



Department of Occupational Therapy
Faculty of Health and Caring Sciences
University of West Attica

REGULATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Assembly of Department No 1st/24-01-2024

1. Introduction

The institution of the Academic Advisor of studies was included in article 35 (Law 4009_2011 Official Gazette A 195) on: "Structure, operation, quality assurance of studies and internationalization of Higher Education Institutions". More specifically, article 35 states the following: "The study advisor guides and supports students in their study programs. With the Internal Operating Regulation of each university, the assignment of study advisor duties to teaching staff is defined and the specific related issues are regulated".

According to the Internal Operating Regulation of the University of West Attica, the Department of Occupational Therapy operates the institution of Academic Advisor. The Assembly of the Department assigns the duties of Academic Advisor to one or more faculty members each academic year. Academic Advisors advise and support students to facilitate their transition from secondary to higher education. Through their education, research, and work experience, they provide support and guidance to students in matters related to their progress and successful completion of their studies and career matters. The Department and the relevant services of the University cooperate and support the Academic Advisors in their work. On the same time, they take into account the Academic Advisors' information, observations, suggestions, and requests regarding any deficiencies and malfunctions that create problems for the students, as well as proposals for dealing with them.

The institution of the Academic Advisor is considered necessary because academic consultation contributes significantly to successful studies and students' well-being. The Department of Occupational Therapy considers this institution as an integral part of its educational services to its students, which contributes significantly to their learning and personal development.

The operation and regulation of the special issues of this institution, as well as the appointment of Academic Advisors, are the responsibility of the Department's Assembly.

2. Allocation of students to academic advisors

The role of the Academic Advisor is taken by faculty members of the Department of Occupational Therapy regardless of rank and position. Each Academic Advisor monitors the students from the beginning to the end of their studies in the Department of Occupational Therapy.

The students are allocated by semester, electronic lottery of random numbers, or alphabetically. Also, the academic advisor supports the graduate students.

Specifically, for first-year students, the allocation of students to Academic Advisors is implemented by dividing the number of students by the number of Academic Advisors. This is the number of students per faculty member.

The list of all Academic Advisors is posted on the University's website. The students of the Department are informed by the Department's Secretariat regarding their Academic Advisor. Further information is given by the Academic Advisors, who are in contact with the students they have undertaken, either in person or online, in prearranged meetings. The student is responsible for contacting his/her Academic Advisor as soon as possible. The first meeting should take place as early as possible at the start of the student's studies and definitely before the end of the calendar year of study. In case of absence of the academic advisor on educational or other leave, the corresponding file and his advisory duties are temporarily taken over by his/her deputy advisor.

3. Duties of Academic Advisors

I. Creation of a student file

During the first meeting, the Academic Advisor fills in the student's personal information (name, address of permanent and temporary residence, telephone numbers, and other contact information) in a form. Any other information the student wishes to mention can be added to the form (special interests, future aspirations, possible learning problems, health issues, etc.). Each student's file is considered a confidential document, the custody and responsibility of which rests exclusively with the academic advisor or his/her designated deputy advisor (an example file is listed at the end of this document).

II. General advisory work

The Academic Advisor may contact each student at least 2 times during each semester as follows: a) at the beginning of the semester, b) at the end of the semester, and after the issuance of the exam results, for discussing any problems encountered by the student during the academic semester and the examination period. The Academic Advisor advises the student accordingly, without his suggestions being mandatory.

Each Academic Advisor must maintain confidentiality, which continues even after the end of his/her duties. The legislation for the protection of students' personal data, as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and concerns the processing of personal data, applies to the work of Academic Advisor.

III. Special advisory work

The role of the Academic Advisor is to guide and support students in their study program and in personal problems related to their studies, as well as to indicate to students the best way to achieve their individual goals at each level of their studies.

Students should feel free to discuss with their Academic Advisor any issue in their academic life, e.g. problems with courses, laboratories, issues related to study regulations, choice of courses, personal difficulties (family problems, health problems), which may affect their studies. The Academic Advisor can advise or guide the student in exploring and finding the most appropriate individual choice and solution to the issues that arise during his/her academic course. However, the Academic Advisor cannot guarantee, in advance, a solution for every problem. In the advanced years of studies, the Academic Advisor might also provide support to graduate students in the process of forming their career plans for their professional life.

Students should be encouraged to communicate regularly with their advisors and discuss issues related to their studies and future careers. Although the primary purpose of Academic Advisors is to assist students in developing meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their professional career and life goals in general, the ultimate responsibility for making decisions about educational and professional plans, as well as future goals, belongs exclusively to each student.

Finally, the Academic Advisor could also call a student in case he is requested to do so by another faculty member who faces problems of any nature with this student (e.g. continuous absences, systematic poor performance in exercises, unexcused abandonment of a cycle of exercises), for further intervention.

4. Change of Academic Advisor

In exceptional cases and if there are serious reasons, a student can request a change of Academic Advisor. A student who wishes to do so must apply to the Department Secretariat explaining the reasons. The possibility of fulfilling the student's request will be examined by the Department's Assembly at its first meeting after the submission of the application. In any case, the decision to change the Academic Advisor requires a majority of 3/4 of the members of the General Assembly.