

Tips for Advising New Students

1. The First Meeting

There are many ways to have an effective advising meeting. Most faculty advisors schedule at least 20 minutes per student, though that may vary depending on your style. Below is just one model of how an initial one-on-one advising meeting might be structured:

- **Introductions.** If necessary—this may have already happened during the group meetings.
- **Ask the student to share a little about themselves and their academic interests.** Follow up question: *Do they already have a major in mind or are they still exploring different areas of interest?*
- **Pivot to course selections.** All first-years will already be registered for a FYS course, so they will likely be looking for three additional courses to add during registration on Saturday. (A few students may already be registered in additional courses as part of special programs.) Some questions: *Do you already have any courses in mind? What are the subjects that you're interested in exploring this semester?* Some students may already have a list of courses prepared, while others may be starting from scratch. Encourage students to have some backup courses in case their first choice fills up.
- **Other questions and concerns.** Do they have any other questions for you? Are there things they are concerned about with registration? (Note: Associate Deans and others will be on hand for registration on Saturday and will be able to guide students through the process.)
- **How can they reach you?** Be sure to tell your advisees how they can get in touch with you and encourage them to do so if they need guidance or support. Consider sending a follow-up email with a reminder about your office location and office hours.

2. Following up a few weeks into the semester

Many first-year students report that they do not see their faculty advisers between Orientation and Advising Week, more than two months later. Since both of these meetings are typically focused on preparing for registration, there is often very little time left to discuss a student's interests and long-term goals, or to talk about support services and opportunities that may be helpful to them. Consider checking in with your advisees in late September to see how they are doing. Invite them to make an appointment with you or to stop by an office hour. Not every student will take you up on this offer, but for some students it will serve as needed encouragement connect with you about any issues or questions that may have come up since the beginning of the school year.

3. Advisers can assign homework

Only so much can be accomplished in advising meetings, so do not be afraid to assign your students advising-related assignments, either as preparation for a meeting or as part of the follow-up to a discussion. For instance, a student interested in a certain major might be asked to look at the requirements on Degree Works prior to their next meeting with their adviser.

4. Help guide students by making referrals and introductions

New students are typically unfamiliar with many of our campus resources. Moreover, even if they know that a resource exists, they may not know how to access it or may not feel that it is intended for them. Encourage new students to take advantage of all of the resources available to them and help them locate relevant websites, email addresses, and phone numbers. When appropriate, consider walking with them to help them find an office's location on campus.

5. Placement Exams and Checking Current Enrollments

Students were offered the opportunity to take placement tests during summer in math (calculus), chemistry, music theory, French, German, and Spanish. Students who wish to take either a chemistry or calculus course this fall will need to take the placement exam prior to registration *unless* they have a qualifying score on standardized test (e.g. AP or IB). Students who wish to take a course in a language that they have previously studied will need to take the appropriate language placement exam prior to registering for the course. Placement results can be viewed on the Advisee List/Advising Transcript module under the "Placement Results" link.

Full details about placement exams are available at: <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/academic-support/advising-center/placement-exams>

6. Additional Resources

- **Advising Handbook.** This online resource is specifically designed to help new students (and their advisers!) find useful information about each major. The Advising Handbook entries include guidance on entry-level courses, a sample 4-year plan, and other pertinent information.
<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/student-success/advising-center/advising-handbook>
- **College Catalog and Departmental Webpages.** The *Catalog* is the definitive source for information about major and minor requirements. This information is also accessible using the "Courses & Requirements" link on each of academic department's web page.
<https://oxy.smartcatalogiq.com/>
- **Degree Works.** Encourages students to check out Degree Works. This is where they'll be able to track their progress with core, major, and minor requirement. Prior to declaring a major, they can use the "What-If" feature to look at the requirements for different majors and minors. (Degree Works is accessed via myOxy.)
- **Department Chairs.** In cases where there may be confusion over a requirement—or if a student is unclear on what level of class to take (particularly in Math and foreign languages)—the department chair is often the best person to contact. If you have time, you can pick up the phone and try calling them directly, or encourage a student to draft a short email. A list of current department chairs can be found here:
<https://www.oxy.edu/academics/dean-college/department-program-chairs>