

Special Advising Needs

While the number of advisees assigned to each adviser varies with the number of students with declared majors for each school or department, most advisers will have advisees of all classifications (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) as well as students of all levels (Academic Warning, Academic Probation, Honor students.) Some may be certain of their major and academic plans, while others may be unsure if they are in the right major or undecided altogether. The needs of transfer students are also distinct from those of students who came to WWU as freshmen. Advisers should be aware of the special needs of these particular groups when students approach you for advisement.

Academic Warning and Probation

Advisees on academic warning or probation should receive early and careful attention, and their academic progress must be monitored with the utmost care. During the first week of the quarter, review your advisees' grades and determine if any are on academic warning or probation. Contact these students by the end of the first week to develop a plan for academic success.

Undecided Students

Undecided students present a unique set of challenges to academic advisers. According to Nelson, Alexander, Martin and Cunningham (2012) of NACADA, undecided students are a diverse group who all lack a declared major, but whose reasons for being undecided can vary greatly. Common reasons for being undecided include:

- Lack of understanding of how a specific major will help them reach their career goals
- Lack of understanding of their own interests and the many career opportunities available to them
- Numerous interests and inability to commit to a specific plan

Nelson et al. (2012) further stated that:

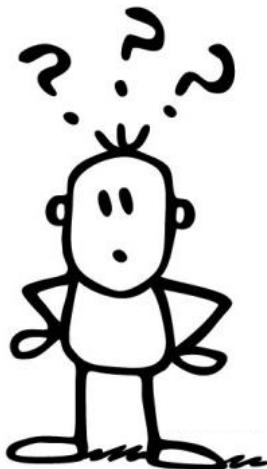
Undecided students need to be encouraged to think of their choices in the context of a strategy that will provide them with the professional opportunities they desire. By thinking more in terms of a long-term strategy than an immediate choice, undecided students can overcome obstacles that may slow or muddle their decision-making strategies.

Advisers need to help undecided students clarify their options. Advisers can accomplish this in a number of ways:

- Refer students to the Career Center and/or Counseling and Testing Services for help in understanding their interests and possible career opportunities
- Encourage students to talk with professionals in the areas that interest them
- Recommend introductory classes in specific majors that may interest undecided students

Remind students that it is ok to be undecided for a while as they do the necessary research to find a career and suitable major. Students shouldn't feel pressured to make a decision too quickly because that could keep them from looking at other options that might be a better fit. It may take several quarters to find a major that is a good fit for the student's long range goals (Nelson et al., 2012).

When setting up a schedule of classes for an undecided student, look for courses that will apply to many of the majors that the student is considering. This will allow the student to explore more options while they continue taking courses needed for a degree. It is helpful to use the [Advisement Guidebook](#) as you help the student select classes.



If a student is considering a professional program such as engineering, nursing or a medical area, they should begin taking some of the science and math courses required for those majors or they will delay the possibility of graduation by one or two years. In most cases, the courses needed for a professional program can be used in many other majors.

Nelson, D. B., Alexander, R. A., Martin, H. E., & Cunningham, B. L. (2012). *Academic and career advising for undecided, exploring, and major-changing students*. Manhattan, KS: NACADA.

Transfer Students

Students transfer from institution to institution for many reasons. When students transfer to WWU it is generally for a specific major, a desire to study in a Christian environment, the geographical location, or because they feel that WWU fits their social needs. Many transfer students come from community colleges where they have focused primarily on general education classes, and possibly some classes for their major. When advising a transfer student, it is very important that the adviser understand the student's long term goals and career plans; not just the major that the student wants to complete. Understanding the student's long term goals will help the adviser recommend classes and campus involvement that will help the student reach those goals.

When advising a transfer student, be sure to use the Advisement Report in myWWU to determine what requirements still need to be met. If there are questions about how a course has been articulated, check with the transcript evaluator in the Academic Records office. If the student or adviser feels that a course has been evaluated incorrectly, the student should supply the course syllabus to the appropriate department so the course content can be reviewed. If the department determines that a course should be articulated differently, the department must send a written explanation of the change to the transcript evaluator.

Transfer students need to follow the protocol for enrolling in upper division classes and they must also meet the prerequisite requirements for all courses. For some students this

may delay the graduation process, but will improve the student's learning and academic success.

Student Advising Needs by Academic Year

Each academic year a student attends a university presents a unique set of educational tasks and advising challenges. When advising students, consider their stage in their educational path and help them to prepare for the next stage. Below are tables that have been modified from those provided by Gordon & Habley (2000) in Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook, pp. 88-96. These tables list the educational tasks of each educational level, and how the adviser can best assist the student with each task.

Freshman Year		
Themes	Needs or Educational Tasks	Advising Services
Become familiar with academic life and utilizing resources	1. Become familiar with university resources	Introduce students to available resources on campus, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Advising• Career Center• Teaching Learning Center• Disability Support Services• Counseling and Testing Services• Student Financial Services
	2. Determine possible eligibility for financial assistance and/or scholarships.	Connect students with Student Financial Services for information about aid and scholarships for which they may be eligible.
Set goals	3. Become acquainted with the University's mission, academic leaders (faculty, department chairs, deans) in major programs or interests.	Help students understand their goals in relationship to the aims of the University. Explore opportunities for students to obtain personal meaning of the University's mission statement. Introduce yourself to new freshmen during departmental functions at JumpStart, and get acquainted with students during your first adviser meeting with them.
	4. Learn to adjust class schedule both before and after quarter has begun.	Contact each advisee for an advising appointment to help them pre-register for the following quarter. Teach students to use their degree audit in myWWU, and how to view the WWU Schedule of Classes at classopen.wallawalla.edu . Inform students of <u>academic deadlines</u> , and refer them to the Academic Records office for assistance in changing their registration after classes have begun.
Make commitments	5. Understand University and major requirements: a. General education	Introduce students to degree requirements including major, minor, general studies and elective requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Credit hours c. Residence d. Major courses e. Prerequisites for admission to graduate or professional school 	Help students who aim to pursue graduate or professional degrees plan to meet the prerequisites of those programs.
Understand policies	<p>6. Understand the University's policies and academic options, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Academic warning and probation b. Changing majors c. Challenging classes d. Advanced placement credit e. Transfer credit f. Independent study credit g. Study abroad h. Honors courses 	<p>Inform students that changes to their major, minor, or concentration can be made at the Academic Advising office.</p> <p>Where appropriate, refer students to CLEP testing, challenge examinations, and check that they are not enrolled in courses for which they have AP or transfer credit.</p> <p>If students are interested in going abroad either through ACA or as a student missionary, begin discussing how to integrate this into their academic plans.</p>
Setting expectations and responsibilities	<p>7. Develop accurate expectations of time and effort required to make successful academic progress, and timely graduation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Time management b. Study skills and habits c. Graduation plan 	<p>Regularly monitor students' academic progress and make appropriate referrals.</p> <p>Discuss effectiveness of students' study habits, and help make adjustments as necessary.</p> <p>Refer students who are undecided on their academic plans or who are considering alternative plans to the Academic Advising office.</p>
	<p>8. Evaluate whether major and career choices match interests and abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify interests b. Assess abilities c. Explore major/career options 	<p>Discuss students' academic and career interests.</p> <p>Refer students to the Career Center for career testing as appropriate.</p>
	<p>9. Assume responsibility for own educational progress.</p>	<p>Teach students to seek out University resources to aid them in academic, financial, and career planning.</p> <p>Foster independent decision-making skills.</p>
	<p>10. Learn how to associate with professors both in and out of class.</p>	Help students learn how to approach professors for extra assistance with a class.

Sophomore Year		
Themes	Needs or Educational Tasks	Advising Services
Crystallize academic plans	1. Determine academic path and expectations.	Establish contact with each sophomore student. Explore with students their academic direction, and monitor student academic progress.
Development through student experience	2. Develop accurate expectations for selected major.	Continue to help students explore degree requirements, and provide assistance with making adjustments to major concentration or minor according to intended career path.
Integrate with campus life	3. Explore career opportunities within major.	<p>Direct students to sources of information on careers that interest them.</p> <p>Encourage students to speak with their professors and make professional contacts, and share your own guidance and experience.</p> <p>Share information regarding internships and other service-learning experiential opportunities.</p>
Reflection	4. Make well-defined education plans with up-to-date information on major and University requirements. 5. Pre-register for 3 quarters of the junior year.	<p>Reinforce using degree audits, help students begin to plan for their upper-division courses, and ensure that students who wish to participate in ACA or serve as an SM are able to do so.</p> <p>Ensure that students who wish to apply to graduate or professional schools are meeting the required pre-requisites.</p> <p>Encourage students to develop an academic plan for degree completion.</p>

Junior Year		
Themes	Needs or Educational Tasks	Advising and Career Services
Integrate academic plans with career plans	1. Become acquainted with two or three faculty members in major field for academic or career planning and counseling and for future letters of recommendation.	Post your office hours, encourage students to visit you and continue to monitor academic progress. Faculty-student interaction must be fostered, particularly at this academic level.
Clarification	2. Clarify career goals and test career choice.	Encourage students to review career literature related to major. Connect students with opportunities for internships, research projects, career-related volunteering activities, or other career-related experiences.
	3. Achieve intellectual competence in chosen field and confidence in professional ability.	Suggest major elective courses and research projects related to the student's career interest.
	4. If contemplating graduate school, consider institution-specific graduate program requirements and scholarships.	Encourage students to compile a list of schools they wish to apply for, and review those institutions' bulletins. Provide information on graduate aid available and sources for scholarship applications. Encourage students to take the GRE, MCAT, LSAT, or other graduate/professional school admission test.
	5. Determine academic standing.	Encourage students to thoughtfully evaluate their own academic progress. Identify areas of weakness and develop a plan for improvement. Begin discussing graduation requirements and senior outlines.

Senior Year		
Themes	Needs or Educational Tasks	Advising and Career Services
Preparing for transition to work or graduate school	1. Prepare for employment opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare resume Develop interviewing skills Work with Career Center for interviews, contacts, etc. Identify and pursue potential career opportunities 	Refer students to the Career Center for assistance with resume preparation and interviewing skills. Encourage students to obtain letters of recommendation from faculty and professional contacts.
	2. Prepare for graduate/professional opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take entrance exams (GMAT, GRE, LSAT, MCAT) if not already done Assess different schools and programs to match abilities, financial commitment, and geographical preference. Understand and complete application procedures. Select graduate school to attend from offers received. 	Ensure students have taken necessary graduate/professional entrance exams (GRE, MCAT, etc.) Help students confirm their choices of graduate/professional schools and complete the application process. Write letters of recommendation where applicable. Help students decide which graduate school to attend based on program, finances, geographical location, and other pertinent factors.
	3. Fulfill major, general, and university requirements for graduation.	Work with each student to fill out and submit a Senior Outline to the Academic Records office during Fall quarter.
	4. Meet graduation deadlines.	Advise students of graduation status, and ensure they are aware of academic deadlines and the process for revising their Senior Outline.

Gordon, V. N., & Habley, W. R. (2000). *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.