

University Policy on Use of Degree Planning Software

Degree planning software facilitates a timely path to graduation by providing roadmaps or Major Academic Plans (MAPs) for every program of study. These roadmaps link curricula, course offerings, program requirements, pre-requisites, and course sequencing into semester-by-semester plans. It also provides aggregate data to assist departments with appropriate course planning. The Degree Planning Software Working Group developed a series of policies and recommendations to effectively implement the degree planning software. The recommendations build on existing policies, structures, and expectations whenever possible to streamline practices and minimize the need to create more policies to implement the software (i.e. enforce current policies rather than create new ones).

In the following document, we list six policies and recommendations to guide their implementation.

Policy 1. Registration priority will be based upon % of degree requirements completed rather than number of units accrued.

Recommendations:

- This will include GEAR requirements. Units completed that do not go towards GEAR or major requirements, i.e. free electives will only be counted for registration priority if the major they have selected has free electives and they help the student reach 120 units.
- If a student switches to a major with fewer free electives, or none, these courses may no longer contribute towards completing a degree, thus this change of major may result in a reduced registration priority.
- Recommendations for specific cases:
 - Double Major
 - Calculate %'s of major that gives a student the highest priority
 - Undeclared Majors
 - Will calculate utilizing the “undeclared” major degree code in the u.achieve/DARS system
 - Units that count in multiple areas
 - Units that count in multiple categories (e.g. GE and Major) will be added to the calculation of % in each area.

Policy 2. Policy recommendation on Expected Academic progress:

Each academic program will develop two milestones in addition to the current milestone of completing basic subjects by 60 units. The Degree Planning Oversight Group will establish and implement consequences for non-compliance with the milestones by the Spring 2018 registration period. The current policy: Academic Progress Milestones for Undergraduate Programs will be revised to reflect these changes.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that departments consult with Institutional Research when picking milestone courses. Certain courses and course grades may have greater predictive value for future success in a given major and thus would make better milestone courses.
- The specific consequences for students not meeting the milestones will be developed by the Degree Planning Oversight Group with wide consultation.
- Consequences for non-compliance with milestones will be standard across the university, while the milestones themselves be designated by departments.
- Programs will provide support and a clear set of steps for students not meeting milestones.
- Milestone timelines will be set according to units attempted rather than semesters, so as to not disadvantage part-time students.

Policy 3. Use of degree planning software by students will be mandatory

Recommendations:

- A registration hold will be lifted when the plans are completed and reviewed by the appropriate advisor. This would be an appropriate time for advisors to discuss progress to degree and relevant milestones. The students will still have full freedom to register for the courses they desire to take, that fit in their schedule, or that still have spaces when their registration time comes up. The plan will need to be updated each semester to reflect adjustments. (Some provision/distinction will need to be made so that freshmen are using the system for their first year but probably not be required to fill out a four year plan until they meet with their advisor in either their first or second semester.)
- Mandatory use of degree planning software should begin in spring of 2018. This will allow departments the time to develop maps in spring and fall 2016 with a soft roll out of the product beginning in spring 2017 and to develop and provide degree planning software training to advisors and students. We envision this roll out to be an open invitation to all students to use the planning tools as maps are finalized with mandatory use of the system in spring 2018.
- Ensure that the structure of mandatory use and any consequences for lack of compliance be based upon student actions and not be a result of structural or policy oversights. The overarching philosophy of degree planning software should be that it is a planning and advising tool that helps our students achieve their goal of graduation in a short a time as is possible

Notes:

As the maps and software implementation are being developed, the following policy/procedure issues will need to be addressed and finalized:

- o Faculty/Student training for using the tool.
- o Map update procedures and approvals.
- o Map development deadlines and enforcement.
- o Phase in for requiring four year map completion including undeclared majors and freshmen/transfers.
- o Types and number of holds (Administrative/Advising, one set for semester and plan updates or separate holds?).
- o Consider issues specific to impacted programs.

Policy 4. Graduation workflows and Major Academic Plans will be standardized in format across all programs

Recommendations:

- Major Academic Plans will be written by each program accounting for co- and pre-requisites, students taking two semesters of English Composition instead of one, and/or needing additional math courses to prepare for the GE math requirement, and students transferring to HSU.
- All departments will use a common template for presenting MAPs to students.
- The standard template would replace all existing versions of roadmaps and be made available in a centralized, easily accessible site.
- Undeclared MAPs will also be developed utilizing standard templates.
- Each program will develop both a visual flowchart MAP and a curriculum listing.
- MAPs should show accurate and realistic paths that include 5th year courses if necessary.
- Utilize Spring/Fall of 2016 to develop and finalize maps.
- Develop appropriate web sites and links to facilitate the distribution and access to Maps.
- Office of Academic Affairs will develop ongoing maintenance plan including roles and responsibilities for updates to flowcharts and Course lists.
- Associate Deans will work with departments to review and manage development of the templates.

Policy 5. Advisors, Department Chairs and the Registrar will use degree planning software to enter and approve course substitutions.

Recommendations:

- Degree planning software will show the substituted courses, and the names and dates of approved substitutions. The procedure will be an electronic version of our current process, facilitated by degree planning software.
- We recommend the following workflow for course substitutions using degree planning software:
 - **Advisor** enters substitution in degree planning software, routes to **Department Chair** who approves and routes to **Registrar** for official entry in DARS (u.achieve).

Note:

This is essentially the policy we have now but uses electronic means rather than paper for entry. It is in the best interest of students and advisors to have substitutions officially entered in DARS as soon as possible. An electronic process consisting of using degree planning software alone may not in and of itself be efficient enough to facilitate faster processing and so the substitution process must be reviewed in order to promote a faster turnaround in the Registrar’s Office without unduly burdening Registrar personnel.

Policy 6. These recommendations, when implemented and taken as a whole, will replace the current major contract system.

Recommendations:

- The current Degree Planning Software Working group or a successor (possibly the newly reconstituted Enrollment Management Group) should be assigned the task of developing, vetting and implementing degree planning software and the required policy and process components as outlined in this document.
- The committee would report to the Provost, inform the Senate of progress and consult with the Academic Policies Committee regarding any changes to policy.