

January 2018

contents:

Launching the Academic Roadmap

To support the strategic direction in light of the 3-3-4 education reform, the University adopted an enabling curriculum structure which offers students the flexibility to choose from a wide range of major and minor subjects and diverse learning experiences to suit their academic interests and goals. To address the students' need for guidance, in 2011 the University implemented the Academic Advising System. Currently, about 1,000 teachers have undertaken this important role as Faculty Academic Advisers (FAA) and Faculties/AAO have also developed different advising resources in support of this initiative.

■ **Highlights: Launching the Academic Roadmap**
Page 1 -2

■ **What's New**
Page 3

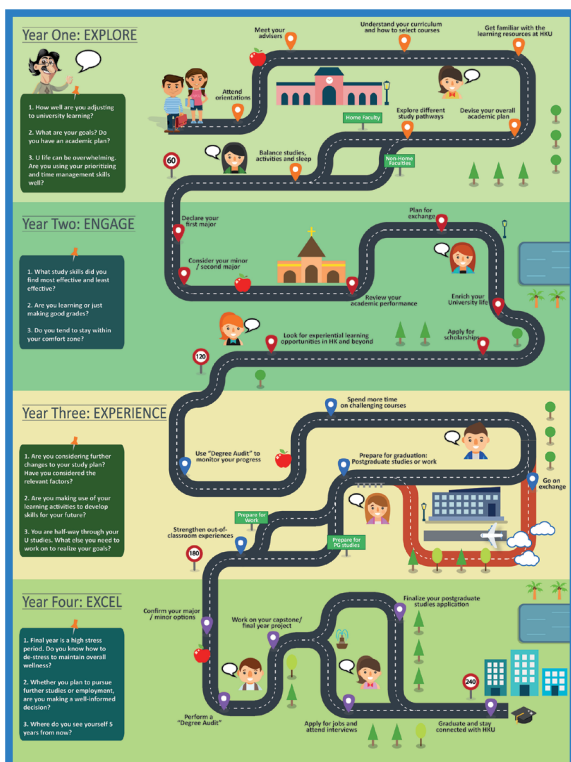
■ **Feature: Advising MATTERS**
* **SLEQ Survey Results**
Page 4
* **From "Awful" to "Awesome"**
Page 4
* **Studies and Careers**
Page 5-7

■ **Voices of Students**
Page 8

■ **Advising Corner**
Page 9-10

■ **What's Happening?**
Page 11

■ **Upcoming Events**
Page 12



To complement AAO's current website which provides comprehensive information on study matters by topics, the Office has developed a new web-based "Academic Roadmap" (<http://aao.hku.hk/roadmap>) to help students navigate their studies year by year. This "Roadmap" provides specific information, advice and/or resources on key study matters which are displayed as bus stops along students' learning journey. Through guiding questions and stories shared by fellow students, students are also encouraged to reflect upon issues that impact on their studies, such as goal

setting, adjustment, learning strategies, stress management and study-life balance.



“Degree Audit” System and “What-If” Function

Another exciting feature of this academic planning tool is the “Degree Audit” system and its “What-If” function which will be open to eligible undergraduate students admitted from 2014-15 onwards in the coming August. Made possible only through the concerted efforts of the Faculties and the SIS Project Office, students, starting from their first year, will be able to use this system proactively to explore different study pathways and monitor their study progress towards graduation. (See p. 3 for further details).

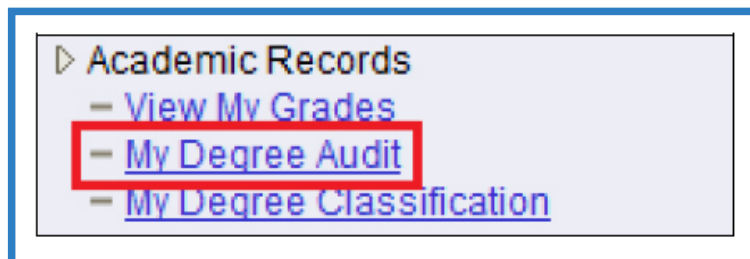
What Is in It for Students

Ivy, (BSc Year 2 student) one of the students whom AAO consulted in the design of the Roadmap, said,

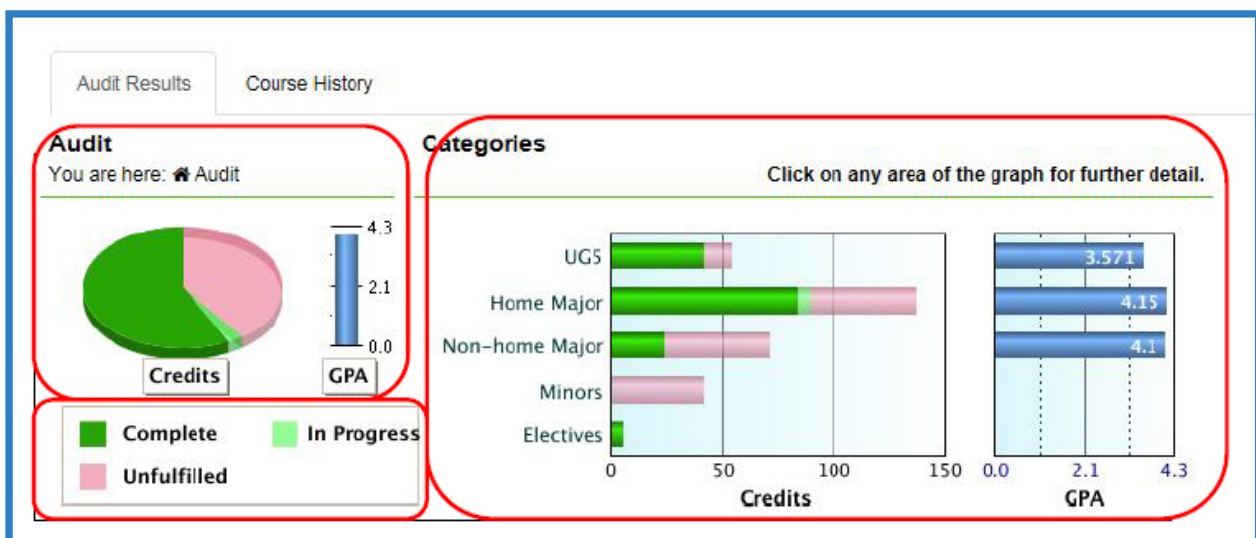
“I think HKU is really great since the curriculum offers me abundant study choices which meet my interests and fulfill my academic curiosity. However we have many questions along the way and it is not easy to find answers just when you need them. With the new Roadmap, I am able to find guidance on critical issues early on and plan my future years with greater clarity and confidence.”

What Is in It for Advisers

The “Roadmap” is also a handy advising tool for the FAAs. By referring your advisees to the relevant resources embedded in the “Roadmap”, you can focus on guiding them to clarify goals, explore university life fully and map out study plans that fulfill their interests and aspirations. For details, please contact us at aaoffice@hku.hk.



Students can access the Degree Audit System via HKU Portal.
Navigation: My Page (tab) -> SIS Menu -> Academic Records -> My Degree Audit



In the “Degree Audit” report, there are charts and graphs illustrating students’ progress towards the completion of their degree programme. Each chart and graph are interactive so students can click on the coloured area for more details.

What Is New @HKU Academic Advising



New AAO Office

We have moved from the UG level to the second floor of Knowles Building (KB212) on 3rd January 2018. The more spacious office will allow us to hold more engagement activities for students and student advisers in the future. A house warming party will be held after the Chinese New Year. Meanwhile colleagues are very welcome to drop by and visit us!



New Academic Planning Tools — Degree Audit and “What If”

Since September 2017, the SIS Project Office has launched the online Degree Audit System in stages to undergraduate students in their final and penultimate years of study and also their FAAs. The report generated by the System matches your advisee’s course enrollment and grades against his/her degree and major(s)/minor(s) requirements and provides a useful reference for monitoring academic progress.

Under the Degree Audit, students can also use the “What If” function to set hypothetical changes to their major(s)/minor(s) or study programme and look at the impacts on their study plan and/or progress. In view of the value of “What If” in helping students make academic decisions, the Degree Audit system will be launched in full scale in August 2018 to eligible undergraduate students admitted from 2014-15 onwards:

Launch Schedule

- Semester I, 2017-18: To final-year students
- Semester II, 2017-18: To penultimate-year students
- Semester I, 2018-19: To undergraduate students

Common Core: New Thematic Minors and Clusters

Commencing from the 2017-18 year of intake, students have additional study choices with two new thematic clusters launched by Common Core Curriculum Office:

- *Sustaining Cities, Cultures, and the Earth*
- *The Universe and the Question of Meaning*

If the courses students have completed in the four AOI (Areas of Inquiry) are drawn from the same thematic area, they can declare a minor with 6 completed courses or a cluster with 4. The achievement will be recognized and recorded in students’ Academic Attainment Profile.

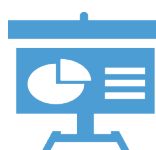
Credit Award Scheme for Out-of-Classroom Learning Experiences

The Senate approved at its meeting on July 4, 2017 a credit award scheme for out-of-classroom learning experiences, which will be piloted for three years from 2017-18. For each out-of-classroom experience/activity, one credit may be earned. The credits are academic credits, but will not count towards the 240 credits of graduation requirement. The upper limit that can be accumulated is six credits. For the application and further details, please check with the Horizons Office.

Academic Advising Duties Included in PRD Form and TEAS Guidelines

In recognition of the effort teachers put into advising, academic advising work is now included as an example of practices associated with excellent teaching in the annual Performance Review and Development (PRD) (from 2016) and the Teaching Excellence Award Scheme (TEAS) application (from 2017). Revisions have been made to the PRD form for academic staff and the TEAS application guidelines, so that FAAs can add and list, if they wish, their advising duties and achievements.

Advising MATTERS



Survey Results of SLEQ – Academic Advising Correlates with Fruitful Learning Experience

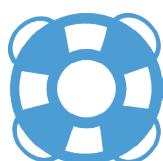
Each year the Teaching and Learning Evaluation and Measurement Unit (T&LEMU) conducts the HKU Student Learning Experience Questionnaire (SLEQ) to collect data about students’ perceptions of their learning experiences and learning outcomes at the University. From 2013 onwards, questions related to academic advising were added to understand our students’ academic advising experience. We are pleased to share with you encouraging findings from the 2016-17 survey:

- The result shows that 79.4% of first-year students had met with their FAAs at least once in 2016-2017 (as compared with 77.4 in 2015-16).
- “FAA” increased in its significance (from 38.2% in 2015-16 to 40.1% in 2016-17) as the second most important source of advice for first-year students.
- “FAA” scores high (3.87) in helpfulness to first-year students who chose FAA as their major source of advice.
- Compared with those who did not meet with FAAs, students who met with FAAs at least once

in the year (first-year students) or in the whole study period (final-year students) tend to have significantly more positive learning experience and outcomes in achievement of the University’s Educational Aims.

“Good advising cannot exist without the experience and goodwill of our many Faculty advisers: the academic jungle looks and feels slightly different every year and we need your help to ensure our students avoid traps and snake pits (or at least the ones you already know about). Advising is a collaborative effort between students, teachers and administrators. We have great colleagues in the Academic Advising Office and Faculty Offices who are always ready to support us. If we do our job properly – which I think we are, and I thank you all for your continued efforts – then we see happy and successful graduates we can be proud of.”

Professor Julia Kuehn, Chair, AAC



From “Awful” to “Awesome” — Supporting First-Year Students’ Progress into The Second Semester

Bridging the gap between secondary education and university learning is a big challenge for most freshmen. With the release of semester one results in January, it is an opportune time for FAAs to conduct a review with their advisees to fortify their “first-sem” experience and keep their momentum going into the second half of their freshmen year. Below are some tips to help them navigate their second semester with greater success.

Transition to University Learning

While university life offers plenty of opportunities

and freedom, it also calls for a higher level of independent thinking and self-discipline. Some students might feel overwhelmed or lost in direction. You may want to discuss with them —

- Can they see their goals more clearly after having studied for one semester?
- How well have they mastered the skills to set priorities and manage time?
- Have they managed to keep a study-life balance so far?

Academic Support

Many freshmen were top students in their secondary schools. Have any of your advisees been frustrated by their “unsatisfactory” grades no matter how much time they spent on studying? You may want to check —

- Do they understand what is expected of them? Have they read the learning objectives/outcomes and the grade descriptors of the courses?
- What study methods have they found most effective for university-level learning?
- Have they made good use of campus resources and sought support proactively?
- How well can they handle pressure? Can you nurture in them a “growth” mindset in overcoming difficulties?

Major/Minor Exploration

The first year is a time for freshmen to explore their potential major and minor subjects so that they can take full advantage of the University’s Enabling Curriculum Design. To help your undecided advisees make a well-considered decision, check —

- What have they learned about their academic interests and abilities from their study experience in semester one?
- Have they enrolled in courses in semester two to

get a taste of the potential major or minor? Do they know that changes can only be made during the Add/Drop period?

- Have they sought information or advice from teachers or their Temporary Academic Advisers (TAA) about the subjects?
- Are they concerned about employment prospects? (Read the article from CEDARS below for useful advice)

Engage in University Activities

Learning takes place not only inside the classroom. However, while some freshmen may shy away from new activities, some enthusiastic ones may over commit themselves at the expense of study or sleep. Check —

- What new experiences have your advisees gained so far?
- Have they allocated appropriate amount of time to these activities?
- Are they aware of the possibility to space out the activities over their whole study period?

Every student’s “first-sem” experience is unique. Inspire them to find their directions and get the most of their university life.



Studies and Careers: Major/Minor Selection — by CEDARS (Careers and Placement Section)

“I am really interested in this subject, but what job can I pursue with this major?” Our careers advisers are often asked this question by the students. Here we would like to share our views on some common career-related concerns from students with colleagues, especially the FAAs, who might be approached by their advisees for guidance.

What Is the Relationship between Careers and Studies?

The relationship between a career and studies is different among students. For students who want to pursue a career in a professional field that requires specialized training and a qualification, the choice of major is a straightforward process.

On the other hand, there are many career options which do not need a professional degree, where employers look for other attributes beyond simply the discipline of studies. In such cases, the degree is not necessarily related to careers. Students are advised to research the job functions and requirements of different career options, pick up relevant work experience and different transferable skills and knowledge from their studies and extracurricular activities so that they can apply them in different industries and work settings.

Should Students Select Their Major Based on Employment Prospects? What Should They Consider?

Employment prospects is only one of the many factors to consider when selecting a major. The job market is changing more quickly nowadays, and it is becoming more difficult to forecast the prospects of different industries and job roles. It is therefore important for students to consider other aspects when deciding their major:

- *Personality and Preferences:* Our personality and preferences are closely related to our work and communication styles, hence help determine the work nature and environment that suit us best. Having such self-understanding would help students decide on a major that paves the way for their prospective career path.
- *Interests and Passion:* If students are certain about their interests and passion in certain career, they should go for a major/minor that would prepare them for that particular field. With passion, students are likely to be more engaged and participative in learning, resulting in more solid foundation and academic success. For students who need more time to discover their career direction, no matter what major/minor they pursue, they should try out different activities to gain more exposure, and to explore their interests and career goals.

Would Employers Consider Candidates with Double Majors As More Competent?

Based on our interaction with employers, students with a double major may give employers an impression that they have stronger academic or intellectual abilities, but that will not make them more qualified than other candidates with a major and a minor or only a major. Employers will look for answers from students during the screening and interview process to questions like — “Do candidates possess the relevant knowledge and skills for the job?” — The key is whether the major/minor studies

provide a positive and persuasive reflection on candidates’ qualities, including interest and passion, knowledge, and hard and soft skills.

Nowadays, companies need employees who are able to bring in different perspectives by thinking out of the box. Indeed, some major corporations and professional firms are keen to recruit students/ graduates from a variety of disciplines so as to diversify their talent pool and create more dynamics. More jobs are now open to students from all disciplines of study.

What Do Employers Look for in Fresh Graduates? Is the GPA the Most Important?

GPA is only one of the many aspects employers look at during the screening process, although some do use the GPA to do initial screening if they have too many applications to handle. It is not the figure that matters, but how it reflects a student as a potential employee – good GPA reflects effective time management and self-discipline, especially if they have also joined many other activities.

Apart from the GPA, employers look for technical skills, relevant knowledge (hard skills), and soft skills in candidates when making hiring decision. According to a recent survey**, the top 10 qualities (soft or transferable skills) that they look for in fresh graduates are:

- (i) Reliability;
- (ii) Responsibility;
- (iii) Communication skills;
- (iv) Positive attitude;
- (v) Team work;
- (vi) Problem solving;
- (vii) Work ethic;
- (viii) Adaptability;
- (ix) Dedication; and
- (x) Integrity.

** Source: Employers & Gen Y: *The Soft Skills That Get You Hired*, Universum

How Can Students Prepare for Their Career? What Support Can CEDARS Offer?

Students should start career planning early – it takes time and effort and they should make best use of their time at HKU to prepare. The **STEER (Scan, Train up, Enrich, Execute, Reflect) framework for career planning** developed by CEDARS (Careers and Placement) will guide them through the process. This process is developmental in design, meaning that individuals normally move through the model sequentially, but the sequence is not fixed and is flexible according to each individual's needs. The support and resources under each stage are listed in the website: <http://www.cedars.hku.hk/careers/planning>.

Please share it with your advisees and they may make an appointment with a career consultant (experienced executives from the community) or walk in to meet the Student Advising Officer (full-time staff) at designated periods with no prior appointments needed. Please see the following details of the 1-on-1 Career Advising Service: contact information and opening hours of Career and Placement, CEDARS.

1-on-1 Career Advising Service (Monday to Friday)

- Student Advising Officers (Full-time staff at Careers & Placement, CEDARS)
 - Walk in (no appointment is needed)
 - Term Time: 11:30 am – 12:30 pm & 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm
 - Term Break: 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm
- Career Consultants (Experienced executives from the community)
 - Access the booking system with this link: <http://cedars.hku.hk/1on1careeradvising>; OR
 - Enquiries: Please send email to guidance@cedars.hku.hk with name, student number, and mobile number.

Contact Information:

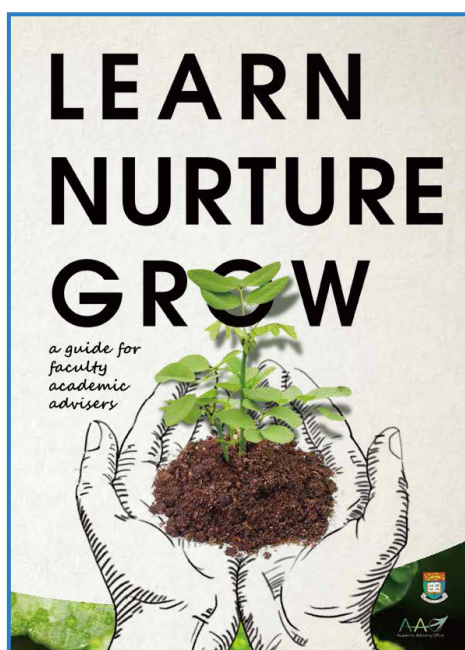
Tel: 2859 2317
 Email: careers@hku.hk
 Location: 3/F Meng Wah Complex
 Website: <http://www.careers.hku.hk>

Office Hours:

Monday to Thursday:
 9:00 am – 5:45 pm (lunch break at 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm)
 Friday:
 9:00 am – 6:00 pm (lunch break at 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm)



Advising Resources



AAO has recently published the *Learn Nurture Grow: A Guide for Faculty Academic Advisers* (<http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/faa-handbook/>) which offers updated and easy-to-reference information to facilitate FAA's advising work. There is also an online toolkit (<http://aao.hku.hk/online-toolkit/>) going with this Guide which connects advisers to further resources to promote student academic success. The hard copy of this Guide will be sent to all serving FAAs within January 2018. If FAAs do not receive it by early February, please contact AAO.



“My Adviser Encouraged Me to Follow My Heart”

“My academic adviser is always very supportive and kind every time we sit down and chat. When we first met, I just entered university and was trying to fit in this new environment. Opportunities and choices were everywhere, and I was very confused about what my life would be, since many decisions may lead to completely different life paths. I still remember what he guided me:

“... Be flexible, participative, and join different activities. Find your true love and follow your heart, don't think about money for now. When you are passionate about what you do and keep a satisfactory GPA, fame and fortune will follow...”

As a business teacher, my adviser also recommended to me some excellent business magazines like *McKinsey Quarterly* to expand my knowledge about the business world and prepare for future studies. I spent my first year exploring my passion, and was planning to transfer my major to another business programme. Therefore, I consulted him for further information. His advice was very helpful and let me finally make up my decision. It turns out that the decision has profound and positive impact on my whole academic life and I am now an inspired learner in my majors. Even today, when he has no obligation to meet advisees after their first year, we still keep in touch and interact like friends. I really appreciate the University's Advising System and also my adviser for being so supportive and helpful to students.”

Cynthia Chen Xin | Year 3
Bachelor of Business Administration



“I Could Not Ask for or Even Imagine a Better Academic Adviser”

“The first time I met my academic adviser was in the first semester and another student of the same major was with me at the time. I felt like it was a very informative meeting because she had a lot of questions that I could not think of any by myself. My adviser made sure that he asked about both our interests, aims and goals (including where we want to work or do future studies) and provided detailed insights on what we can do to achieve them including how to properly network in order to have a career in our major (biotechnology). He focused on letting us understand the bigger picture by comparing the different majors and discussed in detail how they are similar and different. He enquired about our interests and suggested the most suitable major for us.

I am also applying for summer research and I asked him for help. He gave me incredibly detailed information about not only this summer research opportunity but also the different summer opportunities and how to best apply for them (including which professors to approach and how to approach them). For the part he felt unclear, he even suggested me to approach another professor so that I can get more detailed information about specific opportunities.

I am always surprised at the information that he is able to provide and his promptness. I learn so much more from my academic adviser than the Faculty and upperclassmen. Appointments with him are always easily made and he is always very friendly and welcoming. Asking for help is a lot easier. I could not ask for or even imagine a better academic adviser.”

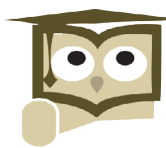
Clarissa Linardi | Year 3
Bachelor of Science



From time to time, AAO receives questions related to student advising from FAAs. In each issue of our newsletter, we will select some cases for sharing possible approaches to guide advisees in resolving issues and attaining growth. If you have any questions or cases to share, please send them to advisingcorner@hku.hk.

International Student with Major/Minor Issues

My advisee Sari is an Indian girl who grew up in Hong Kong. Last week Sari came to see me about her major/minor selection. While she likes Linguistics most for a major, she finds it harder than the other subjects she has taken. She plans to choose an “easy grade” first major to secure a higher GPA, and a second major in Accounting or Economics, which she is “OK”, in order to secure a business job in Hong Kong. Sari also heard that internship is crucial for job seeking. However her application has not been successful because she does not speak Chinese. How should I advise her?



AAO suggests

It seems that employment is a top consideration for Sari when making study decisions. However, employers do not only look at the candidates' major and GPA. In fact, some graduates landed their first job not because of what they studied but rather skills and experiences they picked up in different activities. Remind Sari not to blindly follow others as interest and ability are key to good study outcome. She can get more information from the talk jointly held by AAO and CEDARS (Careers & Placement) at the AAO's Major and Minor Fair in January. Since Hong Kong is primarily a Chinese-speaking community, it is not a bad idea to learn some Chinese to increase her job opportunities in the long run. For the time being, she could consult Careers Advisers at CEDARS how to find work experience where the Chinese language ability is not a must.

How to Make the First Advising Meeting a Fruitful One

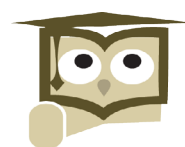
It is semester two already but John just came to my office for our first advising meeting yesterday. He sat down and appeared a bit uneasy. I asked him how he was doing in the first semester. He replied that things were ok. I further asked him if he has any questions. He said no. Frankly speaking I could not think of anything to say so I told him about some of my research work. Since he has nothing to say, I invited him to come again if he has questions. Is there a recommended way to conduct the first meeting?

AAO suggests

The first meeting could create some anxieties especially for a first-year student to meet a teacher by himself. That's why some students are reluctant to come.

To make the meeting more fruitful, you could consider these simple steps. Before the meeting, you can view SIS to have an idea of your advisee's background. In this way, you have a context to understand what he tells you to facilitate communication and rapport building. Secondly, you can prepare a list of open-ended questions to guide John to think about what he wants to achieve in university, which will form the basis of his academic plan. Thirdly, sometimes answers to open-ended questions could be as short as the one given by John. Hence, you may prompt your advisee to talk about aspects of possible issues such as transition difficulties, changes in learning mode and social relationships. Fourthly, no adviser is expected to know every answer. You can refer him to seek information from other offices on campus. However, some FAAs would look up the information together with their advisees. In this way, they not only increase their advising knowledge, but also make it a mutual effort for relationship building.

AAO has a set of suggested topics/guidelines for the first advising meeting as well as how to run a group advising session. Visit our website under <Faculty/Staff> and select <Tips/Tools>. Happy Advising!





AAO offers different workshops and activities for FAAs and students in the year to advance academic advising and promote student academic success.

Below is a short summary of these activities:

For Students

March, 2017: How to Prepare for a Successful Scholarship Application and Interview

April, October and November, 2017: Academic Preparation for Exchange (for Outgoing Exchange Students)

August, 2017: “Meet and Chat” for Study Success—for Direct Admission Year 3 Students

Mid-August to Early September, 2017: Orientations for New Students on Academic Advising —

- Orientation Sessions on Academic Advising at Faculty Briefing Sessions
- Orientation Sessions for Non-local Students—“Academic Advising and Study Support” and “Adjusting to a New Learning Environment”
- Orientation Session for President’s Scholars—“Preparing for University Success”

September to October 2017: Training Sessions for Residential Student Advisers (RSAs) and Faculty Student Advisers (FSAs) of the Faculties of Business and Economics, Engineering and Law



September 2017: Freshmen 101 Workshops:

- Be a SMART Learner—Work Hard Play Hard
- Success Strategies for Common Core
- Mistakes I Made in My First Year!



October 2017: Workshop on Postgraduate Studies: Is Postgraduate Studies Right for Me?

For Advisers

May, 2017: Case Study Workshop



June and July, 2017: Updates on Academic Advising (for Faculty of Architecture and Faculty of Science)

September 2017:

- Advising for Student Success (For new staff, organized by CETL).
- The Essentials of Academic Advising @HKU

Upcoming Events

Please share with your advisees about these events and ask them to watch out for further announcements from AAO.



When “Major” Meets “Minor” Fair 2018

To provide an opportunity for students to explore different major and minor options available at the University, the Major and Minor Fair 2018 will be organized on January 18, 2018 (Thursday). This year, a pre-Fair Peer Sharing Session will be held on January 17, 2018 (Wednesday) for students to hear about how their seniors chose their majors/minors.

When Major meets Minor Fair 2018

- One-on-One Consultation with AAO Academic Advisers, Faculty Administrators and Careers Advisers
- Talk on Studies and Career by AAO and CEDARS (Careers and Placement)
- Pre-Fair Peer Sharing by Senior Students of Different Faculties

Date | January 18, 2018 (Thur)
Time | 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Venue | G/F, Chi Wah Learning Commons, Centennial Campus

Pre-Fair Peer Sharing
How Senior Students Chose Their Major/Minor
Jan 17 (Wed)
5:30 - 6:30 pm
in University Bookstore

Special Talk
Your Studies and Career:
What to Consider
Jan 18 (Thur)
12:30 - 2:00 pm
in University Bookstore

Participating Units:
FACULTIES: Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Business and Economics, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, CEDARS: Careers and Placement Section
FACULTY STUDENT ADVISERS/STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Enquiries: 3917 0128 | Email: aaoffice@hku.hk | Website: <http://aao.hku.hk> | [f hku aao](#)

The University of Hong Kong | AAO Academic Advising Office



Scholarship Workshop

AAO will co-organize a scholarship workshop with the Scholarships Office (SO) on February 27, 2018 (Tuesday) at LG 109, K K Leung Building. In this highly interactive workshop, scholarship awardees will be invited to share their first-hand experiences. Representatives from AAO and SO will also share practical tips by outlining a succinct roadmap from scholarship application to scholarship interview.