

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

StMU Academic Advising



CONTACT

Location

Main Floor,
Administration
Building

Email

advising@stmu.ca

Office Hours

M-F: 9:00am -
4:00pm
(by appointment)

WHAT IS ACADEMIC ADVISING?

Academic Advising fosters student learning and success by empowering undergraduate students to create a fulfilling educational experience that is compatible with their academic and career goals. Academic Advisors help students understand degree requirements and inform students of university policies and processes. By prioritizing integrity, inclusion and respect, students can expect to feel supported and welcomed in their advising meetings.

This document was prepared to support students in finding answers to common questions academic advisors hear on a day-to-day basis. As information can change quickly, the information provided should be used as a reference point but should also be confirmed by an Academic Advisor to ensure accuracy. All inquiries can be made to advising@stmu.ca.

To search for a specific question, press Ctrl+F (Cmd+F) and type in a keyword or phrase.

GENERAL ADVISING

How do I know who my advisor is?

- There are no designated advisors at StMU. All advisors on our team can support you in planning your degree/diploma.

How often should I see an advisor?

- We recommend seeing an advisor once a year to ensure you are on track with your degree requirements.

What happens if I don't meet with an advisor?

- While there are no requirements to meet with an academic advisor, they can provide guidance on your degree that you may not have otherwise known. If you choose not to meet with an advisor, there may be items you have missed from your degree requirements, resulting in the need to change your degree completion timeline or take additional courses.

What is the difference between an Academic Advisor and a Career Advisor?

- Academic Advisors support students in fulfilling their degree requirements and help walk you through the process of going to university. Their focus is to ensure you have the requirements you need to graduate from StMU while taking courses that are both interesting to you and fulfill your degree requirements.
- Career Advising provides students the opportunity to discover, discuss and plan for life after graduation and can help you navigate the requirements or next steps in applying for Master's programs or professional programs. The Career Advisor also hosts workshops such as resume and cover letter writing, utilizing LinkedIn, job search strategies and more.

What do I need to bring to an advising appointment?

- Students should come prepared with questions and ideas to their advising appointment. Prior to attending an advising appointment, students should read the Advising Syllabus.



REGISTRATION



How do I register for courses?

- Course registration is completed on your my StMU (Self-Service) account. Refer to the [Self-Service Manual](#) for step-by-step instructions.

How do I know which courses to take?

- You should have received a Program Guide for your degree upon admission to StMU. Program Guides outline every course needed to graduate from StMU. Refer to your admission email or email advising@stmu.ca to obtain a copy of your Program Guide.

How many courses am I allowed to take?

- Students can register themselves in up to 5 courses (15 credits) in Fall and Winter semesters and up to 3 courses (9 credits) in Spring and Summer semesters unless otherwise stated by an Admissions Officer or Academic Advisor.

What is an elective?

- Electives are courses that count toward your credits for graduation but are not requirements for your particular degree of study. Every degree program has space for electives, which allow student to explore other areas of interest outside of their degree.

What is the difference between a JR and a SR level course?

- Courses at the 200-level are considered to be junior level (i.e. ENGL 200A, PSYC 201, BIOL 231). Senior level courses are either 300- or 400-level courses (i.e. PHIL 351, MGST 305, HIST 401). Junior level courses are often introductory courses, whereas senior level courses often focus on a specific area or topic.

Does StMU offer online courses?

- On occasion there are courses that are offered asynchronously online, however, StMU primarily offers in-person courses. Students should not anticipate courses being offered online.

What happens if a class I want to register in is full?

- If a class is full when you attempt to register, you can add yourself to the waitlist to be notified if a seat becomes available. Refer to the Self-Service Manual for step-by-step instructions on waitlist procedures.

How do I drop a course?

- Any changes to your schedule are made on your Self-Service account. Refer to the Self-Service Manual for step-by-step instructions.

Can I register for courses that overlap?

- Students cannot register for courses with overlapping schedules.

Can I register for courses scheduled back-to-back?

- Yes! Our small campus size allows students to easily move from one classroom to the next.

I don't have the pre-requisite for a class I want or need to take. What do I do?

- Students are encouraged to plan ahead to ensure they have the courses they need to complete their degree. If students do not have a pre-requisite for a course, they can register in the pre-requisite course and plan to take the desired course in a future semester. Students can also submit a Pre-requisite Waiver for consideration. See information in the Academic Calendar for more information or speak with an Advisor.

I have a hold on my account. How can I register or change my courses?

- There are a few reasons there might be a hold on your account. Contact advising@stmu.ca and an advisor will let you know next steps. Students will not be able to access their registration details until the hold is cleared.

PROGRAM PLANNING

How do I know if a course meets my program requirements?

- Students can review their Program Guide to see how a course might fit into their degree requirements and are encouraged to speak with an Academic Advisor.

What happens if I fail a course?

- While failing a course can be tough to handle, it is a minor detour within your degree. If the course is a part of your degree requirements, you will need to retake the course until you receive a passing grade (D if the course is a requirement, C- if the course is a pre-requisite). If the course is not a required course, you can choose to retake it or take another course instead. The failed course will remain on your transcript and no credit will be given.

Do I need a minor? How do I add/change/drop a minor?

- Students do not need a minor in order to graduate. If a student chooses not to minor, the six allotted minor courses will become additional electives. Students wanting to change, add or drop a minor are required to fill out a Change of Program form and drop off to the Registrar's Office or email the completed form to advising@stmu.ca.

How many courses should I take a semester?

- Students are encouraged to consider all their other commitments when deciding how many courses to take (i.e. extra-curricular activities, family obligations, work/volunteer obligations). Students can expect to dedicate 3-5 hours outside of class time per week in each course for readings, assignments and study time.

I have transfer credit from another post-secondary institution. How does this work with my current degree?

- Students transferring to StMU from another institution are highly encouraged to meet with an Academic Advisor prior to registering in courses to review how their transfer credit fits into their degree/diploma. Transfer students can consult the [Transfer Alberta](http://TransferAlberta) website to explore how courses taken at another institution *may* transfer to StMU. Questions about transfer credit can be directed to advising@stmu.ca.

Can I take more than 3 or 4 years to complete my degree/diploma?

- Yes! Students can take as many years as needed to meet their degree/diploma requirements.
 - The only exception to this are students who were admitted as Single-Entry who intend to continue into StMU's BEd After-Degree program. These students have 5 years to complete their undergraduate degree to be eligible for Single-Entry. Should these students take more than 5 years, they are still welcome to reapply for BEd upon completion of their undergraduate degree, but will no longer be considered Single-Entry applicants.

What is the Liberal Arts Core (LAC)? Do I need to take these courses?

- The LAC, comprised of 6 courses (18 credits), is the foundation of all StMU degree and diploma programs. Pulling from English, History, Philosophy and Religious Studies, the LAC develops a deeper level of critical thinking while tending to the mind, body and soul. All StMU students need to complete these 6 courses to graduate from their program.

How do I change majors or concentration?

- Students who wish to change their major or concentration are required to fill out a Change of Program Form and email it to advising@stmu.ca.



FINANCIAL AID AND AWARDS

How many courses do I take to be a full-time student?

Students taking 3-5 courses in Fall and Winter semesters and 2-3 courses in Spring and Summer semesters are considered full-time.

Do I qualify for scholarships?

- Students are encouraged to explore the Scholarships and Awards webpage for information on scholarship requirements. Inquiries about scholarships and bursaries should be directed to awards@stmu.ca.

Who can help me with Financial Aid/funding questions?

- Students are encouraged to read the [Payment Options](#), [Scholarships and Awards](#), and [Tuition and Fees](#) webpages to find answers to their questions. If additional information is required, students can reach out to financial.aid@stmu.ca.

Where do I find my textbook list?

- The booklist tool is available on the bookstore website. Students can reach out to bookstore@stmu.ca if they have any additional questions regarding learning materials.

STUDENT POLICIES AND FORMS

Where can I find StMU Policies and Forms?

- Policies are outlined in the [Academic Calendar](#) and forms can be found on the [Registrar's Office](#) webpage. Student can also email info@stmu.ca and ask for a copy of their desired form.

How do I appeal a grade?

- The grade appeal process is outlined in the [Academic Calendar](#) (see Grade Appeals). Students are encouraged to meet with an Academic Advisor to discuss this process.

How many times can I repeat/attempt a course?

- To maximize student success and enhance access to courses for all students, the university sets a limit on the number of times students may attempt a particular course. A final grade, withdrawal, or withdrawal with cause is considered an attempt. A student may register for a particular course twice without permission from the Dean. On a third attempt, students will need permission from the Dean of Arts and Science prior to registering in the course. Students who are attempting a course for the third time will need to email advising@stmu.ca to begin this process.

What does it mean to be on Academic Warning or Academic Probation?

- Students who have completed nine credit hours or more of study at St. Mary's University and have a term GPA of less than 2.0 will be placed on Academic Warning. Students will remain on Academic Warning for two consecutive terms after which they will be placed on Academic Probation if their grades have not improved. Students on Academic Warning or Academic Probation will not be eligible to participate in St. Mary's University activities such as Lightning Athletics, Student Ambassador Program, Student Legislative Council, etc. After one term of Academic Probation students will be placed on Academic Suspension unless their term GPA rises to 2.0 or greater.

Can I take another course at another institution and have it counted towards my StMU degree?

- Potentially! Students looking to take a course at another institution while enrolled at StMU will need to request a Letter of Permission (LOP). LOPs can be considered for students who are LOPs are approved on a case-by-case basis, so students are encouraged to reach out to an Academic Advisor to discuss the process for their unique scenario.