ORIENTATION

What if I want to change my assigned Orientation date?
It is important that you attend on your assigned date. Your Orientation date was set according to your declared major or area of interest. On this day, you will meet with your dean, department chair, and academic advisor and be assisted in registering for your fall courses. If you do not attend Orientation, you will not be able to register for fall classes until the Thursday before classes begin, and that may greatly impact your opportunity to create a desired schedule. If you have a serious conflict that will prevent you from attending on your assigned date, contact orientation@ship.edu.

Does tuition need to be paid at Orientation?
No, The Board of Governors for the PA System of Higher Education will establish the tuition fee in July. You will receive an email sent to your official SU email address in late July informing you that your fall bill is ready to view and pay online. Bills will be due in mid-August. You will not receive a paper bill in the mail, so it is important to regularly check your SU email account.

REGISTERING COURSES

How many credits must I earn to graduate from SHIP?
Regardless of your major, you must earn a minimum of 120 credits to graduate. Some majors may require more than 120 credits, and students who take developmental-level courses will complete more than 120 credits since developmental-course credits do not count toward graduation credits.

Each course is assigned a “credit” value that typically identifies how many hours each week the class meets. A 3-credit course meets 3 hours a week. Some courses may be 4 credits and would meet 4 hours each week. So, to graduate from SHIP, you will take around 40 courses.

The 120 credits will consist of:
- General Education Courses – 48 credits
- Major Courses – varies according to major
- Minor or free elective courses - varies

How many courses should I take in my first semester?
The standard course load is 15 credits (five courses) per semester. However, it is important to remember that graduation is the goal and it is not a race. The key is for you to determine the best course load for you. There are no prizes for finishing early or penalties for taking longer. Reduced loads may be desirable if you participate in sports, are on academic probation, have learning difficulties, work, or have other significant responsibilities.
To maintain fulltime status, you must enroll in a minimum of 12 credit hours each fall and spring semester. This is important to maintain financial aid, NCAA eligibility, and to maintain health insurance if you are on your parent’s insurance policies.

If you have earned developmental placement in reading, you will be limited to 4 courses (including developmental reading) in your first semester.

**What are General Education courses?**
The General Education (Gen Ed) Program at SHIP contains 48 credits. Regardless of your major, you must complete these courses for graduation. The purpose of the Gen Ed Program is to provide you with a broad, well-rounded education. As a part of the 48 credits, you will be required to take courses in writing, human communication studies, world history, and math. These are typically taken within your first year at SHIP. You will also have the opportunity to study courses of interest in the areas of literature and humanities, biological and physical sciences, political science, economics, geography, and social and behavioral sciences. Some majors may require specific courses in some of the General Education categories, so it is vital that you know the appropriate courses for your program of study. These will be explained to you at Orientation, and your advisor will assist you to make appropriate course selections. You can review the General Education Program at [http://www.ship.edu/cas/General_Education_Requirements/](http://www.ship.edu/cas/General_Education_Requirements/).

**What courses should I register for in my first semester?**
Your first fall schedule will consist primarily of general education courses necessary for graduation. Some majors may require specific courses in the general education categories or require courses to be taken in a certain sequence, so it is critical that you register for the appropriate courses. You may also schedule required developmental-level courses or introductory courses for your major or area of interest.

At Orientation, you will be assisted by your department chair and an academic advisor to identify your options for course selection. In addition, each academic department has created sample schedules for each major. You can review these at [http://www.ship.edu/Undeclared/Academic_Major_Planning_Guides/](http://www.ship.edu/Undeclared/Academic_Major_Planning_Guides/).

**What should I do if I earn placement in a developmental course?**
*If you earn placement in developmental math, reading or writing, we strongly encourage you to take the appropriate developmental course this summer. You may take it through SHIP, your local college, university, or community college. The Placement Testing Office can assist you to identify appropriate courses.*

What developmental course(s) you take will be determined by your academic progress. You will be assisted in registering for appropriate developmental-level courses at Orientation.

- If you cannot take it in the summer, Basic Writing (ENG050) must be complete during the first semester.
- If you cannot take it in the summer, Developmental Reading and Study Skills (RDG050) must be completed during the first semester.
The scheduling of a developmental math course will be determined by your choice of a major or areas of interest. If you cannot take it in the summer, all science and math based majors will need to take this course in your first semester. All other majors will take it the summer between your freshmen and sophomore year or the first semester of your sophomore year.

Faculty advisors will be available at Orientation to help you determine if you should schedule a developmental course in your first semester.

Please note: Credits earned in developmental courses are included in determining a student’s class standing, and the grades are computed in the student’s quality grade point average; however, these credits do not count toward the 120 total number of credits required for graduation. In other words, if you take developmental coursework, you will have 3 to 9 credits beyond 120 at time of graduation (depending on the number of developmental courses you took). Placement into developmental-level courses is determined by the university’s placement testing policies.

What are minors and do I have to declare one?
Shippensburg University offers approximately 30 different minors. An academic minor is a structured group of courses that can enhance your educational experience by complimenting your declared major, broadening your knowledge and skills, or allowing you to pursue study in an area of interest. A minor usually consists of 18 to 21 credits from one or more disciplines outside your declared major. Some majors require you to declare a minor or concentration and other majors may strongly recommend that you declare a minor. Even if you are not required to declare a minor, you may choose to use your free electives in this way and earn a minor.

What are free electives?
Free electives are any course(s) that do not satisfy general education, major or minor requirements; it does not mean that you don’t have to pay for them. Most majors allow a designated number of free elective credits for degree completion. Free electives give you the opportunities to take additional courses in your major or minor, to take courses to gain desired knowledge or skills, to explore a potential major, or to take courses just for the fun of it. It is a wise strategy to reserve most of your available free elective credits until later in your degree progress.

How should I choose my schedule for my classes at SHIP?
One of the big differences between high school and college is the way classes are scheduled. Instead of spending 6 hours each day in class with back-to-back classes, in college you may only be in class 3 to 4 hours a day with your class periods spaced throughout the day. The amount of time you spend in class will be determined by the credit hours for the course and how many days a week it meets. When you look at the schedule of courses, you will note:

- M = Monday; T = Tuesday; W = Wednesday; R = Thursday; F = Friday
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday (MWF) classes are usually 50 minutes long with 10 minute breaks between them
- Tuesday / Thursday classes (TR) are usually 75 minutes long with 15 minute breaks between them
- MW classes starting at 2 pm are 75 minutes long
- Evening classes may meet one evening a week from 6:30 to 9:15. Some meet two evenings a week and are 75 minutes long.

It is generally best to balance your semester schedules with MWF and TR classes. Do not schedule your most difficult courses back-to-back, and do not schedule more than one evening course. You should schedule your courses when you are at your mental and physical peaks during the course of the day.

**How will I schedule my fall courses?**
You will register for your fall courses at Orientation. Your department chair or an academic advisor will assist you in identifying appropriate courses. Then you will be escorted to a computer lab where you will input your schedule into our Banner Student Self-Service System. Faculty advisors will be in the lab to assist you.

You will only have access to the course registration during your Orientation day.

**What do I do if I need to change my fall schedule of classes after Orientation?**
After Orientation, you will not have access to the course registration system. Any request to change your schedule will need to be directed to your dean’s office.

**When should I purchase books for my fall courses?**
Many professors will expect you to have your textbooks on the first day of class. Please keep in mind, the course schedule you create at Orientation is tentative. We recommend that you buy your books for the first day of class AND that you purchase them in the SHIP bookstore. The bookstore will ensure that you have the proper text and edition for the course.

ALSO, keep the receipt and do not open any plastic wrapped books or make any markings in the books until you are sure that you need them. This way you will be able to return them to the bookstore for a refund. If you decide to purchase textbooks online, remember that it may take several days to receive the books AND there may be a risk in not being able to return an unneeded book.

The University Store will be open at Orientation; however, textbooks will not be available for purchase at this time. Dates for textbooks availability will be posted on the University Store website [http://bookstore.shipstudents.org](http://bookstore.shipstudents.org).

**GENERAL HINTS FOR SUCCESS**

**Is class attendance mandatory?**
You will hear various truths and myths in answer to this question, depending upon who you ask. Some professors will require attendance and others may not. However, it is important to understand that there is no substitute for attending class. Various professors may factor class attendance in the final grade, or they may have a policy that after so many absences a student
automatically fails the course. Professors will present material in class that won’t be found in textbooks, and it’s up to you to obtain that information. A high correlation exists between class attendance and academic success.

Put simply, if you want to pass, go to class every day. If you must miss a class, be sure to contact your professor.

**First Day Attendance Policy:** There is a university policy that if a student misses the first day of class (in any semester) the professor may elect to drop the student from the course. If you are dropped for not attending the course, you may not be able to add that course or that section back onto your schedule. See the university catalog (http://www.ship.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate_Catalogs/Undergraduate_Catalog/) regarding what to do if you must miss the class due to an extenuating circumstance.

**What grades must I make to remain in good academic standing?**
To remain in good academic standing, you must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 ("C"). Your cumulative GPA (sometimes called QPA) is an average grade of all of the course grades you earn at SHIP. If you fall below 2.0, you will be placed on academic probation. You can still schedule classes and return the next semester to give you a chance to raise your GPA. If you do not raise your GPA and remain on academic probation 2 semesters in a row, you may be academically dismissed from the university. Be aware that some majors might require a higher GPA to declare and satisfy program requirements. So, making good grades should be your number one priority from the very beginning.

**What grades do I have to earn to make the Dean’s list?**
A dean's list is published at the end of each semester to recognize students who earn at least a 3.3 or better semester GPA. In addition, students who consistently perform at the highest levels are given special recognition at the end of each academic year and at graduation.

**Do I have to take a foreign language?**
The best answer is—*it depends*. In general, only students who expect to graduate with a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) degree must satisfy a modern language requirement. If your degree designation is B.S. (Bachelor of Science), B.S.B.A (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration), B.S.Ed. (Bachelor of Science in Education), or B.S.W. (Bachelor of Social Work), you are not required to take a foreign language. However, you may elect to take a foreign language as part of your general education requirements or as a free elective if you desire.

- If you have completed three years of a single language in high school you have satisfied the B.A. language requirement and would not have to take a foreign language course.
- If you took less than 3 years of the language in high school, you have to take the Modern Language Placement Test to determine your appropriate entry level. You can find more information on the SHIP Modern Language Requirements and Placement Test at http://www.ship.edu/Modern_Languages/
- Unless you are a language education major or language minor, you should not register for a modern language course in fall.
How can I best prepare for the time management challenges of college?
New students consistently report that they are overwhelmed by the amount of free time they have as compared to high school. Used inappropriately, your coursework and grades can suffer. Used wisely, you will be able to stay ahead of your assignments and be well prepared for tests and quizzes. Shippensburg has planners for purchase at the Bookstore at a discounted price during Orientation. Included in the University Academic Planner is information on university policies and procedures, an overview of our General Education Program, contact information for important offices and individuals, as well as links to campus activities and events. Buying (and using) a planner is to your advantage and helps you manage your time in your first year.

How do my parents verify my enrollment?
Official verification of enrollment may be requested through the Registrar’s Office. Follow the directions online: [http://www.ship.edu/Registrar/Enrollment_Verification/](http://www.ship.edu/Registrar/Enrollment_Verification/) or 717-477-1381, registr@ship.edu

How do I change my meal plan?
Contact the Student Accounts Office at (717) 477-1211.

What if I want to change my declared major?
It is important that you attend the Orientation date designated for your declared major or for undeclared students, if you are undecided.

- If you desire to change your major before Orientation, you must contact the Office of Admissions prior to June 1. The Office of Admissions will verify if you meet the requirements to declare the new major and will assist with rescheduling your Orientation date.
- No major changes will be permitted after your Orientation until the fall.

If I am undeclared, when will I be required to declare a major?
Undeclared students are encouraged to declare a major as soon as they are confident of their choice. If you do not declare earlier, you must declare a major early in your third semester. Your academic advisor will work with you to develop a strategy to help you choose your major.

Who will be my academic advisor?
All students are assigned a faculty advisor. If you have been accepted into a declared major, you will be assigned a faculty member within your academic department. If you are undeclared, the Office of Undeclared Students will assign you to a faculty advisor who is experienced and who volunteered to advise undeclared students. When you declare a major, you will be assigned a faculty advisor within the academic department.

You will have the opportunity to meet your dean, department chair or faculty advisor at Orientation. They will help you understand university and academic program policies and procedures, important information related to your major or area of interest, and to register for your fall courses. You may be assigned a new advisor once the semester begins.
This fall, if you do not know who your advisor is, or if you want to change advisors, see the chair of your major academic department. If you have not declared a major, go to the Office of Undeclared Students in Horton Hall 112.

**How often should I see my advisor?**

That depends on two things: your needs as a student and the advising plan you and your advisor design. There is a high correlation between students who are academically successful and those who work with their advisors. So, maintain contact with your advisor. Your advisor will be your partner in your success at SHIP.

Some important documents and websites:

http://ssi.ship.edu/Senate/Swataney/ -- the student handbook

http://www.ship.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate_Catalogs/Undergraduate_Catalog/ -- for university policies and course descriptions

http://www.ship.edu/orientation/ -- for information about orientation

http://www.ship.edu/Undeclared/Academic_Major_Planning_Guides/ -- for academic major course sheets and 4 year planning guides.