

Steps to Advising Incoming Transfer Students

(This handout with important links can be found at www.missouristate.edu/transfer)

Incoming transfer students require a great deal of information in order to be successful at Missouri State. They can register on their own by setting up an appointment with an advisor designated by a department to meet with transfer students. Undecided students will be assisted by the Transfer Advisor in the Academic Advisement Center. Both the advisor and student should expect to meet for about an hour to allow time for the entire advisement process, then the student may register online through [My Missouri State](http://www.missouristate.edu) or in person at a registration center, such as the Office of the Registrar. Information a newly-admitted transfer student receives from the Office of Admissions can be found at <http://www.missouristate.edu/admissions/transfer.asp>.

Please document these appointments by using the “Advising Notes” function by accessing the Teaching and Advising tab through [My Missouri State](http://www.missouristate.edu). These notes are beneficial for the student and advisor, including future advisors.

It is best to follow a routine in transfer advising appointments so that information is not forgotten. The following steps may be helpful in developing your own routine:

- **Verify the student’s status prior to scheduling the appointment.**
Check to make sure the student is fully admitted, transcripts have been evaluated, his/her registration date is posted and that there are no holds. If a student requests an appointment prior to admission, just make sure the student understands you will be discussing general information and that you will *not* evaluate course work or be able to tell with any certainty how many hours will be needed to graduate. If there is information available on the web you would like students to review prior to your meeting, let them know how to find it and explain your expectations.
- **Find out why the student has decided to come to this institution.**
A student’s answer may give you some clues about his or her level of understanding of the degree program selected and if it is a correct fit.
- **Ask the student if he/she is finished or near finishing an Associate of Arts degree or a 42-hour certified block.**
In some cases, if a student is close to finishing one of the above options, a transferring institution may make an exception to its residence requirement and allow a student to transfer back a course to complete the native school’s requirements. In other situations, a student may actually benefit from transferring to Missouri State early, rather than completing a degree at another school. However, student eligibility for some scholarships may be affected by transferring prior to the completion of an AA. It may be helpful to discuss how many hours a student may need in our general education program vs. completing the AA or 42-hr block. Please explain that all students must fulfill the Senate Bill #4 requirement. Courses required by a major or minor are still required, even if they are part of our general education program.
- **Discuss the status of the transfer work and how the courses transferred will meet degree requirements, including general education requirements.**
Degree audits are available on [My Missouri State](http://www.missouristate.edu) for admitted students, but will not include any courses that are listed as “in progress” on the student’s transcript. You’ll find “in progress”

courses on the student's transcript evaluation. Students may also report work not on a transcript. If so, please request that a new transcript be sent ASAP. A degree audit for an admitted transfer student may also erroneously report that a student needs IDS 110. This error will not be corrected until approximately the third week after enrollment. General Education worksheets can sometimes be easier for new students to understand, so using the worksheet in conjunction with the degree audit is a good idea if the student hasn't completed an AA or 42-hour block.

- **Discuss reevaluation options if necessary.**

Discuss opportunities to waive degree requirements or request the use of a transferred course as a degree substitution. Dr. Jeanne Phelps, former Associate Provost, reported that the Degree's Committee has often heard cases involving a student who was "promised" a transfer course would fulfill a requirement and then at graduation the student discovers he or she still needs a course. Please avoid glib reassurance and give the student clear instructions on who has the authority to make the change and how to request a reevaluation. Document all suggestions for course reevaluation in Advising Notes.

- **Help the student understand the difference between "declaring a major" and "being admitted into a degree program."**

All new transfer students are allowed to register for their first semester without a degree hold, regardless of the number of credit hours. Some transfer students will have a degree hold on their record prior to registering for their *second* semester if not admitted to a program in the first semester. Explaining how to complete the paperwork (if necessary) to become admitted into a degree program and putting a deadline to complete this task in your Advising Notes may prove helpful. This may also be a good time to discuss GPA requirements and our repeat policy.

- **Agree to courses appropriate for the student's first semester here.**

Give detailed information about what the student must do after leaving your office to register. Provide assistance in obtaining permission forms or online permission if necessary. Suggest alternatives in the event courses are closed. Demonstrate where to find the online class schedule and the trial schedule tool. If time allows, help the student build the first schedule to ensure the registration process will go smoothly. Discuss the options to change a schedule if it becomes necessary.

- **Invite the student to return to you (or someone in your department) if there are any further questions or concerns.**

Help the student understand when the registration process begins for the following semester, since schools register students in different ways and times. Explain how you prefer to schedule appointments. Clarify your role as an advisor and your expectations of advisees.

- **Remind the student to "take care of university business."**

Many final steps (e.g. getting a student ID, parking permit, campus e-mail and computer accounts) can be overlooked by students with "information overload." Students are reminded of these things in the instructions from the Office of Admissions, but it is helpful to review these expectations.