Creating Progress Reports (Early Alert) in SSC

SSC Campus Progress Reports allows you to alert academic advisors about a student who is showing signs of struggle in your course. Reasons for submitting an alert could be poor attendance, missing assignments, low quiz or test scores, not logging in to Blackboard, excessive tardiness, or personal. The academic advisors will process the progress reports and personal reach out to the student to get them the help they so desperately need.

To create a progress report:

1. Log in to SSC: vcu.campus.eab.com (same credentials you use for VCU log in)
2. If you are both a professor and an academic advisor in the SSC System, you will need to pull up your “Professor Role”. To do so, you would click the drop down arrow next to “Advisor Home”, and pick “Professor Home” instead.

3. Click the Progress Reports link next to the class for which you would like to submit Progress Reports.

4. On the Progress Reports screen, select the student(s) for whom you would like to submit a report, and click Actions and then Create a New Progress Report. Note: You can use one progress report to report on multiple students – so just click all names that will apply to your generic alert reason.
5. A window will pop up (called “Add a New Progress Report”), and this is where you enter all of the alert information. **NOTE:** If you are submitting one alert for multiple students, **please do not enter any identifying information** in the “comments” box about a particular student. If you need to send an advisor a personal note about one student, you should create a personalized alert versus a bulk one.

- **At-Risk to Fail Your Class?** – Always click the “yes” button.

   ![ADD A NEW PROGRESS REPORT](image)

- **Absences** - The number of absences this student has accumulated thus far (if applicable)
- **Current Grade** - The grade the student has earned in this course so far to date (if applicable)
- **Comments** - Enter a narrative regarding how this student is progressing in your course. As with any narrative comment, the more complete the better. But please remember, any comments entered here can be seen by the student – so please make them appropriate and helpful.

   ![ADD A NEW PROGRESS REPORT](image)

6. Click “Submit Report”.

7. An email will immediately be sent to the student’s advisors assigned in SSC – alerting them with the details of your submitted report. The student will also receive a generic message that notifies them an alert has been issued by you, and multiple resources are provided to guide the student on how to rectify/improve their situation.
Managing Progress Reports

Once you have saved a progress report, it will show up under your list of reports at the top of the **Progress Reports** page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Created At</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rashana Blount</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rashana has missed two classes and has not submitted any homework yet</td>
<td>01/31/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VCU Guiding Principles on Advising Notes and Documentation

Overview

VCU collects and retains data and information about students for designated periods of time with the expressed purpose of facilitating the student's educational development. These records are considered to be part of the student's educational record regardless of format (electronic or paper), and are to be stored in the advising unit's central repository following the guidelines below.

VCU recognizes its duty to protect the privacy rights of individuals while balancing the institution's need for information relevant to fulfilling its educational missions, and its obligation to abide by University policy and state and federal regulations. The documentation maintained by VCU advisors is consistent with the ethical standards of the advising field (per the Exposition of NACADA's Core Values):

- Advisors respect student confidentiality rights regarding personal information, and when unable to honor a request for confidentiality, so advises and provides an explanation to the student;
- Advisors practice with an understanding of the institution's interpretation of applicable laws such as the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
- Advisors seek access to and use student information only when the information is relevant to the advising process. Advisors enter or change information on students' records only with appropriate institutional authorization to do so;
- Advisors document advising contacts adequately to meet institutional disclosure guidelines and aid in subsequent advising interactions.

Documentation Procedures

The expectation for advisors at VCU is that every substantial contact with a student or relating to a student is recorded and notes entered electronically using SSC Campus. In all cases, documentation should be the minimum necessary to adequately document the interaction. In order to document a student's past behaviors, "NO SHOWS" for appointments should also be documented. A "substantial contact" is one in which information is communicated that can have an impact on a student's academic progress. For a discussion of key elements to document, see Core Elements below.

Who Documents and Why?

VCU Academic Advisors have the important task of assisting students with the academic exploration process. Due to the nature of this process, it is extremely important for advisors to thoroughly document their interactions with students, noting the decision making processes and ultimately, charting the student's academic progress. Advising notes (or 'reports') can serve as a tool to help build rapport between the advisor and the student, and can provide important information that helps advisors to be more effective in guiding students as they explore.

What to Document?

The expectation for VCU academic advisors is that every substantial contact with a student, or relating to a student, must be thoroughly documented including appropriate details and the date of the interaction. This includes telephone conversations, e-mail interactions, walk-in/quick question advising, pre-arranged advising meetings, and no shows. Other interactions are up to the discretion of each advisor, but in general, staff members are encouraged to document when in doubt. Advisors are reminded to keep in mind "ethical standards" (listed below) when considering content to summarize in the documentation.
Core Elements

VCU advisors must record the content of their discussions with students regarding the student’s current curricular goals, as reviewed in the advising interaction, and issues related to their progress toward those goals. Curricular goals should be entered as part of the contact data, and referred to in the advisor’s summary of the contact. While decisions regarding the content of advising notes are made by the advisor, critical elements for documentation include: discussions about entrance-to-major requirements, the student’s eligibility for a particular college or major, the student’s progress toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements, and the student’s current and future course schedules as they relate to possible curricular goals and graduation requirements.

E-mail and Telephone Contacts

All substantial e-mail and telephone contacts should be documented electronically in SSC Campus. Generally, it is best to summarize e-mails of substance, documenting the general purpose of the interaction and any specific recommendations made by the staff member. Copying and pasting e-mails verbatim should only be done when deemed absolutely necessary due to the subject matter. In rare cases involving sensitive topics, it may be appropriate for the e-mail itself to be printed and kept within the unit’s paper files. Phone contacts of substance should be summarized, including general purpose and recommendations made.

Sensitive Subject Matter

VCU advisors should be very cautious when documenting topics that contain sensitive subject matter. These include: disability, religious and/or political affiliation, perceived or disclosed sexual orientation, medical diagnoses (including a person’s HIV status), or information that could be potentially detrimental to the student if it were revealed to a third party.

VCU Police records, records related to a student's employment, or records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist are not part of the VCU educational record. Official documents related to these topics are not to be kept in student folders or in electronic notes, even if necessary for legitimate academic business. Records with medical or judicial content that are included in petitions to ARAC should be kept separately from the educational record, in a different location.

Where to Document and How?

SSC Campus

All substantial contacts with or about a student must be recorded electronically in SSC Campus or Degree Words (if related to graduation and is determined applicable for the student to view). These notes are accessible by all advisors within the University system, so care should be exercised in this documentation.

Only in rare cases is it appropriate to keep additional documentation in the student's paper file. In these cases, non-sensitive information should be recorded electronically (i.e., schedule plan, academic progress checks, etc.) and reference to additional information in paper notes should be made (see Paper Files below).

Paper Files

While all contacts need to be recorded electronically, in rare occasions sensitive topics arise that need to be summarized and documented on paper to insure the information will not be widely shared. This type of interaction should be documented in the student’s paper file/educational record, and the SSC Campus notes should refer to the paper file. The paper entry should follow the same ethical considerations as SSC Campus and document the minimum necessary to show a problem was assessed and an appropriate referral was made. This practice will insure that thorough documentation is being kept, and will minimize the risk associated with sharing the content through widely accessible electronic notes. Examples of sensitive topics that should be documented and kept in paper files would include referrals for student in distress, confidential medical information or diagnoses that relate to academic decisions, etc.
Personal Files

While personal files are not part of the educational record, they may be subpoenaed in court cases or seized under the Patriot Act. For these reasons, VCU recommends that advisors **do not maintain** personal files about students. If advisors maintain some data relating to students, these should never be kept to the exclusion of formal records and should never contain information that would be inappropriate for the formal record. The keeping of personal records should be minimized, and a great deal of judgment and caution should be used when personal records are kept.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the rules and standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession. Advisors have two associations to which they can look for guidelines on ethical standards for the profession. These include the [Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)](https://www.cas.org) and NACADA, which developed its own [Core Values](https://www.nacada.ttu.edu/about_nacada/about_nacada/standard_4.shtml) to guide the profession.

Self-Check Questions When Entering Notes

When entering your notes, assume others will read your notes and ask yourself:

- Is this something the student would want other people to know?
- Is this something another advisor would need to know? Why?
- Are the details in my notes based on fact or observation and personal perspective?

Always be sure to check your notes for accuracy before saving them.

For additional questions about academic advising notes, please contact advising@vcu.edu