Guide to Entering Comments
for City Tech Alerts

Comments are a critical step in submitting many alerts, as they give responding staff the details they need to prepare for outreach and make a supportive connection with students. Students receive a pre-drafted auto-response email that does NOT incorporate your comments. The alert should be a second step to pull in additional college support after you have made your own attempt to get in touch directly.

Comments also become part of the student's academic file; therefore, it's important that they be brief, factual, and include only appropriate information responding staff will need to know in order to serve the student.

In general, you should omit specific details about medical and mental health concerns, instructor conflicts, student conduct or legal issues, and family or relationship problems. When you're adding comments, ask yourself:

- Is this something the student would **WANT** others to know?
- Is this something another staff member **NEEDS** to know?
- Is this something it is within the **SCOPE** of my role to say?
- Are all the details based on **FACTS**?

Comments to include to help responding staff

Include date and type of last contact with a student

- *Student emailed on XX/XX to say they would miss the next class, but has now missed 3 with no further contact or response to emails.*

Include best contact information for the student or you as appropriate

- *Student can be reached on their cell phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx/responds most quickly to this email address name @domain.edu*
- *Please encourage student to visit my office hours on DAY from XX:XX-YY:YY in LOCATION to discuss.*

Include specific needs the student has expressed

- *Student said they needed a more reliable internet connection/a new device for working on assignments*
- *Student requested help downloading MS Office from CUNY's website*
- *Student expressed concern about this semester's tuition/the cost of supplies.*
- *Student mentioned a situation/emergency affecting their housing/family/finances*

Include brief and factual descriptions of what you have observed

- *Student has frequent connectivity issues during online class meetings*
- *Student seems to be having trouble using Blackboard's discussion board features*

- *Student has not purchased required knife set for class, despite acknowledging several reminders*

Include details about the kind of academic support that would be most effective

- *Recommend a review of anatomy and physiology concepts*
- *Needs more practice applying physics concepts to mechanical engineering problems*
- *Recommend Writing Center support*

Comments to avoid

Omit personal details that are included in the student's prior contacts

- *Student first missed class three weeks ago because they had COVID but has not returned.*
- *Student says that they have mobility issues that make it difficult to get to campus.*

Omit a student's personal reasons for specific needs, especially if they would consider it sensitive or private

- *Student's family is experiencing food insecurity.*
- *Student was kicked out of home by abusive parent and needs housing support.*
- *Student had a flood at home that destroyed their laptop.*

Omit evaluations based on your observations

- *Student is unmotivated.*
- *Student isn't serious about planning ahead.*

Omit speculation about the reasons for student needs or about diagnoses

- *Student is depressed.*
- *Student is showing signs of dyslexia.*
- *Student might have anxiety*