



FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
CAREER SERVICES & ADVISING CENTER



**Transfer Student
Advising Guide
FOR FACULTY**

New Transfer Student Meeting Checklist

- Check that Student has paid Admissions Deposit and is active in the system**

Check DegreeWorks under “Status” if it says “Applicant” in red (see below), they have not paid their deposit/deposit has not been processed. They will not be able to log in to College Scheduler and register. Status should say “Undergraduate Day”

Transfer Credit Earned	47
Alternate PIN	
Overall GPA	0.00
Campus	No Campus
Status	Applicant

- Check for transfer credits in DegreeWorks**

For issues with transfer credits call Grace Soutanian in the Registrar’s Office, at extension 3359

- Check if the student needs a Math or Writing Placement test**

Test scores can be seen in SSC Navigate on the students home page under Categories



Students sign up for Writing and Math placement testing through their admissions portal. More information on placement testing is [here](#).

- Ask the student if they are currently taking classes or waiting on any final transcripts**
- Review DegreeWorks**
- Help the student set up and navigate their Multi Factor Authentication**
- Show the student College Scheduler and how to look up classes**
- Add FYE for students that need it**
- Troubleshoot any error messages**
Closed sections, prerequisite/test score errors, field of study restrictions, etc.
- Tell students when the first day of classes is and if they need to connect to any other departments**
- Notify department administrative assistant that student has been advised in order to assign an academic advisor**

Note: Once they register their student email account is inactive for 24 hours, but then this becomes the default point of contact for the university (bill, financial aid award letter, orientations, etc).

Transfer Student Advising Guide for Faculty



Transfer students are an important sector of our undergraduate student population. While they register during the winter and summer breaks without fanfare, they are an integral part of the fabric of our campus community. Supporting transfer student success is essential from an equity standpoint and they deserve access to the full Fitchburg State experience and resources just like our students that start as first-years. Transfer students bring a rich diversity of experiences and backgrounds to our campus; they deserve to feel welcomed and that they belong. We must adjust our services and processes to the needs of transfer students and not try to make transfer students fit into the conventions designed for students that start at Fitchburg State University as first-year students right out of high school. Additionally, supporting transfer student success is crucial in light of evolving demographics and enrollments in higher education and the need to recruit and retain transfer students is essential to the overall health of enrollment at the institution.

We know that a strong connection to their academic department contributes to transfer student success. Creating this connection early in the student's transfer process helps the student to feel like they belong at the institution and allows students to get answers to their academic questions that only their department can answer before they start classes. However, you are not alone in supporting our transfer students. You can always reach out to the Career Services and Advising Center with any questions or concerns you may have 978-665-4925 and lcarken7@fitchburgstate.edu.

What is a transfer student?

A transfer student is any student that has attempted college level coursework after they have graduated from high school. At Fitchburg State University, this could be one semester or an entire degree. Fitchburg State University accepts up to 90 credits from a 4 year institution and up to 75 credits from a 2 year institution.

Transfer Students Facts

About 300 enrolled each year (200 Fall / 100 Spring)

DAY STUDENTS

- 85% are Full Time, 15% Part Time
- Average age of 24
- 89% Commuter
- Most Popular Majors: Business Administration, Communications Media, Criminal Justice, and Psychological Sciences
- Transfer Credits: 9% come in with 12 credits or fewer, 24% with 13-30 credits, 41% with 31-60 credits, and 26% have 61-90 credits
- About 30% are Mass Transfer Students

► STRENGTHS

- **Experience:** Typically these students are more mature and have some experience with institutions of higher education
- **Persistence:** Transfer students have already had to navigate an often complex admissions and transfer application process involving multiple institutions and offices to have gotten this far
- **Goal oriented:** Transfers students have put thought and effort into their academic and career plan as they are taking purposeful steps toward continuing their education

► CHALLENGES

- **Transfer Shock:** A temporary dip in academic performance in their first semester post-transfer often due to differences in structures, support, curriculum, and environment between institutions.
- **Assumption of Institutional Knowledge:** Often faculty and staff only look to a student class year and not their transfer status and make assumptions about a student's familiarity with institutional policies and processes (how to add/drop a class, office locations, deadlines and timelines), on a student's part they often don't know what they don't know and feel like they should be able to figure it out on their own.
- **Social Isolation:** Transfer students tend to be less involved socially than their non-transfer peers and may experience social isolation, given their later entry into the four-year social scene that is not structured for transfer students' needs, schedules, and responsibilities. Despite transfer students' high academic engagement and accomplishments, an absence of social relationships can result in disconnectedness and a lack of sense of belonging.
- **Shortened trajectory toward graduation:** Depending on the number of credits a student may transfer in, conversations around career preparedness, internships, and graduate school may need to happen more quickly with a transfer student, just as they are getting settled they are preparing to graduate and take next steps.

Advising Meeting

► HOW TO PREPARE FOR A MEETING

1. When a student calls/emails, make it clear if you will be meeting in-person, virtually, or by phone. If in-person let them know they can park in admissions the day they come to campus and to check in with admissions to get a day parking pass. Remember that often transfer students have never been to campus before or only for an initial tour. Below is an email template you can use. Also, they may or may not have access to their Fitchburg State University email yet, make sure you check which email you are sending information to including a google meet link.

Confirmation email Template:

Hi _____ ,
Congratulations and welcome to Fitchburg State! I have you scheduled for an **in-person/virtual** meeting on **date/time** for transfer advising and registration. Here is a [map](#) of the parking on campus. You can park in the section labeled 14 on the map. Check in with Admissions in the campus Welcome Center first; they will give you a parking pass for the day. They can also direct you to my office in **location**. I am on **the third floor, room 318 to the right of the stairs and elevator**. OR below is the google meet link for your meeting (add link below, and add them to the google meeting invite). Make sure to login to your FSU Login portal prior to your advising meeting so you can easily get you into the system to register for classes. If you receive a notice that your Fitchburg State Login has been deactivated or locked, or are otherwise having technical issues, please call or submit a Help Desk Ticket. Please let me know if you have any questions or need to re-schedule.
Thank you

2. Ensure that the student has paid their deposit to admissions. On their DegreeWorks under “Status” if it says “Applicant” in red (see below), they have not paid their deposit/deposit has not been processed. They will not be able to register before this happens. Status should say “Undergraduate Day”

Transfer Credit Earned	47
Alternate PIN	
Overall GPA	0.00
Campus	No Campus
Status	Applicant

3. Check in DegreeWorks to see if transfer credits have been applied. If credits are not yet in the system, call Grace Saultanian 978-665-3359 in the Registrar’s office to ask whether their transcript has been received.
4. Check if the student needs a Math or Writing Placement test. They should have received notification from Admissions if they need to take a placement test via email. If they have the equivalent of Writing I they do not need the writing placement test. If they have a college level math class, they can take non-algebra based math classes (ex. Math 1700). If they need algebra based math, they will need to take the AAF placement test in order to register for Math 1300, even if they have another college level math class transferring in, or they can seek an override from the math department/instructor. You can see if a student has already taken the placement tests in SSC Navigate under “Categories” on a students dashboard (below) and in Banner under SOATEST.

Categories
Accuplacer - Essay 4+, Day Students, In-State Residency, Non-Hispanic, QAS < 268

Tags Manage Tags ▼

Enrollment Status Enrollment Goal

If the student needs English or Math placement testing, let them know they can sign up through their admissions portal. If math placement is critical for major requirements, you may need to reschedule the appointment as the student can't register for classes without testing. More information on placement testing is [here](#).

► PITFALLS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- If you are meeting with a student before or near the end of a semester there is a chance the student's final transcript has not yet arrived, be sure to ask if a student is currently taking classes and if they have had their final transcript sent from the institution that they are transferring from. It's a good idea to ask a student if there are any classes that appear to be missing in their degree evaluation that they thought would transfer in. Note that generally speaking classes with a grade lower than a C will not transfer.
- As the summer/winter break goes on, classes fill up, placement testing dates fill/may not line up with when the student wants to register by, backlogs of transfer transcripts occur in the Registrar, other faculty check their email for red cards less frequently, everything takes more time. The earlier you can meet with a student the easier this process is. Often a student needs follow up after a meeting and the closer to the start of the semester the more time crunched this process gets.

► DURING YOUR MEETING

- Introduce yourself, ask about the student, their major, where they're transferring from, answer initial questions about campus and their program, etc.
- On DegreeWorks, review transfer credits and how they've met Gen Ed and major requirements. Explain the different sections in DegreeWorks. Ask what classes the student is currently taking (if the meeting takes place during or just after fall or spring semester) and use transfer equivalencies to see how these will transfer in.
NOTE: If you're on the phone, students should have received a copy of DegreeWorks from Grace/the Registrar. They can look for it in their email so they can see it while you talk. If they do not have it, you can download their degree audit as a PDF from degreeworks and email to them. They will not have access to their degree evaluation until after they set up their Multi-Factor Authentication.
- Refer to the 4-year Plan for the student's major, discuss potential courses for fall semester and how they will meet major requirements and General Education requirements. Ask the student about schedule constraints and how many classes they want to take (explain degree completion timelines based on 5 vs. 4 classes per semester).
- Help the student to set up their Fitchburg State Login Portal (link to fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/campus-services/technology/login-portal) If they receive a notice that their Fitchburg State Login has been deactivated or locked, or are otherwise having technical issues, please call or submit a Help Desk Ticket
- Show students college scheduler, and how to look up classes you've identified and have the student select from available times and register during your meeting. Transfer student do not have an alternate pin their first semester.

- **Make sure to add FYE for those students that need it.**
- Explain different class modalities if applicable.
- Troubleshoot any error messages (closed sections, prerequisite/test score errors, field of study restrictions, etc.)
- Let the student know once they register their student email, the account is inactive for 24 hours, but then this becomes the default point of contact for the university (bill, financial aid award letter, orientations, etc).
- Tell students when the first day of classes is and ask the student what other questions they have, answer or refer to appropriate resources.
- Follow up with any unresolved issues (red cards, testing, etc.)

► FREQUENT STUDENT QUESTIONS

- Financial aid and student bill will be sent to Fitchburg State University email address (Fall bills will be uploaded in July and are due August. Spring bills will be uploaded November and are due in December. If a student registers after the bill due date, it is generally available within about 5 business days of registering). Students need to act on these ASAP. The bill due date is in August. After the deadline, students need to set up their payment plan, or they will receive a hold on their account.
- How to set up Fitchburg State University email: they should have received this information to the email account on their application. You can look up their student email in SSC Navigate if needed, their default Falcon Key is FSU-XXXXXXXX (last 8 digits of their student ID number). If they continue to have issues, refer to IT Helpdesk
- Veteran/active military students may have questions about their benefits, including a waived deposit, refer to Jennifer Jiminz in the Registrar's Office, the Veterans Affairs Liaison
- Questions about Orientation can be directed to Michael Kennedy in Student Affairs
- Questions about Housing/Move-In: fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/housing-dining
- Where to look up book list: bkstr.com/fitchburgstatestore/home
- How to log into blackboard: fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/campus-services/technology/blackboard-student-help

Helpful Information for New Transfer Students



► TYPICAL TIMELINE FOR NEW TRANSFER STUDENTS

Each semester transfer students are admitted on a rolling basis. They are able to start registering for classes the first business day after the registration period for continuing students. For fall start, there tends to be peaks in late May-June and then again in August. For students starting in Spring, peak advising is after the new year. Transfer students can continue to register/be accepted through the add/drop period, the last date to accept new students and for new students to register is made by enrollment management, Rich Toomey.

► GENERAL EDUCATION FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

Fitchburg State University values the education that students completed prior to enrolling with us. As a result, the number of General Education courses that students will need to complete at Fitchburg State will be determined by the number of transfer credits accepted. The university has a tiered approach to General Education requirements for transfer students:

- **1-29 credits:** Students must meet all General Education requirements.
- **30-59 credits:** Students must complete all Foundation courses not transferred in. Students must complete 18 credits of Exploration coursework and 9 credits of Integrating and Applying requirements.
- **60 or more credits:** Students must complete all Foundation courses other than First Year Experience as well as 9 credits of Exploration coursework and a 3 credit Integrative High Impact Practice.
- **Associate's degree or 90 credits:** If students transfer in at least 34 credits of general education-quality courses (general courses that satisfy the breadth of the General Education), their General Education requirements are considered fulfilled.
- **Bachelor's degree:** General Education requirements are considered fulfilled.

► MASS TRANSFER PROGRAM

We have over 200 MassTransfer linked programs. Graduating from an approved MassTransfer program at a Massachusetts state community college entitles students to:

- Guaranteed admission to Fitchburg State linked programs
- Guaranteed transfer of 60-75 credits, including some D (1.0) grades
- Waiver of general education courses
- Day students who graduate from a linked MassTransfer program with a 3.0 GPA or higher may also qualify for the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver

Questions about Mass Transfer: Reach out to Heather Thomas hbthomas@fitchburgstate.edu or 978-665-3884



Advising Your Transfer Student Advisees

Even if you are not assisting new transfer students with their first Fitchburg State University registration, you will likely have transfer students on your advisee caseload. Below are some considerations to include in your typical advising during the semester.

- Check your advisee caseload for any new advisees that may be transfer students (keep in mind that new transfer students can register through the add/drop period).
- Flag any students that are first semester transfers and make a point of reaching out to introduce yourself as a resource on campus. Remember that up until this point, these students likely have very few touchpoints on campus and may not have attended an orientation. When possible, build connections across campus with peers and offices on campus.
- Make a point of connecting with transfer students by asking them about their story and their experiences at other institutions (may be positive or negative). Validate the academic accomplishments they have already achieved.
- Prior to the advising period make a point of explaining the advising process including timeline, registration times, how to look up any holds, what a “red card” is and the process, what an alternate pin is, much like you would with a first-year student. Normalize help-seeking behaviors and acknowledge that adjusting to a new institution’s systems can be complex and confusing.
- Make a point of discussing career goals and steps they can take to prepare for this including internship opportunities within the major or non-credited.
 - Use your major’s Action Plan if completed
 - Refer to Career Services and Advising for additional resources
- Ask questions yourself! Reach out to Career Services and Advising, Admissions, and the Registrar to learn more about the nuances of the transfer process. Make note of any sticking points for transfer students that you notice and bring it up to your department chair or the Transfer Student Taskforce (reach out to Becky Copper Glenz for more info)

► CONTINUED READING/RESOURCES

- National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students: [Supporting Transfer Student Success— Five Key Faculty Practices](#)
- NACADA: [Advising Transfer Students](#)





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