

# VIRTUAL ADVISOR STUDENT MASTER LIST

## Virtual Advisor #1: On drop/add

**Q:** The semester just started. By when do I have to decide on dropping or adding class?

**A:** During the scheduling period and through the first week of the fall or spring semester, you can add/drop a course online using your MyWCU account. The course will be removed from or added to your schedule. (It is advisable to consult with your academic advisor before you make changes to your schedule). The dates for drop/add are noted on the [Registrar's calendar](#).

After this period, you will have to withdraw from a course using your MyWCU "drop" page (check deadline for this on the Registrar's calendar). The grade of W (Withdraw) will be entered on your academic record.

## Virtual Advisor #2: On "good advising"

**Q:** How does WCU define "good advising"?

**A:** The Advising Task Force has developed a definition of what advising should be on our campus, and we are sharing it with campus groups (such as SGA) to develop a mutual understanding of the roles of both advisors and advisees. The Task Force will also use it to improve advising structures across campus. Below is the abbreviated version – the [Advising Expectations pdf](#) includes detail on each of these eight points.

### Good advising: a shared responsibility

Academic advising is an educational partnership between a faculty member and a student whose goal is the student's academic, personal, and professional success. Advisors and advisees collaborate to help students achieve their aims. Advisors explain policies, identify resources, and give advice; however, students are ultimately responsible for making the decisions that will keep them on track. The advising relationship thus mirrors other teaching relationships at West Chester University.

At WCU, advisors and advisees:

1. treat each other with respect
2. understand their advising duties
3. work to clarify students' professional and life goals
4. contribute to realistic academic and career plans
5. educate themselves about institutional policies, procedures, and opportunities
6. contribute to making good class choices
7. address challenges through knowledge and use of campus resources
8. use available technological tools

### **Virtual Advisor #3: On meeting with your advisor**

**Q:** Why do I have to see my advisor before I schedule classes?

**A:** The primary reason you must see your advisor is to have an engaged discussion about your academic progress, goals and career path. During this meeting, your faculty advisor will help you make good academic decisions so you will be on the right track to graduate in a timely manner. In addition to discussing your academic progress, you can talk about programs such as internships and study abroad, graduate school opportunities, and learn about resources to help you succeed, such as the [Learning Assistance Resource Center \(LARC\)](#) for tutoring or [Department of Counseling & Psychological Services](#) for personal problems. At the conclusion of your advising meeting, your faculty advisor will lift the “advisor hold” to allow you to register beginning on your assigned date. This means you should contact your advisor for a meeting (however he or she wants to be contacted) *before* this date.

Registration for Winter and Spring classes will begin in several weeks – be alert for more Virtual Advisors on this topic.

### **Virtual Advisor #4: On scheduling advising appointments**

**Q:** How do I make an appointment with my academic advisor?

**A:** All undergraduate students must meet with their academic advisors at least once per semester to discuss their academic progress and plans for the following semester. To schedule an appointment with your advisor, you should log on to your MyWCU page to find your advisor’s name and contact information. Ask how they set up appointments. Your advisor may prefer that you email them your availability; others use an online scheduling site; others prefer a phone call; and still others ask you to sign up on sheet placed on their office door. Use the preferred method to schedule an appointment with your advisor at least one week before your scheduling date listed on your MyWCU page.

### **Virtual Advisor #5: On your Degree Progress Report (“DPR”)**

**Q:** What is a Degree Progress Report, or DPR?

**A:** The DPR is an easy way of tracking your progress towards completing the requirements of your major(s) and minor(s). You can access this tool from the center link on your MyWCU home page. The DPR helps you to map the requirements of your major that have been fulfilled and learn more about what courses you should take to fulfill other requirements of your program. Use the DPR in conjunction with the advising sheets and/or handbook for your major and minor programs. It is highly recommended that you consult with your academic advisor to check the information printed on your DPR and to discuss anything on it you do not understand.

## **VIRTUAL ADVISOR #6: On what to bring to an advising meeting**

**Q:** What should I bring to an advising meeting?

**A:** Consider how you can best make the meeting serve your needs as you move through your program. What questions do you need to ask? What information do you need? For example, you could be considering study abroad, or you could be experiencing difficulty in a class. Both of these topics would be good to anticipate so that you can bring them up during your appointment. At minimum, you should *always* go to your meeting with your advisor with a plan for the classes you want to take in the following semester. Also bring your advising sheets and a copy of your DPR printout, if your advisor requests it.

## **Virtual Advisor #7: On withdrawing and NGs**

**Q:** When is the last day that I can withdraw from a class?

**A:** The last date to withdraw from a course or courses is always the Friday of the 9th week of the semester: see the [Registrar's calendar](#) to learn this semester's dates. A "W" will appear on your transcript. If you're currently failing a course, talk to your teacher immediately about how to improve your performance. If you cannot improve enough to pass, consider withdrawing from the course. However, before you withdraw, please be sure that you will still be full time (i.e., 12 credits) and speak with the Financial Aid office about how withdrawing may affect your Financial Aid status. If you're a student athlete, talk to your coach about how withdrawing from a course may affect your eligibility to play.

## **Virtual Advisor #8: On class wait lists**

**Q:** How do I get on a wait list for a class?

**A:** The University is piloting a wait listing service for some of its classes. To see whether or not a class has a wait list, you must unclick the button "Show open classes only" when you search for a class. Then, on the "Add class" page, click "Wait list if class is full." Your schedule will show the course is wait listed if you have been put on its wait list. If a seat in that class opens, and you are next in the wait list line, the class will be added to your schedule. If you want the wait listed class to replace another class on your schedule if a seat opens up, you must use the "swap" tab to identify which class should be dropped when the wait listed class is added.

Remember, only certain classes are in this pilot program for the fall. If no wait list appears for a certain course, then you must use the regular drop-add procedures. Learn more about how the wait list works by visiting the [Registrar's website](#).

## **Virtual Advisor #9: On "reserve capacity"**

**Q:** How do I enroll in courses that have "reserve capacity" restrictions?

**A:** When you go to schedule a class, you may see that it has a “reserve capacity” designation, which is similar to “majors’ only.” Beginning in the spring 2015 semester, academic departments are placing enrollment restrictions on some courses. This means you have to officially declare a major or minor in a specific department in order to enroll in some courses offered by that department. If you need to enroll in any course which has reserve restrictions, you should contact the chair of the department offering that course for permission to enroll, and you should be ready to explain your case.

**Virtual Advisor #10: On Winter & Summer registration**

**Q:** When do I schedule for Winter session or Summer classes?

**A:** The Winter session scheduling date and time will be listed on your MyWCU account as soon as it becomes available in the Fall; this means you can often schedule Winter classes at the same time or shortly after you schedule for the following Spring. (And, similarly, you can often sign up for *Summer* classes at the same time you schedule for *Fall*.)

**Virtual Advisor #11: On taking Winter (or summer) classes elsewhere**

**Q:** How can I take Winter classes at a community college and transfer the credit to WCU?

**A:** You should always discuss course transferability and your reasons for taking classes elsewhere with your academic advisor. Your advisor will explain to you policies governing transfer courses to WCU. Make sure your course will transfer to WCU by checking the “Transfer Equivalencies” on the [Registrar’s homepage](#).

You must also complete the Transfer Credit Permission form for approval by the Registrar’s office *before* taking classes at another institution. See [Transfer Credit Permission](#).

The same process applies to Summer classes.

**Virtual Advisor #12: On paying for winter (and spring) classes**

**Q:** When is tuition payment due for winter and spring sessions?

**A:** The Office of the Bursar (610-436-2552) handles all tuition bills and billing. You can find due dates posted on their home page.

You will also see this due date on your bill, which is mailed to the address you have listed on MyWCU. If you use QuikPay, you will get notification via your WCU email account about your statements and bills. Only one paper bill is sent per semester, so if you don’t receive one, you should access your account via MyWCU to find your billing information. You will also receive periodic email reminders until your bill is satisfied, so please monitor your WCU email account. If you don’t pay your bill by the due date, you risk having your classes canceled. Please note that there is no payment plan for the winter term.

### **Virtual Advisor #13: On retaking classes elsewhere**

**Q:** Can I repeat a course I already took at WCU by taking it at another institution?

**A:** It depends on whether or not you completed the course and received a letter grade at WCU. You may not transfer in a course that you already completed or failed at WCU. However, if you withdrew from a class (and thus ended up with a “W” on your transcript), you may elect to retake that class elsewhere and transfer it back to WCU. As with all transferred classes, a grade does not appear on your WCU transcript, and so it will not factor into your GPA.

See more information in the catalog for [Transfer, AP and Other Credits](#).

### **Virtual Advisor #14: On drop/add**

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### **Virtual Advisor #15: On changing & adding majors & minors**

**Q:** How do I change my major or add/remove a minor?

**A:** As with all big decisions about your academic plans, you should talk to your advisor about changing a major or adding/dropping a minor. Ideally, you will decide on your major by the time you have amassed 30 credits – that will usually give you enough time to finish your degree in four years. If you change majors later, or change to a highly restrictive/structured major, you may have to stay a bit longer or take classes in summer or winter sessions to catch up.

Any kind of change to your program of study requires that you submit the correct form, including the required signatures. You can find these forms on the [Registrar’s webpage](#).

### **Virtual Advisor #16: On majors with entrance requirements**

**Q:** I would like to change my major, but the major I want to get into has entrance requirements that I haven’t met yet. Where can I get advising?

**A:** If you are in a major but don't know whether it is the right choice for you, discuss your plans with your academic advisor. Your advisor may suggest that you be assigned to a different advisor who is trained in helping students in your situation – “internal transfer” students. You will be assigned an advisor in the [Pre-Major Advising Center](#) (located in Lawrence 222) who will know the requirements of your desired major. You can also simply visit the Pre-Major Academic Advising Center to set up a meeting with one of its advisors who will help you explore other majors available at WCU and their respective entrance requirements.

### **Virtual Advisor #17: On Academic Recovery Plans (ARPs)**

**Q:** What is an Academic Recovery Plan, or ARP?

**A:** The Academic Recovery Plan is exactly that – a way for you to get back on track with your studies! Sometimes students have difficulties and finish a semester with a GPA below a 2.0, which means they will be put on academic probation. To help those students plan for future improvement, they must meet with their advisors to complete an online planning form: the ARP. Students must do this in order to register for classes for the next semester (but the ARP is *not* the same as lifting the usual “advisor hold,” which still needs to be done). Ideally, students should file their ARPs in (or before) the first week of classes, so that they have time to adjust their schedules accordingly.

WCU wants you to succeed! Work closely with your advisor and plan using helpful tools like the ARP, and you will be on your way to graduation.

### **Virtual Advisor #18: On scheduling advising appointments**

**Q:** How do I make an appointment with my academic advisor?

**A:** All undergraduate students must meet with their academic advisors at least once per semester to discuss their academic progress and plans for the following semester. To schedule an appointment with your advisor, you should log on to your MyWCU page to find your advisor's name and contact information. Ask how they set up appointments. Your advisor may prefer that you email them your availability; others use an online scheduling site; others prefer a phone call; and still others ask you to sign up on sheet placed on their office door. Use the preferred method to schedule an appointment with your advisor at least one week before your scheduling date listed on your MyWCU page.

### **Virtual Advisor #19: On what to bring to an advising meeting**

**Q:** What should I bring to an advising meeting?

**A:** Consider how you can best make the meeting serve your needs as you move through your program. What questions do you need to ask? What information do you need? For example, you could be considering study abroad, or you could be experiencing difficulty in a class. Both of these topics would be good to anticipate so that you can bring them up during your

appointment. At minimum, you should *always* go to your meeting with your advisor with a plan for the classes you want to take in the following semester. Also bring your advising sheets and a copy of your DPR printout, if your advisor requests it.

### **Virtual Advisor #20: On withdrawing and NGs**

**Q:** When is the last day that I can withdraw from a class?

**A:** The last date to withdraw from a course or courses is always the Friday of the 9th week of the semester: see the [Registrar's calendar](#) to learn this semester's dates. A "W" will appear on your transcript. If you're currently failing a course, talk to your teacher immediately about how to improve your performance. If you cannot improve enough to pass, consider withdrawing from the course. However, before you withdraw, please be sure that you will still be full time (i.e., 12 credits) and speak with the Financial Aid office about how withdrawing may affect your Financial Aid status. If you're a student athlete, talk to your coach about how withdrawing from a course may affect your eligibility to play.

The end of the 9th week is also the deadline for finishing work from a "No Grade" (NG, or incomplete) from last fall.

If you do not withdraw from classes by this date, you will be graded. If you do not finish work from past NGs, you will receive Fs. So you can see why meeting this deadline is important!

### **Virtual Advisor #21: On culture cluster classes**

**Q:** What are "culture cluster" classes?

**A:** *Some* B.A. programs allow their students to do a "culture cluster" option for fulfilling their foreign language requirement. This means that you must pass your 101 and 102 classes in a certain language and also take three more classes in the same language area, so that you learn some of the cultural contexts for that language. So, if you did a culture cluster in French and Francophone, you would take FRE101, FRE102, and three other courses designated on the approved French and Francophone culture cluster list in the undergraduate catalog.

Some additional requirements:

- You may not take more than two in the same department
- You may take only one culture cluster class in the department in which you major.
- You may not use one course to simultaneously fulfill a general education distributive requirement and a culture cluster requirement.
- You do not have to finish your 102-level language class before taking culture cluster classes.
- You may use a 201 language class as one of those three culture cluster classes.

Begin taking your culture cluster courses as soon as you can, so that you'll have enough time to get the classes you need.

### **Virtual Advisor #22: On your Degree Progress Report (“DPR”)**

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**A:** The DPR is an easy way of tracking your progress towards completing the requirements of your major(s) and minor(s). You can access this tool from the center link on your MyWCU home page. The DPR helps you to map the requirements of your major that have been fulfilled and learn more about what courses you should take to fulfill other requirements of your program. Use the DPR in conjunction with the advising sheets and/or handbook for your major and minor programs. It is highly recommended that you consult with your academic advisor to check the information printed on your DPR and to discuss anything on it you do not understand.

### **Q: What does the Career Development Center DO? (And where is it??)**

**A:** The Career Development Center is on the second floor of Lawrence, right across the hall from the Learning Assistance & Resource Center (LARC). The career center offers services, resources, and programs that help you explore future career options as well as prepare for and secure internships and full-time employment. You may schedule appointments for one-on-one personalized help; you can also access resume writing, interview preparation, and job search skills on the [Career Development Center page](#). Be sure to log in to your **Ram Career Network** account as well, where hundreds of jobs and internships are available to WCU students!

Also make sure that you discuss your career ideas with your advisor, who are great sources of information.

### **Virtual Advisor #24: On post-WCU life (jobs & graduate school)**

**Q:** How do I know what kinds of job openings or graduate school options are available related to my major?

**A:** The Career Development Center's career management system, Ram Career Network, lets you search jobs and internships using keywords and industries of interest. Searching that database can provide some insight from employers who are actively seeking to hire WCU students. Career center staff can also point you to other resources and strategies to find jobs related to your academic interests. If you are interested in graduate school, start that conversation with your advisor, who will be your best source of types of degrees, careers related to those degrees, and ways to prepare while you're still an undergrad. You can get help with application essays in The Writing Center and the application process/timeline in the Career Development Center.

### Virtual Advisor #25: On study abroad

**Q:** Where can I find out information about study abroad?

**A:** WCU offers many opportunities to take one class or a full semester abroad, or to be involved in a student exchange program. Discuss this interest with your advisor as soon as possible, so that you can plan the best semester to go and which classes to take while you are away. Your advisor will refer you to the [Center for International Programs](#), on the 3rd floor of Mitchell Hall, for more information.

### Virtual Advisor #26: On not passing a class

**Q:** I may not pass a class. What should I know?

**A:** There are several things to consider if you don't pass a class:

- As you know, it will affect your GPA. If your GPA falls below a 2.0, you will be placed on Academic Probation and will need to file an Academic Recovery Plan, which helps you chart a course for success. A low grade may also affect certain types of financial aid.
- If this class is required or if you need to raise your GPA, you may need to repeat it, so start looking for a seat in fall sections of the course right away – getting a seat may be difficult. Review the [WCU repeat policy](#).
- You may **not** repeat this course at another institution: you **must** repeat it at WCU.
- Remember that “NGs” – “no grades” – are given only in cases of extenuating circumstances.
- Consider how you will improve your work for this class in the future: will you get tutoring (speak to people at the LARC or Writing Center). Will you work on time management? Will you make sure you go to every class? Will you seek help from the teacher during office hours?

### Virtual Advisor #27: On final exams

**Q:** Where can I find out about final exams?

**A:** The best place to get a quick summary of information about finals is on the [Registrar's webpage](#).

Make sure you double check your final exam schedule, so that you know when to take your final. If you see a discrepancy between this final exam schedule and the day/time your instructor told you to come for your final, please ask the instructor for clarification. On the Registrar's page, you can also see the other policies related to final exams. For example, there should be no final exam given outside this final exam time period. And there is a provision – with one week's notice – that can allow you to negotiate with instructors if you have three or more finals scheduled on the same day.