

ACADEMIC ADVISING FOR FIRST TIME BEGINNING FRESHMAN

As you enter East Central University, your first semester you will be guided by the **Academic Success Center Advisors (ASC)**. They will happily provide assessment testing, help you navigate the curriculum, change a course, find a tutor, choose a major, and point you in the right direction to get any and all of your questions about life at East Central University answered! We look forward to you joining ECU, which is a diverse and vibrant community, and these values are the foundation of the curriculum.

How to Think About Your First Course Selection

When you arrive at East Central University, your first big decision will be selecting your first set of courses. Here is a list of things to do prior to your advisement/enrollment appointment with the ASC Advisor.

- Start thinking about your first semester course selection by considering the kinds of assignments and amount of work required by a particular set of courses in your four-year plan.
- Balance and variety should be the goal. Although, University requirements and degree requirements, may compel you to vary your schedule and to explore a number of areas, you should also consider your approach toward repetitive or similar academic exercises.
- For example, if all your courses require difficult textbook reading, weekly problem sets and quizzes, in addition, a fair amount of memorization, after a month or two you might find yourself mentally fatigued and desperate for new and different ways to expend your intellectual energy. You might then wish that you had signed up for that literature course you had considered earlier. The thought of reading some novels and writing expository essays might seem appealing.
- When considering your first set of courses, think broadly. You may be unfamiliar with some disciplines, like psychology or astronomy, and they may seem strange and perhaps daunting; on the other hand, you will already be familiar with disciplines such as mathematics or history, and you may wish to continue studying them during your first term at East Central University.
- Additionally, your academic advisor may suggest a particular level or “placement” courses. These placement decisions are made based on test scores and your high school preparation common in foreign languages, mathematics, and the sciences.
- In general when contemplating your schedule, it is advisable to balance the new with the old;

required courses with elective courses. Similarly, look for the sweet spot between excessive risk and security.

- Selecting four extremely challenging courses is as inadvisable as electing four extremely easy ones. Explore the curriculum with this sense of balance, and you will be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to you at East Central University.

Know that you are not alone; it is not unusual for students to have second thoughts about one or two of the courses they have chosen. If it happens to you, do not panic. You can always go back to your Academic Advisor, Dean, or Department Chair to see about changing your program. However, be aware of **drop and withdrawal deadlines!** You can find them posted in your MyECU and on the website.

After enrollment, who is your Advising Team?

An important source of guidance will be your faculty advisor, a faculty member who understands the academic culture at East Central University and will help you navigate your future academic choices. Moreover, if your advisor does not know the answer to one of your questions, they will know where to find it.

Having realistic expectations about your faculty advisor will help you get the most from your relationship. You cannot expect a faculty member to be able (or willing) to rate every course in the curriculum on things like the quality of the lecturer, the appeal of the assigned readings, or the difficulty of the exams. Instead, you should expect your advisor to talk with you about your short-term and long-term academic goals, and to help you plan not only this semester's courses, but also a strategy for taking the greatest possible advantage of your undergraduate education. In addition, because advisors have information about your high school record and test scores, they are best qualified to help you select courses at the right level — courses that will challenge but not overwhelm you.

Before you meet with your academic advisor to select your courses, it is important to review what courses you have not taken in your degree plan, to think about your goals, and to complete any necessary forms. This will allow you to make the most of the appointment with your advisor.

There are many other resources available to you to help you succeed in your educational goals. The Academic Success Center is here for you too!