

# Achieving Academic Success

## ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advising builds collaborative student-centered relationships that support achievement of personal development and academic success. It is an educational relationship in which students and advisors are partners in planning academic, personal, and career goals.

The Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC) at Washington State University (WSU) helps students create short and long-term plans on which to build the foundation for their education and future careers. All students are required to meet with an academic advisor each semester to discuss academic and career direction. The ASCC offers students a variety of services, programs, and resources to aid in the completion of academic courses, cultivate skill sets, and gain experience marketable to future employers.

The ASCC academic and career advisors and career counselors engage students in critical thinking about career development and required components of a degree at WSU. The ASCC recommends that students gain experiential learning through an internship, summer position, volunteering/community service, and/or study abroad. This provides a strong professional background that enables students to move toward a career, with confidence in the ability to function in a complex, global, and diverse world of work.

WSU academic advisor responsibilities:

- Be accessible, knowledgeable, informed and demonstrate care and respect.
- Guide students as they define and develop realistic goals.
- Teach students decision-making skills and how to assume responsibility to explore their own educational plans, options, and achievements.
- Understand and effectively communicate the curriculum, graduation requirements, and university and college policies and procedures.
- Teach and support students with information about and strategies for utilizing available resources and services on campus and in the community.
- Teach students to understand the purposes and goals of higher education and its effects on their lives and personal goals.

WSU student responsibilities:

- Schedule regular appointments with an advisor (minimum one per semester).
- Clarify personal values and goals and provide the advisor with accurate and truthful information regarding interests and abilities.
- Gather all relevant decision-making information and necessary materials (advisement report, tentative course selections, forms, etc.) to aid in decision making and to build a schedule free of conflicts.
- Prepare a list of questions or concerns before meeting with the advisor.
- Discuss any problems that effect academic performance, for example: study skills, difficulties in course work, time management, personal concerns.
- Ask questions and find out where help is available.
- Know where to access accurate information about educational options, requirements, policies, and procedures.
- Discuss why and how to add or drop courses or to take a course pass-fail or audit.
- Discuss career considerations, changing directions/major/interests.
- Keep a personal record of progress toward academic goals. Be proactive in learning and checking the electronic resources available in myWSU to keep track of academic progress.
- Accept responsibility for decisions and actions that affect your educational progress and goals.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the skill and knowledge of the advising professionals available. The responsibility of making decisions about personal goals and educational plans ultimately rests with the student.

## CHOOSING A MAJOR

Washington State University has nine degree-granting colleges. Colleges are divided into various departments that offer majors. A major is a set of courses that is an in depth study of an academic area.

Choosing a major is an important decision for students. Identifying academic and personal interests and abilities help students narrow the field of choices.

From there, selecting courses in different areas enables students to learn more about a specific major. Choosing a major does not have to be an immediate decision. Often students find a passion while completing University Common Requirements (UCORE) courses, Honors courses, or elective courses. Taking time to investigate different majors and careers is essential to make an appropriate choice. Typically, students are more successful if a chosen major is well-suited to skills and abilities. Further, students who are academically successful are more likely to be competitive in the job market and/or when pursuing graduate degrees. The Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC) assists students in major and career selection through individual career counseling, courses such as College Majors and Career Exploration (UNIV 100), or through various resources within the center.

## University Certification Requirements

Entering students may identify an area of interest. Students are assigned an advisor in their major area of interest by the Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC). This advisor can be changed as the student's interest area changes. Students who do not specify a major interest area will be assigned an academic and career advisor in the ASCC.

An undergraduate student may certify an academic major upon completion of 24 semester hours with a 2.0 or better cumulative GPA, with the approval of the department chair or his/her designee. Some departments have additional certification requirements and may require a higher minimum cumulative GPA and require specific courses. Consult the departmental section of the catalog for specific departmental requirements. Admission to Washington State University does not ensure acceptance into any department or program.

Some students choose to complete a minor or second major to enhance their degree program. Formal certification of a minor or second major is completed after completion of 60 semester hours. Approved minors are identified in the departmental section of this catalog. Consult with an advisor or the department for more information.

## How is a major related to a career?

Today's workplace is changing rapidly. Most adults change careers several times over the course of their working lives. A well-chosen major will prepare students to do well in many occupations, because it will provide problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication skills necessary to succeed. Some jobs require specific college majors; others do not.

Courses that students complete for their degrees will provide them with skills and knowledge to last a lifetime, no matter how much the workplace may change. As students complete University Common Requirements (UCORE) courses and courses within their college major, they will learn skills that apply to any career:

- Communication skills: how to read, write, speak, and listen effectively.
- Analytical reasoning skills: how to break problems down into their component parts and find solutions.
- Cross-cultural skills: how to assess information about other cultures from a critical and comparative perspective.
- Research skills: how to use the scientific method to explore change and development in the natural world.
- Ethical skills: how to discuss questions of value.
- Aesthetic understanding: how to appreciate works of art.

## Take a good look at what is out there

The Academic Success and Career Center (ASCC) has many resources and programs to help students with career planning. Experienced counselors and advisors are available to help with academic major and career decisions. They help students examine values, interests, and abilities, locate current career information, and identify various influences that affect decision-making. Vocational testing can also be arranged. The ASCC also provides information about internship opportunities that can enhance an academic major.

Students should use this catalog and other resources to identify departmental or University Common Requirements (UCORE) courses that sound interesting. Consult with various departments regarding courses or programs that meet interests and abilities. Students may also access departmental information through the WSU homepage at [www.wsu.edu](http://www.wsu.edu). Finally, working carefully with an academic advisor will aid in building a degree at Washington State University.