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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

## MANUAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE ADVISERS IN DEPARTMENTS, PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS FACULTIES OF HUMANITIES, SCIENCE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

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### PREAMBLE

This manual is part of a series of documents prepared by the Academic Advising Centre with a view to ensuring that there is consistent and regular communication and consultation between the Centre and its staff, and the instructors, administrators and staff of the constituent departments, programs and schools of the Faculties of Humanities, Science and Social Sciences. Together we comprise by far the largest single constituency in the University of Victoria with 26 academic units, about 430 regular faculty members, numerous staff members and some 10,500 registered students, so having clear substantive and contact information is especially important. These documents are intended to be active rather than static: we welcome comments and queries, suggestions for improvement and additional material for inclusion. Collaboration is the best way to ensure that our programs are delivered in the manner intended and presented to students clearly and consistently.

### GENERAL

1. Always make sure you refer to the most current copy of the UVic *Calendar*. Courses and programs change from year to year.
2. Be familiar with the academic year's Important Dates ([2011-12 Academic Year](#))
3. A department, program, or school designate (a chair, secretary or administrative officer) can access BANNER so that when necessary you can check student grades, course registration and transfer credits.
4. Talk with previous undergraduate advisers about precedents, typical student questions and problems, and departmental policies. It is highly recommended that each department, program or school keep a list of common waivers and transfer credit evaluations.
5. When in doubt on any matter, contact an Advising Officer at the Academic Advising Centre for program questions, or the Administrative Officer for administrative issues.

## WHO DOES WHAT?

Undergraduate academic program advising is handled at both the Faculty and the Department, Program and School levels. There is some overlap between the two, but there are also areas which must be handled by one or the other. The Records Officers and Record Clerks in Undergraduate Records ensure that the work done by academic advisers in conjunction with students is entered properly in the University records system.

### Academic Advising Officers for the Faculties of Humanities, Science and Social Sciences

1. Discuss, review and provide authoritative advice on University, Faculty and Department, Program, or School academic program requirements with students.
2. Discuss course selection with students.
3. Review and apply Departmental substitutions and waivers of program requirements.
4. Provide graduation checks for students as they near the completion of their programs.
5. Declare formally each and every student's program through the submission of a *Record of Degree Program (RDP)* form.
6. Approve second bachelor's degree and concurrent degree applications.
7. Change declared programs at the request of students.

### Academic Advising Assistants for the Faculties of Humanities, Science and Social Sciences

1. Act as the primary contact point for the Academic Advising Centre, providing initial assessment and triage for all in-person, email and telephone inquiries from students, parent and instructors.
2. Discuss all matters that do not require the attention of an Advising Officer, especially general program enquiries.
3. Provide referral to whatever office or person is required, whether within the Centre (Advising Officers, the Administrative Officer, the Director), in the departments, programs, or schools, in UVic administration (especially Records and Admissions), in UVic student services (Counselling Services, Health Services, Student Awards and Financial Aid, Career and Co-op Services, Fees Office), and outside of UVic (other universities and colleges).
4. Explain and receive all of the forms through which students manage their academic affairs. Advising issues: Record of Degree Program (RDP; program declaration); Request for Program Change (RPC); Request for Student Designed Minor; Request for Surplus Credit Allocation (RSA). Administrative issues: Request for Academic Concession (RAC); Request for Course Overload (RCO); Request for Late Add (RLA); Request for a Letter of Permission (LoP) and Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE).

### Department, Program and School Undergraduate Advisers

Department, Program and School academic advisers are in the best position to advise students on the details of the academic programs in their disciplines and generally on their fields of intellectual endeavour, as well as the resources and opportunities in their units. They have the authority to adjust some of their own program requirements where there are compelling reasons to do so. See below, *s.v. Substitutions and Waivers*.

### Records Officers and Clerks (Undergraduate Admissions and Records)

- I. Calculate academic standing:
  - calculate GPA for Sessions;
  - assign academic probation for an insufficient Sessional GPA;
  - assign Required to Withdraw (RTW) standing;
  - assign Standing Withheld for DEFs in consultation with the Director of Academic Advising.

2. Arrange to have courses evaluated for transfer credit for students entering UVic (Admissions Officers).
3. Enter grades and grade changes in student records.
4. Monitor deferred coursework absolute deadlines (change of DEF to N).

## SPECIFIC MATTERS

### Absolute University Requirements

The following university requirements are not disputable and are monitored by the Advising Officers and Records Officers.

1. All students must complete at least 60.0 units in total, with at least 30.0 of those units completed at UVic.
2. All students must complete at least 21.0 units of upper-level coursework, with at least 18.0 of those units completed at UVic.
3. All students in a Major program must complete 15.0 units of upper-level Departmental coursework, with at least 12.0 of those units completed at UVic.
4. All students in a General program must complete at least 9.0 units of upper-level Departmental coursework in two areas; at least 6.0 of those units in each area must be completed at UVic.
5. All students in a Minor program which requires at least 9.0 units of upper-level Departmental coursework must complete at least 6.0 of those units at UVic.
6. All students must complete the UVic English requirement.
7. All students must achieve a graduating grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.00. This graduating GPA is based on all courses numbered 300 and above regardless of the year in which they were taken.
8. No changes can be made to a degree, diploma, or certificate once it has been awarded. Students cannot upgrade their credential (for example, from a Major to an Honours, or a Minor to a Major) or alter it (for example, from a BA to a BSc). Students may re-register with unclassified, non-degree status and take additional courses which may be required for further study, but the original degree awarded will not be changed.

### Substitutions and Waivers

Substitutions are the most common type of waivers.

- A course may be substituted for one required in a program.
- A course requirement can be waived entirely, if warranted.

The following regulations and guidelines govern substitutions and waivers.

- Carefully consider the implications of any substitution or waiver you grant; it must be fair not only to the student requesting it, but also to all students in the program. Any substitution or waiver granted should be either general (it can apply to any student who requests it; see below, s.10) or specific (it applies solely and exclusively to the student for whom it is granted and creates no precedent).

#### Lower-level (100 and 200) courses.

1. If a lower-level course is waived without substitution, the Department has the option of requiring that an additional upper-level course be taken; the rationale is that the program still consists of the same number of units. For example, a Major in History normally requires 6.0 units of first- and second-year coursework, and 15.0 units at the upper level. If a student has

completed only 4.5 units of lower-level coursework, and then gone on to do a substantial amount of upper-level coursework, the Department may waive 1.5 units at the lower-level on the basis of 16.5 units at the upper level. The student is still doing 21.0 units of History coursework.

2. Generally speaking, lower-level courses can be used in two or more programs unless they form part of a Minor program which requires less than 9.0 units of upper-level coursework. In this case, no course in the Minor program at the second-year-level or higher may be used in any other program or option.

#### Upper-level (300 and 400) courses.

3. An upper-level course must be substituted by another upper-level course — normally from the same Department — in order to maintain the minimum number of units required for the program.
  - Lower-level courses cannot be counted towards upper-level course requirements. If the content of a course from another institution closely matches a required upper-level course at UVic but transfer credit has been allocated as a lower-level course, the UVic upper-level course may be waived on a once-only basis. A re-evaluation of the transfer credit should be considered in these cases. The student must replace the required UVic course with another upper-level course to ensure that the minimum number of upper units for the program is completed.
4. Students may substitute up to 3.0 units of upper-level, non-Departmental coursework in a Major or General program. They may also do so in a Minor program which requires 9.0 units of upper-level coursework. For example, a student doing a Major in Biology may be allowed to substitute BIOC 300A and BIOC 300B in lieu of 3.0 units of upper-level Biology coursework. Another student may ask to use two upper-level Environmental Studies courses in their Geography program. A general rule of thumb is that the substituted courses must have some relation to the program discipline; an upper-level Philosophy course would likely not be permitted in a Biochemistry program. The Director of Advising, on the recommendation of one of the Advising Officers, will not approve evidently inappropriate substitutions.
5. Students may not count upper-level coursework twice (colloquially referred to as 'double-counting'; see below, "Counting Courses Twice"). For example, if a student is doing a Major in Geography with a Minor in Environmental Studies, he or she may be allowed to substitute one upper-level Geography course in the Environmental Studies program, but he or she still must have 15.0 units of upper-level Geography coursework which is separate and distinct from the 9.0 units of upper-level coursework used for the Environmental Studies Minor.
  - Upper-level co-requisites can, however, be used twice. Students doing a BSc Major program in Linguistics must take 6.0 units of upper-level Psychology co-requisites. Because these Psychology courses are not being counted towards the 15.0 units of upper-level Linguistics requirements for the Major, they may also be used in a Psychology Minor.

#### Co-requisite

6. If a student is asking for a waiver of a program co-requisite based on previous knowledge or experience (for example, the Computer Science requirement for a Psychology program, or the Physics requirement for a Biology program), refer the student to the undergraduate adviser in the Department offering the course and ask for an opinion. If the student appears to have satisfied the requirement, the undergraduate adviser in the department offering the course must provide this information to the undergraduate adviser in the department offering the program. Any waiver issued must be from the department offering the program.

#### Minimum Grade Requirement

7. If a course is substituted for a required course which has a minimum grade requirement, the substituted course must also satisfy the same minimum grade requirement. Normally, all lower-level grade requirements must be satisfied before a program can be declared.

#### Pre-requisites

8. If a student has been allowed to use level transfer credit to satisfy a specific course (for example, HIST 200-level credit rather than a specific HIST course), and that specific course is a pre-requisite to other courses, the registration system will not recognize that the pre-requisite has been satisfied. In these cases, the Department must manually register the student in subsequent courses which require that pre-requisite.

## Process

9. Substitutions and waivers can be sent to the Academic Advising Centre by means of a Memo of Referral Form (an Advising Officer will often complete this form and ask the student to take it to the Department for approval), or by e-mail to [advising@uvic.ca](mailto:advising@uvic.ca). Waivers sent by e-mail are reviewed by the next available Advising Officer; please do not supply typed memos. Copies of all waivers are kept in the student's e-file in the Centre. It is important to recognize that other aspects of the student's program may affect the viability of the substitution or waiver; it must be reviewed by an Advising Officer prior to being applied and students must understand clearly that until the process is complete the alteration cannot be relied upon. The Director of Advising, on the recommendation of one of the Advising Officers, will not approve evidently inappropriate substitutions.
10. Occasionally, waivers can be applied to all students in a program; these are described as 'blanket waivers'. If you and your Department were to determine that a specific course can always be used towards a particular requirement (for example, that EPHE 141 is acceptable as a Science elective for Biology programs), send a formal waiver to this effect to the Faculty Advising Office for assessment and implementation. The Advising Officers maintain lists of the blanket waivers issued by departments, so you need only to send the one, rather than issuing repeated and numerous identical waivers to many individual students, but you should keep track of them as well and pass them along to your successor. If you are uncertain about whether or not a blanket waiver has been issued, please contact an Advising Officer.
11. When students declare their programs, they normally follow either the *Calendar* year of their entry to UVic, or the most current academic requirements. However, as program requirements and courses do change from year to year, programs can be adjusted so that the student does not experience academic hardship by having to complete new coursework with each revision. On the other hand, if a new set of program requirements is to her or his advantage, the student may request registration in the new program rather than the old. This can be somewhat confusing; if you have questions about which program a student should follow, please do not hesitate to call one of the Academic Advisers. Departments must be clear on transition processes when programs are changed; these should be included as part of the curriculum change process.

## Second Degrees

1. Students who wish to complete a second bachelor's degree must do so in an area which is distinct from that of their first degree. An Advising Officer will determine whether or not a second degree application is acceptable and review transcripts for applicable courses. There is a specific application form to be completed, which must be processed completely by Undergraduate Admissions or Records before coming to an Advising Officer; students must allow sufficient time (as indicated on the form) for the application process to be completed.
2. If the student has completed a considerable amount of upper-level coursework within a first degree, but not declared that area on the degree, the second-degree application will be approved only if the Department concerned offers enough non-duplicate upper-level courses to complete the degree program.
3. If the student has completed applicable coursework within the first degree, Advising will arrange with Undergraduate Admissions or Records to have the courses evaluated for UVic equivalencies if the student can provide sufficient course information. If the student is unable to do so, the Department will need to discuss with the student whether program requirements have been met within the first degree. Advising must be notified by the Department about any waivers or by-passed coursework.

## Counting Courses Twice ('Double-Counting')

If these regulations are confusing, please call one of the Advising Officers for clarification.

1. Lower-level courses can be used towards more than one program requirement with the following exception.
  - If a student is doing a Minor program which contains less than 9.0 units of upper-level coursework, no course at the second-year level or above can be used towards any other program. In this case, if one course is required for two programs, a substitute course in the same area must be taken for the second requirement.
2. Upper-level courses can be used towards the upper departmental requirements for one program only. However, if an upper-level course is required for one program, it may also be used as a co-requisite in a second program (with the excep-

tion noted above). For example, if a student uses ANTH 312 as a Science co-requisite for a Major in Biology, the course will also count towards a Major or Minor program in Anthropology. Likewise, if a student takes upper-level MATH courses as upper-level co-requisites for a program in Physics, those MATH courses can be used in a MATH Minor (the General and Minor which requires 9.0 units of upper-level coursework, not the Minor which requires only 4.5 units of upper-level coursework).

3. Cross-listed courses can be used towards one program only.
4. Students completing a Diploma program concurrently with a Degree program may count the coursework towards both credentials only if they graduate with the Diploma before the Degree; they may graduate with both at the same convocation. If a student graduates with the Degree before the Diploma, the courses are locked into the degree and are not available for use within the Diploma program.

### **International Exchange Credit (IESS)**

Students on a formal International Exchange program may transfer a maximum of 15.0 units to their UVic program. These exchange units are counted as UVic courses and therefore can be used to meet residency requirements, but any upper-level courses taken as part of an exchange program are not included in a student's graduating GPA calculation.

Students in some formal International Exchange programs are limited to four courses per term for a UVic equivalent of 6.0 units. When evaluating exchange credit, a fifth course is added to increase the credit to equal a full term at UVic (7.5 units). This additional credit reflects the other course content; for example, if a student took four Psychology courses, the additional course will be Social Sciences level credit. If a student took Science or Humanities courses, the additional course would be either Science credit or Humanities credit. This additional course can be used to satisfy breadth requirements, but not inappropriately. The student who took four Psychology courses and received additional credit for 1.5 units of Social Science level credit would not be allowed to use that extra credit to satisfy a Science or Humanities breadth requirement.

For more information on International Exchange, please contact the International and Exchange Student Services (IESS) office.

### **Honours Program**

Admission to a Department Honours program is assessed and approved solely by the Department. If a student is admissible to your Honours program, please advise the Academic Advising Centre. If the student has previously declared a Major program, we will change the program to Honours and send an updated CAPP Degree Audit to the student. If the student has not yet declared a program, the Centre will contact her or him and request that a Record of Degree Program (RDP) form be submitted.

A student cannot be accepted into the Honours Program in order to change a degree that has already been awarded.

### **Duplicate and Mutually-Exclusive Courses**

Students are responsible for reading the course descriptions in the *Calendar* before registering and must make themselves aware of any duplicate (DUP) or mutually-exclusive (MX) course notations which might result in denial of course credit, or influence their eligibility for student loans.

DUP and MX checks have to be undertaken manually by Undergraduate Records. As this can be a lengthy process, some students may not be apprised of a DUP or MX course before the Fee Reduction, or Academic Drop Deadlines.

### **Student Loans**

Students must normally register in a 60 percent course load to be eligible for student loans: 4.5 units of non-duplicate, non mutually-exclusive coursework per term. Any questions regarding student funding should be directed to Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA).