



*Frank H. Dotterweich College of Engineering*

# Undergraduate Advising Handbook for Faculty Members

Last Updated: Summer 2019

This handbook is an effort to compile useful information and policies related to the advising of undergraduate students. In all cases where an apparent conflict exists between this handbook and the undergraduate catalog, assume the handbook is in error and use policies as outlined in the undergraduate catalog.

## FORWARD: WHY FACULTY ADVISORS?

Faculty members are busy—research, teaching, and service demands require constant attention. So, why is it important that faculty in the Frank H. Dotterweich College of Engineering (COE) take time out of their schedules for advising? Though not an exhaustive list, here are a few key reasons why faculty members are the most effective advisors for students in their field:

- **Accreditation.** Both ABET and ATMAE review advising and matriculation of students as part of the accreditation process. Programs need to be prepared to demonstrate effective advising and answer questions about any exceptions made (transfer coursework, substitution forms, and prerequisite violations).
- **Mentoring.** Above and beyond the selection of coursework, the advising process should be about mentoring the student. Learning about students' career goals will help faculty members guide them towards elective choices, graduate school preparation, and other university services as needed (tutoring, scholarships, career services, undergraduate research).
- **Accuracy.** COE degree plans are some of the most rigorous and least flexible degree plans at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK). For example, most COE programs require first semester freshmen to take MATH 2413 (Calculus I), whereas pre-health science and agricultural programs consider it a challenge to find freshmen students prepared to take MATH 1316 (Trigonometry), which is one year of math behind MATH 2413. The sequencing of prerequisite courses, the preparation for senior design, and the lack of elective choices mean it is easy for students to take a wrong step that leads to a graduation delay.
- **Experience.** Sometimes, rules have to be broken or degree plans rearranged to fit a student's needs, and this is where faculty members' experience is invaluable. Calculus III before Differential Equations, or the other way around? What science or mathematics electives will best complement a student's career goals? If a student asks to violate a prerequisite at the junior level to avoid violating multiple prerequisites at the senior level, is that a good trade off? Is the student prepared to be successful if a prerequisite waiver is granted?
- **Continuous Improvement.** Continuous improvement is a central theme in accreditation. Working with individual students provides valuable data about what is and is not working for a program. Advising brings to the forefront potential issues with course sequencing (are student routinely asking to violate a prerequisite for a course; is the prerequisite not appropriate?) as well as content (why do so many students retake a particular course; are the prerequisites not adequate?). These issues may be the starting point for future programmatic changes.

**Bottom Line: Our students deserve our time and our expertise, both in and outside the classroom. Effective advising is student-centered and accurate.**

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## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING ADVISING POLICY

### *Transfer Students*

- Students who transfer into the College of Engineering will be advised by the Professional Academic Advisors for the students' first semesters at TAMUK or until such time as student is Calculus I (MATH 2413) ready and passed Inorganic Chemistry I (CHEM 1311).
- Beyond the students' first semester or enrollment in Calculus I (MATH 2413) (whichever comes *last*), transfer students will be advised by a Faculty Advisor appropriate to their academic discipline.
- Both Professional Academic Advisors and Faculty Advisors have the authority to initiate substitution permits for coursework previously completed. Substitution permits must begin at the request of the student, and substitution permits without a student's signature will not be considered valid. Both Professional Academic Advisors and Faculty Advisors have the responsibility to verify that substitution permits have not been previously completed for a student before beginning the substitution process.

### *Entering Freshmen*

- Students who have been with TAMUK since freshman year (hereafter referred to as *entering freshmen*) will be advised by the Professional Academic Advisors for their first two to three semesters or until they have completed 30-45 hours towards their degree (whichever comes *last*).
- Beyond 30-45 hours or entering freshmen students' third semester at TAMUK, students will be advised by a Faculty Advisor appropriate to their academic discipline.
- If a student has not met TSI requirements by the completion of 30 hours, the student will continue being advised by the Professional Academic Advisor until TSI requirements are met.

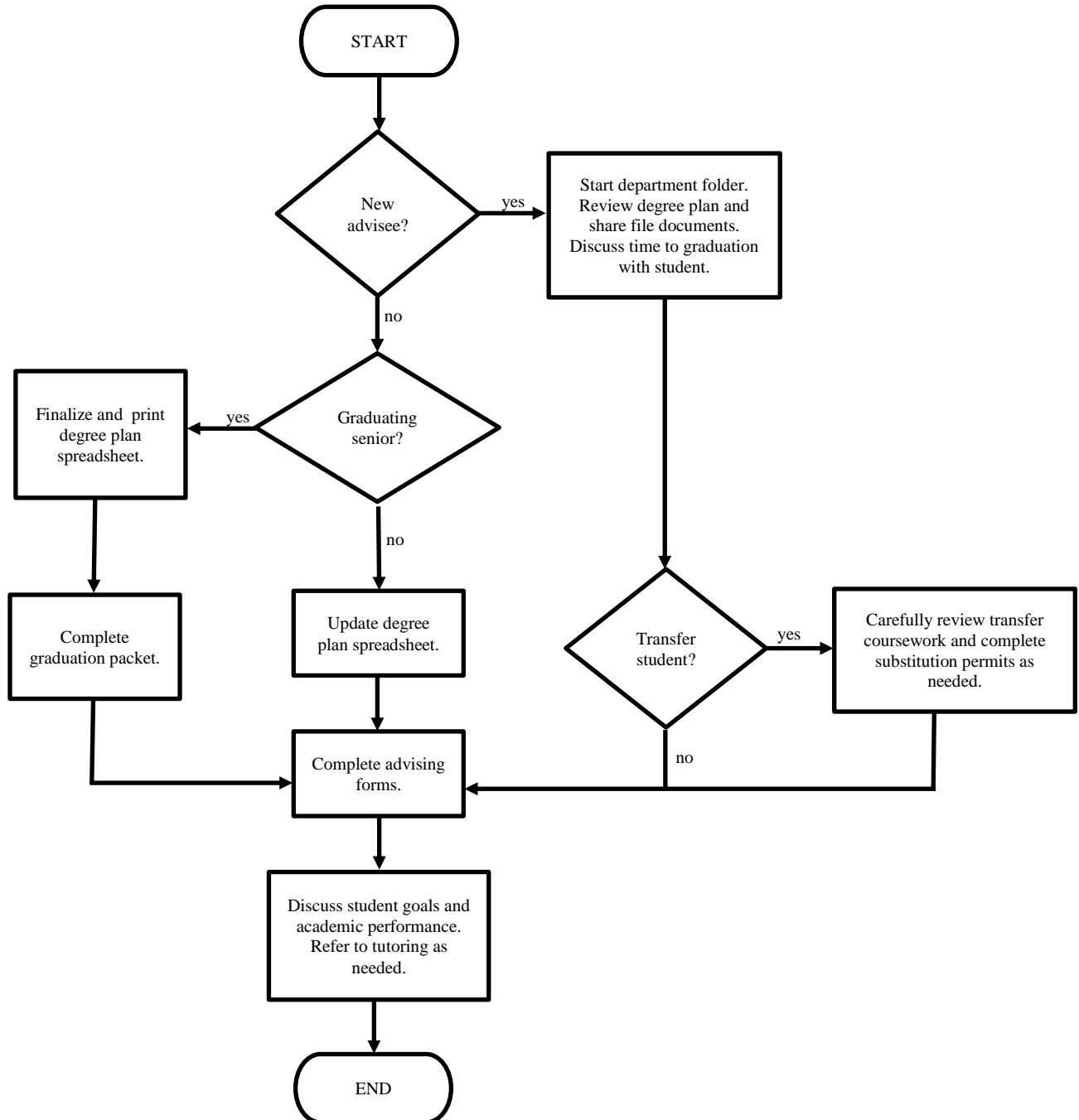
### *Record Keeping*

- An electronic shared file of students' records is maintained by JESSC staff. At the earliest opportunity, all Faculty Advisors should be given access to these records. The electronic shared file (and the corresponding hard copy file also maintained in the JESSC) is the official repository of all documentation for College of Engineering students.
- When a student meets with a Professional Academic Advisor or a Faculty Advisor, a scanned copy of the advising form should be placed in the student's electronic record.
- The electronic records maintained in the JESSC contain an updated Excel file of the students' degree plan. If a signed degree plan is required for a student (athletes, veterans, and students receiving Hazelwood benefits, etc.), it may be accessed in the electronic record.
- Before initiating a substitution form or other paperwork on a student's behalf, the electronic record should be double-checked to avoid duplication.

**Acronyms:** Javelina Engineering Student Success Center (JESSC);  
Texas Success Initiative (TSI)

## ADVISING APPOINTMENTS

The flowchart of Figure 1 provides a brief, but not exhaustive, advising appointment overview.



**Figure 1. Flowchart of advising appointment and faculty responsibilities.**

Advising forms, substitution permits, and other student-related forms can be found on the COE website ([http://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/deans\\_office/forms.html](http://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/deans_office/forms.html)). The Provost's website (<http://www.tamuk.edu/academicaffairs/forms/index.html>) has readmission request forms.

Each semester, the College of Engineering places a hold on registration until students see their faculty advisors. The advising form provides documentation of the courses discussed for future semesters and should be returned to the department administrative assistant after the advising appointment..

Once the student has completed the advising appointment, the administrative associate will remove the advising hold and resolve any issues that occur when the student tries to register (such as prerequisite errors for courses in which students are currently enrolled). However, the **department administrative associate is not an academic advisor!** It is not the administrative associate's responsibility to complete advising paper work or update student degree plans. See **Graduation** for a detailed discussion of degree plans.

The advising process begins with a student making an appointment with their faculty advisor to create a schedule for the next semester(s). Set aside 20-30 minutes for these appointments. If the student is a new advisee (especially a new transfer student) or a graduating senior, schedule a longer appointment.

Students should arrive at their appointment with a copy of their departmental folder, unofficial transcript showing current courses and grades, and an academic advising form. These items should be available in the departmental offices, with the exception of the unofficial transcript. Students may print a copy of their unofficial transcript from Blue and Gold), or the advisor may access the transcript electronically to save paper. See **Electronic Resources** for more information.

Degree plans should be regularly updated. Degree plans will be started by the Professional Academic Advisor in the Javelina Engineering Student Success Center (JESSC) and may be downloaded from the electronic share file (see **Electronic Resources**). These are Excel spreadsheets for most programs. Industrial Management and Applied Engineering students will have a FileMaker record, and students in Mechanical Engineering and Environmental Engineering will have a Degree Analysis Plan (DAP) in spreadsheet form.

Be sure that each advising appointment includes an update on the students' grades, academic standing, and progress to graduation. Key issues include the following:

- Students should not be surprised by their graduation date. If they are behind academically, they should be notified in a timely fashion.
- Students in Pre-Engineering (PPEN) or Alternate Pre-Engineering (APEN) should have their progress monitored regularly and be moved to their major of choice as quickly as possible (see **Forms and Policies**).
- Students on Scholastic Probation or Enforced Withdrawal should be counseled and directed to tutoring and other university services as appropriate (see **Forms and Policies** and **Other**

**Services and Special Populations**). Be sure to check the electronic share file for previous readmission contracts before starting any new readmission request.

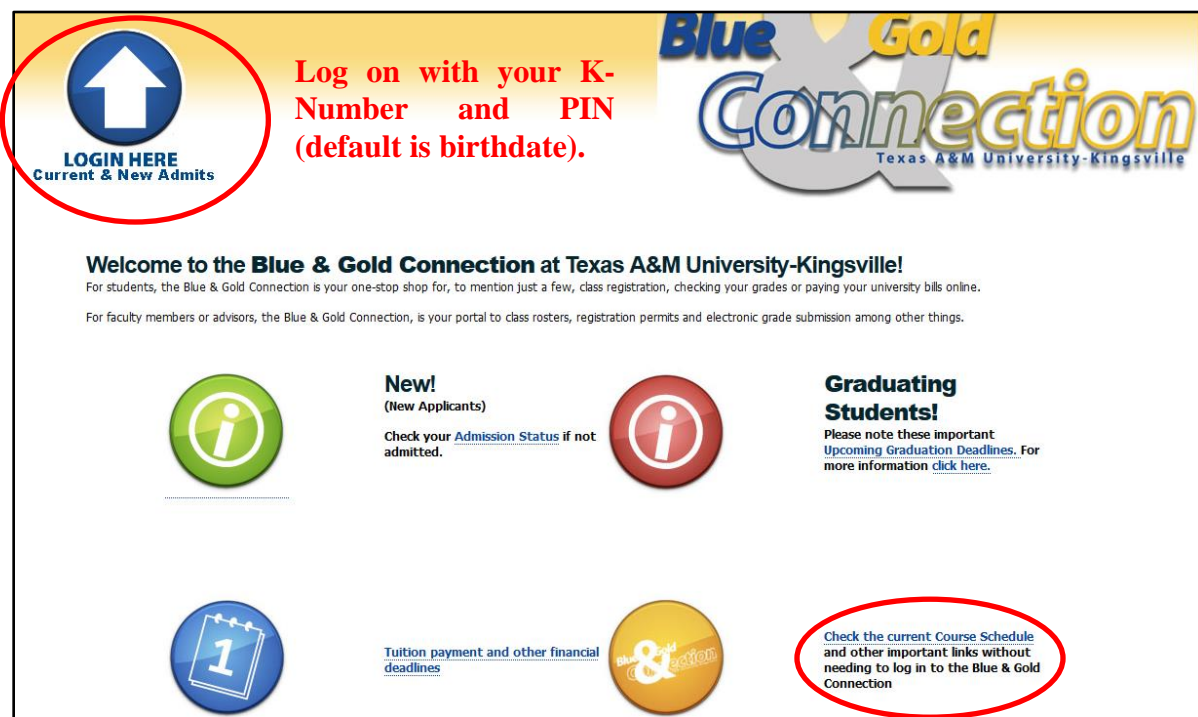
## ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Several electronic resources exist to help faculty advisors. This section discusses how to access and use Blue and Gold and the electronic share file, as well as a brief discussion of DegreeWorks.

### Blue and Gold

Access online: <http://www.tamuk.edu/bluegold/>

Figure 2 displays the Blue and Gold home screen. For reviewing course offerings, you can select “Check the Current Course Schedule” without logging on, but your credentials should be entered to check student grades or contact information. Use your K-Number and PIN to log on; the default PIN is your birthdate in MM-DD-YY format and can be easily changed in the system. You can also log on through JNET. In JNET, the Faculty tab will direct you to the Blue and Gold main menu.

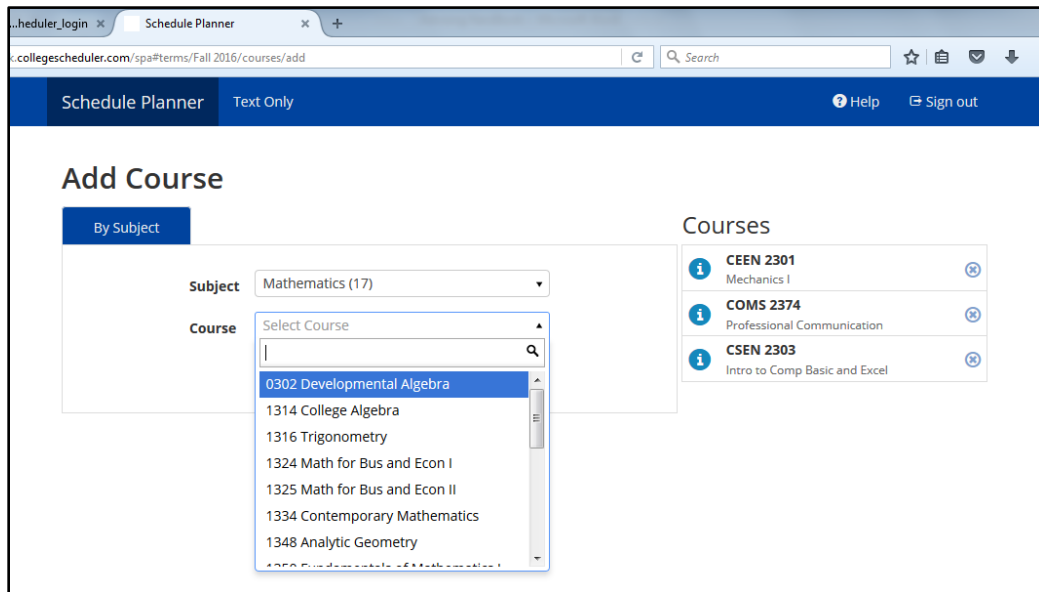


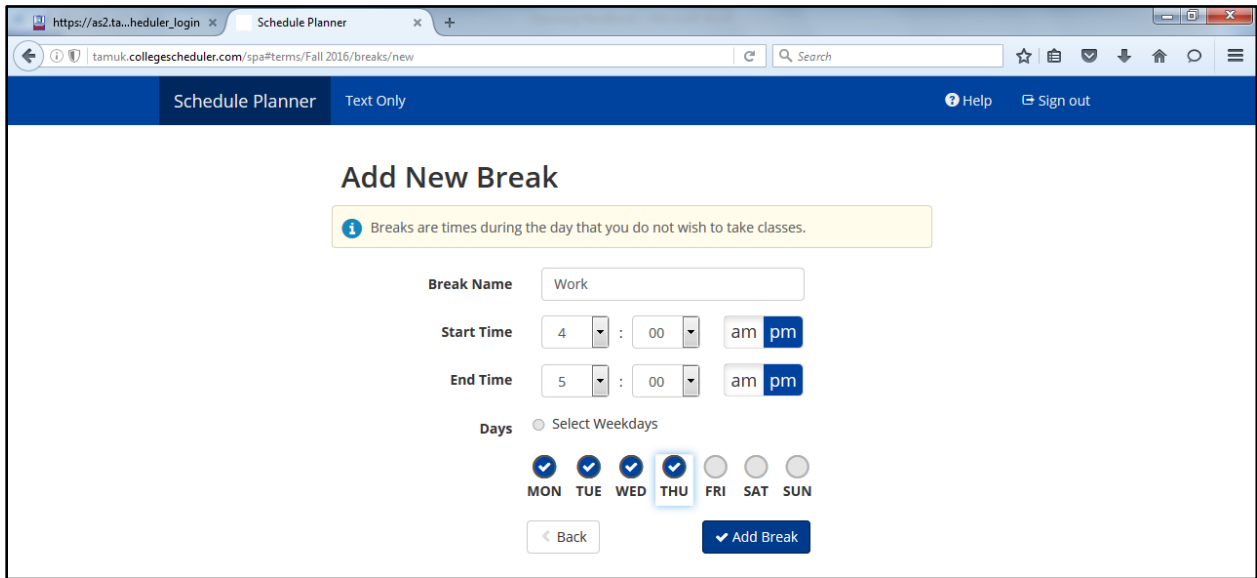
**Figure 2. Home screen for Blue and Gold.**



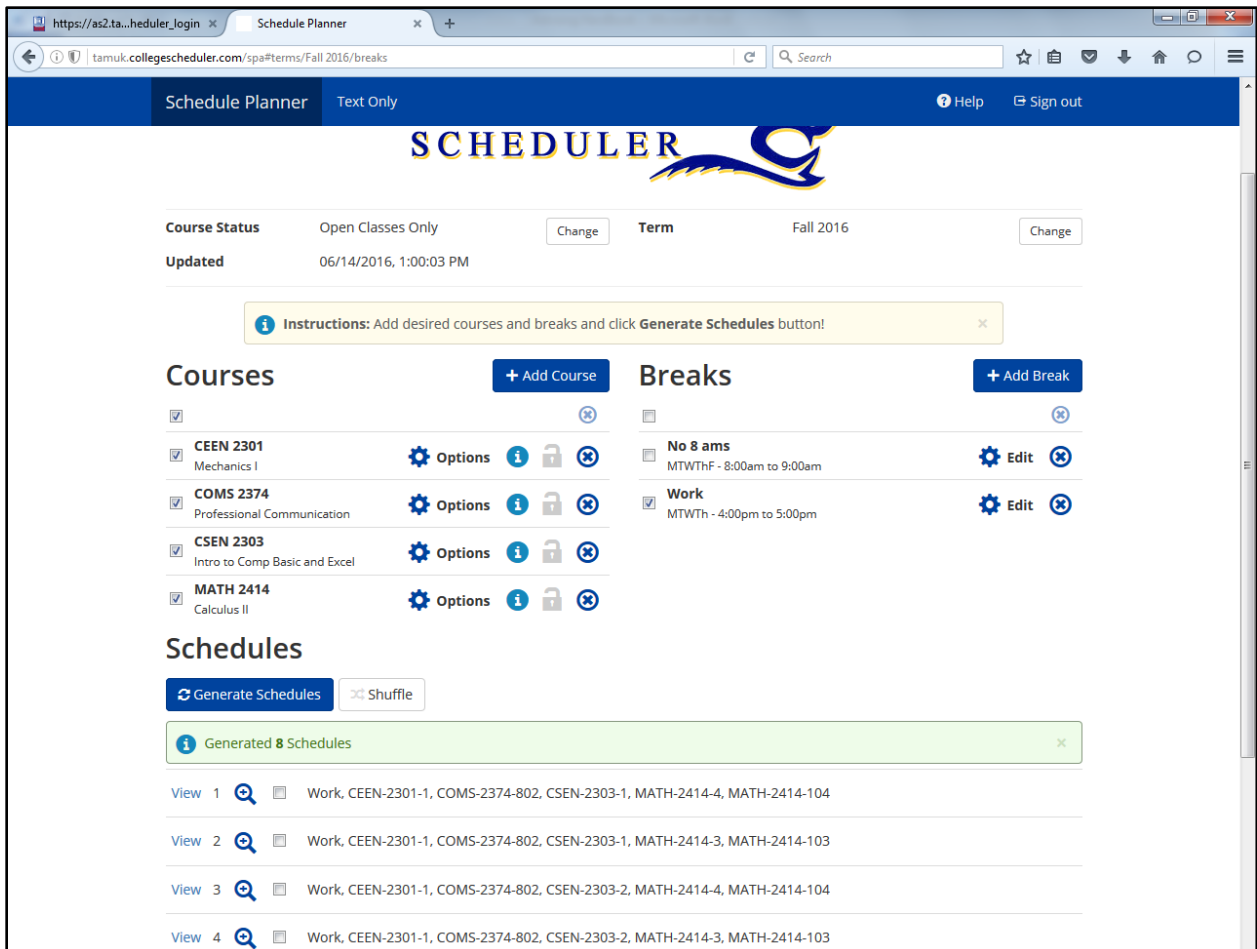
Once logged on, select **Faculty & Advisors**. Spend some time exploring this screen. You may use it to enter midterm and final grades and view a list of students in your classes. Selecting **Student Information**, and then **Academic Transcript**, will allow you to access your advisees' unofficial transcripts. You may also use the **Student Information** menu to find the email address or phone number for your advisees or students, which allows you to reach out to students who are struggling academically.

Also on the **Faculty & Advisors** menu, you will notice an **Open College Scheduler** option (see Figures 3 through 5). The College Scheduler generates possible schedules based on course availability, time conflicts, and seats available. It is also possible to incorporate breaks for students who work or have other obligations. Figure 3 illustrates how to select courses and create breaks. Breaks allow students to specify times they do not want to take classes. Figures 4 and 5 display generated schedules. The College Scheduler is easy to use and allows students to leave the advising appointment with a schedule in hand.

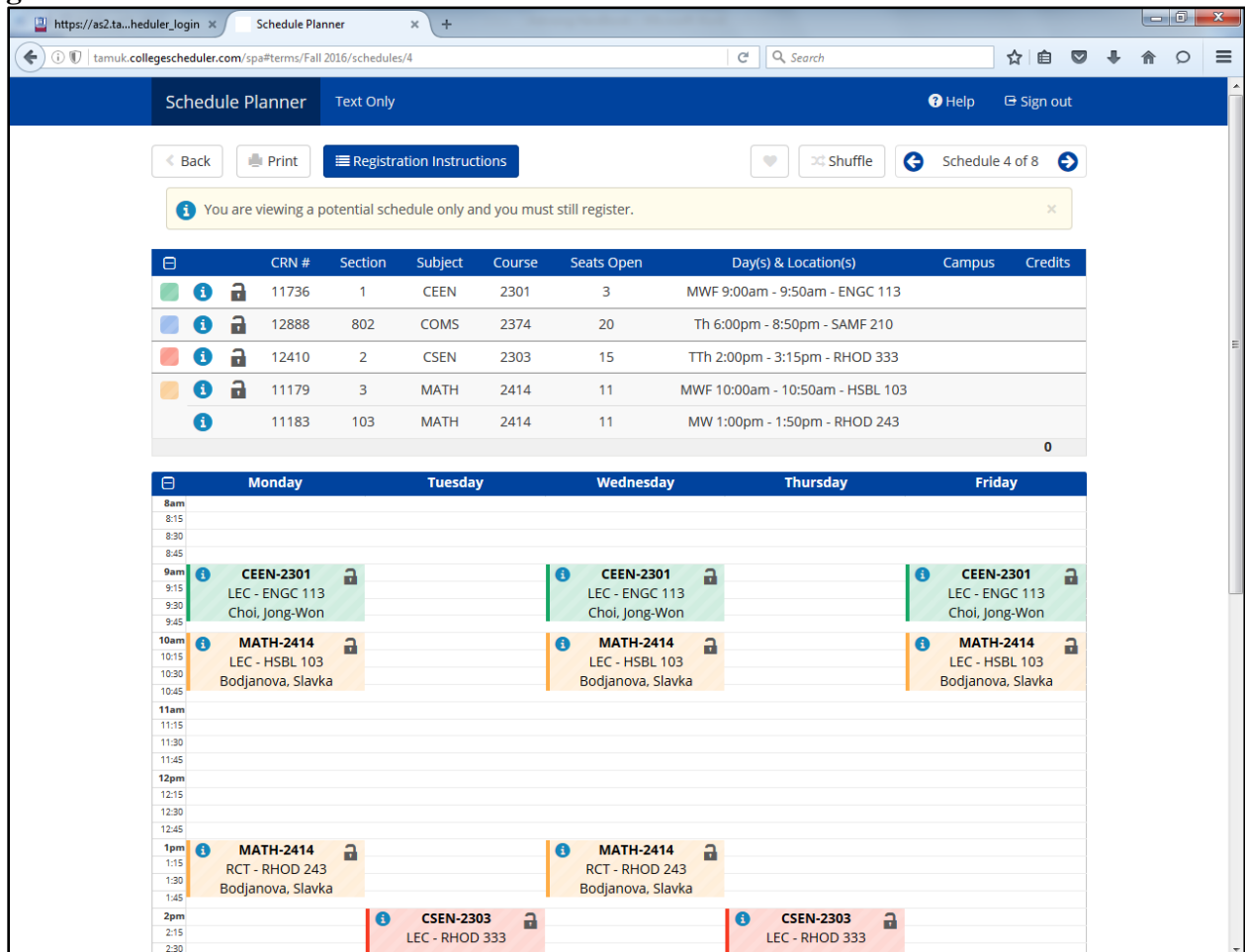




**Figure 3. Windows to navigate the selection of courses and the creation of breaks. Both processes use simple drop down menus. Courses are linked to the course schedule for the semester of interest.**



**Figure 4. Sample output after hitting “Generate Schedules.” Includes four courses and the work break created in Figure 3. Select “View” to see a visual representation of the schedules generated.**



**Figure 5. Sample schedule. Shows visual representation of student schedule. Clicking on “Registration Instructions” tab at the top navigates to a page that includes CRNs and other information required for registration.**

College Scheduler is updated on a semester basis and may not always be available at the very beginning of the advising period, but it is a useful time saver once it is updated.

### Electronic Share File

JESSC personnel maintain an electronic copy of student files. A scanned copy of all signed student paperwork—substitution forms, change of curriculum forms, readmission requests, etc.—is placed in the electronic share file. In addition, electronic copies of student degree plans are also available. Faculty advisors may request access to the electronic share file by submitting a help desk ticket with iTech at: [http://www.tamuk.edu/itech/help\\_desk/index.html](http://www.tamuk.edu/itech/help_desk/index.html)

In the help desk ticket, request access to the Student Files folder under the COE share folders. The specific link you want access to is: [\\nfs.tamuk.edu\CoE\\$\STUDENT FILES](\\nfs.tamuk.edu\CoE$\STUDENT FILES)

If you have any difficulty gaining access to the share file, please contact your department chair.

### **DegreeWorks**

DegreeWorks is a program that tracks students' progress to degree. **Use with caution.** This program is always being updated and perfected. However, students like it and use it, so it behooves advisors to be familiar with it.

DegreeWorks may be accessed through Blue and Gold: <http://www.tamuk.edu/bluegold/>. When you log on, select **DegreeWorks for Faculty** from the main menu.

Some potential questions you may receive from advisees include:

- 1) *Question:* I completed a substitution form. Why does DegreeWorks say I still need the class?

*Short Answer:* Be patient.

*Long Answer:* When a substitution form is submitted on behalf of a student, the professional academic advisors in the JESSC will “push” the substitution in DegreeWorks so that the appropriate degree requirement displays as “fulfilled.” This manual process takes time, so it is important to reassure advisees that once the substitution form is complete within the College of Engineering (through dean’s signature), their degree requirement is fulfilled regardless of what DegreeWorks says.

- 2) *Question:* DegreeWorks says I need to take <Fill in the Course Name> but I’ve never heard of this class and it’s not on my degree plan. Do I need to take it?

*Short Answer:* Probably not.

*Long Answer:* Occasionally, a student asking this question has led us to discover an error in how a degree plan is coded in DegreeWorks. Always check the degree plan to make sure the student isn’t falling victim to “wishful thinking,” then check that the degree plan agrees with DegreeWorks. Any suspected errors should be passed on to your chair, the JESSC Director, and the dean’s office.

- 3) *Question:* Can I take <Fill in the Course Name>? DegreeWorks lists it as an elective choice but my degree plan doesn’t.

*Short Answer:* Probably not. The degree plan trumps DegreeWorks.

*Long Answer:* This question has also led to the discovery that DegreeWorks listed elective courses that had been removed from a degree plan years before. Again, DegreeWorks is

imperfectly implemented, and the student's degree plan is the benchmark to resolve any discrepancy. Suspected errors should be passed on to your chair, the JESSC Director, and the dean's office.

## **FORMS AND POLICIES**

Policies are constantly changing, which is one of the reasons faculty are asked to attend annual advisor training meetings. Make sure you have a copy of the most current academic calendar ([http://www.tamuk.edu/events/academic\\_calendar.html](http://www.tamuk.edu/events/academic_calendar.html)) to track important deadlines. You should also stay informed by checking these websites periodically for new information:

- <http://www.tamuk.edu/academics/catalog/index.html>
- <http://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/>
- <http://www.tamuk.edu/academicaffairs/index.html>
- <http://www.tamuk.edu/admission/freshmen/freshmenrequirement.html>

### **Mid-term and Final Grades**

Mid-term grades are due approximately one week before the Q-drop date (see academic calendar). Mid-term grades (A, B, C, D, or F) should be assigned to all students in your undergraduate classes. Mid-term grades are critical to helping students determine whether or not they need to Q-drop a course, so please be courteous about posting them and honest when discussing them with your students.

Final grades should be posted by the Monday morning following the end of final exams (see academic calendar). If a student fails a class, include the student's date of last attendance for financial aid compliance.

### **Incompletes and I-Contracts**

If a student has a legitimate reason for not completing a course (such as a documented medical condition), and you wish to give the student an Incomplete, please complete an I-contract (<http://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/forms/I%20Contract1.pdf>) and submit it to the dean's office on or before the deadline for posting final grades. An "X" for "no grade posted" will appear on the student's transcript until the I-contract has completed routing.

The I-contract should contain specific instructions about the work remaining to be completed and the deadline for doing so. When the student completes the work stipulated on the I-contract, use a change of grade form to assign a final course grade. I-contracts must be completed within one year (or the deadline stipulated on the contract) or the course grade will be automatically posted as an "F."

### **Change of Grade Forms**

Change of grade forms must be collected at the Enrollment Services Center (the large glass-fronted area in the SUB that houses the registrar, admissions, and financial aid). Faculty must collect

change of grade forms in person and return them in person. You will be asked to sign for the form and present a university ID. These policies help maintain the security of the grading process.

### **Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal**

Students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA to remain in good academic standing with the university. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 (or, in some cases, whose institutional GPA falls below 2.0) will be placed on **scholastic probation**. Scholastic probation provides students with one additional long semester (fall or spring) to raise their GPA and restore good standing.

Students who do not raise their GPA to 2.0 or higher after a semester on scholastic probation will be placed on **enforced withdrawal**. Enforced withdrawal means that students are not allowed to register for the next long semester of courses. Students in this situation have the following options:

1) *Take Summer Classes.*

If placed on enforced withdrawal at the end of spring, students may take summer courses to improve GPA. If they are successful, enforced withdrawal status will be automatically lifted in time for fall registration. Often, the faculty advisor will need to email the registrar's office (Clarissa Rodriguez at clarissa.rodriguez@tamuk.edu is a good point of contact) to request that the student be allowed to register for summer courses.

2) *Complete a Readmission Request.*

Students may complete a readmission request (also called an enforced withdrawal appeal form) to be permitted to continue taking classes while on enforced withdrawal. The readmission request has been moved online. Once the student submits the form, they will be contacted to let them know when they are scheduled to see the Readmission Committee. The department chair will sit in on the committee to assist in making the decision.

After the students meeting with the committee, they will be expected to have already made arrangements to meet with the associate dean. The committee will recommend a decision to approve or deny the readmission request however, the associate dean will make the final decision. If the student is not happy with the decision from their assoc. dean, they are welcome to appeal to the VP for student Success, Dr. Shannon Baker.

We have tried to simplify the process for all involved. We can anticipate that our engineering students will need to submit additional information such as the GPA calculation and the Academic Success Assessment however, they do not need those documents in order to submit their request online. They may be asked to bring that information when they meet with the committee or when they meet with the associate dean.

### 3) *Sit out.*

There are instances where advising a student to sit out one semester are appropriate and in the student's best interest. Some students simply need time to deal with a personal or medical issue, while others benefit from the break to gain extra maturity. Working for one semester can be an excellent way to motivate students to complete their degrees and increase their earning potential.

If a student sits out for one or more long semesters, the advisor can email the registrar's office ([clarissa.rodriguez@tamuk.edu](mailto:clarissa.rodriguez@tamuk.edu)) to request that enforced withdrawal status be lifted. A simple email may be sent along the lines of: "Student (K-number) is on enforced withdrawal. Student has sat out for one semester and is ready to return to school. I am student's academic advisor." Students sitting out 2 years or more must reapply for admission.

### **Drops**

The academic calendar (<https://www.tamuk.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>) lists the last day to drop a course or withdraw from the university. This date occurs after the 60% mark of the semester and about a week after midterm grades are due. Students who drop by 5:00 pm on this date will receive an automatic "Q," which is a no-penalty drop. Students entering the university Fall 2007 or later may use only six no-penalty drops; afterwards, they receive "QF" grades for dropping a course, which will incur a GPA penalty.

Q-drops require an add/drop form from the registrar's office. Academic advisors are required to sign the add/drop form, as are instructors. For this reason, it is important to make sure students and advisees know your office hours leading up to the 5:00 pm drop deadline.

Link to the add/drop form:

<http://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/forms/Add-Drop%20Registration%20Form%20-%20Rev%2020%20Aug%202014.pdf>

Instructors dropping a student for non-attendance must document efforts to contact the student, see [https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/\\_files\\_R/Add-Drop-Registration-Form1.pdf](https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/_files_R/Add-Drop-Registration-Form1.pdf). In general, this step is not recommended if the student is attempting to work with you to complete course requirements. Instructor drop forms submitted **after** the Q-drop deadline will be recorded as failing grades on the student's transcript, so please process these in a timely fashion.

### **Pre-Engineering and Alternate Pre-Engineering**

Freshmen and transfer students unconditionally admitted to the COE will be placed in their major of choice (civil engineering, mechanical engineering, etc.). Two forms of conditional admission exist: Pre-Engineering (PPEN) for students who have been conditionally admitted to the COE and Alternate Pre-Engineering (APEN) for students who do not meet COE standards. PPEN and

APEN students are **not permitted** to take upper-level COE courses. Exceptions must be approved in writing by the dean.

APEN / PPEN students who enter TAMUK as freshmen must meet the following criteria to transition to their major of choice:

- Pass 24 or more credit hours
- Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0
- Minimum math/science GPA of 2.0 (all mathematics / science coursework)
- Passing grade in MATH 1348 (Analytic Geometry) or higher
- Passing grade in CHEM 1311/1111 (General Inorganic Chemistry I and Lab)

APEN / PPEN students who enter TAMUK as transfer students must make “satisfactory academic progress” to transition to their major of choice. Satisfactory academic progress is generally defined as having a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher. However, department chairs may use their discretion to transition students with lower GPAs into the major of choice if the student is making progress towards the degree.

Figure 6 shows a Curriculum Information block as displayed on an unofficial transcript accessible through Blue and Gold.

<b>Curriculum Information</b>		
<b>Current Program</b>		
BS in Mechanical Engineering		
<b>Major and Department:</b>	Mechanical Engineering, Mech & Industrial Engineering	Student's current major.
***Transcript type:GRUF is NOT Official ***		
<b>DEGREE AWARDED</b>		
<b>Sought:</b>	Bachelor of Science	<b>Degree Date:</b>
<b>Curriculum Information</b>		
<b>Primary Degree</b>		
<b>Major:</b>	Pre-Engineering	Student originally admitted PPEN, seeking MEEN degree.
<b>Sought:</b>	BS in Mechanical Engineering	<b>Degree Date:</b>
<b>Curriculum Information</b>		
<b>Primary Degree</b>		
<b>Major:</b>	Mechanical Engineering	Student now enrolled MEEN.

Figure 6. Sample Curriculum Information block for PPEN students who have transitioned to major of choice.



In Figure 6, the student's Current Program reads "B.S. in Mechanical Engineering." Some confusion might arise if an advisor were to read further down and see "Pre-Engineering" listed under Primary Degree. This Curriculum Information block would be typical for a student who entered TAMUK PPEN; the fact that the student was interested in Mechanical Engineering is indicated by the "Sought" entry. The student met transition requirements to move out of PPEN and into MEEN. The entry for the second Primary Degree listing confirms that the transition was made successfully.

APEN / PPEN students' progress should be reviewed at the end of their second semester at TAMUK. Students who are not making sustained progress towards degree should be counseled to explore other career options outside the COE. Students with a strong interest in a technical degree but who are struggling with mathematics or physics should also visit with the Department of Industrial Management and Technology.

### **Change of Curriculum**

The Undergraduate Change of Curriculum form is available on the COE website (see [https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/docs\\_CoE/deansoffice/forms/undergraduate-change-of-curriculum-form.pdf](https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/docs_CoE/deansoffice/forms/undergraduate-change-of-curriculum-form.pdf)). The Change of Curriculum form may be used to specify a change in a student's major, minor, catalog year, or to transition a student from PPEN or APEN to the major of choice. The Change of Curriculum form for the COE is different from the one used / distributed by the registrar. The COE is the only college at TAMUK that requires approval by the dean on a curriculum change.

A 2.5 GPA is required for students applying for admission to the COE from another TAMUK college. Many chairs consider a 2.5 GPA to be a good standard for determining whether or not a student should be permitted to transition from one COE major to another, as well. However, there is no specific requirement to this effect.

Students' degree plans are determined by the semester in which they enter the university. A student entering in Fall 2019 will be placed on the degree plan contained in the 2019-2020 undergraduate catalog. If a later degree plan is published while the student is enrolled at TAMUK, the student has the option to change to the newer degree plan. This change should be specified with a Change of Curriculum form. Students are not permitted to change to an older version of the catalog that was in place before they enrolled.

If a student changes to a new catalog, then the student must complete all requirements of the new catalog. Mixing and matching between multiple catalogs / degree plans is not permitted. Potential things to check include: changes to major; changes to general education requirements; changes to policies regarding graduation.

### **Minors**

Several minors may be of interest to COE students. To help students and advisors keep track of minor requirements, a Minor Check Out Form is maintained by the JESSC Director. The Minor

Check Out Form is also included in graduation packets to provide an easy reference for determining if students meet requirements. The academic catalog is another reference.

**Please note** that students bringing in mathematics credit from community colleges may encounter challenges when applying for the mathematics minor. Calculus III, Differential Equations, and Linear Algebra are upper-level mathematics courses at TAMUK. Community colleges are not permitted to offer upper-level courses, so transfer students will receive sophomore level credit if they completed these courses at a community college. The sophomore level course is sufficient for fulfilling degree requirements, and a substitution form may be completed. However, sophomore level courses do not count towards the 6 hours of upper-level mathematics courses required for the mathematics minor. Students may petition the mathematics department for an exception on a case-by-case basis.

### **Repeating Grades**

Students may repeat courses to improve their GPA. Effective Fall 2015, students may exclude the grade for a repeated class one time only. The third attempt, and any additional attempts, will be averaged into the GPA. Consider the following examples of a student retaking a course to illustrate how this works mathematically:

***Example 1:***

Attempt #1 – F  
Attempt #2 – A  
GPA: 4.0.  
*A replaces the F.*

***Example 2:***

Attempt #1 – F  
Attempt #2 – F  
Attempt #3 – A  
GPA: 2.0.  
*2<sup>nd</sup> F replaces the 1<sup>st</sup> F and is averaged with the A earned in attempt 3.*

Students who fail a repeated class have an “F” in the class, regardless of whether they have previously passed the class. Students who believe they are going to fail a class they have previously passed are permitted (and encouraged) to Q-drop and keep their previous passing grade. To exclude repeated courses from their transcripts, students must complete this form: <https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/files/R/Request-for-Adjustment-Repeated-Courses-Form.pdf>.

Students who had 90 earned hours as of Spring 2016 are exempt from the above policy. These students may retake a class multiple times and use the grade last earned in the GPA calculation.

### **Writing Intensive Courses**

Students entering TAMUK in Fall 2012 or later are required to earn a “C” or higher in one Writing Intensive (WI) course. WI courses have been identified for each major in the college, with the exception of natural gas engineering (pending). Table 1 lists the WI courses approved for the COE.

WI courses are followed by a (WI) designation in the academic catalog, on transcripts, and when listed in Blue and Gold. To qualify as WI, a class must be upper-level; must contain one or more

assignments adding up to 5,000 words / 10 single spaced pages; and must have one assignment that is revised and resubmitted after receiving instructor feedback.

**Table 1. WI courses for the COE**

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>
AEEN 4316	Structural Steel Design
AEEN 4289	Senior Design Project II
CEEN 4316	Structural Steel Design
CHEN 4317	Chemical Process Design III
CSEN 4202	Senior Project
EEEN 4224	ECE Project Lab
EVEN 4302	Environmental Engineering Design I
EVEN 4303	Environmental Engineering Design II
ITEN 3349	Lean Operations
MEEN 4263	Mechanical Engineering Design Projects I

**Minimum Required Hours**

Various programs require students to maintain a minimum number of course hours. A brief list of requirements is as follows:

- Presidential Scholars must take 15 hours a semester. If they do not need a full 15 hours their last one or two semesters, an appeal may be addressed to Ms. Amanda Thompson (amanda.thompson@tamuk.edu).
- Financial aid requires that students register for at least 12 hours a semester.
- Students paying for education through the Hazelwood Act (veterans or families of veterans) must be registered for 12 hours a semester. These students are also required to maintain a correct DegreeWorks profile.

## TRANSFER STUDENTS

Evaluating transfer credits from other institutions for their applicability to TAMUK degree plans requires attention to detail on the part of the academic advisor.

### Transfer Credit Hour and Grade Limitations

Some important policies about transfer credit include the following:

- Transfer credit for math, science, and engineering courses will not be accepted unless the student earned a grade of “C” or better.
- For engineering and computer science degrees, no more than 72 hours of transfer credit can be accepted from a program not accredited by ABET. Junior or senior level courses from non-accredited institutions must be approved by the department chair and dean.
- The university requires that at least 24 of the last 30 credit hours towards the baccalaureate degree be taken at TAMUK.
- The COE requires that at least 45 hours towards the baccalaureate degree be completed at TAMUK, and that at least 36 of these 45 hours be within the COE.

### Core Complete?

Students who are “core complete” at any public institution in the state of Texas are automatically core complete at TAMUK. In practical terms, this means that the students do not need to take any additional general education electives at TAMUK, regardless of whether their courses match TAMUK general education requirements. **A post-baccalaureate student is not necessarily core complete.** If a student earns a bachelor’s degree at a private institution or an out-of-state institution, general education requirements at TAMUK must still be fulfilled.

Official transcripts from previous public institutions in Texas will have a block about core requirements on the last page at the end of the transcript. Look for the phrase “core complete.” If you are uncertain whether a student is core complete, you may contact the transfer representatives in the admissions office. Ms. Tara Schulze (admission@tamuk.edu) is a good contact for this and any other questions related to posting of transfer credit.

If a student is core complete, it is still important to complete substitution forms indicating what classes will be used to satisfy the general education requirements at TAMUK. Because the student is core complete, you may be creative with these substitution forms but should strive in each case to find the best match between the previous institution’s core and TAMUK’s general education courses. The substitution forms and grades entered in the degree plan should reflect previous core courses, so that the student’s final degree plan demonstrates that all the hours required for a B.S. at TAMUK have been completed.

## UNIV Courses

It is a TAMUK requirement that all entering freshmen complete UNIV 1201 or GEEN 1201. Students transferring more than 24 credit hours from another institution are exempt from this requirement. One exception is that UNIV/GEEN is generally required for students who have earned significant test credit or dual-credit while in high school but who are, essentially, moving away from home for the first time as they start their college experience. The Center for Student Success will make this decision during the students' initial orientation.

Transfer students who do not have to take UNIV/GEEN courses **must still account** for these two hours of required course credit in some way. A substitution form may be completed to take **any college-level** (not developmental or transitional) course not otherwise being used to meet degree requirements and apply it towards the fulfillment of UNIV/GEEN coursework.

## Articulation Agreements and TCCN

The COE has developed articulation agreements with several area institutions to ease the transition to TAMUK for transfer students. The articulation agreements are available online (see [http://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/articulation\\_agreements.html](http://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/articulation_agreements.html)). Institutions include Southwest Texas Junior College, Blinn College, Del Mar College, South Texas College, Laredo Community College, and Texas A&M International University.

Another good resource for determining whether a transfer course can be used to fulfill degree requirements is the Texas Common Course Numbering System (<https://www.tccns.org/>). The TCCNS website allows for a side by side comparison of courses offered at different institutions.

## Substitution Permits and Transcript Articulation

The Admissions office articulates coursework completed at other institutions onto the student's TAMUK transcript. Instances where a course does not appear on the student's TAMUK transcript should be referred to Ms. Tara Schulze ([admission@tamuk.edu](mailto:admission@tamuk.edu)). Ms. Schulze can also address concerns when a course has been incorrectly entered on the transcript or the wrong number of hours was awarded, etc. Admissions personnel do not automatically articulate all classes a student has taken at previous institutions; some courses can be articulated only if requested by the advisor. Examples of courses that might not be articulated without an advisor's request include courses for a post-baccalaureate student; advanced math, science, and engineering courses; and technical courses that need to be evaluated for SACS compliance.

Discrepancies between student transcripts and degree plans are resolved with substitution permits ([https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/docs\\_CoE/deansoffice/forms/substitution-permit-form-2016.pdf](https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/docs_CoE/deansoffice/forms/substitution-permit-form-2016.pdf)). The "Substitute" column should list the course numbers as they appear on the TAMUK transcript, and the "For" column should list the course numbers as they appear on the TAMUK degree plan. Be sure to include the student's catalog year so that an accurate degree plan match is made. Also include a copy of the student's TAMUK transcript (unofficial is fine).

If additional information is required to determine the suitability of a course for substitution, consider one of the following options:

- Compare course catalog descriptions for TAMUK and the previous institution.
- Request student to bring in copies of syllabi or coursework from previous institution.
- Request feedback from another TAMUK college or department for courses outside your field of expertise. The College of Arts and Sciences is particularly helpful in this respect.

Be mindful of the number of credit hours students have received at their previous institution(s). Three hours of Calculus I credit is not sufficient to substitute for a four hour Calculus I course at TAMUK. However, the three hour course may be bundled with another hour of mathematics (such as Analytic Geometry) in order to make up the total number of hours required at TAMUK. This bundling should be reflected in the substitution permit.

### **General Education Courses**

The “Core Complete?” and “Substitution Permits and Transcript Articulation” sections provide most of the necessary information to determine what General Education requirements a transfer student has or has not met. In cases where a student is not core complete, the best practice is to review their courses for compatibility with TAMUK General Education requirements. In cases where the General Education requirement is selected from a list of electives, however, it is best to substitute a course from the previous institution for a generic elective, rather than attempting to make an exact one-to-one match.

For example, consider that a student takes a philosophy course at another institution that is articulated at TAMUK as “PHIL 2000 (Ethics and Professionalism).” Substituting PHIL 2000 for a “Language / Philosophy / Culture Elective” is more accurate than substituting the course for PHIL 1301 (Introduction to Philosophy) and accomplishes the same purpose. This logic is often appropriate for the Creative Arts elective, as well.

One final note on General Education courses is that the College of Arts and Sciences recognizes any modern language as appropriate for fulfilling the Language / Philosophy / Culture elective, regardless of whether that language is taught at TAMUK. German and Arabic are two examples of acceptable electives.

### **Residency Requirement**

University policy requires that at least 25% of an undergraduate degree be earned at TAMUK and that 24 of the last 30 hours be completed on campus.

Effective Fall 2016, COE transfer students will be required to earn at least 45 credit hours at TAMUK, with at least 36 hours of coursework taken in the COE. Exceptions should be approved by the department chair and dean.

## GRADUATION

The academic calendar (<https://www.tamuk.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>) lists several deadlines relevant to graduation. These dates include the deadline to apply for graduation with the academic dean; deadline for students officially changing name with the university; and the anticipated date(s) for commencement. The official time for the commencement ceremony will be announced by the Provost's office after all graduation packets have been submitted.

### **Graduation Requirements**

To graduate, COE students must receive passing grades for all courses listed in the degree plan. A "D" is a passing grade. If a student retakes a class and fails it, then the student no longer has a passing grade for the class and must take it again. Any instance where courses do not exactly match the degree plan should be documented with a substitution form, see [https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/docs\\_CoE/deansoffice/forms/substitution-permit-form-2016.pdf](https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/docs_CoE/deansoffice/forms/substitution-permit-form-2016.pdf).

Students entering TAMUK in Fall 2014 or later must also meet the following GPA requirements: **2.0 cumulative GPA; 2.25 mathematics / science GPA; and 2.25 GPA in all engineering / major coursework.** For students entering TAMUK before Fall 2014, these GPAs are 2.0 across the board, except for the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering where the higher GPAs were implemented in Fall 2012. Another exception is Industrial Management and Technology students, who must maintain a 2.5 GPA in all major coursework and a 2.25 GPA in all business coursework. As mentioned earlier, students using Fall 2012 or later catalogs must also get a "C" or higher in one Writing Intensive course.

GPAs for graduation purposes are calculated using the student's degree plan spreadsheet. Courses not on the degree plan will not be factored into the GPA calculation. For example, students who took multiple mathematics courses before Calculus I will not include these courses in the mathematics/science GPA calculation.

### **Graduation Packets**

The JESSC Director emails students when the online graduation application is open and when graduation packets are ready to be picked up from the JESSC. It is important for students to apply for graduation first before coming to the JESSC to pick up a graduation packet. The first page of the graduation packet is a letter to the prospective graduate outlining the graduation packet process and relevant deadlines. **Students should keep this letter.**

The next page in the graduation packet is an internal form called the Degree Advisory Check. To complete this form, it is important that the faculty advisor also complete the degree plan spreadsheet (or DAP or FileMaker form). The next section will discuss degree plans in more detail for those who need a refresher; see also **Electronic Resources** and page 7.

The title block of the Degree Advisory Check is critical and should be filled in completely. Students must specify the catalog year under which they want to be evaluated. If this catalog year

is different than the catalog under which the student was admitted, a Change of Curriculum form must be completed. Other important components of this form include the GPAs calculated with the degree plan spreadsheet and the classes in which the student should register in the remaining semester(s).

Next, you will encounter the Advisor's Check List. This check list is a recent addition to the graduation packet to encourage faculty advisors to do a more complete job when advising graduating seniors. Reviewing the check list will give a full and complete view of the expectations for faculty advisors.

The final component of the graduation packet of interest to an advisor is the Minor Check Out Form. See **Forms and Policies**. This form is placed in the packet for the sake of convenience.

In addition to completing the graduation packet, students should leave your office with the following (as appropriate):

- A signed hardcopy of the degree plan (required).
- Any substitution forms needed to reconcile the transcript and the degree plan.
- Change of major forms to indicate if student wants to use a different catalog year than the year they were admitted or to specify a minor.

Substitution forms and change of major forms should be routed through the chair and dean as normal. The graduation packet should be turned into the JESSC after it is signed by the chair—it is not returned to the dean's office for signature until after the JESSC Director has reviewed it. It is good practice to email an updated copy of the student degree plan to the JESSC Director or place it in the student's electronic folder. Students may want a degree plan and a copy of the Degree Advisory Check sheet for their own records.

**Be sure your advisee understands the remaining requirements for graduation.** Misunderstandings about deadlines for posting transfer credit, grades needed to improve GPAs for graduation, and missing general education courses often lead to angry students and parents, many of whom will not hesitate to contact the Provost or President with complaints.



Degree Plans

Degree plans will vary by department; check with your chair for an updated copy of the degree plan(s) appropriate to your program. Figure 7 and the following discussion use the Fall 2014 civil engineering degree for illustrative purposes.

Name Last				First	MI	<b>Civil Engineering</b> <b>Transfer Courses</b> (Indicated under TR)
Graduation Date				K#		
Preparation Date						
<b>HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCE</b>						
	Hrs	Grade	GP	TR		
HIST 1301	3		####			
HIST 1302	3		####			
POLS 2301	3		####			
POLS 2302	3		####			
Social/ Behavioral elective						
#3	3		####			
Creative Arts elective						
	3		####			
Language/Philosophy/Culture Elective						
	3		####			
<b>OTHER COURSES (8)</b>						
	Hrs	Grade	GP	TR		
ENGL 1301	3		####			
ENGL 1302	3		####			
UNIV 1101	1		####			
UNIV 1102	1		####			
<b>Communication Competency (3)</b>						
	Hrs	Grade	GP	TR		
	3		####			
<b>Hum./S. Sciences/B.Com (32)</b>						
SEM	Hrs	Pnts	GP			
	32	0	####			
Number of hours required for completion of degree plan					129	
Number of hours completed						
<b>Mathematics / Science (32 hours)</b>						
	Hrs	Grade	GP	TR		
MATH 2413	4		####	#1		
MATH 2414	4		####			
MATH 3320	3		####			
STAT4303	3		####			
<b>Math/Science Electives (6-8)</b>						
#3	3		####			
	3		####			
<b>Engineering ( 65 Hours)</b>						
	Hrs	Grade	GP	TR		
CEEN 2113	1	#2	####			
CEEN 2212	2		####			
CEEN 2301	3		####			
CEEN 3143	1		####			
CEEN 3144	1		####			
CEEN 3145	1		####			
CEEN 3167	1		####			
CEEN 3303	3		####			
CEEN 3304	3		####			
CEEN 3311	3		####			
CEEN 3317	3		####			
CEEN 3342	3		####			
CEEN 3365	3		####			
CEEN 3392	3		####			
CEEN 4279	2		####			
CEEN 4289	2		####			
CEEN 4316	3		####			
CEEN 4359	3		####			
CEEN 4362	3		####			
Engr Elective	3		####	#3		
Engr Elective	3		####			
Engr Elective	3		####			
<b>OTHER ENGINEERING (12)</b>						
	Hrs	Grade	GP	TR		
AEEN 1310	3		0			
MEEN 2302	3					
Special Elective						
EEEN 3331	3		0			
Computer Elective						
MEEN 2000	3		0	#4		
<b>OVERALL (All degree work)</b>						
SEM	Hrs	Pnts	GPA			
		#5	####			
<b>Mathematics / Science (32 hours)</b>						
SEM	Hrs	Pnts	GPA			
	32	0	0.000	#5		
<b>Engineering ( 65 Hours)</b>						
SEM	Hrs	Pnts	GPA			
	21	#5	####			
Advisor Approval					Date	

Figure 7. Sample Degree Plan (Fall 2014, Civil Engineering).

Figure 7 contains notes 1-5 in red text. These notes are to show points of interest on the degree plan as follows:

- #1.** Courses accepted for transfer credit. The transfer institution(s) should be indicated at the top of the page. An a, b, c, or d designation should be placed in the TR column whenever a degree plan requirement was fulfilled at the corresponding institution.
- #2.** Grades. Enter letter grades in these fields based on a check of the students' transcript. Most department spreadsheets will automatically calculate the Grade Points (GP) column based on the letter grade entered. You will need to override this in cases where test credit is awarded.
- #3.** Electives. The #3 appears in several spots where the specific elective course taken by the student can be entered.
- #4.** Transfer courses that don't match the degree plan. In this example, a student has received credit from another institution for a programming class that qualifies as the required Computer Elective. The course appears on the student's transcript as MEEN 2000. Rather than substitute this course for a specific TAMUK equivalent, the MEEN 2000 is substituted simply for "Computer Elective." Typing the matching course name into the degree plan as it appears on the transcript can be helpful in these situations.
- #5.** GPA calculations. Check the formulas in these boxes. Do not assume they automatically perform correct calculations. In particular, check that the Hours (Hrs) blocks are correctly counting only courses that the student has passed and that apply to the degree.

### **Graduating with Honors**

Information about requirements for joining the Honors College may be found at [www.tamuk.edu/honors](http://www.tamuk.edu/honors). To graduate with the Honors distinction, students must take between 15 and 24 hours of honors credits, which is dependent on how many hours they have earned when they apply for admission to the Honors College. Students must also maintain a 3.25 GPA and complete an honors project.

Students graduating with GPAs 3.40 and above will receive medals at graduation regardless of whether or not they are members of the Honors College. The GPA will determine whether they qualify to be cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude graduates. This distinction will be placed on their transcript.

### **Distinguished Graduates**

A Distinguished Graduates program was initiated in Fall 2014 to recognize COE graduating seniors who meet the following requirements:

- Attain a minimum 3.0 GPA in all engineering, computer science and industrial management and technology courses.

- Attain a minimum 3.0 GPA in all mathematics and science courses.
- Pass the Fundamentals of Engineering Examination, or an equivalent recognition endorsed by the student's department.
- Complete an internship or research project occurring over at least one semester and with a culminating experience such as an oral presentation to faculty and students.

Qualifying students currently complete an application form which is submitted to the Javelina Engineering Student Success Center. This designation is acknowledged with a certificate.

### **Distinguished Undergraduate Student Award**

The Student Government Association presents a Distinguished Undergraduate Student Award for each academic college at commencement. Applications for this award will be available online through the Student Government Association. and are distributed via email by SGA and College of Engineering. Application requirements are as follows:

- 60 institutional credit hours.
- Minimum 3.40 institutional GPA.
- Submit a list of extracurricular activities, honors, and achievements with the application.
- Submit a typed personal statement (maximum length: 500 words).
- Submit one (1) recommendation letter from department and one (1) other recommendation letter from an employee of Texas A&M University-Kingsville.
- Submit an updated, official transcript (to verify GPA and credit hours).

## OTHER SERVICES AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Faculty members provide students with an important link to university services, and we will all face situations where students need more from us than academic or career guidance. Here are some important resources we can use to help students meet these needs.

### **Financial Aid Basics**

First, it is important to remember that the Financial Aid Office operates independently of the academic side of the University. They have unique policies, up to and including a policy for Satisfactory Academic Progress. Information about student eligibility for financial aid, including details of the Satisfactory Academic Progress and Maximum Timeframe policies, may be found at: <https://www.tamuk.edu/enrollment-management/finaid/policies-and-procedures/satisfactory-academic-progress.html>

Students not making Satisfactory Academic Progress will be ineligible for Financial Aid. An appeal may be filed. The student completes the appeal form alone but may have some questions for the advisor to improve accuracy or provide documentation of progress to degree. To maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, undergraduates must keep a **2.0 cumulative GPA** and **successfully complete 2/3 of the hours attempted each semester**.

In addition, students will have to repay financial aid for any course dropped after the 12<sup>th</sup> class day and before 60% of the semester is completed. For this reason, it is important that faculty enter the date of last attendance when students fail a class. If the student “abandoned” the class before the 60% mark (not attending lectures or completing coursework), then the student will need to repay financial aid for the course.

Students must also complete their degree within the Maximum Timeframe to receive financial aid. The Maximum Timeframe is 150% of credit hours required for degree (that’s 180 hours for a 120 hour degree). Transitional or developmental work does not count against a student, but any course taken at a public institution in the state of Texas does. Appeals for students exceeding the Maximum Timeframe do require assistance from an academic advisor to complete.

### **Excess Credit Hours**

The Registrar’s website provides a good summary of the university’s excess credit hours rules, see [https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/RGAD\\_ACADEMICPROCEDURES/Excessive-Hours.html](https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/RGAD_ACADEMICPROCEDURES/Excessive-Hours.html)

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) tracks the number of hours students earn at public institutions in the state of Texas. The Registrar receives updates about students who have attempted more than 30 hours beyond the hours required for a B.S. degree. These students are charged an extra \$100 per credit hour to continue with their education. Exemptions include dual-credit, AP credit, CLEP credit, and transitional coursework. If a student wishes to challenge the number of hours attempted, they must authorize the university to discuss the issue with THECB, see [https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/files R/FERPA-Release-Form-Excess-Hours.pdf](https://www.tamuk.edu/registrar/files/R/FERPA-Release-Form-Excess-Hours.pdf)

Minors, associates degrees, and transcribed certificates do not help students reset the clock in terms of excess credit hours. A student completing a second degree will receive additional hours to do so but must contact the Registrar for how to complete an appeal.

### **Tutoring**

Tutoring is available in the JESSC during the week as well as in Lucio in the evening. Students should be referred to the JESSC for current tutoring hours, as the number of tutors and the hours change on a semester basis. In addition, there is tutoring offered on the second floor of the Jernigan Library, room 220, through the Pathways Academic Assistance Center (PAAC).

Both graduate and undergraduate students seeking assistance with writing projects may make an appointment with the University Writing Center, <http://www.tamuk.edu/writingcenter/>. Peer writing consultants will review paper drafts for grammar as well as discuss issues of formatting, content, and clarity.

### **Student Health and Wellness**

Contact information: <http://www.tamuk.edu/shw> or extension 3991. Student Health and Wellness offers a wide variety of services to students, including drug abuse and mental health screening, free medical appointments and counseling services, and stress reduction techniques. This office also oversees the Disability Resources Center, where students struggling with a physical, learning, or other disability may apply to receive services.

Extension 3991 may be used to contact mental health counselors during the week. On weekends or after hours, students experiencing mental health crises may call Coastal Plains MHMR Crisis Hotline at 1-800-841-6467. Other resources include the Coastal Plains Community Center (361-592-6481) and the Crisis Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-841-6467).

### **Contact Information for Other Campus Offices**

- Dean of Students, ext 3606, MSUB room 306
- Career Services, ext. 2217
- Financial Aid, ext. 3911
- Registrar, ext. 2811