

Session for new advisors
Office of the Dean of Studies

Academic advising at Oberlin College

Expectations of advisors:

- Meet with new-student advisees two times during orientation to discuss course choices and to begin to establish an advisor/advisee relationship with each;
- Review advisees' course selection, degree progress reports, transcripts, and midterm grade reports to offer suggestions about academic progress and success;
- Meet individually with all advisees during the two weeks prior to registration each semester (typically mid-November and mid-April) to review student progress and discuss course selection);
- See students to sign various forms e.g., for withdrawals from courses; to take courses P/NP (CR/NE); to discuss ideas for Winter Term projects (especially helpful and important for first-year students);
- Communicate with the Office of the Dean of Studies if you cannot be available during advising periods (or when you expect a leave in a subsequent semester).

The number of advisees per faculty advisor at Oberlin varies enormously, from about six to between 40 and 50. The median number of advisees per advisor is about 14. However, some faculty members choose to take a larger number of advisees, and the number of majors in a department also influences the number of advisees per faculty member.

Undeclared majors may stay with the advisor they are assigned initially until they declare a major, or they may change advisors. When a student declares a major, the student is expected to choose an advisor in the department or program of the chosen major.

To encourage good advisor/advisee relationships, advisors may:

- Discuss what the advisor/advisee relationship will include i.e., setting up boundaries; the advisor may offer:
 - Willingness to have conversations about a student's academic focus, interests, possible career paths (consider using *A Roadmap for an Education in the College of Arts and Sciences at Oberlin*);
 - Information about institutional requirements and requirements for a major (especially in the department of the advisor);
 - Recommendations about academic success; about course selection;
 - Information about deadlines in the academic calendar and what one needs to do about completing forms, etc.;
 - Information about academic standing;
 - Information about sources of help on campus e.g., Class Deans, Student Academic Services, Counseling Center, Dean of Studies Office, Office of Career Services, Center for Service and Learning;
 - Interaction as an adult role model (respectfully help an advisee to understand his or her college experience);

- Discuss what the advisee wants from the advisor/advisee relationship; because many first-year students are shy about approaching faculty members, encourage the student to stay in touch with you as you think appropriate;
- Take their first-year advisees to lunch at the Rath one time during the fall semester (Office of the Dean of Studies funds these lunches);
- Send advisees occasional messages/reminders (Dean of Studies Office sends advisors reminder messages three times each semester; advisors may adapt them and send them along to advisees);
- Encourage advisees to make appointments (or e-mail) as questions or issues emerge during the semester.

Expectations of the Office of the Dean of Studies:

- The Dean of Studies reads admission materials and “Information for Advisor sheet” for each incoming student and assigns an advisor for each. Assignments are made with the following in mind: each first-year seminar instructor accepts students in his/her seminar as advisees; students may request a particular professor; if a student is strongly interested in a particular major, especially in the sciences, the student is assigned an advisor in that department.

The Office of the Dean of Studies:

- Is always eager to support advisors, answer questions, make referrals;
- Prepares an advising file for each new student that includes copies of the student’s admission essays and high school/college transcripts and delivers them to the advisor before orientation;
- Enters new advisors and change-of-advisor information into the Student Records system;
- Facilitates exchange of folders among advisors as necessary;
- Works with faculty going on leave to redistribute advisees (especially advisees who have not declared a major);
- Distributes lists of advisees with Registration Alternate PINs prior to advising periods;
- Distributes Degree Progress and Advising Reports and Transcripts at the end of the add/drop period each semester;
- Distributes midterm grade sheets;
- Works with students to identify new advisors as necessary;
- Maintains a website with information for advisors, www.oberlin.edu/dstudies.

Students and advisors:

Students may change advisors easily by obtaining a card from the Office of the Dean of Studies and asking the new advisor to sign the card. When the card is returned to the Office of the Dean of Studies, the change is entered in the Student Record system.

Occasionally, an advisor will ask a student to find a new advisor; the Office of the Dean of Studies is happy to help with this process.