

## Interpreting the Advising Report

**While reviewing the entire document, look for the following things:**

- Cumulative GPA
- Pattern of GPA
- Patterns of grades
- Did the student make a campus change?
- Is the student just now returning after a break in enrollment?
- What is their current academic status?

The following pages address the specific things we can learn about a student from the above pieces of information and advice on how to handle certain situations.

# Cumulative GPA

Advising Report does not show major or minor GPA, just overall cumulative GPA.  
Major and minor GPA can be found on the Degree Audit Report (DARS).

## Is it high?

- Is it above 3.5 in the student's first year? Students who are not admitted as Honors students may be eligible to apply to your college Honors program if they meet the criteria for continuing students. If the student does meet the criteria, offer them the option.
- Is it above 3.5 and they are close to graduation? Check to see if they have at least 60 graded hours (A-E and S grades count, PA do not) at OSU if they want to earn Latin honors at graduation. Alert the students if they will be short hours (more common for transfer students). Some may choose to delay graduation long enough to be eligible for Latin honors.
- Many students are interested in graduate or professional school. The minimum GPA expected by most programs to even consider the application is 3.0. However, many programs are much more competitive than that. If students in the major(s) you advise commonly apply to a particular type of graduate program, make a point of learning what the realistic GPA level is for that program and what alternate options the student may have.

## Is it low?

- Students must maintain a 2.0 to remain in good academic standing with the university. Some colleges and programs will do Program Dismissal for students with a GPA that is above 2.0 but lower than their program expectations.
- Students need a 2.0 cumulative GPA to graduate from any program. Most majors and all minors require a 2.0 minimum major/minor GPA. Certain majors have a higher minimum major GPA for graduation. If this pertains to you, this will be addressed elsewhere in your training.
- Several majors in the Arts & Sciences and many majors in other colleges have competitive admission to the major for which GPA is part of the decision.

## Pattern of GPA tells a story

### High test scores but low GPA as freshman

- Despite the high ability of freshmen admitted to the Columbus campus, some will perform poorly enough to be dismissed by the end of their first year or early in their sophomore year.
- Students with this pattern of grades may lack the maturity to handle the independence of college or have adjustment issues related to being away from the support of family and friends.
- Many students are coming to college with existing mental health diagnoses but may lack easy access to their health providers back home or have trouble connecting to new providers here.
- Many students who were high achievers in high school never learned time management and other study skills.
- Some students get too caught up in the freedom and party atmosphere of college. Some students become addicted to alcohol or other substances. This can be a reason for poor grades at any stage. Most students do not disclose this information.
- **What you can do:** refer the student to Counseling & Consultation Services if appropriate. Refer to the Dennis Learning Center or recommend ESEPSY 1259 if they need to learn better study skills. Reach out to the Collegiate Recovery Community through the Student Wellness Center for advice if the student discloses a substance use concern.

### GPA started strong, then worsened over time

- Many students over-commit themselves. Working too many hours is a common reason why grades begin to suffer. Students who are taking full-time classes should work no more than 10-15 hours per week.
- Traditional-aged students and families often place high value on finishing the degree in 4 years. When students earn poor grades in class or change majors and thus feel “behind”, they may schedule more credit hours per semester to make up time but cannot always handle the increased course load.
- GPA that starts to slip in the senior year may indicate that a student is burning out, especially if the student is going to need more than 4 years to earn the degree.
- If the shift to lower GPA was sudden and can be pinpointed to a specific term, it can be a sign that something external is going on. Often a crisis occurred, and lingering effects of that crisis can impact future terms.
- Making campus change often correlates to at least a temporary drop in GPA.
- Mental health issues can begin, or get worse, during the college years.
- **What you can do:** reassure the student that their degree is not valued less if it takes them longer than 4 years to graduate. If they need to work full-time due to financial need, encourage them to consider attending school part-time. If the student attended a regional campus for at least 15 credit hours, refer the student to their former campus to see if they are eligible for the AA degree. If a crisis did happen or the student expresses problems with anxiety and depression or other mental health issues, refer to Counseling & Consultation Services.

## More GPA patterns

### GPA always hovers just above 2.0

- This pattern is commonly with transfer students and students who made campus change from aregional campus. There can be multiple factors involved.
- **This group is most at risk if a crisis occurs.** They usually have the ability to keep their head above water when their personal life is going well. However, if they have even just one term with several E's or EN's, they often do not have the ability to earn the multiple A's and B's necessary to pull their GPA back up to a 2.0 quickly in subsequent terms. It can take them a long time to recover the GPA, and any subsequent bad term will put them at risk of academic dismissal.
- **What you can do:** encourage students to honestly evaluate their progress in classes and to pay close attention to drop deadlines. Be clear with the student about how you expect them to drop classes (can they email you? Do they need to come to the college office in person?). Check to see if they have remaining Grade Forgiveness eligibility that they can use to help their GPA. If personal circumstances warrant, suggest that they pursue a retroactive withdrawal.

### GPA starts poorly but improves over time

- This can be the result of many factors, such as learning better study skills, changing majors to one better suited to the student's academic strengths, etc.
- This group will often need some extra encouragement with respect to their post-graduation options. For some, the early poor grades will keep their final cumulative GPA below the competitive level for graduate/professional admissions.
- **What you can do:** encourage students to develop relationships with professors through research, office visits, etc. Also encourage internships or other experience related to their choice of career field. Refer to Career Connection if they need help figuring out alternatives to their chosen career if graduate/professional school is out of reach. Refer to your college career services office for assistance with finding internships.

## Pattern of Grades

- Students who struggle in school without a precipitating crisis often have difficulty in a particular type of course. Watch for grades lower than a C as well as W's.
- Patterns of EN grades indicate trouble outside of the classroom, or that a student could be enrolling in classes simply to receive financial aid. The Office of Student Financial Aid takes a close look at all EN grades and students may lose their financial aid as a result.
- Watch for low math grades with students who want to major in disciplines which rely on quantitative skills including Engineering, Business, any of the natural or mathematical sciences (or majors that require the stronger GE sciences as prerequisites), Economics, and Psychology. This can indicate trouble with the major in the future.
- Watch for low English 1110 or 2<sup>nd</sup> writing course grades for students majoring in English, any of the humanities, Sociology, Criminology, Political Science and any discipline where students write a lot of research papers.
- Watch for low grades in foreign language study if the student is enrolled in a college or major that requires it. Many students who struggle have delayed continuing the language they studied in high school. Others do not put in sufficient study in the class. Foreign language study requires different patterns of study than many other courses, and without daily practice, they may fall behind. Without documentation of a language-based learning disability, students are unlikely to successfully petition for substitutions to this requirement in those colleges that require it.
- Check the grades in major courses, and check the major GPA on the DARS. If students are struggling to earn better than C's in their major, then raise the idea of changing to a major which better suits them.
- Look for the areas where students are successful. This can help guide a discussion on possible alternate majors.

# Campus change

- Students who begin on a regional campus must meet specific criteria before making the change to the Columbus campus. They must have a 2.0 OSU GPA and 30 credit hours completed subsequent to high school graduation. EM, post-secondary credit are excluded from the 30 hours, but transfer credit completed after high school graduation may count toward the 30 hours.
- Regional campus students must file a campus change request through the regional campus advisor, which is then sent the proper college office for approval and processing.
- Some colleges have higher criteria than the standard university criteria for campus change. Students who meet university criteria but not the college criteria typically make campus change into the Exploration Program until they meet the requirements for the major they want or change to a different major.

- Some students will come see Columbus campus advisors prior to making campus change so they know what they need to do after making the switch. A majority of students make the switch after their freshman or sophomore year. They may or may not have filed the paperwork before seeing a department advisor. Be sure to ask if they have done so and if not, refer them to their regional campus advisor to start the process. Many colleges wait until all grades are in for the term before making a decision.
- **If you are meeting with a student who has never attended the Columbus campus, please consult with your college's campus change contact person to be sure the student is eligible to make the change into your college.**

- Students who do not meet the criteria for campus change can petition. Petitions are more likely to be approved for students who have a good GPA but are a little short on the required hours than for students whose GPA is below 2.0. Students who have difficulty reaching 2.0 GPA at a regional campus have a high rate of academic dismissal after making campus change.
- **Students who were dismissed from a regional campus without ever having any enrollment in Columbus usually will need to reinstate through the regional campus, and then meet the usual campus change criteria before making campus change. They can petition to reinstate through Columbus campus but the individual college will make the decision about whether such a reinstatement makes sense.**

# Break in Enrollment

- If a student has been away for a semester or longer (excluding summer), check to see what their academic status was at the time they left. That is located in the Summary of Academic History on the left side of the Advising Report just below the name.
- If they were on Academic Probation or Special Action Probation (SPPP), those probation conditions carry over to their next term of enrollment. Many college copy probation emails/letters into OnCourse.
- If the student was academically dismissed, they need to go through the reinstatement process. You will learn how to advise students on this elsewhere in your training.
- If the student has been gone since prior to the switch to semesters, you may need to explain what is different since that switch. Tuition due dates are earlier, drop dates are different, course #'s are different, etc. They may also need to be told how to reactivate their OSU Internet Username and password for accessing their student record and email. After entering the RLOA (or after they receive notice that their reinstatement was approved) have them go to <http://my.osu.edu> and request an activation code and then follow the instructions.
- Feel free to send their name to Kris Wethington ([Wethington.2@osu.edu](mailto:Wethington.2@osu.edu)) for information about Complete Ohio State if they would like additional support through the re-enrollment process. <https://u.osu.edu/complete/> The case management portion is open to any student, financial assistance has specific eligibility criteria.

# COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Impact

## COVID-19 Timeline at Ohio State:

- The COVID-19 pandemic began disrupting normal university operations in March 2020 when students were on Spring Break. The initial plan was to extend Spring Break by an extra week and have remote learning for 2 weeks before returning to campus but that plan quickly changed to remote learning for the remainder of the semester. Students were forced to leave residence halls early.
- A special Pass/Non-Pass grade policy was put into effect for the Spring 2020 semester. Students were required to opt-in and PA grades could count toward most requirements including most majors. <https://oaa.osu.edu/grading-policy-changes-spring-2020>
- All classes for Summer 2020 were online. There was no special grade policy.
- A majority of classes in Autumn 2020 were online or hybrid. A different Pass/Non-Pass grade policy was put into effect for the Autumn 2020. Students were required to opt-in but colleges were permitted to decide whether the PA grade could count toward the major. <https://oaa.osu.edu/pass-no-pass-fall-2020>
- A majority of classes in Spring 2021 and Summer 2021 were online or hybrid. A new faculty rule was put into place in Spring 2021 creating a new Emergency Pass grade policy that could be enacted by the university in times of emergency. The university activated the Emergency Pass option for Spring 2021 and Summer 2021. <https://oaa.osu.edu/grading-spring-2021>
- A majority of classes in Autumn 2021 are back in-person as of August 6, 2021. As of this date, the Emergency Pass option has not been enacted for Autumn 2021.
- It is important for advisors to understand the different grade policies during the pandemic in order to be able to accurately interpret what is going on in the student's academic record. **Not every student earned poor grades during the pandemic but all students were impacted in some way.**
- The changes in grading policies had differing impacts on the Grade Forgiveness Rule.
  - For Spring 2020, courses that were being taken during that term as part of the Grade Forgiveness Rule to forgive grades from past terms were allowed to still forgive the earlier term if the Spring 2020 grade was changed to PA/NP.
  - For Autumn 2020, courses were not allowed to be taken for PA/NP if being used for Grade Forgiveness.
  - For Spring 2021 and Summer 2021, the new Emergency Pass policy was in effect. PE and NP grades do not contribute to the calculation of GPA. When Emergency Pass grading is in effect, a student who earns a C- or higher in their first attempt of a course can choose to retake the course for Grade Forgiveness. **Repeat of a course initially taken during Emergency Pass grading does not count towards students' limit of three Grade Forgiveness attempts.**



### COVID-19 Impact at Ohio State:

- The changing grade policies were very confusing for students, particularly if their college did not allow PA grades on the major in AU20. The grade policy changes all occurred after the beginning of the term in which they were enacted, except for Summer 2021 which was a continuation of the new Emergency Pass scheme.
- A significant number of undergraduates started at Ohio State in Autumn 2019 or later. This means that at most, they had one term of a standard grade policy going into Autumn 2021. The switch back to the standard grade policy will be a big adjustment for these students who may have not had to face significant consequences for poor grades. Advisors should be mindful of this as they work with students who were enrolled during this time.
- Since impact of low grades was minimized in the cumulative GPA for students who opted into the PA/NP policies for SP20 and AU20, many students were allowed to continue enrolling on academic probation longer than they may have been had a standard grade policy been in effect.
- Most international students were unable to obtain travel visas if they were not already in the U.S. This did not just impact new incoming international students. Many international students who were in Columbus in Spring 2020 went home at the request of family but then were unable to return. Some chose to take a leave of absence, others enrolled in all online classes. However, finding asynchronous classes was difficult and many of our international students are Chinese and thus were logging into synchronous online classes in the middle of the night. <https://www.thelantern.com/projects/2021/06/16/14-hours-ahead-covid-19-presents-unique-challenges-for-international-students-abroad/>
- Referrals to the Committee on Academic Misconduct doubled during this time, leading to long delays in resolving cases. <https://www.thelantern.com/2021/07/ohio-state-cheating-cases-nearly-double-in-2020-many-still-unresolved/> | [https://senate.osu.edu/sites/default/files/links\\_files/COAM%202020-2021%20Annual%20Report.pdf](https://senate.osu.edu/sites/default/files/links_files/COAM%202020-2021%20Annual%20Report.pdf)
- The abrupt switch to remote learning in SP20 had an outsized effect on students who had limited access to technology including wifi. Rural and low-income students in particular had few community options such as libraries, coffee shops, etc. due to many of these locations being closed to the public. Other students faced housing insecurity, food insecurity, and other high stress situations outside the classroom. <https://odi.osu.edu/impact-coronavirus-certain-populations>
- <https://www.thelantern.com/2021/07/university-survey-reveals-increased-mental-health-issues-among-students/>
- Ohio State and its students will be feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for a long time. It is important that over time we remember what happened during this time, since many students went on a Leave of Absence and may return later but still face challenges related to the pandemic.

## Final Advice

- Advising Reports are one of many tools available to you. As you become comfortable with each tool, you will get a feel for how much you need to rely on each. It may vary from student to student, but do get in the habit of at least looking over the Advising Report for a student.
- Always check OnCourse for prior advising notes on the student, if any exist. They can help you understand the information on the Advising Report so that the student does not have to rehash everything with a new advisor. You can instead follow up with the student on prior advice given to see if the student followed through and whether it was helpful. NOTE: OnCourse records are routinely purged according to the retention schedule. If a student is returning after a significant time away, prior advising notes may no longer be available.
- Always use the degree hours in DARS when calculating how many credits a student needs to complete their degree. An Advising Report calculates EVERYTHING in the Earned Hours: repeated courses, all non-ASC credits, remedial courses, etc. The DARS accounts for the rules applying to all such courses, and will give you the information you need.
- **Do not be afraid to ask questions!**