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. In addition, throughout their undergraduate career, each student has a navigator in Student Advancement who is available to provide general information and advice, to address concerns that fall outside of the pursuit of a specific major, and to help the student place their academic experience in the broader context of opportunities at Case Western Reserve and beyond.

Students are expected to initiate and maintain regular contact with their advisors and navigators to address curricular and career concerns, and to review progress towards graduation. At a minimum, students are expected to meet with academic 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 teaching the student’s SAGES First Seminar serves as the student’s academic advisor. Each student and their advisor 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, newsletters and websites, the academic representatives designated as first year resources in the majors and minors, and other sources of advice and counseling on campus. Navigators and other staff in Student Advancement, along with staff in the Office of Undergraduate Studies, Post-Graduate Planning and Experiential Education, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the University Health & Counseling Services, and specialized programs such as Co-op (co-operative education), the Center for International Affairs (study abroad, international student services), and the Center for Civic Engagement and Learning (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 to the student. Although some first-year undergraduates enter with definite goals, they are not assigned advisors in the majors until they have declared their major. Students who are ready to declare a major may do so beginning in November of their first year (April for those who matriculate at CWRU in the spring semester). 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). Opportunities for exploring 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.

Support in the Office of Student Advancement

Navigators in Student Advancement serve as a hub to provide guidance in all aspects of being an undergraduate student at Case Western Reserve, including academic information related to undergraduate enrollment and degree programs. Each student is able to establish a multi-year relationship with their navigator, who is assigned during the summer before matriculation and continues to work with the student through the completion of degree requirements. Navigators are available to answer student and faculty questions about university rules, practices, programs, and resources and to refer students to other offices and opportunities, as appropriate.