

This guide was written before the COVID-19 pandemic. Please follow current College guidance for advising and open office hours for the 2020-21 academic year as appropriate for health and safety.



Advising First-Year Students

A guide for what to expect and suggestions for conversation with your advisees in the first year

ORIENTATION ADVISING

GROUP MEETING

- › Introduce yourself.
- › Ask students to share how they expect college to be different from high school.
- › Provide your view of opportunities Hamilton provides (study away, independent study, create your own major, Career Center workshops, extracurricular sports and clubs, internships, etc.).
- › Introduce and discuss the College's purposes and goals.
- › Discuss requirements (WI, QSR, PE) and other designations (SI, SSIH).
- › If students are considering professional school (law, engineering, health professions) or off-campus study encourage them to attend the scheduled sessions that day.
- › Describe the Academic Resource Centers (Writing Center, QSR Center, Oral Communication Center).
- › Discuss the honor code as a community standard.
- › Stress that Hamilton is a community—it is important to make connections with faculty/staff members.
- › Stress the importance of work-life balance and time management (balancing academics with clubs/athletics).
- › Provide students with list of Career Center and Dean of Students Office resources to help them, offer to be a conduit.
- › Discuss your role as an advisor / their role as advisee; what the students can expect when they meet with you as they consider their class schedule for their first semester; what you want them to think through to be prepared to discuss at their individual meeting with you; be explicit about how you communicate (through email, text messaging, etc.).

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Getting to know your advisee

- › “Why did you choose Hamilton? What interests you academically?”
- › Suggest that they are here to find out what they love by being open to new academic areas, which goes beyond “studying what they (think they) love.”
- › What extracurricular activities are they looking forward to—do they anticipate participating in varsity or club sports?

Getting specific about their schedule for the fall

- › “Are you satisfied with the courses you are in from summer registration?”
- › “What are you excited about and what worries you about your classes/schedule?”
- › “What do you expect to gain from each class? Why did you choose these courses?”
- › “How many languages do you speak? What language study do you want to continue or start?”
- › “What pre-professional plans do you have and how do you envision preparing?”
- › “What would you like to explore, but you didn’t enroll in?”
- › Explain process to change courses in the first week of classes, especially if the student is unsure of a course; assure them that you can meet again to change courses if needed.

Getting insight into the bigger picture

- › “Are you considering or anticipating studying abroad and where?”
- › “Where do you see yourself in a year? In five years? In ten years?”
- › “How are you settling in with roommates; how was your pre-orientation trip/experience?”

Sometimes this is easy to do (i.e. you see advisees who are in your class), but checking in with each advisee (even if just by email or an invitation to drop by your office or meet up at Opus) to see how they are faring after the first papers and tests are returned to them can catch a student before a more severe crisis arises.

If a student receives an academic warning anytime throughout the semester, you should schedule a meeting with them to encourage them to use office hours, to point them to resources and tutoring, and to see if it is really just that course, or whether other courses are also not going well.

Preparing for the meeting

- › Use your favorite tool (Blackboard, Google calendar, YouCanBook.me, posted sign-up sheet) for advisees to sign up for appointments.
- › Provide general advice in a group email about what to consider and point them to the Academic Planning Tool to explore options for classes.
- › Give them “homework” for the meeting by posing questions to consider and asking them to come with a list of potential courses.
- › Pester students who don’t schedule appointments—you have to clear them for registration after they meet with you.
- › Remind them by email the night before their appointment (this might seem like a pain, but it results in fewer missed & rescheduled appointments).

At the individual meeting

- › Ask about their favorite and least favorite current courses and explore why.
- › “Are you still really interested in X?”
- › Revisit some initial questions from the first meeting including off-campus study plans, language study.
- › Point out easily overlooked places in the curriculum that they might like to explore.
- › Ask if they have thoughts about a concentration.
- › Discuss their potential course choices for the spring semester—ask how they fit with their goals for their first year, any potential concentration, the College's goals, and how they broaden their academic interests and experience.
- › Remind them of the PE, WI, and QSR requirements.
- › Remind them of their registration day and time—this is the first time they will register via the Academic Planning Tool, they should have explored it on their own before meeting with you, but it is up to them to become familiar with how it works and how to select classes for registration before their assigned time.
- › Ask them about what plans they are making for summer internships and encourage them to meet with their Career Advisor.

**FALL MID-SEMESTER
CHECK-IN**

**SPRING SEMESTER
PRE-REGISTRATION**

- › Ask how they are faring this first semester—what are they struggling with, how are they balancing academic work with extracurricular activities, what do they think they can do better with for the remainder of the semester, how are they managing their time, how are they taking care of themselves through various stresses?

END-OF-THE SEMESTER CHECK-IN

This is good in theory and hard to do in practice, but could be accomplished by email or a quick invite to drop in if you don't see advisees regularly.
You can ask if they now think that they need any course changes for the spring semester (there is schedule adjustment time after the Thanksgiving break).
Share some of your favorite self-care tips for dealing with end of the semester/finals-week stress along with time management in preparing for final exams and papers.

WELCOME BACK IN JANUARY

First year students are still transitioning, even into the second semester. There may be drastic changes in in academic interests compared to what they came within August. Some questions you might ask of your advisees when they return to campus in January

- › How did the first semester go?
- › What was your favorite thing about the college in your first semester? Least favorite?
- › What do you wish you knew then that you do now about college?
- › What do you plan to do differently this term?
- › How have your academic plans changed?
- › What are your big goals for the semester?
- › How are you balancing academics and other commitments? What do you want to readjust to in this area?
- › Do you want to try something new in academics or co-curricular activities?
- › How is it going with roommates and friends?
- › Do you need any connections to resources (e.g., counselors, accommodations)
- › What resources did you not use that might be helpful this semester for your academics and wellness?

SPRING MID-SEMESTER PRE-REGISTRATION CHECK-IN

If you receive any midterm warnings for a student ask them to come see you before the deadline to withdraw from a class to check-in with them
For the pre-registration period

- › Assign “homework” questions for meeting with you and ask them to sign up for an appointment
- › Explore with each advisee which courses are interesting that are outside of their comfort zone and are in new areas of study
- › Explore with each advisee which courses are necessary entering the sophomore year (e.g. writing-intensive, QSR, PE, and pre-requisites for potential concentration)
- › Ask about your their plans for the summer (e.g. internships, work, summer courses, on-campus research program)
- › Inquire if they have any concerns in the present semester that you could help with

END-OF-THE SEMESTER CHECK-IN

Again, this could be accomplished by email or a quick invite to drop in if you don't see your advisees regularly
Assure them that if they need course changes after the summer, those can be accomplished in the first week back to campus in August
Remind them of taking care of themselves through the end of classes
Congratulate them on finishing their first year at Hamilton encourage them to reflect on their successes and what they have learned from any missteps

Advising Calendar 2020-21

Orientation advising	August 17-19
Fall classes begin	August 24
Last day to add a class	September 4
Academic warnings due	September 23
Last day to exercise CR/NC option	September 30
Last day to drop a course	September 30
Last day to declare leave of absence	October 7
Registration period for spring classes	November 1-20
Fall classes end	November 24
Fall final exams	Nov 30 - Dec 4
Spring classes begin	January 19
Last day to add a class	January 27
Sophomores declare concentration	February 8-12
Academic warnings due	February 19
Last day to exercise CR/NC option	February 26
Last day to drop a course	February 26
Last day to declare leave of absence	March 5
Registration period for spring classes	April 1-25
Spring classes end	May 10
Spring final exams	May 12-16

Advising Links

[College Catalogue](#)

[Academic Advising Guidebook](#)

[Introduction to Hamilton's Curriculum](#)

[First Year Students Advising](#)

[Advising Resources](#)

[Registration Information](#)

[FERPA Information](#)

[Areas of Study](#)

[AP/IB/Transfer Credit Policies](#)

[Getting Started in a Concentration](#)

[Requirements for Graduation](#)

[Knowing Our Students](#)

[Academic Planning Worksheet](#)

[Academic Warning Form](#)

[Course Change Form](#)

[Credit/No Credit Form](#)

[Academic Leave of Absence Form](#)

[Declaration/Change of Concentration](#)

[Interdisciplinary Concentration Petition](#)

[General Petition Form](#)

[Independent Coverage of Coursework](#)

[Independent Study](#)

[Petition for Transfer Credit](#)