Many people at Yale are eager to offer you advice about acclimating to Yale, campus life, and your academic and other choices. It is our hope and expectation that you will take advantage of Yale's many advising resources. Remember that it is in the nature of a liberal arts education to ask questions, and that you have an important role to play in seeking advice.

Residential College Dean

Your primary academic adviser is your residential college dean, to whom you may always turn for academic and personal advice. The dean lives and has an office in your residential college. He or she can answer questions about academic requirements and connect you to other advising resources on campus. In addition, your residential college dean oversees your residential college's advising networks.

On the first evening of First-Year Orientation, your dean will welcome you at a meeting of all the first-year students in your residential college. He or she will give you some recommendations about how best to take advantage of the opening days and course selection period. You will also have many occasions to meet with your dean throughout your first year. If you have a question to which you cannot find an answer, or if you need advice you cannot find elsewhere, consult your dean.

College Adviser

Your college adviser is a Yale faculty or staff member affiliated with your residential college who has volunteered to help you acclimate to Yale, navigate university resources, and talk through your academic and extracurricular interests and aspirations. Your college adviser works with your residential college dean and first-year counselor as part of a triad of college-based advising. Meeting with your adviser will give you the opportunity to become acquainted with a Yale faculty or staff member and, in particular, will help you transition to Yale and its academic culture, and to connect to campus networks. Your adviser may be in a position to answer specific, course-related questions, but faculty in the relevant departments are ordinarily better positioned to answer specific course-related questions (see "Departmental Advising and the Academic Fair," below).

You will have an opportunity to meet your college adviser in your residential college on the Monday before classes begin. Your college adviser may also contact you independently, typically by email, with introductions and to confirm your meeting; if so, your prompt reply is urged. Your first Monday afternoon meeting will be followed by a one-on-one meeting during the course selection period and before your course schedule is due to discuss your transition to Yale and your academic and extracurricular plans for your first semester and beyond. You will receive your college adviser’s name and contact information from your residential college dean, and you can find it on your Degree Audit page on the Student Information System website as well. You are also welcome to take the initiative and contact your college adviser first.

You will get the most out of your meetings with your college adviser by being prepared to talk about your background, interests, and goals for your first year at Yale and your hopes for your college experience in general. Other suggested topics of conversation are how best to navigate college life and your new options at Yale, course selections and opportunities, and your extracurricular interests. By the end of the course selection period, you will be asked to secure your adviser’s signature on your course schedule to indicate that you have met.

Keep in mind that your college adviser is available to meet with you throughout the term about any matters you wish to discuss, and that the amount of contact you have with your adviser depends largely upon your interest and initiative. We expect that you will also meet with your adviser around midterm to discuss how your semester is going, and again toward the end of the fall and spring terms as you begin to think about the term ahead.

Your college adviser’s appointment may last up to four terms (through the end of your sophomore year). However, in acknowledgement of students’ evolving interests and needs, and in order to involve you in the selection of your college adviser, you may also select a new adviser after your first term of enrollment or at any time until you declare a major. Some students stay with their college adviser for all four terms because of the successful advising relationship they have established; other students develop advising relationships with other faculty members or seek such relationships based on common academic or other interests and opt for a new college adviser. The choice is yours.

First-Year Counselor

First-year counselors ("frocos") are seniors who live near you and are trained to be sources of information and assistance throughout the year. Your first-year counselors can offer suggestions about curricular and extracurricular choices, take an interest in your concerns, and give firsthand advice on how best to use the academic and other resources of your residential college and of Yale College. Your first-year counselor works in close coordination with your residential college dean and is an important component of the dean/college adviser/first-year counselor advising triad.

Departmental Advising and the Academic Fair

During your first few days on campus, a number of activities will help you get the academic year started. For example, you will have the opportunity to hear faculty presentations at departmental meetings, to sign up for sections of courses, to take placement tests, to consult
Advising directors of undergraduate studies (DUSes) about courses and majors, and to attend orientation sessions led by the Health Professions Advisory program and the Center for International and Professional Experience.

Each academic department has a DUS with whom you may discuss the department’s course offerings and major requirements. Contact information for each DUS is listed by department in the Yale College Programs of Study (the YCPS, or “Blue Book,” which is available online early in the summer). Large departments may also have departmental representatives in the residential colleges; the YCPS lists the names of these representatives.

A particularly important opportunity to gather information about academic programs is at the annual Academic Fair, held on the Tuesday before classes start, during First-year Orientation. At this event, DUSes and faculty members from most academic programs and departments, and in some cases undergraduate majors, are available to answer your questions and offer you guidance about courses, placement, and prerequisites for majors. The Academic Fair provides excellent opportunities to gather information and advice directly from a broad range of sources, and you are strongly urged to attend.

Future Advising

Your residential college dean, college adviser, and first-year counselor are your first points of contact within your advising network. However, many members of the faculty are also available to talk to you, and you will meet them in the natural course of your studies. Often the best advising relationships arise from shared interests and experiences that begin in the classroom. Starting in your first year, you should seek out faculty members who might be good counselors and guides.

In your junior and senior years, your adviser will be a faculty member in your major, often the DUS. Remember that these advising resources are of little use if you do not actively take advantage of them. During each of your four years, if you look for faculty members whom you would like to get to know, you will often find generous support. Finally, keep in mind that you may always consult your residential college dean if you are unsure of where to go for help.