



GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

ADVISING HANDBOOK

Office of Academic Affairs

Updated September 2022

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Advising Mission Statement

The Georgia Southwestern Advising process empowers all students to take ownership of their education by providing professional, personalized academic advising and the necessary resources to guide and support students on their educational journey.

Objectives

- 1) Assist students with academic planning, including course selection.
- 2) Discuss career choices with students to ensure proper selection of major and minor/certificate program.
- 3) Monitor the progress of students on university supported enrollment until good academic standing is regained.
- 4) Refer students to other campus support services that can help meet both their academic and non-academic needs.

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1) Be an active learner by participating fully in the advising process.
- 2) Recognize the components of the general Core Curriculum and describe how these components fit into your degree program.
- 3) Examine the role of your advisor, your responsibility in the advising process, and the difference between academic advising and registration.
- 4) Identify and utilize campus resources to support your academic needs and career readiness.
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge of university, college, and department requirements, policies, and procedures.

Academic Advisor

The student academic advisement program is under the direction of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Academic deans and department chairs and other designated faculty members have direct responsibility for providing the best possible information and advice to students enrolled in the programs of the University.

Expectations of Advisor

- 1) Be reasonably accessible to students via multiple channels of communication and interaction.
- 2) Create a reflective, supportive, and safe environment for students to communicate and explore academic and career goals.
- 3) Support student growth as individuals while respecting diverse backgrounds.
- 4) Provide professional advice and guidance and recognize that students have the final decision regarding their higher education.
- 5) Stay current with university degree requirements, academic programs and policies, and campus resources, and make referrals to other departments and offices as necessary.
- 6) Advocate for the best interests of all students within the structure of the University.

Responsibilities of Advisor

- 1) Refer the student to the Financial Aid office for specific financial aid questions. Watch/listen for key words/phrases – eligible, enough, minimum, must take X hours, etc.
- 2) Retaking a course may not always be the answer. If the student has taken the course multiple times without success and there is another option, the student should consider the other course.
- 3) Inform the student of free tutoring options, as well as other academic resources available.
- 4) Work the DWF report. Send an email or call students who are failing courses at midterm. Discuss options and offer encouragement.
- 5) Check BEACON for information about advisees.
- 6) Encourage early registration. Email advisees to “remind” them of registration and advisement dates.
- 7) Talk to advisees about course load and finding a successful balance between work, family, and college.

Advisee

Students enrolled in the University are required to indicate the programs of study which they plan to pursue. Based on this information, students are assigned to faculty members who will serve as their official advisors.

Expectations of Advisee

- 1) Regularly check your GSW Radar email address account for official announcements.
- 2) Identify and explore your interests, values, and abilities to assist in the selection of a major.
- 3) Be willing to share your ideas, interests, and questions with your advisor.
- 4) Develop an educational plan with your advisor to ensure timely academic progress towards your degree.
- 5) Communicate regularly and consult with your advisor at least once per semester.
- 6) Take primary and increasing responsibility for your academic decisions. Bring a semester/class plan to your advisor meeting.

If a student desires to make a change in their program of study, he/she should meet with the department chair or an advisor in the new program of study to discuss the requirements and expectations of the new major. Once the decision is reached as to which curriculum the student will pursue, the student must complete a "Major/Advisor Change Form." This form is found online under [Student Forms](#).

Responsibilities of Advisee

- 1) Contact your advisor with any questions or concerns throughout the semester.
- 2) Respond to advisor emails promptly.
- 3) Know when it is time to apply for graduation and contact your advisor to initiate the process.
- 4) Return requested documents to your advisor promptly (such as graduation check sheets and transient permission forms).
- 5) Ask about transfer credit not applied.
- 6) Don't be afraid to seek help!

Advisor Assignment

Students are assigned to faculty members who have been trained and are designated to advise. These assignments are based on the student's designated degree/major. If the student changes their program of study, a new advisor will be assigned.

Degree Programs

A complete list of GSW Majors is available online under [Degree Programs](#).

Minor/Certificate

A minor or certificate is a secondary group of courses that can be chosen to aim for occupational or career goals. A minor/certificate can also be used to explore areas of personal interests. Some majors require completion of a minor or certificate program, whereas this is optional for other majors. A complete list of GSW Minors and Certificates is available online under [Degree Programs](#).

Advising Calendar

The [Early Registration calendar](#) for currently enrolled students is available each term. Advisement sessions open one week before the initial date of registration. The [Academic calendar](#) is available on the GSW website for the current term and future terms.

Class Schedule

The [Schedule of Classes](#) is available for all GSW, eCore, eMajor Criminal Justice, and eMajor College of Business and Computing courses.

Semester Hour Load

Undergraduate students enrolled in 12 or more hours are considered "full-time"; graduate students are full-time at 9 hours. Students who wish to enroll in more than 18 hours in any one term must seek approval from the Dean of the college in which their major is housed. The [Request for Overload Hours](#) required can be found under the list on [Student Forms](#).

RAIN

With GSW's Registration and Academic Information Network ([RAIN](#)), students can access the following:

- Class registration
- Schedule
- Grades
- Student account balance
- Financial aid status updates
- Unofficial transcript

Degree Works

Degree Works can be used to check curriculum requirements and is updated after each term. For any outstanding requirement, you can click the course number to open a dialog box listing the course description, any prerequisite needed, and the CRN# if the course is available during the next registration term. The Degree Works Login can be found on [the Registrar's Degree Works Page](#).

Transfer Credit Review/Substitution

Degree Works is a crucial section within RAIN detailing how student transfer courses have been applied to the degree sought. During the first academic advising session between student and advisor, transfer courses in Degree Works should be reviewed to help determine what courses should be taken during the first term at GSW.

Upon acceptance to GSW, student transcripts are sent to the GSW Registrar's office for initial transfer evaluation of general education credits. Transferred courses are listed in one of three ways in Degree Works:

- 1) Courses for which GSW has a direct equivalent, such as general education courses transferred from other USG schools, will be listed by the same course numbers that appear on your official transcript. ENGL 1101 or MATH 1111 are examples of direct course equivalencies as you will see them in Degree works.
- 2) If GSW has courses in a particular disciplinary area but not the specific course on your transcript, the course will appear as an elective equivalent, such as HIST 2--- or BIOL 3---.
- 3) If GSW does not offer courses in a disciplinary area, the course will appear as elective credit. For instance, a Geography course, such as GEOG 1100, would appear in Degree Works as ELE 1100 or ELE 1---.

Students who feel they have earned transfer credits not applied in Degree Works should obtain a course description and Learning Outcomes from the institution where the course was completed. This information is required for each course in question and should be submitted to the student's academic advisor for review. If your advisor agrees that substitution credit is possible, a course substitution will be completed by the advisor and submitted to the Academic Dean for review.

Helpful Recommendations for Course Selection

[Storm Tracks](#) delivers a term-by-term recommended schedule for each major at GSW. Refer to specific discipline webpage for additional guides and recommendations.

It is generally recommended that Freshmen and Sophomores should take mostly core classes. This conservative approach will help ease the transition for students who decide to change to another major or transfer to another university. In general, Freshmen and Sophomores should take the introductory courses offered in the major. Juniors and Seniors should focus on completing the major requirements with an eye toward long-term career development.

Physical Education Requirements

GSW requires undergraduate students, both on campus and online, to complete three Physical Education Courses: Lifetime Fitness, First Aid and CPR, and one activity course, such as golf or tennis. Transfer students with an AA or AS degree from a USG institution will already have fulfilled this requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be found in the [GSW Catalog/Bulletin](#).

Georgia Legislative Requirements

Section §20-3-68 of the Official Code of Georgia requires that each candidate for a degree from a University System of Georgia institution demonstrate knowledge of the history and constitution of the United States and Georgia by course work or examination.

The U.S. and Georgia constitution requirements can be satisfied by earning a passing grade in POLS 1101 American Government or its equivalent taken at another University System of Georgia institution. Transfer students who receive credit for POLS 1101 from a non-University System of Georgia institution or Advanced Placement will satisfy the U.S. constitution portion of the requirement, but not the Georgia constitution portion of the requirement unless you graduated from a Georgia High School.

The Georgia constitution requirement can be satisfied by passing POLS 2201 State and Local Government or by passing an examination. The U.S. and Georgia history requirements can be satisfied by earning a passing grade in HIST 2111 or HIST 2112 U.S. History or its equivalent taken at another University System of Georgia institution. Transfer students who bring credit for the U.S. History course from a non-University System of Georgia institution or Advanced Placement have satisfied the U.S. portion of the requirement but not the Georgia history portion.

The Georgia History requirement will be met with Advanced Placement credit if the student graduated from a Georgia high school. The Georgia history portion can be satisfied by passing HIST 3810 or by passing the Georgia history examination. For more information or to schedule an examination, please contact the Testing Center.

To fulfill the Georgia Legislative Requirements, students who have taken American Government or US History in a state other than Georgia are able to take HIST 0100 Georgia History Review and/or POLS 0100 Georgia Constitution Review. Each course provides all the materials needed to study for the challenge exam that will allow them to fulfill the Legislative requirement. Please contact the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs to be enrolled in the appropriate GeorgiaView course or courses.

Types of Holds Preventing Registration

- **Academic Standing** – a student on University Supported Enrollment should be referred to a Success Champion in his or her academic major. Consult your dean or department chair to find out how the Success Champions are in your unit.
- **Advisement Necessary** – students must meet with their advisor. After the session, the advisor will release the hold and open registration
- **Orientation for Transfers** –Students transferring to GSW for an on-campus program should either complete the [Online Orientation](#) or attend a GSW Storm Day. Students transferring into the eMajor BBA program should complete the [eMajor orientation](#) which counts as both the GSW Transfer and eMajor Orientations. Students transferring into the eMajor Criminal Justice program complete both the GSW Transfer Orientation and the eMajor Orientation. Transfer students registering for eCore should complete the [eCore orientation](#) even if they completed the eCore Orientation at another University System of Georgia Institution.

- **Registrar's Hold** -- Student must be readmitted to GSW.
- **Student Accounts** – a tuition/fee balance is due. Student must contact Student Accounts.
- **Immunization Hold** -- ALL students must be immunization compliant even if they are an online student. GSW Health Services is currently using Med + Proctor, an electronic medical clearance platform, as the strategy to monitor and collect immunization information. First, students will need to have access to their radar email account. Directions for accessing this account can be found [here](#). Then the student should register within the Med + Proctor site by visiting the GSW Health Services webpage: Select “Immunization Information” from the menu options, then select “Register with [Med + Proctor](#)” and click “register” to start a new account. Online students are required to complete the top portion of the form, check the box at the bottom stating online status, and sign the form. Then the student simply uploads the form(s) to the [Med + Proctor](#) site. All students must submit the Required Proof of Immunization prior to their *first semester* on campus. This only needs to be submitted once.

GOOD STANDING AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORTED ENROLLMENT

A grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 on the 4.0 scale is required for graduation from Georgia Southwestern State University, although some curricula may require a higher average. To remain in Good Academic Standing students must maintain the total institutional grade point average specified below.

The grade point average and academic status are determined at the end of each semester and appear on the academic transcript. The categories used by the University are Good Academic Standing and University Supported Enrollment. Academic status is different from financial aid status and Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Contact the Office of Financial Aid to determine your financial aid status or SAP.

Good Academic Standing

Transfer and continuing students with more than 30 institutional credit hours will be considered in Good Academic Standing if their total institutional GPA is 2.0 or higher. New First Year Students with 30 or fewer credit institutional hours will be considered in Good Academic Standing if their total institutional GPA is 1.75 or higher.

University Supported Enrollment

Students whose GPAs fall below Good Standing will be placed on University Supported Enrollment. Students who are placed on University Supported Enrollment should know that it will not be easy to return to Good Standing, but that we are confident that they can meet this challenge once they have a plan and the support to carry out their plan. Students on University Supported Enrollment will have advising holds placed on their accounts, requiring them to fill out and return the University Supported Enrollment Questionnaire and to meet with a professional advisor in Academic Affairs or the Office of First Year Experience to make an Academic Recovery Plan for returning to Good Standing. Students who have already registered for the semester following their placement on University Supported Enrollment will retain their schedules as long as they fill out and return the questionnaire, and schedule an appointment to create an Academic Recovery Plan before the beginning of the next semester. Students should be

aware that an Academic Recovery Plan will most likely require them to change an existing schedule.

The Academic Recovery Plan includes not only a recommended class schedule, but also recommended academic and student support, such as tutoring or counseling. Once the student has met with a professional advisor and made a recovery plan, the plan will be approved by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Students must agree to follow the approved plan and not to withdraw from any of the classes on the plan, since a withdrawal would compromise the effectiveness of the plan. Students on University Supported Enrollment must complete an Academic Recovery Plan for each semester until they return to Good Standing. Acceptance of an Academic Recovery Plan is not automatic nor is University Supported Enrollment an open-ended status. Each term a student remains on University Supported Enrollment there will be a frank discussion between the student and a professional advisor about the advisability of continuing. For some students, leaving school and returning later on Academic Renewal may be a better option than continuing on University Supported Enrollment

Being on University Supported Enrollment and having an Academic Recovery Plan does not affect a student's financial aid status or SAP. Students should contact the Office of Financial Aid to determine their financial aid status or SAP.

Academic Reinstatement after Stopping Out

Students on University Supported Enrollment status who stop taking classes of GSW for one semester more must contact the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs to request a link to the Academic Reinstatement application. When reinstatement is granted, the student must make an appointment with a professional advisor to develop a new Academic Recovery Plan. Students who have stopped out for more than one calendar year will also have to apply for readmission to the university. The Readmission Application maybe found on the Office of the Registrar webpage under Student Forms.

GPA

While classes taken at other institutions will mostly transfer to GSW, for most purposes, the grades earned in those classes will not. Therefore, the institutional GPA at GSW starts over. Essentially, students will not have a GSW GPA until the end of the first term when the first round of grades are received from GSW. During the first term, students will be in Good Standing with this GPA, but after receiving the first GSW grades, students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or better to remain in Good Standing. If the GPA falls below 2.0, students will be in academic jeopardy and will need to speak with an academic success advisor to make a plan to get back to Good Standing.

Requirements necessary for a student to graduate with honors from GSW can be found in the [GSW Bulletin](#)

Transient Permission

GSW students who wish to take coursework at another institution for academic credit may submit a [Transient Permission Form](#) to the Registrar's Office. Students submitting a Transient Permission Form must meet several conditions as stated on the permission form. The student

must meet with his/her academic advisor to complete the form and verify that courses will apply toward degree requirements. The [Transfer Articulation Link](#) can be used to determine course transferability.

Graduation Applications

Approximately one year before anticipated completion of degree requirements, students should apply for graduation. This process can be initiated by either the student or advisor and should be following these general guidelines:

- 1) The advisor should complete the Advisor Graduation Checksheet. All course requirements that have not been successfully completed should be listed on the form. Specific future terms should not be listed unless the student has registered for the course.
- 2) The advisor should send the completed form to the student for his/her review. If approved, the student should sign and return the form to his/her advisor. If the student has not already done so, the Application for Graduation should be submitted to the advisor at that time.
- 3) Upon receipt of the student signed Advisor Graduation Checksheet, the advisor should sign the checksheet for processing. The signed checksheet, student curriculum sheet, and student graduation application should be submitted to the Academic Dean for approval. If approved, the entire packet will be forwarded to the GSW Registrar's office to be processed.
- 4) Once the Registrar's office has processed the application packet, Degree Works will be updated with the anticipated graduation date.

Internships and Club Opportunities

Junior and Seniors should also consider gaining valuable career-enhancing experiences. These might include participation in the major specific clubs and internship experiences. Research projects with faculty members are another educational opportunity with hands-on experience. See the specific discipline webpage for additional opportunities that may be available for each major.

Course Drop vs Withdrawal

The first few days of each semester are the Drop/Add period. Courses and course sections may be changed during this time without being recorded on your grade transcript. Once the Drop/Add Period is finished, students can withdraw from courses up to midterm. This will result in a grade of "W" on your transcript for the course. Payment is also required for W courses in most cases. After the withdrawal date, a withdrawal can only be done for serious medical reasons or a family emergency.

Student Academic Support Services

A variety of academic support services are available to students at GSW:

- 1) [James Earl Carter Library](#) offers a wide variety of services to the GSW campus community.
- 2) The [Office of First-Year Experience](#) assists students as they transition into GSW.
- 3) [Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction](#) offered online in GeorgiaVIEW.
- 4) The [GSW Writing Center](#) gives writers what they need most: readers trained to give them useful feedback to improve their writing. Appointments can be made both in person and online for face-to-face or online consultations.
- 5) The [Office of Accommodations and Access](#) provides support and accommodations for students with documented learning challenges. Students with documented learning challenges need to contact the Office of Accommodations and Access as soon as possible after they register for classes to promptly receive necessary accommodations. The office also houses testing facilities for all students at GSW.

Important Deadlines and Policies

- Early registration is highly recommended. Registering early will increase the likelihood that you will get the courses that you want and the times that you prefer.
- The minimum credits for full time status is 12 hours/semester. It is recommended that a student take 15 hours/semester to graduate in four years.
- Internships must be arranged during the early registration period. Registration for internships is not allowed during late registration or the Drop/Add Period.
- Graduating Seniors must submit the Application for Graduation approximately one year before the anticipated graduation date.

Resources and Forms

- Academic Calendar - <https://www.gsw.edu/calendars/academic-calendar>
- Career Planning - <https://www.gsw.edu/campus-services/career-readiness/>
- Catalog/Bulletin - <https://www.gsw.edu/registrar/bulletin>
- Class Schedules - <https://www.gsw.edu/registrar/schedule-of-classes>
- Counseling - <https://www.gsw.edu/health-counseling/counseling-services>
- Course Descriptions - <https://www.gsw.edu/Academics/Registrars-Office/Schedule-of-Classes>
- Curriculum Sheets - <https://www.gsw.edu/academics/curriculum>
- DegreeWorks - <https://www.gsw.edu/registrar/degreeworks>
- Accommodations and Access - <https://www.gsw.edu/accommodations/>
- Financial Aid - <https://www.gsw.edu/financial-aid/index>
- Health Services - <https://www.gsw.edu/health-counseling/>
- Radar Email - <https://www.gsw.edu/resources/facultyandstaff/iit/email>
- RAIN - <https://rain.gsw.edu/>
- Registrar's Office - <https://www.gsw.edu/registrar/>
- Storm Tracks - <https://www.gsw.edu/registrar/stormtracks/>
- Student Forms - <https://www.gsw.edu/academic-resources/student-forms>
- Technology Services - <https://www.gsw.edu/campus-technology/>
- Tutoring - <https://www.gsw.edu/academic-resources/tutoring/>
- Writing Center - <https://www.gsw.edu/academic-resources/writing-center/>

Important Contacts**Academic Affairs**

Wheatley Administration Building
Phone: (229) 928- 1361
Fax: (229) 931-5079
cheri.paradise@gsw.edu

Admissions

Canes Central
Phone: (229) 928-1273
Fax: (229) 931-2983
admissions@gsw.edu

Bookstore

Marshall Student Center
Phone: (229) 931-2366
Fax: (229) 931-2841
2233mgr@follett.com

Accommodations and Access

Sanford Hall
Phone: (229) 931-2661
Fax: (229) 931-2958
evelyn.oliver@gsw.edu

Financial Aid

Canes Central
Phone: (229) 928-1378
Fax: (229) 931-2061
finaid@gsw.edu

First-Year Experience

Canes Central
Phone: (229) 931-2724
Fax: (229) 931-2835
fye@gsw.edu

Health Services

Herschel A. Smith Health Center
Phone: (229) 931-2235
Fax: (229) 931-2666
health@gsw.edu

Public Safety

Smarr and Smith Memorial Building
Phone: (229) 931-2245
Fax: (229) 931-2711
public.safety@gsw.edu

Registrar's Office

Sanford Hall
Phone: (229) 931-2015
Fax: (229) 931-2021
gswreg@gsw.edu

Student Accounts

Marshall Student Center
Phone: (229) 931-2013
Fax: (229) 931-2768
stuacct@gsw.edu

Student Engagement and Success

Student Success Center
Phone: (229) 928-1387
Fax: (229) 931-2835
brooke.tome@gsw.edu

Technology Services

Morgan Hall
Phone: (229) 931-2074
Fax: (229) 931-2928
techsupp@gsw.edu