

The Academic Advising Syllabus
B.S. Liberal Studies: Professional Studies program
West Chester University

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Other resources: Undergraduate Catalog
Student Handbook
myWCU portal
University Website
Facebook group: WCU Professional Studies Program

Office Hours: Appointments preferred
Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m.– 12 p.m., 1-3 p.m.
Other times by appointment.

University Mission Statement for Academic Advising

The West Chester University community embraces the concept that effective academic advising is a collaborative teaching and learning process between the student and the faculty advisor. Effective advising should assist the student in achieving their academic, professional and personal goals. Faculty advisors will strive to provide accurate, timely and current information, thus establishing the framework around which students will construct their academic program of study.

Academic Advising Description/Definition

Academic advising is an educational process that, by intention and design, facilitates students' understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education and fosters their intellectual and personal development toward academic success and lifelong learning. (NACADA, 2004)

Academic Advising for the Professional Studies

Academic Advising is a critical component in the successful completion of any degree program. The Liberal Studies: Professional Studies program of study is as unique and varied as the individual students who pursue the major. As a result, regular consultation with your academic advisor becomes essential.

The academic advisor's role is to make certain that the requirements for the major are clearly explained to the student. However, the academic advisor's role goes beyond this simple function. Your advisor:

- serves as a sounding board for the student as they prepare and execute their academic plan;
- serves as a source of information about university academic policies and procedures; and
- serves as a resource to discuss and investigate options available to the students after graduation.

As a result of successful academic advising and the student's active involvement in the process, the student is empowered to make informed decisions about their program of study and their academic plan. In essence, the student takes ownership of his or her educational experience. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that all requirements for the degree are met in order to graduate.

Responsibilities of the Academic Advisor include:

- Assist the student as they develop their academic program of study by:
 - Explore with students their individual interests, abilities and goals;
 - Aid students in the creation of an academic plan;
 - Counsel students in the selection and sequencing of courses that meet the various degree requirements;
- Identify university resources that may be of value to the student and make appropriate referrals; and
- Be aware of university academic policies and procedures as they relate to the needs of the student.

Responsibilities of the Student in the Academic Advising relationship include:

- Meet with your advisor at appropriate times during the semester;
- Be aware of important, relevant deadlines and then meet them;
- Complete all forms and submit them to the appropriate offices;
- Review university policies and procedures as needed;
- Develop and clarify the values and goals that impact your academic decisions;
- Create an academic plan for your remaining semesters;
- Understand the requirements for the major and minors;

- Understand the university general education requirement;
- Have knowledge of the undergraduate catalog and the information in the Undergraduate Course Schedule;
- Examine your academic record for accuracy on a regular basis;
- Save all academic advising and course registration related documents;
- Be aware of prerequisites for the course you plan to take;
- Provide to the Registrar's office the official transcripts for courses taken at other institutions; and
- Recognize the need for student resources and services on campus and use them.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes for the Advising Experience

Through the academic advising experiences in this program,

- Students will demonstrate the ability to make effective decisions concerning their degree and career goals.
- Students will develop an educational plan for successfully achieving their goals and select courses each semester to progress toward fulfilling that educational plan.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the value of the general education requirement.
- Students will utilize the resources and services on campus to assist them in achieving their academic, personal and career goals.
- Students will make use of referrals to campus resources as needed.
- Students will graduate in a timely and efficient manner based upon their educational plan.

Demonstrating Your Achievement of Student Learning Outcomes

In order for you and your advisor to accurately measure and document that you have achieved the learning outcomes listed above, the advisor and student will collectively contribute to the student's major file, to be maintained by the advisor. This file will include a variety of documents such as the educational plan for the student, semester schedules and displays of academic progress, information regarding usage of campus resources, copies of relevant correspondence and other documents of note.

Major Academic Advising

Academic advising for the Liberal Studies: Professional Studies student begins at the initial meeting between the student and the Program Director. At that time, the program will be explained and the courses taken by the student will be incorporated into the program advising sheet. There will be a discussion about the need for two academic minors, and options for these will be explored. The advisor and student will also discuss the student's short-term and long-term goals. Change of Major and Minor Application forms will be issued at that time.

Students are expected to use the information they receive at this meeting to develop an academic plan. The plan should include the minors they wish to pursue, the courses they want to take, and a tentative timeline to degree completion.

The student should meet with their advisor at least once a semester. Ideally, that meeting should take place before the student's enrollment appointment for the upcoming semester. At that meeting, the student's progress toward degree completion is evaluated, the student's academic plan is reviewed and modified as needed, and their proposed course selection is examined.

Students are encouraged to consult their advisor at any time they have a question, or want to address an issue of concern. That consultation may take place via telephone, email or office visit. Please note that email communications should not be considered as confidential. Please exercise appropriate levels of caution. Do not include information such as identifying numbers (social security #, etc.), grades, GPA, etc.

The Interdisciplinary Degree

The Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies: Professional Studies is an interdisciplinary program. Interdisciplinary degrees have grown in popularity across American higher education over the past decade. Typically, the student is charged with developing a rationale that delineates the relationship that exists between the minors, and how the pursuit of the degree will serve the student during their undergraduate career and beyond the walls of the university. It is very likely that such a statement will be required in the not-too-distant future.

Minor Advisors

Students in the Liberal Studies: Professional Studies major are required to earn two academic minors as part of the degree requirements. Students must submit an application to each minor they wish to pursue. Upon acceptance to the minor, students should request an appointment to discuss minor requirements and course options. Every department is different; however, a minor advisor should be officially assigned to the student. If you are unsure who your minor advisor is, contact the department chair and ASK. Often, the department chair will serve in this capacity. *It is the student's responsibility to meet with the minor advisors.* The student is responsible for completing all minor requirements. Students who fail to consult their minor advisors are accountable for any mistakes made in pursuing that minor.

Safe Zone

The faculty and staff of the Professional Studies program are committed to providing an environment which is inclusive of, open to, respectful and supportive of all students. We are pleased to provide our services to students of all ages, genders, races, cultures, abilities, sexual orientations, religious backgrounds and socio-economic statuses.

Assistance with Issues of Disabilities.

West Chester University will make every effort to assure students with disabilities access to all classes required for their program of study and will endeavor to remove any and all obstacles to a fulfilling, comprehensive university experience. This policy extends to the academic advising process. Students with unique needs should discuss those needs with their academic advisor.

Students should contact the Office for Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 223 Lawrence Center to arrange suitable accommodations. They can be reached at 610.436.2564.