor; Requests for

Declarations and Changes of Majors and/or Minors may be initiated by the student in consultation with their academic advisor; the academic advisor must acknowledge the request before it will be routed electronically for approvals.

### **Faculty Co-Advisor Responsibilities**

In academic programs in which students are assigned faculty co-advisors, the ASC academic advisors will require that the students have met with their faculty, prior to providing them with their registration PINs. The faculty co-advisors are responsible for serving as mentors to and with students in their major. Since the ASC advisor is responsible for providing students with general academic program knowledge, assisting with course sequencing and helping students understand academic policies and procedures, the meetings between the faculty advisor and their students can now focus on support related to specific academic program knowledge, research, high impact practices, career outcomes and opportunities, industry-driven competencies, and fine-tuning/confirming the student's schedule and/or course sequence within the students' degree program(s) during the student's first and second years. This program or department-specific mentorship is based on the programs and/or departments to determine, as is appropriate to their discipline. This early relationship is fostered by ASC academic advising staff, who are trained to encourage students to meet with their faculty co-advisor/mentor for program and/or career- specific advice.

Faculty co-advisors are responsible for utilizing the advisor notes function in Starfish to log pertinent information about advisees to ensure seamless communication and student service between ASC academic and faculty advisors. The consistent use of Starfish ensures that ASC academic advisors reinforce the same message to students also assigned to their caseloads. Faculty co-advisors are encouraged to utilize Starfish to share office hours; this layer of accessibility provides ASC academic advisors with additional information to connect students with their faculty co-advisors.

All academic programs, with the support of the Executive Director of General Education (REAL) maintains current, up-to-date degree pathways, check lists, and marketing materials for their majors and minors to ensure that ASC academic advisors can effectively support students to explore opportunities and career pathways throughout their RU experience. College/School of Nursing deans, academic school directors, and department chairs communicate with the ASC Executive Director, directors/lead academic advisors assigned to their college, and the General Education Executive Director, regarding updates to their programs, curriculum pathways, catalog revisions, and/or practices. The colleges invite their assigned ASC director/lead academic advisor to leadership team meetings and curriculum committee meetings. Individual departments and schools may also choose to invite academic advisors to join departmental/school meetings and sit in on classes, labs, or clinical experiences to familiarize themselves with the curriculum of the individual courses. The ASC Executive Director will communicate frequently with all academic stakeholders to ensure consistent, effective, and accurate services are being provided to all students.

### **ASC Advisor to Faculty Advisor Handoff**

Faculty are assigned as primary advisors and are responsible for advising students who declare a major or minor in their department and have 56 credit hours or more, transfer students after they have gone through orientation and complete at least one semester at RU, and readmitted students after they complete one semester and have met their academic improvement plans at RU.

When a student is nearing 56 credit hours, the ASC academic advisor reminds them that the following semester their primary advisor will be their faculty advisor. The ASC academic advisor informs the student that they will still be available in the ASC to assist the student but that the student should seek academic advice and mentoring from the faculty advisor. Ideally, the student has a strong relationship with both the ASC academic and faculty advisor at this point and has two people they can reach out to when challenges arise.

Before the new semester starts, the ASC director/lead academic advisor assigned to each college works with the department chairs/directors to compile a list of students ready to be transitioned; the director/lead academic advisor changes the primary/secondary designation in Banner and communicates via e-mail to both the student and faculty advisor to let them know that the new advisor assignment has been electronically established.

The ASC academic advisor shares any information they have with the faculty advisor using Starfish advising notes. Throughout the entire process both ASC academic and faculty advisors have access to view and create notes for their students to ensure a seamless transition.

Faculty advisors continue to use Starfish advising notes to ensure the ASC academic advisors have needed information should the student seek assistance from them at a later date. Faculty and ASC academic advisors communicate throughout the tenure of their shared students so that when roadblocks, challenges, or opportunities arise, students have multiple connections available to seek help throughout the calendar year. Faculty advisors are responsible for utilizing the advisor notes function in Starfish to log pertinent information about advisees to ensure seamless communication and student service between ASC academic and faculty advisors. They are responsible for sharing any degree plans using this system. This layer of transparent communication ensures that ASC academic advisors reinforce the same message to students who return to see them for further consultation.

\*Incoming freshmen who have declared majors in the College of Education and Human Development will be assigned to an ASC academic advisor as their primary advisor, with a co-faculty advisor, for the duration of their freshman year. Once they have completed their first year and have earned at least 24 credits, the ASC academic advisor will shift roles and serve as the student's co-advisor; the faculty advisor will become the primary advisor in Banner.