

Faculty Advising Ready or Not - Pop Quiz

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There is a knock on the door. A student enters and asks, “Professor Taylor, do you have a minute?” Dr. Taylor, a first-year faculty advisor, welcomes the student and asks, “How may I assist you?” As the student responds, “You’re my advisor, and I have a question about. . . .” The professor, known across campus for dynamic classroom teaching and content expertise, experiences heart rate increase, squirms uncomfortably in the desk chair, and attempts to mask uncharacteristic nervousness with a smile.

Sound familiar? Even during scheduled advising sessions, when a student raises a question, poses a problem, needs information, or seeks assistance, the encounter often feels to the advisor like an unannounced pop quiz in which correct answers and appropriate information must be immediately provided to meet a student’s expectation. Conscientious faculty advisors know that their performances on these quizzes may result in significant consequences. The student’s level of satisfaction—even persistence and graduation—as well as the faculty advisor’s own professional reputation and advancement may depend, in part, by his or her answers on the quizzes.

The faculty advisor bears responsibility to provide accurate information, and new faculty members quickly discover that there are enormous amounts of information they need to know to be effective academic advisors. Many first-year faculty advisors, especially those without previous training or experience as academic advisors, face a steep learning curve. The seeming demand to know everything can leave a faculty member feeling overwhelmed, and new faculty advisors, in particular, may become frustrated if they feel ill-prepared for the recurring pop quizzes. Many new faculty advisors frantically seek help in gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to excel during their first year and beyond.

Ready or not, the pop quizzes come and come and come. New advisors can face these challenging tests with confidence if they fully appreciate three liberating insights:

- (a) Learning the information an advisor needs to know depends on experiential and developmental processes;
- (b) the pop quizzes are open book; and
- (c) no advisor is expected to be an in-person, on-call Siri or Alexa, who can provide instant answers to any and every question students ask.

Rather than provide inaccurate information to the student, however, advisors without a vetted answer need to acknowledge their limits and admit “I don’t know” and then give the student a correct answer as soon as possible. This honest interchange can provide a valuable learning moment for both the student and the advisor. No advisor knows all of the answers, but each does need to learn the questions to anticipate and where the answers can be found.

In this knowledgebase, we have provided advising resources to help. In the [Advisor Resource](#) section, an overview of the unique role that faculty members fill as academic advisors and the broad scope of knowledge they must gain to develop into seasoned advisors is included.

We encourage readers to use the provided tools and resources to prepare for the upcoming pop quizzes that come with advising sessions.

Next Steps? > Continue by reading the next article in this toolkit - [The Unique Role of Faculty in Academic Advising](#)

