Advising Checklist
for advisors of students in the College of Arts and Sciences
by the Advising Committee and the Office of Dean of Studies, updated July 2015

This document includes some general guidelines and checklists of topics for advisors to discuss with advisees. There is a checklist for each year of study, along with recommendations for students that advisors may choose to integrate into their advising sessions. The recommendations for students are drawn largely from “A Road Map for an Education in the College of Arts and Sciences at Oberlin College,” which is available at new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-studies/roadmap/.

General Expectations of Advisors

• Meet with new first-year advisees during orientation
• Meet individually with all advisees during the two weeks prior to course registration and be available for other meetings during the semester
• Sign forms for changing a grading option or withdrawing from a course (for additional forms you may be asked to sign, see http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-studies/)
• Contact the class dean or a dean of studies (5-8540) if you have concerns about the well-being of an advisee (see new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-students/class-deans/ for contact information)
• Communicate with the Office of the Dean of Studies if you are going on leave or cannot be present during an advising period

To Encourage Good Advisor-Advisee Relationships, You May:

• Discuss your own and your advisee’s expectations of the advisor/advisee relationship
• Review the road map together
• Specifically, you may encourage:
  o a fall-semester lunch with first-year advisees at the Rath (tab picked up by Dean of Studies);
  o meals with advisees in selected dining halls (see tinyurl.com/OC-fast-meals);
  o staying in touch and checking in; and
  o scheduling regular appointments during the semester.
YEAR 1

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

- Current educational goals for advisee’s Oberlin career
- A course schedule that is balanced between divisions, with different kinds of assignments
- Advisee’s understanding of general course requirements
- Students are expected to take four courses per semester (4 x 8 = 32 courses, the total required for the BA)
  - Full-time enrollment is three and one-half to five full courses (14 to 20 credits) for BA students, and 16 to 26 credits for double-degree students
- Winter-term requirements and ideas for projects
- Importance of the academic calendar and upcoming deadlines
- Student accountability for academic progress; review Degree Works on PRESTO regularly
- Give advisee his/her RAP

AS TIME PERMITS, YOU MIGHT:

- Ask about your advisee’s out-of-class activities; encourage participation in student organizations, club sports or other physical fitness activities; community service through the Bonner Center for Service and Learning; an initial visit to the Career Center
- Encourage advisees to get to know their professors and to identify one to get to know well
- Ask about advisees’ time management skills and offer suggestions
- Refer your advisees to campus offices, as needed: Student Academic Services for tutoring, study skills, and time management; the Quantitative Skills Drop-in Tutoring Center (or “QS Center,” see oberlin.edu/clear); class deans for personal issues; deans of studies for general advising, incompletes, and academic standing

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVISORS

- If your field is among the humanities or social sciences, review the list of courses that fulfill the quantitative and formal reasoning (QFR) requirement in the catalog. See the Quantitative and Formal Reasoning Courses 2015-2016 link at http://catalog.oberlin.edu.
- Periodically read course descriptions of introductory courses outside of your department or program

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS, AS APPLICABLE

- Outline your educational goals, and consider how to integrate your values and your Oberlin education. Discuss these with your advisor, class dean, or another member of the faculty or staff.
- Enroll in courses that will allow you to sharpen your reading, writing, and analytical skills.
- Take courses beyond your “comfort zone.” The general requirements—i.e., curriculum exploration, cultural diversity, writing, and QFR—can steer you in a variety of directions. Select which courses will work for you.
- Begin a new foreign language, or advance your fluency in a language you’ve already studied. Inquire about international winter term opportunities (for this year, next year, or both). Visit the Office of the Dean of Studies to learn more about study-away.
- Select a community service project through the Bonner Center for Service and Learning.
- Attend events sponsored by the Multicultural Resource Center, OC Dialogue Center and Program Houses. Attend a Conservatory concert or view an exhibit at the Allen Memorial Art Museum. Audition for a student theater production or an a cappella singing group.
- Learn about academic and student life policies, including the Oberlin College Code of Conduct.
- Refine your time management and organizational skills. Sleep, eat, and exercise.
- Get to know the academic ambassadors, and talk to them about winter-term projects, summer internships, and course selection.
YEAR 2

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

☐ Course selection for a balanced schedule, with a focus on an area of advisee’s interest
☐ Progress toward completion of general course requirements
☐ Selection of a major, which must be declared by the time a student has completed 16 courses. If a student arrives with a large number of credits (AP, IB, or otherwise), a student may not be prepared to declare a major at 16 courses (64 credits). Please send the student to the Dean of Studies who can grant a deadline extension.
☐ Study away and academic preparation for study abroad (annual study-away deadline is March 15 for either fall or spring semester of the following year)
☐ Winter term, considering a possible internship or summer internship (see the Career Center)
☐ Importance of academic calendar and upcoming deadlines
☐ Visit the Career Center to learn about support opportunities—e.g., résumé and cover-letter writing
☐ Student accountability for academic progress; review Degree Works on PRESTO regularly
☐ Give advisee his/her RAP

AS TIME PERMITS, YOU MIGHT:

☐ Review your advisee’s extra-curricular activities, including civic engagement that relates to a student’s academic interests
☐ Counsel advisees to get to know more faculty members (who may be willing to write letters of reference)
☐ Help your advisee plan for life after Oberlin, with an eye on how best to keep options open

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS, AS APPLICABLE

☐ Take courses in the departments and programs that you find most compelling. Talk about your interests with students and faculty, including department chairs. Find out, for example, how compatible a particular major is with different study-abroad programs.
☐ Look back on your initial set of educational goals. Assess the ways in which they have changed, and update accordingly. Recognize the flexibility necessary to this endeavor, and imagine how different your values and identity may appear again in the next couple of years.
☐ Plan a summer internship and consider a winter-term internship related to your social values and fields of interest. Use summer and January to explore real-life experiences, which can deeply affect your education at Oberlin and opportunities after Oberlin.
☐ Consider studying abroad during your junior or senior year, in a location where you can speak the native language, and learn more about the nation and the world.
☐ Develop a résumé (with advice from Career Center staff) and begin to compile a portfolio of your achievements, assessments, and plans. Each of these tools can serve as a personal archive, to allow you to reflect upon what you have done, so that you can choose wisely what to do next.
☐ Take advantage of mentoring opportunities through the Career Center and the Alumni Association.
☐ Begin thinking about life after Oberlin. Learn about fellowships for recent graduates, and explore graduate and professional school programs. Explore careers you may pursue once you graduate.
YEAR 3

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

☐ Major requirements (including capstone, honors, research, senior seminar, etc. as appropriate) and overall plan for remaining semesters

☐ Selection of elective courses considering issues of educational goals and breadth

☐ Plan for the study-away experience and after. Before departure, talk about building connections between the study-away experience and the remaining semesters at Oberlin. Students returning from study away may find the need for additional support in adjusting back to campus life and culture.

☐ Winter-term or summer internships relevant to career interests

☐ Importance of academic calendar and upcoming deadlines

☐ Importance of thinking ahead about academic and non-academic opportunities: research requirements for fellowships, graduate schools, post-college internships, or jobs

☐ Visit the Career Center to update résumé and find out about tests required for graduate or professional school and opportunities to network with alumni

☐ Student accountability for academic progress; review Degree Works on PRESTO regularly

☐ Give advisee his/her RAP

AS TIME PERMITS, YOU MIGHT:

☐ Refer your advisee to professional societies relevant to field of major

☐ Affirm the importance of leadership opportunities

☐ Offer counsel on how best to begin planning for life after Oberlin

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS, AS APPLICABLE

☐ Choose electives that support your academic and personal goals. Use the idea of breadth to guide you as you continue to make the most of the liberal arts education.

☐ Organize and participate in campus events that are relevant to your educational goals.

☐ Find out about professional societies associated with your major. Get involved with your department. Serve as a student major representative, Student Academic Ambassador, or arrange visits by outside speakers. Volunteer for leadership positions in student and community organizations.

☐ Consider again the ways in which student organizations or community involvement could deepen your understanding of the world around you.

☐ Arrange meetings with your advisors, mentors, and a Career Center advisor about how your work at Oberlin can support your long-term career and personal goals. Junior year is key for planning ahead.


YEAR 4 - 5

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

☐ Completion of all requirements
☐ Honors or capstone project as applicable
☐ Making the most of leadership opportunities
☐ Application for commencement
☐ Applications for fellowships, graduate schools, post-college internships, or jobs
☐ Importance of academic calendar
☐ Student accountability for academic progress; review Degree Works on PRESTO regularly
☐ Give advisee his/her RAP

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS, AS APPLICABLE

☐ Aspire to create knowledge through your senior honors project or capstone. Use this opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of your field of study, and to draw connections between your major and your other interests.

☐ Pursue opportunities to present your work on campus and in the community. Share your knowledge in public forums, and practice the skills of effective speaking, writing, and presentation. Talk to your mentors and Career Center staff about how to give a talk, rather than read a paper.

☐ Choose courses you have always wanted to take, particularly those that will enrich your life after Oberlin.

☐ Take advantage of networking opportunities through the Career Center and the Alumni Association.

☐ Accept leadership positions in student or community organizations. These opportunities will teach you important skills of organization, and allow you to bolster the qualities of Oberlin you care about the most. Contribute to the vibrancy of the college and the community.

☐ Mentor Oberlin students. Tutoring and advising can allow you to master what you already know and reciprocate the generosity shown to you when you arrived at the college.

☐ Revisit the Career Center: attend senior orientation session; practice interviewing skills, finalize your résumé, learn about writing graduate school essays. Seek out advisors to read drafts of your application essays. Take advantage of the networking opportunities available to you through the Career Center and the Oberlin Alumni Association with Oberlin alumni.

☐ Complete applications for fellowships, graduate school, post-college internships, or jobs.