

## **General Guidelines for Academic Advising at HKBU**

### **I. Introduction**

With the goal to offer quality first year experience to students and continue to provide advice and assistance to students throughout their studies, the University developed and implemented the Academic Advising and Mentoring Framework in AY2012/13 to align with the first cohort of the 4-year Degree. With the framework in place for over 5 years, and two cohorts of 4-year Degree graduates in 2016 and 2017, the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee (TLPC) deems it opportune to review this framework with an aim to further enhance academic advising.

For Year 1 and senior year students who are new to the University, the aim of academic advising is to help them to have a smooth transition to study life at the University. In particular, students receive advice on academic endeavours such as choosing the study majors, developing effective study skills, mapping out study plans to satisfy requirements at different stage of studies, identifying academic policies and regulations, upholding academic integrity, administrative matters such as course registrations, etc. In addition to the formal curriculum, students should also be introduced to other learning opportunities such as exchange, internship, experiential learning, service learning, hall life, etc. With proper guidance, students can set their personal and academic goals. In this regard, academic advising is an essential component of the overall First Year Experience planned by the University which starts with new student orientation.

Academic advising should not stop after students' first year at the University. Continual support should be given to students so that they can update their study plans, relate what they have learnt to their future careers, and formulate their career goals or plans for further studies. Advice can also be given to students who may encounter difficulties in their studies. If necessary, advisors can refer cases to relevant offices for further assistance and targeted support.

This document sets out a revised overall Academic Advising (AA) Framework in the University, which has evolved from the academic advising and mentoring scheme mentioned earlier (reference: SEN/11-12/5/ A2). It intends to give some guidance on AA, while allowing flexibility for academic units to continue their good practices and implement new initiatives.

### **II. Overall Objectives**

AA at HKBU aims at achieving the following objectives:

*For new First-Year-First-Degree (FYFD) students:*

- to smoothen students' transition to the University learning environment;
- to advise students on choosing their desired majors or courses that fit their interests and abilities, amid fulfilling the graduation requirements;
- to assist students in formulating their study plans so as to develop the attributes expected of them;
- to counsel students to set attainable academic goals;
- to guide them to seek and use University learning resources; and
- to engage students to consider possibilities for further studies and career after graduation.

*For new senior year entrants:*

- to smoothen students' transition to the University learning environment;
- to advise students on choosing courses that fit their interests and abilities, amid fulfilling the graduation requirements;
- to assist students in formulating their study plans so as to develop the attributes expected of them;
- to counsel students to set attainable academic goals;
- to guide them to seek and use University learning resources; and
- to encourage students to plan for careers or further studies after graduation.

*For Year 2 students and above:*

- to provide continued academic support to students throughout their learning journeys in the University;
- to help students work out their study plans year by year;
- to assist students in fulfilling various graduation requirements;
- to guide them to seek and use University learning resources;
- to monitor students' progress in their learning;
- to keep track on achievements of relevant goals and the achievement of graduate attributes; and
- to encourage students to plan for careers or further studies after graduation.

### **III. Intended Outcomes**

With the provision of AA and their active participation, students should be able to:

- adapt to the University learning environment effectively;
- identify study strategies and courses suitable for personal growth and professional development;
- develop sound study plans and enable them to monitor their own progress throughout their learning journeys in the University;
- plan for their careers or further studies; and
- find the available resources leading them to achieve the graduate attributes.

Academic units should develop appropriate activities that are aligned to the above objectives and outcomes. Appropriate measures should also be in place to collect feedback for improvement.

### **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

Academic advisors and advisees are recommended to maintain contact from time to time. The formats and kinds of activities may vary, ranging from formal consultation meetings to informal gathering. **Appendix 1** outlines the timeline of key tasks for AA in the first year, with a checklist for students in **Appendix 2**.

Academic units are also expected to organize appropriate AA activities for all students on a regular basis. They shall work out an annual activities plan for AA with objectives clearly spelt out so that they can rationalize the kinds of activities organized and evaluate the effectiveness of their AA at

the end of the academic year. Their AA activities shall be organized aligning with the AA intended outcomes, instead of up to individual choices.

While organizing Departmental-wide or Faculty-wide generic AA activities, units can also follow the good practice of working with student academic societies or the Students' Union to deliver such activities, enhancing the effectiveness and participation rate, while avoiding overlaps in coverage and scheduling. Academic units may also consider arranging with the Academic Registry for scheduled timeslots in designated periods of the semester for AA, facilitating advisees and advisors to participate in large scale activities, or meet for private consultation.

AA focuses on the students advisees while many parties are involved. The followings set out the duties, expectations and deliverables for each party respectively.

## **4.1 Academic Units and Committees**

### **4.1.1. Faculties\*/Departments**

#### *Duties on Personnel Deployment:*

Working closely with their Departments, Faculties are responsible to oversee and monitor AA work within their units and coordinate the appointment of suitable academic advisors at various levels to help enhance students' success in their university studies.

Faculties also have the duty to provide adequate administrative support to the academic advisors to perform their duties effectively. Administrative personnel at both senior (e.g. Faculty Manager) and support (e.g. Executive officers or Assistant) levels should be appointed as administrative advisors with the primary duty of assisting Faculty academic advisors, particularly on procedure and academic regulation matters (e.g. majors selection, course regulations, rule and regulations etc.).

Academic Departments work with their respective Faculties on the appointment of departmental academic advisors and suitable peer advisors. They should also ensure the provision of additional administrative assistance to the advisors and advisees as necessary.

#### *Duties on Activities and Related Support:*

Faculties are also responsible for organizing large scale, Faculty-based AA activities, as well as coordinating and collating reports and feedback from their Departments for monitoring and submission to the appropriate committees.

Faculties should update their academic AA websites regularly to provide the most up-to-date and relevant information to students:

- the number of majors available to students within Faculty;
- a proposed study schedule for each major/programme offered by Faculty (to facilitate students in planning for their studies), and other information which is relevant to their studies;
- useful information such as academic regulations, general guidelines for AA, and relevant academic statistics (e.g., percentage of first year students admitted to their first-choice majors); and
- relevant contact details of the academic advisors and administrative advisors.

These AA websites should be cross-linked to the First Year Experience and Student Life websites accordingly.

Academic units are encouraged to offer a wide variety of AA activities for students, which may include but not limited to the followings:

- Departmental/Faculty-based activities helping first year students adapt to the new learning environment and facilitate them to choose their majors;
- individual/group consultation meetings with academic advisors;
- gatherings in informal settings allowing students to share their learning progress and experience;
- learning experience sharing sessions by students in senior years or alumni;
- career talks for students; and
- relevant activities co-organized with other departments or organizations outside the University.

The good practice of introducing the importance of AA at Student Orientation (including Orientation for senior year entrants) by Faculty should continue as the first AA activity for new students. This will provide an opportunity for new students to meet with their advisors before the semester begins.

In a bid to encourage colleagues to carry out AA duties, all units are highly recommended to consider ways to recognize the contribution of their staff members in AA related work, including but not limited to:

- recognizing the contribution in the annual activity report;
- counting the AA service as contributions to “Teaching” or “Service” in the annual performance review exercise; and
- considering the workload of academic advisors in the assignment of teaching load.

#### **4.1.2 Central Support for AA**

Administrative and supporting units in the University provide adequate support to AA. Different units offer specific services to students and to the advising personnel. Examples include:

- AR – providing academic and programme related information, clarification on regulations and policies, arranging course registrations, etc.;
- GEO – providing information and advice regarding the structure of the GE programme and the offering of GE courses;
- INTL – providing information on exchange programme, supporting students who want to join exchange programmes and study outside Hong Kong;
- SA – providing various student services enhancing the quality of campus life, offering different co-curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities to students, giving counselling and career advice, offering quality hall life experience to students, supporting students with special educational needs, etc.; and
- CHTL – providing regular opportunities for advisors (academic and administrative) to share their AA practices, disseminating exemplary examples within the University community. In collaboration with other supporting units and engaging suitable external/internal consultants, training/briefing sessions will also be offered to advising personnel.

### **4.1.3 Teaching and Learning Policy Committee (TLPC)**

The TLPC has the overall responsibility to formulate policies for and monitor the implementation of AA. It reviews the annual AA reports and plans submitted by Faculties. The TLPC will also disseminate good practices gathered from academic units as appropriate.

## **4.2 Advisees and Advisors**

### **4.2.1 Advisees (Students)**

Students should be the chief beneficiaries of AA. Student advisees are expected to:

- participate actively in all AA activities organized by their respective Faculties/Departments/Programmes;
- seek advice from advisors through various means, schedule consultation appointments with them as appropriate, and abide to the agreed schedules of interaction/consultation with the advisors;
- take an active role in developing a plan for their studies and monitoring their learning progress; and
- familiarize themselves with academic policies and regulations, graduation and programme requirements pertaining to their studies.

### **4.2.2 Academic Advisors (Teachers)**

In order to have effective AA that can support and assist students while they are studying at HKBU without overwhelming the colleagues involved, various levels of academic advisors are suggested:

- Faculty AA Coordinator – assumes overall responsibility for coordinating all AA activities in the Faculty, works closely with academic and administrative advisors to take care of students' development during their University education;
- Faculty Academic Advisors/Programme Advising Coordinators (for Year 1 students) – broad-based programme academic advisors at the Faculty level for freshmen to help them adjust to university life and plan their studies. These advisors should be full-time academic/teaching staff members, and familiar with programme structure and course selection. Ideally, they can be teaching courses for Year 1 students; and
- Department Academic Advisors (for senior year entrants, Year 2 students and above, or some Year 1 students (programme-based admission)) – advisor at the departmental level help students succeed in their studies, provide advice on course selection, study planning, career development, and assist in their successful transition to the workplace.

### **4.2.3 Peer Advisors (Senior Year Students/Graduate Students/Recent Alumni)**

As currently practiced in some units, engaging senior and graduate students to support their junior fellows has proven to be an effective means of AA. Students usually find peer advice more useful and relevant. This exemplary practice is hence expected to continue and be extended to all academic units. A proper recruitment mechanism should be developed by individual Faculties/Departments to select appropriate personnel to take up such responsibilities. Peer advisors are expected to provide academic advice to their junior fellows based on the

guidelines/regulations and their learning experience in the University. Furthermore, an induction must be offered to, and completed by these peer advisors before they are allowed to assume duties.

## **V. Evaluation**

Formal assessment or evaluation of the effectiveness of AA will be conducted centrally with appropriate questions included into a centrally administered questionnaire to gather feedback from students. Experience sharing sessions among advisors are also helpful in gathering comments and opinions from staff's perspectives.

Individual units can collect comments from advisors and advisees on the various AA activities for immediate feedback. Current good assessment practices in the University include:

- collection of feedback through various formal or informal channels (e.g. discussion at departmental meetings, blogs, etc.);
- conducting focus group interviews with students;
- keeping relevant records or documents on AA related activities (an example is given in **Appendix 3**);
- submission of reflection reports which capture advising experience from the beginning to the end; and
- adoption of e-portfolios to help students reflect on their learning experience and to facilitate the evaluation on students' engagement.

Faculties/Departments are encouraged to make good use of the data collected to identify evidence of success, reflect on the effectiveness of the activities, and refine their AA initiatives in response to the feedback.

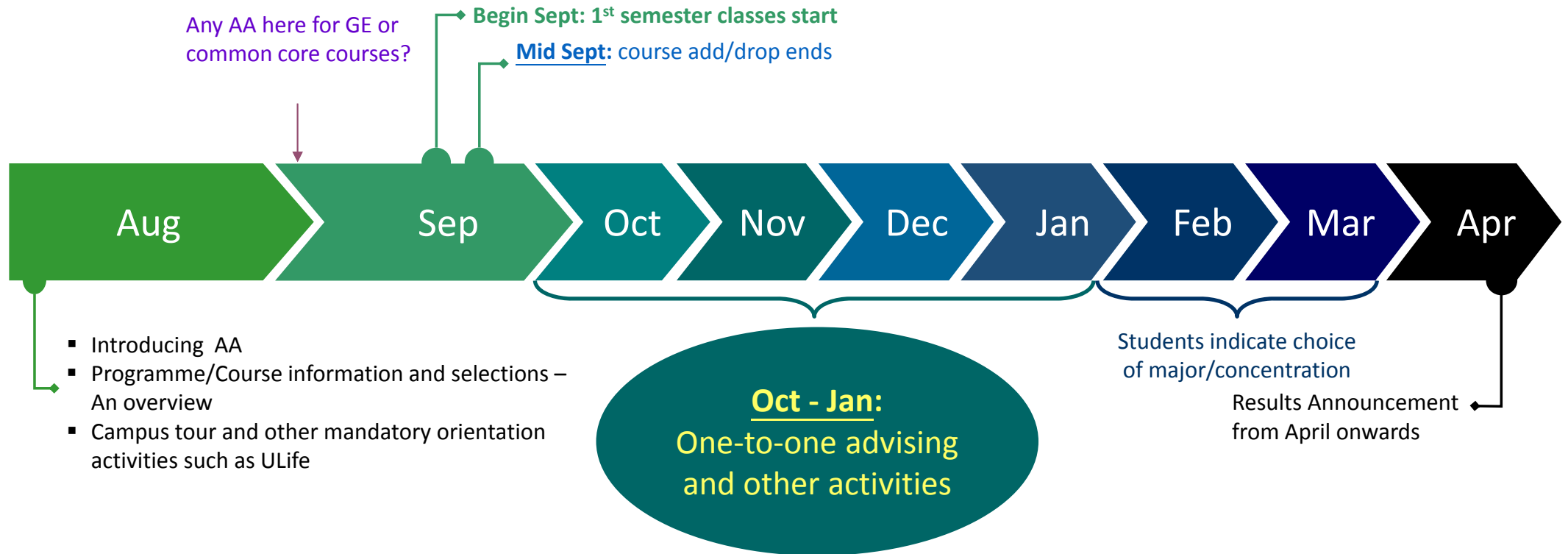
## **VI. Reporting**

To facilitate monitoring at the University level, Faculties are requested to submit an annual plan for the ensuing academic year to the TLPC. This is to facilitate feedback to be returned Faculties in time for adjustments to the AA activities that will begin in August when new students arrive on the University campus for orientation. In September, Faculties should submit a reflective final report, presented in the "Approach-Deployment-Results-Improvement" (ADRI) format, on their activities and the use of allocated fund for AA in the immediate past academic year. The reporting timeline is set out in the flowchart in **Appendix 4**.

Teaching and Learning Policy Committee  
May 2014  
(Revised in April 2018)

Note – '\*' The terms 'Faculty' and 'Faculties' in this paper include all Faculties, Schools and the Academy of Visual Arts at HKBU.

# Proposed Timeline and Tasks for First Year Academic Advising (AA)



**Hong Kong Baptist University**  
**Students' Checklist for Academic Advising (AA)**

This document intends to set out what you are expected to do with AA during different years of studies, and is not meant to be exhaustive. Based around this list, you are recommended to develop a tailor-made list for yourself.

Please put a “✓” if you have completed the suggested task(s):

***First Year of Study***

Status	Task
	Join the student orientation organized by my Department/Faculty
	Identify who is my academic advisor, and whom/which unit I should approach in case I need assistance
	Meet with my academic advisor
	Read through various academic policies and regulation
	Identify the HKBU graduate attributes
	Identify the graduation requirements
	Figure out the way to do course registration
	Identify my own strengths and interests
	Identify my favorite major programme
	Put together a study plan
	Set my academic goals
	Plan ahead the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities I will participate
	Take the appropriate tests (e.g. Whole Person Development Inventory (WPDI), language tests, standard tests, etc.)
	Add more .....

***Second Year of Study***

Status	Task
	Review my academic goals
	Review my learning process against the study plan
	Meet with my academic advisor
	Join the AA activities organized by my Department/Faculty
	Add more .....

***Third Year of Study***

Status	Task
	Review my academic goals
	Develop my career plan and goals, or a plan for further studies
	Review my learning process against the study plan
	Check the graduation requirements and identify the gaps
	Meet with my academic advisor
	Join the AA activities organized by my Department/Faculty
	Add more .....



***Final Year of Study***

<b>Status</b>	<b>Task</b>
	Review my academic and career goals
	Review my learning process against the study plan
	Check the graduation requirements and identify the gaps
	Meet with my academic advisor
	Join the AA activities organized by my Department/Faculty
	Review on my achievements of what is expected (Graduate Attributes, Programme Intended Learning Outcomes)
	Add more .....

**Academic Advising Meeting Record**  
**Academic Year: AY20XX/YY**

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Date and Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Group / Individual Meeting)

**Information of Advisee(s)**

Advisee	Name	Student ID	Programme	Year of Study
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

**Issue(s) Discussed:**

- ☐ Courses or Major Selection
- ☐ Study Plan
- ☐ Learning Environment
- ☐ Learning Resources
- ☐ Career or Further Studies
- ☐ Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

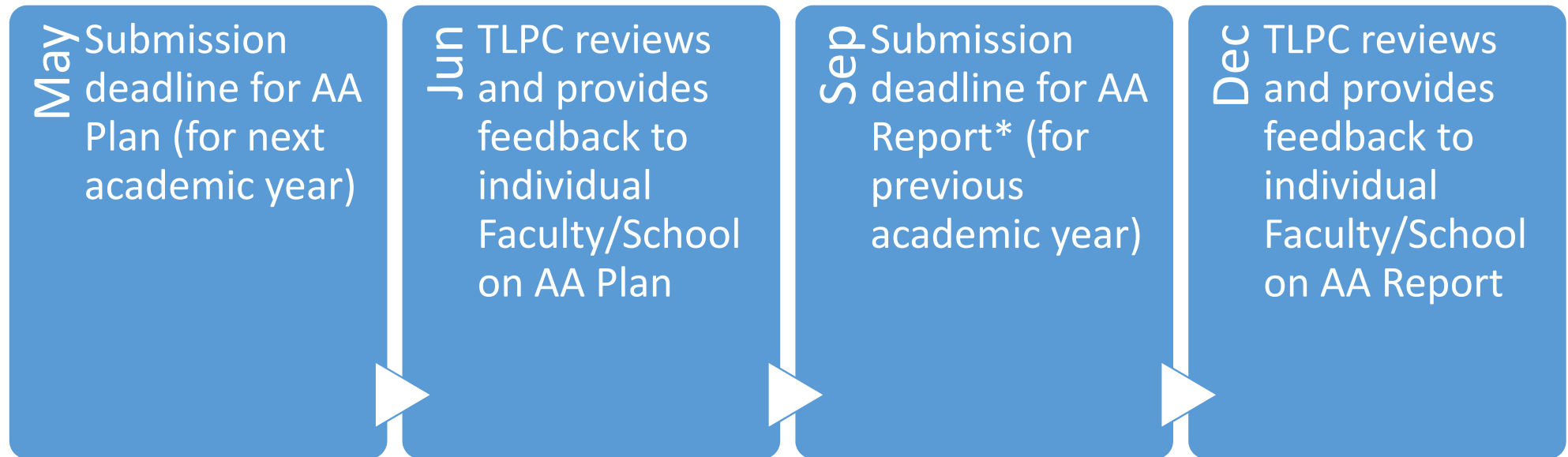
**Advice/Follow-up:**

**Date of Next Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

# Academic Advising (AA) – Timeline for Report and Plan Submission



\*AA Report should also cover:

- Number of AA activities held in the previous years and the respective attendance rate
- Percentage of students who were offered the first choice of Major