

Academic Advice

Each individual has strengths, challenges, skills, interests, and aspirations. We have resources at Whitman to help you assess your strengths and challenges, sharpen your skills, explore your interests, and support your aspirations. Take advantage of the wealth of experience and advice from faculty, staff, and students during your time at Whitman to help you clarify and achieve your goals.

Academic Advising

Ultimately, the responsibility to be well-informed and to make personally satisfying choices belongs to you. Your academic adviser, however, is one of many individuals on campus who will be happy to assist you in developing an academic plan, creating realistic goals, and gaining a clear understanding of the academic requirements to graduate.

Role of the Academic Adviser

- **Assistance with course selection**
Discussing your interests and goals, reviewing graduation requirements, and assessing appropriate course levels based on competence.
- **Assistance with course load**
Assisting you to assess your academic preparation, study skills, and the demands of the courses involved.
- **Assistance with academic problems during the semester**
Examples of problems that might impact your course work include inadequate high school preparation, heavy course load, problems with study skills/time management, personal problems, changes in your interests or goals, or family pressure. Deficiency slips, failure to attend class, and missing or late papers or tests are often warning signs of a problem that might require consultation with your adviser.
- **Referral to campus resources**
Although your adviser might not know the answer to every question, he or she will be able to recommend other campus resources who can help.
- **A different perspective**
Faculty members can provide you with a valuable perspective on their own field, and on a Whitman education based on years of experience in academia.

When Should You See Your Academic Adviser?

Expectations

- **Meet** with your adviser as scheduled during registration periods.
- **Meet** with your adviser every time you make a change in your registration (i.e. drop, add, P-D-F, or withdraw from a class).
- **Be prepared** — Your adviser can't help you if you don't help yourself. Be familiar with the catalog, your academic evaluation, and other official documents.
- **Hold up your end of the relationship** — your adviser isn't a mind reader — be sure to give him or her enough information to be a good adviser.
- It is very important to **talk with your adviser** if you:
 - receive a deficiency slip in the middle of the semester;
 - are disappointed or concerned by the grades you are receiving in any of your classes;
 - need additional campus resources, but don't know where to turn.

Don't be embarrassed. Your academic adviser is here to help.

Other Suggestions

- Remember that a faculty member doesn't have to be listed as your official adviser in order to give good advice. Feel free to consult with any member of the faculty. For example, if you are interested in medicine and your adviser is a philosopher, you might get excellent general advice from your adviser, but may still want to consult with members of the premed committee about the specific requirements for that field.
- Drop in on your adviser during his or her scheduled office hours to say hello, touch base, or invite him or her to lunch. Faculty members are people, too.

If you have questions about advising or cannot find your adviser, contact the Academic Resource Center, Memorial 205.

Changing Your Adviser

All students have a pre-major adviser until they declare a major, at which time they choose a major adviser. If at any point you would like to change your premajor adviser, contact Julia Dunn, Director of Academic Resources, Memorial 205.

Student Academic Advisers

Student Academic Advisers (SAs) are sophomore and junior students who are selected for their solid academic and personal accomplishments, then given extensive training in peer advising. SAs live in first-year student sections and are involved



Fall Student Academic Advisers (front to back, left to right)
**Laelitiah Magara, Beverly Li, Zoe Erb, Rosemary Hanson, Anne Gaskins,
 Melanie Medina, Louise Fix, McKENzie Momany, Jane Carmody,
 Jeremy Schofield, Kari Paustian, Ahren Stroming, John Lee, Abby Sloan,
 Luke Rodriguez, and Fernando Medina Cory.**

in residence hall activities. The primary job of the SA is to serve as academic tour guides. This involves acquainting first-year students with the academic programs, opportunities, and expectations at Whitman. Each first-year student is assigned to an SA, and will meet with him or her individually, and as a section during Opening Week. Once registration is over and you are comfortably settled into a set of classes that suit your interests and goals, your SA will provide information on a wide range of academic issues.

If you have questions about when to P-D-F a class, how to find out more about studying for physics, where to find a tutor in economics, what to expect from your first blue book exam, how to improve your time management, how to determine your learning preference(s), or other academically related skills, your SA can help you discover the answer or put you in touch with someone who can. In addition, many SAs are willing to read and comment on papers for Encounters, organize study groups or assist with complicated math and science problems.

Top Ten Questions and Concerns

(and answers from the Fall 2011 Student Academic Advising Staff)

Academics: How do high school and college academics differ? What should I expect my workload to be?

While your specific workload will depend on which courses you take, expect an increase from your high school workload. Be sure to utilize your syllabus to find deadlines as you will also have more personal responsibility to stay on top of your assignments. Also, remember that there are fewer graded assignments in college so the quality of your work is always important.

- Melanie Medina, Jane Carmody, Jeremy Schofield

Classes: Which ones should I take? How do I balance major and distribution requirements? What should I take if I'm undecided?

Keep in mind that distribution requirements are intended to help you discover new academic interests — take a myriad of courses to help you discover your academic passions. Map out classes you think you'll need and try to fulfill some requirements each semester, but don't stress about trying to fulfill all of your requirements freshman year. You have plenty of time.

- Fernando Medina Corey, Laetitia Magara, Zoë Erb

Encounters: What is it? Tips for success?

Encounters is a small, seminar-style course for first-year students that provides and introduction to reading and writing analytically at the college level. Encounters seeks to build an academic and interpersonal community through exposure to different perspectives and literary works foundational to a liberal arts education. Be sure to read the materials thoroughly, and participate in class by asking questions and offering opinions. Use your professor and peers as resources — you're all in this together.

Papers: How do I write a good paper/essay?

- Think about it. Make sure you've read the texts carefully, then do some prewriting and develop a solid thesis.
- Talk to your professor. Ask him or her to give you feedback so you know what to work on.
- Draft, draft, draft. Write the first draft of your essay then get input from as many people as possible to gain new insights.
- Finishing touches. Leave yourself time to step away from your paper and come back with fresh eyes for a final revision before turning it in. Professors look favorably on hard work.

- John Lee, Anne Gaskins, Abby Sloan, McKenzie Momany

Professors: How should I approach a professor? How do I choose good professors? What are office hours?

Don't be afraid to approach your professors; they're at Whitman because they want to interact with their students. You can contact your professor by email or phone, or go into office hours which are available on course syllabi, CLEo, and professors' doors. Be respectful and work around their schedules. If you have questions about professors ask your SA; they'll be able to provide you with more information on teaching styles and courses.

- Kari Paustian, Louise Fix, Rosemary Hanson

Registrar: How do I transfer credits — college, AP, IB? Add/drop; PDF; withdraw?

College credits — Ask your previous institution to send a transcript detailing work completed at another institution.

AP/IB credits — Request that College Board send your scores to Whitman College. Credit will be awarded as is noted in the college catalog. IB credits are awarded in a similar fashion. Neither can be applied to distribution requirements.

Add/drop — First, talk to your pre-major adviser. They will assist you in determining the proper course of action, which can then be carried out on CLEo.

PDF — First, discuss the implications of PDF with your adviser or the staff in the ARC. Then, fill out a form in the Registrar's office.

Withdraw — To withdraw from a class (in which you will receive a grade of "W"), you must fill out a form located in the Registrar's office.

- Anne Gaskins, McKenzie Momany, John Lee, Abby Sloan

Registration: How does it work?

You register for classes during Opening Week in late August after meeting with your pre-major adviser. Every first-year will already be assigned to section of Encounters, but will have the opportunity to register for other classes at this time. Compile your ideal course wishlist beforehand (go on CLEo to check for class times), but be sure to include plenty of alternatives as well. Email the professor or stop by in person to get on a waitlist.

- Jane Carmody, Melanie Medina, Jeremy Schofield

Resources: What resources are available on campus? Where do I go if my SA isn't around?

Departments host group tutoring sessions or you can arrange for an individual tutors through the Academic Resource Center. Go to the Language Learning Center or see a native speaker for help in a language class, or visit the Writing Center for assistance with an essay. Finally, don't forget your peers and your professor.

- Fernando Medina Corey, Zoë Erb, Laetitia Magara

Studying: Where can I study? How do I find the right study space for me? Can you share some study tips?

Potential study spots include places in your residence hall like your room or a common space, or other places on campus like the library, academic buildings or Reid. Cafés downtown or outdoor locations are also great options. Learn to manage your time by utilizing planners, tackling one project at a time, and maximizing your productivity by eliminating distractions like your phone and computer. Use your peers- exchange papers for peer editing and organize study groups. Most importantly, know yourself as a learner so you can find the place and style that works best for you.

- Beverly Li, Luke Rodriguez

Time Management: How do I balance EVERYTHING?

Don't overcommit! Try new things and give yourself time to decide about them, but learn to prioritize and say "no." Decide how much time each commitment requires and utilize planners to organize your schedule and plan ahead. Maintain balance by making time for yourself and doing things you enjoy.

- Beverly Li, Luke Rodriguez

We would not have admitted you to Whitman if we didn't think you could be successful in this environment. While we fully expect your total experience at Whitman to stretch you as a student and as a person, we believe you are up to the challenge. Expect to work hard and use the resources available.

Glossary of Academic Terms

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is crucial to the integrity of the program of learning in a college. Falsification, misrepresentation of another's work as one's own (such as cheating on examinations, reports, or quizzes), plagiarism from the work of others, or the presentation of substantially similar work for different courses (unless authorized to do so), is academic dishonesty and is a serious offense. Knowingly helping other students cheat or plagiarize is also considered academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism occurs when one, intentionally or unintentionally, uses another's words, ideas, or data without proper acknowledgment. All new students will discuss academic dishonesty with the Director of Academic Resource during Opening Week, and will be given an explanatory sheet of what constitutes academic dishonesty early in their career at Whitman. Students will sign a statement acknowledging that they understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about how to cite your sources, seek assistance from your professor, your adviser, the Writing Center or the Academic Resource Center.

Academic Probation

If you earn a semester grade-point average below 1.7 or a cumulative GPA below 2.0 (1.7 during the first semester of your first year), you will be placed on academic probation. This is a serious situation that can result in your being dismissed from the college if you do not make adequate and timely academic progress. Usually, students are allowed only one semester of academic probation before being dropped for low scholarship. In rare cases, academic performance is so poor that students are dropped from the college after the fall semester of their first year. Despite the seriousness of the situation, however, many students have been able to restore themselves to good academic standing and pursue successful academic careers here at Whitman and in graduate school. Typically, this requires hard work, careful assessment of the factors which led to the problem, and a willingness to work with the various college resources available to assist you. If you are on probation, you should consult with your faculty adviser and the Director of Academic Resources.

Academic Warning

A student who receives an academic warning from the Board of Review must correct the problem in the next semester. Transfer work may be used to address an Academic Warning due to credit deficiency, providing that the student completes the

Request for Approval of Transfer Credit form prior to registering for coursework at another institution. It is important for you to work with your academic adviser, the Academic Resource Center, the Writing Center, and other resources on campus to ensure your academic performance improves during the semester. Further information about academic Standards can be found in the college catalog.

Add

You can add a class to your schedule during the first two weeks of the semester via the Web. You must obtain your adviser's consent to do so. If you want to add a class during the second week of the semester, you also will need to get consent from the professor who teaches the class you are adding.

Board of Review

The Board of Review is composed of three faculty members who consider student petitions for exceptions to academic policies. You must petition the Board of Review if you want to add, drop, or withdraw from a course after the published deadline, change the time of a final exam, take more than 18 academic credits, or seek a variance or exception to any college policy. Petition forms are available in the Registrar's office (Memorial 208). The Registrar or your adviser can give you further information about when it is necessary or appropriate to file a petition. The Board of Review will approve petitions for exceptions to college regulations when adequate cause is demonstrated.

Deferred Grade

The Board of Review, at the request of the course instructor, grants deferred grades in special circumstances. This option may be used when academic circumstances beyond the student's control prevent the completion of a course or project. If a deferred grade is granted, the student receives a grade of "X" until the final grade is submitted.

Degree Progress

In order to remain in good standing, you need to meet the following three criteria for degree progress: earn a minimum of 24 credits in any two consecutive semesters, successfully complete General Studies 145/146 during your first two semesters (see the catalog for further explanation of this requirement), and maintain a cumulative major grade-point average of at least 2.0.

Drop

You can drop a class without any record in your transcript through the sixth week of classes online or in person with your adviser's consent. You do not need the instructor's consent to drop a class, although it would be wise to tell the instructor so he or she won't wonder why you have stopped attending class.

Incompletes

If a circumstance beyond your control (illness, family tragedy, etc.) prevents you from completing all of the work in your courses by the end of the semester, you may consult with the Dean of Students to see if an incomplete would be appropriate. There is a more extensive discussion of incompletes in the college catalog. The Dean of Students or the Board of Review must authorize all incompletes.

Midterm Deficiencies

Faculty members are obligated to submit deficiency slips for students who are incurring D or F grades in their coursework at the midsemester. If you receive a midterm deficiency slip, you should schedule an appointment with the instructor and with your adviser in order to discuss the reasons for your deficiency and the best ways to address the situation. The Academic Resource Center staff will also schedule an appointment to meet with you and assist with creating a plan to finish the semester successfully.

P-D-F

During the 10th week of the semester, you will have an opportunity to submit a form to the Registrar's Office indicating that you wish to be graded on a P-D-F basis in one or more of your classes. If you register for a course on a P-D-F basis, your transcript will show a P if the grade you earn in the course is a C- or better; if you receive a grade lower than C- (e.g. D+, D, D-, or F) that grade will be recorded on your transcript and counted in your cumulative grade-point average. Although the P-D-F option can be beneficial in certain circumstances, there are implications involved with its use. Please ask the staff in the Academic Resource Center to help if you have questions. Before you register for a course on a P-D-F basis, you should read the section of the Whitman catalog titled "P-D-F Grade Options" carefully. You also must consult your academic adviser and obtain his or her signature. You may not P-D-F the Encounters class or classes fulfilling distribution areas.

Withdraw

If you decide to drop a class after the sixth week but before the end of the 10th week of classes, you will receive a grade of W. The W on your transcript indicates that you were registered in the course but decided not to continue in the middle of the semester. The W does not indicate how well or poorly you were doing at the time you decided to drop the course. Withdrawal can be a useful option if you find yourself in an excessively heavy course load, or if you discover you don't have a solid preparation or interest in a particular class. It also can be an appropriate response to unexpected circumstances such as illness or family problems. As always, you should consult with your adviser and obtain his or her signature.

