

Ready, Aim, Hire!

**Academic Advising Center
The University of Iowa**

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Not Just Anyone Can Be An Advisor

An effective hiring process seeks a good fit



Maximize quality of information:

Given to prospective applicants

- **Create an accurate position description**
- **Develop accurate informational materials for applicants**

Collected from applicants

- **Required application materials**
- **The interview**



The Position Description

- ❑ **What are advisors expected to do?**
- ❑ **Who will be advised?**
- ❑ **What is the nature of the advising unit?**
- ❑ **What educational background is necessary?**
- ❑ **What kind of experience is necessary?**
- ❑ **What qualifications are essential and what qualifications are desirable?**



What are advisors expected to do?

- “seeks a talented individual for providing academic advising services for undergraduate students and for assisting the Director with registration, scheduling and related functions...”**
- “...responsible for providing individual educational advising and arranging educational opportunities for approximately 25 scholarship recipients...”**



What are advisors expected to do?

“adviser will support the student affairs processes and programs....including advising, a faculty student affairs committee, student advisory board and special events....will work closely with the University College to ensure a smooth transition for students from pre-major advising ...to admittance into the major and departmental advising as a major.”



What are advisors expected to do?

“works as part of an advising team to...advise... students on course selection, degree requirements and academic policies and procedures; monitor their academic progress; counsel students in academic difficulty; and assess student needs and make appropriate referrals....maintains accurate student records, evaluates transfer credit and tracks students’ progress toward their degree.”



What are advisors expected to do?

“Advising includes meeting individually with students to discuss curriculum issues, program requirements, and university regulations; monitoring students’ academic progress; helping students assess academic plans relating to career goals; and referring students to appropriate university resources...This position will also assist with the resolution of administrative and procedural issues, including related paperwork; participate in semester academic reviews; help coordinate freshmen and transfer orientation programs, including preliminary evaluation of transfer credits; and teach a fall section of UNIV 100: The Student and the University.”

Who will be advised?

- **“...undergraduate students...”**
- **“provide academic and career-related advising for current and prospective undergraduate students.”**
- **“The School of Mass Communications... invites applications for a new academic adviser position in the School....ensure a smooth transition for students from pre-major advising...”**

Who will be advised?

- **“...approximately 25 scholarship recipients who are gifted students from low-income to moderate-income families throughout the US.”**
- **“...1st, 2nd, and 3rd year visual arts students...”**
- **“...serve as the primary academic advisor for Molecular and Cell Biology majors and share responsibilities for advising freshmen interested in biology majors...”**
- **“...has primary responsibility for the academic advisement of Honors students enrolled in the Academic Center for Exploratory Students and....supplemental advising for all Honors Scholars and Presidential Scholars.”**

What is the nature of the advising unit?

- **“The School of Mass Communications, part of the College of Humanities and Sciences....adviser will be housed in the School and will report to the School’s Coordinator of Student Services.”**
- **“...Young Scholars Program at XXX Center for Talented Youth...one of the most personalized scholarship programs available to high school students in the country.”**
- **“Office of Advising, Records & Registration Services, XXX College of Art and Design...”**
- **“Honors Program...Center for Exploratory Students”**

What educational background is necessary?

- **“Master’s degree in higher education administration, mass communications, or related area”**
- **“Master’s degree in a related field”**
- **“Bachelor’s degree in the Biological Sciences, preferably the molecular biosciences.”**
- **“Master’s degree and a combination of 4 years of experience as an academic counselor or advising students in an academic program setting, or bachelor’s degree and six years of experience as described above.”**

What kind of experience is necessary?

- ❑ **Minimum of 2 years of experience**
- ❑ **Minimum of two years of professional experience in student services or a related field.**
- ❑ **1-3 years of academic advising experience in higher ed**
- ❑ **1-2 years in teaching or advising students**
- ❑ **Experience in the academic advisement of undecided/undeclared students, experience in orientation activities, career planning, and/or other relevant areas of student service.**

Essential vs. Desired/Preferred Qualifications

- **Minimum of 2 years of experience.... experience in academic advising, student personnel administration, and/or counseling is preferred, as is computer literacy.**
- **Minimum of Bachelor's degree: Master's degree...preferred. Minimum of three years of experience in counseling, education, or other relevant field. Experience working with low-income and high-achieving students and families preferred. Bilingual Spanish-English a plus.**

Essential vs. Desired/Preferred Qualifications

- ❑ **Academic advising experience in higher education required. Experience and/or interest in studio art preferred.**
- ❑ **Advising experience with one or more of the following student populations preferred: honor program students, learning disabled students or students in academic difficulty. Experience interpreting and administering academic policies is preferred.**



Revisit the Position Description Before Each Search

Changes may be necessary, as a result of:

- New position responsibilities**
- New institutional requirements**
- Lessons learned from the last search**

Additional Information for Applicants

- Provides a more complete picture of the position and of the advising unit**
- Levels the playing field**



Information Collected From or About Applicants

- Required application materials**
- Interview**
- References**



Required Application Materials

- **Resume**
- **Cover Letter**
- **Writing Sample**
- **Portfolio**
- **Application Questions**



Focus of Possible Application Questions

- Reason for applicant's interest in the position
- Examples of past work that required attention to detail and consequences of errors
- Hypothetical scenarios that put applicant in:
 - the position of an advisee in your setting
 - a particular type of advising appointment (e.g., “What comes next?”)

Continuously Improve Application Questions

2000: Answer either (a) or (b).

- a. What do you think goes through the mind of a brand-new first year student from a small town in Iowa in the student's first week on the University of Iowa campus?
- b. What do you think goes through the mind of a brand-new first year student from an educationally disadvantaged background in the student's first week on the University of Iowa campus?

Continuously Improve Application Questions

2008: Answer either (a) or (b).

- a. Put yourself in the shoes of a brand-new first year student from an educationally disadvantaged background. What are your thoughts during your first week on the University of Iowa campus?
- b. Put yourself in the shoes of a brand-new first year student who is part of an underrepresented minority group. What are your thoughts during your first week on the University of Iowa campus?

Review of Application Materials

- **“Check offs” vs. Qualitative**

- **Strive for common understanding among committee members while preserving individual perspective:**
 - **Define “related experience”**
 - **Define what you’re looking for in a “good” application**



The Interview

- How long should it last?**
- With whom should candidates meet?**
- Are your interview questions effective?**



Qualities of Effective Interview Questions

- ❑ **True to the position description and qualifications**
- ❑ **Reveal meaningful differences among candidates**
- ❑ **Give opportunities for candidates to show what they know and can do**

Additional Resource on Interview Questions

- Chalmers, L.C. (2005). An Advising Administrator's Duty. Retrieved October 9, 2007 from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Hiring.htm>



References

- **Format**
 - **Letters of Recommendation**
 - **Telephone**
 - **Written Answers to Specific Questions**
- **Relationship to Candidate**

Questions

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