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# Choosing Your First Year Courses

## Understanding course registration

Choosing your courses as a first year student can be overwhelming. Suddenly you have all this control, and with so many factors to keep in mind, it can be stressful. Keep these **tips and tricks** in mind to **make this moment stress-free and exciting!**



## How to prepare for course registration

This stage of the process is where the bulk of your time will be spent, but if you follow these tips and tricks, it will be **straightforward and painless.**

### 1. Review your degree requirements

Did you know that **your degree also has requirements**? Some courses are mandatory, and may require prerequisites. This means that you'll need to take a specific course before you can complete the other. For example, you'll have to take Psychology 101 before you can take Psychology 102.

Your degree might also require that you **complete courses from other areas of study.** Your school may provide a predetermined list of courses you can choose from, or you can choose any course in that subject. So even if you're in engineering, you may have to take a course in Arts, Social Sciences, or another area of study.

### 2. Find your course registration date

You'll be **assigned a certain date and time** for when you can register for your courses. **Courses fill up quickly,** and if you wait too long, they may be full by the time you try to register. Your date is usually **determined by your academic year.** Incoming first years register for courses earlier than the rest of the students, and unfortunately, you can't register for your courses before your date.

If you miss your registration date, don't panic! Schools will give you at least a couple weeks to register for your required courses. But, after this time, your required courses will **open up to students not in that program.** If your

required courses are full by the time you go to register, **contact the professor or academic advisor**. They can override the system and enrol you in the courses you need.

### 3. Try to find your ideal timetable

While you may not always have a choice on *when* you can take some courses, there will be courses you can choose. **Knowing when you operate best will be the key in your success**. Remember — having Friday afternoons off sounds great, but that doesn't mean you should register for an 8:30am class to achieve that when you're not a morning person.

To help you find your ideal timetable, most schools will offer a **schedule building tool** where you can insert your potential courses and mix and match different course times.

### 4. Reach out to other students

One of the best ways to find out more about a course is to **talk to upper-year students**. What did they like about the course? Were the assignments difficult? Was the professor approachable? While this advice could be useful, take it with a grain of salt. Don't let peer pressure or other peoples' comments deter you from a course you're really interested in.

### 5. Choosing elective courses

Once you've identified all of the courses you're required to take, that leaves room for your electives! An elective is **a course that is not part of your degree requirements**. Now you can **check out your other interests!** But there are a few things to keep in mind when selecting your electives:

- a) Since an elective is not part of your degree requirements, you **may have to wait for a later date to enrol in the course** so that people who are in that program have the chance to register first.
- b) Some courses **may not be open for students to take as electives** as they are only available for students in that specific program.
- c) Check out your degree requirements, because you **may have to choose electives from a predetermined list**.
- d) You may **choose to take a minor** during your degree, and elective spaces are the best way to fulfil the minor requirements.

### 6. Consider a minor degree

You can enhance your degree by choosing a minor. A minor is a **secondary subject that you'd like to study, which requires fewer courses** than a full major. Minors will have their own specific degree requirements, so it's best to think about this early on. Usually, you can decide after your first year, too.

## Course registration: game time

So, the day to choose your courses has come. Here's **what to keep in mind** so it can go smoothly:

### 1. Expect hiccups

You might run into a few hiccups while registering, but the work you did in advance will make the process easier. Choosing your courses right away gives yourself time to account for **possible internet or system issues**. A lot of people will be choosing their courses at the same time, so prepare for possible loading errors.

### 2. Register for both terms (if you're able)

If you're able, you should **register for your fall and winter term courses at the same time** to guarantee your spots. By registering for both terms in the summer, you don't have to worry about spending your winter break stressing over course registration that you could have done sooner.



## After course registration: next steps

Phew — course registration is done! Now you can start **preparing for classes**:

### 1. You can make changes

If you don't like your schedule or courses, you can **change them**. Each school will have a deadline for when course registration closes, but usually this date is a few days after classes have begun.

### 2. Getting the material you need for these courses

Once you've registered for courses (and you've received your course syllabus), you can **begin buying the materials you'll need!** Check out your school's bookstore for the textbooks and materials you need. If you're eager, you can buy those books before classes begin, or you can choose to wait until you know for sure which courses you'll stay in. Keep in mind that bookstore lines will be crazy at the start of each term!

## Good luck with choosing your courses

Post-secondary school is when you get the freedom to cater your education to your interests. You have control over your schedules and courses, so **take this time to find what works best for you!**

Good luck!

