

FACULTY VIRTUAL ADVISOR MASTER LIST

Virtual Advisor #1: On drop/add

Q: What are the dates for drop/add?

A: During the scheduling period and through the first week of the fall or spring semester, students can add/drop a course online using their MyWCU accounts. The dates for drop/add are noted on the [Registrar's calendar](#). It is recommended that your advisees to consult with you before they make changes to their schedules.

After this period, students will have to withdraw from a course using their MyWCU "drop" page (check deadline for this on the Registrar's calendar). The grade of W (Withdraw) will be entered on their academic records.

Virtual Advisor #2: On "good advising"

Q: How does WCU define "good advising"?

A: The Advising Task Force has developed a definition of what advising should be on our campus, and we are sharing it with campus groups (APSCUF, Senate, Colleges, SGA) to develop a mutual understanding of the roles of both advisors and advisees. The Task Force will also use it to guide improvement of advising structures across campus. The [Advising Expectations PDF](#) includes detail on each of these eight points.

Good advising: a shared responsibility

Academic advising is an educational partnership between a faculty member and a student whose goal is the student's academic, personal, and professional success. Advisors and advisees collaborate to help students achieve their aims. Advisors explain policies, identify resources, and give advice; however, students are ultimately responsible for making the decisions that will keep them on track. The advising relationship thus mirrors other teaching relationships at West Chester University.

At WCU, advisors and advisees:

1. treat each other with respect
2. understand their advising duties
3. work to clarify students' professional and life goals
4. contribute to realistic academic and career plans
5. educate themselves about institutional policies, procedures, and opportunities
6. contribute to making good class choices
7. address challenges through knowledge and use of campus resources
8. use available technological tools

Each of these items is recommended by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), the Faculty & Student Surveys of Student Engagement (FSSE, NSSE), the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), and the WCU Advising Task Force (2014-2015 edition). It is understood that some tasks associated with the above characteristics may be performed by non-faculty and that some of the characteristics are the hallmark of *all* campus interactions.

Advisor #3: On meeting with your advisees

Q: Why should I meet with my advisees before they schedule classes?

A: Meeting with your advisees allows you the opportunity to contribute to their development by teaching them to make good academic, personal, and institutional decisions. This can help keep them on the right track to graduate when they intend to do so. You can discuss their academic progress, talk about programs such as internships and study [abroad](#), and lead them to resources to help them succeed, such as the Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) for tutoring or [Department of Counseling & Psychological Services](#) for personal problems. As a result of these discussions, you can feel confident they know enough about their programs and options to lift their advising hold so that they may schedule classes for the coming semester.

Advisor #4: On scheduling advising appointments

Q: How should students make appointments with you, their advisors?

A: As a faculty advisor, meeting with your advisees before their scheduling dates to discuss their academic progress and plans for next semester is considered “good advising practice.” It is important to inform your advisees of your preferred means for making their advising appointments. You may prefer making appointments via email or an online scheduling website, others by phone. Surveys have shown that asking students to walk to your office to sign up for appointments manually on posted sheets is not the most appreciated or efficient. Communicating appointment information to your students in a timely manner will help them to know your preferred means of contact.

Advisor #5: On the Degree Progress Report (“DPR”)

Q: Why should I know about my advisees’ Degree Progress Reports, or DPRs?

A: The Degree Progress Report is increasingly becoming the most popular way students keep track of their academic progress. So it is crucial that you familiarize yourself with it and show your students how to navigate it. Departments should make sure the DPRs for their programs correlate with other advising materials they distribute to their students, and they should contact the Registrar to correct any inaccuracies with the DPRs. If your advisee questions something in the DPR, please ask him or her to show the problem to you and, if appropriate, discuss it with your Department Chair.

Virtual Advisor #6: On what to bring for an advising meeting

Q: What should a student bring to an advising meeting?

A: Consider what you would like to discuss with your advisee – perhaps studying abroad, or perhaps you need to follow up on an academic difficulty. Let all of your advisees know what to bring to their appointments with you at the beginning of advising season. Students really should be expected to bring a plan for the classes they want to take in the following semester, but perhaps you also want them to bring their advising sheets and a copy of their DPR printouts. Help them be prepared by communicating your expectations to them ahead of time.

Advisor #7: On withdrawing and NGs

Q: When is the last day that a student can withdraw from a class?

A: The last date to withdraw from a course or courses is always the Friday of the 9th week of the semester: see the [Registrar’s calendar](#) to learn this semester’s dates. A “W” will appear on the student’s transcript. We encourage you to contact the students who are failing your courses to remind them of this and to let them know whether or not they can improve their performance well enough to pass. However, before students withdraw from any course, they should be sure that they will still be full time (i.e., 12 credits), and they should speak with the Financial Aid office about how withdrawing may affect their Financial Aid status. Encourage student athletes to talk to their coaches about how withdrawing from a course may affect their eligibility to play.

The end of the 9th week is also the deadline for finishing work from a "No Grade" (NG, or incomplete) from last fall.

If students do not withdraw from classes by this date, they will be graded. If they do not finish work from past NGs, they will receive Fs. Please stress to your advisees the importance of this deadline!

Virtual Advisor #8: On class wait lists

Q: How can a student get on a wait list for a class?

A: The University is piloting a wait listing service for some of its classes, and your chair will probably let you know if this applies to any of yours. To see whether or not a class has a wait list, you and your advisees must unclick the button “Show open classes only” when you search for a class. Then, on the “Add class” page, the student must click “Wait list if class is full.” The student’s list of classes will show the course is wait listed if the student has been put on the wait list. If a seat in that class opens, and the student is next in the wait list line, the class will be added to his/her schedule. If the student wants the wait listed class to replace another class if a seat opens up, the student must use the “swap” tab to identify which class should be dropped when the wait listed class is added.

Remember, only certain classes are in this pilot program for the fall. If no waitlist appears for a certain course, then students must use the regular drop-add procedures. Learn more about how the wait list works by visiting the [Registrar’s website](#).

Virtual Advisor #9: On “reserve capacity”

Q: What does it mean when a class shows “reserve capacity” restrictions?

A: You and your advisees may see this designation when students go to schedule certain courses. Due to the new “reserve capacity” functionality that has been added to the course registration process, some classes are reserved for only one department’s major and minor students. This means undeclared students and those looking into majoring or minoring in this department’s programs will not be able to self-enroll in the courses that have reserve restrictions. Consider making accommodations for these students to enroll in your courses during the course registration period.

Virtual Advisor #10: On Winter & Summer registration

Q: When do students schedule for Winter or Summer classes?

A: The Winter session scheduling date and time will be listed on students' MyWCU accounts as soon as it becomes available in the Fall; this means they can often schedule Winter classes at the same time or shortly after they schedule for the following Spring. (And, similarly, they can often sign up for *Summer* classes at the same time they schedule for *Fall*.)

Virtual Advisor #11: On taking Winter (or summer) classes elsewhere

Q: How can a student take Winter classes at a community college and transfer the credit to WCU?

A: Students should always discuss course transferability and their reasons for taking courses elsewhere with you, their academic advisor. Please explain to them the policies governing transfer courses to WCU, such as pre-approved transfers listed in the ["Transfer Equivalencies"](#) section of the Registrar's homepage.

They must also complete the Transfer Credit Permission form for approval by the Registrar's office *before* taking classes at another institution. See [Transfer Credit Permission](#).

The same process applies to summer classes.

Virtual Advisor #12: On paying for winter (and spring) classes

Q: When is tuition payment due for winter and spring sessions?

A: The Office of the Bursar (610-436-2552) handles all tuition bills and billing. You can find due dates posted on their [home page](#).

Students will also see this due date on their bills, which are mailed to the addresses students have listed on MyWCU. If they use QuikPay, they will get notification via their WCU email account about their statements and bills. Only one paper bill is sent per semester, so if students don't receive one, they should access their accounts via MyWCU to find their billing information. They will also receive periodic email reminders until their bills are satisfied, so ask them please to monitor their WCU email accounts. If they don't pay by the due date, they risk having their classes canceled. They also may need to know that there is no payment plan for the winter term.

Virtual Advisor #13: On retaking classes elsewhere

Q: Can a student repeat a course already taken at WCU by taking it at another institution?

A: It depends on whether or not the student completed the course and received a letter grade at WCU. A student may not transfer in a course already completed or failed at WCU. However, if the student withdrew from a class (and thus ended up with a “W” on his or her transcript), s/he may elect to retake that class elsewhere and transfer it back to WCU. As with all transferred classes, a grade does not appear on a student’s WCU transcript, and so it will not factor into his or her GPA.

See more in the [Academic Policies and Procedures](#)

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Virtual Advisor #15: On changing & adding majors & minors

Q: How do students change majors or add/remove minors?

A: As with all big decisions about academic plans, your advisees should talk to you about changing a major or adding/dropping a minor. Ideally, students should decide on a major by the time they have amassed 30 credits – that will usually give them enough time to finish their degrees in four years. If they change majors later, or change to a highly restrictive/structured major, they may have to stay a bit longer or take classes in summer or winter sessions to catch up.

Any kind of change to students’ programs of study requires them to submit the correct form after securing the required signatures. Advisees may contact you to ask you to sign these forms, which you can find these forms on the [Registrar’s webpage](#).

Virtual Advisor #16: On majors with entrance requirements

Q: One of my advisees would like to change her major, but the major she wants to get into has entrance requirements that she hasn't yet met. I want to make sure she receives accurate information. Where can she get advising?

A: If a student wants to change majors but hasn't yet met her desired major's entrance requirements, you can ask her to change her major to become an "internal transfer." This category of student is advised by specialists in the [Pre-Major Advising Center](#) who are familiar with the entrance requirements for all majors on campus. The plan number is A198, and she would be assigned to a new advisor in PMAA who can counsel her about exploring different majors, meeting any entrance requirements for her new major, and taking classes that will fulfill requirements for her new major.

Virtual Advisor #17: On Academic Recovery Plans (ARPs)

Q: What is an Academic Recovery Plan, or ARP?

A: The Academic Recovery Plan is exactly that – a way for students to get back on track with their studies after being put on academic probation (or, if they have NGs, if they have a chance of being put on probation). To help students plan for future improvement, they and their advisors must complete an online planning form: the ARP. Students must do this in order to register for classes for the next semester – but the ARP is *not* the same as lifting the usual "advisor hold," which still needs to be done. Ideally, students should file their ARPs in (or before) the first week of classes, so that they have time to adjust their schedules accordingly.

Read more about [probation and ARP policies](#).

Virtual Advisor #18: On scheduling advising appointments

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Virtual Advisor #19: On what to bring for an advising meeting

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bring to their appointments with you at the beginning of advising season. Students really should be expected to bring a plan for the classes they want to take in the following semester, but perhaps you also want them to bring their advising sheets and a copy of their DPR printouts. Help them be prepared by communicating your expectations to them ahead of time.

Virtual Advisor #20: On withdrawing and NGs

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Virtual Advisor #21: On culture cluster classes

Q: What are "culture cluster" classes?

A: Some B.A. programs allow their students to do a "culture cluster" option for fulfilling their foreign language requirement. This means that they must pass their 101 and 102 classes in a certain language and also take three more classes in the same language area, so that they learn some of the cultural contexts for that language. So, if a student did a culture cluster in French and Francophone, s/he would take FRE101, FRE102, and three other courses designated on the approved French and Francophone culture cluster list in the undergraduate catalog.

Some additional requirements:

- A student may not take more than two culture cluster classes in the same department.
- A student may take only one culture cluster class in the department in which s/he majors.
- A student may not use one course to simultaneously fulfill a general education distributive requirement and a culture cluster requirement.
- A student do not have to finish your 102-level language class before taking culture cluster classes.
- A student may use a 201 language class as one of those three culture cluster classes.

Encourage your advisees to taking their culture cluster courses as soon as possible, since many of the culture cluster classes are not offered every semester.

Virtual Advisor #22: On the Degree Progress Report (“DPR”)

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A: The Degree Progress Report is increasingly becoming the most popular way students keep track of their academic progress. So it is crucial that you familiarize yourself with it and show your students how to navigate it. Departments should make sure the DPRs for their programs correlate with other advising materials they distribute to their students, and they should contact the Registrar to correct any inaccuracies with the DPRs. If your advisee questions something in the DPR, please ask him or her to show the problem to you and, if appropriate, discuss it with your Department Chair.

Virtual Advisor #23: On the Career Center

Q: What can the Career Development Center do for my advisees? (And where is it?)

A: Helping advisees figure out what they may want to do after graduation is an important component of an advisor’s job, and starting that discussion early is beneficial. You have a wealth of information about your field that you can share, and you are also able to direct advisees to professional contacts or campus resources.

The Career Development Center is on the second floor of Lawrence, right across the hall from the Learning Assistance & Resource Center (LARC). The career center offers services, resources, and programs that help students explore future career options as well as prepare for and secure internships and full-time employment. Students may schedule appointments for one-on-one personalized help; they can also access resume writing, interview preparation, and job search skills on the [Career Development Center site](#). Remind them to open a **Ram Career Network** account as well, where hundreds of jobs and internships are available to WCU students!

Virtual Advisor #24: On post-WCU life (jobs & graduate school)

Q: How can my advisees find out about job openings or graduate school options?

A: Your advisees’ greatest resource is, of course, *you*. Ask them if they are interested in graduate school, so that you can begin discussing types of degrees, careers related to those degrees, and ways they can prepare while still undergrads. They can get help with application essays in The Writing Center. If they are interested in job searches, point them to WCU’s Twardowski Career Development Center. The Career Center's career management system, Ram Career Network, lets students search jobs and internships using keywords and industries of interest. Searching that database can provide some insight from employers who are actively seeking to hire WCU students. Career Center staff can also point them to other resources and strategies to find jobs

related to their academic interests, and they're knowledgeable about graduate school application processes and timelines.

Virtual advisor #25: On study abroad

Q: What do I do if my advisee is interested in study abroad?

A: Advisors don't need to know about all of the opportunities WCU offers, but you should know that we have single classes abroad, full semesters abroad, summer and break programs, and student exchange programs. You should refer your advisees to the [Center for International Programs](#), on the 3rd floor of Mitchell Hall, for more information. Talk to your advisees about the best semester for their study-abroad plans, and consider what classes they might take while away – general education classes, especially electives, often offer the most flexibility.

Virtual Advisor #26: On not passing a class

Q: One of my advisees may not pass a class. How can I advise him/her?

A: There are several things for students to consider if they don't pass a class:

- As you know, it will affect their GPA. If their GPA falls below a 2.0, they will be placed on Academic Probation and will need to file an Academic Recovery Plan, which helps them chart a course for success. A low grade may also affect certain types of financial aid.
- If this class is required or the GPA needs to be raised, students may need to repeat the course, so they should start looking for a seat in fall sections of the course right away. You can review the [WCU repeat policy](#) with them.
- Students may **not** repeat this course at another institution: they **must** repeat it at WCU.
- Remember that "NGs" – "no grades" – are given only in cases of extenuating circumstances.
- Ask students to consider how they will improve their work for this class in the future: will they get tutoring (speak to people at the LARC or Writing Center). Will they work on time management? Will they make sure they go to every class? Will they seek help from the teacher during office hours?

Virtual Advisor #27: On final exams

Q: Where can my advisees find out about final exams?

A: The best place to get a quick summary of information about finals is on the [Registrar's page](#).

You might ask your advisees to make sure they double check their final exam schedules, since we all have heard of the student who showed up in the wrong room at the wrong time for his/her final! On the Registrar's page, your students can also see the other policies related to final exams: for example, that there should be no final exam given outside the time period allotted for the exam by this schedule. And remember that students might be curious about the

provision that allows them to negotiate with instructors if they have three or more finals scheduled on the same day (with one week's notice).