Welcome to Rivier University!

This handbook is designed to help answer some of the questions you may have as you enter your first semester at Rivier.

Each semester you will have the opportunity to meet with your Advisor to register for the upcoming semester. The Academic Advisors work in collaboration with Faculty Advisors to ensure that you are progressing through your program and staying on track as your work towards that goal. Your Advisor will help you select appropriate classes for the next term, provide resource help and assistance, and address any concerns you might have.

At Rivier University, you’ll find a welcoming community that wants to see you succeed. We want to make the transfer process as easy as possible for you and look forward to working with each of you as you complete your degree program with us. We wish you the best as you begin your future at Rivier University!

Sincerely,

Tracy Morgan, Academic Advisor, Transfer Advisor
Lisa Enright, Director of Academic Advising
Marie Cloutier, Assistant Director of Academic Advising
Kathy Morrissey, Administrative Assistant
Academic Advising Overview

The Office of Academic Advising aspires to be a caring and supportive environment that empowers students to become responsible self-directed learners achieving academic success and independence. Advisors and advisees will work together to craft a unique academic plan based upon each student’s academic ability and goals. Academic Advising views the advising relationship as an on-going conversation that transcends mere course selection, attempting to educate the whole person to prepare them for life after Rivier. The Office of Academic Advising will work as an integral part of the larger campus community on areas that impact a student’s academic progression and success.

How does the advising process work?

Each Rivier University day student is assigned a Faculty Advisor in the department in which the student is majoring and an Academic Advisor, thus providing a dual advising system. The dual advising process provides Rivier undergraduate students with the greatest opportunity to personalize their studies. Rivier Academic and Faculty Advisors help students achieve their academic goals in a supportive and student-centered environment.

Academic Advisors...

» Oversee undergraduate day student registration for classes each semester, including requests to add or drop courses
» Track semester progress, identify and solve potential scheduling conflicts and create individual education plans for each student
» Provide referral and resource assistance
» Work with Student Life, Faculty, and Academic Administration to monitor student academic performance
» Notify the necessary faculty and staff if a student will be absent due to sudden illness or other medical or personal emergency situations
» Assist instructors and faculty regarding excessive absences and missing coursework
» Manage change of major requests
» Advise students regarding the published academic appeal process

Faculty Advisors...

» Help students select courses in their majors
» Monitor progress within the major to ensure timely degree completion
» Assist in planning internships or fulfilling senior-level major requirements needed for graduation
» Serve as mentors regarding potential career and/or graduate study opportunities

Expected student learning outcomes for the academic advising experience

Through the advising experience, you will...

» demonstrate the ability to make effective decisions concerning your degree and your career goals
» develop a plan for successfully achieving your educational goals and select courses each semester to progress toward fulfilling your goals
» demonstrate an understanding of the value of the Rivier degree through the value of the general education requirements and major/minor requirements
» utilize resources and services on campus to assist you in achieving your academic, personal and career goals
» make use of referrals to campus resources as needed
» graduate in a timely manner based on your educational plans

How to prepare for an advising meeting

All Rivier University undergraduate day students are required to meet with their Academic Advisor to register for courses each semester.

To ensure a productive advising session, each student should complete the following steps before meeting with their Academic Advisor:

» If your registration requires a Faculty Advisor signature and advising session prior to meeting with your Academic Advisor, make sure to schedule your faculty advising appointment before calling the Academic Advising office to schedule your appointment with an Academic Advisor (see page 5 for a list of Faculty Advisors by major)
» Enter your Academic Advisor appointment time and date in your personal calendar so you don’t forget about the meeting
» Review and update your degree audit sheet. Through your MyRiv Account, you can access an updated student transcript
which lists all courses you have taken. You can also stop by the Academic Advising Office for a copy of your advising degree audit sheet.

- Make a tentative list of courses you plan to take and any questions you might have regarding:
  - specific course requirements
  - adding a minor
  - graduation requirements
  - academic difficulties in a particular course or subject area

**Student Support Services**

**Office of Disability Services**

Rivier recognizes that learning styles differ from person to person. Physical, perceptual, or emotional challenges experienced by students may require additional supports and accommodations to equalize their opportunities for academic success. Those students who have a documented disability can access support services by meeting with a member of Disability Services, (603) 897-8497, at the beginning of each semester.

**Career Development Center**

The Rivier University Career Development Center is committed to educating, engaging and supporting undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni as they pursue meaningful career and life goals. The goal of the Career Development Center is to help individuals acquire lifelong career development skills, allowing them to navigate and manage occupational choices and life transitions, being mindful, as well, of the unique contributions that they can offer in service to the greater community. The Career Development Center is located at 18 Clement Street. Call (603) 897-8882 to make an appointment with a staff member.

**Counseling Center**

The Counseling Center provides individual and group counseling, consultation, and referral. The Center facilitates workshops and psycho-educational presentations to the campus community. In addition, the Director oversees Rivier’s alcohol and drug prevention program for freshmen, called MY STUDENT BODY.

The Counseling Center is located at 17 Oldfield Road and is open during the fall and spring semesters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with evening hours available on request. The staff encourages you to schedule an appointment by dropping in or calling ext. 8251 or from off campus at (603) 897-8251. The services are free of charge to all full-time students and others at the discretion of the Director.

**Writing and Resource Center:**

The purpose of the Writing and Resource Center is to provide academic support to students in the areas of writing skills development and subject comprehension in order to achieve success in their degree completion.

Services offered:

- Academic support as students work on writing tasks in courses across the curriculum
- One-on-one conferences with a professional writing consultant
- Drop-in or reserved appointment consultation
- One-credit weekly writing tutorials
- Course in Principles of Grammar
- Specialized workshops based on student requests
- Tutoring services with trained peer tutors across all disciplines
- ESOL grammar tutoring

The Writing and Resource Center is open weekdays Monday – Friday with limited evening hours throughout the fall and spring semesters. Specific hours are posted on campus and semester schedules are available at the Writing and Resource Center. The Center is located on South Main Street across from Trinity and Adrienne Halls and can be reached at (603) 897-8581.

**Service Learning**

Service Learning is a one-credit project that integrates active, socially significant community service into your educational experience. It offers meaningful, community-based experiential learning and is an aspect of Rivier’s commitment to action and social justice. Service Learning leads to authentic knowledge and union with God, neighbor, and the community. Most students tie a service learning project together with a course in their major sometime during the sophomore year. However, students may choose to fulfill the requirement at any time. Transfer students who have completed 30 or more transfer credits are exempt from the service learning requirement. The Service Learning Office is located in St. Joseph’s Annex. Contact Donny Guillemette, (603) 897-8658 for more information.

**Advisor Responsibilities – You can expect your Academic Advisor to:**

- Treat you with respect and as an adult
- Understand and effectively communicate the curriculum, requirements, and academic policies and procedures
- Encourage and guide you to define and develop clear and realistic educational goals
- Review your progress by tracking semester progress, identifying and solving potential scheduling conflicts, and creating individual education plans
- Provide information about campus resources and strategies for utilizing them
- Be accessible for meetings during office hours, by appointment, telephone or e-mail
- Assist you in gaining decision-making skills and in assuming responsibility for your educational plans and decisions
- Maintain confidentiality. Your Advisor will not discuss issues with parents or non-college persons without your written permission.

**Advisee Responsibilities – You are expected to:**

- Schedule appointments or make regular contact with your Advisor each semester
- Come to each appointment prepared with questions or materials for discussion
- Ask questions if you do not understand an issue or have a specific concern
- Connect with faculty in your major department and/or your Faculty Advisor
- Keep a personal record of your progress toward your academic goals
- Organize documents so you may access them when needed
- Become knowledgeable about college programs, resources, degree requirements, policies and procedures
- Complete all assignments or recommendations from your Academic or Faculty Advisor
- Gather all relevant information before making decisions that affect your educational goals
- Clarify personal values and goals and provide your Advisor with accurate and truthful information regarding your interests and abilities
- Accept responsibility for your decisions, actions (and inactions) and the effects they may have on your educational progress
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I find out who my Academic Advisor and Faculty Advisor are?
A: Tracy Morgan, (603) 897-8223, advises all transfer students. Faculty Advisors are assigned by your major and are listed on page 5 of this handbook.

Q: How do I declare or change my major?
A: Make an appointment with your Academic Advisor to re-evaluate your course record. Please note that some programs require an application and acceptance process and have specific GPA requirements prior to admittance.

Q: How do I declare a minor?
A: A student may earn a minor in a field outside their major by completing five to seven three- or four-credit courses designated by the department offering the minor. Meet with your Academic Advisor to declare the minor before the end of your sophomore year.

Q: How many courses should I take?
A: Full-time, traditional-aged students generally take five three- or four-credit classes per semester. In addition, some students may register for a one-credit writing tutorial.

Q: What happens if I only take four courses?
A: In order to have a lighter load, some students choose to take only four courses. Since a load of 12 or more credits is considered full-time, a four-course schedule is a viable option for students who need to be full-time but have a lot of other commitments. However, in order to graduate in the traditional four years with a bachelor’s degree or in two years with an associate degree, you need to successfully complete five three- or four-credit courses each semester. Students who choose to take four courses during one or more semesters will have to make up courses during summer sessions to graduate in four years or will need to complete extra semesters of study.

Q: Academic Advisor
A: Academic Advisor will assist you in adapting the advice in this booklet to your situation. If you are enrolled as a part-time student, you do not have the option of living on campus.

Q: What do the letters and numbers mean before the course titles, such as PSY101A (General Psychology)?
A: Undergraduate courses at Rivier are designated numerically, as 100-level, 200-level, 300-level and 400-level. Generally, these designations indicate levels of difficulty. For example, 100-level and 200-level courses may be considered introductory and appropriate for first-year and sophomore students, while 300-level and 400-level courses are more advanced courses in a department and more appropriate for juniors and seniors. 300-level and 400-level courses often have prerequisites. The final letter (A, B, C, D, E, etc.) indicates a specific section of that course. Different letters indicate different times or teachers, not degree of difficulty.

Q: What is a prerequisite?
A: A prerequisite is a course or courses that you need to take before you can take certain other courses. For example, ENG115 (Expositions and Arguments) is a prerequisite for any other college level literature course. Similarly, FR101 - French Language and Culture I is a prerequisite for FR102 - French Language and Culture II because FR102 builds upon the knowledge you gain in FR101.

Q: How do I calculate my GPA?
A: Please refer to the GPA calculator located on the Academic Advising page of our website at www.rivier.edu/advising.

Q: What if I fail a course? Can I repeat it?
A: If you fail a class, you can retake that same course, but only at Rivier. When you retake a failed course, grades for both attempts will show on your transcript but only the new grade will be calculated in your GPA. Students (with permission) can take a failed course (non-nursing) at another institution but it will not impact their GPA.

Q: How do I request a copy of my transcript?
A: To request a copy of your transcript, visit the Registrar’s Office on campus, or download a transcript request form online. (Please note that there is no fee for copies of official transcripts if ordered directly through Rivier, but a fee does apply if you order through the outside website mentioned on the Registrar’s page, www.rivier.edu/registrar.)

Q: How can I get a copy of my degree requirements?
A: Stop by the Office of Academic Advising to get a copy of your audit sheet. Complete degree requirements are also listed in the Undergraduate Course Catalog, available online at http://catalog.rivier.edu.

Q: What are these different marks on my transcripts?
A: A “W” on your transcript indicates that you withdrew from a class after the add/drop period which is the first week of classes. This mark has no impact on your GPA. However, if you fail to give official notification for withdrawing from the class before the published deadline, you will receive a grade of “F.” An “I” indicates an incomplete. If for some reason a student is unable to complete some part of the course requirements, the professor may allow the student an extension to complete the work, so long as the request is reasonable and made before the final examination date.

Academic Difficulty

Q: What is an academic warning?
A: An academic warning is given to students the first time that their semester grade point average falls below a 2.0, which is the minimum standard of academic achievement at Rivier. Although their overall grade point average may be above a 2.0, students are warned that they are placing themselves in academic jeopardy, should they continue to perform below standard.

Q: Academic probation—What are my options? Where do I go from here?
A: Students are placed on academic probation when their cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0. Students are then required to meet with the Associate Vice President for Student Success to discuss strategies for successfully raising their grade point average to a 2.0 or higher. Once strategies for success have been identified, students sign a Personal Growth Contract to ensure their accountability for success.

Students that fail to meet the 2.0 grade point average for two consecutive semesters may be in jeopardy of being dismissed from Rivier. Students also need to be aware that academic failure can jeopardize their eligibility for financial aid.

Q: When would a student be academically dismissed from Rivier?
A: Students whose GPA is between 0.0 – 1.0 at the end of their first semester may be dismissed from Rivier. After two consecutive semesters of failing to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 1.0 or three consecutive semesters of failing to achieve a 2.0, students are academically dismissed. In many cases, students have the right to appeal their academic dismissal by meeting with the Associate Vice President for Student Success. The Associate Vice President
for Student Success may permit the student to continue in their program of study at Rivier, however, the student will have to agree to meet the requirements for continuation, as deemed by the Associate Vice President for Student Success.

Q: How can I avoid academic difficulty?
A: There are many academic support services available to students which include writing services, tutoring, career counseling, disabilities services and counseling. Students can access these services through their Academic Advisor or the Associate Vice President for Student Success.

Earning Alternative Credits

Q: Can I take a course off campus during the summer?
A: Students take courses during the summer for many reasons, including having dropped a class. Students can take classes at Rivier in the summer by registering with their Academic Advisor. Students who would like to take courses at another college should email a course description to their Advisor for approval before signing up for any classes. Off-campus courses can only be transferred to Rivier with prior approval and with a grade of C or better. Only the credits earned will transfer into a student’s program and not the grade; therefore, GPA is not affected by off-campus courses.

*Nursing students wanting to take off-campus classes should see their Academic Advisor for more specific information about grade requirements for transfer credits.

Q: How do I get permission to take a summer course off campus?
A: Talk to your Academic Advisor if you are planning to take summer courses at another college. You will be required to submit the course title and number, and the official course description to make sure the course meets Rivier’s standards before the course will be approved. Once the course is completed, you must also request that an official transcript be sent to Rivier before credit will officially be granted. Please note that for most programs, you may only transfer in credits for courses for which you receive a grade of C or better. Check with your Advisor regarding your program’s specific transfer credit requirements.

Q: How do I transfer in credits that I have taken off campus?
A: To transfer credits that you have already taken at another accredited college into your program at Rivier, you must contact the Registrar’s Office at the college where the course(s) was taken and request that they send an official transcript to your Academic Advisor. Once received, the transcript will be evaluated to see if the course and the grade attained meet Rivier’s requirements. Typically, the grade earned must be a C or better for transfer, although some courses (i.e. nursing requirements) require at least a B. If you have taken AP courses in high school, Running Start courses, military or professional training, or CLEP exams, you are still required to contact the institution these were taken through and request that official copies of the transcripts or scores be sent to Rivier University.

Q: What is a directed study?
A: A student can request a directed study in two cases. The first is if a course that is needed as a graduation requirement is not being offered. The second is if the student is interested in pursuing a special topic course that Rivier does not offer. Either way, students must meet with their Faculty Advisor to discuss this option. Together, faculty instructors for directed studies and students will determine assignments and meeting times to check on progress. All directed studies must be approved by the Division Dean.

Q: Can I test out of courses in areas in which I am already proficient?
A: There are two ways a student may be exempted from taking certain courses while still earning credit for them. The first is the Challenge Examination which is a one-time examination in a specific content area created by Rivier as an equivalent to a course. The method of examination varies, but to earn credit a student must score a C or better. No retakes are allowed, and it is the student’s responsibility to prepare for the exam. Students should contact their Academic Advisor to discuss procedures, guidelines and fees.

The College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP) is an alternative way to earn college credits by testing out of certain courses offered. CLEP is a way to save money and time by showing your proficiency in courses that you would otherwise take at Rivier. To earn credit, the test score must be at or above the 50th percentile for most exams, but see your Advisor for the specific requirements. For information on which tests are offered, where, costs, study guides and other details, visit the College Board website: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/about.html.
Q: How can I do an internship for credit?
A: Internships are a great way to get experience in your field and start building professional networks and your résumé. If you are interested in doing an internship, set up a meeting with your Faculty Advisor. Requirements, procedures and credits vary by department, but often an internship can be used to gain elective credits. Internships are typically done during the fall or spring semester, but can also be done over the summer break. Visit the Career Development Center for more information on internship options: http://www.rivier.edu/departments/cardev/.

Q: How can I find out about studying abroad?
A: There are several groups of people you may want to discuss your study abroad plans with:

First, visit the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) located in Memorial Hall, room 120, where they will assist you in developing a basic plan. The OGE team can guide you in developing personal and academic goals for your study abroad experience, help you think through which region of the world might fit your goals, direct you to a specific program tailored to your major, and help you work through language issues.

Once you have narrowed down your options, you should consult with your faculty advisor. You need to get their opinion about locations that would be most beneficial for your program and timing (when should you go to get the most out of the experience?). Your faculty advisor has most likely spent time outside of the US and can help you think through which region of the world might fit your goals, direct you to a specific program tailored to your major, and help you work through language issues.

Once you have listened to input from your faculty advisor, you can get more details from the Academic Advising Office. Where will the credits go? What courses will remain in your academic program? You need to be able to have a solid academic plan defined as you think through your study abroad options.

Q: How will I register for classes for the next semester?
A: Three weeks prior to the registration period, students receive a detailed email from the Academic Advising Office listing the dates for priority registration. Students meet first with their Faculty Advisor, depending on their major (nursing and undeclared students are exempt), to select major courses and fill out a registration form, and then with their Academic Advisor to select core courses and complete their schedule.

Q: Can I drop, add or withdraw from a class during the semester?
A: Students can drop a class and add another class during the first week of classes by seeing their Academic Advisor. After the first week of classes and prior to the last date to withdraw, dropping a class will show up as a “W” on your transcript (the “W” mark has no impact on GPA). Check the academic calendar to be aware of add/drop and withdrawal dates. Call your Advisor if you are thinking about adding, dropping or withdrawing from a class.

Q: How do I take a leave of absence or withdraw from the University?
A: To take a Leave Of Absence (LOA) or withdraw from the University, students must meet with their Academic Advisor to fill out the required paperwork, or if unable to return to campus, send a dated letter of intent. Tuition will be refunded based on the date of notification and according to the refund schedule outlined in each semester’s course schedule booklets. (Note: Nursing majors who take an LOA will be readmitted to the program on a space-available basis).

Q: How do I notify Rivier/professors if I need to leave temporarily for an emergency?
A: If an emergency occurs and you need to leave campus and miss classes, notify your Academic Advisor and your professors as soon as possible via phone or email. Each professor will determine how, and if, work a student has missed will be made up and the timeframe in which the work needs to be completed.

Professional Resources

Q: What jobs can I obtain with my major? Where can I go to get career guidance?
A: Rivier University’s Career Development Center web pages offer information: http://www.rivier.edu/cardev.
Rivier College became Rivier University on July 1, 2012.