UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advising is an important component of the educational program at Case Western Reserve University. Academic advisors assist students in the exploration of academic opportunities at the university and in the selection of courses. Advisors may refer students to other sources of information and assistance at Case Western Reserve.

The advising model at Case Western Reserve aims to balance generalist and field-specific advising, shifting the balance as students progress through their undergraduate careers. At the beginning, a student’s First Seminar instructor provides generalist advising until the student declares a major. At the same time, representatives from each major and minor are available to provide field-specific advice as a student decides on an area of focus. Once a student declares a major, the emphasis shifts to major-focused advising with an advisor assigned in that field to guide the student in the construction of an academic plan and to monitor the student’s progress in pursuit of that plan. Throughout a student’s undergraduate career, the deans in the Office of Undergraduate Studies are available for generalist advising to address concerns that fall outside of the pursuit of a specific major.

Students are expected to initiate and maintain regular contact with their advisors to address the student’s curricular and career concerns, and to review progress towards graduation. At a minimum, students are expected to meet with advisors when declaring a major or minor, before registering for classes each semester, and when making corrections to their academic requirements reports.

Advising during the First Year

During a student’s first year at Case Western Reserve, the faculty member instructing the student’s SAGES First Seminar serves as the student’s academic advisor. Students and their advisors are expected to explore the student’s academic interests and concerns, as well as educational and career goals, and to seek expert information and advice about academic policies and procedures and about specific academic programs from the General Bulletin, from newsletters and websites, from the academic representatives in the majors and minors designated as first year resources, and from other sources of advice and counseling on campus. Staff in the Office of Undergraduate Studies (http://case.edu/ugstudies) (including the Directors of the First-Year Residential Colleges), the University Career Center (http://studentaffairs.case.edu/careers), Educational Services for Students (http://studentaffairs.case.edu/education), the Office of Multicultural Affairs (http://studentaffairs.case.edu/multicultural), the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Office of Health & Counseling Services (http://studentaffairs.case.edu/counseling), and specialized programs such as Co-op (http://engineering.case.edu/coop) (co-operative education), SOURCE (http://www.cwru.edu/source) (research and creative projects), the Center for International Affairs (http://case.edu/international) (study abroad, international student services), and the Center for Civic Engagement and Learning (http://studentaffairs.case.edu/civicengagement) (community service) are available to support first-year students and their advisors with publications, workshops, websites, experiential learning opportunities, and individual communications.

Advising in the Majors and Minors

When a student selects a specific major or minor, the academic representative of that major or minor assigns a faculty advisor. Although some first-year undergraduates enter with definite goals, they are not assigned to advisors in the majors until they have declared their major. First-year students who are ready to declare a major in their first year may do so beginning in November. Students engaging in further exploration of majors are expected to declare a major no later than the end of the second year (See Declaring a Major in the section on Academic Policies and Procedures (http://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/policies)). Opportunities for exploration of majors and minors include a Choices Fair, departmental information sessions, and individual conversations with faculty and academic advisors.

After the first year, students who have not declared a major should consult their assigned advisor (noted in their online student information) or the academic representative of an academic department of interest for advice and schedule approval.

Advising in the Office of Undergraduate Studies

The Office of Undergraduate Studies serves as a hub for all academic information related to undergraduate enrollment and degree programs. The Associate Dean for First-Year Students and the Directors of the First-Year Residential Colleges work with first-year students. All new transfer students work with a specially assigned dean during their first semester of enrollment at Case Western Reserve; this dean also works with non-degree students. After the first year for students who matriculate as first-year students and after the first semester for students who matriculate as transfer students, each Case Western Reserve student is assigned to an upperclass dean based on the student’s last name. This allows a dean to establish a multi-year relationship with the student, starting in the student’s second year and continuing through the completion of degree requirements.

The deans and advisors in the Office of Undergraduate Studies are available to answer student and faculty questions about University rules, practices, programs, and resources and to meet with students who are interested in accelerated undergraduate to graduate and professional school programs, academic awards, and fellowship and scholarship opportunities. All students who have not declared a major should consult with their first year advisor or with one of the deans in the Office of Undergraduate Studies for advising and schedule approval. Students with interests in health professions and/or law school are encouraged to seek advice from the pre-medical advisor and/or the pre-law advisor in the Office of Undergraduate Studies.