Undergraduate Academic Advising Syllabus
College of Arts and Sciences Office of Undergraduate Advising - Western Michigan University

Office: 2318 Friedmann Hall
Phone: (269) 387-4366
Email: coas-advising@wmich.edu
Fax: (269) 387-3999
Web site: http://www.wmich.edu/arts-sciences/advising

General Office Hours

M T W R F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

For **First Year students**, you may find the First Year Success Guide found here particularly useful: http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/pdf/studentsuccessguide-current.pdf

Because of the Student/Advisor relationship, the student will be able to do the following:

- Take responsibility for making his/her own academic decisions based on information and advice;
- Take responsibility for making his/her own career decisions based on information and advice;
- Take responsibility for making his/her own graduation plan decisions based on information and advice;
- Have a working knowledge of university policies;
- Have a working knowledge of university procedures;
- Have a working knowledge of campus resources;

Values Statements

Accountability: We are committed to providing timely, accurate, and intentional advising.

Diversity and Inclusivity: We honor the unique nature and interests of each student. Advising services and delivery methods will be shaped to fit the diverse needs of our campus populations.

Respect and Integrity: We seek to establish a reciprocal relationship with students based on an ethic of care and shared responsibility and to engage students in a fair and professional process of meaningful self-reflection and authentic inquiry.

Social and Global Responsibility: We foster a culture of independent thinking and global awareness so that students make informed, socially responsible choices consistent with their academic, career and life goals.

Advisor Responsibilities

Academic advisors have the responsibility to uphold the integrity and value of your degree by maintaining the standards and policies of the university. Your academic advisors will:

- **Assist** you in making academic decisions consistent with your interests, abilities and goals.
- **Communicate** the College of Arts and Sciences Liberal Education Curriculum (LEC) requirements, as well as interpret and explain university policies, processes, and campus resources.
- **Listen** carefully and **respect** questions, concerns, and problems.
- **Assist** you in: defining your academic, career, and personal goals; creating an academic plan consistent with those goals; transfer and study abroad credit evaluation; and the graduation auditing process.
- **Help you discover** educational and co-curricular opportunities which complement your goals.
- Continue to find ways to **improve** the advising process and how we communicate information.
- **Present alternatives** if obstacles are encountered.
- **Maintain student record confidentiality** according to WMU and the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines.
- **Be available** to answer questions, either in person, via e-mail or by phone.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for knowing their degree requirements, relevant policies and deadlines, and for consulting with their advisors. As a student you should:

- **Meet with an advisor** at least once per semester.
- **Read your WMU email daily.**
- Take **responsibility** for making your own **academic and career decisions** based on available information and advice, including your graduation plan.
- Act **professionally** and treat others with **respect.**
- **Seek advice** from advisors and faculty; **be open** to their suggestions.
- Be **involved** in the advising process by being **prepared** to discuss your goals and educational plans during meetings; **bring questions and necessary materials**.
- Have a **working knowledge** of university policies, procedures and campus resources.
- **Familiarize** yourself with FERPA and how this privacy act governs our interactions with you, your family and others.
- **Become familiar** with the material on our advising homepage: (http://www.wmich.edu/arts-sciences/advising).
- **Review** your LEC/major/minor requirements each semester and track your progress toward completing your graduation requirements…or even better, **commit to and participate in the Western Edge**.
- **Execute an academic plan** directed toward completing your degree at Western Michigan University.
- **Become a regular patron** of Career and Student Employment Services. Participate in career path development, resume writing workshops, etiquette dinners, career fairs, practice interviews, and job search services.

When should you have contact with your advisor?

- When you have academic concerns or questions about university policies, procedures, and expectations
- If you are an athlete and need to do so to comply with NCAA requirements
- If you are a re-entry student and advising is required as part of your re-admission plan
- When you need to discuss possible majors or minors
- When you need to declare your major and/or minor
- If you need help with your schedule for the upcoming semester
- When you need to complete your graduation audit
- If you have graduation audit questions
- When you need study abroad credits pre-approved
- When you need a referral to university resources

Which advisor(s) should I see?

Students in the College of Arts and Sciences have at least 3 advisors:

- A ***curriculum advisor***, found in the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office, who assists you with general education (LEC) requirements, compiles your graduation pre-audit, facilitates your completion of the Western Edge graduation compact paperwork, and helps you with re-admission after academic dismissal. They are also able to interpret and answer questions, as well as make the appropriate referrals to other WMU departments.
  - If you are planning to go to a graduate professional school related to human biology (ie: medical school, dental school, chiropractic school, physician's assistant school, physical therapy school, optometry school, pharmacy school, etc.), then you will want to ask for one of the **Pre-Health Advisors** in the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office. They can not only assist you in navigating your LEC requirements, they can help you with the professional school application and acceptance process as well.
  - Similarly, if you are planning to go to law school, the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office has **Pre-Law advisors** to assist you with understanding both the LEC requirements and the law school application and acceptance process.
- Your ***major advisor***(s) who will assist you in planning your major courses, internships, independent studies, study abroad course approval and referrals to other campus resources. Your major advisor also

helps you declare your major and provide basic advising and counseling. If you have multiple majors you will see each advisor to coordinate the details of each major.

- Your ***minor advisor***(s) who will assist you in the planning of your minor courses, help you declare your minor, and provide information about internships and independent studies allowed in your minor.
- If you are a ***member of the Lee Honors College***, you will have an advisor at LHC to ensure you meet their requirements.
- If you are an ***intercollegiate athlete***, you will have an advisor in the Athletic Department, ensuring compliance with the NCAA.

How should you contact your curriculum advisor?

1. **By Scheduled Appointment**

When you need to spend some time with your advisor to discuss course scheduling, career plans, internships, study abroad, pre-professional questions, etc.

- Appointments usually last 30 minutes (new transfer student appointments or Skype appointments will be scheduled to last one hour).
- Appointments are scheduled at least one day in advance, via the online appointment scheduler, as explained below. If you do not have internet access, you can call 269-387-4366 to set up an appointment.
- You can make as many appointments with your advisor as you feel necessary, but most students should check in with their curriculum and major advisors at least once a semester.

- **To schedule an in person or telephone appointment with any of the advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences Office of Advising, use the link here:** http://www.wmich.edu/arts-sciences/advising
    - Click the link which says "Appointments", and follow the directions.
    - A reminder e-mail will be sent to your preferred email address 24 hours in advance of your appointment.
    - **Make sure to note the date and time of your appointment.**
- You can also choose to have your appointment via **Skype.**
    - This format is best used when it is physically difficult for your to come into the office (ex: you are a new transfer student from more than an hour away from Kalamazoo, you are a current WMU student on Study Abroad, or you are a former WMU student who no longer lives in the area and are trying to finish your bachelor's degree).
    - **Use the link here to schedule an appointment via Skype** (please be aware that not every advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences Office of Advising is set up to do appointments via Skype): http://www.wmich.edu/arts-sciences/advising
- **Appointment Etiquette:**
    - **Cancel your appointment if you can't make it.**
        - Log on to the College of Arts and Sciences' appointment scheduler again and cancel your appointment.
        - If you do not have your user name and I.D., please call 269-387-4366 to cancel your appointment.
        - **Make your appointment WELL IN ADVANCE of your first day to register for classes!**
    - **Prepare for the meeting:**
        - Write down a list of topics/questions you want to address
        - Prepare a list of courses you are considering
        - Keep all your advising information organized in a folder or the "yellow advising envelope" provided by the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office
    - **Arrive promptly for your appointment:**
        - Bring your advising folder, with paperwork from previous advising appointments
        - Bring paper and pen to take notes
        - Turn off your cell phone before you walk into your advisor's office

2. **By e-mail:**
   When you have a short, one-line question that requires a short, one-line answer; **OR** when it's physically difficult for you to come in person for an appointment (ie: you are taking summer classes elsewhere, away on an internship, transferring to WMU in an upcoming semester but still attending your current school, etc.).

   E-mail etiquette:
   - Use your WMU account
   - Use a clear subject line such as "Question about my schedule"
   - Include your full name with middle initial in the signature of your email, as well as your WIN.
   - Make sure to include the CRN's of any classes you are having difficulty registering for, along with any error messages you may be receiving.
   - Don't be too casual with your advisor when using e-mail. Proof-read and spell check!
   - Keep the question short and to the point.
   - Allow 48 hours for a response, excluding weekends and holidays.

3. **By walk-in advising:**
   - When you need an answer to a quick question or a referral; meetings tend to last less than 20 minutes
   - Consultation is available on a first-come, first-served basis
   - Please arrive by the time walk-in advising ends.

4. **By telephone:**
   - When you need to know advising hours, or another very quick general question that requires a brief/quick answer.
   - The telephone should **NOT** be used for questions such as "What General Education classes do I have left?"…especially if you have never been in to our advising office before. These questions seem deceptively simple, but may entail large amounts of information that are best explained in person.
   - If the advisor is meeting with a student, your phone call will go into voicemail. Please leave your name, WIN, phone number (including area code) repeated twice, along with the nature of the question you need to ask. Speak slowly and clearly.
   - Expect a reply, but not an immediate one (Allow 48 hours for a response, excluding weekends and holidays). You may want to use e-mail for a faster response time overall.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR:
http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/

Notes or questions for my advisor: