

Advising Syllabus: A Guide to Advising at WCC



Using This Syllabus

The advising syllabus is your guide to navigating academic advising, your relationship with your advisor, and resources that will support your academic success at Whatcom Community College. The syllabus outlines the goals of advising, WCC's commitment to students, and the learning you can expect throughout your advising experience. The syllabus also cues you into what to focus on with your advisor at each phase of your studies, how to make the most of your advising sessions, and how to keep track of important information and action steps for graduation.

Advising Mission

Advisors share a common goal to partner with you and provide personalized guidance as you pursue your studies at WCC and beyond. Specifically, the mission of advising is to:

- engage with students as whole persons, and honor each student's unique life story;
- connect students to tools, opportunities, information and people so they can manage the college experience;
- engage students in academic exploration and development based on their assessments of strengths, interests, goals and enrichment opportunities;
- and foster students' recognition of their power to take ownership of their choices

so that each student can create and succeed in an academic plan that accords with their goals and values.

WCC Mission, Vision, and Promise

The advising mission also supports WCC's mission, vision, and promise to our surrounding communities.

Mission: Whatcom Community College contributes to the vitality of its communities by providing quality education in academic transfer, professional-technical, and lifelong learning, preparing students for active citizenship in a global society.

Vision: Whatcom is a supportive community, empowering lives through education.

Promise: We transform lives through education. We accomplish this by supporting student growth, respecting student investment, embracing diversity, promoting excellence and creating opportunities.

Learning Through Advising

As a WCC student, you will learn new information and grow a range of skills and abilities throughout your time at the College. *Core learning abilities* are overarching skills that are taught and reinforced both in and out of the classroom. Advising will help you grow the following core learning abilities:

- **Thinking** -- the ability to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives, and solve problems creatively and critically.
- **Information Literacy** -- the ability to discover information, identify how it is produced and valued, and use it ethically when creating new knowledge.

Advising will also help you learn key information, skills, and abilities to plan your program of study and navigate college as you prepare for your future. Through advising, you will:

- Clarify your academic and career goals through self-assessment, career exploration, and research into programs of study.
- Use complex information from various sources to build an educational plan that aligns with your strengths, interests, aspirations, and needs.
- Demonstrate personal agency in decision making.

Advising Framework

WCC's Advising Framework gives you and your advisor a predictable schedule for checking in with each other about your learning and decisions around your career, academic, and personal goals. The framework is your roadmap to staying on track, tapping into resources, and accomplishing important milestones in a timeframe that works for you. Advisors work with prospective students who plan to apply to WCC, newly admitted students, and current students, including students who take a break and return to WCC.

Prospective Students

If you are a prospective student, an advisor can help you learn more about your program of interest and the steps you need to take to become a student.

Through **prospective student advising**, you will be ready to:

1. Summarize your next steps, resources, and degree options.
2. Submit an admission application.
3. Complete your math and English placement.

New Students

After you apply to become a new WCC student, activate your ctcLink account, and complete your math and English placement, you will be ready for entry advising. Entry advising is required for new students.

Through **entry advising**, you will:

1. Identify a program of study that aligns with your interests and aspirations.
2. Use relevant technology to prepare for your first-quarter registration.
3. Identify personally relevant campus or community resources.
4. Summarize your next steps to prepare for your first day of class(es).
5. Describe your next steps for advising.

Current Students

Once you begin your classes as a current student or after returning to WCC following time away, you should meet with your advisor at least three more times: (a) in your first quarter, (b) in your third quarter (or when you reach 45 credits), and (c) when you reach 60 credits.

Through **first-quarter advising**, you will:

1. Collaboratively create an initial educational plan that aligns with your career/pathway.
2. Examine your personal, academic, and career-related strengths and needs.
3. Identify your support network and personally relevant campus or community resources.

Through **third-quarter/45-credit advising**, you will:

1. Refine your educational plan to complete your program.
2. Outline your academic, career, and/or transfer next steps.
3. Construct a personalized plan for your academic success.

Through **60-credit advising**, you will:

1. Confirm your remaining course requirements for completing your program.
2. Build a personalized plan to prepare for a bachelor's degree and/or employment.
3. Apply for graduation.

Many students find a need to connect with their advisors more than these three key checkpoints. We encourage you to reach out or meet with your advisor whenever needed.

Connecting with Your Advisor

You can make an appointment with an advisor, use drop-in advising, or email your advisor for support. Your [advisor will be assigned](#) to you after entry advising based on your [interests and goals](#) (e.g., your intended university major, degree, or certificate). WCC groups university majors and workforce preparation (professional-technical) programs into [areas of study](#). Your advisor specializes in at least one area of study—arts and communication; business; culture and society; education and public services; healthcare and social services; information technology and computer science; sciences, math, and engineering; and exploration if you are undecided.

Advising Appointments

Advising checkpoints require appointments. New students needing mandatory entry advising can visit or call Orca Central to schedule an appointment (Heiner Building, 2nd floor, 360.383.3080). Current students can schedule an appointment for all other advising checkpoints in two ways:

1. Visit or call Orca Central (Heiner building, 2nd floor, 360.383.3080), or
2. Use [Navigate360](#) to schedule an appointment.

In-person and virtual (Zoom) appointments are available during regular business hours.

Drop-In Advising

Drop-in advising is a convenient way to get immediate answers to questions that can be addressed in 15 minutes or less. It is on a first-come, first-serve basis; no appointment is needed. Examples of drop-in advising topics include selecting classes for next quarter, submitting the graduation application, making schedule changes, and verifying degree requirements. Check out the [Advising & Careers Services webpage](#) for drop-in hours.

Email Advising

Email advising is a great way to get answers to questions that are not urgent in nature. Examples of things you can email about include requests for links to important forms; clarification about a degree requirement or selected course; an unofficial evaluation of courses you want to transfer to WCC; or help with locating resources on campus, off campus, or on another college or university's website. Your advisor will tell you if your emailed questions are better addressed in a "live" (Zoom or in-person) advising session.

Getting the Most from Your Advising Session

Getting the most from your advising session involves understanding expectations and preparing in advance. Following are advisor responsibilities, student responsibilities, and tips from other students to help you have productive meetings with your advisor.

Advisor Responsibilities

When meeting with you, your advisor will:

- Communicate with you in a respectful, inclusive, and timely manner using various modalities (e.g., in-person, email, Zoom, and/or phone).
- Work to create a collaborative, personalized advisor-advisee relationship.
- Help you navigate college systems, processes, and policies.
- Connect you with resources and opportunities that support your success.
- Offer clear information and guidance to help you explore, plan, and make decisions about your career and academic future.
- Discuss course, program, career, and university transfer options that align with your aspirations, interests, and strengths.
- Collaborate with you to create academic plans that suit your needs, timeline, and goals.

Student Responsibilities

When meeting with an advisor, we ask you to:

- Communicate with your academic advisor in a respectful and timely manner using various modalities (e.g., in-person, email, Zoom, and/or phone).
- Proactively make appointments for advising checkpoints and long-term planning needs; use drop-in advising or email for quicker questions or support.
- Use the information discussed in your advising sessions to register yourself for classes each quarter in ctcLink. (Advisors do not register students in classes.)
- Explore and research career and academic opportunities that align with your aspirations, interests, and goals (e.g., university transfer, special admission programs, or career pathways).
- Complete action items from your advising sessions to prepare for future meetings and keep your academic progress on track.
- Assume personal responsibility for your educational decisions.

Tips for a Productive Advising Session

Following are tips from fellow WCC students to help you maximize your advising session:

- Be engaged with the advising process. Ask questions. Look at the class schedule search for future quarters. Share academic and careers goals with your advisor (even “maybe” plans).
- Sign up for classes early -- classes can fill up quickly. Check [ctcLink](#), email, and the WCC website for enrollment dates.
- The degree planning tool...is really good! Students should use it themselves.
- Send transfer credits (from other colleges/universities) **early!** (Send a PDF of your unofficial transcripts to your advisor or advise@whatcom.edu. Send official transcripts to WCC’s Enrollment Services. Be sure to turn in the [Transfer Credit Evaluation Request](#) form for official evaluations.)
- Know when to use drop-in advising (for quick questions) and when to schedule an appointment (bigger planning like mapping out degree requirements, exploring or planning for university transfer, reviewing credit evaluations, or changing majors).

Advising and Class Registration Technology

There are two web-based platforms we use in advising to support your success:

- [Navigate360](#) – to create an educational plan (a quarter-by-quarter mapping of the courses you need to complete your program) and monitor your progress toward graduation.
- [CtcLink](#) – to register for classes, view your unofficial transcript, update your contact information, etc. WCC has several [ctcLink tutorials](#) to help you learn how to use it.

Connecting with Campus Resources

WCC offers many campus resources to support you in your success. (Visit www.whatcom.edu and hover above “Current Students” for details.) Talk with your advisor about how to get connected. You can also work with a [student success coach](#) to explore or expand your success strategies while creating a personalized plan for your success.

Student success coaches offer one-to-one coaching sessions and workshops to help with individual academic guidance, study strategies, time and self-management skills, personal accountability, and more.

Advising Notes

Mandatory Entry Advising

Date/Time:_____ **Advisor:**_____

Notes:

Next Steps/To Do:

- Register for classes in [ctcLink](#)
- Sign up for [New Student Orientation](#)
- Get [books and supplies](#)
- Confirm schedule and classroom location the day before school starts
- Schedule a first-quarter advising appointment via [Navigate360](#)

- _____
- _____
- _____

First Quarter Advising Appointment

Date/Time:_____ **Advisor:**_____

Other Notes: