

I. Advising Philosophy and Foundations

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Advising Mission and Responsibilities

Mission: Academic advising is an important part of the learning process at Messiah College that encourages students to discern and develop their interests and talents in preparation for professional and community engagement. As part of a “carefully mentored, Christ-centered journey of the intellect and spirit,” advisors assist students in their intentional exploration and planning of educational opportunities. This relationship is perhaps best thought of as a partnership between students and educators: students are personally responsible for planning their academic program and co-curricular involvement to meet all graduation requirements and develop their sense of vocation; advisors help students make good choices compatible with their academic plans and life goals.

Academic Advisors should:

- understand QuEST (general education) requirements, major requirements, as well as the overlap between the two;
- understand academic policies and procedures; able to apply them to student circumstances.
- assist students to establish academic goals compatible with the student’s life goals;
- encourage students to enhance academic performance and seek academic challenges;
- assist students to develop course schedules which consider the student’s academic goals and background;
- monitor student academic progress and encourage good academic work;
- encourage students to pursue appropriate educational opportunities;
- refer students to appropriate resources available to help students:
 - solve individual problems (e.g., Engle Center, Student Affairs, Learning Center, Writing Center, Financial Aid, and Disability Services);
 - identify, plan and explore educational opportunities (e.g. Intercultural Office, Career and Professional Development Center, Agape Center, Student Leadership and Involvement, Collaboratory, etc.);
- encourage student applications, if appropriate, for scholarships and awards—following student inquiry;
- evaluate the advising system, when requested, in order to strengthen the advising process.

Students should:

- accept full ownership for all academic decisions -- academic advisors will assist by presenting options and identifying resources;
- prepare for advising sessions and bring appropriate resources or materials (i.e. pen/digital device timetable of classes, catalog, completed registration form, etc.);
- contact and make an appointment with an advisor when in need of assistance;
- follow through on actions identified during each advising session or other communication;
- clarify personal values, abilities, interests, and goals during their time at Messiah;
- become knowledgeable of and adhere to institutional policies, procedures, and requirements;
- review eligibility requirements for scholarships and awards and when appropriate, discuss options with advisor in a timely manner;
- evaluate advisors and the advising system when requested, in order to strengthen the advising process.

Foundations of Advising

- In order to earn a bachelor degree, students must complete all major and QuEST requirements with a minimum of a total of 123 credit hours.
 - Always use the credit totals at the top of each block to evaluate progress towards completion. Do NOT add up the blocks themselves, as some courses may meet multiple requirements.
- The last 30 credits preceding graduation must be earned at Messiah College.
- To continue at Messiah, students need to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 1.80 for the first two semesters, 1.90 for the next two semesters, and 2.00 thereafter. In order to graduate, students must demonstrate a 2.00 minimum GPA for their overall requirements, as well as for their major.
- Students may be completing different years for QuEST than their major.
 - The year a student enters Messiah determines which QuEST requirements they must complete.
 - The year in which a student formally declares their major determines which major requirements the student must meet.
 - For example, a student enters Messiah in 2016-2017. They will follow the QuEST requirements for that year. The same student declares their major during the spring semester of 2018. That student would follow the major requirements for 2017-18 for their major, while following the 2016-17 requirements for QuEST.
- For transfer credits/ off-campus programs/AP:
 - Ensure that courses in the transfer equivalency database meet the needed requirement (do not merely look at course prefix).
 - For courses not already approved in the transfer equivalency database:
 - Department chairs determine transfer equivalencies for major and minor-related courses.
 - The Registrar's Office and Assistant Dean of General Education, Common Learning and Advising approve transfer equivalencies for QuEST courses based on the course objectives for the relevant requirement.
 - Some QuEST courses have limited transferability:
 - Created and Called for Community MUST be taken at Messiah
 - Ethics/ World Views/ Pluralism and Science, Technology and the World MUST be taken at a similar theological institution
 - Knowledge of the Bible and Christian Beliefs are approved on a case-by-case basis when transferred from non-Christian institutions
 - To determine how AP credits may meet requirements, consult http://www.messiah.edu/info/21351/transfer_ap_clep_courses/2107/apclepib_equivalencies/2

**Please take time to review the:
Degree Works video at [DegreeWorks for Undergraduate Students](#)**

Degree Audit Essentials

Degree Works Audit: Accessed via Falcon Link/ Faculty and Advisors Self Service Menu/ Student Information Menu/ Degree Audits

- The [Ellucian Degree Works™ Audit](#) is the primary advising tool for tracking degree and certificate requirements. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the Degree Works audit displays course requirements specific to a student's declared academic program and catalog year.
- The [Degree Works Audit may be accessed](#) via FalconLink / Degree Works (Faculty) card
- **Degree requirements** for undergraduate students consist of major courses, general education courses, and free electives, depending on the academic program. Students should meet with their academic advisor before registration and prior to graduation to ensure that the minimum required credits are on track for completion by the anticipated graduation date.
- Click [here](#) to learn about the **various features** of Degree Works and how to interpret the degree audit.
- The **blocks** on the audit display the total number of credits needed for program completion, course requirements and GPA. Degree Works displays requirements in a checklist format. *Courses marked with a green check mark are complete. Courses with a blue half-moon are currently in-progress. An unchecked box indicates courses that are not yet fulfilled.*
- **The credits applied count** includes both in-progress as well as completed credits. Be aware that some courses may display on the degree audit in more than one block (such as major and general education) but should only be counted once in the total credit calculation.
- Students pursuing a **degree and certificate, or two degrees** (*each of a different type*) will have two-degree audits. You can access each audit separately by using the degree drop-down menu at the top of the audit, and toggle between both audits as needed.
- To ensure that you are accessing the most up-to-date information in Degree Works, click the **'Process New'** button. This will ensure that newly registered or graded courses display appropriately.
- While Degree Works allows the user to **collapse and expand blocks** on the audit, please be sure to expand all blocks for a full picture of the academic programs and corresponding requirements.
- Please be advised that **transfer credits** marked as 'IP' (*or in progress*) have not been earned yet. They will appear like other in progress courses with the blue half-moon; however, the distinction is in the grade of 'IP' versus 'NR' (*not reported*). If you find a transfer course marked as in progress on the degree audit, please have the official transcript sent to the Registrar's Office upon completion for final evaluation. Please note, transfer equivalency and a grade of C or higher are required for courses to transfer.
- **Courses that are repeated for a better grade** will display an "R" under the repeat column on the far right-side of the page. Upon completion of the second occurrence of the course, the grade corresponding with the first occurrence will be excluded from the GPA calculation, while the second occurrence will be included in the GPA. At the end of the term, repeated courses that have been excluded will display in the 'Insufficient' block at the bottom of the audit.
- For students completing **multiple programs**, please be advised that 12 credits in a minor, 24 credits in a major, and 8 credits in a concentration must be unique to each program. While there is no overlap or double counting rule for students earning certificates and other majors, minors, or concentrations; new certificates may not overlap more than 3 credits with existing certificates.
- Degree Works also offers students the ability to track their **graduation checklist** as well as their **registration checklist**. Both checklists can be accessed in the academic view under the drop down for the degree works format. Once selected, make sure to click 'Process New' for the checklist to load and appear on your screen.

- The “**What-if**” **audit** is a helpful tool for students who are considering a change of academic program or addition of a certificate or minor. Click [here](#) for a short video tutorial on how to complete a “What-if” audit.
- The Degree Works audit provides a **Note feature**, which allows the academic advisor to record electronic notes directly into a student’s degree audit. The Degree Works note feature is intended for general notations regarding student advising, such as meeting summaries for future registration and graduation plans. Click [here](#) for a video tutorial on how to create/edit a note in Degree Works.

Degree Audit Questions

- For questions or concerns regarding the Degree Works audit, please email: degrecertification@messiah.edu.
- **Please note: Requests for exceptions/substitutions/waivers must come from the Department Chair.**

Registrar’s Office Contact Information

Main Email: registrar@messiah.edu **Main Phone:** 717-691-6074