

Residential College Dean

Your primary academic adviser is your residential college dean, to whom you may always turn for academic and personal advice. The dean lives and has an office in your residential college. He or she can answer questions about academic requirements and connect you to other advising resources on campus. In addition, your residential college dean oversees your college's own advising networks.

On the first evening of Freshman Orientation your dean will welcome you at a meeting of all the freshmen in your residential college. He or she will give you some recommendations about how best to take advantage of the opening days and course selection period. You will also have many occasions to meet with your dean throughout freshman year. If you have a question to which you cannot find an answer, or if you need advice you cannot find elsewhere, consult your dean.

Freshman Adviser

Your freshman adviser is a Yale faculty or staff member affiliated with your residential college who has volunteered to talk with you about your academic interests and aspirations. He or she can offer general guidance about constructing a sensible overall schedule for your first year, help you think through larger questions and plans, and direct you to relevant resources. Please note that the primary purposes of these conversations are to provide general advice about acclimating to Yale's academic culture and to give you an opportunity to become acquainted with a Yale faculty or staff member.

You will meet your freshman adviser at the advising meeting in your residential college dining hall during Freshman Orientation. Be aware that advisers typically serve three or four students from the same college, and this first meeting usually takes place in a small group. The principal purpose of this meeting is to discuss general questions and to arrange a follow-up meeting when you can talk one-on-one.

You and your adviser must meet at least one or two more times before course schedules are due, either in your adviser's office or in your residential college, perhaps over a meal in the dining hall. Among the purposes of the follow-up meeting(s) are reviewing the courses you chose during course selection period and securing your adviser's signature endorsing your fall-term program of study. Please be aware that you will likely need to direct specific questions about courses and requirements to faculty affiliated with the relevant academic department or to your college dean. If you have any difficulty finding answers to a particular question, your college dean can guide you to the right source of information.

Finally, keep in mind that advisers are also available to meet throughout the term about any matter you wish to discuss, and the amount of contact you have with your adviser depends largely upon your interest and initiative. We particularly encourage you to arrange a meeting with your adviser around midterm to discuss how your courses are going, and again toward the end of the fall term as you begin to think about the spring term.

Freshman Counselor

Freshman counselors are seniors who live near you to be sources of information and assistance throughout the year. Your counselors can offer suggestions about curricular and extracurricular choices, take an interest in your concerns, and give firsthand advice on how best to use the academic and other resources of your residential college and of Yale College.

Departmental Advising and the Academic Fair

During your first few days on campus, a number of activities will help you get the academic year started. For example, you will have the opportunity to hear faculty presentations at departmental meetings, to sign up for sections of courses, to take placement tests, to consult directors of undergraduate studies, and to attend orientation sessions led by the Health Professions Advisory Program or the Center for International and Professional Experience.

Each academic department has a director of undergraduate studies (DUS), with whom you can discuss the department's course offerings and major requirements. Contact information for each DUS is listed by department in *Yale College Programs of Study* (the YCPS, or "Blue Book," which will be available on line by mid-July), and a separate list of DUSes is posted on the Yale College Web site. Large departments may also have departmental representatives in the residential colleges; the YCPS lists the names of these representatives.

A particularly important opportunity to gather information about academic programs is the annual Academic Fair, held during Freshman Orientation. At this event, directors of undergraduate studies and faculty members from most academic programs and departments will be available to offer you guidance about courses, placement, and prerequisites for majors. The fair provides excellent opportunities to gather information and advice from a broad range of sources, and you are strongly urged to attend.

Dear first-year students,

As you prepare to travel to Yale and look forward to your first meeting next Monday, August 31st, with your freshman adviser, I write with some suggestions about how you can prepare to get the most out of that (and subsequent) meetings, and with some advising FAQs and information on upcoming academic events.

You will meet your adviser for the first time at 2:00 on August 31 in your residential college. This meeting generally lasts not more than 45 minutes and will be a group meeting with your adviser and his or her other freshman advisees.

There are a few goals for this meeting, none of which really have to do with discussing specific courses (i.e., "bluebooking"). The goals are:
for you to get to know your adviser and for him or her to get to know you
for you and your adviser to make a plan to meet one-on-one two additional times before course schedules are due on September 16th.

How can you prepare for the August 31st meeting? Spend a few minutes beforehand reflecting on
your academic interests (and not just your possible major, but all those subjects that put a twinkle in your eye)
your extracurricular interests or hobbies
what your adviser should know about you in order to help advise you holistically (your hometown, your high school, what attracted you to Yale in particular)
your goals for your first year at Yale/your goals for your four years at Yale

I hope that this information is helpful and that you have a great advising meetings next Monday and following. Below, please also find some advising FAQs and the first in a series of occasional emails with Academic Events for Freshmen.

Best regards,

Dean Risa Sodi

FAQs

What are the two follow-up, shopping period meetings for?

Among the purposes of the first follow-up meeting are further discussing your goals for your freshman year and your various interests, and further building an advising relationship. Your adviser will also want to review the courses you are shopping or have chosen. This advising meet generally lasts between 20-60 minutes.

The purpose of the third and final shopping period meeting is to secure your adviser's signature on your course schedule. This meeting may only last a couple of minutes, particularly if you haven't made big changes to your schedule since the second meeting.

Does fall-term advising end on September 16?

Do keep in mind that advisers are available to meet throughout the term about any matter you wish to discuss, and the amount of contact you have with your adviser depends in part upon your interest and initiative. You may expect to hear from your adviser around the midterm and at the end of the term. If your adviser emails you, don't forget to email back without delay!

When can you meet Directors of Undergraduate Studies to ask questions about courses and majors?

The Academic Fair takes place the day after your first advising meeting, on September 1, from 2:00-3:30, and is designed with first-year students in mind. Representatives of 92 departments, programs, and majors will be on hand to answer your questions.

What are some helpful links?

Freshman Orientation app

The mobile download is <https://events.crowdcompass.com/yaleevents>

The event URL is located at <https://event.crowdcompass.com/ycfo2015>

A six-page booklet that describes Yale's academic advising system, including the respective roles of the residential college dean, the freshman adviser, and the freshman counselor (page 2), plus information on distributional requirements, Credit/D/Fail, etc.

http://yalecollege.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/2015_Toward_Academic_Success_3.pdf. A fuller description Yale's academic advising system is available here:

<http://yalecollege.yale.edu/new-students/class-2019/academic-information/advising>

Some fall-term courses require preregistration, a placement test, or other action before the term begins. Refer to the Preference Selection, Preregistration, and Applications page for August deadlines.

Academic Events for Freshmen, August 31-September 3
(details available by clicking here)

August 31-September 3

Spanish Online Make-up Placement Exam

September 1

Academic Fair, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

September 2

Language Fair, 12:00-2:00 p.m.

History Shopping Party, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Conversation Starters for Fall Advisee Meetings

Fall Term

For the Freshman Advising Group Meeting in the Residential Colleges

- Can you remember the first time you looked up from a project and realized four hours had passed? As you plan your schedule, where are you most likely to find this feeling again?
- Consider the things that you did, as well as the things you couldn't do, in order to get here. What will you continue, what will you eliminate, and what new things can you add?
- What was the most challenging course that you voluntarily took in high school. How did it go? If well, what do you do to succeed? If not well, why?
- What are the three words you would like to be able to use to describe your first semester?

General Conversation Starters for Freshman Advisers

- How did you spend your summer?
- Reflecting back on your high school experience, what stands out? What went well? What would you have done differently?
- Which course(s) in high school did you look forward to attending, and why? Which course(s) were your least favorites, and why?
- What are your goals for this semester?
- How do you plan to approach shopping this fall?
- How many courses do you plan to shop?
- Which courses are you thinking about taking this semester? Why?
- How many credits will you take?
- Do you have a mix of large and small courses? Seminars and lectures? Graded assignments, with a variety of due dates?
- *For the second shopping-period advising meeting:* Please explain your schedule to me: which classes you are taking, why you are taking them, and how they fit into your time at Yale.
- Why do you want to study _____?
- Let's take a look at how this schedule will help you fulfill your distributional requirements.
- Will you participate in extra-curricular activities?
- Are you satisfied with your room assignment? Your suitemates?
- Have you thought about doing research this? Study abroad during term-time or over a summer?
- *For mid-semester:* Have you begun to make any personal connections with any of your professors?

General Conversation Starters for Sophomore Advisers

- How did you spend your summer?
- Reflecting back on your freshman year, how did it go? What went well? What would you have done differently?
- Were your first-year grades what you expected? Were you pleased with your grades and, if not, why not?
- Which course(s) did you look forward to attending, and why?
- Which course(s) were your least favorites, and why?
- What did you learn last year about Yale? Academics? College life? Yourself?
- What are your goals for this semester? Are you still interested in _____?
- What is your thinking, after one year, about a potential major?
- How do you plan to approach shopping this fall? Will you do anything differently, as opposed to last year?
- How many courses do you plan to shop?
- Which courses are you thinking about taking this semester? Why?
- How many credits will you take?
- Do you have a mix of large and small courses? Seminars and lectures? Graded assignments, with a variety of due dates?
- Let's take a look at your distributional requirements: those that you fulfilled last year, and those you'll potentially fulfill this year.
- Please explain your schedule to me: which classes you are taking, why you are taking them, and how they fit into your time at Yale.
- Why do you want to study _____?
- Let's take a look at how this schedule will help you fulfill your sophomore distributional requirements.
- Did you participate in extra-curricular activities last year? Do you plan to continue?
- Are you satisfied with your room assignment? Your suitemates?
- Have you thought about doing research this year? Study abroad during term-time or over a summer?
- [For mid-semester] Have you begun to make any personal connections with any of your professors? With the DUS of your probable major?

For New (and Returning) Freshman Advisers

Who are our freshmen?

- Many have never been away from home before and may be overwhelmed and homesick
- Most freshmen are 17 or 18 years old
- They are still adolescents in need of guidance and limits...
- ...But they are also young adults who want to feel independent

What can you do for your advisees?

- You will need to offer them guidance, but also give them the freedom to find their own way
- You will be the kind of advice that is grounded in your experience as a teacher/staff member and as a (former) student
- You will help them think about the kinds of questions they should be asking
- You will introduce them to the variety of resources available to them
- Some students will have questions that you can readily answer; others will not have even begun to consider why they are at Yale and what they want to get out of their time here.
- You will help these latter students by asking them the questions that they need to be asking themselves
 - questions about how their goals and personal interests relate to the courses they say they plan to take
 - sometimes the connection will be clear; in many other cases, however, there will be no apparent connection, and your job will be to help students think about their courses in a new light
- You will help give students an understanding of what constitutes a liberal arts education at Yale

What about course schedules in particular?

Some general things to look out for:

- Ask your advisees how they came up with that particular group of courses to shop. This may lead to an interesting conversation about what they are looking for—or whether there is something they are overlooking
- Are they simply repeating the same kind of schedule they took in high school when they didn't have the range of options that the Yale curriculum makes available to them? If so, you can help them to think about other possibilities that might be of interest.
- Is the number of courses they intend to shop reasonable? Anything over 8 or 9 might be too daunting.

- Is the student taking at least one small class in which they will have the opportunity to get to know an instructor and engage in discussions with classmates?
- Is the student over-reaching by taking too many courses or too difficult a load? Note, in particular, those students whose academic preparation from high school suggests the need for introductory courses, such as ENGL 114.
- Has the student selected courses that conflict in class meeting times or examination groups?
- Has the student considered the distributional requirements for the freshman year
- Has the student made plans for fulfillment of the foreign language requirement?

Conversation starters

- Where are you from?
- Tell me something about your high school?
- What were your favorite subjects? In what sort of extracurriculars did you participate?
- How did you spend your summer?
- What are you expecting to be a challenge this semester? What do you feel pretty confident about?
- How is it going in your suite? Do you and your roommate get along? Suitemates?
- What are your goals for this semester?
- Do you have ideas about a potential major?
- How do you plan to approach shopping period?
- How many courses do you plan to shop?
- Which courses are you thinking about taking this semester? Why?

Communicating

- Who takes the lead — your advisee or you?
- When should you communicate with them?
- How much personal information about yourself is the right amount to communicate?
- How much personal information about your advisees is the right amount to solicit?
- How (via which technology) should you do it?

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