

## VII. ACADEMIC ADVISING

A college education is a complex and multi-faceted experience, which is best undertaken in a supportive and encouraging environment. As part of its dedication to student success, the University of Guelph is committed to providing high-quality academic advising, in order to assist students in the development and pursuit of academic objectives consistent with their life goals and the available opportunities at the University. The responsibility for developing educational plans and setting goals rests with the student. Academic advising contributes to this process by identifying alternatives, exploring likely outcomes, and referring students to appropriate resources.

Academic advising at the University is delivered by a team which includes Faculty Advisors, Program Counsellors, the Undergraduate Academic Information Centre (UAIC), the Associate Vice-President Academic and others. Coordinating all activity is the University Council on Undergraduate Academic Advising (CUAA), which has responsibility for overall advising systems direction and policy. The UAIC provides general walk-in assistance to students and, as appropriate, directs students to specialized advising resources. Each student has direct access to Faculty Advisors, who focus on subject-related issues and advice, and a Program Counsellor, who assists with Diploma Program requirements and expectations.

These components of the academic advising system work together to achieve goals and objectives that include:

- Helping students develop an educational plan and choose an appropriate course of studies to meet their academic and life objectives
- Ensuring that students are aware of opportunities and resources that can assist them in achieving their educational goals
- Assisting students in interpreting university policies and procedures, and applying general rules to their specific cases
- Facilitating resolution of academic problems, conflicts and concerns, as appropriate
- Referring students as necessary to other resource units
- Collecting and disseminating information on student needs, wants, perceptions, and trends in order to enhance institutional effectiveness and adaptability

Within the system, specific roles and responsibilities are distributed as follows:

### Students

#### Responsibilities of the Student

Students admitted to the University are responsible for understanding and meeting certain responsibilities regarding Associate Diploma Regulations and Procedures, diploma requirements, course requirements, Schedule of Dates, rules of conduct and accessing the University of Guelph email account. These responsibilities are described in Chapter I of the Diploma Program Calendar.

The responsibilities of students regarding academic advising are to seek, when necessary:

- information from the Undergraduate Academic Information Centre
- advice and assistance regarding academics from the Program Counsellor or Faculty Advisor

- clarification of regulations and procedures from the Program Counsellor or Faculty Advisor

### Faculty Advisors

#### Role of the Faculty Advisor

The Faculty Advisor has particular expertise in the diploma program. The role of the Faculty Advisor is to:

- provide information about the academic requirements of the diploma and graduation requirements
- refer to other campus services, as necessary
- communicate information about the diploma program to the department and the curriculum committee, program committee, and Program Counsellor, and to bring forward any concerns or issues as students progress through the Schedule of Studies for the diploma program
- liaise with the Program Counsellor for the diploma program, in order to provide information about the diploma program

#### Responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor

The responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor are to:

- be familiar with the academic requirements of the diploma including graduation requirements
- assist students wishing to change diploma programs
- assist the student to make academic decisions
- refer students to the Program Counsellor, as appropriate
- offer advice about meeting the requirements of the Schedule of Studies for the diploma
- be reasonably available to meet with students, as requested
- assist with graduation checks, as requested
- approve substitutions or exemptions for the diploma
- be aware of career and further study opportunities related to the field of study
- assist with course selection issues related to the diploma
- provide information to the department, curriculum committee, program committee, and Program Counsellor about issues or concerns concerning the Schedule of Studies for the diploma
- provide information and advice to the department and college, as requested, around enrollment management issues

### Program Counsellors

#### Role of the Program Counsellor

The Program Counsellor has particular expertise in the diploma program requirements and regulations. The Program Counsellor is also familiar with the policies and procedures that govern university practice. The role of the Program Counsellor is to:

- provide information about the academic requirements of the diploma program, including admission requirements, Schedule of Studies requirements, Continuation of Study requirements, and graduation requirements
- refer to other campus services, as necessary
- communicate information about the diploma program to the dean, chairs and directors, Faculty Advisors, curriculum committees, program committees (and their sub-committees); and to bring forward any concerns or issues as students progress through the Schedule of Studies for the diploma program

- liaise with the Faculty Advisor for the diploma, in order to provide information about the diploma program

## Responsibilities of the Program Counsellor

The responsibilities of the Program Counsellor are to:

- be familiar with the academic requirements of the diploma program, including admission requirements, the Schedule of Studies and Continuation of Study requirements, and graduation requirements for the diploma program
- assist the student to make academic decisions and understand the implications of those decisions
- assist with course selection and enrollment management issues as related to the diploma program
- explain transfer procedures and requirements
- explain appeal procedures
- assist with graduation checks
- sign program approval, as appropriate
- change student type, as appropriate
- meet with students as requested, or required
- refer to the Faculty Advisor, as appropriate
- uphold the academic policies of the university
- help interpret the academic policies and procedures to students, staff, and faculty
- act as a source of referral to other campus services
- be generally aware of career and further study opportunities related to the field of study
- work closely with the Faculty Advisor on any changes to the Schedule of Studies
- consult, as necessary, with other campus services
- provide relevant information to the Faculty Advisors, departments, dean, curriculum and program committees (and sub-committees) about student issues with the diploma program
- participate at liaison events, as requested

## Undergraduate Academic Information Centre (Guelph Campus only)

The role of the Undergraduate Academic Information Centre (UAIC) (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/>) (U.C. Level 3, extension 56613, [uaic@uoguelph.ca](mailto:uaic@uoguelph.ca)) is to provide general academic advising information to undergraduate/diploma students. This includes appropriate referral to the Program Counsellor, or Faculty Advisor, as well as other support services on campus.

For some students, the Centre may function as a first point of contact for information about academic issues. Peer helpers in the unit operate on an assessment and referral system - first helping the student to identify the problem or issue, and then, as necessary, referring them to the appropriate resource (e.g. Program counselling office, faculty/specialization advisor, Career Services, Financial Services, etc.).

At the Centre, students will find general information on topics including but not limited to transfer requirements and procedures; Continuation of Study requirements; admission and graduation requirements; information about appeal process and procedures; help with interpreting the calendar; or help with different forms. Students who require more detailed information about their particular diploma program requirements, or who have more specific questions may be directed to the Program

Counselling office or the Associate Director's office or the Faculty Advisor, as appropriate.

UAIC is a resource for all students, with particular sensitivity to issues facing transfer (advanced standing) students, non-degree and general studies students, and "undecided"<sup>1</sup> students, including first year students or other students contemplating a change in program.

<sup>1</sup>

Although most University of Guelph students declare a major upon entry, "undecided" in this context refers to students who may be declared in a major but are now not sure whether the program is the right fit for their educational, career, or life goals.

## The Council on Undergraduate Academic Advising

The role of the Council on Undergraduate Academic Advising (CUAA) is to develop, review, discuss, and recommend to senior administration on an ongoing basis any and all advising-related strategies, policies, and processes.

The CUAA is responsible for managing and directing academic advising policies at the university. The CUAA reports to, and is chaired by the Associate Vice-President Academic. Membership includes broad representation from stakeholders across the university community including, but not limited to: Program Counsellors, Faculty Advisors, Office of Registrarial Services, Coordinator of Undergraduate Curriculum, deans, chairs, Student Affairs, Centre for Open Learning and Educational Learning/SCOL, undergraduate students, Centre for International Programs, and the Director of the Undergraduate Academic Information Centre. The Council normally meets once per semester.

The CUAA develops strategic directions and formulates policy on advising issues, coordinates planning around academic advising issues, and serves as a permanent communication channel to help coordinate the work of the various individuals and entities engaged in academic advising activities.