

Most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) by Students about Academic Advising

Q1: I would like to declare Political Science major or minor; International Affairs majors and/ or one of the following certificates: Security Studies, International Human Rights, Cybersecurity, Legal Studies. How can I do it?

A: When students transfer from another academic institution or regional campus, they need to apply and be admitted to the College of Arts and Sciences to declare any of these majors, minor or certificates. Here is more information:

<http://admissions.uc.edu/apply.html>

Once admitted to the College of Arts and Science or another West Campus College, students can declare any of these academic program online at:

http://www.artsci.uc.edu/students/undergrad/forms/declare_major.html

Q2: POL and INTA curricula list multiple 2000- and 3000-level courses. What is the difference between these two groups of courses?

A: 2000-level courses are focused on specific policies, regions or issues, whereas 3000-level courses focus on theoretical and conceptual aspects of Political Science. However, from programmatic point of view there is very little difference. Students can use any of these courses to fulfill their POL and/ or INTA course requirement. Occasionally, 3000-level courses might require independent research and analysis whereas 2000-level courses might emphasize learning of basic factual content. Also, 2000-level courses have a BoK general education (gen. ed.) attributes attached (and hence will count toward gen. ed. coursework for non-majors) where most 3000-level courses do NOT have these attributes due to university policies.

Q3: I am an INTA major; should I pursue a double (INTA and POL) major or a POL minor?

A: If you have decided to pursue an INTA degree, you are almost certainly going to earn enough credits for a POL minor due to similar coursework. INTA students can declare a POL minor but the school would recommend the pursuit of double (POL and INTA) major if feasible. Similarly, we would suggest one of our inter-disciplinary certificates (e.g. SSTD, IHR, CYBR and others).

Q4: I have finished all gen. ed. and major coursework but still have 1-2 semesters left until graduation (i.e. to reach 120 credits). Why is this so? What should I do?

A: Most curricula in the College of Arts and Sciences are set up in a way that allow students who chose their major early in college to complete required coursework relatively quickly. As a result, by their senior year most A&S students will have left free electives equivalent to 1-2 semesters of coursework. In these cases, the school normally recommends students to enroll in another minor(s) and/ or certificates(s) to use these credits in a structured way that enhances their future competitiveness on the job market.

Q5: I am interested in INTA but also POL and several other majors. Can I complete all of them?

A Students should keep in mind that multiple majors across different colleges are more difficult to complete (SPIA would basically recommend only a combination of POL/INTA and economics or business). Students should focus on one major and several minors and/or certificates in a course of four years. Bear in mind that you always have an option to pursue a graduate (MA/ PhD) degree in an area different from your undergraduate coursework.

Q6: I heard that requirements for Political Science and International Affairs majors have changed. Is this true and how will this affect me?

A: Yes, effective Fall 2016, there will be new required courses for the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) requirement and Political Analysis requirements. Students will have to take **one** STAT course (from STAT 1031, 1034, 1035) **and** POL 3001C (Quantitative Research and Data Analysis). Students will be required to complete POL 1001 (Power and Politics: Understanding the Political World) to fulfill the Political Analysis requirement. The new requirements should not affect students' progress toward their degrees as they can complete the QR requirement prior to Fall 2016 by taking two STAT courses (e.g. STAT 1034, 1035 or equivalents). Please, note that POL 3000 will continue to count toward the Political Analysis requirement but will NOT be offered after the Summer Semester 2016. Instead, POL and INTA students will be advised to complete POL 1001 and also take 3001C as their second QR course (unless they have already accumulated 6 credits of QR coursework).

INTA majors are also required to complete POL 1060 (Introduction to Comparative Politics and POL 1080 Introduction to International Relations) to fulfill their Introductory Courses in Political Science. For their third class they have options to choose from POL 1010 (Introduction to American Politics), POL 1040 (Introduction to Political Theory) and POL 1090 (Law, Politics and Society).

Q7: I heard that there are changes to the number of credits required for POL and INTA majors. Is this correct? What are the new requirements?

In essence all INTA students graduating in or after December 2017 will be required to take 27 rather than 24 credits of upper-level POL and INTA coursework (or the equivalency of one additional course for each of the two majors). Additionally, INTA major will be required to take 12 rather than 9 credits of Introductory Courses in Political Science which include POL 1060 (Introduction to Comparative Politics), POL 1080 (Introduction to International Relations) and **two** more of the following courses POL 1010 (Intro to American Government), POL 1040 (Intro to Political Theory) and POL 1090 (Law, Politics and Society).

Q8: I heard that the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) offers a Legal Studies Certificate. Where can I learn more about it?

Yes, we are pleased to offer in partnership with the College of Law a new Legal Studies certificate. It is geared toward pre-Law students and students interested in careers in the legal profession. The certificate requires 18 credits of coursework between Political Science and Interdisciplinary tracks two required courses – POL 1090 (Law Politics and Society, 3 credits) and LAW 2001 (Introduction to Law & the Legal Profession, 3 credits). For further details contact Prof Andrew Lewis; his email is Andrew.Lewis@uc.edu.

Q9: How can I review my degree audit and access other advising resources?

Students and advisors can access degree audits via Catalyst. For more details, visit the student section of the Catalyst website and register to view your student options:

<http://catalyst.uc.edu/>. You can also access your audit, schedule, course history and other valuable resources there. Also, course offerings are posted here:

<http://www.classes.catalystatuc.org/search/> (select Subject: POL-Political Science; Offering College, Arts & Sciences).

Q10: I have some ideas what to do after college. Who should I talk to?

A: You can most definitely talk to Division of Experience-Based Learning and Career Education (ELCE) people who have professional advisors trained to help you prepare for the job market. However, if you are interested to continue your education and go to graduate school, law school, etc. or seek other professional opportunities, you can also talk to your major advisor and/or other SPIA faculty. Feel free to talk to UG Director or your major advisor.

Q11: I am planning to apply for graduation and I want to make sure I am on track. What should I do and/ or who should I talk to?

A: Your first step would be to go online and check your audit. In case, there are minor unresolved issues related to your major or college requirements, please feel free to email your respective advisor and inquire about specific requirements as these issues can be resolved by email. If there are more substantial issues that require a waiver or a formal exception, then you should definitely meet with your A&S college advisor who can consequently refer you to the UG Director. Make sure you clear all unresolved issues before applying for graduation.

Q12: I talked to my faculty advisor and he or she told me I am okay to graduate. I thought I had fulfilled all requirements (gen. ed. and major) and I applied for graduation but my application was denied. What should I do?

A: Students should keep in mind that even if they have met all major requirements, they can be denied graduation if one of the gen. ed. (or college) requirements are not met. One such requirement is that each student should accumulate a total of 120 college credit. If the student is even 1 credit short, the college certifier will deny their application. Students should be aware of this dynamic and plan carefully ahead of time.

Q13: My audit says that as of August 2021 I have accumulated a total of 111 college hours but my advisors told me I am ready to graduate in December 2021. Why is this case if I am supposed to have 120 credits?

A: Unlike most parts of the degree audit which consider your “In progress” coursework completed, the Catalyst Degree audit counts toward “total college credits” only those hours which the student has completed successfully. In the case discussed in Q13 above, if the student has registered for and completes 12-18 credits in Fall 2021, they will accumulate between 122-128 college credits which is sufficient to graduate in December 2021.

Q14: *I think I was assigned an unfair grade and/or I feel I was treated unfairly by the instructor in the class. What should I do or who should I complain to?*

A: Your first step would be to discuss this matter directly with the instructor and explain why you feel you have not been treated fairly. If you are not able to resolve the issue, your second point of reference would be the UG Director or Advising Coordinator. Keep in mind that faculty in Political Science have academic freedom which includes the right to formulate and implement course policies. NO administrator (e.g. UG Director or UG Advising Coordinator) can change these policies unless the rules are considered unfair to the students. The Director or UG Advising Coordinator will inquire about the case from the instructor and let the student know about their resolution or recommendation. UG Director or Advising Coordinator has also the right to bring the issues to the UG Committee and/ or School Director for review and recommendations. Finally, if the student is not satisfied with the school's review and recommendations, they have the right refer the case to the University of Cincinnati's Ombudsman Office (the latter step is recommended only in exceptional cases).

Q15: *I met with the Undergraduate director or major advisor about the fulfillment of a requirement or another administrative issue but I don't think he or she was helpful and my issue was not resolved. What should I do?*

A: By and large, the Undergraduate Director is in charge of undergraduate affairs and if they are not available the student could refer this matter to the UG Advising Coordinator. However, if the director has reviewed the case and has not been able to find a mutually acceptable resolution, depending on the type of issue, the student can refer the issue to the School Director.

Q16: *Am I eligible for School or High School Honors? What should I do to receive those honors?*

A: In the case of School Honors you should maintain and graduate with a 3.34 GPA in the major; in the case of the High School Honors, your major GPA should be 3.67 and you are required to complete either a graduate-level seminar (7000-level) POL class (see Appendix 2 for a list of these classes) or write a senior thesis and register for POL 5000 and 5001. Details are available in the Capstone section of the UG Handbook and this advising document.

Q17: *I was told I am eligible for high school honors. Should I complete a senior thesis or take a 7000-level graduate seminar?*

A: Senior thesis is recommended if following requirements are met: (1) the student has an approved topic; (2) initial research has been conducted and; (3) a SPIA faculty or faculty from similar disciplines has consequently agreed to supervise their research. POL 5000 and/ or 5001 is especially recommended for students who have received funding from Taft, Tolley Fellowship, UC or other undergraduate research fellowships. If the student is not sure about a research topic, the school recommends pursuing a 7000-level seminar. At least one such seminar is offered every semester and the student should talk to their major advisor about these options.

Q18: *What is 4+1? How can I receive more information about the BA/ MA program?*

A: The 4+1 also known as BA/MA program offers the completion of undergraduate and graduate (Master's) degrees in approximately 5-5.5 years. To that end, the student should plan **at least** one year **prior** to the completion of their undergraduate degree to submit an application for the 4+1

program. They should also plan to take GRE or an equivalent test and prepare an application letter that summarizes research interests and outlines possible topic for a professional paper. Contact the UG Director or Graduate Director for further details.

Q19: Can I finish my BA degree and then work for one or more years before applying for the BA/MA program?

A: No. The rules of the BA/MA program require the students to remain continuously enrolled in college, which means that if you plan to graduate in May, you should be able to start the MA program in August the same year. No gaps in enrollment are allowed. If you prefer to take a year off, then you won't be eligible to apply to the 4+1 program and will instead need to apply to the regular two-year MA program.

Q20: Can I really finish the BA/MA program in one additional year of coursework (hence 4+1)?

A: The main incentive for the BA/MA program is the funding that students receive from the State of Ohio to pursue a graduate degree. It is possible to complete the work in one year if the student carefully plans their coursework and even considers taking a few required graduate-level courses in their last semester of undergraduate (BA) coursework. Note that graduate-level courses will **NOT** count toward the BA degree as no double-dipping is allowed. 7000-level seminars that serve as capstones can count **ONLY** toward BA coursework and **NOT** toward their MA coursework at the same time. BA/MA students should plan to complete the remaining graduate-level coursework in two semesters during which the student would also work on their professional paper. Graduate (4+1) students should plan to complete and revise the paper in the summer following the two semesters of graduate coursework. Please, note that if students accept a job offer or have other non-academic commitments, they should be aware that these events would delay their graduation and it may **NOT** be realistic to expect them to complete the MA requirements in a single year.

Q21: I see that there are several options to fulfill a capstone requirement (e.g. 5000-level as well as 7000-level courses). Which type of course should I register to fulfill this requirement?

Courses coded at 5100-level are open to undergraduate students while those coded at 6000-level are open to graduate students (for example POL 5165 is the undergraduate capstone version of the Women and sustainable development offering while 6065 is its graduate-level version. Undergraduate students should register for 5100-level courses (3 credits) while graduate students should register for the 6000-level version (4 credits). Students eligible for High School Honors and other interested to pursue graduate school (3.4 or higher GPA) can also take selected 7000-level grad courses to fulfill the capstone requirement. For details see the Undergraduate Handbook: <http://homepages.uc.edu/~ivanovid/pdfs/handbook.pdf>.

Note that if a student is 1 credit hour short of fulfilling a specific requirement due to odd number of credits and subject to the instructor's approval, it is possible to sign up for additional 1-2 credits in one of the independent studies (POL 4010, 4040, 4060, 4080) and arrange additional work in this class in lieu of the extra credit hour(s).

Q22: I see that our school offers every semester independent studies POL 4010, 4040, 4060 and 4080. What are these classes and why can't I sign up for them?

A: As explained in the Undergraduate handbook, students wishing to pursue a narrowly defined subject in more depth can sign up for an independent study (up to 4 credits) in American Politics (4010), Political Theory (4040), Comparative Politics (4060), or International Relations (4080). To that end, they have to meet the following requirements: (1) the student must have completed basic course work in the area before proposing an individual work project; (2) they must identify a faculty supervisor for the research project and latter must confirm with the UG director that they are, indeed, willing to supervise the project and; (3) students must prepare a written proposal that includes a reading list and a schedule of meetings with their faculty supervisor.

Q23: I want to do a co-op or an Internship? What opportunities do I have available at UC?

Currently we are NOT able to offer co-ops for POL and INTA majors. If students can arrange a co-op on their own, the school will facilitate the process and the possible transfer of academic credits. Nonetheless, our students can take advantage of the internship program developed in partnership with ELCE for which students can also earn academic credit. Internship opportunities are posted on the school's page on Blackboard or are available via ELCE. See UG Handbook for further details. Students should contact Paula Harper (email: Paula.Harper@uc.edu) at ELCE or the UG Director.

Q24: My overall GPA is higher than 2.0 but my major GPA is below 2.0. Will that prevent me from graduating and what should I do?

A: Students need to maintain 2.0 overall GPA and GPA in the major to graduate. If you have accumulated Fs, "unconditional withdrawals" (as well as "Incompletes" and "In Progress"/ SP grades that have consequently become Fs after 1 year) due to inability (physical, personal, etc.) to complete coursework, feel free to contact the instructor or the respective director of academic programs to inquire if there is an option to complete this coursework and consequently change the grade in this course(s). You should also understand that in many cases administrators or instructors may not be willing or able to change grades after more than 1 year. Alternatively, students can require if they can grade replace this coursework (each undergraduate can use up to 4 grade replacements during their academic career). If a grade replacement is not possible (due to limited offerings or unavailability of grade replacements), then the student should complete as many courses as needed to reach a 2.0 GPA in the major. The UG Director or the UG Advising Coordinator can use the GPA calculator to determine how many courses and what grades the student should complete to reach the desired GPA.

Q25: I am pursuing a major and several minor(s) and/or certificates have several different advisors. Should I see all of them and/ or what should I do?

A: Whereas meeting with multiple advisors may be onerous, it is recommended to meet individually with each of them to ensure that you are making satisfactory progress toward your degree(s) as planned. The School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) generally recommends students who meet with their advisors to inquire about courses that can fulfill multiple requirements at the same time (for example, a major and a minor/ certificate requirement; or a minor/ certificate and a gen. ed. requirement/s). If students feel they are well-informed and confident about the programmatic requirements, they don't need to meet with an advisor or can seek advice by email. In this case, however, advisors are **NOT** responsible for a student's miscommunication or inaccurate interpretation of different rules and requirements.

Q26: *How often should I meet with my A&S (or college) and my faculty advisor(s)?*

A&S students have mandatory advising during their freshmen year and can consequently decide to meet with them again as many times as they need. It is always recommended to meet again **one** semester before graduation with your designated POL and INTA college advisor to make sure they are on track. Students meet with their Political Science advisors when they start taking classes in the major/ minor/ certificate and should meet as often as they feel necessary. We recommend to seek advice (if necessary) **prior to** participation in a study abroad program or anticipated application for graduation. The School of Public and International Affairs does **NOT** require mandatory advising.

Q27: *I want to study abroad but I don't know where and when. What should I do?*

First, you should visit UC international's website at:

<https://www.uc.edu/international/study-abroad/explore.html>. Then, you can set up an appointment with an officer/ advisor there to discuss what opportunities are available and which of them will best fit your needs. Make sure that you select a program which offers courses and/ or other experiential activities that are closest to your scholarly and professional interests. For example, you can complete an FL requirement or another major/ gen. ed. requirement and/ or other coursework that will count toward your major(s)/ minor(s)/ certificate(s). Finally, you should feel free to approach your faculty advisor, UG Director or UG Advising Coordinator and ask to meet with them to make sure this coursework will fulfill specific requirements. The advisor or Advising Coordinator will also help you fill in the required study abroad forms.

Q28: *I am a senior who has NOT studied abroad and I would like to do that before I graduate. What should I do?*

While the best time to study abroad is in the sophomore and junior year, it is still possible to use the senior year to study abroad. In these cases graduating seniors should bear in mind the following constraints: First, POL and INTA majors are required to complete their capstone at UC and should plan accordingly. Second, seniors should select courses that fulfill requirements not completed previously (and, if possible, plan how to complete them). Third, if you anticipate delay in graduation, meet with your advisor to weigh the pros and cons of your decision to study abroad.

Q29: *Do we offer study abroad programs in our school?*

Yes. SPIA occasionally offers a study abroad course in Brussels and The Hague with focus on International Institutions. Ask your advisors, UG Director or Advising Coordinator or for more information.

Q30: *I have tried on multiple occasions to complete a specific requirement (e.g. STAT or QR coursework); however, it seems that I may have a (documented) medial disability that prevents me from completing these courses. What should I do?*

Students with documented disability can petition to have specific courses in their QR requirement waived or substituted with equivalent coursework. To that end, they should contact the UG director and formally request a waiver. Students are required to present to the UG director all relevant medical documentation. If they don't have any documentation, they should first seek professional

help to determine if they indeed have a disability and how to deal with it. UC's Counseling & Psychological Services offer a 24 Hour Phone Consultation at 513-556-0648 and are available to help.

Once presented with relevant documentation, the UG Director will review the case and will consequently meet confidentially with the student to determine if such waiver can be granted. Please, note that if a specific requirement is waived for medical reasons, students can still be required to take other courses at a level corresponding to their disability or can be directed to pursue alternative pathways to earn specific academic credit(s).

Q31: I am enrolled in an Internship Class and as a part of my internship I experience one or several of the following issues: (a) I am asked to do basic tasks and I don't get the kind of experience I signed up for; (b) my boss behaves inappropriately and is abusive (verbally or otherwise) toward me and/ or other co-worker(s); (c) activists or opponents have threatened me; (d) I have witnessed other forms of inappropriate behavior and/ or abuse. What should I do?

Students enrolled in an Internship for academic credit class comply with UC rules and requirements. Their safety and well-being is the university's top priority. Therefore, any situation of inappropriate behavior or other issues associated with the program should be communicated with the internship supervisor **and** the supervising instructor. Additionally, if students feel that their life and well-being is threatened or if they don't feel safe, they should contact authorities or call the emergency services (e.g. 911, 112 or other emergency phones). If the matter does not constitute any emergency, they should write a detailed email and await response with further instructions from faculty. In case, no such response is received within 72 hours, they should contact UG Director or School's Director.