



THE ROLE OF ADVISING

Academic advising is an important factor in the retention, progression, and timely graduation of college students. Beyond helping students develop an academic plan, faculty advisors are in a position to engage students in the academic environment and educate them on research and career opportunities. Faculty advisors are critical in helping students create and achieve their academic goals.

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide accurate and timely information about degree and career-related requirements.
- Be available during publicized office hours and pre-registration periods.
- Respond to students' inquiries within two business days.
- Empower each student to make independent and informed decisions.
- Be knowledgeable about policies and procedures.
- Serve as a guide, teacher, facilitator, coach, and counselor.
- Make appropriate referrals.
- Encourage active engagement in the curriculum-based advising process by using the degree audit found in SeaNet.
- Advise from an integrated perspective of university studies, concentration(s), minor(s), experiential learning, study abroad.
- Ensure smooth transition for students declaring and changing concentrations.
- Keep accurate and up-to-date advising records.
- Provide realistic options for students' decision making and encourage reasonable time to degree.
- Be resourceful, utilizing web-based resources, advising tools and professional development opportunities.

GRADUATION-ORIENTED ADVISING

All advisors are encouraged to utilize a "graduation-oriented" approach to advising to assist students with timely progress toward their degree. To help students graduate in a timely manner, it is important to discuss with them a plan of action beyond the semester for which they are registering for courses. Consider reviewing a three or four year plan that takes into account course prerequisites and the timing of course offerings. This will help students understand how their courses are interrelated and their path to a successful degree, ideally completed within four years.

COLLEGE/DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING

Faculty and/or staff in each college/department are responsible for advising in the concentration and are encouraged to integrate University Studies advising as students should experience their academic

study as an integrated process (refer to General Education Advising section). Key resources for college and departmental advising are:

- **Academic Plans of Study:** In template format, these plans provide clear, consistent, and up-to-date information for students to make it easier for them to navigate the system while allowing for departmental flexibility.
- **Departmental Advising Website:** Each department is asked to have an advising website for undergraduates, utilizing University-wide guidelines to assist departments in providing clear, consistent, and up-to-date information for students via the web.
- **[Degree Audit](#):** Advisors are encouraged to monitor their students' progress through the online degree audit found in SeaNet. This feature searches through in-progress courses, transfer credit, and courses taken at UNCW to find courses that match the degree requirements for a given degree and concentration. The Degree Audit includes university studies requirements and Cameron concentration requirements, specifies remaining courses that still need to be satisfied and even compares admission requirements to the Cameron School of Business.
- **Department Chairs/College Deans:** Check with your department chair and/or Associate Dean of your College for the status of your department's Academic Plan(s) of Study, Departmental Advising website, and other advising resources that may be unique to your department or college.

UNIVERSITY STUDIES ADVISING

All faculty/staff advisors are encouraged to advise on [University Studies](#) requirements as part of an integrated approach to advising. Faculty/staff advisors are encouraged to train students to become familiar with the online Degree Audit which is the single most reliable and comprehensive method of enabling the student to track his or her completion of university studies requirements. This feature searches through in-progress courses, transfer credit, and courses taken at UNCW to find courses that match the degree requirements for a given degree and concentration. The [Degree Audit](#) includes university studies requirements and Cameron concentration requirements, specifies remaining courses that still need to be satisfied and even compares admission requirements to the Cameron School of Business.

UNIVERSITY STUDIES PROGRAM

The University Studies Program at UNCW encourages students to begin a life-long journey of engaged inquiry and societal contribution. As a consciously integrated component of each student's overall educational experience, the program reflects our institution's fundamental commitment to fostering ethical and intellectual development and to promoting the growth of well-informed, creative, literate members of society. The University Studies Program first establishes the basis of an essential liberal education through a multi-faceted exploration of our diverse intellectual heritage. As it extends through each student's educational career, the University Studies Program builds upon this foundation through a course of study designed to cultivate the skills and capacities students require to respond to and anticipate the complexities of modern citizenship in an inclusive and creative manner.

Students who meet the requirements of the University Studies program will:

Goal 1. Acquire foundational knowledge, theories and perspectives in a variety of disciplines (Foundational Knowledge);

Goal 2. Engage in rigorous, open-minded and imaginative inquiry (Inquiry);

Goal 3. Locate, evaluate, and effectively use information by applying a variety of academic and technological skills (Information Literacy);

Goal 4. Integrate multiple methods and perspectives to critically examine complex problems (Critical Thinking);

Goal 5. Effectively express meaningful ideas in speech and writing (Thoughtful Expression);

Goal 6. Demonstrate basic proficiency in speaking, listening, writing and reading in a language in addition to English (Foreign Language);

Goal 7. Describe and examine the importance and implications of human diversity (Diversity);

Goal 8. Describe and examine the intellectual and ethical responsibilities of active global citizenship (Global Citizenship).

University Studies Components:

- Foundations*
 - Composition (3 - 6 hours)
 - Lifetime Wellness (2 hours)
 - Mathematics and Statistics (3 hours)
 - Foreign Language (3 - 6 hours)
 - First-Year Seminar (3 hours)
- Approaches and Perspectives*
 - Aesthetic, Interpretive, and Literary Perspectives (6 hours)
 - Historical and Philosophical Approaches (6 hours)
 - Scientific Approaches to the Natural World (7 hours)
 - Understanding Human Institutions and Behaviors (6 hours)
 - Living in Our Diverse Nation (3 hours)
 - Living in a Global Society (3 hours)
- Building Competencies
 - Writing Intensive (9 hours)
 - Information Literacy (9 hours)
- Quantitative and Logical Reasoning (3 hours) **prior to 2016-2017 – OR – Critical Reasoning (3 hours; Effective Academic Year 2017-2018)*
- Explorations Beyond the Classroom (1 approved experience)
- Capstone Courses (1 - 4 hours) ** Not required after 2016-2017 Catalogue*

TRANSFER OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES EQUIVALENT COURSES

Students may meet any of the course requirements of the University Studies program with approved equivalent courses transferred from other regionally accredited institutions. At the time of admission,

transcripts of work at other institutions are evaluated to determine equivalency. This includes equivalency for the courses required in the University Studies Program.

[Request for Waiver/Substitution of University Studies Degree Requirements](#)

If a student believes that he or she has transfer credit that should count towards a UNCW University Studies requirement, the student should discuss that situation with an advisor. If the request seems valid, the advisor should complete and submit either a [waiver/substitution form](#) or a [petition for crediting a course for a competency requirement](#) (depending on the circumstance), along with a copy of the course description and/or course syllabus. Once the form is completed and signed by the advisor, it should be sent to the appropriate Department Chair who will then forward it to the appropriate Associate Dean (in the case of a waiver/substitution) or to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (for petitions).

For additional information and help determining request validity, consult the [Competency Checklist](#) to see if the coursework meets the minimum criteria for acceptance. **Student Services Center Advisors will work with students on submission of waivers/substitutions on behalf of the Cameron School.**

ADVISING TRANSFER STUDENTS

There are many reasons why students transfer:

- Poor institutional fit at previous 4- year or 2-year institution (i.e., educational or social environment of the institution was not congruent with the student's expectations, abilities, future plans, academic performance, or comfort level)
- Completion of an Associate's Degree
- Financial considerations
- Geographic preferences

The common element among these students is they will be making a very significant change in their lives.

COMMON ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

[Advising transfer students](#) for their first semester usually demands more time and care than virtually any other advising task. This is because: (1) the student's transferable credit must be carefully reviewed, (2) the applicability of transfer credit to UNCW University Studies and major requirements must be analyzed, (3) remaining coursework needed to complete University requirements must be sketched out, and (4) a schedule of classes for the coming term must be planned after current students have already registered and filled the seats in many University Studies and major courses.

As part of the transfer admissions process, a Transfer Credit Evaluator in the Office of the Registrar will examine a student's transcript(s) from the previous institution(s) to see what can be transferred. The student is responsible for having all of his/her transcripts submitted to that office so the appropriate courses can be transferred and awarded. Once the student arrives, the advisor should discuss the transfer credits with the student to see if all anticipated transfer credit has been awarded and is reflected in the student's UNCW advising transcript.

The transfer student should be encouraged to bring copies of his/her previous institution transcripts to the advising session. The advisor should contact Office of the Registrar if he or she has questions about credit yet to be evaluated or coursework still in progress. If you or the student has a question about University Studies equivalencies, the student may submit a [petition for crediting a course](#) along with a copy of the course description from that institution's catalog or course syllabus to the Dean of University Studies for review.

In helping transfer students select courses, advisors must exercise great care to avoid duplication of credit. Duplication occurs when a transfer student enrolls for a UNCW course that covers substantially the same material as a course they took at their former institution. (It also occurs when Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit and UNCW coursework overlap.) [UNCW course equivalencies](#) should be noted on the student's advising transcript and the student needs to be aware of the fact that repeating a course will remove the transfer credit awarded.

After transfer students have registered for their first semester of classes at UNCW, it may seem like the most intensive work for their advisors is done. But advisors should be attentive in following up with: (1) the transfer student's first-term adjustment to UNCW, which almost always proves to be a greater challenge academically and socially than the institution from which the student comes; and (2) the arrival and evaluation of further academic credit from the former institution(s), which may alter the student's academic plan. A careful review of the transcript should be made every time the student comes for advising in case transfer credits have been added or the student is changing their original plans for a major and/or minor. It never hurts to repeatedly ask the student if their transfer credits have been awarded as expected.

ONLINE ADVISING TOOLS

[How to Declare a Major or Minor](#)

[Cameron School Admission Application](#)

[Graduation Deadlines and Application](#)

[Transfer Equivalency Guide by Institution](#)

[Tuition Surcharge](#)

[Withdrawal Limits & Process](#)

[Office of the Registrar – Online Forms for Faculty/Staff](#)

- Auditing a Course or Pass/Fail Option
- Allow Class Time Conflict
- Transient Study
- FERPA Consent to Release Information
- Request to Walk in Graduation Ceremony
- Undergraduate DIS Enrollment Form
- Substitution/Waiver of Degree Requirements
- Petition for Crediting a Course for University Studies competency requirement

ADVISING REFERRALS

There are several resources on-campus aimed at student success. A comprehensive list of links and contact information can be found online, but below is a list of key referrals.

- Career Center
- Counseling Center
- Dean of Students
- Disability Services
- Housing & Residence Life
- Student Behavioral Intervention Team (SBIT)
- Office of the Registrar
- Office of International Programs
- Scholarships & Financial Aid
- Testing Services
- University Learning Center

BEST PRACTICES IN UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISING

Advisor Responsibilities: Core responsibilities (refer to Advisor Responsibilities section).

Best Practices: How individual advisors should fulfill their core responsibilities.

Best Practices: Advising In General

Scheduling and Preparation of Advising Appointments

- Have dedicated advising hours; increase availability during peak advising times.
- Schedule advising appointments to accommodate a variety of students' schedules in relation to the academic calendar.
- Update availability for advising appointments online regularly.
- Send students reminders about when they need to schedule appointments and encourage them to see all their advisors.
- Meet with current students at least once per semester.
- Require or encourage students to complete/update an academic plan including when they intend to take courses and bring it to appointment.
- Require or encourage students to complete a degree audit immediately prior to the appointment. This can either be pulled up on a computer during the advising session (to save paper) or students can bring it to the appointment.

Time-to-Degree/Withdrawals/Repeats

- Address time-to-degree by advising which courses need to be taken immediately and which can be taken later for proper progression.

- Steer students into courses for which they are prepared (e.g., avoid high D/F/W courses for those who may not be prepared).
- Inform students about possible pitfalls of changing majors (e.g., time-to-degree; tuition surcharge; financial implications).
- Discuss consequences of [withdrawing](#) from a single course or all courses as it pertains to the Withdrawals policy and the process of repeating a course; help them to understand the consequences (e.g., time-to-degree; tuition surcharge; financial implications; unique consequences per college/department). Send emails regarding these topics as appropriate.

Other

- Review and reference (this) Advisor Manual.
- Provide major and University Studies advising in one advising session so that students do not need to make multiple advising appointments or see different advisors.
- Discuss unsatisfactory mid-term grade notifications, implications of academic probation, and refer to academic support resources.
- Discuss undergraduate research opportunities, study abroad, internships, and other forms of experiential learning.
- Encourage engagement in the University and local community (e.g., clubs, student government, recreation, community service).
- Demonstrate that you care about the students' academic success and be patient.
- Communicate regularly with students through emails about appointments and appointment preparation.
- Ensure that students have access to updated curriculum worksheets and information on departmental websites.
- Utilize departmental worksheets for major and University Studies requirements.
- Seek an advisor mentor, a more experienced faculty/staff mentor, in your department that you can go to with advising questions or concerns.
- Utilize developmental advising practices.
- Evaluate your advising and make improvements by seeking students' input through appointment evaluations.

Best Practices: Advising New Students (Freshmen and Transfers)

- Adhere to the previous section "Best Practices: Advising in General."

- Review TR/AP/IB credit to ensure students have not repeated credit for equivalent coursework they are transferring in either as a freshman or transfer.
- Clarify degree requirements as outlined in the Academic Plan of Study for the degree.
- Educate students about course scheduling (e.g. process, timeline, sequencing).
- Discuss course load (number of courses; type of courses), sequencing, and implications. Note: students on probation should not necessarily take fewer courses.
- Discuss “Major fit” in relation to skills, interests, and abilities.
- Discuss decision-making process in relation to Major and career exploration, and make appropriate referrals to facilitate students’ decision-making process.
- Discuss students’ responsibilities in advising such as utilizing the degree audit and reading emails.

Best Practices: Advising Upper-Class Students

- Adhere to the previous section “Best Practices: Advising in General.”
- Review entire transcript to ensure students have not repeated credit for equivalent coursework. This includes courses repeated at UNCW and TR/AP/IB credit (together with transient study).
- Continue to discuss “Major fit” in relation to skills, interests, and abilities.
- Continue to make appropriate referrals in relation to career exploration and career development.
- Assess students’ progression toward degree.
- Have students leave advising appointment with a plan to enroll in the exact courses needed to graduate.
- Encourage students to consider Summer School as a method for staying on track.
- Discuss plan for finishing before reaching 140 attempted hours (tuition surcharge).
- Conduct graduation clearance checks prior to the end of the drop/add period.