Advising Notes Protect Students and Advisers

Maintaining record of interactions with students is essential for facilitating continuity in a student’s educational development. When you use Starfish to document the recommendations and interpretations you made to students during advising appointments, you protect both the student and the university. Documentation allows advising mistakes followed in good faith to be corrected. Documentation allows students to be held accountable to following correct instructions.

For academic advisers, documentation of recommendations and interpretation of policy is a basic expectation of professional and ethical practice. Moreover, accurate record-keeping is required by university policy AD-88, Code of Responsible Conduct. Notes maintained in Starfish are part of the student’s educational record and are viewable by individuals in specific roles and educational connections with the student.

What to Document and how to Address Sensitive Subject Matter

Every substantial interpretation of policy, concern raised, or recommendation made to a student (or relating to a student) should be documented in Starfish.

Caution should be exercised when documenting topics that contain sensitive subject matter, particularly disclosure of disability, religious and/or political affiliation, sexual orientation, medical diagnoses, or information that could be potentially detrimental to the student if it were revealed to a third party. In cases where one of these may affect a student’s academics, general reference to a “personal issue” or “medical issue” will suffice.

How to Add Notes to Starfish

For scheduled meetings, navigate to the student’s appointment in Starfish and hover over the calendar icon (1). Click on “Outcomes” (2) (see image to the right). Type your note into the dialog box and click “Submit”.

Appointments are found on your Dashboard, in the Appointments section, and in the Meetings tab of the student’s Starfish folder.

For interactions outside of scheduled meetings, navigate to the student’s folder. Click the Notes button and select the desired note type. Type your note into the dialog box and click “Submit”.

Search for students by name, email, or PSU id from the general search bar in the upper right or from the Students section.