

FACULTY HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 3

Academic & Independent Study Advising

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A. FACULTY ADVISING

1. THE FACULTY ADVISER

At The College of Wooster, the adviser-advisee relationship is among the most important relationships a student will form. All members of the faculty serve as academic advisers. The adviser assists the student in the construction of the academic program in a number of important ways: by assisting students in planning a program that is consistent with their interests and abilities; by helping students to integrate the resources of the College to meet their educational needs and aspirations; and by providing information about requirements, policies, procedures, and educational options. Although decisions about course selection and construction of their program are ultimately the responsibility of the student, the adviser provides an essential resource.

For entering students, the student's instructor in First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry is also their academic adviser; as such, the adviser will have special insight into the student's background and interests, goals and needs, strengths and weaknesses. When the student declares a major, a new adviser is assigned who will help to introduce the student into the discipline as a professional, socialize the student into the culture of the department or program, mentor the student closely in the development of an appropriate academic program, and look for special opportunities that will help the student to grow both as a major in the discipline and as a liberally educated person. When the student undertakes the senior project in Independent Study, the adviser will work extremely closely with the student and mentor his or her final development as a student-scholar in the discipline and to prepare the student for graduation. The adviser will also counsel the student and offer assistance as he or she plans for life and a career after Wooster. ***Note that in many departments, however, the Independent Study adviser is different from the academic adviser.*** Commonly, students experience formal advising relationships this way:

ARCH Adviser → FYS Instructor → Adviser in Major → I.S. Adviser

In our relationships with our advisees, we serve as agents of the institution. In this capacity, we must fairly and accurately interpret the academic rules and expectations of the institution to the student. At the same time, we also serve as the student's advocate. In this capacity, we must be sensitive to each student's background, needs, talents, and personality and work with each student to identify the program of academic and co-curricular experiences that will be most beneficial. We must also use our experience, judgment and resources to help the student through the bureaucratic and procedural complexities that are part of every academic institution.

2. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential that the faculty adviser become familiar with the rules, policies, and curriculum of the institution as described in the Catalogue. Advisers are encouraged to study the Catalogue carefully, in particular the sections on Degree Requirements and Registration, and to regard the Catalogue as a first point of reference in their conversations with advisees. Note that students are bound by the Catalogue for the year in which they entered.

1. The adviser supervises the academic program of the advisee. The responsibilities of the adviser include the following:
 - a. assisting students in elucidating goals and values;
 - b. helping students to understand the nature and purpose of a liberal arts education;
 - c. providing information about requirements, policies, procedures, and educational options;
 - d. assisting their students in planning a program that is consistent with their interests and abilities;
 - e. helping students to integrate the resources of the College to meet their educational needs and aspirations;
 - f. increasing advisees' awareness of abilities and talents
 - g. assisting advisees to plan each semester's program of courses, using the Degree Audit;
 - h. directing students in academic difficulty to the appropriate campus resource;
 - i. being aware of each advisee's progress by sufficient contact and the keeping of accurate records; and
 - j. monitoring and evaluating one's own effectiveness as an adviser.
2. Advisers should be aware of the following limitations on their advising responsibilities.
 - a. An adviser should not make decisions for an advisee, but be a sympathetic listener, direct the student to appropriate resources, offer various alternatives for the student to consider, and recommend what in his or her judgment is the best decision or course of action. Students themselves, however, make final decisions about their education and their academic program, and the final responsibility for these decisions is theirs.
 - b. An adviser is not expected to have detailed information about all departments, programs, and requirements at the College. The adviser is expected to check the information provided to advisees for accuracy and, as necessary, to direct the student to other sources that can provide accurate information and definitive

answers to specific questions. It is the student's responsibility to take advantage of such counsel and these resources.

- c. An adviser should not betray a student's confidence. Outside contacts, including contact with parents, are governed by FERPA regulations, though many students have release forms on record. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the Dean of Students Office.

However, this should not preclude exchange of helpful information between adviser and instructor or the Deans. Such exchanges should always be conducted in a professional and discreet manner. For instance, keep details sent via email brief and follow up with a phone call or submit a formal Care Team or Academic Alert. Student information should only be shared as educationally appropriate within the College.

Staff and faculty acting in their capacity as College employees (with the exception of the College

Chaplain and Wellness Center staff) are considered by the College to be mandatory Title IX reporters. Please see the Title IX website for more information:

<https://www.wooster.edu/offices/title-ix/>.

3. Advisers must approve registration for all courses for their advisees. The procedure for registration for courses is as follows:
 - a. Advisers must meet with all advisees during the times designated for advising conference prior to on-line registration and release each advisee for registration.
 - b. If a student does not meet with the adviser prior to scheduling, the adviser should not release the student for registration.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

(FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational, financial and health records. Without the appropriate student information releases, student account and academic records cannot be discussed with a parent, guardian, spouse, or other parties. Under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), student education records and information cannot be released without the expressed written consent of the student. The written consent needs to contain specifically what is to be released, the reasons for release and to whom. Additional information about FERPA, including exceptions for directory information can be found [here](#).

Title IX is a federal civil rights law in the US that was passed as part (Title IX) of the Education Amendments of 1972 to prohibit sex discrimination in education. It is also known as the **Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act** (named after the Congresswoman who co-authored and introduced it). This includes:

- Sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment
- Sexual misconduct including sexual harassment and assault
- Stalking and intimate partner violence
- Bullying and cyber bullying
- Retaliation
- Hazing
- Program inequity

4. Following the open registration period, advisers must approve all course changes for their advisees. The procedure for changing a course is:
 - a. The student completes the Registration Adjustment (Drop/Add) form (available on the Office of the Registrar's webpage and in APEX) and an email is sent to the student's Adviser for approval. The change is valid on the date the form is received by the Registrar's Office.
 - b. Students must be enrolled in three credits to be a full-time student. Students who wish to drop below three credits must complete the petition for an Exception to an Academic Policy and submit it to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. Students should be advised that enrolling in fewer than three credits may have implications for financial aid, visa status and housing eligibility.
 - c. Any time advisees make changes to their class schedule, advisers receive a report, sent out on a weekly basis.
5. Advisers may be consulted about the progress of students by the Deans, Registrar, members of the Admissions staff, and by the Committee on Academic Standards.

3. CHANGES OF ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Updated October 2020

It is not uncommon that a student's academic advisor will change during their time at the College. When students declare a major, the Chair of the Department or Program will assign their advisor. When a student's advisor goes on Research Leave or is unable to continue as academic advisor for another reason, the Chair also makes student advisor reassignments.

If a student wishes to change of advisors *before they have declared a major*, they should reach out to the Associate Dean of Academic Advising.

After a student declares a major, they should reach out to the Chair if they wish to change advisors within the major. If their advisor is the current Chair, they may consult with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.

4. SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Adapted Fall 2020 from communication from Associate Dean of Students Justin Adkins and Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement Jennifer Bowen

Many college students face different challenges during their time on campus. This guide is a resource to assist faculty and staff members as they support students in difficult situations.

Important Phone Numbers and Offices

<p>Academic Affairs Galpin Hall, first floor Provost, Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement, Dean for Faculty Development</p>	<p>330-263-2008 academicaffairs@wooster.edu</p>
<p>APEX (Advising, Planning, and Experiential Learning) Gault Library, lower level Academic Advising, Career Planning, Center for Entrepreneurship, Experiential Learning and Community Engagement (ELCE), Global Engagement Office</p>	<p>330-287-1919 apex@wooster.edu</p>
<p>Dean of Students Office Galpin Hall, first floor Class Deans</p>	<p>330-263-2545 dos@wooster.edu</p>
<p>Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Galpin Hall, second floor</p>	<p>330-263-2167 cdeio@wooster.edu</p>
<p>Center for Diversity and Inclusion Babcock Center Offices of International Student Services, Multicultural Student Services, Multicultural Student Services, and the Campus Chaplain</p>	<p>330-263-2434 cdi@wooster.edu</p>
<p>Learning Center APEX, Gault Library, lower level</p>	<p>330-263-2595</p>
<p>Longbrake Student Wellness Center 570 E. Wayne Ave.</p>	<p>330-263-2319</p>
<p>Security and Protective Services 602 E. Wayne Ave.</p>	<p>330-263-2590 (non-emergency) cow-security@wooster.edu 330-287-3333 (emergency)</p>
<p>Anonymous Tip Line (Available 24/7)</p>	<p>330-263-2337</p>
<p>Title IX Office Longbrake Student Wellness Center</p>	<p>330-263-2017</p>

a. DEANS OF STUDENTS OFFICE AND CLASS DEANS

General concerns as well as urgent or time sensitive concerns about students can be reported to the Dean of Students Office at 330-263-2545 for referral to a Class Dean or other resource, or directly to the appropriate Class Dean.

Examples of behaviors to share with the Dean of Students Office or a Class Dean could include:

- Change in behavior, such as withdrawing
- Appearing extremely down or depressed
- Significant anxiety or crying in class
- Prolonged physical health issues
- Potential alcohol or drug abuse
- Unusual difficulty transitioning to college
- Poor academic preparation
- Confused, disjointed thoughts
- Consistently sleeping in class
- Missing class excessively or an extended time

b. CARE TEAM

A small group of College staff members (**Care Team**) meet weekly to consult about students of significant concern. The purpose of this group is to review and identify patterns arising with an individual student or group of students, and/or to research, and develop a plan for appropriate intervention for significant students of concern. Information shared during this meeting is private and often no action is taken on a single piece of knowledge. Care Team members are trained to help address intersectional concerns about stressful situations, behaviors, academic progress, and mental health. To share a concern about a student with this administrative group, contact the appropriate Class Dean or submit the information via the online [form](#). Upon receipt of the form, the Class Dean will respond confirming receipt of the report and ask for any clarifying information.

c. URGENT, DISRUPTIVE, OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Emergencies should be reported to Security and Protective Services at x3333 from a campus phone, 330-287-3333 from a cell phone, or to 911.

d. DISRUPTIONS TO CLASS

College policies concerning attendance, missed assignments, final exams, grade complaints, and academic integrity violations can be found in *The Scot's Key* and the *College Catalogue*. General academic concerns should be submitted via an [Academic Alert](#). Additional questions can be directed to Academic Affairs. Academic Alerts offer a way for faculty to share academic-oriented concerns about students, they are not designed to be punitive, but instead they are used to proactively communicate about students.

i. SEVERELY TROUBLING OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

If a student is extremely agitated, screaming, actively making threats of harm to self or others, or engaging in aggressive or dangerous behaviors, do not try to handle the situation on your own and risk harming yourself or others. Call Safety and Protective Services at 330-287-3333 or call 911 immediately.

e. PERSONAL CONCERNS

A faculty or staff member is often the first person in whom a student confides. When a student shares a personal concern with you, do not promise confidentiality. More often than not, you will need to pass on the information to someone else or involve others in assisting the student. Rather, assure the student of their privacy, meaning you will only share information with others if necessary. It is important in respecting the student's privacy that you not share information among colleagues, but with the appropriate staff who can help you support the student. It is also important to remember your limitations. While some of our staff and faculty members have extensive training in responding to student concerns, most of us are not licensed counselors and should not attempt to act as such. Never hesitate to seek consultation from staff members in the Dean of Students Office.

Clergy and religious professionals are also available for consultation with students on personal and religious issues or questions. The Chaplain is an on-campus advocate and resource in the Religious & Spiritual Life (RSL) branch of the Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI). The Chaplain serves students (and faculty or staff) of any religious, secular, or spiritual tradition, providing pastoral care and advising support where needed. The Chaplain is also a confidential resource for Title IX and is not obligated to file reports, but can assist students with connecting to on- or off-campus resources.

Other members of the RSL staff—such as the Catholic Campus Minister—are available to meet with students, as are the clergy and faith leaders at Westminster and First Presbyterian Churches, St. James Episcopal Parish, Wooster Mennonite, and Knesseth Israel Temple, all in walking distance of campus.

A list of more faith communities in the area and their contact information can be found in the [Places of Worship directory on RSL's website](#). If you have a student of a particular background or experience but are unsure how to connect them to resources or communities off-campus, please contact the Chaplain at rsl@wooster.edu.

i. EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

If a student confides an emotional challenge to you – depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorder, or other mental health concerns – suggest scheduling an appointment to see a counselor at Counseling Services. Counseling Services is located at the Longbrake Student Wellness Center and includes four licensed mental health professionals. Appointments may use Microsoft Teams (a HIPAA compatible platform). In the event of an emergency, the counselor on call may be reached through the nurses or the administrative coordinator at the Center when classes are in session by calling 330-263-2319. Additional resources can be found at Counseling Services [website](#), including details about “Let’s Talk” (a brief consultation meeting with a counselor) helpful information about wellness, and local mental health providers.

If you would like to consult with a counselor about a student, call Counseling Services during business hours. If a student is in crisis (either during business hours or evening/weekend) please assist the student to get to the Wellness Center by walking them over or calling Security and Protective Services for help in transporting the student.

Information regarding a student’s use of Counseling or Health Services is confidential. The staff at Longbrake Student Wellness Center cannot confirm or deny that any student is using or has used services. Additionally, Health and Counseling Services do not write notes for students regarding missed classes. Students are expected to communicate with their instructors about making up work if they have been sick. Class Deans are able to verify information about a student with faculty and staff members. If your concerns about a student continue, and you want to make sure the student is getting appropriate help, you should fill out the **Care Team** form.

ii. ILLNESS AND INJURY

For illness or minor injury, students may visit Longbrake Student Wellness Center for student health services. Longbrake is staffed 24/7 by a registered nurse and includes overnight rooms for care when classes are in session. In addition, the College maintains a contractual arrangement for physician care and referrals with the Cleveland Clinic Wooster, a private multi-specialty group of physicians located several blocks from the campus. Physicians, including OB/GYN practitioners, are available at scheduled times, with most meetings provided using Microsoft Teams. All students should call the Wellness Center (330.263.2319) before coming to the building. Students who become ill or injured at a time when the physician is not at the Center will be seen and treated by the nurse on duty and, as necessary, referred to the Cleveland Clinic Wooster or Wooster Community

Hospital. Students should note that visits to providers outside the Longbrake Student Wellness Center (including the Wooster Community Hospital emergency room) will be their own financial responsibility.

iii. CONCERNS INVOLVING SEXUAL ASSAULT OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

If a student or colleague shares with you that they have been victim of sexual violence or sexual harassment, your first step is to ensure that person is referred to campus resources. Next, you are obligated to report incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment to the Title IX coordinator, unless you are designated a “confidential source” by the College. Confidentiality has a particular legal meaning and only a handful of College employees are designated as confidential including Wellness Center employees (medical doctors, licensed counselors) and the College Chaplain providing pastoral care. While you cannot promise confidentiality, you can assure the person disclosing to you that you will respect their privacy. Please inform the student that you are obligated to report the concern to the Title IX Coordinator. Often this is enough to allay their concerns.

If a student shares with you that they have been accused of violating the sexual misconduct policy, they should be connected to support resources through the Title IX Office.

iv. BIAS-RELATED INCIDENTS

For students seeking support concerning bias-related incidents, please direct them to the Bias Incident Reporting [Form](#), the Anonymous Tip Line, or the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer 330-263-2167.

v. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

If students confide in you about difficulty purchasing books, refer them to the Dean of Students Office. There is a modest book purchasing fund that the Bookstore provides. For difficulties with tuition costs, refer students to the Financial Aid Office to discuss possible loan options or to the Business Office 330-263-2321 to discuss payment plans. If a student has an emergency expense and needs assistance, refer them to the Dean of Students Office to inquire about a short-term emergency loan or the possibility of small grant opportunities.

Students needing employment on campus should be directed to the Student Employment Office (330-263-2234, studentjobs@wooster.edu). Students with work-study awards will receive priority in placement referrals if they report to the Student Employment Office prior to the seventh day of class in the Fall Semester.

vi. CONCERNS RELATED TO RESIDENCE LIFE AND HOUSING

In general, questions concerning a student's housing or residential community issues should be directed to the Director of Residence Life and Housing.

Housing Placement: Each year, this office works to place students in residential environments that match closely with the students' needs and interests. Questions regarding room draw, first-year housing, program housing, or room changes should be directed to the Residence Life and Housing office.

Staffing: This office includes professional staff (many of whom live on campus) and undergraduate Resident Assistants. Each year applications for RA positions are available for rising juniors and seniors who have proven themselves as student leaders and role models. Often, RA candidates seek out reference letters from faculty members. If you have questions pertaining to departmental staffing, please contact our Assistant Director for Staffing and Training.

f. ACADEMIC CONCERNS, OPPORTUNITIES AND STUDENT RESOURCES

There are various academic resources across campus designed to support students in a variety of ways. These include, but are not limited to, Offices such as the Writing Center (Andrews Library), the Learning Center (APEX), the Office of Academic Advising (APEX), the Math Center (Taylor Hall), the STEM Success Initiative, and departmental-specific supports.

i. LEARNING CENTER

The Learning Center offers a variety of academic support services, programs, and one-on-one meetings available to all students. Popular areas of support include time management techniques, class preparation tips, and test-taking strategies. In addition, the Learning Center coordinates peer tutoring for several academic departments. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment at the APEX front desk or visit the Learning Center Website for additional options.

Additionally, the Learning Center offers English Language Learning (ELL) support. Students can receive instruction or support with English grammar, sentence structure, writing, reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary, listening comprehension, speaking fluency, pronunciation, and American culture through: one-on-one meetings with ELL staff; ELL Peer Tutoring; ELL Writing Studio courses; and other programming offered throughout the year. Students seeking ELL support are encouraged to visit the APEX front desk.

The Learning Center also coordinates accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students should contact the Learning Center to make arrangements for securing appropriate accommodations. Although the Learning Center will notify professors of students with documented disabilities and the approved accommodations, students are encouraged to speak with professors during the first week of each semester. If a student does not request accommodations or does not provide documentation to the Learning Center, faculty are under no obligation to provide accommodations.

ii. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

International Student Services (ISS) offers academic and social support to international students (330-263-2132). For English language support contact the Learning Center 330-263-2595. Students who have personal or family immigration concerns and need assistance with academic issues, financial aid or other college issues should contact International Student Services.

iii. REGISTRAR

Questions and concerns involving course schedules and the completion of requirements should be referred to this office. Forms for students, such as declaring a major or minor, adding and dropping courses, petitioning for credit overload, and to register for special courses, such as tutorials and Teaching Apprenticeships, are available at <https://www.wooster.edu/offices/registrar/forms/>.

iv. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The Deans in the Office of Academic Affairs are who a student should contact about course- or faculty-related concerns that are not able to be resolved at the Departmental or Program level. If possible, the student should first contact the professor of the course regarding their concern. However, because the faculty member is in a position of authority over the student, quite often students do not feel that it is possible for them to bring a concern directly to a faculty member. If the student is not comfortable speaking directly with the faculty member, or if that does not lead to a successful resolution, they should next reach out to the Chair of the Department or Program about their concerns. Chairs are welcome to consult with the Deans at any point, and if the concern is not able to be resolved at that level, Chairs should advise that the student meet directly with one of the Deans regarding their concerns. Please note that there is

some overlap in their areas and on some occasions meeting with both Deans may be advisable. In cases where there is a conflict of interest involving the Chair or a Dean, the Provost may also participate in a conversation.

Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement

The Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement (DCAE) addresses matters relating to the academic procedures and policies of the College that cannot be resolved at the departmental level. These can include grade disputes and concerns about violation of academic policy. Note that in some cases students may raise with the DCAE concerns that they have about aspects of a faculty member's course even if the reason for their meeting with the DCAE is on another matter.

Dean for Faculty Development

The Dean for Faculty Development (DFD) hears student concerns related to faculty. Where possible, the student should first try to resolve these concerns in direct and open conversation with the faculty member; if this does not yield satisfactory results, the department or program Chair is usually an appropriate next step. However, if issues still remain after pursuing these options, the student should contact the DFD to explore other possible ways to seek a positive resolution or pursue further action.

After speaking with the student (or students), the DCAE and/or DFD will seek to resolve the student concern. This may involve meeting with the faculty member, often with the Chair of their Department or other colleague, to hear the faculty member's perspective and allow them to provide context for the student concern. Ultimately, the goal of this meeting is to work with you to ensure that you meet student needs in a way that aligns with the course goals appropriate to the course. After that meeting, the DFD will send a summary email to the faculty member and other attendees. While the Provost is not always involved in student concerns about faculty, the Provost's responsibility as Chief Academic Officer may require their involvement in some situations.

g. APEX (ADVISING, PLANNING, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING) CENTER

APEX (in Gault Library, lower level) integrates and coordinates the resources and activities that help students develop a thoughtful educational plan and professional development. APEX complements our one-on-one faculty advising system by providing a centralized location for programs and resources, many of which have been identified as High Impact Educational Practices.

One of the goals of APEX is to enable students to translate their liberal arts education at Wooster to life after college through programs that foster the integration of theory and practice. APEX faculty and staff are available for one-on-one consulting appointments.

In addition to the Offices listed below, the Learning Center and the Registrar's Office (discussed above) are both in APEX.

i. ACADEMIC ADVISING

The Office of Academic Advising helps students develop a comprehensive educational plan. The staff serve as academic advisers for a number of continuing students, but they are available for individual meetings and provide programming to help all students navigate their academic paths. Resources for course scheduling and creating a 4-year educational plan to visualize student's academic, personal and professional goals are available here: <https://www.wooster.edu/offices/advising/>. The office also coordinates a Peer Mentor program that provides support primarily to first-year seminar faculty and students, but Peer Mentors can also be connected to sophomores and juniors.

ii. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (ELCE)

Experiential Learning is grounded in the ideal of 'learning by doing,' and the goal of Community Engagement is to extend the benefits of learning beyond the campus and ourselves. Wooster offers students an array of experiential learning opportunities including credentialed course-embedded experiences, student-designed summer internships supported by APEX Fellowships, research opportunities, and mentored team-based consulting with AMRE, Wooster's [Applied Methods and Research Experience Program](#). The staff in ELCE and the Associate Dean for Experiential Learning assist students in finding opportunities, help guide students through reflective and explorative activities to connect experiences to their academics, and work with faculty and staff to incorporate best practices in experiential education into their programming.

iii. CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Center for Entrepreneurship takes a broad view toward the definition of entrepreneurship that goes beyond starting new ventures to include leadership development and the search for solutions to complex problems. The focus is on empowering individuals to make a difference in the world through the creation of an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset. The Center for Entrepreneurship supports both

academic courses and co-curricular programming that is relevant for the professional development of students from all majors.

iv. CAREER PLANNING

The faculty adviser plays a critical role in helping students explore and select career options consistent with their abilities and goals. This section outlines resources available to faculty advisers from Career Planning. Please encourage any student who desires help to make an appointment with us.

- **Assessment Tools** such as StrengthsQuest, PathwayU, Self-Directed Search, and Campbell Interest and Skill Survey help students gain a clearer focus on their interests, skills, and abilities in relation to many occupations.
- **A Career Library** filled with career exploration materials, graduate school program information, internships, and summer and fulltime job opportunities.
- **The Scots Career Network** offers current students access to over 800 alumni nationwide who serve as career mentors.
- **The Career Services Homepage** gives students access to thousands of career-related links.

v. FACULTY ADVISERS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Faculty members and APEX directors serve as advisers for a number of scholarships, fellowships, and programs. You can find additional information on the APEX website [“Graduate Fellowships and Scholarships.”](#)

vi. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICE (GEO)

This office provides individualized advising to all Wooster students on international and domestic off-campus study, intern, and research programs. The office is responsible for preparing students to maximize their learning on off-campus study programs and to integrate their learning into their Wooster degree program. The office manages the College’s menu of approved off-campus study programs (see the [GEO Compass](#)) and works closely with the faculty on the development of TREK programs (short-term faculty-led programs). Please encourage any student interested in exploring off-campus study options to make an appointment with our staff; advance planning ensures off-campus study can be integrated into a student’s four-year plan. For further information, contact the Director of GEO.

B. INDEPENDENT STUDY

1. INDEPENDENT STUDY AT WOOSTER

The capacity for individual inquiry and expression is a mark of a liberally educated person. The objective of the Independent Study program at Wooster is to provide an opportunity through which this capacity may be nurtured in every student at the College. As President Lowry described the challenge of the program more than fifty years ago, "...it invites all students to come to their best in terms of their own talents."

The Independent Study program is not reserved for a few students; it provides all students the opportunity to engage in an activity which is both personally meaningful and appropriate to their individual fields and interests. As a student begins Independent Study, he or she is assigned a faculty adviser who serves as mentor and critic. Throughout the program, students work closely with their advisers through regularly scheduled conferences or seminars. These conferences and seminars are designed to assist, encourage, and challenge the participants and to afford both students and advisers an opportunity to share the excitement of discovery and expression in fields in which they have mutual interests. The program approaches learning as an exploration shared by student and adviser alike, neither having all the answers, but both enjoying immensely the opportunity to search for solutions.

Specific format and procedures vary from department to department. The Independent Study Guide for each major provides details on the format and procedures for Independent Study in a particular field. Students should request a current copy of the Independent Study Guide at the time of registration for I.S. 401 and I.S. 451-452. The first unit of Independent Study often consists of a seminar or a tutorial program, designed both to explore the possible range of research and creative projects in the chosen field and to initiate the student into a methodology of research or the techniques necessary for creative work. This introduction to Independent Study, usually elected during the junior year, stresses the development of the student's confidence and ability to carry out a more substantial project in the senior year. During the latter part of the first unit of Independent Study, a preliminary survey or exploration of the subject of the senior project may be undertaken.

In the senior year the student devotes the time equivalent of two courses to a major investigative or creative project which culminates in the writing of a thesis or the production of a substantial creative work. Attention is given to the method, form, and content of intellectual activity, and there is an emphasis on the communication of the results of the individual's own intellectual achievement.

At Wooster, Independent Study is the culmination of liberal education and provides the basis for independent learning throughout life.

2. OBJECTIVES OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

The capacity for individual inquiry and expression is a mark of a liberally educated person, and the objective of the Independent Study program is to provide an opportunity through which this capacity may be nurtured.

Three elements of Independent Study 451-452 (thesis or equivalent project) are content, method, and form:

Content -- Students differ in their individual interests and the requirements for various courses of study are not uniform; consequently, there are few rules for the proper choice of content for I.S. projects. A well-selected thesis or project should be governed by such consideration as the significance of the subject for personal intellectual development, the progress of professional understanding, and the needs of society. Given the constraints imposed by available resources and time, the manageability of the topic is also an essential consideration.

Method -- Implicit in every inquiry is a method or plan which includes a logic, a design, or a deliberate conception of what is being attempted. The method selected will determine the techniques, devices, or tools appropriate for the project.

Form -- The successful completion of the project requires the communication of what has been discovered or developed. Through the form of the thesis or creative project, students share with others the results of their efforts. Whether by exposition or through an act of creative expression, the forms of communication should be consistent with the content and method and should be chosen carefully to communicate as clearly and forcefully as possible the results.

3. GENERAL POLICIES APPLICABLE TO INDEPENDENT STUDY

- a. All candidates for the B.A. degree at The College of Wooster are required to complete one course of Independent Study plus a two-course Independent Study Thesis (or equivalent creative project). The three Independent Study courses count toward the total number of courses required for a Wooster degree.
- b. Creative projects which count as the Independent Study Thesis should be more than creative events and should result in a permanent record or critical appraisal of the work achieved.
- c. The Independent Study Thesis must be done in the student's major unless the student has approval of the major department or program to register for the thesis in a different department or program.
- d. A department may require a methods seminar or a one-semester Independent Study course before accepting direction of a student's Independent Study Thesis.

- e. The student will be expected to register for the I.S. Thesis during the Fall and Spring Semesters of the senior year. Exceptions to this regulation will be rare and must be approved in writing by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement prior to registration. I.S. 451 and 452 cannot be taken concurrently.
- f. Students who have been approved for a double major must register for the Independent Study Thesis in one major during fall semester and in the second major in spring semester. Each faculty member supervising a joint Senior Independent Study Thesis will receive teaching credit each semester. In some cases, with the approval of both Department Chairs and in consultations with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement, a single advisor may suffice.
- g. Students should enroll in no more than three full courses per semester, excluding the thesis, during the Fall or Spring Semester of the senior year. The maximum load permitted while enrolled in I.S. 451 or 452 is 4.250 courses.
- h. As part of the Independent Study Thesis requirement, all students will be expected to present a successful defense of the thesis (or project). The defense must be completed by the deadline specified by the department. The defense of the thesis will involve an oral and/or written examination which will cover the thesis (or project) itself as well as the relation of the thesis to the broader questions of the discipline. A department may choose not to schedule an oral defense if the written thesis does not meet the “passing” criteria.
- i. All grades for the Independent Study Thesis must be submitted to the Registrar by the last day of classes of the Spring Semester in which the student expects to graduate unless a later date has been approved by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.
- j. The Independent Study Thesis will be graded No Credit, Satisfactory, Good, or Honors. The final grade will be decided on the basis of the work accomplished during each of the semesters, on the basis of the completed Thesis, and on the basis of the defense of the Thesis. Each Thesis will be evaluated by at least two faculty members, and the two will jointly assign the grade.
- k. With the approval of the department chairperson and the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement, one course taken at another institution may be accepted by Wooster as Independent Study (other than for thesis credits) if the work in the course corresponds to a one-semester Independent Study course at Wooster and if the appropriate department at Wooster certifies the grade when the work is completed. The Independent Study Thesis courses must be supervised by a College of Wooster faculty member.
- l. A student may register for Senior I.S. 452 after a gap of five semesters or more, if all of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) continuation of the same topic of the Independent Study; (ii) demonstrated proficiency equivalent to Senior I.S. 451 (the departments may determine the criteria); and (iii) availability of a faculty adviser for the topic.

- m. In evaluating the Independent Study Thesis, the faculty member should consider the three elements of Independent Study (see objectives above) and the manner in which these are combined in the realization of the project:
- i. **Content** – The choice of the Independent Study Thesis topic should reflect a considered judgment as to the significance and manageability of the subject, and the completed project should represent a serious and systematic attempt to deal with it by having used effectively the available resources. An awareness of what has and has not been accomplished should be part of the presentation of the project.
 - ii. **Method** – The method chosen should be stated and followed. The choices involved in the design should be made clear, and an appreciation of its uses and limits should be one of the results of the project.
 - iii. **Form** – Form is an essential element of clear expression. The project should reflect explicit attention to the requirements of form for a given discipline, field, or mode of expression.

4. DEPARTMENTAL AND PROGRAM INDEPENDENT STUDY GUIDES

Every department and program will provide Guide to its Independent Study process on their website, which will include:

- Explicit attention to the steps by which the student's training in the dimensions of content, method, and form will proceed and any schedules for conferences and for the submission of drafts required by the department.
- A statement about potential Independent Study Thesis areas that can be supported by existing staff, library, and other resources. Where relevant, indications should be made of the course work that would provide background for these areas. Students should be encouraged to select Independent Study topics which grow out of the previous course work and for which staff and research resources are clearly available.
- A statement about the procedure to be used by the department in evaluating a student's Independent Study Thesis/Project and about the department's particular use of the College criteria of form, content, and method in making such an evaluation.
- All I.S. Guides should include a statement that the department reserves the right to make changes in the next edition of the I.S. Guide.

All Handbooks should be updated annually, with major revisions occurring every 3-5 years.

5. INDEPENDENT STUDY ADVISERS

A student may select a major any time after the first semester of their first year and must select a major prior to the advising period for registration for their junior year. Students who wish to

pursue a double major must declare their intention to do so no later than October 1 of the junior year. Assignment of Independent Study advisers is the responsibility of the department or curriculum committee chairperson, after consultation with the student and appropriate faculty and consideration of the topic the student wishes to investigate.

Responsibilities of the adviser are as follows:

- a. to encourage the student to attempt an inquiry or project of appropriate rigor within the limitations of the student's potential, the time available, and the College's and the student's access to resources (library, laboratory, studio, computer, field work facilities, etc.);
- b. to advise the student toward the successful completion of the chosen Independent Study, meeting the general College specifications as interpreted by the department;
- c. to be available to meet regularly with the student and help guide the research process; while the length and structure of meetings will vary by discipline and for the individual student, on average faculty members should expect to be available for each advisee for between forty-five minutes and an hour each week;
- d. to assist with the editing of the Independent Study thesis/project according to the following guidelines:
 - i. On all drafts of the thesis/project, including the final draft if received by the deadlines specified above, the adviser is responsible for indicating to the student typical errors of logic, style, mechanics, etc., which may occur. The advisor is not required to edit and proofread these drafts paragraph by paragraph and sentence by sentence. The editing of any draft by the adviser does not imply the ultimate acceptability of the thesis.
 - ii. After the completed Independent Study thesis/project is submitted and evaluated, the adviser is responsible for indicating to the student any specific typographical and mechanical errors that must be corrected before the document is filed with the department.
 - iii. If the deficiencies in the final copy extend beyond "specific typographical and mechanical errors," then the student must re-enroll for I.S. 452 in a subsequent semester. Students who enroll for a ninth semester to complete I.S. 452 will be charged the current "ninth semester rate" as established by the College.

6. INDEPENDENT STUDY AND DOUBLE MAJORS

Students with double majors may complete their Senior Independent Study requirement, either by doing two separate theses/projects or through a joint thesis/project. If a student chooses the latter model, the relevance of using the two different methodologies to study the project should be clear in the proposal to the two departments. The Independent Study project of a double major should be formulated to reflect an interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary approach in a manner that represents four years of disciplinary engagement in each department/program.

The student and adviser(s) should have a joint meeting to establish the process for the project. While it is often the case that students doing double majors have had two advisors, it is also appropriate for a student to work with a single advisor if it is agreed upon by the Chairs of both Departments/Programs in consultation with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. The Double Major I.S. Agreement should be completed following this discussion with the advisers and submitted to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement as soon as possible but no later than the end of the fourth week of the semester in which I.S. 451 is undertaken.

The goal of a joint Senior Independent Study thesis/project should be to examine a topic using approaches and methodologies of the two disciplines. If it is not possible to accomplish this goal, the student should complete two separate Senior I.S. projects rather than joining two separate pieces of work into one final project.

7. HENRY J. COPELAND FUND FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

To honor his College presidency, Wooster's Board of Trustees established the Henry J. Copeland Fund for Independent Study and raised \$1 million in gifts to endow this program. Each member of the Senior Class is invited to consider how a grant from the Copeland Fund for Independent Study might enhance the senior project. In order to apply for grant assistance, seniors should discuss their needs with their advisers and complete a Copeland Fund Application. All grants from the Copeland Fund are determined by a faculty committee. Additional information can be found at this website: <http://www.wooster.edu/academics/research/is/copeland/>.

8. POLICY ON PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

This policy's purpose is to protect human subjects of original research conducted either at The College of Wooster or by an employee or student of The College of Wooster. It is intended to assure that subjects of research are aware of their rights and protections. Moreover, the College is required to assure the federal government that such safeguards are being provided and enforced. These safeguards are derived from ethical principles articulated in the Belmont Report issued by the national Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research in 1979. The Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC) is the body charged with reviewing, prior to its commencement, all research, whether funded or not, involving human subjects conducted under the auspices of The College of Wooster.

The policy changes occasionally due to new federal regulations or for purposes of clarification or to handle new issues. Therefore, researchers should check the website (<https://www.wooster.edu/info/hsrc/>) for the most up-to-date information.

9. I.S. FORMATTING TEMPLATES

Added October 30, 2020

Pre-formatted IS templates are available through [Educational Technology's IS Resources](#) to all Seniors with the caveat that they consult with their advisor about whether the templates are appropriate for their particular project or discipline. EdTech staff can direct students and advisors to resources for making minor adjustments (such as moving page numbers to a different position or changing a heading style) if necessary. If you would like students to use Election something different, please refer them to discipline-specific formatting resources and/or the IS Resources at <https://technology.wooster.edu/is/> for general help with formatting.

10. THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER SEAL

While images of Kauke Hall are frequently used on I.S. cover pages (see Templates discussed above), please note that:

The official seal of The College of Wooster is the symbol of the authority and corporate signature of the Board of Trustees and may be used in its printed, embossed, or electronic form only on diplomas, academic transcripts, enrollment certifications, or other official College documents. Such other documents include commencement or baccalaureate programs, proclamations, and policy and procedure guides. The seal should never be used for either personal or general departmental publications. The seal cannot be altered except by authorization of the Board of Trustees.

The office of the Secretary of the College has custody of the seal for the purposes described in this policy. Anyone who wishes to use the seal on an official College publication or document must seek permission from the Secretary of the College in writing with a clear indication of its intended usage.

11. INDEPENDENT STUDY THESIS COMPLETION

a. I.S. DEADLINES

Completion of IS 452	Due Date for I.S. Submission (Student)	Due Date to Submit I.S. Grade (Faculty Advisor)
Spring Semester	5:00 p.m. on the first day of classes following Spring Recess	no later than the last day of classes for the Spring semester

Fall Semester	5:00 p.m. on the day four weeks prior to the end of classes	no later than the last day of classes for the Fall semester
Summer Session	5:00 p.m. at the end of the eighth week from the beginning of the Summer Session	no later than the end of the first week of classes of the Fall Semester

In performance or other departments where special equipment or facilities are needed, a department may require the completion of the project by the last day of classes prior to Spring Recess.

When the Independent Study Project involves the scheduling of a dramatic or musical performance to occur beyond the deadline, the Department must request approval by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement for extending the deadline for completion of the project.

Departments and advisers may impose deadlines for the purpose of commenting and advising when the work is in progress.

Faculty advisers are not expected to provide editorial comment, guidance, and advice on the thesis during the two weeks prior to the due date (this includes Spring Recess).

b. I.S. SUBMISSION

Students must complete these steps by 5:00 p.m. on the I.S. due date indicated above:

1. A digital copy of the I.S. must be submitted to the Libraries' [Open Works website](#) (digital submission must be completed before the paper copies of the I.S. will be accepted by the Registrar). See Archival Copy Submission information at <https://www.wooster.edu/offices/registrar/is-submission/>, including information on formats accepted, redacting personal information, embargos for theses with proprietary information, and the process for submitting a revised copy.
2. Two bound copies of the I.S. and two additional copies of the cover page (loose, unbound) must be turned in to the Registrar's Office, unless an extension has been arranged *in advance* with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. In the case of a project, two copies of a written synopsis of the nature of the project and of a statement that the I.S. has been presented in its final form are due in the Registrar's Office at the time specified.

c. PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF IS DEADLINE

In exceptional circumstances, a student may petition the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement in advance of that date for an extension of the deadline. Any extension to the

Independent Study Thesis deadline can only be granted by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement and only with the support of the I.S. adviser.

No thesis turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of Honors without the unanimous vote of the department and the approval of the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.

d. INCOMPLETE GRADE

Any delay in turning in a thesis (project) beyond the deadlines specified above automatically establishes the grade of 'I' for the thesis. The conditions for changing the 'I' to a passing grade will be established by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement after consultation with the student's adviser. The 'I' automatically becomes 'NC' two weeks after the deadline for the submission of the thesis unless prior approval for an extension of the 'I' has been given by the Dean.

Procedures for changing the 'I' to a passing grade are as follows:

- a. If a student has submitted an Independent Study Thesis/Project to the Registrar's Office in the two-week period after the deadline and the thesis/project has been given an 'I':
 - The student must write a petition to his or her Independent Study adviser and the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement indicating the reasons why the thesis/project was submitted late.
 - The Independent Study adviser must indicate in writing his or her support for the student's petition and submit this statement to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.
 - Upon review of the petition and statement of support, and if circumstances warrant, the Dean may approve the removal of the grade of 'I' and will indicate this to the Registrar, student, and adviser.
 - As appropriate, the adviser may take the late submission into consideration in assigning a final grade to the Independent Study Thesis/Project.
- b. If a student has not submitted an Independent Study Thesis/Project to the Registrar's Office in the two-week period after the deadline, the student must submit a petition to his or her adviser and the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement during that period to propose the establishment of a new deadline. The process for the submission and approval of the new deadline is the same as described in the preceding paragraph.

12. EVALUATION OF INDEPENDENT STUDY THESIS OR PROJECT

Independent Study Thesis/Project is graded as follows:

Honors: Outstanding in terms of content, method, and form.

Good: Significantly above average in terms of content, method, and form.

Satisfactory: Acceptable overall in terms of content, method, and form, though consideration may be given to balancing weakness in one area by strength in another.

No Credit: Seriously deficient in content, method, or form with no compensating strengths in other areas.

a. **ADVISER'S EVALUATIVE STATEMENT**

The adviser or the second principal evaluator of the thesis or project will provide an evaluation of the work to the student. The evaluation of the project should address specifically the elements of content, method, and form and the manner in which these have been combined in the realization of the project.

13. DEPARTMENTAL HONORS AND INDEPENDENT STUDY THESIS

A graduating senior will receive departmental honors by attaining all of the following:

1. A cumulative grade point average of 3.500 or better for all courses completed in the major department.
2. A cumulative grade point average of 3.200 or better for all courses completed at the College.
3. Honors for the Independent Study Thesis or the unanimous vote of the department that the student's overall performance in the major is of the quality to merit departmental honors.

14. INDEPENDENT STUDY THESIS AND THE WOOSTER TRANSCRIPT

1. In calculating the total number of courses for graduation, the two-unit Independent study Thesis will be counted as two courses, I.S. 451 and 452.
2. The Independent Study Thesis will be identified on the transcript by department, "I.S. Thesis," number and title.

15. I.S. EXEMPLAR STATUS

Departments, I.S. advisers and the Provost may nominate individual I.S. projects as an exemplar. I.S. Exemplars will be made completely open access on the Internet, following the

expiration of any applicable embargoes. These highly selective projects would serve as examples of the outstanding work done by our students during I.S.

Each student will be asked to accept the following two permission statements, independently, as part of the I.S. submission process:

I represent that the I.S. project is my own original work, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone else's copyright. I grant The College of Wooster and its designated employees a non-exclusive, perpetual, and royalty-free license to archive and provide unrestricted access to my I.S. project, in whole or in part, in any medium, to the College of Wooster community. I also authorize the Provost the right to distribute copies of my I.S. project to other individuals. I understand that I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my I.S. project.

Should my I.S. be nominated by my department as an Exemplar, I hereby grant the College and its designated employees a non-exclusive, perpetual, and royalty-free license to provide unrestricted world-wide open access to my I.S. project, in whole or in part, in any medium.