

A Guide to Advising Students

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Academic Office

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following information is designed as a resource to help USP faculty members perform their roles as advisors to students under their care. It is important that we understand the students' situations so that we can help them plan for the future.

If, after reading through the following material, you still have questions regarding an individual student, please consult with any one of the USP Directors or Administrative Staff (Academic Team).

Staff information is available at <http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg/about/people> and will be updated regularly.

2. HOW THE USP ADVISING SYSTEM WORKS

2.1 Overview

Prior to the start of every academic year, each USP faculty member is assigned as an advisor to a group of incoming students. The faculty member keeps these students as advisees for the four years that they are in USP. The USP advising system is based on the premise that students are responsible for making the final decisions about what modules they take and when. However, advisors help students to:

- articulate their personal and intellectual interests;
- see connections between USP modules and these interests;
- strategically plan a course of study to maintain high academic standards, so that the students will stand a good chance of achieving honours;
- complete their studies in a timely manner; and
- find resources to resolve academic and personal problems.

Amongst these goals of advising, the first three are the most important. USP advisors bring strong teaching experience to advising. They have well-developed classroom strategies to encourage students to address issues and challenges in class. They can offer strategies to help advisees discover the fit between their intellectual interests and USP modules. However, gathering the information to accomplish the fourth and fifth goals of advising can be time-consuming. Thus, this guide aims to identify the main features of USP that advisors ought to know, so that they can then direct students to links on the USP website where the students can find more relevant, up-to-date information.

2.2 Scheduled Meetings with Advisees

Advisors should schedule regular meetings with advisees during their stay in USP. For the first two years, they should meet with their advisees twice in Semester 1 and at least once every subsequent semester. Beyond the second year, the frequency of meetings is left to the discretion of the advisors and the advisees. Table 1 outlines the major points of focus for each scheduled meeting.



Table 1: Meeting Objectives

Meeting	Time	Focus
1	Start of Semester 1 during Advisory Tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain advising system's goals and your role.• Give/get contact information.• Encourage students to develop their plan of study.• Discuss the USP roadmap.• Alert students to opportunities in USP, either study-related or beyond-the-classroom.
2	Middle of Semester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review students' study plans and choice of modules for Semester 2, and compare them with the USP requirements.• Enquire about adjustment to university life.• Enquire about academic problems with current modules.
3	Middle of Semester 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check USP Advisory Online System (accessible from the USP website https://aces.nus.edu.sg/advisory/login.jsp) for students' academic performance in Semester 1. Note that academic warning notifications are also sent by USP Academic Office to the respective advisors to aid the advising process.• Discuss causes of poor academic performance (CAP below 3.5). Encourage students to consider academic counselling early. If a student's CAP falls below 3.5, you could advise her/him to consider leaving USP, so that s/he can concentrate on graduating with a degree from the home Faculty/School.• Review students' study plans and choice of modules for Semester 3, and compare them with the USP requirements.
4	Middle of Semester 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same as the previous semester.• In addition, discuss with students their ideas and plans for the USP ISM (i.e., provide general guidance on doing ISMs, rather than offer specialised knowledge in a particular discipline of study).
5	Semester 5 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same as the previous semester.



2.3 Expectations of the Role of the Advisor

Advisors are expected to:

- Help students understand the USP structure or requirements
- Guide students in choosing the inquiry modules that will challenge them intellectually while offering them a chance to expand their interests
- Help students think through and work towards their career and personal goals
- Help students with any problems that they may experience within USP itself
- Put students in touch with others who may be of assistance with regard to questions and problems outside USP
- USP students who matriculated in 2016 and after will have to read at least 6 USP modules by the end of their second year. Those who have not will be asked to show justification, and produce a study plan on how they can complete the programme.

Advisors are not expected to:

- Provide detailed information on students' home Faculty/School's curriculum structure or requirements
- Give students professional counselling (although they can refer the students to others who can offer professional help).

Advisors may seek clarification from the USP Academic Office if they are uncertain of the advice to students in the following areas:

- USP module registration
- How USP requirements relate to the graduation requirements of students' home Faculties/Schools
- Student Exchange Programme module substitutions
- Transfer of faculty or change of course
- Withdrawal from USP.

3. USP CURRICULUM

3.1 USP Requirements

Students in USP must read and pass all of the following:

- 3 compulsory foundation modules worth 12 MCs
- 8 inquiry modules worth 32 MCs
- 1 senior seminar module worth 4 MCs.

Foundation Tier (Level 2000) contains three modules, Writing and Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and University Scholars Seminar.

Inquiry Tier (Level 2000 & 3000) consists of eight modules, in two domains, Humanities & Social Sciences (H&SS), and Sciences & Technologies (S&T). The goal of this tier is to promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary inquiry, so that students can make intellectual connections outside of their majors. All USP students will take four modules in the H&SS domain and four modules in the S&T domain (including at least one but not more than three ISMs).



Substitution of modules is allowed in a number of cases. Students going on USP or their faculties' Student Exchange Programmes, subject to approval, can substitute two modules per semester. Those on NUS Double Degree Programmes (between USP partner faculties), USP's own Cultural Immersion Programmes in Japan, China, and India, and one-year NOC programmes and NOC SG can gain exemptions (including ISM requirements) of up to four USP modules (2 HSS + 2 ST) in total. There are also special arrangements made for directly recognised faculty modules, for example in Special Programme in Science (SPS), Engineering Science Programme (ESP) and SDE. Please refer to Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Module Substitution/Waiver/Double-counting

Type	Programme	Module Code	Remarks
Module substitution <i>Modules mapped are to fulfill USP Inquiry tier requirement only.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEP 	<i>Module substitution code:</i> UFBxxxx UFCxxxx	Allow 2 Inquiry modules per semester away. Approval granted for up to 4 modules.
Module waiver <i>Students deemed to have fulfilled 2HSS + 2ST Inquiry-tier modules, subject to approval. The waiver includes ISM requirement (i.e. no ISM required).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NUS-Waseda DDP USP Yuanpei 		Module substitution allowed (max 2 modules).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSR/Hindu College 		No module substitution allowed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-year NOC/NOC SG 		No module substitution allowed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NUS DDP (between USP partner faculties except FoL) 		No module substitution allowed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty of Law 		Students are required to read Law Directed Research (LL4396)
Double-counting <i>This refers to double-counting of non-USP modules to meet major/faculty and USP requirements.</i> <i>Faculty/Programme & equivalent module codes:</i> SPS → SP ESP → ESP BES → ENV SDE → PF/RE/AR/ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISMs (pure/ride-on/UOPS) 	UISxxxx	1 to 3 ISMs
	Faculty codes recognised as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISMs 	SP3172 ESP3901/ESP3902 ESP3903 ENV3102 PF2303 RE3102/3103	ESP – any 2 modules RE – either 1 module
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry modules (ST) Inquiry modules (SDE only - ST/HSS) 	SP2173/SP2174/ SP3175/SP3176 ESP2109/ESP2110 PF3302/PF3204 RE2103/RE2104 AR3102/AR4102/ AR4104 LA4702/AR4142 ID4121/ID4104	SP - any 2 modules ESP – either 1 module Module substitution allowed for SDE students (max 2 modules).



Reflection Tier (Level 4000) consists of one module, the senior seminar.

The table below briefly summarizes the revised curriculum.

USP Curriculum
<p>Foundation Tier: 3 compulsory modules (12 MCs), comprising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 Writing and Critical Thinking1 Quantitative Reasoning Foundation1 University Scholars Seminar
<p>Inquiry Tier: 8 modules (32 MCs)</p> <p>Modules equally divided between Humanities & Social Sciences and Sciences & Technologies Domains.</p> <p>At least one but not more than three modules to be ISMs.</p> <p>Students can obtain module exemptions for up to four modules through the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Cultural Immersion/Double Degree/Joint Degree Option<ul style="list-style-type: none">USP-Yuanpei College (Peking University, China)USP-Hindu College ProgrammeUSP-Lady Shri Ram College for Women ProgrammeUSP-Waseda DDP ProgrammeANU-USP JDPNUS DDP (between USP partner faculties)b) Entrepreneurial Development Option<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fulfilled by participation in either NOC Overseas Colleges (one-year duration) or NOC SG
<p>Reflection Tier: 1 module (4 MCs), comprising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 Senior Seminar

Additional General Rules:

- (1) Of the twelve required USP modules, students have to ensure that they read a minimum of **eight** USP modules in NUS (excluding the directly recognised faculty modules) to qualify for the USP certificate. This will prevent students from substituting too many modules, and will preserve the USP's integrity as a learning community.
- (2) With effect from AY2014/15, USP modules (level 2000) are eligible for S/U, with the exception of WCT and QRF modules. From AY2017/18, USS2105 will be graded, and will be eligible for S/U. Students are required to have at least **six** graded USP modules, and to graduate with at least an Honours (Merit) degree.

With effect from AY2016/17, all NUS students have to read GER1000 to fulfil the GE Quantitative Reasoning pillar.



3.2 Singapore Studies Requirement

Students are required to read one of the modules designated as Singapore Studies modules in USP.

As at July 2017, the basket of USP Singapore Studies modules consists of the following:

Module Code	Module Title	Domain
UCV2207	The Politics of Heritage: Singapore and the Region	Humanities & Social Sciences
UCV2209	The Heterogeneous Indians of Contemporary Singapore	Humanities & Social Sciences
UHB2212	Singaporean Nostalgia	Humanities & Social Sciences
ULT2299D	The Politics of Language and Literacy in Singapore	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2304	Singapore: The Making of a Nation	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2305	Southeast Asia: The Making of a Region	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2311	Archives, Biography, Memory	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2312	Nationalism and the Arts	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2317	Multiculturalism in Singapore and Its Contested Meanings	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2318	Managing Cultural Difference: Theorizing the S'pore Model	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2320	Transitional Justice and War Crime Trials: Case Studies from Singapore and Asia	Humanities & Social Sciences
USE2321	Examining Local Lives	Humanities & Social Sciences
USP3505	Asianism and Singapore	Humanities & Social Sciences
UQR2311	Singapore Studies: Transportation Systems of Tomorrow	Sciences & Technologies
UPC2209	Understanding Environmental Pollution in Singapore	Sciences & Technologies



4. ACCESSING STUDENTS' RECORDS

4.1 USP Advisory Online System

To assist students effectively, you will need information on your advisees' academic performance. You will have access to the USP's database through your computer and will be able to call up a report on each of your advisees. The report will provide the following information:

- student's name and matriculation number;
- student's contact information – home address, phone number(s), and e-mail address;
- student's home Faculty/School and course of study and major (where applicable);
- information on modules taken by the student – module codes and module titles;
- grade for each completed module; and
- history of the student's CAP.

These web-based reports are generated on a real-time basis. As a result, you will always have access to the latest information on your advisees whenever you need it.

Below are the steps for calling up a report on an advisee:

- Go to <https://aces.nus.edu.sg/advisory/login.jsp> (must be accessed via VPN if off-campus)
- Login with your NUSNET ID and password, and follow the prompts to generate the report.

4.2 Confidentiality of Information

The need for confidentiality is central to winning advisees' trust, so that they will share information with you. In general, treat information you receive from advisees and their records as confidential. If a need arises for you to share information with colleagues about advisees, seek students' permission to do so. Certain exceptions to this guideline are specified below.

5. RESOLVING PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

You may find some advisees struggling with poor academic performance. Poor academic performance is a matter of concern that should be discussed with students as soon as you see a problem. If students' CAP is low, they may not stand a good chance of being offered a place in their home Faculty's/School's honours programme. Early intervention is necessary to give students a chance to deal with the academic and emotional causes of under-performance.

Some obvious signs of academic difficulty are falling grades, poor class attendance, and failure to submit assignments in a timely manner. Academic difficulties are often triggered by personal problems, which advisees may raise as you discuss their academic performance with them.

5.1 USP Pastoral Care

USP offers first-line counselling care and support to students experiencing distress in university life, whether psychological, emotional, physical, or finance-related. USP works closely with the university's Counselling and Psychological Services (CPS) and University Health Centre (UHC) for follow-up support and care.



You may contact the following for more information and assistance:

USP Pastoral Care, Ms Ng Yun Sian, at tel 6516 4076, uspngys@nus.edu.sg

USP DD (Student Life), A/P Albert Teo, at tel 6516 4058, uspteocy@nus.edu.sg

Some useful numbers are follows:

Campus Security 6874 1616

Counselling and Psychological Services (CPS) 6516 2376

5.2 Dealing with At-risk Students

There are two situations in which you should inform the USP Directors immediately:

- If a student has psychological difficulties exhibited by clear signs of disorientation, delusion, extreme agitation, fidgeting, or uncontrollable crying.
- If a student shows violent tendencies or threatens to harm himself/herself or others.

We hope you have found this information packet useful for your advising purposes. Should you require more resources in facilitating your advising process, please feel free to contact any one of the Directors or administrative staff.

