



## **POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT**

NUMBER: 1.3130

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Advising Relative to Declaration and Change of Program of Study

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### **I. Purpose and Scope**

Western Kentucky University is committed to enacting data-driven policies and procedures that support student retention, persistence, and timely degree completion. Studies conducted both nationally and within WKU indicate that persistence and graduation rates are significantly reduced among baccalaureate students who remain undeclared into the junior year. Consultation with an academic advisor is a critical element of an informed decision-making process on the part of students. This policy establishes policies and procedures associated with students' consultation with their academic advisors, declaration, and change of program of study.

### **II. Policy**

1. Undergraduate degree-seeking students are required to meet with their designated academic advisor prior to registration each fall and spring semester until graduation. At this time, advisors will lift the registration hold.
2. Baccalaureate degree-seeking students are required to formally declare a major prior to registering beyond their 60<sup>th</sup> hour of degree credit, or completion of their first term of study at WKU (whichever comes later); associate degree-seeking students are required to formally declare a major prior to registering beyond their 30<sup>th</sup> hour of degree credit, or completion of their first term of study at WKU (whichever comes later). This declaration is to be made in consultation with the student's academic advisor. Certain extenuating situations (e.g., study abroad/study away, return to school following stop-out) may prevent a student from meeting with his/her academic advisor prior to registration; in such cases, the student may be allowed to register beyond 60/30 hours once under a waiver, which contains a the clear expectation, acknowledged by the student in writing, that s/he must declare a major after consultation with an advisor in that program area in order to register for subsequent terms.

3. Continuing students have the opportunity to request a change in their declared program of study once per term (fall, spring, summer). Such changes include declared major(s), minor(s), certificate(s), and/or concentration(s); in addition, students may request a change in their academic advisor at this time. Program of study changes involving a change of major or certificate are provisional until such time as the receiving department/program has reviewed and accepted the request. Similarly, a requested change in a student's academic advisor must be approved by the department head or his/her designee.

### III. Procedure

1. Each term (fall, spring, summer), the Office of the Registrar will establish a three-week period (generally weeks five through seven) during which a student may initiate requests for change(s) to their program of study. The specific dates of the change period will be communicated to faculty, staff, and students.
2. The student initiates the change request using the appropriate form available through TopNet.
3. Depending on the nature of the change request, submission of the request initiates one of several email notification and routing sequences (see Appendix for a flowchart summarizing these actions):
  - a. Change requests involving only minor(s) or concentration(s) do not require additional approval. Upon submission, an email is sent to the student confirming the change.
  - b. Requests for change of major(s) or certificate(s) will be routed to an identified email account of the college housing the proposed receiving department. Professional advisors/staff within the college will work with the receiving department to review and either approve or deny the request.
    - i. If the request is approved, the receiving department will also assign a major advisor (if the request involves change of major). Upon approval, an email is sent to the student, with a copy to the new advisor, approver, and college professional advisors/staff confirming the change.
    - ii. If the request is not approved by the receiving department, the student will be automatically referred to the Academic Advising and Retention Center (AARC) for assistance in identifying an alternative program of study. AARC will contact the student to initiate this process. An email is sent to the student, with a copy to the original receiving department and college professional advisors/staff, indicating that this process has been initiated.
  - c. A request for change in academic advisor (without a requested change in major program) will be routed to the department head for review and action. If the request is approved, a email will be sent to the student confirming the change. If the request is not approved, the department will work with the student to resolve the issue.

4. Review and action on student-initiated change requests should be completed within two weeks after the change request period, to allow the student the opportunity to meet with the appropriate academic advisor prior to registering for the upcoming term.
5. Program of study changes made during the fall term will be effective the following spring term. Changes made during the spring and summer terms will be effective the following fall term.

#### **IV. Related Policies**

#### **V. Reason for Revision**

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## APPENDIX – Flowchart of Change-of-Major Advising Process

