

First-Year Student Guide to Academic Advising, Academic Resources, and Academic Exploration

Academic Information/Advising Resources

People

- SAGES Advisor, Academic/Departmental Representatives, Undergraduate Studies

Websites, Communications, and Publications

- Undergraduate Studies website & official e-mail communications (<http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/undstud.htm>)
- First Year Student Newsletters (<http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/year1/year1.html>)
- CWRU Class of 2015 - First Year Academics Group on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/CWRU-Class-of-2015-First-Year-Academics/175276902535016>)
- 2011 – 2012 General Bulletin (<http://bulletin.case.edu/>)
- 2011 – 2012 First Year Information (FYI) Guide (<http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/FYI%20Guide%202011-2012.pdf>)
- CWRU departmental websites
- CWRU Registrar's Office website – Searchable Schedule of Classes (<http://www.case.edu/provost/registrar/soc.html>)
- Career Center website (<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/careers/>)
- SIS (Student Information System) (<http://www.case.edu/erp/sis>)
- Academic Advisement Report (AAR) (available on SIS under Academic Requirements)

Strategies for Academic Success

- Go to your classes...all of them all of the time.
- Read!
- Get to know your professors.
- Explore things that you know nothing about.
- Learn as if your life depended upon it. It probably will.
- Ask questions. Ask for help.
- Manage your time.
- Maintain a balance between academics and the rest of your life.
- Use peer support – tutoring, SI, SAGES Peer Writing Crew, study groups. (<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/education/resources/>)
- Take advantage of the services provided by Educational Services for Students (ESS) and consider serving as a SI or tutor in the future. (<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/education/>)
- Make meeting new people and having new experiences a priority in your life.

Academic Advising Roles and Expectations

Students

- Learn academic policies, procedures, and deadlines by reviewing your *2011-2012 FYI Guide*, *2011-2012 General Bulletin*, *First-Year Student Newsletters*, and e-mails from the Office of Undergraduate Studies
- Learn the curricular requirements for your major(s)/minor(s) of interest by reviewing degree requirements in the *2011-2012 General Bulletin*
- Initiate and maintain regular contact with your advisor
- Share your interests, questions, concerns with your advisor
- Come prepared for academic advising appointments by reviewing the *2011-2012 General Bulletin* and Academic Advisement Report (AAR), and by preparing questions for discussion
- Take & follow through on referrals made by your advisor and/or Undergrad Studies
- Regularly monitor progress toward degree completion by viewing your AAR and referring to the *2011-2012 General Bulletin*
- Keep all paperwork/forms associated with advising (drop/add forms, print outs from SIS, emails, etc.)

SAGES Advisors

- Monitor advisee's progress toward degree completion and refer regularly to the advisee's Academic Advisement Report (on-line in SIS)
- Be readily available for advising discussions (office hours, scheduled appointments, emails, etc.) & schedule advising appointments in advance of registration periods
- Answer general academic advising questions and make referrals to resources, offices and individuals as necessary for specific information
- Be familiar with: 1) academic goals and interests of his/her advisees, 2) academic policies, procedures, and resources, 3) make referrals to offices and individuals across campus that address the academic and personal needs and goals of his/her advisees, and 4) sources of academic information

Academic/Departmental Representatives

- Specific knowledge about department and academic discipline
- Connection to faculty within department, and knowledge of opportunities for engagement within the department
- Familiarity with major/minor requirements

Undergraduate Studies

- Provide academic advising support to students and faculty
- Connect students to experiential learning opportunities
- Provide specialized advising for those interested in pre-health professions, pre-law, and study abroad; advise students competing for national scholarships and fellowships (e.g. Fulbright, Rhodes, Marshall)
- Monitor and support student academic success
- Maintain student academic records; post credit; monitor completion of degree requirements and certify graduation

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Exploring Academic Interests - Process

The Head Game

- Accept that exploring and confirming academic interests is a process. There is not “one right major, minor, or degree” for anyone. It’s about finding something that you are passionate enough about to study for this point in time in your life.
- Make exploring and confirming your academic interests a priority. Set aside time in your schedule for the exploration process.
- Accept that you might be surprised at what you learn about yourself and your academic/career interests. It’s ok if you end up changing your mind about what you want to pursue as an academic/career interest.

Constantly test your assumptions. For example:

- Don’t assume that you will be more admissible to medical school with a major in the sciences or engineering. Ask the Pre-Health Advisor.
- Don’t assume that you will not be able to “get a job that pays a living wage” with a Philosophy (or any Arts, Humanities, or Social Science) major. Talk to the Philosophy department professors, alumni, and the Career Center.

Do Your Homework

See the recommendations listed below under “Making the Most of a Referral.”

Before making a decision gather as much information as you can through research, conversations, and reflection. If you follow this advice, you will not make a “bad” decision.

Making the Most of a Referral

Reflect

- How did you develop an interest in the academic area?
- What do you know about the academic discipline/research/careers?
- What do you know about the programs and degree requirements for your field of interest?
- What questions do you have?

Prepare

- Search the department website for degree information, faculty profiles, and on-going research.
- Review any degree, major, minor requirements in your Handbook for Undergraduate Students.
- Look at course descriptions for courses offered in the department (Searchable Schedule of Classes and/or the University Bulletin on the Registrar’s website)
- “Google” the faculty member with whom you will be meeting to learn about his/her area of research.
- Write down some specific questions that you would like to have answered.
- E-mail and/or call the faculty member well in advance of any deadlines so as to identify a time that works for both parties.

Exploring Academic Interests - Useful Questions

These questions are targeted toward a faculty academic/department representative, however, many questions could be asked at the Career Center as well. You might also use some of these questions with professionals working in an academic discipline or career of interest.

- How did you get into this field? How did you end up as a professor? What factors influenced your decisions?
- How would you recommend that I explore and/or test my interest in this field/career/academic discipline? (e.g. shadowing, research, academic student organizations, specific courses, etc.)
- Are there certain careers that are correlated with this major/minor? Does this academic discipline prepare students especially well for any specific career(s)?
- What type(s) of graduate and/or professional school opportunities might exist after the undergraduate level and what kind of education/experience would they provide?
- Is an advanced degree or some type of additional training/education usually required to work in fields associated with this degree?
- Are there majors, minors, skills, courses, or experiences that might complement study in this academic discipline? (e.g. Psychology might be complementary to an interest in management, sociology, anthropology, pre-medicine, biology, etc.)
- Are there research, co-op, internship, and/or practicum experiences available in your department? How do I get involved in those?
- Are there certain work experiences, volunteer activities, or participation in student organizations that might enhance my educational experience in this academic area?
- What kinds of jobs have your recent graduates received?
- What types of students are the most successful in this major?
- What skills will this major help me develop?

Engaging in Experiential Learning Opportunities

- SOURCE (Support of Undergraduate Research & Creative Endeavors)
<http://www.case.edu/source/>
- Study Abroad
<http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/studyabroad.htm>
- Internships & Co-Ops
<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/careers/explore/experience/>
<http://engineering.case.edu/coop/>
- Community Service
<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/civicengagement/>
- Leadership Opportunities
<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/activities/>
<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/greek/>
- Networking/Job Shadowing
<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/careers/tips/networking/>