

Academic Success

FAQ's and Terms to Know for Students

Academic Support Services: UW has a wide variety of academic support services for you, from career services and academic advising, to library resources and an on-campus writing-center. Check out the [Resources for Students](#) page for links to several support services on-campus.

FERPA - What is FERPA? FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) protects your privacy; once you turn 18 or are enrolled at a college/university your privacy is protected by that institution. Essentially you have the right to have your information protected and kept private. This may be difficult for your family to navigate as this does not allow parent(s)/family member/guardian to call and inquire about such things as final grades. Again, protection of student privacy is important and essential. We encourage you to have open conversation with your family so you can respect their interest and investment in you as a college student while also upholding your privacy. Here are a couple links to explore for additional information: [University of Wyoming, Registrar - FERPA](#), [FERPA](#) and [FERPA General Guide for Students](#).

Registrar: the registrar handles academic records at UW. It is a good idea for you to check with the registrar on degree completion status on a regular basis – you can also consult with advising on this process as well. The registrar checks academic progress and records to confirm status for class standing (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior) and graduation. [Visit the University of Wyoming Registrar page for more information](#). You are encouraged to utilize this office to help you stay on track with course requirements and graduation status. Once you have met the course requirements indicated for your program you are eligible for graduation (check with the registrar for Degree Evaluation and Anticipated Graduation Date forms/information).

Classes/Courses: classes/courses look quite a bit different in college compared to high school. You are expected to attend class – expectations for participation and attendance are outlined in syllabi that are typically distributed on the first day of class or within the first week of class. Class schedules can vary, some meet once a week for a few hours, some meet three times a week and some twice a week – it is important to know your schedule and attend class. If you are unable to attend class it is very important to communicate with your instructor immediately, this is where an established relationship with an instructor can be useful so that you feel comfortable sending an email to notify an instructor if you are unable to attend class. Again, class attendance is critical to the successful completion of coursework and an overall college degree.

Syllabus: a syllabus is like a roadmap for the course. This can also be considered an agreement of expectations of the students, learning objectives (what you will learn), schedule for assignments, attendance policies, office hours for the instructor, and much more. It is important that you pay close attention to this syllabus, follow guidance included within the syllabus and always contact instructors if you have any questions on class assignments or course expectations.

Enrollment: You are in college – but now you need to sign up for classes! You should consider degree requirements, schedule, course offerings, and any additional commitments when meeting with your advisor to select classes each semester. You will want to be proactive in this process and meet with advising prior-to enrollment dates! Check out the [Calendar and Deadlines](#) information on the Registrar page for more information.

Credit Hours: credit hours usually indicate the number of hours a student will spend in a class per week. Credit for classes completed each semester are awarded based on the credit hour system. Students will typically take 12 to 15 credit hours per semester (which is 4-5 classes based on a 3 credit hour courses).

Department: or an *Academic Department* indicates a division within the university dedicated to a particular academic discipline. You will want to familiarize yourself with the contacts and support services within your academic department, as well as the faculty and staff.

Major/Minor: think of a *Major* as a specific area of study – you will focus your coursework and efforts within a specific field. For *Minor*, this is a secondary area of focus for you. Each *Major* and *Minor* has specific credit hour requirements and coursework that must be completed – refer to your academic department, advising and the registrar for assistance.

Breaks: most often these are fall or Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, spring break, and summer. [Check out the University Calendar here](#) – you can also navigate to academic and administrative calendars via the hyperlinks on the left-hand side of the page. It is important to navigate the transition to-and-from campus during these breaks with ease. Utilize this time away from campus for self-care and reflection and remember your parent/parents/family are excited to see you and hear all about your time at UW – enjoy your time away and remember to connect with campus/academic support services when you return to campus if you have any questions that came up while you were away!

Semester: half of a school year – most commonly: Fall Semester and Spring Semester. The University of Wyoming also offers coursework during the summer – Summer Term/Semester.