Academic Enhancement Programs

Academic Advising

At Sacred Heart University, academic advising is an integral part of a student’s education, and meetings with an academic advisor should be an important and regular feature of a student’s time at the University. The Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences coordinates academic advising for all first-year students; advising for incoming transfer students is coordinated by a representative from the student’s chosen college. Once a student officially declares a major by completing our Major Declaration Form, he or she will receive a faculty advisor in the appropriate discipline. Academic advisors not only assist students with course, program, and scheduling selection, but also provide the guidance and support needed to assist students in exploring personal and professional goals. It is important that students meet regularly with their academic advisors.

Advisors in The Freshman Academic Advising Program assist our newest students with the transition to the academic life of college. By design, our freshmen have regular and frequent access to their Freshman Academic Advisor. For the first semester, a student’s Freshman Academic Advisor is a full-time faculty member, who also serves as a professor in one of the student’s freshman academic courses. This allows for regular and continuous contact throughout this crucial first semester. Students and advisors also meet regularly outside of class for additional support and guidance. Freshman advisors monitor their advisees’ academic progress and intervene when appropriate. Freshmen stay with their Freshman Academic Advisors until they declare their majors. The Program offers freshmen the opportunity to declare a major at the start of the second semester.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

The English Language Institute at Sacred Heart University offers an accredited full time Intensive English Language program to prepare students for their successful study an American academic institution.

Full-time ESL students enroll in eight-week sessions, taking a cluster of oral communication, written communication, pronunciation and service learning courses totaling 22 hours per week. Placement in the noncredit pre-academic intensive English Language Program is determined by an English Placement test and the student’s language profile. Students who successfully complete their ESL classes at the Sacred Heart English Language Institute are not required to take another proficiency test to enroll in other degree programs at Sacred Heart University. Admission to the English Language Institute does not guarantee admission to the University. Students are allowed to take credit courses while taking advanced ESL courses at the same time. For more information regarding the program, contact the Director at 203-365-7528. ESL classes are offered on the Fairfield campus. The program runs five semesters per year. Please see our website for further information: www.sacredheart.edu/esl

Thomas More Honors Program

The Honors Program is home to some of the University’s brightest and most committed students. The Honors version of the Common Core, The Human Journey, is rigorous, but also highly student-directed, in that students are given greater latitude in selecting readings and designing assignments and, in general, are invited to take active responsibility for what they are learning.

The limited size of the University’s program and the number of course offerings means that honors students receive highly individualized instruction. Since the best learning can sometimes take place out of
the classroom, the program coordinates and funds opportunities every semester to travel as a group to off-campus cultural events, and provides a stipend for students who study abroad.

The mission of the students in the Honors Program is to serve as leaders in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual life of the University. In this way, Honors students can themselves become leaders and active learners. For more information, visit the Honors website.

Independent Study and Individualized Instruction

Independent study is available for the qualified student who wants more advanced or specialized work in a given academic area. A faculty member guides the student in the research needed for the study. Only the student who has officially declared a major and who has successfully completed at least 15 credits will be able to enroll. A maximum of 6 credits of independent study or individualized instruction is permitted toward the baccalaureate degree. Independent study requires a packet approved by the advisor, instructor, department chair and Dean.

Individualized instruction under the guidance of a faculty member is available for the student who needs a specific course to fulfill degree requirements but is unable to schedule the course for a valid reason (e.g., involvement in student teaching, field experience or unavailability of the course). The syllabus for individual instruction conforms to the usual requirements, including required assignments, for that course. Ordinarily, no student will be permitted to take more than one individual course per semester, and no more than two individual courses to fulfill degree requirements.

Instructional Technology and Mobile Computing Program

Recognizing the increasingly important role of technology in our society and in education, Sacred Heart University has made a commitment to, and a serious investment in computers, networking and its supporting technologies. The University's network infrastructure provides connectivity to every facility on campus via a fiber-optic multi-Gigabit Ethernet backbone.

802.11n wireless access points provide access to the University library, Internet and student e-mail 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

VPN and Virtual Desktops are available to provide connectivity solutions for even the most sophisticated applications, from anywhere on the Internet. Outlook.com is available through the web, for sending and receiving campus e-mail from any computer connected anywhere on the Internet.

To promote its “Anytime, Anywhere Learning” initiative, Sacred Heart University deployed wireless networking in the summer of 2000 to create one of the first wireless network campuses in New England. This infrastructure allows students to use their portable devices anywhere on campus. The current wireless standard is 802.11n.

The students’ computing laboratories are currently comprised of 310 desktop computers distributed throughout several academic facilities. Ten laboratories are used for computer-related instruction, and an additional lab provides 24/7/365 access for Sacred Heart University students, faculty and staff. The University continues to upgrade regular classrooms to “smart” classrooms with fixed multimedia capabilities that allow instructors to fully integrate technology in their classroom presentations. All general-purpose classrooms are equipped with LCD projectors, DVD, audio capabilities, and PC/laptop connections. All classrooms on campus are equipped with an active data jack for instructors or students to access
the network. Additionally, there are data connections in every room and wireless networking is accessible throughout the campus. The network infrastructure is designed with future technologies in mind and with excess capacity to allow for significant growth. The University is making a serious financial commitment to maintaining the network at peak performance capability and reliability. Upgrading the software and hardware that support the network is a continuous process and not one the University will ever say is complete. Sacred Heart’s commitment is to keeping a state-of-the-art system in place for all our campus customers.

The University is part of a select group of academic institutions that embraces the mobile computing philosophy. Every full-time undergraduate student is required to purchase and use a laptop during their academic life at the University. Information Technology fully supports variety of laptop models from Lenovo, Apple, and Dell. In addition, Sacred Heart University provides all of its full-time faculty members with a choice of laptop, tablet or Mac laptop refreshed every three years. We offer similar program to our adjunct faculty who are issued a supported laptop refreshed every year. We build and deploy an image which contains the latest Microsoft Office software and other necessary tools and utilities. Faculty members are able to incorporate more electronic course information into the curriculum and use computers as a key component of classroom instruction; faculty and students are able to communicate using Sacred Heart’s Online Web-based Course Management System, “BLACKBOARD,” for class content, assignments, questions and classroom discussion groups; as well as virtual office hours. To expand on the mobile learning initiative, the University now offers the ITUNESU Webex platform to provide the community with the tools required to download content to portable players and replay the content when appropriate.

**Computer Facilities**

Sacred Heart University offers a state-of-the-art campus network. The library, classrooms, on-campus residence facilities, health and recreation center, and faculty and administrative offices are all networked. With its fiber-optic infrastructure, the University is positioned to support a wide range of emerging technologies.

The University has established itself as a pioneer in the implementation of technology across the curriculum. A host of multiprocessor campus servers supports the labs and educational programs. The University maintains 1.5 Gpbs Internet (1,500 Mbps), dual-housed for reliability and uptime. The network also supports video, voice and data across the campus. State-of-the-art routers and firewalls provide high-speed connectivity and security to Wide Area Network segments and are completely managed in-house. Administrators apply traffic-shaping, intrusion prevention and wireless security measures for access as secure as it is convenient.

The University has adopted the “Blackboard” Transaction system to create a simplified means for identification and commerce transactions on campus. The Sacred Heart ID can also be used at select off-campus merchant locations to facilitate additional commerce transactions.

In support of the laptop program, the University has an on-site Notebook Service Center and Call Center (The Factory) staffed by certified technicians and open 12 hours a day, Monday-Thursday (9 hours on Friday) so that members of the University community can call trained technicians for assistance with anything on campus that pertains to technology. The Factory can be accessed on campus through the internal telephone system and off campus via a toll-free telephone number. The Factory is specifically designed to service and troubleshoot problems with laptops. In addition, Sacred Heart University has a full-time trainer who provides basic, intermediate
and advanced instructional courses on all supported applications included on the laptop. Through Sacred Heart’s telephone support hotline, students, faculty and staff can dial a toll-free number or email tech support to obtain technical assistance.

**Jandrisevits Learning Center**

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES**
The Jandrisevits Learning Center (JLC) is located in the lower level of the Ryan-Matura Library. The JLC offers students at every academic level an opportunity to improve their content area knowledge and to develop academic skills needed to succeed in their coursework. Staffed by highly experienced faculty, graduate and peer tutors in disciplines across the curriculum, the JLC provides a warm, friendly learning environment that fosters the growth of self-directed learning. The JLC offers the following support services free of charge to all SHU students:

- individualized tutoring in many disciplines provided by faculty, graduate and peer tutors (by appointment);
- Classroom Learning Assistants (CLAs) are peer tutors nominated by faculty who provide academic support to students in disciplines across the curriculum;
- Workshops on college-level study skills such as notetaking; time management; test-taking; critical reading and writing; oral presentations; math concepts and problem solving; and
- Online Writing Lab (OWL) for online feedback with written assignments.

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL LEARNING SERVICES**
The Office of Special Learning Services provides instructional accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. There is no separate application process to be admitted to the Office of Special Learning Services (OSLS). Students with disabilities who request academic accommodations must submit appropriate documentation and register with OSLS. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the OSLS provides reasonable instructional accommodations and services including disclosure letters, alternate testing accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and academic adjustments. For appointments call 203-371-7820.

**Internships and Co-Ops**
Sacred Heart University embraces the concept of experiential learning as a way of supplementing the classroom experience, exploring different career paths and enhancing the student’s marketability when seeking post-graduate employment.

Internships may be paid or unpaid and can be completed by the student for academic credit. The length of the internship and the number of credits awarded vary. A typical placement lasts for one semester and involves 10 to 20 hours of work per week.

Employers offering co-op opportunities allow a student to work full-time for one or two semesters for a set hourly wage and 6–12 academic credits per semester.

The student works with his or her faculty advisor to gain approval for the content of an internship or co-op, and to determine the number of credits that will be awarded. The student must also complete the required documentation from the Office of the Registrar. The Career Development and Placement Center assists the student in locating an appropriate experience.

Experiential learning opportunities are available in all fields including the sciences, business, health care, media and government. Students interested in these programs should consult their faculty advisor as well as the Career Development and Placement Center.
Professional Programs
Sacred Heart University offers pre-professional advising in Pre-Dental Pre-Law, Pre-Medical, Pre-Optometry, Pre-Occupational Therapy, Pre-Physical Therapy, Pre-Pharmacy, Pre-Physical Assistant, Pre-Speech Language Pathology and Pre-Veterinary.

PRE-LAW PROGRAM
There is no prescribed Pre-Law major or academic curriculum for admission to law school. Students interested in attending law school are advised, however, to secure a strong foundation in the liberal arts. Excellent writing, research and critical thinking skills are essential competencies for gaining admission to law school and for completing the requirements of a rigorous law school curriculum. Such skills are also conducive to the practice of law. Pre-law students are encouraged to join the university’s Pre-Law Club and to meet periodically with the Pre-law Advisor to discuss course selection and the law school application process. Experience suggests that a respectable score on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), a strong academic performance over the course of four years, excellent letters of recommendation, along with interesting extra-curricular activity often results in a student’s acceptance to law school.

PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISEMENT PROGRAM
The Pre-Health Professions advisement program services the needs of students seeking to pursue careers in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, pharmacy and physician assistant programs. The program provides academic advisement for a balanced curriculum in biology, chemistry, physics, English, humanities, mathematics, social sciences and other prerequisites for specific areas of study required for acceptance into advanced professional programs. A seminar for the health professions is offered to assist students throughout their four years and is offered at the freshman/sophomore and junior/senior levels, reflecting the level of student matriculation through the program and stage of the application process. Internships, shadowing and research are integral to the program and planned with advisors.

PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAMS
For more information, please refer to the corresponding section under the College of Health Professions.

Study Abroad
Sacred Heart University offers a variety of undergraduate study abroad programs around the world- with programming that supports a broad range of educational, professional, and personal objectives. Choose from over 100 programs in over 30 countries, including our own sites in Dingle, Ireland and Luxembourg. Students may attend a SHU program, a SHU-affiliated program, or a CCIS program. Courses completed may fulfill general education, elective, and major/minor credits. Applications are available online one semester before the program start date.

Short-term programs over winter, spring break, and the summer are also available. Short-term programs are offered at the University’s own sites in Ireland and Luxembourg, with SHU faculty in additional countries, and at SHU University partner programs.

Students participating in SHU or SHU-affiliated programs pay the regular Sacred Heart tuition rate plus a program and/or study abroad fee. Federal and state financial assistance as well as Sacred Heart University grants may apply to SHU and SHU-affiliated semester study abroad. Specific program cost and scholarship information is located on the Office of Global Affairs website.

Students may also participate during the fall and/or spring semester in a variety of study
abroad opportunities preapproved by the Office of Global Affairs. These preapproved programs are sponsored by a number of U.S. accredited institutions through CCIS, the College Consortium for International Studies. The Office of Global Affairs assists students in selecting and applying to these programs and facilitates the transfer of credits from these programs by clarifying prior to participation how these courses will be used in their Sacred Heart University degree programs. Students who participate in these programs are assessed a study-abroad fee. While federal and state financial assistance may be applied to these programs, Sacred Heart University grants will not.

For more information, contact the Office of Global Affairs at 203-396-8028 or locate programs online at www.sacredheart.edu/studyabroad.

**Women’s Studies Program**

Women’s Studies is an academic, interdisciplinary program oriented to the study of women and gender roles. The program draws on the new scholarship about women from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to examine and critique traditional models of thinking and to develop creative ways of exploring women and their experiences.

Theoretical and critical debates that have influenced modern feminist thought are also an integral part of the curriculum. Students select courses cross-listed in Women’s Studies and a variety of other disciplines including: Criminal Justice, History, Literature, Media Studies, Nursing, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies and Sociology.

The Women’s Studies program provides students with the opportunity to broaden their education by enriching their understanding of women through multiple fields of inquiry. The program supports critical thinking about women’s and men’s social, economic, cultural and political roles in the past, present and future. It challenges students to develop their intellectual understanding of the impact of gender as an organizing force in society. Students are encouraged to explore the meaning and application of this knowledge to their own lives.