

# **KESSLER**

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# SCHOLARS

## **One-On-One Staff-Scholar Meetings Resource Guide**

This resource guide is intended to provide resources and information to guide one-on-one meetings between professional staff and Kessler Scholars. We encourage you to adapt and include campus-specific content as needed.

**Overview:** One-on-one meetings between a Kessler Scholars staff member and individual students are intended to serve as deliberate, structured conversations designed to provide students with proactive support, promote learning, growth, and development, and to build rapport with Kessler Scholars staff. These meetings do not replace student engagement with designated academic advisors but are instead designed to be an additional point of support by a trusted professional who is closely familiar with the student's background and goals. Meetings should be planned in advance and Kessler Scholars staff should create a framework to guide these conversations. When possible, programs are encouraged to designate a single staff member to serve as a primary point of contact—a go-to person for each student—who proactively reaches out to the student, understands their academic and personal strengths, needs, and goals, and tracks their academic journey and engagement in the program. In addition to structured one-on-one meetings with individual students, Kessler Scholars staff members are also encouraged to hold regular office hours or drop-in sessions to meet informally with students on an as-needed basis.

**Meeting Frequency:** We recommend that each Kessler Scholar participate in two individualized meetings per semester or quarter. Meetings with first-year Kessler Scholars or students who need additional support may be more frequent. As students progress through their collegiate journey, one-on-one meetings may be less frequent, with one meeting required per semester. Individual meetings with Kessler Scholars staff and students typically are scheduled for 30- or 60-minute blocks.

**Meeting Content:** Typically, one-on-one meetings provide an opportunity to discuss students' academic, social, and personal development and to reflect on progress toward meeting goals in each of those areas. These meetings also enable staff members to monitor students' academic progress, address any academic,

personal, or financial challenges they may be facing, and check-in on Kessler-related program requirements.

We encourage you to tailor the content of one-on-one meetings with students based on their individual needs and interests. Additionally, meetings should cover timely topics relevant to their collegiate journey, as suggested in the table below:

	First-Year Students	Upper-Level Students
<b>Focus</b>	Student’s development of self-efficacy and their ability to make sound decisions	Combination of academic and professional advising
<b>Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide proactive and personal attention, with structured opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection</li> <li>• Build collaborative and trusting relationships</li> <li>• Normalize academic challenges</li> <li>• Help students build community and gain a sense of belonging</li> <li>• Academic and social integration: awareness of campus resources and opportunities to get involved.</li> <li>• Build social and cultural capital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support for setting goals and exploring career and post-graduation options</li> <li>• Connect students to opportunities and resources to enrich their college experience (e.g., study abroad, tutoring, service learning)</li> <li>• Provide information about fellowship, internships, and graduate school opportunities</li> </ul>

Example one-on-one meeting guidance from partner campuses:

- [Syracuse University: Kessler Staff 1-on-1 Meetings Guide- Spring All.pdf](#)
- [University of Michigan: Differentiated Talk Track by Year.pdf](#)

**Key Ingredients for Successful One-On-One Meetings:**

- **Building Trust:** Building trust with the Kessler Scholars you work with is integral to the success of one-on-one meetings. Creating a positive and warm climate can help ensure students are comfortable, open, and honest in their interactions with program staff. Building trust takes time. Each meeting you have with a student is an opportunity to create an environment of trust, where you get to know the student and the student is able to get to know

you. Communicating with a student that they have permission to be themselves in the meeting, that what they share with you will be held in confidence (within legal limits for mandated reporting), and that you are there to support them can go a long way towards establishing trust and rapport.

- **Active Listening:** Active listening is foundational for building trust and connection between you and a student. It is a communication technique that conveys that you are deeply listening to what students have to say, withholding judgment, seeking to understand their perspectives and experiences, and responding with empathy. Here are some [Active Listening Sentence Stems](#) that communicate to a student that you are actively engaged in the conversation. This [article from the Center for Creative Leadership](#) provides additional guidance on active listening skills.
- **Conversation Clarity:** Setting a clear agenda for the conversation with students can ensure that one-on-one meetings are a good use of everyone's time and that students feel heard and find value in the conversation. You might consider asking students to complete a brief survey or goal setting sheet, such as [this example from Syracuse University](#), ahead of each meeting to ask them what they want to focus the conversation on or spending the first five minutes of the meeting prioritizing topics for conversation. It is important for both you and the student to know what the overarching meeting goals are in order to have a productive conversation.
- **Asking Empowering Questions:** Empowering questions are open-ended questions that invite further exploration and deeper engagement. In this [Forbes article](#) on Empowering Questions, Joni Fedders, certified Leadership Coach, explains, "When we frame questions that require reflection, we enable and empower people to think and express their thoughts, emotions, fears, and ideas." When helping students navigate a difficult situation, it is easy to fall into a habit of giving advice and telling the student what to do to address the problem. However, part of the goal of one-on-one meetings is helping Kessler Scholars to learn and grow. Empowering questions encourage a productive dialogue and help students realize they have the power to be their own advocate and successfully address any challenges they may be facing. Rather than tell students the answer or offering advice on how to handle an issue or problem, offer to help them discover how they can figure out the answer themselves.

- **Ending with an Action Plan:** As you wrap up your one-on-one meetings with Kessler Scholars, we suggest you work with students to create an action plan for areas they may want to focus on before your next meeting. Helping the student think about next steps and asking them to commit to an action plan will ensure that they put into practice what they learned during the session. You might consider concluding your meeting with these closing questions:
  - Was your agenda for today’s meeting successfully met?
  - Was there a topic you wanted to discuss today but we did not get an opportunity to address?
  - What should we change or do differently the next time we come together for a one-on-one meeting?
  - What are some of the best strategies that we talked about during today’s meeting that you think you would like to try and use before our next meeting?
  - What are your next steps? What do you need to do and/or who do you need to talk to next?
- **Documentation and Follow-Up:** After one-on-one meetings with Kessler Scholars, it is important to document meeting attendance and summarize your discussion. We encourage you to track one-on-one meetings with Kessler Scholars. We also suggest you keep running notes from these meetings so you can easily recall previous conversations, building from one meeting to the next, and note any follow-up items. For example, if your one-on-one meeting with a student focuses on applying for summer internships, then you might follow up with the student in a week or two with information about a resume workshop or job fair that is being offered by the Career Center on campus or share a relevant internship job posting with them that may be of interest. Establishing internal tracking systems is important to ensure Kessler Scholars are meeting program requirements and getting the support they need throughout their college career.

### Conversation Starters

We recommend you begin your one-on-one meetings with a few framing questions to begin the conversation. Here are some example questions to guide your discussion:

- How are *you* today?
- What is going well for you this week?
- What would you like to prioritize during our meeting today?
- What would you like to achieve by the end of our conversation?

- Do you have any questions or concerns that you want to share before we get started?
- If we only have two areas today to focus on, what topics would you feel most helpful to discuss and why?
- What have been your most recent accomplishments? And in what areas do you feel like you might be struggling?

#### **Additional Resources:**

- This three-part blog series produced by InsideTrack discusses the similarities and differences between advising, coaching, mentoring, and counseling, providing helpful example scenarios of conversational approaches with students.
  - [Part 1 - Coaching vs. Advising](#)
  - [Part 2 - Coaching vs. Mentoring](#)
  - [Part 3 - Coaching vs. Counseling](#)
- This one-page handout from the Varga Group provides guidance on [strengths-based versus deficit-based thinking](#). We encourage you in your one-on-ones with students to adopt an assets-based approach that focuses on building from students' existing strengths, assessing what is working well, and empowering students to problem solve and learn new skills.
- This [brief article](#) published by NACADA discussed a model of advising as coaching and offers helpful discussion questions to integrate into one-on-one meetings with students.