

## **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\\_equivencies/2](http://www.messiah.edu/info/21351/transfer_ap_clep_courses/2107/apclepib_equivencies/2)

**Please take time to review the:  
Advising Tips video at <https://video.messiah.edu/Watch/Aa6r5CGg>**

## Degree Audit Essentials

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

- The **Degree Works Audit** is a document used internally as a means of communicating degree requirements between the student, their Advisor (academic department) and the Registrar's Office.
- **Academic Year** is important. This is how the degree audit knows what degree requirements it needs to use to apply. The academic year associated with QuEST (General Education) requirements signifies the year that the student enrolled. The academic year associated with the major or minor should reflect the term in which they declared their area of study.
- Different sections or **blocks** identify the student's Major, Concentration, QuEST requirements, Minor (if applicable), College Honors Program (if applicable), Other/Elective Courses, Insufficient (if the student earned a grade of F or W), and In-Progress.
- The first block tracks the **degree requirements** (i.e. Minimum 123 credits required to graduate, Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, Last 30 credits rule, Major, QuEST, and College Honors Program). The degree block sums up the total credits applied (including those in progress) versus credits required, and displays the number of credits "still needed" to graduate.
- To demonstrate **degree completion**, all major and QuEST requirements must be checked off and all in progress courses completed. In addition to meeting all course requirements, students must earn a minimum of 123 hours of credit, except as noted in the requirements for selected majors.
- Credits include **Completed** (green checkmark), **In Progress** (blue tilde), and **Still Needed** (red check box).
- **In Progress** courses are counted in the credits applied count.
- Courses that are **Still Needed** will list the number of credits required. You can click on the unmet course requirement (i.e. PSYC 101) for a course description, pre and co-requisites and the semesters it is offered.
- If the degree audit says "**Concentration is required but not found**" this means that the student must declare the concentration by completing the appropriate declaration form found in the Registrar's Office. Once the concentration is declared and processed, it will be displayed on the degree audit.
- For students who are **double majoring** (*where each major has the same degree type*), both majors will share the same degree audit.
- For students who are double majoring (*where each major has a different degree type*, such as BA and BS), there will be two degree audits. To view the other degree audit, click on the down arrow next to "Degree" at the top of the screen.
- Credits may be displayed in more than one section (i.e. Major and QuEST); however, credits can only be counted one time. Do NOT tally up the credits applied from each block.
- If there is more than one major, minor or concentration, the **credit overlap rule** applies. *There must be 24 unique credits for each major, 12 unique credits for each minor, and 8 unique credits for each concentration.*
- **For students who are currently repeating a course for a better grade, be sure to account for the credit only once. Degree Works cannot remove the original credit and grade until final grades are reported at the end of the semester.**
- Students who receive a **waiver** (i.e. Language/cross-cultural) will see that the requirement is checked off; however, credits will not be applied. In this case the student would be expected to fulfill the credits through free elective courses or may declare another area of study (i.e. minor).

**Student Access to Degree Audits:** Accessed via Falcon Link/ Self-Service Main Menu/ Student Records/ Degree Evaluation (Degree Works)

### “What If Audits”

The “What If Audit” is a helpful advising tool for students who are considering changing their major or adding a minor.

- Select the *Degree* associated with the major that is being changed (if different from the existing degree).
- Select the *Academic Year* (this will be the year in which the major is being declared). For example, if the student is declaring a major in Fall 2020, it would be academic year 2020-2021.
- Select the *Major* and *Concentration* that the student intends to declare. To select a concentration, look first for the corresponding major code.
- Select a *Minor* (or multiple minors) if applicable.
- Confirm the *Chosen Areas of Study* in the population box and click *Process What If*.
- Click on *Worksheets* to resume normal view of the degree audit.

### Helpful Tips

- The What If audit will automatically default to the year in which the student is declaring the area of study. As a result, the QuEST year will change when conducting a “What If.” Please note that when a student changes their major, their QuEST year will remain as the term in which they enrolled.
- If a student has yet to declare a major in your department but wishes to meet with you to discuss their options, it is recommended that the student bring their own “What If audit” with them.

### Additional Features

- The **Notes feature** will allow the advisor to add a note to the student’s audit, which can be marked as internal (viewed only by advisor and the Registrar’s Office) or it can be viewed by the student. Access *View Notes* tab to view all notes.
- By selecting the *Format* drop down list at the top of the screen, a **Registration Checklist** sums up the remaining courses needed.

## Degree Audit Questions

- For questions or concerns regarding the Degree Works audit, please email: [degreecertification@messiah.edu](mailto:degreecertification@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](mailto:registrar@messiah.edu), **Main Phone:** 717-691-6074