

The Algonquin College Student Advising System (ACSAS) is an online recording and tracking system housed within the College's IntraWeb that has been developed in collaboration with ITS for academic advisors at Algonquin College.

#### **Four Principles of the Student Advising System**

1. Staff access to the ACSAS is limited. The ACSAS is accessible only to those staff assigned a role on an approved program advising team. Teams must be part of the Academic Advising Program to use the ACSAS.
2. Advisors can best support a student by sharing advising information among knowledgeable colleagues. It is acceptable for advisors to share information that affects a student's academic progress as long as the information stays within the advising team for the student's program.
3. The information that can be shared among the advising team about a particular student is limited in extent and type. The degree to which a student's information is shared among those on the advising team and the type of information shared must conform to existing College directives with respect to confidentiality and disclosure of student information.
4. Students have the right to be informed about any collection or sharing of academic information. Each student assigned an academic advisor must be made aware of the confidentiality and disclosure guidelines at or before the first meeting with the advisor.

#### **FAQS**

##### **1. Who is included on the "advising team"?**

The advising team is defined by each program's Chair each semester and includes

- one or more faculty advisors,
- the Student Success Specialist for the School/Faculty,
- the Coordinator of the program,
- the Chair of the program.

##### **2. Can anyone else see the information on the ACSAS?**

The Dean of each program's School or Faculty can be added to the advising team by default; he or she can view, but not add to, the information.

The Academic Advising Coordinator (for the College) is added to the advising team by default; he or she can view, but not add to, the information and can also create reports from the collated system information for the Academic Advising Steering Committee as requested.

##### **3. Can faculty who are not part of the advising team view information about a student on the ACSAS?**

No, faculty who are not assigned an official advising role cannot log on to the system or view information.

**4. Can a faculty who is assigned an advising role still view the information about the students he or she advised in a previous semester (e.g. in F10) in the next semester (e.g. F11)?**

YES, but only if the faculty's role as advisor has been renewed for the current term within the same program. Advisors who are removed from the advising team can no longer log on to the system or view information.

**6. What kind of information can be shared on the ACSAS about a student among an advising team?**

Information of a **factual** nature that is required to support the **academic success** of the student

- General topic of discussion
- Brief explanatory comments that use neutral, non-judgmental language
- Use of job titles or positions (rather than proper names) of College staff
- At-risk designations or testing scores as agreed upon by the department
- Referrals to other College services (contact information only)
- Agreed actions – brief summary of “next steps” as mutually agreed upon by the student and advisor at an advising session

**7. What kind of information cannot be shared on the ACSAS about a student among the team?**

- Personal details unrelated to academic matters (e.g. details of personal life, particulars that suggest to the advisor that the student should be referred to counselling, CSD or another appropriate student service)
- Proper names of other College staff (with the exception of referrals) especially in the case of student complaints or grievances
- Unsupported or undocumented observations (e.g. “student may be dyslexic”)
- Information that the student specifically requests NOT be shared.

**8. Which policies provide guidance with respect to College rules for confidentiality and disclosure?**

Directive **A21** (Rights, Freedoms, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for the Algonquin College Community); Directive **AA40** (Academic Advising); Directive **A11** (Freedom of Information) and Directive **E19** (Confidentiality of Student Records).

**9. What does Policy AA40 on Academic Advising say about confidentiality and disclosure?**

The Directive outlines a “code of ethics” written by a Counsellor in Counselling Services at Algonquin (Section 3):

“Code of Ethics. Advisors will...

3. Not disclose information acquired from the student while functioning in an advising capacity, except in those cases where disclosure is
  - *Requested by the student,*
  - *Required to support the academic success of the student,*
  - *Required to avert a clear and imminent danger to the student or others*
  - *Required to protect the integrity of an academic program” (E31, page 3).*
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**10. What should the student be told about the ACSAS on or before the first advising session?**

- An academic advisor is not a personal counsellor, a CSD counsellor or a specialized career

counsellor. An academic advisor supports your educational progress in a program of study and can also be consulted for field-specific advice.

- Your advisor may make notes about your advising sessions on the ACSAS. You will be asked to sign a consent form acknowledging you are aware of this at your first advising session. If you prefer not to sign the consent form, the advisor will not record notes about you on the ACSAS.
- In this program, advisors work as a team with the Coordinator and the Student Success Specialist for your Faculty or School.
- Information about your academic progress may be shared among some members of the team. This information is shared *only when necessary* to ensure you receive the most accurate, up-to-date and relevant advice and support.
- Information of a personal nature is *not* shared; in cases where your personal situation is interfering with your ability to succeed in your program, you will be referred to a qualified, professional counsellor in Student Services.
- You can ask the advisor not to record or share a particular piece of information.
- You can request to look at the notes an advisor makes as part of an advising session.
- You should be aware that if you divulge information that suggests that you are a clear or imminent danger to yourself or others, or if you share information that suggests that the integrity of your program is at risk, then your advisor is obliged to pass that information on to a responsible person at the College.

**11. What forms should the student read and sign at or before the first advising session?**

- Academic Advisor – Advisee Agreement (both advisor and student keep a copy)
- ACSAS Consent Form (advisor keeps a copy)

**12. Where can an advisor get more information about these guidelines?**

- Coordinator, Academic Advising, Marni Squire, [squirem@algonquincollege.com](mailto:squirem@algonquincollege.com)
- Ombudsperson (changing)

Any member of the Academic Advising Steering Committee