

ADVISING

THE ADVISING OF MAJORS

The DUS establishes and oversees the department's advising system. This is one of your most important jobs, and your level of commitment will have a profound impact on the majors in your department. Depending on the size of your department, it is also one of your more demanding jobs, and the more majors you have, the more assistance you will need from colleagues. The frequency of advising appointments will largely depend on the individual initiative and needs of the students, but all students are expected to meet with an adviser in their major at least once each term after they have declared a major.

Advising in the major should achieve the following three goals:

1. students in the major and students contemplating the major receive full information about the department's offerings
2. students receive advice according to their special interests and individual abilities
3. ensure that students are taking the courses required for completing the major

An individualized advising system is normally easy to establish in smaller departments, and more challenging in a larger ones. An arrangement that some larger departments have found successful is that of appointing departmental representatives in the residential colleges. By this scheme, you designate as your representative in each of the fourteen residential colleges a member of the college's fellowship who is also a departmental colleague. This departmental representative advises undergraduate majors in the college and reviews their proposed course schedules in advance of course registration. If a college does not have in its fellowship a member of the departmental faculty who is available for advising, you should not hesitate to recommend to the head of that college the name of a colleague who would be a good adviser. Any new member of the full-time faculty is eligible to be elected to a college fellowship after one term of teaching at Yale.

Other larger departments use a DUS/associate DUS model, where one or more members of the departmental faculty assist the DUS with advising and other tasks.

If yours is a smaller department but your number of majors is still such that one person would find advising all majors challenging, you may find it convenient to recruit some faculty members to assist you as departmental advisers.

If you delegate to departmental advisers the responsibility of advising students, you should keep in mind that you have made them partners in the job of enforcing the requirements of the major. Make certain that they are thoroughly conversant with these requirements and keep them informed of changes in the undergraduate curriculum. You can also ask the University Registrar's Office (URO) to grant these advisers access to the Degree Audits of the majors. There are some functions that only you, as DUS, may perform, such as granting exceptions to a major requirement or allowing a substitution. For such matters, your colleague should refer the student to you.

The members of your department's Student Advisory Committee (SAC) might also play a role as peer advisers. Such peer advisers often prove to be most useful for giving fellow students a sense of the experience of majoring in your field and practical advice on navigating the requirements and electives in your department or program. In no case may peer advisers officially assess progress toward completion of the major. In addition, they are unpaid. Peer advisers may make themselves available through email, informal meetings, or drop-in hours in a departmental lounge or other suitable space. Many DUSs invite their SAC members to accompany them to the fall Academic Fair.

Pamela Schirmeister (pamela.schirmeister@yale.edu), Deputy Dean of Yale College and the Graduate School, can provide you with a template for establishing a peer adviser system.

THE ADVISING OF NON-MAJORS

The DUS and the departmental advisers have the important and substantial task of advising students who have not yet declared a major regarding the department's courses and programs. Many departments have developed systematic methods for such advising, such as holding a fall or spring meeting for students tentatively interested in entering the major; in others, the DUS and departmental representatives respond to the initiative of individual students who make inquiries.

All DUSs are encouraged to participate in the Academic Fair, run by the Office of Academic Affairs and held annually in the week before the first day of fall classes. First-year and other incoming students, such as transfer students and Eli Whitney (non-traditional) students, are directed by their residential college deans to attend the Academic Fair to learn about Yale's subject offerings and seek answers to questions about placement, registration, and major requirements.

Incoming first-year and other new students also have access to a summer peer advising program. Staffed by a team of former first-year counselors ("FroCos"), and supported by academic deans in the Yale College Dean's Office, one-on-one advising sessions via videoconferencing are available from mid-June to mid-August. This program became mandatory for all incoming first-years in summer 2024.

During the academic year, first-year students are advised by college advisers (faculty and staff) drawn from the fellowships of their residential colleges. These advisers are assigned by the dean of the residential college and are charged with holistic advising. It is expected that specific course- and major-related advising will come from the departments themselves, often from the DUSs. In fact, DUSs are identified as one of first-year students' "primary advisers." Thus, you may expect questions at the beginning of the fall and spring terms from college advisers and from first-year or other incoming students; their questions about the department's course offerings will frequently concern matters of placement. DUSs, especially those in larger departments, are encouraged to hold enhanced office hours during the week immediately preceding and immediately following the beginning of the fall term.

A good resource for non-majors and majors alike is the 2015 Yale College Dean's Office report, "Goals for All Yale College Majors." The goals listed for your department may help you present your department's curriculum and objectives to potential interested students. Many departments have created "roadmaps," or visual representations indicating how students go through those majors. Many majors offer multiple paths,

and the roadmaps are designed to facilitate comparison. They are also visually uniform so that students may easily compare one major with another at a glance. If your department has not prepared a roadmap but seeks to do so, contact Beth Baumgartel (beth.baumgartel@yale.edu), Registrar's Office.

You may also encourage non-majors to use the "What If" function in Degree Audit, which allows them to see how their audit would appear if they were to declare any major (or add a second major).

Questions about college advising should be directed to Risa Sodi (risa.sodi@yale.edu), Associate Dean of Yale College and Director of Advising and Special Programs.

DEGREE AUDIT

If you or your department administrator is new to Degree Audit, you are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the University Registrar's Office (registrar@yale.edu) for an orientation. Degree Audit provides students, advisers, and deans with a dynamic tool showing a student's progress toward fulfillment of Yale College requirements, including major requirements. Degree Audit also offers exploration features for non-majors considering your major, and you can record special permissions and waivers directly into the audit, eliminating the need for cumbersome paper-based tracking systems.