



An Advising Guide for RSU Students

(Fall 2010)

This guide is provided as a tool for you to manage your Plan of Study so that you can graduate in a quick and academically sound manner. Along with your advisor, you share considerable responsibility for your educational planning. This guide should provide you with the information necessary for scheduling your classes and tracking your progress through your Plan of Study.

Many students start their college careers with a goal in mind – “I want to be a teacher,” “I want to be a nurse,” “I want to major in history” – but few truly have a clear picture of what that goal entails. This guide will help you better navigate your academic path as you choose the courses you will need in order to pursue your particular goal. Rogers State University offers a variety of degree choices – both associate and baccalaureate degrees – and each of these choices has a specific selection of courses that are prescribed for each major. However, regardless of your major, there are also other courses, general education courses, that all students must take and pass before moving into courses specifically designed for your major.

I. CHOOSING A MAJOR / PLAN OF STUDY

Some of you may have decided on your major course of study a long time ago – based on any number of factors and influences; others of you may yet be “undecided,” which means you have not yet chosen a particular major or course of study. While there is no fail-safe method for choosing the major that is right for you, anyone who has been where you are now will tell you that it is not a decision to be made in haste or taken lightly. The major you choose can and often will be the field that you will be devoting much of the rest of your life to; therefore, your choice of major should reflect both your interests and your strengths. In other words, if just the mere mention of blood leaves you swooning, then perhaps medicine and/or nursing may not be the fields you want to pursue. A well-chosen major will provide you with a variety of career options to choose from, and a hastily chosen major may lead to frustration and wasted credit hours. Choosing a major is one of those decisions that will affect the rest of your life, so take the time and effort to do it well.

Your **Plan of Study** is the RSU degree plan in force at the time you enter any Oklahoma public college or university. For example, if you started at RSU as a biology major in 2009, then the degree plan in force at that time for biology majors would be your plan of study. Degree plans appear in the appropriate Rogers State University *Bulletin*, and your plan of study is valid as long as you are continuously enrolled – unless you opt for a newer degree plan or the degree plan expires (degree plans are valid for only seven years). It is **important that you have a copy of this degree plan**, along with any other paperwork you are given by your academic advisor, to serve as a guide to specific courses you will have to take in order to finish your degree.

A Word about Minors

In addition to your major plan of study, you may be required to supplement your degree with an area of emphasis that complements your major. These supplemental areas are called **academic minors**, and they involve a less extensive concentration in your particular area of study. According to the RSU *Bulletin*, an academic minor “is a specific set of courses in a subject area or academic discipline” (32), consisting of a core of courses and possible electives, intended to offer students an opportunity to balance their major plans of study with a related field or a more specific focus within their major. Academic minors differ from degree **option areas** in that minors are not a cohesive group of courses contained within a student’s major area. For example, a student pursuing a bachelor of fine arts degree with a multimedia

option might choose a minor in Native American studies to explore different avenues for utilizing that degree. Similarly, someone pursuing a bachelor of arts in liberal arts (BALA) degree with an English option might choose a minor in American studies for a more multi-disciplinary view of that particular field.

While the selection of a minor is not required for all degrees, it is required for many degree programs offered at RSU; however, whether your degree requires a minor or not, students have found that choosing a complementary minor to their major field of study broadens their understanding of the various facets of their major as well as broadening their potential job opportunities upon finishing their degrees. Another benefit of a minor is that it diverges considerably from your major and demonstrates your versatility. If you are required to declare a minor for your major area of study or if you are considering declaring a minor to complement your major area of study, you should discuss the various possibilities with your academic advisor.

II. GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES – MISSION AND REQUIREMENTS

A large part of your degree plan will be a prescribed course of study known as **general education courses** – courses that most degree plans (whether for a baccalaureate or associate degree) mandate that all students pursuing those degrees take and successfully complete.

The mission of general education courses is, according to the RSU Bulletin, “a shared set of experiences that imparts knowledge, skills, and perspectives necessary for lifelong learning and productive citizenship in a dynamic and global society” (*Bulletin* 57). What that means is that RSU, in conjunction with the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, has designated certain courses as necessary elements of that “shared set of experiences.”

At RSU, the general education requirements for both baccalaureate and associate degrees should be completed within a student’s first 45 credit hours and are the same regardless of whether the student is attempting a bachelor’s or associate’s degree:

A minimum of 41 credit hours must be completed and passed from the following categories:

- A. Communications – Nine (9) hours, consisting of: 9 hours**
 - a. ENGL 1113 – Composition I (3 hours)
 - b. ENGL 1213 – Composition II (3 hours)
 - c. SPCH 1113 – Speech Communication (3 hours)
- B. Social and Behavioral Sciences – Nine (9) hours, consisting of: 9 hours**
 - a. History – Three (3) hours, chosen from:
 - i. HIST 2483 – American History to 1877 (3 hours) OR
 - ii. HIST 2493 – American History since 1877 (3 hours)
 - b. Political Science – Three (3) hours
 - i. POLS 1113 – American Federal Government (3 hours)
 - c. Social Science – Three (3) hours, chosen from:
 - i. ECON 2113 – Principles of Macroeconomics (3 hours)
 - ii. ECON 2123 – Principles of Microeconomics (3 hours)
 - iii. PSY 1113 – Introduction to Psychology (3 hours)
 - iv. SOC 1113 – Introduction to Sociology (3 hours)
- C. Science and Mathematics – Eleven (11) hours, consisting of: 11 hours**
 - a. Physical Science – Four (4) hours, chosen from:
 - i. CHEM 1315 – General Chemistry I (4 hours)

- ii. GEOL 1014 – Earth Science (4 hours)
 - iii. GEOL 1114 – Physical Geology (4 hours)
 - iv. GEOL 1124 – Physical Geography (4 hours)
 - v. GEOL 1224 – Historical Geology (4 hours)
 - vi. GEOL 2124 – Astronomy (4 hours)
 - vii. PHYS 1014 – General Physical Science (4 hours)
 - viii. PHYS 1114 – General Physics (4 hours)
 - b. Biological Science – Four (4) hours, chosen from:
 - i. BIOL 1114 – General Biology (4 hours)
 - ii. BIOL 1134 – General Environmental Biology (4 hours)
 - iii. BIOL 1144 – General Cellular Biology (4 hours)
 - c. Mathematics – Three (3) hours, chosen from:
 - i. MATH 1403 – Mathematics for Critical Thinking (3 hours)
 - ii. MATH 1513 – College Algebra (3 hours)
 - iii. MATH 1613 – Trigonometry (3 hours)
 - iv. MATH 1715 – Pre-Calculus (3 hours)
 - v. MATH 2264 – Analytical Geometry & Calculus I (3 hours)
 - D. Humanities – Six (6) hours, chosen from: 6 hours**
 - a. ART (HUM) 1113 – Art Appreciation (3 hours)
 - b. COMM (HUM) 2413 – Theatre Appreciation (3 hours)
 - c. ENGL 2613 – Introduction to Literature (3 hours)
 - d. HUM 2113 – Humanities I (3 hours)
 - e. HUM 2223 – Humanities II (3 hours)
 - f. HUM 2893 – Cinema (3 hours)
 - g. MUSC (HUM) 2573 – Music Appreciation (3 hours)
 - h. PHIL 1113 – Introduction to Philosophy (3 hours)
 - E. Global Studies – Three (3) hours, chosen from: 3 hours**
 - a. BIOL 3104 – Plants and Civilization (3 hours)
 - b. ECON 3003 – International Economic Issues and Policies (3 hours)
 - c. GEOG 2243 – Human Geography (3 hours)
 - d. HIST 2013 – World Civilization I (3 hours)
 - e. HIST 2024 – World Civilization II (3 hours)
 - f. HUM 3633 – Comparative Religion (3 hours)
 - g. LANG 1113 – Foundations of World Languages (3 hours)
 - h. NAMS 1143 – Native Americans of North America (3 hours)
 - i. NAMS 2503 – Cherokee I (3 hours)
 - j. PHIL 1313 – Values and Ethics (3 hours)
 - k. POLS 3053 – International Relations (3 hours)
 - l. SOC 3213 – Minority Groups (3 hours)
 - m. SPAN 1113 – Beginning Spanish I (3 hours)
 - F. Elective – Three (3) additional hours from the courses listed above and not previously selected. 3 hours**
- TOTAL 41 HOURS**

NOTE: Some programs require specific general education courses, so be sure to refer to your specific degree plan or consult with your academic advisor for a list of these requirements.

III. HOW MANY CREDIT HOURS SHOULD I TAKE PER SEMESTER?

Most college-level courses are measured in **credit hours** – a time-based reference that measures educational attainment – and the courses you will take at RSU are no different. College courses require quite a bit of work both in and out of class; too often, students try to cram as many courses as possible into a full semester, thinking that the sooner they take certain courses, the sooner these courses are over and they can move on. Unfortunately, students soon learn that this misconception comes at a great price: they attempt too many hours and wind up having to repeat many if not all of their classes.

Course hour management is often a matter of time management; if you are like most modern college students, you find yourself facing greater demands on your time than you had faced before starting your college career. Some of these demands are forced on you by work schedules or family responsibilities. These outside commitments often require a student to take a much lighter load of credit hours in order to accommodate these schedules. However, taking too few hours each semester can have an equally detrimental effect of making the goal of a college degree seem much more frustrating and impossible to attain. Optimally, students should avoid working more than 15-20 hours per week if they expect to graduate in a timely manner.

While there are no hard-and-fast rules regarding how many hours you should attempt, the *RSU Bulletin* designates a “maximum load that an undergraduate student [may] be permitted to take is 18 [credit] hours during fall and spring semesters, and nine [credit] hours during the summer term” (32). For beginning students, a good rule of thumb is: no more than 13-15 hours the first semester; then perhaps the student can attempt up to 17-18 hours the second and successive semesters. **All decisions regarding the number of credit hours attempted should be discussed with your academic advisor.**

The courses you see listed in each semester’s schedule as well as in course descriptions listed in the *Bulletin* are assigned numbers that designate the degree of advancement required for such courses. Courses numbered in the 1000s are designated freshman level and should be completed first; courses numbered in the 2000s are sophomore level, while courses in the 3000s and 4000s are designated for junior- and senior-level work respectively. Students with fewer than 45 credit hours should not attempt a 3000- or 4000-level course; second-semester sophomores may take 3000- or 4000-level courses but with caution.

Other demands are the result of underestimating the amount of time demanded by each college course that you take. Many students learn very early in their college experiences that for every hour they are in a classroom, it takes two to three hours of work outside of class to keep up with assignments and stay abreast of readings and lecture material. It is **vital** to keep this in mind when deciding on what classes and how many hours to attempt in a semester, since successfully completing the courses you attempt means avoiding potential risks such as academic notice, academic probation, and academic suspension.

RSU Regulations regarding Academic Notice, Probation, Suspension, and Reapplication

A very real but no less tragic aspect of higher education is the risk of failing to maintain the GPA standards set forth by the University; such students are placed on academic notice, academic probation, or academic suspension. The *RSU Bulletin* outlines the definition of these terms and the consequences of each:

Academic Notice: Any student with 30 or fewer credit hours, with a retention GPA of 1.7 to 1.99 will be placed on academic notice.

Academic Probation: Any student whose cumulative retention GPA falls below those listed in **Retention GPA Requirements** for a given semester will be on academic probation. The student will remain on probation as long as he/she maintains a current term GPA of 2.0 each semester until his/her retention GPA is a 2.0. If the student does not maintain a current term GPA of 2.0, he/she will be placed on academic suspension.

Academic Suspension: Any student who is on academic probation and who does not achieve a term GPA of 2.0 (excluding activity/performance courses) will be suspended and will not be eligible for reinstatement until one regular semester (fall or spring) has elapsed.

Retention GPA Requirements: A student must maintain a 2.0 retention GPA for the duration of his/her college experience with the exception of freshmen on academic notice. A student will be placed on academic probation if he/she fails to meet the following requirements:

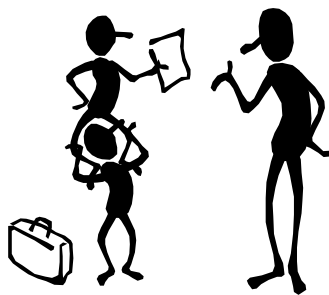
Credit Hours Attempted	Retention GPA Requirement
0-30 semester credit hours	1.70
More than 30 semester credit hours	2.00

...

Readmission of Suspended Students: Students who are academically suspended from Rogers State University will not be allowed to reenter the University for at least one regular semester (fall or spring) except as provided in the suspension appeals process. Any student who has been suspended for at least one regular semester may apply for readmission to Rogers State University. The student will need to send a letter of reapplication to the Office of Admissions declaring his/her intent and a plan of action. The Office of Admissions will determine if the conditions that led to the academic suspension have been corrected. If, in the judgment of the Office of Admissions, the student has a reasonable chance of academic success, he/she will be permitted to reenter the University. The following criteria will apply to all students readmitted to Rogers State University after serving at least one regular semester on academic suspension: (1) Suspended students can be readmitted only once. (2) Such students will be readmitted on probationary status and must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) each semester attempted while on probation or raise their retention GPA to the designated retention level. (3) Students admitted after a suspension may be limited to 12 credit hours of enrollment during their first semester at RSU. (4) Should a student who has been reinstated be suspended a second time from Rogers State University, he/she cannot return to the University until such time as he/she has demonstrated, by attending another institution, the ability to succeed academically by raising his/her GPA to the retention standard.

Appeal for Immediate Readmission after Suspension. Students who feel that they have had extraordinary personal circumstances that contributed to their academic difficulties may petition for immediate reinstatement by requesting an 'Application for Suspension Appeal' from the Office of the Registrar, Markham Hall, (918) 454-7545. If, in the judgment of the Dean of the School where the student has their major, the Registrar, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the student has a reasonable chance of academic success, he/she will be permitted to reenter the University. If approved, the student will be reinstated for one semester on a probationary basis and must meet the retention requirements at the end of the semester for continued enrollment at Rogers State University. Should a subsequent suspension occur, the student would not be allowed to reapply until such time as he/she has demonstrated an ability to succeed academically by attending another

institution and subsequently raising his/her retention/graduation GPA to meet retention requirements. (Bulletin 37-8)



IV. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DETERMINING MY SCHEDULE?

Even though you have an academic advisor, that individual can only do so much; you ultimately must see yourself as a partner in this process. *All* students need to become equal partners along with their advisors in mapping out an effective plan for achieving their educational goals; only through an active partnership with your advisor can you map out a plan of action that will get you successfully through your general education and specific degree plan courses.

Assigning Advisors: When you registered the first time for classes at RSU, if you declared a major at that time, a code was entered which assigned you to a department and an academic advisor, a member of that department's faculty to work with you in the development of (and your progress through) a degree plan. This individual will play a very valuable role in your college experience and in your success in college *if* you stay in contact with him/her. In a very real sense, you are responsible for the successful completion of your degree plan as your advisor is, and students who generally keep informed of any changes or modifications to their degree plans or to the general education requirements are ultimately more successful in completing their degree plans in a timely manner. Therefore, you should not wait for your advisor to contact you, especially when time for pre-enrollment for an upcoming semester approaches. Instead, you should plan your schedule with your advisor **before** enrollment begins. Too many students enroll so late that they do not get into important, required classes, which can delay graduation by an entire semester or an entire year. This makes academic advisement **prior** to enrollment very important each and every semester.

Bulletins and Schedules: If you have questions about the specific degree plan you are pursuing, you should consult the RSU *Bulletin*, which is published every year and which contains information about degree plans as well as information regarding payment schedules, holidays, course descriptions, campus services, and other important data. Each semester's Class Schedule is published both in paper form and online and is made available for students before the pre-enrollment cycle begins for the upcoming semester. As an RSU student, you should familiarize yourself with both of these publications.

Before Enrollment: As soon as the next semester's schedule becomes available, you should get a copy and, with your degree plan and previous semester's transcript in hand and with the help of your academic advisor, you should start planning the schedule you need. Once you have an idea of what classes and what sections are available each semester and what classes and/or sections you need to take, then you need to meet with your academic advisor to discuss your schedule. Here are some tips to make that meeting more productive:

- **Make an appointment** to see your academic advisor *before* the pre-enrollment period begins
- **Fill out an enrollment form** during your meeting with your advisor. These forms can be obtained at the Registrar's office or in the departmental office responsible for your particular plan of study.
- **When you and your advisor have discussed your schedule in light of your degree plan and have agreed on the courses you should take, take your signed enrollment form immediately to the Registrar's office for processing.**

If you wait until the semester starts or just before the semester starts to get enrolled, you may find that the sections or courses you need are already closed. Just a little advanced planning can make scheduling a semester's classes a much smoother and less stressful process.

A word here about **online registration**: Students should enroll online **only** after meeting with their academic advisors. While it is possible for students who have no other holds on their accounts to enroll online, this can cause some very major problems *IF* the student does not meet with his/her academic advisor beforehand and decide on a schedule that keeps the student on track to finish his/her degree plan in a timely and successful manner.

The keys are preparation and communication: be prepared by looking over the upcoming semester's schedule as soon as it is available and by constructing a schedule that fits your degree plan; stay in contact with your advisor, especially as pre-enrollment time approaches, so the two of you can discuss your progress and the direction your future classes need to take in time for you to pre-enroll according to the time schedule set out by the university.

Pre-Enrollment and Classifications: Pre-enrollment occurs at the end of each full semester (fall or spring) and is set up so that upper classifications (juniors and seniors) enroll first, followed by lower classifications (sophomores and freshmen); therefore, it might be wise at this point to define what exactly each of these classifications stands for:

Freshmen – undergraduate students having fewer than 30 semester hours of earned credit.

Sophomores – undergraduate students having between 30 and 59 semester hours of earned credit.

Juniors – undergraduate students having between 60 and 89 semester hours of earned credit.

Seniors – undergraduate students having 90 or more semester hours of earned credit.

As mentioned earlier in this guide, what courses you are allowed to take is often dictated by your classification or how many credit hours you have accumulated to that point. Students with fewer than 45 credit hours are not allowed to take 3000- and 4000-level courses; second semester sophomores may take these courses **only** with the permission of the instructor and the head of the department offering the course.

Schedule Modifications: If circumstances dictate that your schedule be changed (moving to a different section of a course, adding or dropping a course, etc.), the changes should start with a visit to your academic advisor. **Do not** alter your schedule without discussing with your advisor the changes that need to be made.

In the past, students were permitted to add and/or drop a course during the first two weeks of a regular (fall or spring) semester; however, starting with the summer 2010 semester, this time frame has been changed: students now can only add a course or switch a section during the first full week of class (during fall and spring semesters), and students wishing to drop a course (with a refund) can do so only during the first two weeks. It is *your* responsibility as a student to keep these deadlines in mind and to plan accordingly.

Dropping a Course with a "W": Each semester, a deadline is announced before which students can withdraw from a class and receive only a "W" instead of a grade. This deadline always appears on each semester's academic schedule as well as in the various syllabi you will be given in your classes. Here

- For Summer graduation: May 1

A commencement checklist is available online through the university website at www.rsu.edu/commencement/checklist.asp.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is our hope that this guide will answer some of the questions you may have regarding your education here at RSU – from your first day of classes to the day you receive your degree. This is by no means an **exhaustive** reference guide; this is only a supplement to address those issues and questions most frequently asked by students.

You are the key to your success: your participation in and your commitment to your education here at RSU will determine the level of success you will achieve. After all, higher education is not a “spectator sport” – in order to win it, you have to be **in it**. Hopefully, the information contained in this guide will help you be a more committed participant in your education.

