



WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

General Orientation

University Advising and Academic Support Center

At Western Illinois University, students who are not ready to declare a major enter the University in the General Orientation program and work with professional advisers in the University Advising and Academic Support Center (UAASC). Established in 1982, the center employs full-time advisers, graduate assistants, and a dedicated support staff to serve a large number of Western students.

What Is General Orientation?

- **A Major Advantage:** Decide where you want to go before you start in the wrong direction. Know more about yourself before you enter the constantly changing world of work. Approximately 25% of each freshman class begins in General Orientation.
- **A Major Alternative:** Work with a professional adviser who is committed to helping you find the major that is right for you.
- **A Major Opportunity:** Use all the University's resources, the Career Services Office, and computer programs designed to help you explore all the major options available to you.

Who Are GOs?

- Students with fewer than 45 semester hours
- Students who are not sure which major they want to pursue
- Students who want to sample classes in a major before declaring it
- Students who start in one major only to find out that it is not really the major they want

Where Are GOs Advised?

The UAASC serves a variety of students, including General Orientation (undeclared) students (GOs). UAASC advisers facilitate career exploration, make on-campus referrals, and assist their GO advisees with course selection.

At Western, advisers receive ongoing inservice training to ensure that they provide students with the most accurate, complete, and timely information possible. Caseloads for advisers working with GOs are manageable and allow advisers time to meet frequently with students to address career exploration as well as course selection.

How Do GOs Stay on Track?

By selecting from courses appropriate for all first-year students, regardless of major—These are called General Education courses. Through Western's General Education curriculum, students learn to think critically, to understand and appreciate multiple perspectives on issues, and to improve skills in research and problem solving. General Education requirements have been grouped into six broad areas: communication skills, natural sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities and fine arts, multicultural studies, and human well-being. Knowledge of these subjects is the mark of an educated person. GOs often discover their majors by taking courses in the General Education curriculum.

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By using general elective courses to explore potential majors—Students need 120 semester hours (SH) of credit to graduate. Of these, approximately nine to 21 SH may be general electives (courses taken from any department). This option must be used carefully, but it helps GOs explore coursework that is not part of the General Education curriculum.

Academic Advising and Registration

The UAASC coordinates the advising portion of the Summer Orientation and Registration Programs for all incoming freshmen and transfer students. UAASC advisers are responsible for the academic advising of GOs, students admitted through the Academic Services Program (alternative admission), Transitional Advising Program students, and area high school students taking courses while still in high school.

Career Exploration

UAASC's career resources help students select appropriate majors and careers. Brochures and flyers are collected regularly from each department and are distributed to students expressing an interest in a particular major. Advisers can help students access online career exploration information and can refer students for career testing when appropriate.



UAASC Philosophy

UAASC advisers are committed to developmental advising, which means they feel a responsibility to do more than just assist with course selection. They also view themselves as mentors and resource people who recognize that some students will experience difficulties adjusting to university life. It is important for students to feel that they have someone available to help them in this adjustment. UAASC advisers make it a priority to reach out to students so students will know help is available.

UAASC Recognition

The center has been recognized nationally as the recipient of an Institutional Advising Program Award by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). All of the UAASC advisers are members of this organization.

For More Information

For more information, contact UAASC at (309) 298-1846 or 298-1871 or visit wiu.edu/UAASC.

Higher Values in Higher Education

Located in Macomb (population 20,000), with a campus in the Quad Cities (Moline, IL), Western Illinois University offers a caring and supportive learning environment to more than 13,000 students in west-central Illinois. Western students have all the advantages of a large public university—strong faculty, state-of-the-art technology and facilities, and a wide range of academic and extracurricular opportunities—in an atmosphere free from distractions. Western Illinois University is a member of the NCAA and competes at the Division I level, sponsoring 20 intercollegiate sports in a broad-based athletics department. Western's presence in the Quad Cities spans more than 40 years, and that campus offers undergraduate and graduate programs to more than 1,500 students. The core values of the University are academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth, and social responsibility.

Western's GradTrac and Cost programs guarantee that students can achieve their degrees within four years while paying a fixed rate for tuition, fees, room, and board.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, and veteran status.

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