

Advising for Scheduling for Student Success

■ Appropriate course load

The standard credit load is 15 hours per semester. However, the key is to assist students to determine the appropriate course load to enhance their potential to achieve their goals. Some students may need to take fewer credit hours to enhance their potential for success. Students often express concerns about “falling behind” if they take less than 15 credits. Advisors need to help students understand that graduation is not a race. There are no prizes for finishing early or penalties for taking longer. The goal is graduation. 12 credit hours is the recommended course load for students with significant out-of-class commitments. Students enrolled in RDG 050 are limited to 12-13 hours.

■ Appropriate course selection

In advising for scheduling, the advisor must be aware of the student’s placements and suggest courses accordingly.

- **Students who have not satisfied a reading placement** should be advised to not take any reading intensive courses, such as World History or Literature or Psychology, until the placement has been satisfied.
- **Students who have not satisfied a writing placement** should be advised to not take courses that have extensive writing requirements or literature courses.
- **Students who have not satisfied a mathematics placement** should be advised to delay courses that require strong reasoning skills, such as some sciences, economics, and computer science, until they have strengthened their math skills.

Students also need to be guided to not overload their semester schedule with “killer” courses. For example, a schedule consisting of Principles of Biology, Chemistry, World History, Economics, and Mathematics, is a recipe for failure for some students. Students who have not declared a major, or may be uncertain about their major, should take courses that will help them investigate areas of interest, expose them to new areas, and count for General Education. Developmental students should not schedule upper-level courses in the first year and until all placements have been satisfied.

■ Appropriate course timing

Being able to manage their course schedule is just as important as the selection of courses. Students should be assisted to understand their biological clock and schedule courses at times they are most mentally alert. Students should also be guided to resist the temptation to pack their courses into a TR schedule. Students need adequate time to process information, so they should be advised to create a balanced schedule of MWF and TR courses. Evening courses that meet just one night a week are usually not wise choices for first-semester students. In addition, courses should be spaced so that a student does not have back-to-back courses and has ample time to comfortably get from class to class.