

Graduating Senior Survey 2018 – Selected Results on Academic Advising

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning | George Mason University
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The Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) was administered to 5,506 seniors in the 2017-18 academic year (summer and fall 2017, spring 2018), with a response rate of 31%. This document presents selected results related to students' experience with and perception of academic advising. Complete GSS 2018 results for the university, by college/school, and by department are available at <https://ira.gmu.edu/>.

Highlights of Key Findings

- Almost one-half of the respondents reported meeting with their academic advisors 3-6 times while at Mason though the percentage varied by school/college and transfer status.
- About one-third of the respondents also reported having technology-enabled contact with their academic advisors 3-6 times, with variation by school/college.
- During their last year at Mason, over one-half of the respondents reported using Degree Works¹ at least 7 times to track progress on degree completion, again with variation by school/college.
- The majority of the respondents (59-90%) had positive perception of /experience with academic advisors despite minor variation by transfer status.
- In general, students who met with academic advisors more frequently were more likely to report satisfaction with their Mason experience.
- Students who met with academic advisors more frequently (e.g., 3 or more times) graduated within four years at a higher rate than those who used the service less frequently.

Meeting with Academic Advisors

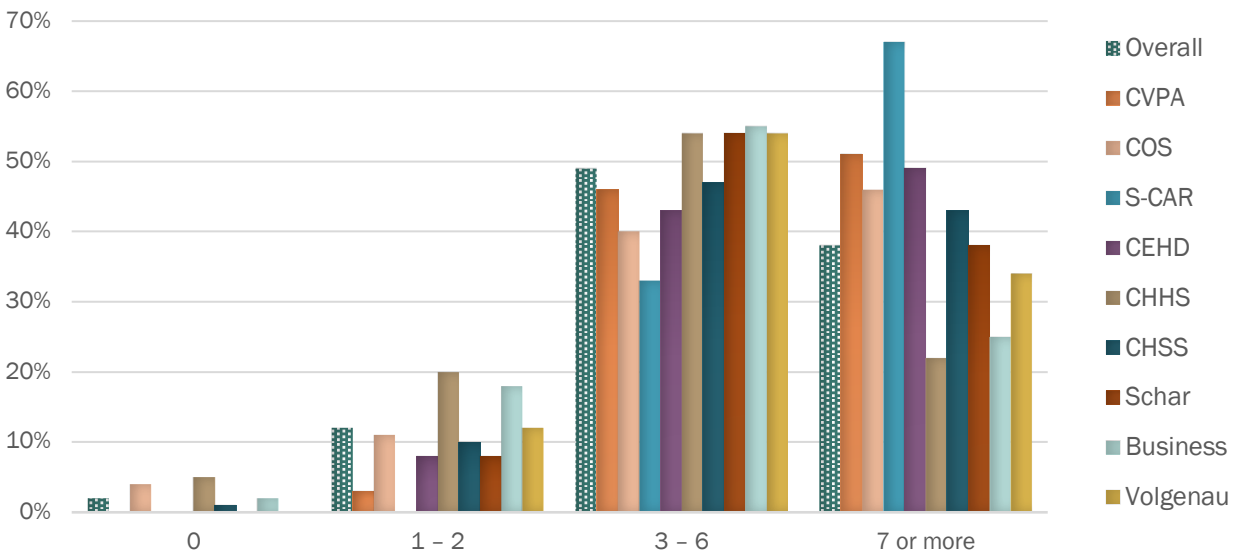
- Overall, about one-half of the respondents (49%) met with academic advisors 3-6 times while at Mason; over one-third (38%) did so at least 7 times. Only 2% of the respondents never met with academic advisors (Table 1 and Figure 1).
- The number of times students met with academic advisors in person varied significantly by college, with five colleges being above the institutional average at the higher end (i.e., 7 times or more: 43-67% and 38%, respectively) (Table 1 and Figure 1).
- Statistically significant variation emerged in using the academic advising service by transfer status. For example, 50% of the graduates who started at Mason (referred to as 'native') met with their advisors at least seven times compared to 27% of transfer students (Figure 2).

¹ Degree Works is the degree evaluation system used at Mason by students and advisors to track progress on meeting degree completion requirements (for students with a catalog year of Fall 2012 and later).

Table 1 and Figure 1. Meeting with Academic Advisors in Person: Overall and by College

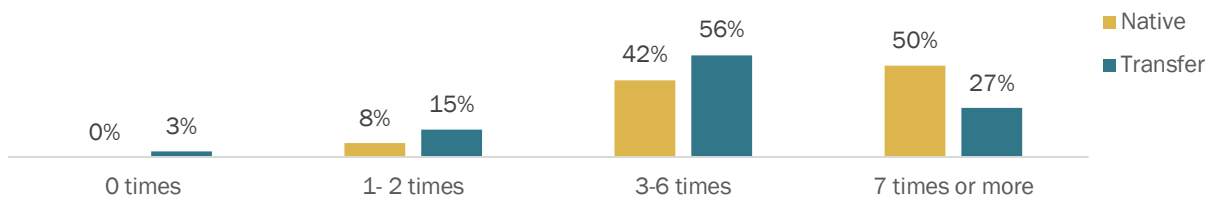
How many times have you met in person with an academic advisor during your time at Mason?

	0	1–2	3–6	7 or more
Overall (n=1583) ¹	2%	12%	49%	38%
CVPA (n=69)	0%	3%	46%	51%
COS (n=159)	4%	11%	40%	46%
S-CAR (n=21)	0%	0%	33%	67%
CEHD (n=53)	0%	8%	43%	49%
CHHS (n=121)	5%	20%	54%	22%
CHSS (n=540)	1%	10%	47%	43%
Schar (n=63)	0%	8%	54%	38%
Business (n=253)	2%	18%	55%	25%
Volgenau (n=305)	0%	12%	54%	34%



¹ Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n. Significant at $p < .001$, Chi-square (2-sided).

Figure 2. Meeting with Academic Advisor: by Transfer Status



Based on 1,568 respondents (native=729, transfer=839). Significant at $p < .001$, Chi-square (2-sided).

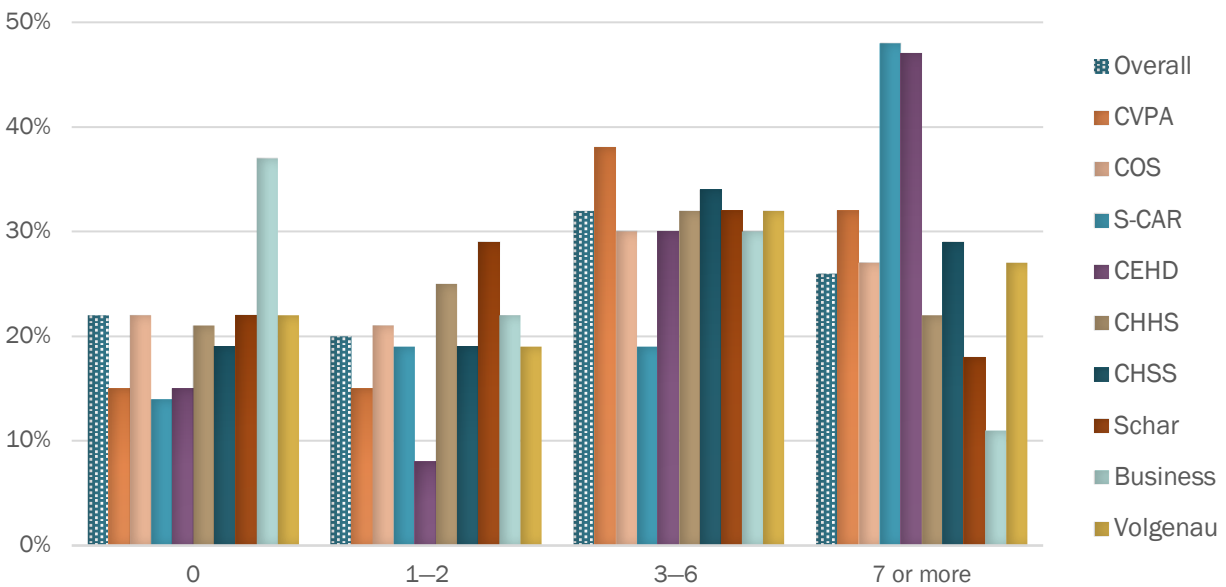
Contacting Academic Advisors by Phone, Email, or Skype

- Overall, one-third of the students contacted academic advisors 3-6 times for help by phone, email, or Skype while they were at Mason; another 26% did so at least seven times (Table 2).
- Statistically significant variation emerged by college, with S-CAR and CEHD's students reporting significantly more frequent contact with academic advisors by phone, email, or Skype (e.g., 47-48% for 7 times or more, compared to 11-33% for other colleges/schools) (Table 2).

Table 2 and Figure 3: Contacting Academic Advisors (Not in Person): Overall and by College

How many times have you consulted with an academic advisor by phone, email, or Skype?

	0	1–2	3–6	7 or more
Overall (n=1581) ¹	22%	20%	32%	26%
CVPA (n=68)	15%	15%	38%	32%
COS (n=159)	22%	21%	30%	27%
S-CAR (n=21)	14%	19%	19%	48%
CEHD (n=53)	15%	8%	30%	47%
CHHS (n=121)	21%	25%	32%	22%
CHSS (n=540)	19%	19%	34%	29%
Schar (n=63)	22%	29%	32%	18%
Business (n=252)	37%	22%	30%	11%
Volgenau (n=305)	22%	19%	32%	27%



¹Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n. Significant at $p < .001$, Chi-square (2-sided).

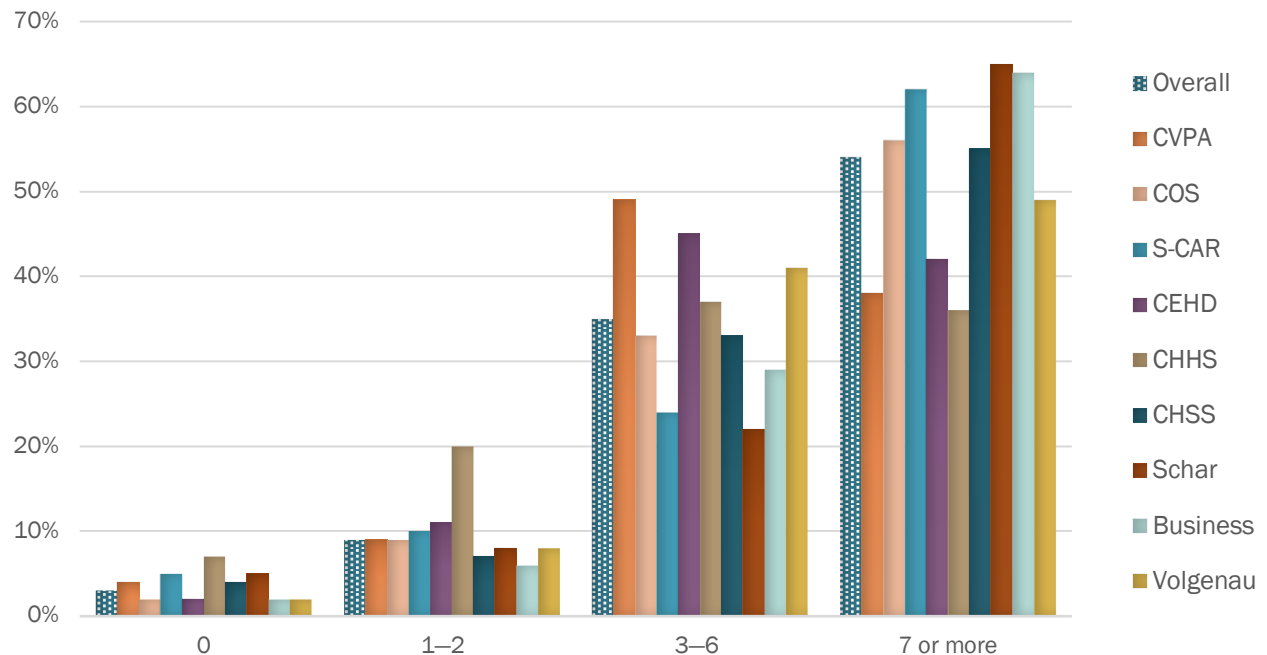
Using Degree Works in the Senior Year

- Overall, over one-half of the students (54%) used Degree Works at least seven times during their last year at Mason; another one-third did so 3-6 times (Table 3 and Figure 4).
- Statistically significant variation emerged by college, with Schar, Business, and S-CAR's students reporting more frequent use of Degree Works during their last year at Mason (e.g., 62-65% for 7 times or more, compared to 36-56% for other colleges/schools) (Table 3 and Figure 4).

Table 3 and Figure 4: Using Degree Works during Last Year at Mason: Overall and by College

How many times have you used Degree Works during your last year at Mason?

	0	1–2	3–6	7 or more
Overall (n=1582) ¹	3%	9%	35%	54%
CVPA (n=68)	4%	9%	49%	38%
COS (n=159)	2%	9%	33%	56%
S-CAR (n=21)	5%	10%	24%	62%
CEHD (n=53)	2%	11%	45%	42%
CHHS (n=121)	7%	20%	37%	36%
CHSS (n=540)	4%	7%	33%	55%
Schar (n=63)	5%	8%	22%	65%
Business (n=253)	2%	6%	29%	64%
Volgenau (n=305)	2%	8%	41%	49%

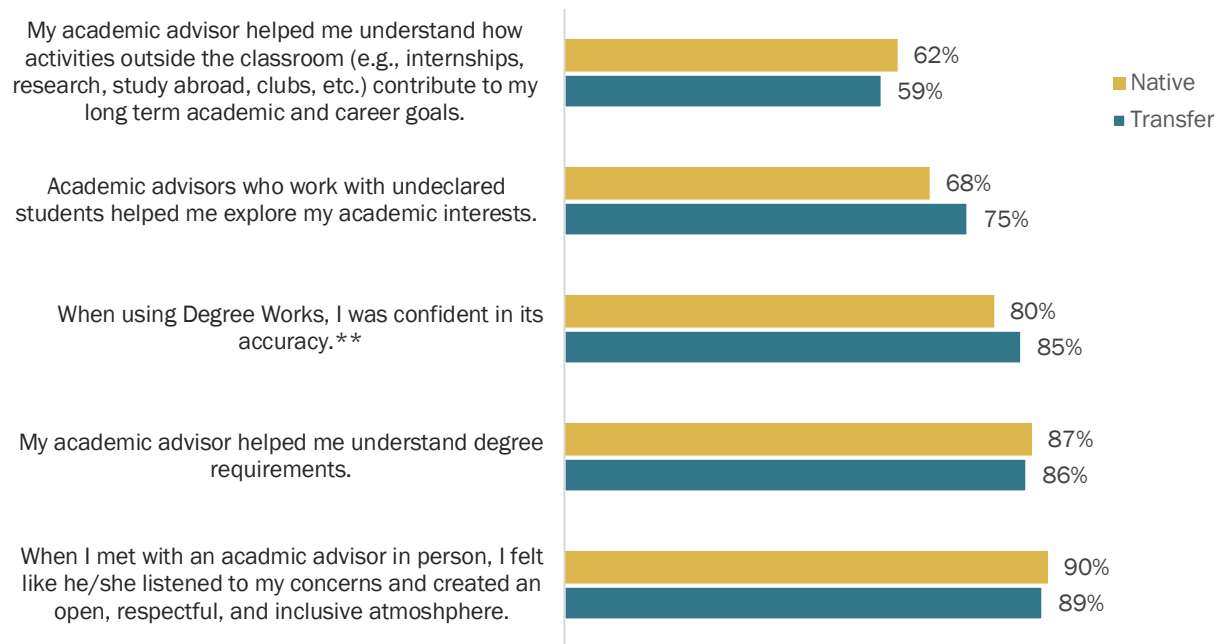


¹Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n. Significant at $p < .001$, Chi-square (2-sided).

Perception of Academic Advising

- The majority of the graduates (over 86%) strongly agreed or agreed that academic advisors helped them understand degree requirements and provided a caring and positive atmosphere when meeting with students (Figure 5).
- 85% of transfer students were confident in the accuracy of Degree Works, a significantly higher rate compared to 80% of their native peers (Figure 5).
- Transfer students were also more likely to appreciate the guidance from advisors in helping them explore their academic interests than native students (75% vs. 68%, respectively) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Perception of Academic Advising by Transfer Status



Percentages are for “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” combined (“N/A or don’t know” were excluded from the calculation). Based on students who responded to these questions. N for native = 344-715; N for transfer = 399-806. ** $p < .01$, t-test (two-tailed).

Academic Advising and Student Satisfaction

- In general, students who met with academic advisors more frequently were more likely to report satisfaction with their Mason experience, particularly in terms of *academic advising*, career support from faculty and staff, and mentoring (Table 4).
- For example, students who had met with academic advisors at least seven times while they were at Mason gave higher rating on most satisfaction measures than their peers who never met or met less frequently with academic advisors (Table 4).

Table 4. Student Satisfaction by Frequency of Meeting with Academic Advisors

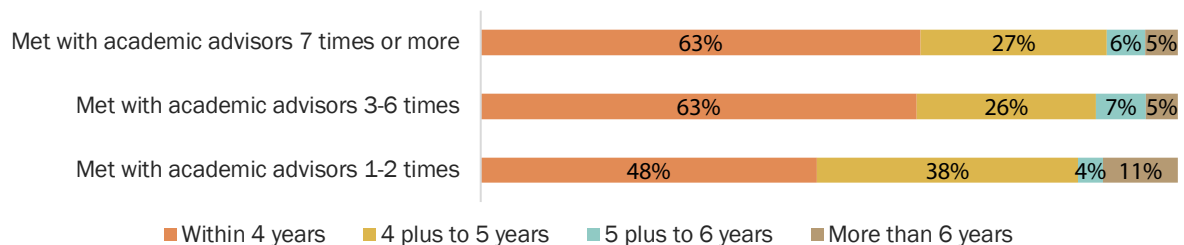
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your education at Mason?	Times Meeting with Academic Advisor				Sig.	Post Hoc Comparison
	0 (1)	1-2 (2)	3-6 (3)	>=7 (4)		
Sense of belonging at Mason	2.83	2.85	3.02	3.05	*	4>2; 3>2
Overall Mason experience	2.91	2.97	3.13	3.13	*	4>2; 3>2
Education you received in your major	3.13	3.15	3.26	3.32	*	4>2
Academic advising	2.48	2.53	3.12	3.30	***	4>1,2,3; 3>1,2
Your level of involvement in campus activities	2.74	2.63	2.81	2.90	**	4>2,3; 3>2
Career support from faculty and staff	2.35	2.58	2.86	2.94	***	4>1,2; 3>1,2
Preparation for work	2.52	2.78	2.95	2.98	**	4>1,2; 3>1,2
Preparation for post-baccalaureate study	2.57	2.78	2.90	2.98	**	4>1,2,3; 3>1
Mentoring	2.61	2.56	2.79	2.92	***	4>2,3; 3>2
Overall quality of course instruction	3.13	3.04	3.17	3.21	*	4>2; 3>2
If you were to do it all over again, would you attend George Mason University? ¹	2.91	2.99	3.15	3.13		4>2; 3>2

¹Rating scale: 1 (Definitely Not) to 4 (Definitely Yes); rating scale for other satisfaction measures: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied). Numbers represent averages. Based on students who responded to these questions. N for 0 times: 23; N for 1-2 times: 175-179; N for 3-6 times: 746-756; N for >=7 times: 581-584. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, ANOVA.

Academic Advising and Time-to-Degree

- The frequency of meeting with academic advisors is associated with time-to-degree. In general, students who met with academic advisors more frequently graduated within 4 years at a higher rate (63%) than those who used the academic advising service less frequently (48% for meeting 1-2 times) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Time-to-Degree by Frequency of Meeting with Academic Advisors



Based on 726 respondents who were initially enrolled at Mason as first-time freshmen and who responded to the question about how frequently they had met with academic advisor in person. N for 1-2 times: 56; N for 3-6 times: 307; N for >=7 times: 363. The "Met with academic advisors 0 times" category was excluded from the analysis due to small n (1).