

# The Division of General Studies

**Director:** Nancy Walburn

The Division of General Studies is a primary source of academic support for students. Through two offices—The Office of Exploratory Studies and The Office of Student Academic Success, the division coordinates and offers academic programs and services to enhance the academic experience and support the academic success of undergraduate students. The Office of Exploratory Studies includes academic advising services for three key areas—advising for students who are undecided about their major, students pursuing a major in pre-nursing and students with a professional goal of medicine, dentistry or optometry; the Office of Student Academic Success coordinates the freshmen year experience course, University 101 and other academic support programs such as Supplemental Instruction, Academic Coaching and General Study Strategy Sessions, which are designed to assist students in strengthening their academic skills necessary for success in the University.

## Exploratory Studies

The Exploratory Studies advising system provides a comprehensive program for students who are undecided about a major and students who are completing the requirements for admission to programs in nursing and business. Advisors assist students in identifying their educational and career goals and in selecting courses and supporting activities to achieve these goals. Students work with their advisor to assess their skills, clarify their goals and develop an individual plan for their chosen program of study.

Academic advising is provided in individual sessions and in group sessions during New Student Orientation. Advisors provide students with information regarding academic policies and procedures, explanations of university expectations and descriptions of options and opportunities available to help them achieve their academic goals. Additionally, advisors assist students in developing skills for successful academic performance.

The following majors are advised in Exploratory Studies:

### **Undeclared (UDEC)**

Students who have not yet decided on a major have the opportunity to explore options for majors while taking courses that count toward a degree. Undeclared students in Exploratory Studies may select any of the undergraduate majors in the university; however, they must select a major by the completion of 60 semester hours of course work. Advisors in Exploratory Studies work with each student to choose a field of study that is compatible with the student's skills, interests and priorities.

### **General Studies Business (GSB)**

Students who have identified a major in the School of Business but do not meet the grade point average requirements work with a Exploratory Studies advisor toward the goal of becoming eligible for admission to the School of Business or identifying other options that are achievable.

### **Pre-Nursing (PNUR)**

Students who have identified Nursing as a major must complete prerequisites and achieve a competitive grade point average for admission to the School of Nursing. Advisors work with each student to become a competitive applicant or to consider appropriate options for their educational goals.

Students should call (205) 934-6135 or visit the office (Room 318, Hill University Center) to make an appointment.

## **Pre-Health Professions Advising**

Pre-Health advising is recommended for students who plan to apply to medical, dental, or optometry school. The Pre-Health Advising Program is designed to help students become competitive applicants for health professional programs beyond graduation. Pre-Health advisors assist students in major fields of study across the university as they prepare for the competitive application process to professional schools. Beginning with group meetings at freshman orientation, students see the pre-health advisors in information sessions, group meetings by class level, and seminars in addition to individual advising sessions throughout the student's undergraduate preparation. Each student, with an advisor, creates an individual plan to develop the high level of academic and interpersonal skills critical to successful application to professional school. Opportunities are available for students to participate in assessment interviews with admissions committee members, an active national pre-health honor society, and a number of leadership and community service activities as they develop the interpersonal skills necessary for a professional career in healthcare. The pre-health advisors coordinate the preparation of required letters of evaluation at the time of a student's application to professional school.

While there is not a specific pre-health major at UAB, most undergraduate programs of study easily accommodate the pre-requisite courses required for admission to schools of medicine, dentistry and optometry. In principle, students may select any of the undergraduate majors listed in this catalog. Students are encouraged to pursue individual academic interests by the professional school admissions committees.

## Academic Program

The Pre-Health advisors work in collaboration with the student's academic advisor to plan individual academic programs according to the requirements of the students' chosen majors. In addition, students will incorporate the following courses that are required by medical, dental, and optometry schools:

Courses Required by most Medical, Dental, or Optometry Schools:

English	EH 101, 102
Biology	BY 123 & 124 (with labs)
Chemistry	CH 115 (116 lab), 117 (118 lab), 235 (236 lab), 237 (238 lab)
Mathematics	Two semesters of college math. (May include statistics or computer science) We recommend math through pre-calculus (MA106).
Physics	PH 201(211lab) & 202 (212 lab); or 221(231 lab) & 222 (232 lab)

The UAB School of Optometry recommends Biochemistry (CH 461), The Biology of Microorganisms (BY 271), one semester of calculus, one semester of statistics, two courses in psychology, and two semesters of additional courses in social and behavioral sciences.

The UAB School of Dentistry requires 12 semester hours in biology. As a result, one additional biology course is required: BY 210, 256, 271, 314, and 330 are recommended choices. Biochemistry is strongly recommended (CH 461). Calculus and analytical geometry (MA 125) is also strongly recommended.

Students should take these courses during their freshman and sophomore years in order to be prepared to take the required admissions tests as juniors and are encouraged to consult the catalogs of specific professional programs in which they have an interest in order to be certain that they complete all requirements for admission prior to application to a particular professional program.

## Alternative Careers

Students should bear in mind that admission to schools of medicine, dentistry, or optometry is highly competitive. Satisfactory completion of pre-professional requirements in no way guarantees acceptance by the professional schools. The undergraduate major should therefore be chosen with care so that alternative career paths are available if admission to the desired professional school is not granted. Students should also keep in mind alternative health professions in which a doctorate may be earned, such as pharmacy, podiatric medicine, or veterinary medicine. The Pre-Health advisors work with students and provide resource materials to explore options and develop individual plans.

## Completion of Bachelor's Degree

In addition to the prerequisite courses for admission to a school of medicine, dentistry, or optometry, students must also satisfy the requirements for completion of a degree including requirements for a major. In rare situations a student may be accepted to an accredited medical, dental, or optometry school before completing the requirements for a baccalaureate degree. These students, upon successful completion of their first year of professional study, may then receive a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in natural science.

## Student Academic Success Programs

The programs offered through the Office of Student Academic Success are designed to assist students in refining and strengthening the academic skills necessary for success in the University. The staff works closely with other departments and offers the following programs:

**University 101:** Designed to promote the academic success of entering freshmen, University 101 is a three semester hour course offered as elective credit toward degree requirements. It is a component of the Freshman Year Experience Program and focuses on critical thinking skills and the academic tools needed for success in core curriculum courses and for success in navigating the transition into the university.

The course is also related to three goals of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan:

- Quantitative Literacy
- Oral and Written Communication
- Civic Responsibility

The course is open to regularly admitted student and required of conditionally admitted students.

The critical thinking skills are taught in relation to three areas of a student's university career:

- Success in core curriculum courses
- Personal academic planning and decision making
- Development of a university experience

### **Course Description**

#### **University 101 The University Experience (3 hours)**

Students receive training, experience and prescriptive feedback on critical thinking skills and their applications to Core Curriculum courses in the following ways: lecture, discussion, readings, and exercises. Students interact with academic advisors in supportive, diagnostic and prescriptive ways to determine individual needs for academic success. Students participate in activities outside the classroom that will support critical thinking and integration into the university.

### **Supplemental Instruction**

Supplemental Instruction is an academic support program involving a series of weekly review sessions for students taking historically difficult courses. Sessions are designed to reinforce the content of the course while developing course-specific problem solving skills and test preparation strategies. Attendance in Supplemental Instruction sessions is voluntary and free of charge.

### **General Study Strategy Sessions**

Designed to help students explore effective learning styles and efficient study practices, these sessions are led by trained student leaders. Open to any student with an interest in improving their study practices, these sessions are offered each term and are free of charge.

### **Academic Coaching**

Working in individual sessions trained Academic Coaches assist students in gaining a better understanding of the learning process and the behaviors and study skills necessary for academic success. Topics discussed include development of successful academic behaviors, reading and information processing, self assessment, critical thinking, communication, time management, self-management, goal setting and action planning.

