

Faculty Advising Tips – Undergraduate Graduation Requirements

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Catalog Year: It is important to be mindful of the student’s catalog year, which can be viewed within the Colleague self-service progress tab. Advising based on an incorrect catalog year will likely delay graduation. [Catalog Year Policy Available on Web.](#)

Institutional Graduation Requirements: These graduation requirements apply for all students, majors and degrees. It is important not to overlook these requirements during the advising process. [Institutional Graduation Requirements Available on Web.](#)

Different Categories of Graduation Requirements: Sometimes students do not understand the full scope of their requirements – e.g., believing graduation is just around the corner simply because major and minor requirements have been met. Students may need their faculty advisor to explain the difference between the following:

- General Education Requirements
- Major & Minor Requirements (*including any program specific credit hour and GPA requirements*)
- Institutional Requirements (*including various credit hours (overall, upper level and senior college) and GPA requirements*)

Prior Associate Degrees: Students and their advisors often believe that having an associate degree means general education requirements are automatically satisfied. This is only true if an associate of art or science was awarded by a regionally accredited school in Oklahoma. Applied associate degrees do not automatically fulfill general education requirements. [Transfer Credit Policies Available on Web.](#)

Importantly, it is still true that courses completed toward an out-of-state or applied associate degree can count toward a bachelor degree. The courses are considered for credit the same as are other transfer courses.

New General Education Requirements: It is important to remember that beginning with the 2023-2024 Catalog, it must be considered not only if a course counts toward general education, but also whether a course can satisfy any of the applicable learning outcomes (i.e., communications, critical thinking, information literacy, intercultural knowledge and competence, and global citizenship).

When to Consider Course Substitutions: Advisees should be encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor prior to submitting a graduation application. Identifying course substitutions and submitting proper paperwork prior to the student submitting a graduation application, can facilitate the degree audit process and limit confusion and anxiety on part of the student.

Be Mindful of Transfer Courses with Prefix “-TR”: Various course prefixes with “-TR” are used when a course earned elsewhere is transferrable, but ECU does not have an appropriate course equivalency. These courses will commonly show as the last item in the self-service progress tab titled “other courses.” Possibly a better way to review these courses is the transfer summary tab, which displays all accepted transfer courses organized by originating institution.

Although “-TR” courses by default only count toward general electives contributing to the overall number of hours needed to graduate, these courses *may* be able to count elsewhere. If you believe a “-TR” course appropriately satisfies a requirement, please consult your department chair for instruction. The exact steps to take may differ depending upon the relevant degree requirement.

Colleague Self-Service Progress Tab: Being familiar with the appearance and organization of this tool will maximize the advising experience for both students and faculty. The progress tab contains a lot of information. Only with regular use will an advisor become comfortable with it. Regular use by faculty advisors will also help facilitate a coordinated effort between academic departments and the Records Office, to ensure an optimal alignment between the user experience and the possibilities for programming and visual presentation of graduation requirements.