

Academic Advising: Quick Reference Guide

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This guide, along with other materials for faculty advisers, is available at:

<http://www.oxy.edu/advising-center/faculty-resources>

1. Degree Requirements

Students need the following to graduate:

- At least **128 units of credit** (no more than 64 can be transfer units)
- A cumulative **GPA for all classes of at least 2.0**
- A cumulative **major GPA of at least 2.0** (see below for more information on how to check this)
- Completion of all **Core Requirements**
- Completion of a **major** and its constituent requirements, including **comps**

Note: At least 64 units counting toward the degree should be taken **outside the major department**.

All students can take up to 18 units per semester. Students who are sophomores and above with a GPA of at least 3.0 can register for an additional 2 units (for a total of 20) beginning on the first day of classes.

In order to make "normal progress" toward graduation, students should take at least 16 units each semester. The chart on the right shows the number of units a student would be expected to have at the beginning of each semester if they were registering for 16 units per semester and have no units from transfer, AP, or summer coursework. For students who are lagging behind, it is often helpful to have a discussion about their strategy for catching up (e.g. taking summer courses at another institution, enrolling in 1- and 2-unit classes in addition to four 4-unit courses, etc.)

Year	Semester	Units Earned*
1st	1	0
	2	16
2nd	3	32
	4	48
3rd	5	64
	6	80
4th	7	96
	8	112
Completed Degree		128

*Number of units earned at beginning of each semester, assuming 16 units per semester and no summer or transfer coursework.

Enrolling in at least 12-units is required to maintain full-time status; dropping below 12-units can affect eligibility for financial aid, athletics, and more. Maintaining "normal progress" is particularly important for students receiving financial aid, which is generally awarded for no more than 8 semesters.

Occidental College Advising Center

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2. Core & Writing Requirements

Core Requirements

All students are expected to complete the requirements by the end of their junior year. In general, we recommend that students fulfill most of their Core Requirements during their first two years to allow them to focus on their major(s) during their final two years at the college.

The four-letter attribute codes (e.g. CPGC) are used on Course Counts to indicate which courses fulfill a given requirement. In some cases, it is possible to fulfill *a maximum of two core* requirements by completing a single course. In addition, there are small number of courses that are tagged in Course Counts with *three* different core requirements; in these instances, the students can use the course to satisfy *any two of the three requirements listed*.

Fall FYS Course	Spring FYS Course	First-year student must take these courses. This requirement is waived for transfer students.
CPUD U.S. Diversity	CPRF Regional Focus	CPGC Global Connections
CPFA Arts	CPPE Pre-1800	Some courses satisfy both a blue requirement and a red requirement.
CPMS Math or Science (1)	CPMS Math or Science (2)	Lab Science (CPLS) courses can also be used to fulfill one or both of the CPMS requirements
CPLS Lab Science		
LANG Language Proficiency		Student must have proficiency in a non-English language equivalent to having completed a 102-level course.

First-Year Seminars (FYS). These are small first-year writing seminars that emphasize discussion, critical analysis, and intensive instruction in writing. Incoming first-year students are required to take one seminar in the fall and one in the spring, for a minimum of eight units. *Note: Transfer students are waived from the FYS requirement.*

U.S. Diversity (CPUD). Courses satisfying this requirement study difference in the U.S., with a focus on race, religion, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or sexuality; and use frameworks from different academic fields to explore how U.S. identity and experience have been shaped by a diverse array of intellectual and cultural influences and traditions.

Regional Focus (CPRF). Courses satisfying this requirement examine a region outside of the United States without privileging a U.S.-centric perspective.

Global Connections (CPGC). These courses provide students with an understanding of the interconnectedness of cultural, socioeconomic, and political systems on a global level.

Fine Arts (CPFA). Courses satisfying this requirement focus on art-making and/or cultural and historical understandings about creative works of art.

Pre-1800 (CPPE). In courses meeting this requirement, at least 50% of the course topics and materials are drawn from before 1800 CE.

Two courses in Math or Science (CPMS). The purpose of the Core Program Math/Science (CPMS) requirement is to ensure that students have significant exposure to, and experience with, disciplinary-specific thinking based on systematic observation, the analysis of data, and/or the use of mathematical concepts and formal methods of reasoning.

One Lab Science course (CPLS). These are science courses that have a separate “lab” section. If a student takes more than one CPLS course, the additional courses can be applied to the CPMS requirement.

Language Proficiency. All students must achieve proficiency in a language other than English equivalent to two semesters of college-level study. A student studying a language for the first time would take the 101-level course followed by the 102-level course in order to fulfill the requirement.

There are several other ways that a student can satisfy this requirement, including assessment of existing proficiency through a placement exam or submission of qualifying standardized test scores. It is also possible to complete the requirement based on proficiency in language not offered at Occidental. Students should refer to the Core Program web page or consult the Language Education Specialist for more.

First-Stage Writing Requirement

For all students who enter Oxy as first-time first-year students, the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement will be determined through their performance in both First-Year Seminars (FYS) courses and through an evaluation of a writing portfolio, which includes essays written in the fall and spring first year seminars. Students who receive an assessment of “Completed” on their portfolio *and* who pass both of their FYS courses will have completed the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement.

Students who receive an assessment determination of “Not Completed” on the writing portfolio, or who do not receive a passing score in both of their FYS courses will be required to take and pass with a grade of “C” or higher WRD 201: The Art of Essay Writing in their sophomore year.

Note: Transfer students have different pathways for completing the First-Stage Writing Requirement depending on the course work they completed at their previous institution(s). The Writing Programs Director works with each transfer student to determine which options are viable.

More information about the First-Stage Writing Requirement is available here:

<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/writing-program-requirements>

Second-Stage Writing Requirement

The Second-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement is designed to teach students about writing in a specific discipline and its discourse community. Typically, the Second-Stage Writing requirement is completed by the end of the junior year. The specific requirements for completing the Second-Stage Writing Requirement are specific to each major and can be found in the major requirements section of the *Catalog*.

3. Advising Tools

Faculty advisers have access to student records through two different platforms, *Advisee List/Advising Transcript* and *Degree Works*. Both are accessed through myOxy and located on the *Acad Info & Advising* page. Students also have access to both of these tools, though for students *Advisee List/Advising Transcript* is called *Grades and Academic Records*.

Advisee List/Advising Transcript allows advisers to...

- See a list of all advisees currently assigned to them
- See lists of advisees assigned to other advisers in their department
- See basic information about a student, including GPA, units earned, declared majors and minors, expected degree date, and academic standing.
- See current class schedule and registered courses (if any) for future semesters
- Course history, organized either by subject or chronologically
- Placement results from placement exams or derived from standardized test scores
- A list of transfer courses (if any)
- Results from the First-Stage Writing Requirement portfolio

Degree Works allows advisers to...

- Track a student's progress on all degree and core requirements
- Track a student's progress in completing requirements for any majors or minors they have already declared
- Use the "What-If" feature to temporarily add a major or minor to a student's record in order to see which requirements have been fulfilled
- Access GPA calculators with a variety of functions

More information about Degree Works can be found here:

<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/student-success/advising-center/degree-works>

4. Declaring a Major or Minor

Majors

All Students must declare a major by the end of their sophomore year and are encouraged to do so prior to Registration Week of their fourth semester. (Students who transfer as juniors should declare a major during their first semester at Oxy.) When a student declares a major, they must also choose a faculty adviser affiliated with that major. They can stay with their current faculty adviser if they happen to be in the major department.

To declare a major, students should fill out a Major Declaration form (available at the Registrar's Office, Advising Center, and on [the Registrar's webpage](#)) and get signatures from their major adviser and the chair of the relevant department. The form can then be submitted to the Registrar. Some majors have an additional form on their web page that should be filled out prior to meeting with the Department Chair.

Students can double major, but they must complete all requirements for each major *and must complete separate comps*. Students with two majors may decide to drop one major up until the beginning of the senior year and often replace it with the corresponding minor (when available).

Minors

Students are not required to declare a minor. Those who elect to declare a minor should do so by the beginning of their senior year. The Minor Declaration form (available at the Registrar, Advising Center, and on [the Registrar's webpage](#)) requires only the signature of the chair of the respective department.

Students may declare more than one minor as long as they are able to fulfill all of the requirements.

5. AP/IB Credit and Transfer Courses

Students will receive 4 units of credit for any Advanced Placement examinations with scores of 4 or 5, or International Baccalaureate scores of 6 or 7 in Higher Level (HL) courses. Students should have an official score report sent to the Registrar's Office for processing.

AP and IB scores can *not* be used to fulfill Core Requirements, with one exception: a score of 4 or 5 on a non-English language AP exam can be used to fulfill the Core Language Proficiency Requirement.

Courses taken at another accredited college or university may be granted transfer credit if approved. Students should have an official transcript sent to the Registrar's Office. In most cases, students will need to fill out the Transfer Credit/Course Substitution Form and get approval signatures from the equivalent Oxy department chair. In order to fulfill a Core requirement using a transfer course, students must receive approval from the Core Program Director or Coordinator.

A maximum of 64 units of transfer credit can be applied toward the 128 units students need to complete their degree. Students who have reached this limit can still take additional transfer courses to fulfill specific requirements, but will not earn additional units.

6. When Faculty Advisers are on Leave/Sabbatical

When a faculty member is on leave or sabbatical, their advisees will be temporarily reassigned. Undeclared students will be assigned to the Advising Center. Advisees who have already declared the major must be advised by another faculty adviser within the department. These reassignments are typically coordinated by the department chair in consultation for the Director of Advising. In some cases, faculty members may elect to continue advising some or all of their advisees during their leave/sabbatical, but this is at their individual discretion.

All temporary advising assignments should be arranged with the Director of Advising. This will ensure that the temporary adviser has full access to a student's record on Degree Works and that they appear on the adviser's mailing list.

7. Advising Students Participating in Off-Campus Programs

Students who are currently studying abroad or participating in other off-campus program are expected to contact their advisers via email or other means during Advising Week to discuss course selection and get their PIN and registration time. Off-campus students will register online during their normal registration

times. (Students studying in places with limited internet access should contact the International Programs Office for assistance.)

8. The Advising Center

While faculty advisers are always the primary source of academic advising for all students at Occidental, the Advising Center provides additional support for students on routine academic matters, including questions about academic policies and procedures. Resources for both students and faculty advisers are also available on the Advising Center website.

Located in **Johnson Student Center room 134**, the Advising Center is open each weekday during the semester and throughout the summer. Students can make in-person or Zoom appointments by following the “Schedule an Appointment” link on the Advising Center website:

<http://www.oxy.edu/advising-center>

The Advising Center can also be reached by telephone (323-259-1341) or email (advisingcenter@oxy.edu)

9. Additional Advising Support

Pre-Health Advising

Director: Kat Wang (on leave Spring 2023)

Interim Director: Cheryl Okumura

Pre-Health Adviser: Cathreen Oracion

<http://www.oxy.edu/pre-health-advising/>

The Office of Pre-Health Advising provides support for pre-medical, pre-health, and STEM students to help them make well-informed career decisions and develop effective strategies for achieving their professional goals. The office provides resources to help students choose appropriate courses based on graduate-level program requirements, and also helps to connect students with co-curricular activities such as research, volunteering and clinical patient interactions. They offer application review, practice interviews and step-by-step assistance for students ready to apply for graduate school. New students possibly interested in health-related professions are encouraged to connect with Pre-Health Advising early on and to join their mailing list.

Pre-Law Advising

Director: Marisol León

<http://www.oxy.edu/pre-law-advising/>

Pre-Law Advising includes advising for law-curious and law-bound students; information about the law school admissions process; LSAT advising; personal statement advising; and advice for securing letters of recommendation. Interested students are strongly encouraged to visit the Pre-Law Advising web page and sign up for the email list in order to receive announcements about workshops, seminars, and speaker events, as well as other helpful resources.

3-2 Program Advising

3-2 Program Liason: Alec Schramm

<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/areas-study/physics/3-2-engineering-program>

Occidental has a cooperative engineering program with Columbia University and the California Institute of Technology that allows well-qualified student to complete a B.A. at Occidental and a B.S. in Engineering from the partner school in five years: the first three years are spent at Oxy, followed by two years at the partner school. Students who are interested in this program should contact Prof. Alec Schramm (alec@oxy.edu), the 3-2 Program Liaison, during their first semester at Occidental.

Language Placement and Advising

Language Education Specialist: Luz Forero

<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/student-success/language-study-placement>

Students who have questions about language placement, or who wish to fulfill their Core Language Proficiency Requirement using a language not offered at Occidental, are encouraged to contact the Language Education Specialist, Luz Forero (lforero@oxy.edu).

10. FERPA Information

The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides college students with significant privacy protections. With very limited exceptions, FERPA prohibits educational institutions from sharing a student's educational records without specific written consent. Educational records include (but are not limited to) grades, transcripts, class lists, course schedules, and financial aid information. Even within an institution, FERPA states that educational records should only be shared with employees who have a "legitimate educational interest" in the information. If you have questions about FERPA, please contact the College Registrar or the Director of Advising.

11. Student Alerts

Occidental has two student alert systems. The **SEAN Academic Concern** system helps students know that an instructor or adviser is concerned about their academic performance. Instructors typically send a SEAN when a student does not turn in a major assignment by the deadline; receives a low exam score; has poor attendance in class; or due to other indications that a student may be struggling in the course. The SEAN alert is sent to the student and copied to the student's adviser. The student is then asked to respond by filling out a brief online form.

The Advising Center reaches out to all students who receive a SEAN to offer support. Depending on the nature of the concerns and the student's response, a Student Success Adviser from the Dean of Student's Office or Disability Services may reach out as well.

Faculty advisers are strongly encouraged to read all SEANs issued to their advisees and to reach out to their advisees when support seems needed and appropriate. Questions about the SEAN Academic Concern system can be directed to the Director of Advising.

The **Oxy Care Report** allows faculty and staff to report non-academic concerns. *These alerts are NOT sent to the student.* Instead, the alert will be reviewed by members of the Student Success Team and appropriate support will be offered to the student. Oxy Care Report concerns may include medical, behavioral, emotional, relationship, family, and other issues. Questions about the Oxy Care Report system can be directed to Dr. Vivian Garay Santiago (garaysantiago@oxy.edu)

12. Contact Information

Questions related to academic advising can be directed to Edmond Johnson (Director of Advising):

edmondjohnson@oxy.edu

Johnson Hall 108; 323-341-4139

Questions about the registration process should be directed to the Registrar's Office:

registrar@oxy.edu

AGC 101; 323-259-2686