

ADVISING AND PLANNING A DEGREE PROGRAM

Though Penn State has a vested interest in student success and takes active steps to build a positive learning environment, the primary responsibility for successful completion of a degree program lies with the student. The key to meeting this responsibility is personal involvement in academic planning. To plan a program of study that will best meet individual goals and interests, students must know the requirements and restrictions of the department, college or other degree-granting unit, and the University; know the sources of academic information, especially the Undergraduate Bulletin; and work consistently with an academic adviser in examining programs and course requirements and alternatives.

For most degree programs at Penn State, a student may begin their studies at any campus. More than 160 baccalaureate majors, more than 25 associate degree majors, and more than 7,000 undergraduate courses are offered by the University. Though each campus cannot offer every academic program or every course, academic advisers can help students to understand their options for completing degree programs across the University. In some instances, admission to some academic programs is restricted, and students must meet specific requirements once at Penn State to gain entrance. In other cases, admission to certain academic programs must be approved when a first-year student first enters the University; transfer into these programs at a later point in a student's career is not possible. For these reasons, it is imperative that a student understands both program and course limitations at the campus of enrollment.

Though many programs at Penn State allow varying degrees of flexibility, it is important for students to engage academic advising on a regular basis to discuss their academic plan. An early decision to pursue a highly structured program enables the student to complete the program in the optimum length of time by taking the required courses in a sequence that allows the smoothest progression from one level to the next. Even the most regulated programs, however, allow choices within given boundaries. Other programs allow a considerable range of choices in the completion of the requirements. Students should be aware of possible difficulties in transferring from a flexible program to a more highly structured program. Whether a program is highly structured or quite flexible, it is extremely important that the student understand program requirements when enrolling in the University.

Select the topics of interest below or the menu to the right to explore different information areas.

Academic Advising (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/academic-advising/>)

Course Placements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/>)

Degree Audit (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/degree-audit/>)

First-Year Seminars and Engagement Plans (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/first-year-seminars-engagement-plans/>)

New Student Orientation (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/new-student-orientation/>)