



PLANNING  
YOUR  
ACADEMIC  
LIFE AT  
CALVIN

# WHAT'S INSIDE

When you go to college for the first time, there's a lot more to learn than the content of your textbooks. Use this guide to help you navigate the new academic world you're entering at Calvin.

- Find out how (and when!) you'll register for classes during Passport orientation and beyond.
- See first-semester sample schedules.
- Know your responsibilities when it comes to meeting with your academic advisor.
- Learn what it takes to graduate.
- Find resources to help with registering for classes, changing your major, writing papers and more.

## VOCAB

**ACADEMIC EVALUATION REPORT (AER):** Your academic roadmap at Calvin. Reference this personalized document to know where you stand regarding core curriculum and major/minor requirements. Check this document before all advising appointments. Access your AER in the fall by logging in to your Calvin account.

**COURSE LOAD:** The number of hours you take each semester. The average course load consists of 14-16 semester hours. Take as many as 17, or as few as 12 to be considered a full-time student.

**DROPPING/ADDING A COURSE:** Add a course only during your first week of classes. Drop a course through the ninth week of classes. Dropping a class will result in a "W" on your academic record.

# CHECKLIST

## FIRST-YEAR ADVISING CHECKLIST

### BEFORE YOU COME TO PASSPORT ORIENTATION:

- Review Calvin's catalog to check out core requirements and look for interesting classes to take.
- Know your major? Use your program's website to explore course requirements and other important info.
- Take placement tests for foreign languages online. If you need to take a test, you will receive instructions from Academic Services via e-mail.

### IN YOUR ADVISING APPOINTMENT DURING PASSPORT:

- Let your advisor know if you're interested in a program such as teacher education, engineering or pre-med so you can get into the right courses.
- Planning on being involved in music or athletics? Make sure your advisor knows this so your classes don't get scheduled during practice times.
- Want to study abroad? Let your advisor know—some core requirements are met by off-campus programs.

### IN YOUR FIRST SEMESTER:

- Learn where resources like the Rhetoric Center (paper-writing help), Career Development and the Broene Counseling Center are located.
- Familiarize yourself with course add/drop deadlines.
- Interested in the Honors Program? Familiarize yourself with its requirements and opportunities.



ACADEMIC CALENDAR

[www.calvin.edu/academic/go/academiccalendar](http://www.calvin.edu/academic/go/academiccalendar)

# BUILDING YOUR FIRST SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Wondering how you'll enroll in courses at Calvin for the fall semester? The answer involves you, a faculty advisor and a course registration specialist in Academic Services. Here's how you'll get to class in the fall:

- 1** During Passport you'll meet with a professor in your area of interest, or, if you're still choosing a major, an advisor assigned to you by Academic Services. In this first advising appointment, you will identify some classes you'd like to take and other factors affecting your school life in the fall: musical or athletic activities, plans to study abroad later on or interest in pre-professional programs.
- 2** During Passport, you may take placement tests for things like foreign language courses (check your Calvin e-mail to see whether you can take these online prior to Passport), English and calculus to determine which courses you will enter.
- 3** Your advisor will send a worksheet from your advising appointment to Academic Services where your fall semester courses will be scheduled.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE #1 Undecided Major

COURSE	SEMESTER HOURS
PRELUDE	1
VISUAL CULTURE	4
ENERGY: RESOURCES, USE, AND STEWARDSHIP	4
HISTORY OF THE WEST AND THE WORLD	3
LITERATURE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT	3
CAMPUS CHOIR	1
TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS = 16	

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE #2 Undecided (strong interest in pre-medicine)

COURSE	SEMESTER HOURS
PRELUDE	1
ELEMENTARY SPANISH	4
BIOLOGY	4
CHEMISTRY	4
CARDIO CROSS TRAINING	1
TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS = 14	



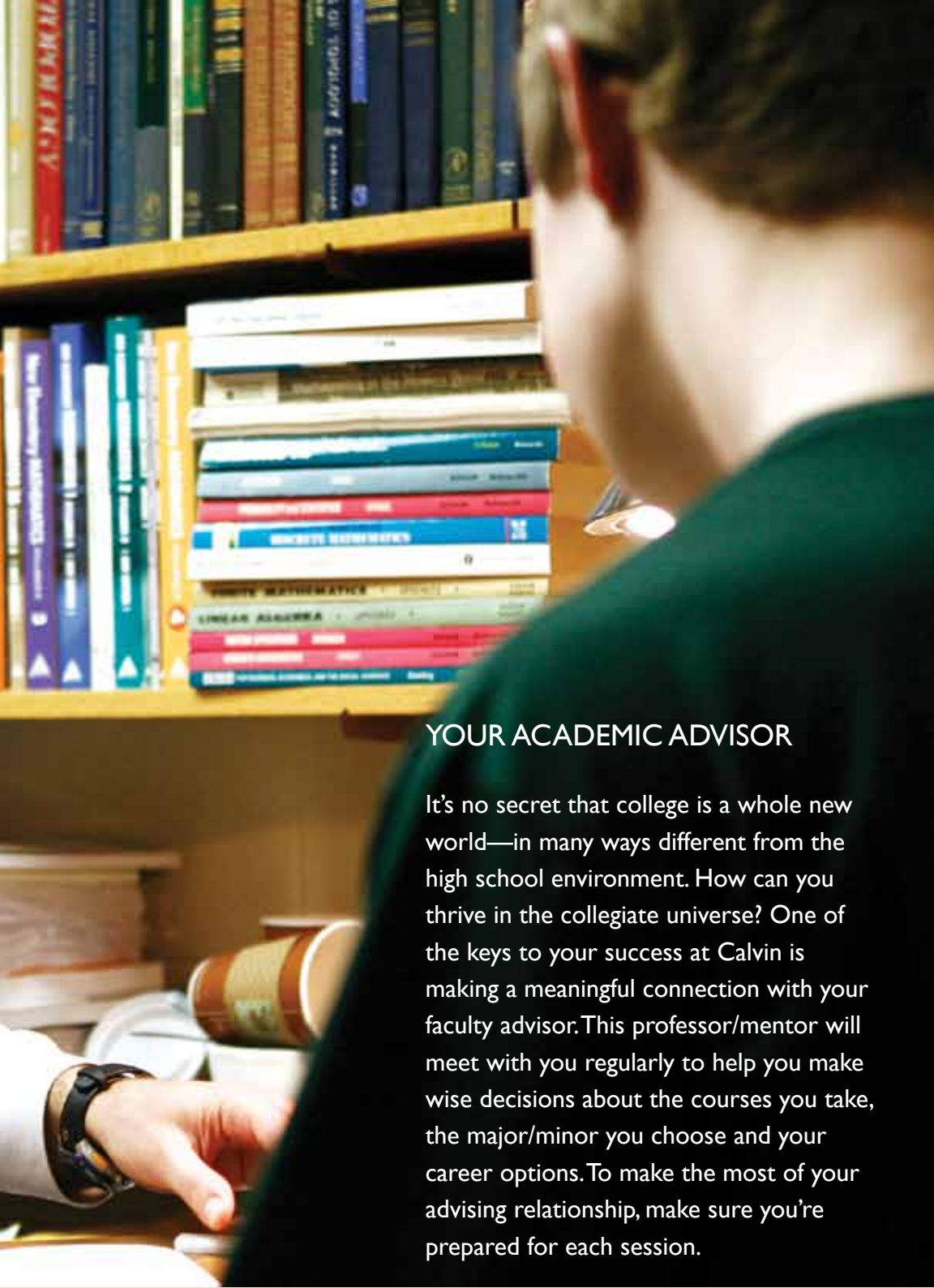
## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Read up on core requirements at [www.calvin.edu/go/core](http://www.calvin.edu/go/core).
- Build a list of 6-7 classes you're interested in taking this fall.
- Be open with your advisor about majors, career options and other things affecting your academic life.
- Ask lots of questions!



Contact Academic Services if AP or transfer credits are not listed on your AER.

YOU



## YOUR ACADEMIC ADVISOR

It's no secret that college is a whole new world—in many ways different from the high school environment. How can you thrive in the collegiate universe? One of the keys to your success at Calvin is making a meaningful connection with your faculty advisor. This professor/mentor will meet with you regularly to help you make wise decisions about the courses you take, the major/minor you choose and your career options. To make the most of your advising relationship, make sure you're prepared for each session.

- Give accurate information about core and major/program requirements.
- Listen to your concerns and goals to help you make wise decisions.
- Refer you to other resources to aid your decision-making.

TIP

You'll work together with your advisor to come up with great options for your first-semester schedule, but in the end, you are the one who gets to make decisions when it comes to your courses and academic programs.

ADVISOR

# MAJOR

## FINDING YOUR MAJOR

If you're still deciding on a major, you're not alone: typically, a quarter of Calvin's incoming class remains undecided prior to enrolling. With careful advising, you can make the most of your college education. Start by trying courses in areas that fascinate you.

## WHAT CAN HELP YOU DECIDE?

- Your advisor—or a professor in an area that interests you
- The Career Development office can help you discern your interest areas and strengths.
- Reading the college catalog to find majors with courses that you find interesting
- Talking with a chaplain in the Campus Ministries office to explore God's calling in your life

## SECOND SEMESTER AND BEYOND

**1** Sign up to meet with your advisor during Academic Advising (two days off from classes during October and April). After you meet, your advisor will confirm that you're eligible to register for classes.

**2** Check online for your designated time to register (usually a few days after your advising appointment). Log in to your Calvin account and choose your courses.

TIP

Want to make registration go faster? Fill in preferred courses ahead of time and choose "Express Registration" when you log in.

## STAYING ON TRACK TO GRADUATE

Most Calvin students graduate within four years. Here's how you can do the same:

- Complete at least 124 semester hours by taking an average of 15 hours each semester.
- Take at least three interim courses.
- Complete all core and major/minor requirements.
- Achieve a minimum 2.0 GPA to maintain good academic standing (GPA requirements may be higher for some majors).

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## WHAT IS CORE?

"Core" is a set of courses every Calvin student takes. These courses include everything from a first-year writing course (Written Rhetoric) to PE classes and theology courses. Core requirements are similar for most students, but may be different if you major in engineering, nursing or other professional programs.

Why does Calvin have core requirements? Taking classes in many areas of studies will help you think broadly about the world and equip you with the knowledge, skills and character that gives you a competitive advantage when you enter the workplace.

Learn more about core requirements at [www.calvin.edu/go/core](http://www.calvin.edu/go/core)