



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
*School of Undergraduate Studies*

## **Using Your Degree Planning Worksheet**

Your degree planning worksheet is designed to help you plan and track your progress toward your degree. It includes the requirements for the degree and recommends specific courses as well as the best order in which to take them.

This worksheet design was developed to give you more explicit guidance in the form of course recommendations and sequences. If you work through the courses in this order, you can be confident of fulfilling graduation requirements and will lay an academic foundation before signing up for more advanced courses. With a few adjustments, they work for transfer students as well.

Here are some questions and answers to help you use the worksheet for your educational pathway at UMUC.

### **How are the courses in my degree plan presented in this worksheet?**

The listed course sequence supports your academic success by preparing you for each course before you take it. The "first courses" (and the preceding placement exams for English and math) help build skills needed in all college-level courses. The "introductory" and "foundation" courses provide the initial study and broad academic context to prepare you for more complex material later on. Then you move into the heart of your degree – the remaining courses for your academic major (and perhaps minor), as well as electives to complete degree requirements and round out your personal interests. The courses that count for your major can be identified by the diamond ♦ next to the course number.

### **Do I have to take those specific courses?**

Sometimes the specific course is required. In that case, the notes after the course number will say so: for example, "Required for major."

Sometimes the course fulfills a requirement but there are other options. In that case, the notes will say "Or other" choice: for example, "Or other behavioral/social science GER course."

### **Why are specific courses recommended if I can choose others?**

The recommended courses are widely available, are appropriate in focus and subject matter for that place in the degree plan, are appropriate for the variety of students who may take the course, and are among the best academic courses you could select at this

place in your degree plan. They simplify your choice, so you can identify and schedule your next course more easily.

### **If the plan says, "Or other," how do I find my other options?**

If the option is a GER course, refer to the list of General Education Requirements in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. If there is a short list of options, it will normally be included in the course note.

### **Do I have to take the courses in that order?**

The LIBS 150 and the first English and math courses must be taken in your first 18 semester hours with UMUC. (Depending on placement test results, however, you may need to take preparatory English or math courses first. So, for example, you may need EDCP 103 before WRTG 101, or MATH 009 or 012 before the math course listed.)

Some courses have one or more prerequisites. Prerequisite courses are listed before the later courses. For example, the prerequisite for PSYC 436 (Clinical Psychology) is PSYC 100 (Introduction to Psychology). This means that you need to take PSYC 100 first, and the worksheet will present the courses in the appropriate order.

Otherwise, the sequence is recommended rather than required. Just remember that there is a logic to the sequence. If you change the course selected or the sequence of courses, it could affect other elements of the degree plan. For example, if the recommended course satisfies two requirements (as ECON 201 does for the Business Administration degree), substitution could force you to take two courses instead of one. Or if you choose a lower-level course where an upper-level one is recommended, you may have to take additional upper-level credit elsewhere to meet the minimum. Your advisor can help you make sure you are meeting all requirements.

You can also mix elective courses into this sequence, even though they are listed at the end of the degree plan. But make sure that you are progressing on the degree requirements as suggested, so you will not end up having to take extra courses at the end of your studies.

UMUC strongly recommends against taking upper-level courses before you have finished most of your lower-level courses, or taking many courses in your major before you have laid the foundation with General Education courses.

### **I haven't chosen a major. How can I start progressing toward my degree?**

Many of the General Education courses are the same regardless of your degree, including the "first courses" of LIBS 150 and WRTG 101, so you can get started while thinking about your choice of major. You may want to compare a few degree plans, both to make that choice and to see which courses are most common across the majors. An advisor can help you find safe courses that are applicable to any degree, as well as think about your choice of major.

## **I am transferring from another university. Can I use that coursework in this degree plan?**

Yes. Subject to the limits on maximum credit, source of credit, and application to the degree requirements, you can use transfer credit in your UMUC degree. Nontraditional credit (such as military credit or credit by exam) can also be used as applicable.

## **How do I know how my transfer credit fits in the plan?**

You need to secure an official evaluation of transfer credit or (for military students) SOC Student Agreement, based on a review of transcripts from previous study. The *Catalog* or your advisor can tell you how to request this evaluation. If a course is evaluated as the full equivalent of a UMUC course, you can use it exactly as you would use that course in the degree plan. For example, if your writing course is been evaluated as the equivalent of WRTG 291, you can check off that course on your plan and go on to the next. If a course is accepted in transfer but **not** equivalent to one at UMUC, you can still use it in the electives or wherever a "generic" equivalent exists; for example, a business course may qualify as a "supplemental major course" in a business plan.

## **What if I am waiting for my evaluation of transfer credit? How do I know what courses to take?**

Start at the beginning of the worksheet, with the "first" and "introductory" courses, and select the first course you have not taken before. (Except for placement testing, first and introductory courses generally do not have prerequisites.) Work your way through the courses in sequence.

For example, if you have taken no library research or "freshman" English courses, take EDCP 100, LIBS 150 and/or WRTG 101 (based on the placement exam) first. If you do have freshman English but aren't sure of the equivalency, take other "first courses" or "introductory courses" until you receive your evaluation. Select courses in disciplines that you know you have not yet studied. An advisor can help you find safe courses.

## **I'm transferring as an upper-level student. How can I get started?**

You proceed like any other transfer student, but will likely start further along on the degree plan. If you have an associate degree, for example, you probably have covered most of the General Education requirements and may find yourself beginning with "foundation courses" or even additional major courses. Just be careful not to select a course for which you may have an exact duplicate, or a course with a prerequisite. If you know there will be a lot of overlap (for example, you are bringing over 60 credits in transfer and have already taken many courses in your major at UMUC), you may want to start on your minor or some of your electives until you secure your evaluation.

In addition, you probably have acquired so many lower-level courses that you may need to concentrate on upper-level choices, especially in the major and minor. An advisor can help you find safe courses.

*Consult an advisor if you have other questions. We welcome your comments on how we can make these degree planning materials more useful.*