

Whitman College Advising Handbook



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Advising Program Mission Statement

The Whitman faculty see the relationship between academic advisor and advisee as a partnership between student and advisor, and we work with students as they identify and pursue their goals. Academic advisors help students understand a liberal arts approach to education and chart their path through the curriculum. We also support and connect students to resources, especially those related to academics, so that all students can thrive at Whitman.

Advising Program Student Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for All Students:

Students will:

1. Understand a liberal arts approach to education
2. Use that understanding to chart a path through the curriculum
3. Understand available supports and resources
4. Create goals for their future

Additional Learning Outcomes for Advising within Majors:

Students will:

1. Understand the learning goals and requirements for the major
2. Explore their next steps after graduation

Expectations for Academic Advisors

Given the pre-major and major Student Learning Outcomes, the following are expectations for academic advisors.

Pre-major advisor expectations

- Discuss the value and purpose of a liberal arts education
- Encourage students to make progress on general education requirements
- Help students pick a major
- Facilitate accessing academic and non-academic resources and supports when needed
- Provide guidance regarding academic skills, such as study skills or time management, when needed
- Be responsive to students' problems and concerns when needed
- Facilitate reflection on students' academic experience and how it connects to their future
- Refer students to classes and activities they need to undertake to achieve those future plans

Major advisor expectations

- Discuss the value and purpose of a liberal arts education
- Encourage students to complete general education requirements by the end of the 7th semester
- Guide students as they complete their major requirements
- Help students create a plan for courses that allows them to graduate on schedule
- Facilitate accessing academic and non-academic resources and supports when needed
- Provide guidance regarding academic skills, such as study skills or time management, when needed
- Be responsive to students' problems and concerns when needed
- Facilitate reflection on students' academic experience and how it connects to their future
- Refer students to classes and activities they need to undertake to achieve those future plans

Academic Advising Calendar

July – First-year students meet with Summer Registration Assistants (a smaller cohort of experienced advisors who counsel students on fall semester course selection)

- Students take the Writing Assessment and other placement tests during this period
- Students are automatically placed in their First Year Seminar, after responding to a preference survey

August – First-year students meet with Pre-major Advisors during New Student Orientation to begin building the advising relationship and finalize their fall schedules

September to October – Meetings and other communication happen as needed or as desired by students

- Academic Concern Reports typically come during this period, and advisors should follow up to ensure students know about helpful resources
- Students might pursue conversations related to study abroad, prospective majors, career interests, etc.

November – All students meet with Pre-major or Major Advisors for discussions related to Pre-Registration for spring semester

January to March – Meetings and other communication happen as needed or as desired by students

- Students wishing to make changes to spring schedules typically confer with advisors in January
- Academic Concern Reports typically come during this period, and advisors should follow up to ensure students know about helpful resources
- Students might pursue conversations related to study abroad, prospective majors, career interests, etc.

April – All students meet with Pre-major or Major Advisors for discussions related to Pre-Registration for fall semester

Important Information Available to Advisors

(via My.Whitman)

Advising Documents

- High School Transcript
- Common Application
- Pre-major Advising Questionnaire

Advisee Details

Include but are not limited to:

- Course Plan for Current and Upcoming Semester
- Progress Toward Graduation
- Test Scores – Admissions Tests (ACT, SAT), Placement Tests (AP, IB), Other (Whitman writing assessment and placement tests)
- Transfer Summary
- Grades

A Note about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational records. Following FERPA, advisors should not communicate any information about their advisees' educational records to a third party (including parents) without prior consent from the student.

Advisors and faculty can share information about students' educational records with Whitman College officials who have a "legitimate educational interest". Those with a legitimate educational interest need the relevant information to carry out responsibilities in support of Whitman's educational mission. Simply being a Whitman employee is not sufficient reason to access a student's records.

Key Processes and Procedures

Declaring a major or minor

Students must declare a major before the end of the second semester of their sophomore year. The major requirements for each student are dictated by the catalog at the time of declaration. Advisors should keep in mind the following in relation to declaring majors and minors:

- When students are sophomores and are leaning toward a specific major, pre-major advisers should encourage those students to get major-specific advising.
- Students should contact a professor they know in the department or the department chair to learn how advisors are assigned in that department.
- Students may declare a minor in their junior or senior year. The minor requirements are dictated by the catalog at the time of declaration.
- Majors require 2/3 of credits be in residence.
- Minors require 3/5 of credits be in residence.
- Major and minor requirements will appear on the student's Academic Evaluation to assist in tracking progress toward completion.

Petitioning the Board of Review

The Board of Review meets weekly to hear petitions for deviations from academic procedures and policies. The most common reasons for petitioning include the following. However, any academic policy or procedure may be addressed by the Board of Review:

- Academic Overload (greater than 18 academic credits if GPAs are below minimum)
- Late add to a class after the printed deadline
- Late-drop/withdrawal from a class after the printed deadline
- Major/minor requirement waivers or revisions
- Waive commencement participation
- Change of final exam day/time

Find the Board of Review petition here: <https://www.whitman.edu/registrar/quick-tips-for-advising/board-of-review-petitions>

Advisor Training Expectations

All new advisors must participate in New Advisor Training in May of the relevant academic year before they begin advising students.

Ongoing professional development related to advising is offered annually. Advisors should participate at least once every three years to foster their professional growth and ensure their ability to uphold the academic advising mission.

Additional Resources

[Whitman Advising Canvas Site](#): All active advisors are enrolled. The site includes information from the registrar, program-specific advising information, and materials (including videos) from previous advisor training sessions.

NACADA – Global Community for Academic Advising

- Core Values of Academic Advising:
<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreValues.aspx>
- Core Competencies of Academic Advising
<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreCompetencies.aspx>

Advising Contacts

Advisor Training

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My.Whitman / Registration Logistics

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