

High-Impact Coaching Checklist

NOTE: This checklist is designed to accompany the resources and tools presented in [MDRC's Tools for Postsecondary Schools Toolkit](#). It builds on information and concepts presented in the “High-Impact Coaching” video. **Before reviewing this document, please use the link above to visit the web-based toolkit and watch that video.**

HOLISTIC ADVISING

- Staff coaching teams with students in mind. Structure your teams in a way that allows staff members to help meet students' needs holistically. Doing so could mean providing your teams with additional training or recruiting new people with experience in holistic student support. Whenever possible, hire staff members who have life experiences similar to your students'.
- Ensure that coaches are available when students are available (that is, make opportunities for coaches to meet with students in the mornings, evenings, and weekends, and to meet with them virtually).
- Train staff members in the expectations of holistic advising and the resources available to support students.
- Give students assistance overcoming both academic and nonacademic barriers to success. Connect students to resources when applicable.
- Approach advising sessions with an organized vision. Create a communications plan or [coaching schedule](#) to ensure coaches discuss important topics that affect many students at specific times of year.
- Meet with your team regularly to discuss advising and continually improve how students are supported.

CASELOAD STRUCTURE AND MEETING FREQUENCY

- Organize students into caseloads that are small enough for coaches to reach out to students and build long-term, meaningful relationships with them. Caseload sizes can range from 80 to 150 students per full-time coach.
- Consider the following campus-specific factors when determining your caseload ratio:
 - The extent to which coaches need to juggle other responsibilities in addition to supporting the students on their caseload
 - The nature and intensity of support that students in the program need
 - How much time coaches will require to enter case management data into their campus's management information system and retrieve that data from the system
- Allow students to stay with the same coach for the duration of their time at the college, whenever possible.
- Require students to meet with their coaches twice a month. After the first semester of meetings with students, consider creating a triage approach to adjust meeting-frequency requirements. Students who are doing well overall can meet with their coaches once a month.
- Track data on meeting attendance, discussion topics at each meeting, and academic, financial aid, and career-prep milestones.
- Offer group coaching sessions or workshops that count toward the monthly coaching requirement.

OUTREACH

- Reach out to students to check in, share reminders, and schedule appointments.
- Use multiple modes of communication (email, phone calls, text messages) to reach out to students.
- Employ communication strategies informed by behavioral science (such as [SIMPLER](#)).
- Use automated communication systems built into the management information systems on your campus, or use external systems.

- Enlist support from other staff members on campus to assist with general communications (that is, sending reminders).
- Continue reaching out to students who have stopped engaging with the coaching program as well as students who have unenrolled, to encourage them to reengage.