

Academic Advising Syllabus

Office Location: E103 Westgate, University Park, PA 16802
Phone: 814-865-8974
Website: <https://ist.psu.edu/advising>

Purpose Of Syllabus:

The purpose of this academic advising syllabus is to clearly communicate the goals, expectations, and responsibilities of both students and academic advisers in the College of Information Sciences and Technology at Penn State. Academic advising is a collaborative process. Use this syllabus as a guide to make the most of your advising experience. Your adviser is here to support you, but you are ultimately responsible for your academic success.

Academic Advising Mission Statement:

To support students in making informed academic decisions, setting and achieving educational goals, and becoming self-directed learners throughout their academic journey.

Advising Learning Outcomes:

Through collaboration with their academic adviser, students will be able to:

- Understand and navigate degree requirements and academic policies.
- Identify campus resources for academic and personal success.
- Make informed decisions about majors, careers, and life goals.
- Take responsibility for academic planning and making informed decisions on majors and careers.

Student and Adviser Expectations:

<i>Student Expectations</i>	<i>Adviser Expectations</i>
Schedule and attend advising appointments at least once per semester. If unable to make an appointment, cancel in advance so that other students have access to that appointment time.	Offer hybrid appointment times throughout the semester and provide clear instructions for scheduling appointments and accessing advising support.
Come to advising appointments prepared to collaborate with your adviser. Take notes and follow through on actions discussed.	Assist students in developing realistic and meaningful academic plans aligned with their goals. Guide students in course selection, scheduling, and long-term academic progression.
Understand degree requirements, utilizing Lionpath What-If and/or Academic Requirement reports.	Help students understand degree and graduation requirements.
Check your Penn State email daily for messages from your assigned adviser and informational emails from the Advising Office. Use only PSU email for official university communication.	Respond to student emails and inquiries in a timely manner.
Take initiative in your academic and career planning and responsibility for your academic decisions and outcomes. Utilize available resources, including IST Career Solutions, to explore career interests, understand internship requirements, and prepare for post-graduation opportunities. Be respectful and courteous in all interactions with advising staff and campus partners.	Encourage goal setting, career exploration, and self-advocacy. Help students connect academic choices with their interests and goals, and make appropriate referrals to IST Career Solutions for internship guidance, career planning, and employment preparation when needed.

Use the academic calendar to understand key deadlines (e.g., registration, drop/add, graduation) in relation to academic goals.	Provide accurate and timely information about institutional policies and refer to appropriate offices.
Inform your adviser of any changes affecting academic performance or personal well-being.	Refer students to appropriate campus resources (e.g., tutoring, counseling).
Follow both the Penn State Code of Conduct as well as the IST Honor Code. Understand the consequences of academic integrity violations.	Adhere to the Penn State core values and the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Key Resources

- Academic Planning Tools
 - LionPATH (lionpath.psu.edu) is the official system where Penn State keeps all student records, including enrollment, grades, and academic information.
 - Starfish (starfish.psu.edu) is the official system used for advising, including tracking student progress, scheduling appointments, and sharing updates between students and advisors.
- Academic Planning Resources
 - Undergraduate Bulletin: <https://bulletins.psu.edu/>
 - General education requirements: <https://gened.psu.edu/>
- College of IST Resources
 - IST Chaiken Center for Student Success: <https://ist.psu.edu/offices/chaiken-center-for-student-success>
 - IST Academic Advising: <https://ist.psu.edu/advising>
 - IST Learning Support: <https://ist.psu.edu/learning>
 - IST Career Solutions: <https://ist.psu.edu/current-students/career-solutions>
 - IST Honor Code: <https://ist.psu.edu/about/ist-honor-code>
 - IST Student Engagement: <https://ist.psu.edu/current-students/current-undergraduate-students/student-engagement>

- University Resources
 - Academic Calendars: <https://registrar.psu.edu/academic-calendars>
 - Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual: <https://aappm.psu.edu/>
 - Chaiken Center for Student Success: <https://success.psu.edu/>
 - Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS): <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling>
 - Multicultural Resource Center: <https://equity.psu.edu/offices/scholars-programs>
 - Student Care and Advocacy: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/studentcare>
 - Penn State Code of Conduct: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/student-accountability/code-procedures/student-code-conduct>
 - Student Confidentiality (FERPA): <https://www.registrar.psu.edu/confidentiality/>
 - Student Disability Resources: <https://equity.psu.edu/offices/student-disability-resources>
 - University Health Services: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health>

How to prepare for appointments?

Before your appointment, review the Academic Requirements or What-if Report in LionPATH. This will help you ask informed questions about policies, course substitutions, transfer credits, and entrance-to-major requirements.

Drop-in vs scheduled appointment vs email?

- Drop-in appointment:
 - Generally 10-minutes or less
 - First-come, first-serve basis; therefore, depending on time of semester, may involve a lengthy wait
 - Not suitable for long term academic planning
 - Common Examples:
 - Quick clarification on degree requirements
 - Course selection or change (add/drop/swap)
 - Understanding a prerequisite or course sequence
 - Concerns about academic performance
 - Transfer credit interpretations
 - Trouble registering for a course (e.g., error codes)

- Waitlist questions or strategies
 - Holds on registration and how to resolve them
 - Help filling out academic forms (e.g., withdrawal, petition)
 - Questions about declaring a major or minor
- Scheduled appointment:
 - 30 minute time slots
 - More in-depth conversations that require more time, planning, or sensitive discussion than a drop-in
 - Common examples
 - Long-term course planning (semester-by-semester flowchart)
 - Creating or updating a graduation plan
 - Exploring or changing a major/minor
 - Evaluating progress toward degree or general education requirements
 - Academic warning/suspension support and recovery planning
 - Guidance on faculty senate petitions
 - Navigating personal challenges affecting academic performance
 - Connecting with resources: counseling, financial aid, disability services, tutoring
 - Study abroad planning and course mapping
 - Final graduation checks
 - Review and signature for study plans (sponsored students, ROTC students, etc.)
- Email:
 - Typically straightforward, non-urgent, and informational
 - Emails should be professional, brief, specific, and include student ID and relevant course codes. For anything complex or sensitive, it's best to schedule a meeting.
 - Common examples
 - Confirmation of degree or major requirements
 - Clarification about prerequisites or course eligibility
 - Questions about credit transfers or equivalencies
 - Confirmation of entrance to major status
 - Help locating a specific university policy or deadline
 - Asking how to book an advising appointment or office hours
 - Inquiring about drop-in hours
 - Questions about Lionpath
 - Confirmation of graduation application submission
 - Asking which office handles a specific concern

- Clarification if you are unsure an appointment is necessary
- Please allow 48 business hours (not including holidays/weekends) for advising to respond to your email.