Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students

Practice Guide Introduction

What Works Clearinghouse™

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This Practice Guide, developed by the What Works Clearinghouse™ (WWC) in conjunction with an expert panel, draws upon studies of effective postsecondary student advising systems and practices. The expert panel believes the impacts of advising are magnified when advising is integrated within a broader structure of holistic student support. That is, support that meets students where they are developmentally, addresses their individual needs, leverages their strengths, and focuses on student learning and development. This guide provides four evidence-based recommendations designed to be used by staff members at community colleges, 4-year institutions, and other public or private technical colleges who are responsible for designing and/or delivering advising to students.

Recommendations in this practice guide:

1. Intentionally design and deliver comprehensive, integrated advising that incorporates academic and non-academic supports to empower students to reach their educational goals. *Moderate Level of Evidence*

2. Transform advising to focus on the development of sustained, personalized relationships with individual students throughout their college career. *Strong Level of Evidence*

3. Use mentoring and coaching to enhance comprehensive, integrated advising in ways that support students' achievement and progression. *Strong Level of Evidence*

4. Embed positive incentives in intentionally designed advising structures to encourage student participation and continued engagement. *Strong Level of Evidence*

The discussion of each recommendation includes four critical components:

The Recommendation

Includes an actionable recommendation, a summary of the research evidence that supports the recommendation, and a description of how the recommended practice supports student learning.

Guidance

Explains how to carry out the recommendation, informed by studies that support the recommendation, as well as the panel's expertise and knowledge of strategies available to help implement the recommendation.

Potential Obstacles

Includes obstacles and advice from the expert panel about how to overcome them.

Tools and Resources

Offers practical information and examples to help practitioners implement the recommendation.

Readers are encouraged to use the advice provided in ways that work best in their context. Users of this Practice Guide may decide to implement some or all of the recommendations.

The complete Practice Guide can be accessed through the What Works Clearinghouse website at **whatworks.ed.gov**, or directly at **https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/28**.