

How to develop a plan of study for your degree

1. Download a copy of the degree sheet, suggested 4-year plan, and planning spreadsheet from the NREM web site or my teaching web page (<http://nrem.okstate.edu/shouplab/Teaching.php>). Be sure to get the version (year) of the degree sheet that you are working from. This will typically be the year you started on the degree option, but you are allowed to change to a newer degree sheet if you want...but make sure I use the same version when I perform your graduation check. There is also a document at my teaching page that lists all NREM courses and when they are taught. Use these in combination with your unofficial transcript (available in Banner) to figure out what you have done and what you have yet to do. If you are unsure if class you have previously taken can count to meet a requirement on the degree sheet, contact me and I can either clarify your question, or can even give you a copy of the degree sheet I have marked up for you showing any substitutions or waves that we have made.

2. General Education requirements have gotten pretty confusing due to some rules that went into effect a little while back, so this is worth a comment or two. The new rule required us to show at least 15h of general education that gives the student a choice in what they take, so starting with the 2016-17 degree sheet we have done that. In reality, you already are required to take several classes that give general education credit (Bot 1404, CHEM 1214 or 1314, CHEM 1225 or 1515, GEOL 1114 or PHYS 1014, AGCM 3203 or SPCH2713 or SPCH 3733). The result of this is that you do not really need to take any other classes besides BIOL 1114 in the (N) general education box, and you will not need to take the 6h of “additional general education” box...but we do need to be sure you end up taking the right total number of credit hours for the degree. This means you can either go ahead and find 3 extra (N) gen ed hours and 6h of any gen ed category (i.e., just following the degree sheet as it is written), or you can count the above science classes you are going to be taking anyhow to meet those general education requirements and then add 9h to the bottom right-hand elective group (or honestly you can take racquetball or some other fun class to get 9 additional hours). Basically, you either get some credits you get to choose from general education section on the degree sheet, or you can apply the required science classes to gen ed requirements and gain some free electives instead. I suspect most students would rather take 9 more hours of classes in their major than extra gen eds, but the choice is yours. The one General education requirement you do need that many miss is that you need an (I) and a (D) class (even though no hours are specified, the bottom of the gen ed box on the degree sheet says you need at least one of each of these. The best idea is to make 3 of your 6h of (H) be a class that also gives (I) credit (will show as (HI) next to the course title) and the other (H) class should also give (D) credit (shows as (DH) by course title). This allows you to take 2 classes to meet 4 requirements.

3. Sit down with the degree sheet, scheduling helps (4-yr plan and planning spreadsheet), and a computer to access Banner (to look up times/days classes are typically offered in spring or fall semesters) and map out what classes you plan to take every semester from now until you propose to graduate. This should include 1) the course number, 2) title of the class, and 3) the days of the week and time that it meets (including labs). Also add the 4) total number of credit hours for each semester and 5) label your semesters with spring/fall and the year (helps us know where odd-year/even-year classes can fit if we need to make future changes). This is what I am calling the plan of study.

4. You can determine the time the class meets a couple of ways. First, start with the suggested 4-year plan document (i.e., the “flow chart” as we sometimes call it). It lists most of the required classes. Second, you get the time date for any NREM class from the document at the web site under the “List of all NREM classes with times/days they meet” link. You can get remaining class times by going to Banner and selecting a previous semester in the “select term” option. Try to look at a comparable semester to make sure you have the right time for the class (i.e., some courses have different schedules spring vs fall, and some classes are only offered one semester every other year...so look at even versus odd springs and

falls). Usually, a class has the same schedule every year, so the current semester offerings in Banner are a good resource for figuring out when a class will be offered in the future. Another great tool is to use www.myedu.com, a web site that allows you to pick classes you want to schedule in one semester and it will show you all the possible ways to schedule those classes...it has access to the OSU course database so it already knows the times/dates for most classes (change between a fall/spring semester using a drop down box at upper right corner of the web page). Ultimately it is your responsibility to make sure there are no conflicts...I do not know the schedule of all the classes you will take and have too many advisees to look up every class on each student's plan of study, so I will trust that you accurately recorded this information to your plan.

5. Carefully double check to make sure 1) you have no conflicts between course times (including lab sections) for any semester's schedule on your plan; 2) the classes you proposed to take are actually offered in the semester you propose to take them (note some classes that are only offered in even or odd numbered years); and 3) you have scheduled all required classes. Make sure you include a course with "(I)" and "(D)" designation even though there are no credits listed on the degree sheet by these...any number of credits will do (hence why no hours are listed) and the course can also be used to meet another requirement such as your "(H)" requirement...but you do need to take at least 1 hour of "(I)" and 1 hour of "(D)". Again, the smart thing to do is take an (HI) class and an (HD) class to knock out your two H classes, your I class, and your D class requirement with only 2 classes.

6. Send me this plan of study via email so I can look it over and get back to you with any changes I see that need to be made. If you would like a photocopy of the degree sheet I am marking up for you, email me and I'll make a copy for you (this shows any substitutions or waives we are planning to make and may be important for transfer students where the course name is not the same as the degree requirement for which we are using it).

Feel free to contact me if you have questions, but I can not make the plan for you. It is your choice as to what classes you take (where options exist) and because of this, it can take a lot of time to do this (I would allow several hours). I do not have time to do this individually for all 30+ of my advisees. However, I am here to help with whatever specific questions you have. But please be patient...there are a lot of you and it takes about 30 minutes to check over each version of the plan of study you send me (and we will probably go back and forth 3-4 times before we get this all correct). As such, it may take me a couple days to get back to you in the middle of advising season, but I will get to it as soon as I can.