



During the **RED STAGE** of the university's Physical Distancing Framework, the Academic Advising Resource Center (AARC) strongly suggests that academic advising conversations and appointments happen virtually (online or over the telephone).

The AARC will continue to keep the campus community up-to-date on important programs, dates, and deadlines that affect registration, major/minor declaration, and graduation. Here are some important tips you may find helpful:

Online Academic Advising: Tips and Resources for Advisors

Getting Started:

Step 1 – Email all of your advisees to confirm the (current) online nature of academic advising.

Step 2 – Remind them of important upcoming registration dates and deadlines.

Step 3 – *Detail how they should make advising appointments with you.

Step 4 – Review any academic policy changes that may have taken effect recently.

*Keep in mind some of the barriers your advisees may have to meeting remotely: limited access to the internet, distant time zones, etc. When possible, please allow students to choose the method by which you meet. You may find appointment booking tools such as [You Can Book Me](#) helpful in setting up your advising appointments.

Considerations for Video-Conferencing (Zoom) Appointments:

Using a video-conferencing platform is a great way to stay connected to student and make a long-distant meeting feel more personal. Video-conferencing platforms like Zoom allow you to share your screen and “chat” during meetings.

While Zoom is the platform of choice for UR, you may consider other options (not an exhaustive list):

- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- Facebook Messenger
- Video FaceTime (iOS only)
- Google DUO
- WebEx
- Whereby

There are pros and cons to each of these platforms for advising. If you are making a decision on what to use, consider your overall needs, the length of time you would anticipate needing to use this solution, the learning curve, the available tools (screen share, audio/video options, etc.), the ease of sharing link or appointment invitation, etc.

Helpful Tips for Video Conferences:

- Do a trial run prior to each meeting (1 day before or a couple of hours prior to the meeting) to be sure technology is working. Encourage your students to do the same so that if there are glitches, you can make alternate arrangements.
- Think about what the background behind you looks like on camera. Is it professional? Is it distracting? Some platforms allow you to blur your background which could be beneficial.
- Some students may not feel comfortable using their camera during a video conference appointment, and that is okay. Keep your camera on if that works for both of you, or just switch to audio only.
- Consider using screen share so that both you and the student are viewing the same document at the same time. This will reduce confusion and also ensure that the student doesn't get lost in verbal navigation.
- After you finish meeting, it is helpful to send a follow-up email with a recap of what was discussed and include any website links you think the student should look at. A follow-up email keeps the line of communication open and allows for confirmation that both you and the student are on the same page about the appointment.
- Record advising notes, even for video conference appointments. If the student ends up talking with a different advisor in the future, it is useful for everyone to know what the content of your meeting was.

Considerations for Phone-In Appointments:

Many advisors schedule phone appointments with students throughout the year for a variety of reasons and may be the easiest way to connect with students.

Helpful Tips for Phone Appointments:

- Remind students to provide a phone number that they will have uninterrupted access to during the appointment time.
- If you are not comfortable giving out your personal cell or home number, consider signing up for a [Google Voice](#) number, it's free and you can turn it on or off as you have need.
- Be sure to communicate whose responsibility it will be to place the call – either you, or the student.
- Make sure that the student is aware of the time and time zone that the appointment will be held.
- Recognize that a student may or may not have control over their external environment at the time of the call. If they are home, there may be other people/siblings/pets and/or external noises which they cannot control. You can communicate expectations that you would like for them to have access to such as a phone/computer in a quiet space during the appointment, but be understanding if that is not possible.
- After you finish meeting, send a follow-up email with a recap of what was discussed and include any website links you think the student should look at. Since you won't be able to read the student's non-verbal cues over the phone, a follow-up email keeps the line of communication open and allows for confirmation that both you and the student are on the same page about the appointment.

- Record advising notes, even for phone appointments. If the student ends up talking with a different advisor in the future, it is useful for everyone to know what the content of your meeting was.

Considerations for Email Appointments

While perhaps not the most efficient way to conduct an academic advising meeting, you might consider offering an email appointment if the student is concerned about having access to the internet or telephone.

Helpful Tips for Email Appointments

- Have the student send you a list of their questions prior to your meeting. The more specific the question, the better.
- Consider sharing any documents or resources prior to the meeting and requesting the student to read them in preparation for the meeting.
- Save all correspondence from email appointments for record keeping.

Considerations for Student Engagement

No matter which way you conduct an academic advising appointment, it is important to find ways to engage your advisees:

Helpful Tips to Engage Students:

Some questions you might ask students:

- How are you doing?
- Are there any ways that I can support you better this semester?
- How can I help you succeed?
- Do you have any concerns about accessing academic materials (textbooks, notes, etc.)?
- What technology skills are you worried about, if any, right now?
- What challenges are you facing this semester?
- How are your courses progressing?
- How are you feeling?
- What are your plans for the upcoming break/summer?

Other tips:

- Encourage students to maintain healthy routines and study habits that will help them be successful.
- Provide these links to other campus resources:
 - [Working Remotely](#)
 - [Information Services Help Desk](#)
 - [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
 - [Academic Skills Center](#)

Resources for the Advisor:

[Accessibility in Online Courses](#): This resource is more about courses, but can be applicable to advising

[Teaching in times of Disruption](#): Resource shared via NACADA, again focused on teaching but may also be applicable to advising

Need more help? The AARC is here for you!

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During the red stage, the AARC has limited office hours. Please [email](#) us if you need immediate assistance!