

Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students

Practice Guide Summary

What Works
Clearinghouse™

WWC 2022003
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A publication of the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

At its most effective, advising is a collaborative process between a student and an advisor designed to help the student realize their educational potential. Most postsecondary institutions have historically used advisors to help students select and register for courses, but postsecondary institutions are increasingly asking advisors to play an instrumental role in helping students progress through college. This expanded advising role often involves ensuring students are connected to both academic supports and non-academic supports that enable students to overcome barriers to persistence and completion.¹

The *Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students* practice guide (WWC 2022003), developed by the **What Works Clearinghouse™** (WWC) in conjunction with an expert panel, draws upon studies of effective postsecondary student advising systems and practices. After reviewing 168 studies of effective practices and based on their professional judgment, 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.

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**

When integrated within a holistic student support model, advising plays a central role in helping students navigate the complicated systems and experiences of college by connecting students to a wide range of supports and opportunities. As part of this approach, advisors build educationally purposeful relationships with students to engage, challenge, and support them as they plan their academic journey and to help them connect to academic and social supports in college.

This summary introduces the recommendations and supporting evidence described in the full practice guide. These recommendations are 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. This includes academic

advisors, faculty advisors, deans, registrars, program directors, other administrators, and student support staff, such as counselors, mentors, coaches, and tutors. For a full description of the recommendations and more implementation tips, **[download your free copy of the guide.](#)**

Recommendation 1. Intentionally design and deliver comprehensive, integrated advising that incorporates academic and non-academic supports to empower students to reach their educational goals.

For advising to be most effective in helping students successfully advance along their educational pathways, it should be intentionally integrated within a holistic student support structure that offers supports to address both academic and non-academic barriers that students face.² Comprehensive, integrated advising refers to advising that is intentionally designed to connect students with a broad range of relevant academic and non-academic supports. Advisors can help connect students to appropriate supports so they are better able to navigate complicated academic, financial, social, and emotional challenges and reach their educational goals.

Comprehensive supports are often provided by a broad range of offices, advisors, student support staff, and faculty across campus. To facilitate collaboration, it is important to clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each of the offices and staff members delivering each student support.³ It is equally important to ensure students are aware of the supports available to them and how to access them. Institutions should monitor students' engagement with available academic and non-academic supports and consider ways to improve supports or make them more available and appealing to students, if needed.⁴

How to Carry Out the Recommendation

1. Situate advising as a core function in alignment with the mission and goals of the institution. The panel recommends that advising be situated as a core function of the institution. Advising should aim to improve students' connectedness with the college

community, develop self-directed learners who engage in their learning process, and connect students with the supports they need to overcome barriers to persistence and degree completion.⁵

For advising to truly be a core function of the college, it needs to be integrated within a broader structure of student supports. Relatedly, advising leadership should continually coordinate with other offices and staff that provide student supports throughout the design and implementation of student support programs and initiatives. The panel suggests advising leadership should participate in planning committees, student and academic affairs meetings, and other groups that make decisions on the college's mission and goals, staffing, and budgetary priorities.

2. Determine what supports students need and whether there are gaps and overlaps in the supports currently available.

A useful starting point for designing and delivering comprehensive, integrated advising is to develop an understanding of the types of supports students need. To do so, institutions could consider what academic, financial, social, and emotional challenges students might face during their college experience. Beyond a student needs assessment, the panel also recommends that institutions identify any gaps and overlaps in the supports currently available to students as they progress through college—from initial orientation through degree completion. One strategy that can be used for this purpose is process mapping, which involves both staff and students at an institution documenting the processes and requirements students

must complete as they progress toward graduation. After mapping the intended processes and requirements, both staff and students can share their experiences regarding successes and challenges students encounter when navigating the processes, as well as potential gaps and overlaps in the supports that are currently available to assist students.

Providing students with a broad range of supports and establishing connections across them requires more than just referrals, policies, and procedures. Moreover, it is important to have a partnership and structure in place when sending a student to another department for support. There should be communication between departments, as a team approach to advising and support services can help ensure that students do not feel as though they are just another number standing in line in a different office. The panel believes strongly that advisors should provide a “warm handoff” by introducing the student to their colleague in another office. To do that requires student support staff who know how other offices that provide support operate (see also **Recommendation 2** on sustained, personalized advisor-student relationships).

- 3. Design comprehensive advising to meet the individual needs of a diverse student population.** To support diverse student populations and the varying needs of individual students, colleges should provide a broad range of academic and

non-academic supports that are deliberately selected and connected to meet individual students’ needs.⁶ The role of the advisor is to understand the needs of individual students and connect them with relevant supports, whether these supports are provided directly by the advisor or by other departments on campus. The expert panel believes advising should meet students where they are by considering their needs and challenges and by being available to meet when and where students are.⁷

- 4. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the different staff delivering student supports and ensure close collaboration among those staff.** Given the potentially complex system of supports available to students, it is important to clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of the staff and faculty delivering each academic and non-academic student support.⁸ This will ensure that supports are provided efficiently and effectively, and that there is a college-wide coordination of who is responsible for delivering each support. The panel recommends staff should think intentionally about the best way for multiple individuals to support students in a coordinated, non-overwhelming way. Institutions might consider the questions in **Figure 1** as they consider student support roles and responsibilities.

Figure 1. Questions about student support roles and responsibilities

What supports are needed, and which are currently available?

- What does “high-quality student support” look like in each varied support role on campus?
- What supports do we currently offer? Why, when, and in what way are these supports offered?
- Where are there gaps in supports?

What resources are available to address gaps in supports?

- Are we using all people on the campus efficiently to meet the needs of students at various times?
- Which existing staff could be in a position to fill identified gaps?
- Which gaps cannot be filled by existing resources, but remain a priority?
- What kind of staff are needed to fill those priority gaps?
- How will these new staffing needs be funded?
- How can the process of engaging with different functions or support providers be streamlined for students?
- How will we facilitate cross-role communication and coordination?
- How can we promote familiarity and trust amongst staff?
- How will we train and support staff to meet the expectations of their roles?
- How will students know whom to go to and when? How will the advising structure be communicated to students?
- Who serves the role of primary contact for a student who is facing academic challenges? What about for a student facing personal issues or challenges?
- How will we evaluate the effectiveness or success of student supports?

Members of a college’s leadership team are well positioned to take responsibility for establishing close collaboration and coordination between academic and non-academic student support services.⁹ Collaboration and coordination can also be overseen by a program coordinator who conducts intentional outreach across offices and departments.

5. Clearly communicate the full range of student supports available to students.

The panel believes information about who the student’s advisor is, the advisor’s role, and information on available supports needs to be communicated clearly to students—from first orientation to the final steps leading up to graduation. Institutions that have developed a process map of the student experience from college enrollment to graduation could use the map as a basis for developing a visual that clearly lays out processes and requirements that students must complete, as well as how to access available supports along the way.

- ### 6. Continuously monitor student engagement with academic and non-academic supports.
- A central component of comprehensive, integrated advising is opportunities for students to engage with advisors and access relevant supports, as needed, throughout their time in college.¹⁰ Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of students’ engagement and experiences with advising will help the institution to continuously develop and improve its student supports.¹¹ Institutions may find it to be helpful to disaggregate data to explore the possibility of differential engagement by student subgroups.

Technology can be useful for monitoring how and the extent to which students are accessing student support services. Using technology, advisors can identify students requiring encouragement to participate in optional and mandatory support activities.¹² Advisors can use calls, text messages, and posts on course management systems to connect with students and remind them of upcoming appointments.

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

Advising should be tailored to the individual academic, personal, professional, and career needs and goals of the student.¹³ The specific needs of each student often change as they progress through college. Therefore, the expert panel recommends an advising model that focuses on the development of sustained, personalized relationships with individual students throughout their college careers.¹⁴ The panel believes an advising model that promotes sustained relationships between students and advisors enables advisors to build trust and a personal relationship with students, allowing advisors to better address the various academic and non-academic barriers to success each student faces.

As described in **Recommendation 1**, to be able to offer students such advising, some institutional transformation could be necessary. Institutions that use advisors to guide students in selecting courses but not to provide long-term, individualized academic and non-academic supports could need to transform their advising practices to better meet student needs. Transforming the culture and practice of advising can require fundamental shifts along structural, procedural, and attitudinal dimensions.¹⁵ For example, institutions might need to re-examine their advising model and practices, including the role advisors play in serving students and whether they have appropriate staff and delivery mechanisms in place to effectively provide comprehensive, integrated advising.

This transformation of the culture and practice of advising could require additional resources and investments, such as professional development for advisors and smaller caseloads. The costs of transforming advising practice might be offset by the benefits of improved student outcomes,

however. Institutions might consider investing in technology to help advisors provide long-term individualized support to students more efficiently.

How to Carry Out the Recommendation

- 1. Meet students where they are developmentally and recognize their individual needs.** To meet each student's unique needs, an institution's advising model should build a foundation of understanding the student population the advisors will serve, what academic and non-academic supports those students might require, and how to deliver those supports to the students who need them. It is important for colleges to remember that individual students' needs will differ depending on their background, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, or relevant lived experiences, as well as educational goals.

If an institution anticipates that students will face a wide range of academic and non-academic barriers, a preferred model is one robust enough that the advisor can tailor support to each student. Tailored advising begins with assessing and understanding the individual barriers the student faces throughout their time in college.

- 2. Design an advising model that enables individual students to have a sustained relationship with their advisor.** A holistic approach to advising, where the advisor comes to understand the challenges faced by each individual student and connects each with the supports they need, can improve students' ability to meet their academic and non-academic goals. To promote a

sustained relationship, an advisor should start building a relationship with individual students early on in their college experience, staying engaged with each until they meet their educational goals.¹⁶ Small caseloads allow advisors to meet with students more frequently and for longer durations, and could help advisors uncover and address more issues relevant to their students' success in school.

- 3. Implement strategies that make advising visible and accessible.** To support student engagement with advising services and supports, institutions should ensure advising is both visible and accessible. Students might not be aware of the multitude of academic and non-academic supports available to them. Similarly, if services are difficult to access—whether due to staff shortages, limited hours, or inconvenient locations—students might not get the assistance they need when they need it.

Colleges might consider adopting flexible work hour policies to allow staff to better align their hours with student availability and promoting remote meetings through video communication technologies such as Zoom or Skype. To make advising supports more visible and accessible, institutions might consider integrating advising into educational activities, such as student success courses or orientations; locating the advising department centrally on campus; and conducting advising where students are located, such as within residence halls or athletic departments.

- 4. Provide professional development opportunities for advisors, taking into account advisors' learning needs.** To the extent that advisors are required to transform their practices, professional development can help.¹⁷ If advisors and other support staff are expected to form ongoing relationships with students, training on how best to do so can help advisor-student relationships be more fruitful. The expert panel suggests that institutions tailor professional development to advisors' learning needs, as informed by feedback from advisors about challenges they face on the job and potential gaps in knowledge to address those challenges. Institutions with limited professional development budgets should not underestimate the value of peer professional development, both within and across various departments on campus.
- 5. Use technology and data to promote efficient individualized advising.** The human element to advising should be maintained, but advisors can leverage technology to provide more efficient, individualized advising. Technology that provides information about students' academic standing can help advisors reach them more efficiently by flagging which students are in need of immediate intensive support and for which a lighter touch could be sufficient.¹⁸

The iPASS initiative, featured below, used a variety of advising technologies to better serve students, including education planning tools, early-alert systems, predictive analytics, learning management systems, and communication tools.¹⁹

Highlights from the Field

Promoting Efficient Individualized Advising Through the Use of Technology: Enhanced iPASS

Early alerts and predictive analytics can inform advisers about the nature and degree of each student's needs, allowing the advisor to strategically allocate their limited time and capacity to provide the most intensive support to the students who need it the most. For example, advisers may differentiate interventions for students depending on the number and type of early-alert flags students receive; those who receive multiple flags may be considered at higher risk and be required to meet with an adviser, while students with one flag may be sufficiently served with outreach from an adviser via email.

Communication tools can also help advisers and other personnel coordinate with each other when intervening with a student so that the student receives a coherent message from across the institution. For example, when an adviser uses this technology to refer a student for services like tutoring, not only the student but also the tutor or other staff member providing the service can see the referral; the tutor can then follow up with the student. The adviser can also see whether and when the student acts on the referral and can later inquire about the student's experience with the service or ask why the student did not follow through with it.

A shared note-taking platform is another common benefit of communication tools; colleagues can see each other's notes about their interactions with students. When meeting with a student who has been served before, staff members can draw on the notes to engage in a more personalized dialogue with the student. These tools are also designed to make it easier for staff members to align their advising with previously offered information and guidance.

Advisers' interactions with students can assume a more instructional focus with the support of data and functions available from advising technologies. These technologies also allow advisers to track students' progress toward a degree more efficiently. For example, some education planning tools notify the student and the adviser when a student attempts to enroll in a course that is not part of his or her course plan; the adviser can then either intervene to get the student back on track or approve the modification. Overall, by enabling advisers and students to engage in multi-semester program planning and making it easier for students and advisers to know when students are off track, information gathered using these tools can motivate discussions that can help students attain their long-term academic and career goals.

While technology can make it easier to realize the objectives of high-quality advising, adopting technology-based practices at full scale often requires redesigning advising structures and practices, which can be a lengthy, iterative process. One study found that the institutions that were most successful at using technology to change how students experience support reassessed and improved their advising structures and practices on several occasions. The comprehensive student advising experience envisioned in the iPASS model requires time, resources, and continual refinement of structures and practices to achieve.

(Mayer et al., 2019, p. 9-10)

6. Continuously monitor student progress toward their educational goals. Monitoring students' progress toward their educational goals will inform whether each student is on track to succeed, and whether intervention by an advisor might be beneficial. Data collection and management systems that allow for timely intervention enable advisers to regularly assess students' progress toward benchmarks, such as meeting advising participation requirements, that serve as indicators of the impact of the advisement model on student outcomes.

Interviews or student surveys can be used by administrators and advising staff to monitor students' perceptions of whether their needs are being met as they navigate college. If students are not meeting their educational goals, it is important to understand why and whether advising supports could have helped students overcome barriers. Institutions can use this information to refine or enhance their approaches to comprehensive student advising, especially if these data identify weaknesses in the supports currently offered and delivered to students.

Recommendation 3. Use mentoring and coaching to enhance comprehensive, integrated advising in ways that support students' achievement and progression.

Mentoring and coaching are promising practices that can enhance the role advisors play in supporting students as they work to reach their educational goals. Though the terms “mentoring” and “coaching” are sometimes used interchangeably, mentoring and coaching both are different from advising, and often differ from each other. Clear distinctions in roles—and clear communication about what those roles entail—can ensure that mentors and coaches complement advising appropriately. The role of the mentor or coach should be clearly defined and should enhance traditional advising functions, such as course planning, to increase the value of student supports.

“Mentoring” describes a supportive learning relationship between a student and a mentor. Mentors are usually a faculty member,²⁰ a student peer,²¹ or a professional²² with experience and knowledge in the student's desired field. “Coaching” usually is more formal and structured, anchored in specific student learning or development goals. Advising, mentoring, and coaching each play an important role in a comprehensive approach to student supports, and they all share a focus on student development, supporting students in moving from *where they are* to *where they want to be*.

How to Carry Out the Recommendation

- 1. Determine whether, and if so how, mentors or coaches could be used to enhance the supports students currently receive.** The panel recommends that college leadership and advisors identify the gaps in student supports that could be effectively addressed by mentors or coaches. This involves thinking carefully about the role

and purpose of the mentors and coaches and how they can best help students achieve their educational goals.

Peer mentors can help students use technology, show them how to enroll in courses, unmask the hidden curriculum²³ and hidden rules of college, and provide tips and tricks on how to adjust to college and navigate the campus.²⁴ Faculty mentors can provide insights to their field of study, access to research and internship opportunities, or guidance on pursuing further education.²⁵ Whether they are faculty members or peers, mentors often provide guidance based on their personal knowledge and experience, usually through informal interactions with the student.

In contrast to mentors, coaches focus their guidance on students' specific personal and academic development goals. Coaches might not have expertise in a student's specific field or area of interest, but they are professionally trained in facilitating conversations that promote purposeful self-reflection, development, and skill-building. This could include reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses, interests, and aptitudes, as well as the connection between these traits and the student's personal growth and career goals.²⁶

For the integration of advising, mentoring, and coaching to be effective, clarity on the role and purpose of each type of support ought to be established and shared by advisors, mentors, and coaches. Institutions should make sure advisors, mentors, and coaches are aware of the responsibilities and functions of their own role as well as others' roles. Institutions should ensure

individuals serving in each of these roles receive training that aligns with their responsibilities and functions.

- 2. Decide who will deliver mentoring and/or coaching.** The panel recommends that institutions carefully consider who will be providing mentoring or coaching. Faculty members, students' peers, or outside professionals might all be well suited to serve as mentors or coaches. However, each will have their own strengths and weaknesses, competing responsibilities and demands on their time, and levels of training and preparation for taking on either role.

For peer mentoring, some programs use juniors and seniors,²⁷ whereas others use graduate students who share the student's academic interest.²⁸ It can be helpful for students to be paired with a mentor whom they can authentically connect with, such as someone who is similar in academic interests or background characteristics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, or relevant lived experiences.²⁹ Faculty mentors are often paired to mentees based on academic interests. The panel recommends that if outside professionals are used as mentors, they should also be matched based on academic interest.

- 3. Focus mentoring on topics that prepare students for advising.** The work of mentors and advisors can be complementary, and the activities they undertake with students should be structured to maximize the benefits of both. The panel recommends developing or adopting topics for mentors to cover with students that prepare them to get the most out of meetings with their advisor. These topics include how to clarify academic and career interests; how to identify, access, and navigate campus resources; and general academic planning.³⁰

Mentors can also play an important role in building student motivation and willingness to seek out and access advising. The panel suggests that topics requiring more specific knowledge of college requirements and procedures, such as course selection for specific majors, as well as more complex personal and non-academic issues, are best covered by professional advisors and counselors.

- 4. Carefully consider the format, frequency, and duration of mentoring or coaching.** Mentoring and coaching can be implemented in many different ways. Some mentoring and coaching programs are delivered in person,³¹ others combine in-person and virtual meetings.³² Mentoring and coaching can be short in duration (one semester or less)³³ or last an entire academic year.³⁴ The frequency (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly) can also vary. Students can meet with mentors and coaches one-on-one or in a group format. The panel recommends adopting a student perspective when deciding on the format, frequency, and duration of mentoring and coaching. Institutions could consider the questions in **Figure 2** when deciding on the format, frequency, and duration of mentoring or coaching.

Figure 2. Considerations for deciding format, frequency, and duration of mentoring or coaching

- Would certain formats, such as in-person or online, make mentoring or coaching more accessible to specific students or groups of students, including commuter students and students with full-time jobs?
- Would students benefit from discussing certain topics in a one-on-one or a group format?
- How much time would students need with their mentor to build mutual rapport and trust?
- Are there certain time periods when students might need more frequent contact, such as end-of-semester or right before degree completion?

5. Provide mentors or coaches with initial and ongoing training. The expert panel believes that training is critical for effective mentoring and coaching.³⁵ The panel recommends the focus of the training be tailored to the role and purpose of the coaching and mentoring. The panel suggests institutions should make sure that the purpose and responsibilities of advisors, coaches, and mentors are clearly defined;

aligned with their training, professional scope, and contractual roles; and carried out according to a shared understanding of how each type of support can best help students achieve their educational goals. Shared training on roles and responsibilities, including decision rules on referrals from peer mentors to advisors and vice versa, can support a coherent experience for the student.

Recommendation 4. Embed positive incentives in intentionally designed advising structures to encourage student participation and continued engagement.

Students might not always engage with comprehensive advising services, even if they would benefit from doing so. For this reason, the panel recommends that institutions consider ways to entice students who would benefit most from these services to use them, and then sustain their engagement.

Ideally, students who are initially incentivized to engage with comprehensive advising services will eventually come to see value in the advisor-student relationship and the academic and non-academic supports that are available to them. The hope is that if students realize the benefits of these services, they choose to continue to engage with their advisor and the supports more frequently and voluntarily. Because not all students need the same type or amount of support, the panel suggests institutions determine which students or groups of students they want to target and what might incentivize those students specifically. It is important that even those students who are deemed to be “on track” are aware of the supports available and that they feel comfortable and capable of accessing them if necessary.

How to Carry Out the Recommendation

- 1. Offer incentives for students to engage with available supports.** The panel recommends that institutions use strategies, practices, and incentives that encourage students to stay engaged with the academic and non-academic supports available to them. Incentives might be financial, such as gift cards, book vouchers, transportation passes, parking permits, food, or subsidized childcare. Non-financial incentives might include priority registration, priority meeting times with advisors, or access to additional courses at no cost. When selecting incentives, the panel suggests institutions determine which students or groups of students they want to target and what might incentivize those students specifically. Coupling the distribution of incentives with specific advising meetings or functions can help increase the likelihood that students participate in those meetings or functions.
- 2. Incentivize face-to-face advising meetings.** Students should give careful consideration to how they describe and promote both financial and non-financial incentives designed to encourage students to take advantage of available supports and services. Ideally, there will be a sense of mutual responsibility, in that the college or program is providing something that benefits students, who in turn commit to particular actions to earn the incentive. Institutions should prioritize positive incentives over penalties; that is, “carrots” over “sticks.” Penalties such as registration holds could lead to decreased student retention because they present an additional roadblock to registering for courses. Students can find face-to-face meetings with their advisors, held in-person or by videoconference, to be more helpful than emails or texts for receiving support and encouragement. Face-to-face meetings can also be more productive for working through complex activities such as goal-setting, selecting a course of study over multiple semesters, and discussing academic and career goals.³⁶

Incentivizing face-to-face advising meetings could lead to advisor-student relationships that are more personalized. As an advisor learns about the challenges their students face, they could be better positioned to connect students with supportive services. In turn, students could come to view the advisor-student relationship as beneficial, which could be engaging and sustain a relationship throughout a student's college experience.

Though face-to-face interactions might be preferred for in-depth discussions, advisors could find it efficient and effective to use technology to accomplish advising-related administrative tasks, such as registering students for courses, entering personal information into an information management system, or tracking key dates and deadlines each semester, that do not require direct advisor-student contact.

- 3. Use a positive, student-centered approach before, during, and after advisor-student contacts.** A central goal of advising is to provide positive experiences, built upon relationships that enable an advisor to understand the needs of individual students, in order to help them overcome barriers to success. When advisors, administrators, faculty, and staff use a positive, student-centered approach to advertising, delivering, and following up on supports, students could be more inclined to view those supports as helpful or worthwhile. In turn, they could be self-motivated to continue to engage with their advisor and other support providers they view as invested in their success.

Positive, welcoming messages that are culturally responsive can be woven throughout students' experiences in comprehensive, integrated advising programs. The panel also believes strengths-based advising can help increase students' confidence and motivation to achieve and

persist in college. This involves having advisors identify and build on students' inherent skills and qualities in ways that help them develop and apply their strengths to new challenges and tasks.³⁷ Emphasizing students' strengths, as opposed to weaknesses or deficits, can facilitate advisor-student relationships and increase students' levels of engagement and academic self-efficacy.³⁸

- 4. Consider incentives that extend beyond advising activities to include other milestones required for students to progress in college.** The panel recommends tying incentives not only to advisor-student contacts, but also to key activities that could ensure students are successfully progressing in college, such as using tutoring services or career services; enrolling in a minimum number of credit hours; and meeting grade point average (GPA) requirements.³⁹ Examples from interventions included in the studies that support this recommendation follow.

Students participating in the Ohio ASAP Replication Demonstration, a program targeting low-income, nontraditional students at three Ohio community colleges, were eligible to receive a \$50 incentive each month contingent on participation in advising, tutoring, and career services.⁴⁰ In the Learning Communities initiative at Kingsborough Community College, students in learning communities received a book voucher as an incentive to enroll in short courses offered between the fall and spring semesters, giving them access to even more credits in their first year.⁴¹ The Vision Inspired Scholarship through Academic Achievement (VISTA) scholarship program provided up to \$1,000 in additional financial aid in each of four consecutive semesters contingent upon students meeting with their advisors at least two times per semester.⁴² This aid was awarded in increments tied to academic milestones, and payments were made directly to students.

Summary of Evidence by Recommendation

	Recommendation 1 <i>Intentionally design and deliver comprehensive, integrated advising that incorporates academic and non-academic supports to empower students to reach their educational goals.</i>	Recommendation 2 <i>Transform advising to focus on the development of sustained, personalized relationships with individual students throughout their college career.</i>	Recommendation 3 <i>Use mentoring and coaching to enhance comprehensive, integrated advising in ways that support students' achievement and progression.</i>	Recommendation 4 <i>Embed positive incentives in intentionally designed advising structures to encourage student participation and continued engagement.</i>
Number of Studies	8	10	12	6
Level of Evidence	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong
Meta-Analysis Results by Outcome Domain				
Progressing in college	+	+	+	+
Academic achievement	+	+	+	+
Postsecondary degree attainment	+	+	+	+
Note: All of the findings for the relevant outcome domains were statistically significant and positive.				

For more practical tips and useful examples from community colleges, download a copy of the *Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students* practice guide at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/28>.

The Institute of Education Sciences publishes practice guides in education to provide educators with the best available evidence and expertise on current challenges in education. Its What Works Clearinghouse™ (WWC) develops practice guides in conjunction with an expert panel, combining the panel's expertise with the findings of existing rigorous research to produce specific recommendations for addressing these challenges. The expert panel for this guide included Melinda Karp, Sara Ackerson, Donna Linderman, Brett McFarlane, Joe O'Shea, and Lashawn Richburg-Hayes. See Appendix A in the practice guide for a full description of the series.

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Notes

- ¹ There are many different terms for this form of expanded advising, including developmental, enhanced, proactive, and student-centered, and these descriptors are sometimes used interchangeably.
- ² Hodara et al. (2017); Nosaka & Novak (2014); Patel & Valenzuela (2013).
- ³ Hodara et al. (2017); Maton et al. (2000); Nosaka & Novak (2014); Patel & Valenzuela (2013).
- ⁴ Miller et al. (2020); Scrivener et al. (2015); Scrivener et al. (2018).
- ⁵ Hodara et al. (2017); Nosaka & Novak (2014); Patel & Valenzuela (2013).
- ⁶ Hodara et al. (2017); Maton et al. (2000); Miller et al. (2020); Nosaka & Novak (2014); Scrivener et al. (2015); Scrivener et al. (2018); Sundy (2017).
- ⁷ Hodara et al. (2017); Patel & Valenzuela (2013).
- ⁸ Maton et al. (2000); Miller et al. (2020); Nosaka & Novak (2014); Scrivener et al. (2015); Scrivener et al. (2018).
- ⁹ Maton et al. (2000); Scrivener et al. (2018).
- ¹⁰ Hodara et al. (2017); Scrivener et al. (2015).
- ¹¹ Miller et al. (2020).
- ¹² Hodara et al. (2017); Miller et al. (2020); Scrivener et al. (2015).
- ¹³ Hodara et al. (2017); Patel & Valenzuela (2013).
- ¹⁴ Bettinger & Baker (2014); Binder et al. (2015); Hodara et al. (2017); Maton et al. (2000); Miller et al. (2020); Nosaka & Novak (2014); Patel & Valenzuela (2013); Scrivener et al. (2015).
- ¹⁵ Community College Research Center (2017) (this source was not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide).
- ¹⁶ Maton et al. (2000); Scrivener et al. (2015); Patel & Valenzuela (2013).
- ¹⁷ Miller et al. (2020); Scrivener et al. (2018).
- ¹⁸ Bettinger & Baker (2014); Brock & Richburg-Hayes (2006); Mayer et al. (2019); Scrivener et al. (2015).
- ¹⁹ Mayer et al. (2019).
- ²⁰ Campbell & Campbell (2007); Lavallais (2017); Maton et al., (2000).
- ²¹ Kim et al. (2013); Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Thomas (2005).
- ²² Maton et al. (2000).
- ²³ Hidden curriculum refers to the unwritten, unofficial lessons, values, and perspectives that students are expected to learn in school. In postsecondary settings, this can include things such as the importance of seeking opportunities to network with faculty members or to visit career services to seek an internship in the first few years of college. First-generation college students frequently are not aware of these unwritten tips and tricks and can benefit most from explicit exposure to them.

- ²⁴ Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Kim et al. (2013); Thomas (2005).
- ²⁵ Campbell & Campbell (2007); Maton et al. (2000).
- ²⁶ Bettinger & Baker (2014).
- ²⁷ Kim et al. (2013); Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Thomas (2005).
- ²⁸ Kim et al. (2013).
- ²⁹ Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Thomas (2005).
- ³⁰ Bettinger & Baker (2014); Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Maton et al. (2000); Servies (1999).
- ³¹ Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Servies (1999); Maton et al. (2000); Medina (2016); Thomas (2005).
- ³² Bettinger & Baker (2014); Kim et al. (2013); Mayer et al. (2019); Oreopoulos & Petronijevic (2018).
- ³³ Kim et al. (2013); Medina (2016); Servies (1999).
- ³⁴ Campbell & Campbell (2007); Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Oreopoulos & Petronijevic (2018); Thomas (2005).
- ³⁵ Dennehy & Dasgupta (2017); Kim et al. (2013); Oreopoulos & Petronijevic (2018); Servies (1999); Thomas (2005).
- ³⁶ Bailey et al. (2016); Kalamkarian & Karp (2015) (these sources were not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide).
- ³⁷ Schreiner & Anderson (2005) (this source was not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide).
- ³⁸ Soria et al. (2017) (this source was not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide).
- ³⁹ Binder et al. (2015); Miller et al. (2020); Patel & Valenzuela (2013); Visher et al. (2012) (this source was not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide); Weiss et al. (2014) (this source was not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide).
- ⁴⁰ Miller et al. (2020).
- ⁴¹ Visher et al. (2012); Weiss et al. (2014) (these sources were not included in the meta-analyses for this practice guide).
- ⁴² Binder et al. (2015).