

# Planning Your Academic Program



From the *Degree Plans* page, you can determine which courses are needed to graduate with the degree that you are seeking. However, you'll need to consider more than just the courses in order to successfully plan your academic career! Particularly in the sciences, you must pay careful attention to the order in which you take courses due to the sequential nature of chemistry courses as indicated by the listing of pre-requisites and/or co-requisites. And, we urge you to be realistic about course load for each semester at UWF.

Since most academic programs require 120 semester hours credit, this means student must take 30 credits per year, or 15 credits per semester. So, a "full-time" student would take 15 credits per semester in order to earn an undergraduate degree in four years. And, since a "rule-of-thumb" is that you will need to spend at least two hours in preparation for each hour you spend in the classroom, a 15 credit load leads to a 45 hour "work week". And, then working a job for 15 hours or so each week leads to a rather hectic life with little time to spare. Adding in commuting time makes it even more challenging.

The result is that few students take 15 credits each semester. In fact, nowadays for financial aid validation, 12 semester hours is considered full-time during Fall and Spring semester. Taking 6 credits during summers can help keep a student on track for a four year degree. (Florida requires, in most instances, that students accumulate a total of 9 credits during summer terms.)

As you plan your program, we have the following recommendations:

- , Consider how many hours you will be working on a paying job.
- , Consider your commute time.
- , Consider your family responsibilities.
- , Pay close attention to pre-requisites.
- , Pay close attention as to when classes are offered. Some are offered every semester; some annually and some in alternating semesters.
- , Try to avoid signing up for more than two laboratory courses in any one semester.
- , Do your best to avoid withdrawing from a course. Leaving just one course could cost you a full year on your overall academic program.

We urge you to keep in contact with your departmental advisor as you progress through your program.