



Academic Advisors' Frequently Asked Questions

Which view/tab should I look at first with students and why?

We encourage users to review the Requirements first because it organizes all the program requirements by category and includes the student's status in fulfilling each of them. (Similarly to a CAPP Degree Evaluation, it provides an overview of the student's progress.) Subsequently, we recommend using the Courses view to examine the suggested timeline for completing any outstanding requirements.

Why isn't the student's first semester/year showing in the Courses view?

The semesters/years that appear in the Courses view depend on when the plan was first built, which can be confirmed via Plan History (located in the More menu). If a plan is built after a student's first semester has already begun or been completed, the Courses view will begin with the next/upcoming term by default because it is future-oriented. However, all information from the previous semesters will be captured in the Requirements view.

Why does the Program Progress field indicate that the student needs more credits than what is noted in the Catalog?

When a plan is first built, the total number of required credits may be larger than what is noted in the Catalog because the system is accounting for potential student choices, program nuances, and opportunities that are not yet specified. Additionally, it is assessing the completion of degree requirements—not just the completion of credits. The total number of required credits should decrease and align with the Catalog as the student refines their plan and moves forward in their academic career.

My advisee declared/changed their major/minor/Constellation; why didn't Degree Planner update accordingly?

As a planning tool (as opposed to an auditing tool), Degree Planner is designed to allow users to make plans that align with or deviate from their actual program(s) of study. Such flexibility is important to support a student's decision-making process. Consequently, when a student officially changes any elements of their curriculum records, they will need to update Degree Planner accordingly.

Why would Degree Planner list an impossibly high number of credits in a single semester?

This typically happens when a student plans for one set of classes but ultimately enrolls in a different set of classes. The unregistered courses remain in the semester for which they were planned as a form of documentation, and the registered classes populate in the same semester. To move the original placeholders to a future semester, simply drag and drop them; alternatively, use the Rebuild Plan function (located in the More menu) to "recalibrate" the plan in one step.

My advisee had a rough semester and will need to retake one or more courses, which will impact later requirements due to prerequisites. How do we update Degree Planner without having to move each placeholder individually?

Open the “More” drop-down menu and select “Rebuild Plan.” Using this feature will refresh and recalibrate the plan, which includes shifting a prerequisite sequence forward as needed.

I submitted a CAPP Target/Substitution/Waiver Form for my advisee, but the adjustment isn’t showing in Degree Planner. Why is that and what do I do about it?

Currently, Degree Planner recognizes certain types of waivers and substitutions but is unable to apply targets. We are working on a process for capturing this information in Degree Planner; in the meantime, we recommend using the “Add Comment” function (in the Courses view) to document that an exception was made.

Why is Degree Planner including courses that aren’t required by the major?

The implementation of Degree Planner has revealed the complexity of our prerequisites, which is often manifested as “extra” classes in the Courses view. For example, suppose a Fashion Design major requires students to take ART400, and ART250 is a prerequisite for the course but is not required for the major. Degree Planner will include ART250 in the suggested timeline because, according to our curriculum, ART250 must be taken before a student can proceed to ART400. Placeholders for courses like ART250 can be simply removed from the plan; however, they will continue to appear in new plans (and will yield error messages if removed) unless the curriculum is updated and Banner is programmed accordingly.

Degree Planner keeps putting courses in the “wrong” semester (e.g., fall-only vs. spring-only, term sequencing). Why is that and what can we do about it?

There are a few reasons why this might occur. For instance, if a program’s suggested course sequence is organized by year rather than by term in the Catalog, the prioritization of courses will be less specific in Degree Planner. Additionally, if a fall- or spring-only class was ever offered in a different term, Degree Planner will see that historical data as evidence of flexibility. Over time, Degree Planner will “learn” our offerings and adjust accordingly, but we are exploring ways to expedite this process. In the meantime, Department Chairs are encouraged to share sequencing concerns with the Assistant Registrar of Curriculum Management.

How will Degree Planner account for internships, independent studies, or special topic courses?

If such courses are requirements or explicit options within a program, they will be listed as such in Degree Planner and will allow users to designate the credit value as needed. If such courses are not requirements nor explicit options within a program, but a student would like to incorporate them into their plan, they may do so using the “Add Course” function in the Courses view. Degree Planner is connected to the College’s entire course catalog, so internships, independent studies, and special topic courses can be easily incorporated into the plan.

Where are the rest of the required classes for junior/senior year (i.e., why did Degree Planner only plan the first two years)?

In programs that have particularly complex and/or extensive prerequisite sequencing, Degree Planner may stop creating placeholders in the Courses view at a certain point because the student has not yet

completed too many of the prerequisite courses. As we work to update the Catalog and course language, we hope to decrease the instances of upper level courses not being planned.

Why does Degree Planner keep “forgetting” the Constellation that was designated by the student/advisor?

Although a student’s Constellation selection should be maintained, users may sometimes notice that individual courses are applied to other Constellations because of how Degree Planner’s algorithms and prioritization work. For instance, suppose a course could fulfill either Building a Better World or Living Well; the Constellations are in alphabetical order, and the system will apply a course that could be used in either requirement to whichever is first. So, even if a student has chosen Living Well, Degree Planner may place the course in Building a Better World because the latter Constellation has a “higher” priority. Encouraging students to plan their Constellation course selections in the system may help to prevent “misplaced” classes. Also, see “How do I change the designation for where a course counts?” for more information on moving a course from one Constellation to another.

Where can I leave notes for the students or for the advisor so substitutions can be documented?

The Courses view includes the “Add Comment” feature on the right side of the page (below the “More” menu), and such notes are viewable to the student and any other staff member working with the plan. Comments are also accessible in the plan’s printout and snapshot—the latter of which is generated through the approval process.

How do I change the designation for where a course counts (e.g., elective vs. Constellation)?

If a course can fulfill one of multiple requirements, and a user would like to change how it is being applied, the academic advisor can make such adjustments in the Requirements view. Scroll to the requirement to which the course is currently being applied and look for the following statement in the status field: “This course can be used for another requirement.” Click on “View Options” and select/save the alternative requirement to which the course should be applied.

Why doesn’t Degree Planner display CRNs when it shows the schedule and lists the courses for the upcoming semester?

CRNs are not included in Degree Planner to reinforce to students that they (1) should check the Schedule of Classes for the most up-to-date information about seat availability and (2) can only register for classes via YCP Web. However, CRNs could be included in the print/PDF version of the plan, and we would welcome feedback about this option.

Why am I receiving an email from “Starfish Notices” with an “Email from Starfish: Plan Approval Request” subject line?

On the student’s side of the system, they have the ability to request approval of their plan. When they initiate this process, the system will inform the student’s academic advisor by sending a message from “Starfish Notices” (notices@degreeplanner.starfishsolutions.com), and it will simply state that “[Student name] has requested approval on their degree plan with the following comments.” If there is no text after this introductory sentence, the student did not make any comments. When the academic advisor approves or returns a plan via the system, the student will receive similar messaging.