



How to get started developing your academic plan

A well thought-out and approved academic plan can give you assurance that the courses you are taking are bringing you closer to your academic goals. All students are strongly encouraged to develop a plan and have it approved by their academic advisor. This worksheet will guide you through the developing phase where you work on the plan on your own. After you have completed the steps listed below, bring your plan to your advisor to discuss.

Where do I start??

The first step is to know what your academic goals are. Try to answer the following questions:

List your major(s): _____

List your minor(s): _____

When would you like to graduate? _____

What are your post-graduation plans?

It's OK if you can't answer some of these. Write down what you think your goals are and take note of questions you want to ask your advisor.

Resources to help set goals:

Careers in Astronomy: <http://aas.org/education/careers.php>

UW Career Center: <http://careers.washington.edu/>

Developing a plan

Step 1: Run a degree audit (DARS) to see what classes you have taken apply to your degree(s) and which classes you still need to complete.

What is DARS and where do I find it? Log in to MyUW, look for Student Personal Services. Click on "Degree Progress – Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS)".

Step 2: Grab a pencil and sit down with a clean copy of the planning worksheet, included at the end of this document.

Step 3: Use the following combination of resources to find out when the classes you still need to take are offered.

Astronomy and Physics annual course schedule website:

<http://staff.washington.edu/sterrs/YearTS.htm>

Course Catalog (at the end of the course description, look at “Offered: A, W, Sp, S” to see which quarter the course is typically offered – not always accurate if the department doesn’t keep the catalog updated): <http://www.washington.edu/students/crscat/>

Time Schedule (you can go back several quarters to see if a class was offered in the previous year. This is probably the least accurate way to do this since what happened last year doesn’t always happen the next year): <http://www.washington.edu/students/timeschd/>

Step 4: Fill in the planning worksheet using DARS to find which classes you need and the resources above to know when they are offered. When you are deciding electives, keep your options open and write VLPA or Physics Lab as place holders.

Remember that this planning worksheet is a guide meant to be somewhat flexible. If you find that a class isn’t being offered in the quarter you thought, you may need to do some rearranging.

Step 5: Bring your academic plan to your advisor to review and discuss any questions or concerns you have. Your advisor may be able to catch any mistakes or make recommendations on a better way to structure your plan.

Step 6: Incorporate extracurricular activities into your plan. Consider research projects (both during academic year and summer) or volunteer work. Check out some of the resources below, talk with your advisor and talk with faculty members.

Resources to help find extracurricular activities:

National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduate Listings:

http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.cfm

American Astronomical Society Research Experiences for Undergraduate Listings:

<http://aas.org/education/REU.php>

Four-Year Planning Sheet

20____ - 20____

AUTUMN		WINTER		SPRING		SUMMER	
Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit
Quarter total		Quarter total		Quarter total		Quarter total	

20____ - 20____

AUTUMN		WINTER		SPRING		SUMMER	
Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit
Quarter total		Quarter total		Quarter total		Quarter total	

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Quarter total		Quarter total		Quarter total		Quarter total	

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