



iSchool Advising Chatbot

AdvisrLab

Team Intro - AdvisrLab

Project Name: iSchool Advising AI Chatbot

Sponsor: Information School



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Why do we need an AI chatbot for iSchool advising?

From Advisors' perspective...

- A high volume of inquiries of routine questions
- Consumes time for answering complex issues
- Demand for advising immediately exceeds capacity of human staff
= creation of AI chatbot idea

Validating with Student Survey Data (n=29)

- **58%** of students would use an AI agent for **immediate answer**
- Another **58%** need help **outside of business hours or on weekends**
- **46%** of students (12/26) reported **they "Always" or "Often" avoid asking an advising question** because of social fears

Problem Statement

How might UW iSchool Undergraduates get timely and accurate access to advising information so they can reduce uncertainty and enhance their overall academic success?



Key research insights

Literature Review

- Studies have shown that students trust AI more when it provides direct citation
- The **Dawood** literature review found that chatbots create a "safe space" for students who may feel intimidated by human advisors.

Market Research

- Students want a bot that feels like a mentor/peer mentor, not a search engine.
- Providing support in multiple languages (especially for international MSIM/MLIS students) removes a significant barrier to "Institutional Capital" and improves equity.

User Research

- **70%** of students (16/23) use AI agents "Always," "Often," or "Sometimes" for academic assistance
- However, over **54%** of those users (12/22) report that the AI agent only provides an effective answer **"Sometimes"**

Personas



Lucy

- first-generation student
- balancing a strict commute and a part-time job

Needs Summary:

- officially cited answers
- 24/7 access
- Eliminate the anxiety
- Avoid looking for conflicting information online
- Reduce time going through information resource sites



Omar

- transfer student
- Navigating graduation requirement and transfer credit issue

Needs Summary:

- centralized and reliable system
- Navigate simple advising questions
- escalation to a human advisor
- Productive and time-saving system

Key Concepts

Automated Responses

Provides quick, accurate answers to routine student inquiries.

Source Citations

Each response includes citations from credible sources.

Central Database

A centralized "Truth Database" guarantees consistent and up-to-date advising information.

Human Escalation

Complex inquiries are escalated to human advisors.

Friendly Tone

The chatbot engages users with a warm, friendly tone.

MVP Definition

Feature	Status
Answer 40+ common FAQs	Live
Citations to official sources	Live
Escalation to advisors	Live
UW Purple AI integration	Live
Knowledge base from advisor Excel	Live

Not in MVP (future):

- Live course schedule integration
- Advisor analytics dashboard

Concept Validation

We validated our advising chatbot prototype through user testing with representative students.

- **Students want:**

- quick, direct answers to advising questions
- prefer a simple conversational interface over navigating advising pages.

- **Lessons learned from testing:**

- Users were **satisfied with fast responses**
- but reported frustration when bot gave out **inaccurate** answers
- or when the chatbot's response included **courses that are rarely offered**.

- **Design direction:**

- We prioritized **clearer and accurate** responses by structuring our database to make it more interpretable for agents.
- incorporating a non-netid restricted quarter schedule to make sure classes are relevant

Solution approach / key features

- Key Features:
 - Chat Interface
 - Response with citation
 - Escalation message

Chat Interface

N

"What are the upper division core requirements?"

 **AdvisrLab Beta1**

The Upper Division Core requirements for Informatics include:

 **Required courses:**

- **INFO 300** – Research Methods
- **INFO 340** – Client-Side Development
- **INFO 360** – Design Methods
- **INFO 380** – Product and Information Systems Management

 **Important Notes:**

- A minimum grade of **2.0** is required for all upper division core courses.
- These courses must be completed before starting the Capstone requirement.

User asks about graduation requirements

N

"Do I have to take CSE 373, or can I take something else?"

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You do not have to take CSE 373 specifically. For the "Developing IT" requirement in the Informatics major, you can choose one of the following courses:

 **Options:**

- **CSE 373** – Data Structures and Algorithms
- **INFO 442** – Cooperative Software Development
- **INFO 443** – Software Development for Mobile Platforms

 **Important Note:**

- You only need to complete one of these courses to fulfill the requirement.

User asks about class alternatives

Response with citation

N

What quarters are INFO 490 offered in?

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INFO 490 is offered during **Winter quarter** as part of the Practical Capstone sequence. Students then continue with INFO 491 in **Spring quarter** to complete the capstone requirement.

 **Source:** Core Courses - Capstone_ Informatics Resource Site ¹

[1] [Core Courses - Capstone_ Informatics Resource Site.pdf](#)



Core Courses - Capstone_ Informatics Resource Site.pdf

1 / 13

100%

2/17/26, 9:50 AM

Core Courses - Capstone: Informatics Resource Site

Core Courses - Capstone

Capstone is a culminating experience that challenges you to use and demonstrate all the knowledge and skills you've learned in the Informatics program. Students can choose to complete one of three Capstone options below. All options require the same amount of work from students, 8 credits total, but involve different timelines and activities. All Informatics students are required to complete a Capstone to graduate — but which type you choose is up to you!

- **Practical Capstone (INFO 490/491)** in winter and spring,
- **Intensive Capstone (INFO 492)** in a quarter that it's offered, or
- **Research Capstone (INFO 493)** across the quarter(s) that you choose

The prerequisites for all capstone options are INFO 300, 340, 360 and 380 - students need to complete both courses before they are eligible to start capstone. The most common capstone option is the practical capstone (INFO 490/491), however, another option may be more suitable to you depending on your interests, desired timeline to graduation, and/or your post-graduation goals. Details and registration information for each option can be found in the tabs below.

Overview

The Practical Capstone is the "usual" capstone completed by most Informatics students — if someone just says "Capstone," this is what they are referring to. This capstone option focuses on developing a solution to an information problem in small groups of 4-5 students. Students do a wide range of projects, including designing new information experiences, analyzing an information system, devising new information workflows, and even bootstrapping startups (browse the [capstone archives \(https://ischool.uw.edu/capstone/projects/?q=&program=informatics&tag=&year=\)](https://ischool.uw.edu/capstone/projects/?q=&program=informatics&tag=&year=) for past projects).

This option is best for students interested in pursuing a technical career and/or going into industry following graduation.

During winter quarter, students will

- Finalize groups during the first week of the quarter
- Define and research their information problem
- Design, develop and validate the minimum viable product (MVP)
- Present the MVP

During spring quarter, students will

- Iterate the product (cycle #1)

https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1736489/pages/core-courses-capstone

1/13

Answer + source link

Escalation message

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I failed INFO 340 and I'm really stressed about graduating on time. What should I do?

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I'm sorry to hear you're feeling stressed. Failing INFO 340 can be challenging, but there are steps you can take to stay on track:

1. **Retake INFO 340:**

- You can retake the course to improve your grade. Only the most recent grade will count toward your GPA, although both grades will appear on your transcript.

2. **Plan Your Schedule:**

- Check when INFO 340 is offered next (likely every quarter) and prioritize enrolling in it.

3. **Consult an Advisor:**

- Schedule an appointment with an Informatics advisor to discuss your graduation timeline and options for staying on track. They can help you adjust your academic plan.

4. **Explore Other Options:**

- If retaking INFO 340 delays your capstone or other requirements, ask your advisor about alternative strategies, such as taking summer courses or adjusting your workload.

5. **Focus on Self-Care:**

- Academic stress can be overwhelming. Take breaks, seek support from friends or family, and consider reaching out to UW Counseling Services if needed.

 **Need personalized help?** Schedule an advising appointment: <https://ischool.uw.edu/advising-support#info>

Would you like me to connect you with a human advisor for further assistance?

Complex questions route to advisors

Live Demo

- <https://purple.uw.edu/chat/bd9cb063-4ced-4615-a210-5ced893d763a>

Ethical considerations

Our Values

- **Trust & accuracy:** Students make real academic decisions = correctness matters
- **Equity & access:** 24/7 access to exact information
- **Transparency:** Students should be able to verify the information.
- **Human-centered support:** We are not designing to replace human advisors.

Ethical Concerns

- **Misinformation / overconfidence**

Our approach to address the concerns

- **Grounded answers**
 - Use official iSchool materials
 - Avoids guessing when the information is not supported
- **Concise, structured responses**
 - Short responses in bullet points
 - End with a clear “next step” so students don’t get lost in long explanations.

Next steps for spring quarter

- **Challenges**

- No reliable, centralized knowledge base yet
- No Purple API/Limited sharing
- Hard to test with friends/users

- **Further the project**

- Expand the knowledge base using full ISchool documentation
- Improve UX: Make citations/links clearer

- **Next steps**

- Deploy a chat bot on the ISchool Advising webpage