

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO

EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC ADVISING

Exceptional academic advising is a shared responsibility. Below are some strategies for maximizing your advising experience.

Be current on academic policies, procedures, and requirements by familiarizing yourself with your College and ENSP websites; and by reading listserv announcements: <http://ensp.umd.edu/advising>

- Understand concentration requirements and keep a copy of your advising checklist and graduation plan together for easy reference.
- Take the initiative to contact your advisor according to his/her preferences. (phone? email?) Check here to see what your advisor asks: <http://ensp.umd.edu/concentrations>
- Know the academic calendar. Set appointments with your advisor well in advance of deadlines.

Help your advisor get to know you.

- Reflect on your interests, experiences, and goals, and be frank about your plans, concerns, and hopes. Consider taking a copy of your resume to your first advising meeting; it's a great summary of your "academic and career autobiography."
- Take a copy of your transcript with you to each meeting. It is available on TESTUDO.

Spend some time thinking through the following questions:

- What are your academic goals? What are your long-range career goals? What skills or experiences will you need to achieve these goals?
- Are there courses within your discipline or related disciplines that are closely related to your goals?
- How can you use the summer months to gain the greatest amount of professional development?
- If considering graduate school, are you pushing yourself to do more than the minimums, e.g., should you be taking more Calculus, more basic sciences? Discuss this with your advisor.
- Update your advisor on your academic experiences and new or changing interests.

Prepare a list of questions or concerns before each advising meeting so you won't forget them and to ensure they all get answered. Do some preliminary research on your questions or concerns before your advising meeting.

- Have a list of proposed courses with you, with rationale.
- If there are upper level courses outside your curriculum that you would like to take, ask if they can "count" as Restricted Electives. Bring a course description and explain how the course relates to your interests.
- If you are interested in gaining research or internship experience, ask about departmental opportunities and/or referrals to appropriate faculty members.
- Take notes during your advising session and keep copies of all documents you receive (e.g., referral locations, next steps, etc.). Place your advising notes in a personal advising file for later reference.

Your advisor will present you with options, but YOU must make the decisions and take the steps to make them happen!