ACADEMIC ADVISING

Role of Advising

Academic advising is an integral part of each student's educational experience and it takes many forms. Academic advisors provide students with information on academic requirements needed for degree completion, help students plan for future graduate study or a career, and serve as a resource person. Academic advising is a shared responsibility between the student and the advisor.

- **Provide information on academic requirements needed for graduation.** Advisors assist students in developing an academic and career plan, monitor students in the major, and discuss how a course of study fits a particular academic or career interest. Advisors answer questions concerning a specific academic concern, such as problems with a particular class, and guide students through the registration process, including providing information on various registration blocks and what needs to be done to remove them.
- **Help students plan for future graduate study or career.** Advisors discuss how an academic major can prepare a student for his/her career, and what career options are available. Advisors refer students to the Career Center which provides career counseling and workshops on issues such as writing resumes and preparing for job interviews. They also inform students about internship opportunities and how credit can be earned, and provide information on study abroad programs that might enrich a student's academic experience as well as enhance their resume. Advisors inform students about graduate school opportunities and application procedures.
- **Serve as a campus resource.** Advisors assist students in obtaining support from other offices of the university. This includes informing students about possible scholarships or fellowships, and referring students to academic support units that provide tutoring or workshops on study skills, time management, and stress management. They may recommend that students seek counseling for stress, addictions, or trauma that may be affecting their academic work. Advisors inform students with physical and learning disabilities of the support available to them. They also encourage students to enrich their experiences by becoming involved on campus via social, political, academic, ethnic/cultural, sport and/or recreational student organizations and activities.

Some advisors are able to provide information on all of the above. Others specialize in a particular topic or area of concern. For example, a college/department may have a specific career advisor or study abroad coordinator. Students in upper level courses are often advised by faculty members who can assist with graduate school and career issues. Furthermore, some advisors work with specific populations, such as returning students, athletes, students with physical or learning disabilities, and students of color.

If you are not sure where to seek advising, contact your academic college. When requesting to meet with an advisor, specify what topics you wish to discuss to ensure that you are directed to the appropriate individual. Advising at the University of Maryland is normally a combination of professional advisors, located in many of the college offices, and faculty advisors. Please check your individual college to find out whom you need to see for academic advising. For more information, visit http://studentsuccess.umd.edu/resources/academic-advising/.

Academic Advising and Degree Completion

All new students are required to attend Orientation where they will register for classes. During their first semester, students develop a four year plan based on templates provided for each major (see http://4yearplans.umd.edu). Each plan includes specific benchmark courses to be completed within a specific period of time. Four year plans must be approved by an advisor in order to register for subsequent semesters.

Students are required to complete the benchmark courses in their major in order to progress to graduation (see Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy (p. 1) below). Outlined in each four year plan, benchmark courses guide students in a step by step process to degree completion and demonstrate satisfactory progress in the major. Academic units conduct regular reviews of students' progress, and those students who are in danger of falling behind benchmarks will be required to work with an advisor to develop a plan to get back on track. Students who do not make progress may be required to select a new major in which they can be successful.

Many students change their majors over the course of their academic career. When doing so, students must first complete and have approved a new four year plan. Any student who completes ten semesters or 130 credits without completing a degree is subject to mandatory advising prior to registration for any subsequent semester. Students with exceptional circumstances or those who are enrolled in special programs are required to develop a modified graduation plan that is appropriate to their situations. In all cases, students are responsible for meeting progress expectations and benchmarks required for their degree programs.

It is recommended that all students seek advising assistance prior to course registration. Students should also consult with an advisor as circumstances change and four year plans need to be updated. Many colleges have mandatory advising prior to registering for a new semester.

Students placed on probation are required to consult an academic advisor in their college prior to the beginning of a new semester but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period. Students will not be allowed to add or drop courses, or to register during any probation semester without the approval of an academic advisor in their college.

Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy

The goal of the Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy is to promote undergraduate student success. The policy establishes a structured framework and criteria to guide all students to completion of an undergraduate degree within a reasonable period of time.

Full-time degree seeking students normally are expected to complete the undergraduate program in four years. Within this timeframe, all students are expected to demonstrate continuing progress in their majors by completing prerequisite or required courses with the appropriate grades, and by completing other requirements consistent with graduation progress or benchmarks established by their academic units (see 2, below). It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to meet these requirements. To help students meet these requirements the university will facilitate student progress to degree by providing enhanced student advising through the following measures:

1. Academic units will create 4-year graduation templates that will specify the degree requirements for each major and provide semester-by-semester course schedule models that achieve graduation within four years. Students will prepare individualized plans for completing their degrees in accordance with the academic units' 4-year graduation plans. Students are also encouraged to periodically update their plans with the assistance of their academic advisors.
2. Academic units will establish graduation progress benchmarks for each academic major. These will specify the credit and course criteria that will indicate satisfactory progress to degree. Academic units will establish schedules for regular periodic reviews of student progress, and students who are in danger of falling behind the program benchmarks will be required to consult with an advisor prior to registration.
3. Students who do not achieve the progress expectations or benchmarks will be permitted to continue in the major only upon the approval of the dean of their college. If it becomes necessary for students to change majors, they will be given assistance in identifying and enrolling in a suitable alternative major.
4. When students change majors, they will be required to present an academic plan to the new major unit that demonstrates their ability to complete their degree in a timely manner.

While some students will have valid reasons to take additional time to degree, any student who completes 10 semesters or 130 credits[1] without completing a degree will require mandatory advising in his/her college prior to registration for subsequent semesters. Students with exceptional circumstances, students whose programs include minors, double majors/degrees, enrichment activities or who need to pursue a degree part time will have on record approved plans with approved program benchmarks. Program benchmarks will be developed by the student in consultation with and approved by an advisor.

[1] Degree credits include University of Maryland credits and all applicable transfer credits from other postsecondary institutions. The equivalent semesters applicable to the enrollment limit for transfer credits will be determined by dividing all transfer credits applicable to the degree by 15. However, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) credits, and credits earned for college courses taken while in high school and prior to matriculation at a postsecondary institution, will not count toward this semester or credit limitation. Such courses may, however, count toward degrees. Summer Session and Winter term will not be included in the semester count. Credits earned during Summer Sessions or Winter terms will be included in the credit count.

References to the policy: http://ugst.umd.edu/academicsuccess.html and to frequently asked questions: http://ugst.umd.edu/faqs-successpolicy.html.