

# The complexities of instituting academic advising in the Faculty of Health Sciences: An educational perspective



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Office of Student Support



# OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT (OSS)



The OSS offers the following services to all students:

Academic support  
Extra time applications  
Learning Excellence skills  
Individual/Group counselling  
Career advice

Accommodation referrals  
Faculty liaison services  
Leave of absence  
Referrals to Campus Health Clinic  
Deferred exam applications

One-to-one sessions  
Financial advice  
Mentoring  
Reading skills  
Writing skills



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Please explore the Office of Student Support Wits-e website (OSS 2018 tab in SAKAI) at <https://elearn.wits.ac.za/home/>

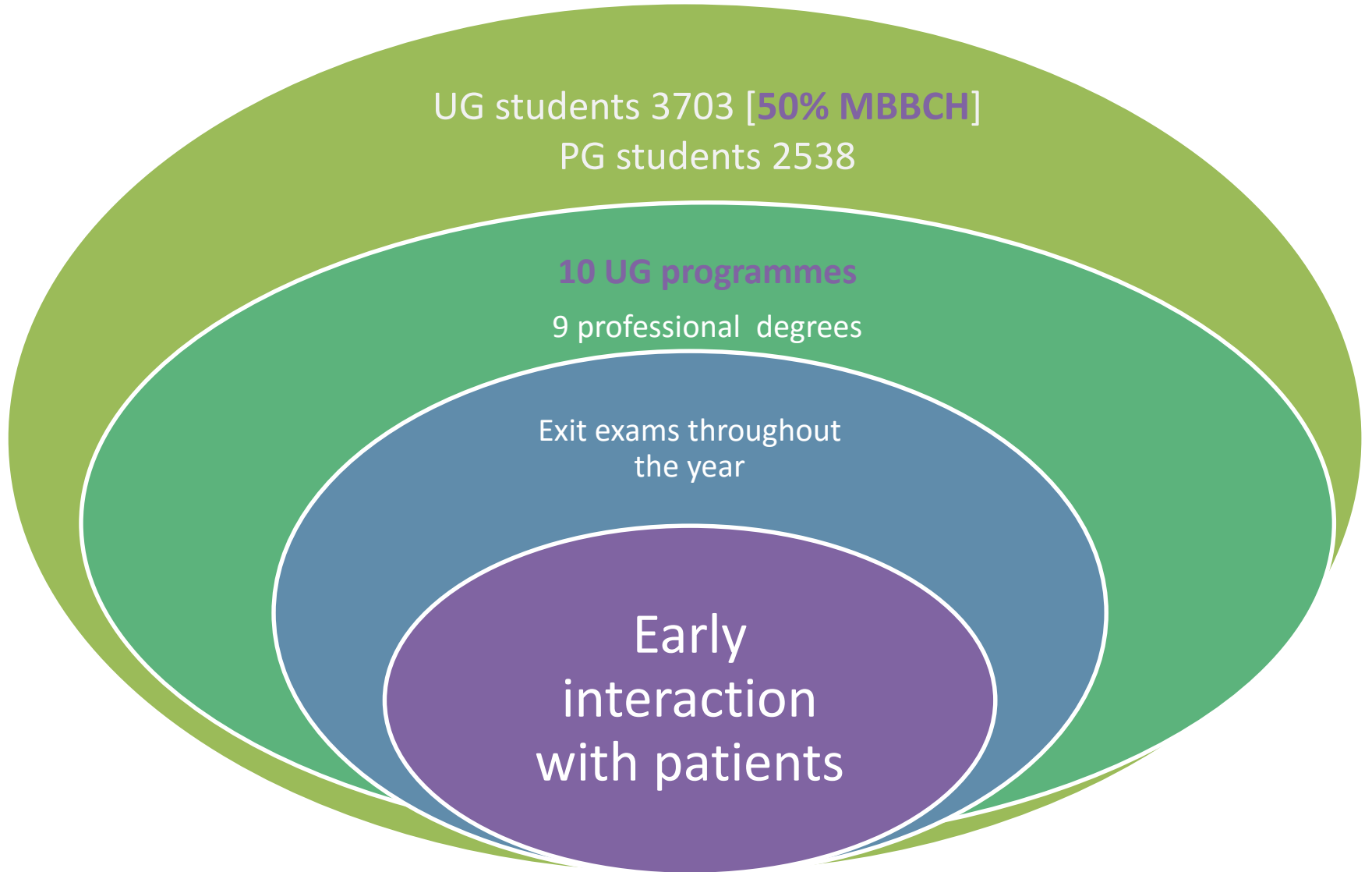
# Faculty of Health Sciences

UG students 3703 [**50% MBBCH**]  
PG students 2538

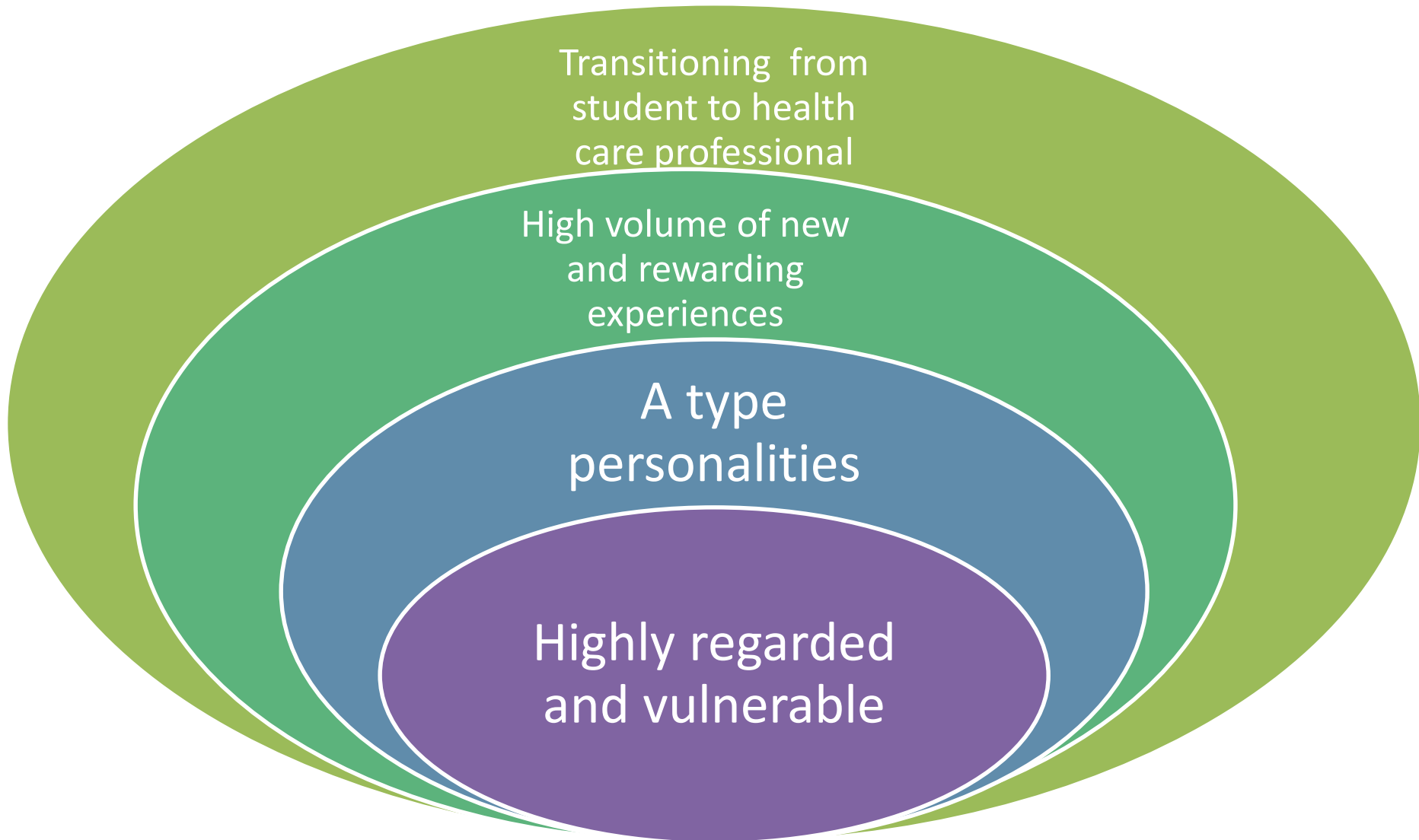
**10 UG programmes**  
9 professional degrees

Exit exams throughout  
the year

Early  
interaction  
with patients



# Faculty of Health Sciences



# *Introduction*

- Academic advising (AA) as a systematic process is facilitated through student-advisor engagement with the intention of supporting a student to achieve educational outcomes by interacting and interfacing with the curriculum, pedagogy and stated learning outcomes using both institutional and community resources<sup>1, 2</sup>.

1. Crookston, B. B. (1972). A developmental view of academic advising as teaching. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 13, 12–17.

2. Bridgen , S. (2017) .Using Systems Theory to Understand the Identity of Academic Advising: A Case Study. *NACADA Journal*, 37 (2), 9-20. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-15-038>

# *Introduction (cont'd)*


- According to O'Banion, an academic advisor serves as a teacher and guide and, adopts an integrative approach<sup>3</sup>. AA is the intersection of the teaching and learning experience<sup>4</sup>.
- Academic advising is considered a critical component to the success of higher education.

3. O'Banion, T. (1972). An academic advising model. *Junior College Journal*, 42( 6), 62–69.

4. Miller, MA and Alberts, B. (1994). Developmental Advising: Where Teaching and Learning Intersect. *NACADA Journal*: Fall, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 43-45. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-14.2.43>

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- 
- Improves throughput rates
  - Reduces attrition rates

- Academic advising is considered a critical component to the success of higher education<sup>5</sup>.

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5. Glennen et al. (1996) How Advising and Retention of Students Improves Fiscal Stability. *NACADA Journal*: Spring, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 38-41. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-16.1.38>

# *Introduction (cont'd)*

**Academic Advising is in that regard developmental<sup>1</sup>.**

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## Academic Advising is in that regard developmental<sup>1</sup>.

- Assists students in the clarification of their life/career goals
- Development of educational plans for the realization of these goals.

### OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT: LEARNING EXCELLENCE LECTURERS

Staff Member	Programme
<b>Dr Constance Khupe</b> Email: <a href="mailto:Constance.Khupe@wits.ac.za">Constance.Khupe@wits.ac.za</a> Tel: 011 717 2334	Medicine
	Nursing
	Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice
	Bachelor of Health Sciences (Biomedical Sciences)
	Bachelor of Health Sciences (Biokinetics)
<b>Ms. Gila Carter</b> Email: <a href="mailto:Gila.Carter@wits.ac.za">Gila.Carter@wits.ac.za</a> Tel: 011 717 2211	Pharmacy
	Dentistry
	Bachelor of Oral Health Sciences
	Occupational Therapy
	Physiotherapy

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- Concerned about academic life of student and specifies alternatives and indicates best choice when student faces difficult decisions.
- Monitors academic progress through files and records.

6. Jahangard et al. (2017). Prediction of educational achievement based on learning styles mediated by academic self-efficacy: a case study on the students of medical professionals in Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Iran.

[Strides in Development of Medical Education 2017 , Volume 14 , Number 1;](#)

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## **Intrusive<sup>7</sup>**

- Proactive

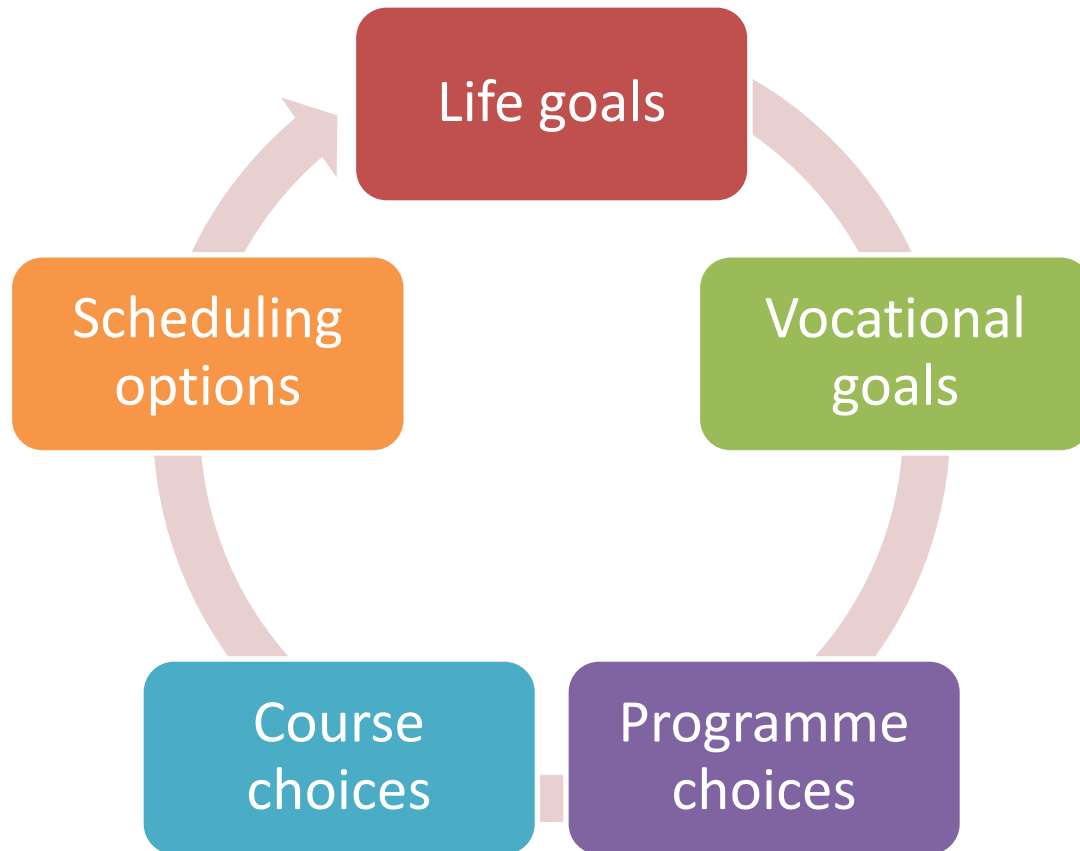
*7. Schwebel et al., (2008) Efficacy of Intrusively Advising First-Year Students via Frequent Reminders for Advising Appointments. NACADA Journal: Fall, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 28-32.*

## *Objective:*

- This paper aims to explore the five elements of O'Banion's 1972 model by reflecting on components of academic advising that derived learning outcomes for health sciences students.

# O'Banion Model

Lecturer and student explore goals and choices



# Methodology

- During the 2017 academic year, health sciences students [n=924] presented to the Head of Student Support for one on one meetings.
  - The majority were referred by either their peers, by a course coordinator or Head of Department [n=553]. Readmitted students [n=251] were asked to reflect on their experiences.
  - The remaining consultations [n=120] comprised a range of self-initiated visits that ranged from requests for career counselling to students who presented in a mental health crisis.
  - Key points were noted during each consultation.
  - Comprehensive individual reports were finalized at the end of the day.
  - An overview of the key findings is presented from an educational perspective.
- **Readmitted students n= 251**

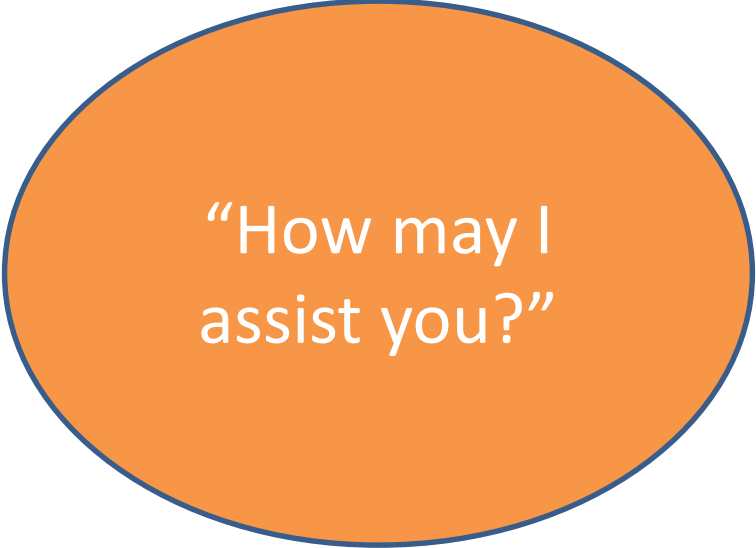


“Tell me about  
2016.”

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- **Referrals n= 553**
- **Self Initiated n= 120**



“How may I assist you?”



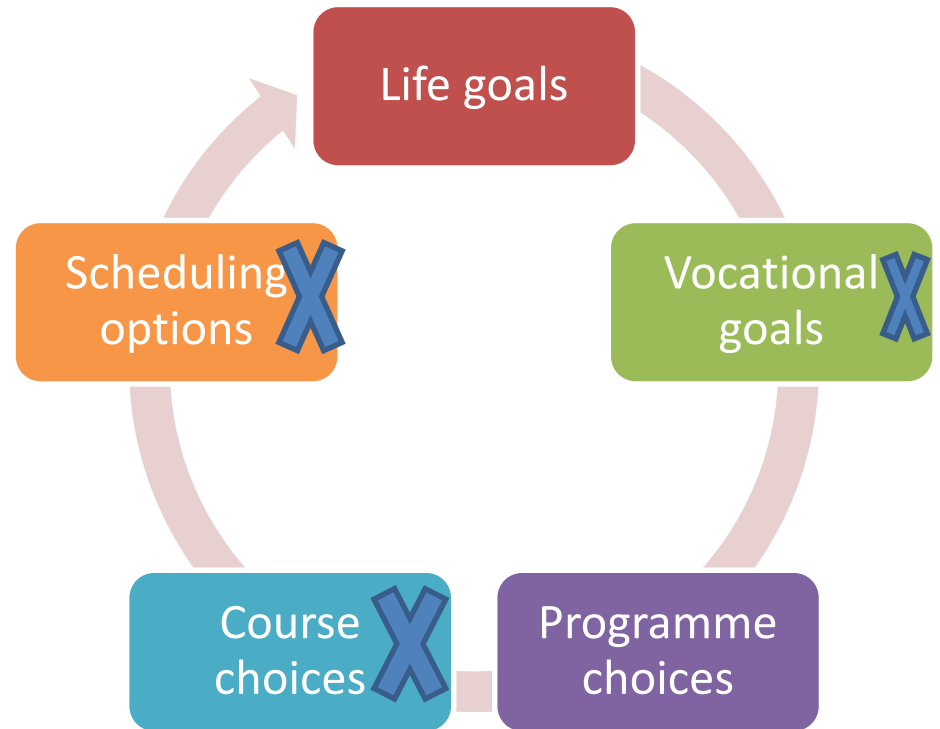
# Key Findings

# #FeesMustFall

- *“I was in the bus that caught fire. We were trapped inside...”*
- *“I’m in 2<sup>nd</sup> year. This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Wits. I missed notice for my supplementary exams.”*
- *“I am staying off campus. I lost my funding.”*
- *“I do not have a phone. I was mugged on the way home.”*

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# Academic Record

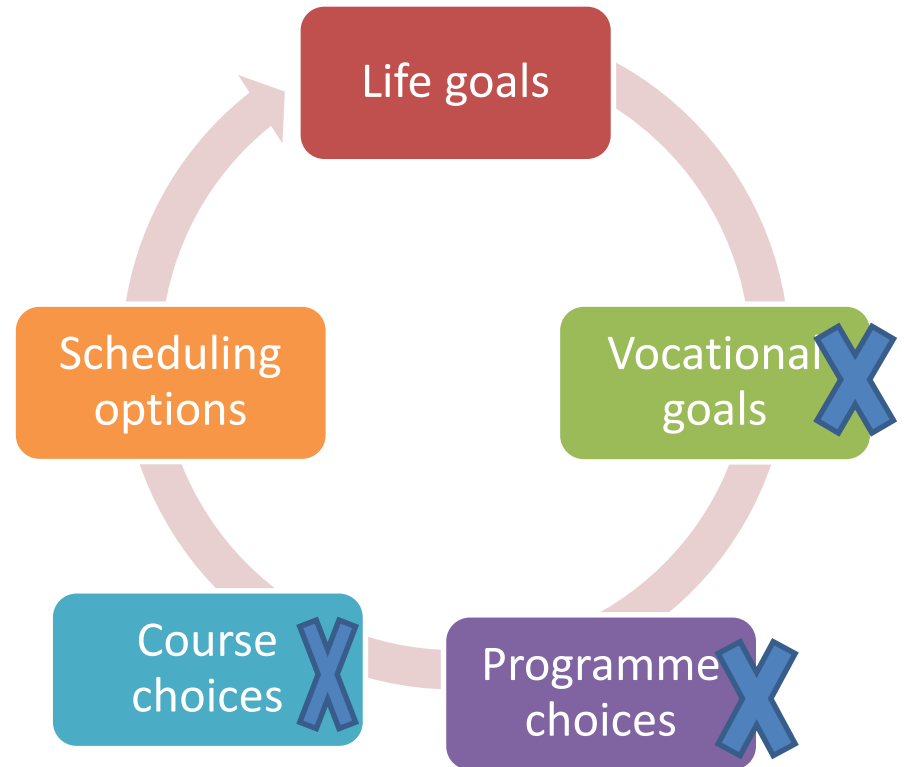
## Physics

- *“I did not do physics in matric. I have to repeat physics and chemistry.”*
- *“I had to repeat APES in 1<sup>st</sup> year. Now I’m repeating Anatomy for the second time.”*

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# Student Athletes

## Role conflict

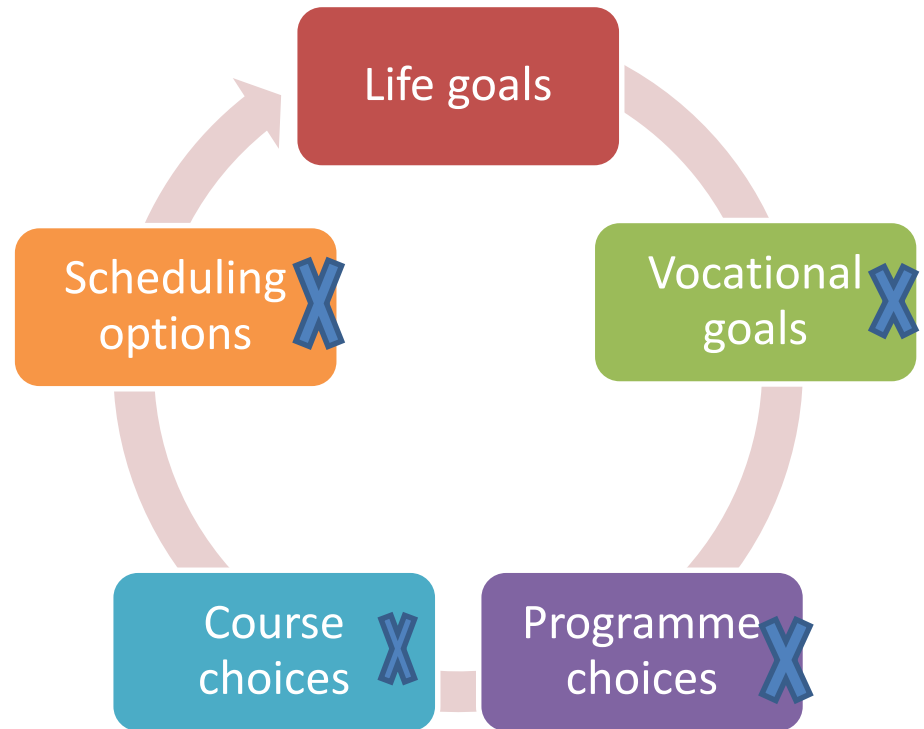
- *“I struggle to balance the demands of my life. My coach wants me to attend all my training sessions. Sometimes our matches are out of town and I end up missing classes.”*

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# Occupationally Acquired Infections

Unavoidable risk and implications of acquiring workplace infections,

- Needle stick injuries
- TB
- Chicken pox
- Typhoid

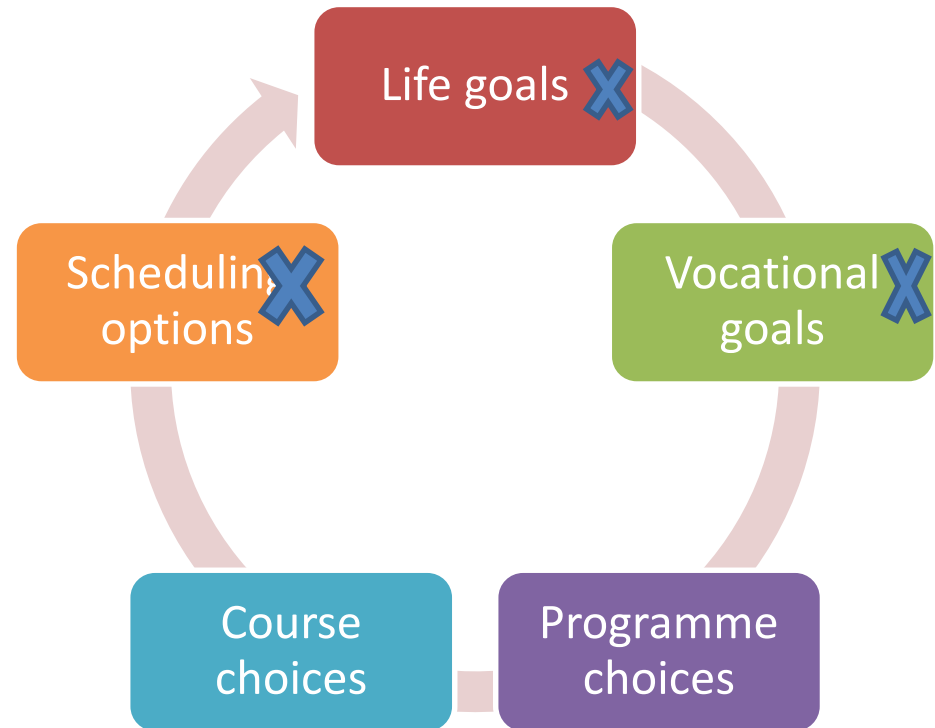
van der Westhuizen, H, & Dramowski, A. (2017). When students become patients: TB disease among medical undergraduates in Cape Town, South Africa. *SAMJ: South African Medical Journal*, 107(6), 475-479. <https://dx.doi.org/10.7196/samj.2017.v107i6.12260>



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# Familial Influence

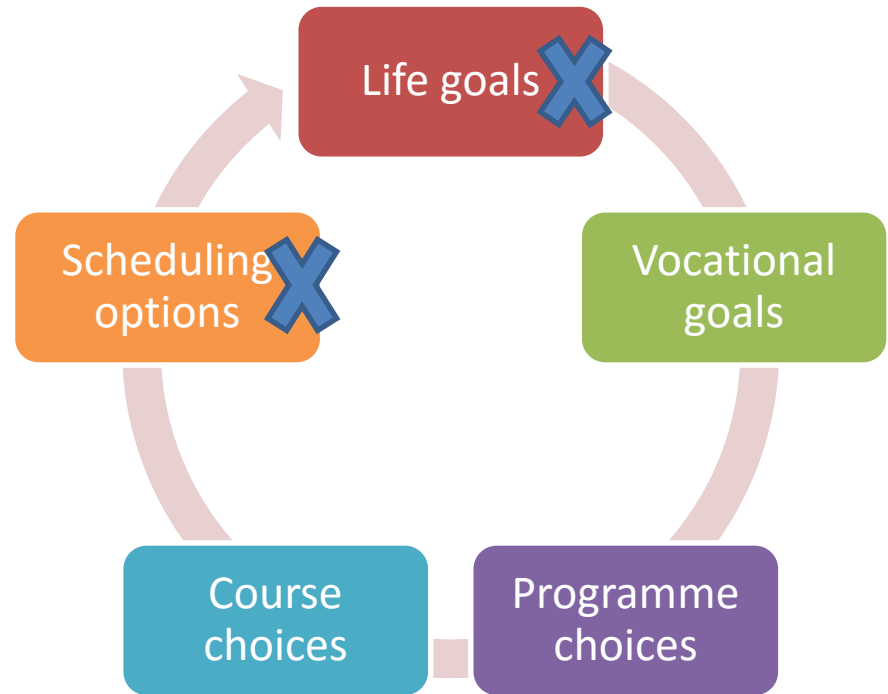
- *“I know my son. I love him. I have his student number...I just want him to marry a nice Christian girl...but this...”*
- *“ I live in this big house. I am not allowed to leave the house to visit my friends. I cut myself whenever I feel alone. I’m on medical aid but I do not want my parents to know. They do not believe in mental illness.”*

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# Career Advice

*“I do not enjoy my degree.”*

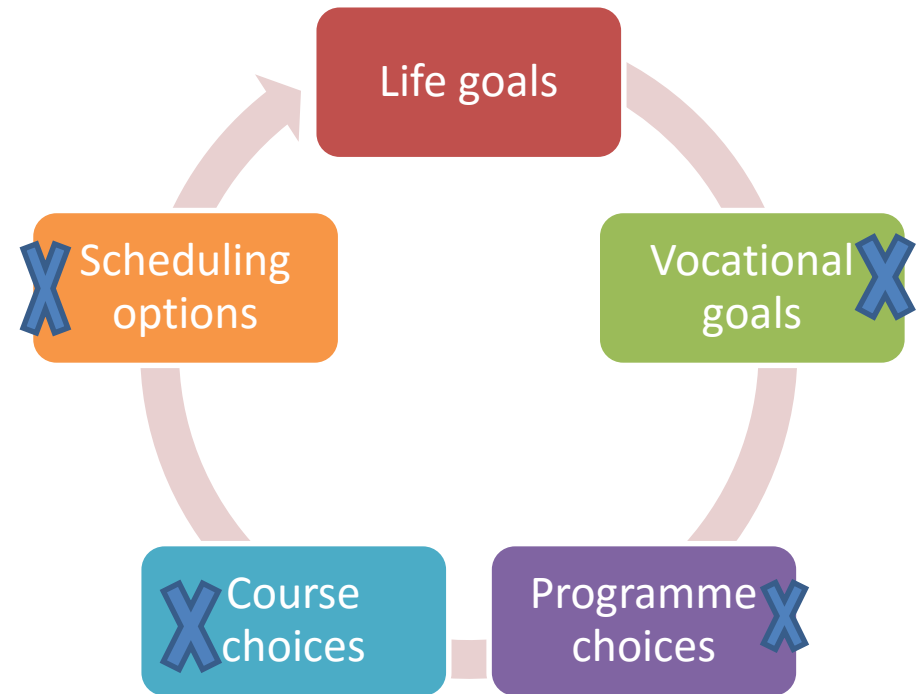
*“I wanted to do law /music  
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Simmons, AN. (2008). A Reliable Sounding Board: Parent Involvement in Students' Academic and Career Decision Making. NACADA Journal: Fall, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 33-43.  
<https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-28.2.33>

# Career Advice

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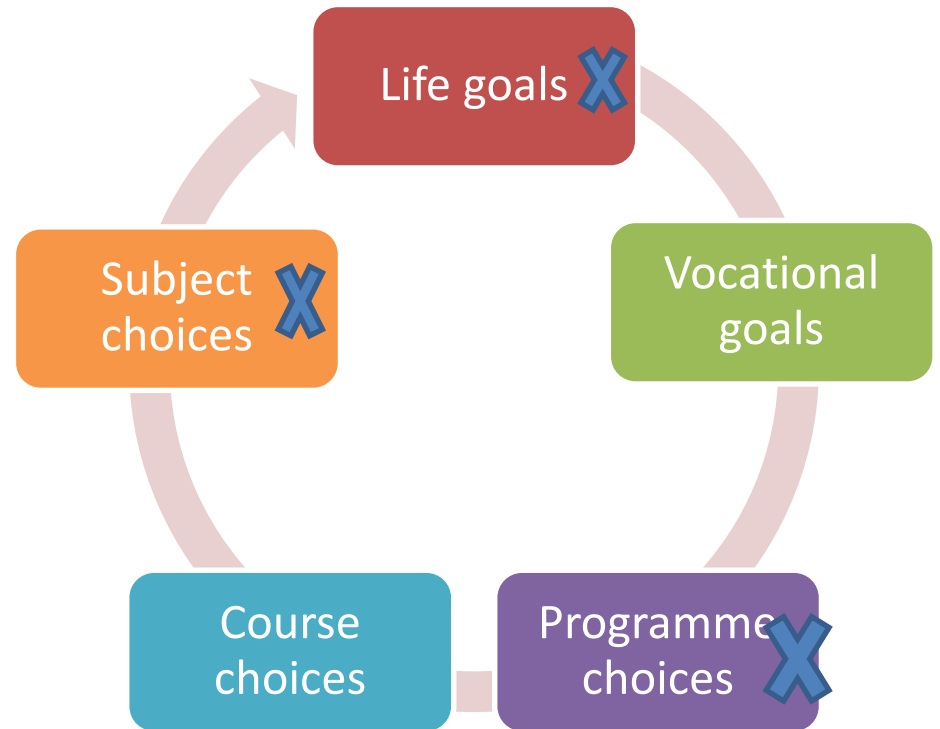
# Guiding Conversation

- *“EDD is end of the month. I’m planning to take 4 days off.”*
- *“My roommate threatened to kill me.”*

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# Benefits of Academic Advising

- For each student, at least 3-5 elements were explored in consultations that ranged from
  - 2-4 sessions for readmitted (at risk) students and, at least 1-6 sessions for referred students and those in crisis.
- At risk students and those who were referred
  - realized academic and personal benefits when a prescriptive approach of AA was implemented.
- Students in crisis
  - realized benefits when an intrusive approach was adopted.
- Inform faculty processes
  - Admission criteria
  - Pull down courses



# Conclusion

- AA is critical in assisting students realize the goals of learning.
- Life history of a student presenting at risk or in crisis was identified as a non-academic marker of performance.
- AA is not a singularly enacted intervention.
- It does require institutional investment.

- **English: Thank you**  
**Afrikaans: Dankie**  
**IsiNdebele: Ngiyathokoza**  
**Sesotho: Ke a leboha**  
**Northern Sotho: Ke a leboga**  
**Setswana: Ke a leboga**  
**SiSwati: Siyabonga**  
**Xitsonga: Inkomu**  
**Tshivenda: Ndo livhuwa / Ro livhuwa**  
**IsiXhosa: Enkosi**  
**IsiZulu: Ngiyabonga**

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