

Guide to Your Bowdoin Education



Bowdoin

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Overview

This guide represents the collective efforts of Bowdoin faculty, staff, students, and an alumnus. It is not intended to replace other vital publications such as the Bowdoin College Catalogue [www.bowdoin.edu/catalogue] or the Student Handbook [www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs]; it's designed to complement and supplement the information contained in those publications. Take time to read this before beginning your life at Bowdoin and then refer to it as needed. It will stimulate your thinking about your Bowdoin experience and provide you with practical and useful information that should help guide you. You may find the reading slow going at times, but stick with it. Your efforts will be rewarded. Remember, your success at Bowdoin will be only as great as your understanding of the expectations and the resources that are available to assist you.



Chapter 1

A Liberal Arts Education and Your Bowdoin Experience

You are probably well aware that Bowdoin College is a “liberal arts” college. And you probably have some idea of what is meant by a “liberal arts education.” This section takes the time to define a liberal arts education, distinguishing it from vocational, technical, professional, and other education programs, and it describes the philosophy of a liberal arts education and its value. It gives you advice about selecting courses to assure that you acquire a liberal arts education, explains the role of experiences outside the classroom that can contribute to a liberal arts education, and concludes with seven observations on learning.

A. What Is a Liberal Arts Education?

A liberal arts education embodies both general and specific goals. At its most general level, a liberal arts education seeks to instill in students the ability to learn independently and to live effectively in a complex and ever-changing environment. It involves developing the capacity to think critically, to question intelligently, and to present clearly one’s thinking, both orally and in writing. A fundamental dimension of a liberal arts education is its ability to

equip you with the intellectual tools needed to confront problems in a constructive way, whether they are problems encountered in professional life, personal life, or community life. To do so involves exposure to a variety of methods of analysis and ways of thinking, experience with an array of informational resources, and evaluation of argumentation. These aspects of a liberal arts education serve as a foundation for a lifetime of active learning and contribution along whatever paths you choose to follow. As an artist, civil servant, educator, scientist, family member, community member, or friend, you are better able to understand the world around you and to perform effectively within it when you are equipped with the training associated with a liberal arts education.

A liberal arts education decidedly does not represent a particular world view or set of values. On the contrary, it welcomes the expression of difference as an opportunity for learning. Within this context, a liberal arts education actively engages you in the discussion of difference; it strives to promote a better understanding of difference, an appreciation of difference, and, perhaps most importantly, it strives to reduce fear of difference. This emphasis of a liberal arts education facilitates the development of the skills and sensitivity you will need to live a productive and harmonious life, and to resolve conflicts when they arise,

in a world characterized by increasing globalism and diversity.

In addition to these general goals, a liberal arts education exposes each individual to an in-depth study of a subject area of her or his choosing. Not only does this provide you with knowledge of a specific discipline, it also engages you in a more rigorous training of the mind, enabling you to undertake original thinking in your chosen area of study and to critically evaluate the work of professionals in the field. Obtaining a fairly high degree of competency in a particular discipline serves both to prepare you for further study or professional activity in related fields and to reinforce the more general goals of a liberal arts education.

B. Selecting Courses for a “Liberal Education”

In order to fully realize the potential of a liberal arts education, you must choose courses with care. A certain amount of structure is provided to students in the form of distribution and division requirements, the requirement to major in a particular discipline, and the specific course requirements of each major. These requirements form the basis of the liberal arts education at Bowdoin and are designed with both the general and specific goals of that education in mind. These requirements are discussed in detail in the College Catalogue and in “Your Advising Partnership”; therefore, they will not

be considered further here. Rather, the purpose here is to discuss some guiding principles of course selection that serve to make the most of a liberal arts education, given the considerable range of choice that exists beyond the requirements.

First and foremost, don't avoid taking courses that you think would be difficult or challenging or that are unfamiliar to you. These may be the courses from which you stand to gain the most; they are likely to expose you to new ways of thinking, to new knowledge, and perhaps they will help you to gain self-confidence through overcoming perceived limitations. Related to this point, it's wise to select courses outside of your major to an even greater extent than called for by distribution requirements and division requirements, and to select such courses from a wide array of departments, both those that complement your major and those that are very different. Selecting courses narrowly and courses that are "safe" undermines the objectives of a liberal arts education and ultimately limits your intellectual and emotional development.

This general principle of open-mindedness about course selection extends to the selection of a major as well. Even if you arrive at Bowdoin feeling certain, for whatever reasons, of your choice of major, allow yourself to experiment and to consider alternatives. You are likely to enhance your potential to a much greater extent if you are

engaged in detailed study of something that you find interesting, enjoyable, and challenging, than if you myopically follow a preordained course of study that fails to excite your intellectual energies. This is not to deny that considerations of future employability and earnings prospects are relevant to your choices, but, rather, to emphasize that the development of your potential in accord with the goals of a liberal arts education is generally more highly valued and rewarded than is specific knowledge, per se.

It's also wise to select some courses that will focus attention on the enhancement of writing skills. Skill in writing is particularly important for those majoring in subjects that are, by their nature, less writing-intensive than others. Regardless of your future directions in life, the value of writing well cannot be overstated. There's always room for improvement in writing, even among the most seasoned of writers, but rarely will you have the opportunity to actively and consciously work on your writing in such an informed and supportive environment.

Finally, be conscious of the general attitude you adopt toward your courses. In order to gain the most from a liberal arts education, you must take full advantage of the opportunities provided through formal study. Each course should be viewed as a venue for growth and development; and though it sounds trite, what you gain from each course will be commensurate with what you

bring to it. So approach your courses with enthusiasm and treat each one as a possibility for learning that you may never have again. If you do otherwise, if you fall into the trap of cultivating an air of ennui regarding your education, you will almost certainly have regrets later in life.



C. The Liberal Arts within and beyond the Classroom

These remarks about attitude toward courses apply much more broadly to your education as a whole. The benefits of a liberal arts education are not only influenced by the courses you take and by what occurs within the classroom, they are also affected by your experience outside of the classroom and the extent to which these are interconnected.

Students benefit tremendously from active discussion outside the classroom of their subjects of study and by the application of learned methodologies and perspectives to issues of contemporary relevance. Similarly, the classroom experience is enhanced by the incorporation of examples taken from your own life and from the larger world in which you live. In short, the active learning and intellectual engagement that are an integral part of a liberal arts education should not be viewed as processes that are “turned on” when you are in the classroom and “turned off” when you’re not in the classroom or studying. On the contrary, they should define a way of life that extends well beyond the classroom and beyond your undergraduate education.

D. Seven Observations on Learning

1. Learning is not a spectator sport; it requires active participants, not a passive audience. It’s fair to say that 90 percent of the effort expended on your education should be your own effort. What you hear in the classroom can and should provide you with the foundation of knowledge, but the edifice you erect upon those stones is your own responsibility, and that edifice should tower far above its foundations.
2. Learning is largely verbal. While symbols and the forms of art are involved in some academic disciplines, most of your education involves words. If you don’t understand what you hear

or read, you will not learn, and if you cannot express verbally what you know, your knowledge is powerless. Increasing your ability to read and write is perhaps the largest and most important challenge you will face at Bowdoin.

3. Learning should have an ethical foundation. The pursuit of knowledge, like the pursuit of money or power, is filled with temptations, not the least of which is the temptation to cheat. As in most endeavors, however, the short-term gains acquired by cheating are never worth the long-term debasement of the self. At best, cheating on your education means cheating yourself. At worst, it involves an intellectual assault upon your peers, and such a crime is as serious as the theft of material goods.

4. Learning begins with tolerance. If an idea or belief repels you, you are free to condemn it; if it attracts you, you are free to embrace it; if it bores you, you may consign it to oblivion. But no product of the human mind can be legitimately damned, praised, or discarded until it has been allowed a preliminary hearing. There is neither safety nor salvation in ignorance.

5. Learning inevitably involves memorization. As mechanical and potentially sterile as it may seem, the accumulation of objective data is as central to the working of the mind as it is to the computer. Facts in themselves don't constitute knowledge, but knowledge without facts is impossible.

6. Learning is inconclusive: inconclusive not only because one must never cease to learn, but also because the search for

answers inevitably leads to new questions. If, after four years at Bowdoin, you find yourself with more questions than answers, you should be gratified. Knowledge consists of answers, and you should seek to acquire knowledge, but wisdom consists in knowing what questions you should ask.

7. Learning is not the same thing as entertainment. Although the goals of learning—knowledge and wisdom—can be the source of great pleasure, the process of learning is not necessarily pleasurable, at least not in the sense of immediate satisfaction. The procedures by which one gains knowledge are often unavoidably difficult, frustrating, and tedious. A good teacher can alleviate your suffering to a certain degree, but don't expect learning to be easy. If it were, the world would be full of learned people.

Chapter 2

Taking Responsibility for Your Bowdoin Education



As a student at Bowdoin College, you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning and decision-making. It is important that you are motivated and serious about your responsibilities as a student, actively involving yourself in your educational experience. For many, this requires a significant change in approach. You will want to establish clear goals and priorities for your learning, recognizing that they may change over time. You will need to know the degree requirements and academic standards and regulations associated with a Bowdoin degree and understand the key resources and services that are available to you.

A. Understanding Academic Requirements, Policies, and Procedures

1. The Bowdoin College Catalogue [www.bowdoin.edu/catalogue]

If you are a first-year student, a copy of last

year's Bowdoin College Catalogue should have been mailed to you when you were accepted. A copy of this year's Catalogue will be included in your arrival packet. If you are an upper-class student and you haven't already procured a copy of this year's edition of the Bowdoin College Catalogue, stop by the Registrar's Office and do so. The Catalogue contains all kinds of information that will be of use to you, including the academic calendar, a listing of faculty members and administrators, departmental and program descriptions, the committees of the College, descriptions of the courses offered for the upcoming year, and so on. Most importantly, however, it includes the degree requirements and academic standards and regulations that apply to all applicants for the Bachelor of Arts degree from Bowdoin College. You should review the degree requirements and regulations carefully; not only are you required to know them, but also the regulations are revised from time to time. Ignorance of a rule does not qualify you for exemption from that rule.

2. The Registrar's Office [www.bowdoin.edu/registrar]

The Registrar's Office is the office that maintains your academic record, monitors your progress toward your degree, and oversees the enforcement of the academic policies and regulations detailed in the Catalogue. It's helpful to think of this office as the gatekeeper to the Bowdoin degree; its primary function is to ensure that all graduates of Bowdoin meet the necessary degree requirements. The Registrar's

Office maintains the student database, coordinates enrollment and course registration, distributes course schedules and grade reports, schedules exams, assigns classrooms, awards transfer credit, and the like. You can turn to the Registrar's Office to change your address, add or drop a course, register for a course Credit/D/Fail, declare a major or minor, obtain a transcript, inquire about academic honors, or submit a petition to the Recording Committee.

The Registrar's Office will provide you with information that will help inform your decisions, but, ultimately, the decisions will be left to you. For example, you will periodically be provided with a report that depicts your progress toward your degree. You will want to review this information (with your advisor if you'd like) and make your course selections accordingly. Don't, for example, expect the Registrar's Office to send you a letter saying you need another International Perspectives course to satisfy your distribution requirements. It's your responsibility to know this. This is a subtle but important distinction that helps to clearly define the extent of your responsibility.

3. The Recording Committee

The Recording Committee is a standing committee of the College composed of faculty, students, and staff whose purpose is to address matters pertaining to the academic standing of individual students and to consider exceptions to the policies and procedures governing academic life. The committee meets regularly to consider

student petitions and meets at the end of each semester to review the records of those students who are subject to probation, suspension, or dismissal.

If you think of the Registrar's Office as the gatekeeper, think of the Recording Committee as the academic rules and regulations appeal committee. All of its decisions are final. There are times when exceptions to academic regulations or curricular requirements are appropriate. However, in order to maintain the integrity of the Bowdoin degree and ensure fairness and consistency, all such exceptions are approved by the Recording Committee.

One of the most common petitions to the Recording Committee is a petition to drop a class after the drop deadline. Another is to change grading status after the deadline, from letter grade to Credit/D/Fail or vice versa. Some petitions are approved and others denied. The circumstances of the individual student's petition are what guide the decision. Generally, if there's an extreme medical or personal circumstance, something beyond the student's control, such petitions are approved. They are not approved if a student is simply trying to avoid a disappointing grade.

Petitions for the Recording Committee are available at the Student Affairs Office. All petitions require the signature of a dean and advisor, and, depending on the nature of the request, some may require supporting documentation from a faculty member, doctor, or counselor. Note: A dean's signature on a petition signifies that the dean and you have discussed the petition

and petition process; it does not necessarily mean that the dean approves of or supports your petition.

B. Understanding Key Resources and Services

In order to assume responsibility for your education, you must also be familiar with the key resources and services that are available. Seldom does one progress through Bowdoin without experiencing academic or non-academic difficulties of one kind or another. Perhaps you can think of relevant examples from your high school experience. To succeed at Bowdoin, you will need to seek out appropriate assistance when encountering trouble. In order to do so, you need to be able to recognize the need for assistance and understand the resources that are available. To aid you in this process, this section identifies a number of key resources and services and defines their associated roles and functions.

I. Your Advisor

Your advisor is one of your central support resources and serves as your personal guide to the Bowdoin curriculum. She or he will help you organize your academic experience over the course of your four years at the College. Most importantly, your advisor will ask you thought-provoking questions aimed at helping you make well-informed decisions. Be sure to review carefully the chapter on advising. It outlines the advising program at Bowdoin and includes sections on understanding the role of your advisor and suggestions on how to get the most out of your relationship with your advisor.

2. Your Dean

[www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/]

Your dean is another central support resource who, along with your advisor, serves as your primary advocate at the College. During your first year, your deans are the dean of first-year students and the assistant dean of first-year students. After your first year, however, you will be assigned to an upperclass dean who will serve as your dean for your sophomore, junior, and senior years. To discuss multicultural student programs or initiatives, you will contact the associate dean of multicultural student programs.

Deans are knowledgeable about issues and problems that may arise for you and are a good source of information about College resources and policies. They offer general advising as well as referrals to other campus offices. They collaborate with advisors in helping you manage academic and non-academic situations as they arise. To do this, deans consult extensively with faculty, advisors, and staff across the College. Each dean, the director of student activities, and members of the Residential Life staff share in an on-call rotation. This enables a staff member to be available to you in emergency situations at all hours of the day or night.

If you have a question, concern, or problem, and you don't know where to turn, contact your dean. She or he is located in the Student Affairs Office on the second floor of Moulton Union, 725-3149. If your dean is unable to answer your question or help you solve your problem, he or she will

direct you toward the appropriate campus or community resource.

Note: You are in control of information you share with your dean. This means that your parents are generally not informed about situations or issues without your permission. Exceptions to this rule are parental notification regarding a change to your student status (probation, suspension, or dismissal) or parental notification for a situation regarding your health or welfare (e.g., you are transported to the hospital in a critical situation; you are deemed a threat to yourself or others; you have been inexplicably absent from campus for a prolonged period of time). Deans rigidly adhere to this approach in order to maintain your trust.

3. The Student Affairs Office

[www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs]

The Office of Student Affairs serves as the home for members of the dean's staff. The office is located on the second floor of Moulton Union. In addition to serving as the primary advocates for individual students, the members of the Student Affairs staff also orchestrate a number of specific programs, systems, and services including the following:

- academic advising
- community standards and the judicial process
- orientation
- learning or physical accommodations
- international student advising
- transfer and exchange student advising
- emergency student loans

So, if you need an emergency student loan to buy your books, need to change your advisor, need an accommodation for a learning or physical disability, and the like, this is where you turn. Again, if you aren't sure where to go for a particular need, this is a good place to start. If the members of the Student Affairs staff can't help you themselves, they will direct you toward the appropriate campus or community resource.

4. The Academic Affairs Office

[www.bowdoin.edu/academic-affairs]

The Bowdoin faculty directs the academic program, and the Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs oversees and coordinates the work of the faculty and the curriculum. The academic deans are responsible for the overall quality and coherence of the College's academic program. Working with academic departments, the deans oversee and coordinate the recruitment, hiring, reappointment, and promotion of the faculty. The dean for academic affairs chairs the student/faculty committee on Curriculum and Educational Policy, which is the College's central forum for discussion of curricular affairs. Of particular importance to students, at the end of each semester the Dean's Office solicits student comments about all courses so that faculty can obtain student feedback about their classes.

5. The Center for Learning and Teaching

Bowdoin College has a group of programs developed to support learning and teaching throughout the curriculum. Three

programs and the ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) advisor are housed in Kanbar Hall and work cooperatively to enhance Bowdoin's curricular resources and to strengthen students' academic experience. The Baldwin Program for Academic Development, the Quantitative Skills Program, the Writing Project, and ESOL are described below. No fees are charged for any services offered by the Center for Learning and Teaching.



- a. The Baldwin Program for Academic Development
[www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-program]

Based on an individualized and holistic approach to learning, the program offers

activities and services such as individual consultation with peer academic mentors, tutoring, study groups, and study skills workshops, as well as individual consultation with peer academic mentors. Mentors help fellow students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses and develop individually tailored time management, organizational, and study strategies. Mentors may be particularly useful to students encountering difficulty balancing the academic and social demands of college life; struggling to find more effective approaches to understanding, learning, and remembering new material; experiencing problems with procrastination; or simply achieving the self-structuring demanded by an independent study or honors project.

- b. The Quantitative Skills Program
[www.bowdoin.edu/qskills]

The Quantitative Skills (Q-Skills) Program was established in 1996 to assist with the integration of quantitative reasoning throughout the curriculum and to encourage students to develop competence and confidence in using quantitative information. The program was established in recognition of the increasing demand to understand and use quantitative information in college-level work, in employment situations, and for effective citizenship.

The Q-Skills Program assists students in a variety of ways. Entering students are tested to assess their proficiency with quantitative material. Using the test results and other indicators, the Director of Q-Skills and faculty advisors counsel students

regarding appropriate courses to fulfill their Mathematical, Computational, or Statistical Reasoning distribution requirement.

In addition, students are encouraged to take courses across the curriculum that enhance their quantitative skills. The Q-Skills Program supplements many of the quantitative courses by providing small study groups led by trained peer tutors. Upon the request of instructors, workshops on special topics are also provided by the Q-Skills Program. One-on-one tutoring is available on a limited basis.

c. The Writing Project

[www.bowdoin.edu/writing-project]

The Writing Project is a peer tutoring program based on the premise that students are uniquely qualified to serve as intelligent, empathetic readers of one another's writing. As collaborators rather than authorities, peer tutors facilitate the writing process for fellow students by providing helpful feedback while encouraging writers to retain an active and authoritative role in writing and revising their work. Each semester, the Writing Project assigns specially selected and trained writing assistants to a variety of courses by request of the instructor. The assistants read and comment on early drafts of papers and meet with the writers individually to help them expand and refine their ideas, clarify connections, and improve sentence structure. After revisions have been completed, each student submits a final paper to the instructor along with the draft and the assistant's comments. Students in any course may also reserve conferences with a writing assistant in the Writing

Workshop held Sunday through Wednesday evenings.

Students interested in becoming writing assistants apply before spring break. Those accepted enroll in a fall semester course on the theory and practice of teaching writing, offered through the Department of Education. Successful completion of the course qualifies students to serve as tutors in later semesters, when they receive a stipend for their work. A list of courses participating in the Project will be available during the first week of each semester.

d. ESOL Writing Tutor/Advisor

Students who are multilingual or who have parents who are non-native speakers of English may work with the ESOL tutor. They may seek help with understanding assignments and reading strategies; grammar; outlining, revising, editing; and the conventions of scholarly writing.

6. Accommodations for Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who may need special classroom accommodations, you should contact the Office of Student Affairs to assist you in securing the requested accommodation(s). Documented disabilities may include a learning disability; attention deficit disorder; a visual, hearing, or mobility impairment; or a physical or psychiatric illness. The College's Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities can be found in the Student Handbook [www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs] and is publicized at the beginning of each

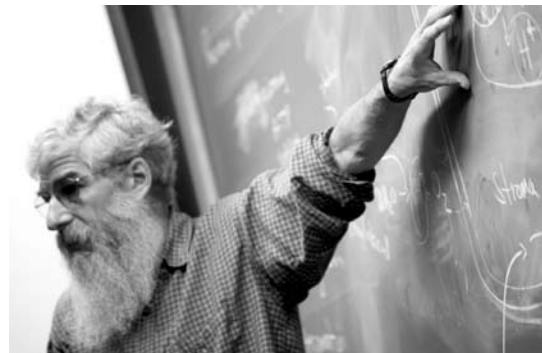
semester. It's your responsibility to be aware of the policy and procedures and to contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as you are aware of the need for a special accommodation.

7. Course Instructors

If you are struggling in a course, the first place you should turn is to your course instructor. Most faculty members maintain office hours, and students are free to drop by and ask questions. If you have a difficult time approaching a faculty member, you may want to begin with a conversation with your advisor or dean or an e-mail to the instructor. Your course instructor is a primary resource, and failing to seek her/him out when you are experiencing difficulties would be foolish on your part. Remember, faculty members have chosen to come to Bowdoin because they are committed to teaching undergraduate students and welcome the opportunity to do so.

Some course instructors may use comment cards to communicate your progress in their class. The written observations alert you, your academic advisor, and your dean to potential problems you are confronting. They can also be used to highlight improvement or successes. You should view comment cards as an academic progress report providing warnings or highlighting achievements. When a faculty member uses a comment card for warning purposes, you should immediately seek out your instructor to discuss strategies to turn things around. Your advisor and dean can also be very helpful in developing strategies

for improvement and identifying existing support services.



8. Course-based Tutorial Services

Some courses offer tutorial support. Be sure to contact your course instructor to see what is available. If a formal system is not in place, your course instructor may be willing to provide you with the name of an upper-class student who could serve as a tutor or you can stop by the Center for Learning and Teaching in Kanbar Hall to see if the staff there might be able to identify a tutor. It's best to start with your course instructor so that you can develop the most effective plan. Don't delay: identifying a tutor can take time, especially once the semester is underway and prospective student tutors have their own commitments. If you are multilingual or have parents who are non-native speakers of English, you should also consider making an appointment with the ESOL Tutor (see 5.d. above). Please note that no fees are charged for tutorial services.

9. Coaches

[www.bowdoin.edu/athletics]

If you participate on an intercollegiate sport or club team, remember that your

coach can be a valuable resource for you. If you encounter difficulties, bring your coach “into the loop” as soon as possible. She or he can refer you to appropriate resources and work with you, your advisor, and your dean as you get things back on track. Because of the commitment that athletics represents, it’s important that you keep your coach apprised of your individual academic situation. Always remember that you are a student first and that your success in the classroom is what makes your athletic and other co-curricular opportunities available to you. Your coach is committed to your success but can do little for you if she or he doesn’t know you are experiencing difficulties.

The coaching staff works to coordinate schedules, but you share this responsibility. If you have problems or conflicts, be sure to consult with your professors and coaches as early as possible. Questions or issues regarding athletics should be directed to the Director of Athletics (725-3016).

10. The Counseling Service

[www.bowdoin.edu/counseling]

The Counseling Service is staffed by psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, and clinical social workers who are dedicated to helping you resolve personal and academic difficulties and maximize your psychological and intellectual potential. Members of the counseling staff have worked extensively with Bowdoin students and understand the challenges inherent in campus life and the Bowdoin “culture” in particular. This probably helps explain why close to 20 percent of Bowdoin students take advantage

of the opportunity to work individually with a counselor during the course of an average academic year. Far from being an admission of weakness, the decision to seek counsel when one is confronted by internal or external obstacles is a sign of maturity, wisdom, and courage.

The members of the Counseling Center staff will help you resolve concerns related to anxiety, depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, family problems, relationship issues, and a host of other challenges that might arise during your time at Bowdoin. To schedule an appointment, just call 725-3145 or stop by the office in person (32 College Street). Regular hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours and on weekends, you may reach an “on-call” counselor for emergency consultation by calling Bowdoin Security (725-3500). Note: Any information you disclose to a counselor is subject to strict confidentiality.

II. Peer Support Services

Some students are more comfortable seeking out a peer when they encounter a problem. A number of formal peer support services are available to you including your proctor or resident assistant (RA), members of Safe Space, and the Health Education and Liaison Program (HELP).

a. Proctors and Resident Assistants

[www.bowdoin.edu/reslife]

Your proctor (for first-year students) or resident assistant (for upperclass students) is another central support resource who

is available to you. Your proctor or RA is a student staff member of the Office of Residential Life. She or he lives with you in your residence hall, house, or apartment complex and is available as a resource. Your proctor or resident assistant works to build community on your floor and within your building. She or he also works to promote your personal and academic success and enhance your leadership development. Proctors and RAs have been trained to help you in an emergency—personal or academic—and they are wonderful guides to campus resources and services.

b. Safe Space

The members of Safe Space support the survivors of sexual violence and offer survivors an opportunity to share their experience in a confidential and supportive atmosphere. Members are trained to provide educational programming to campus groups and peer counseling to individual students. To obtain a contact name and number, call the Health Center (725-3770), Counseling Services (725-3145), or the Office of Student Affairs (725-3149).

c. Bowdoin Health Education and Liaison Program (HELP)

With the goal of increasing awareness and dialogue about what it means to be healthy, these trained peer educators disseminate information on a variety of health-related topics, organize discussions among and lectures to campus groups, and refer students to appropriate resources on campus.

It's true, much of your experience at Bowdoin will be defined by the intellect and character of the people who surround you—students, faculty, and staff. However, the strength of your experience will be determined by the opportunities you seek, the vitality you bring to your activities—academic and non-academic—the energy with which you engage others, and your ability to solve problems as they arise.

Chapter 3

Advising at Bowdoin



Academic advising is perhaps the most important means by which you, with the help of a faculty member and perhaps a peer advisor, will organize your academic experience over the course of your years at the College. As such, it's an essential ingredient of the Bowdoin College learning experience. In most instances, the effectiveness of advising depends on the commitment and investment made by you and your advisor. A good advisor will devote considerable attention to acquainting you with curricular possibilities and institutional policies, challenging you to broaden your intellectual horizons, referring you to appropriate College resources, and improving your decision-making skills.

The advising system at Bowdoin is divided into two parts: advising during the first two years, known as pre-major academic advising, and advising after the declaration of a major, known as major academic advising.

A. The Goals and Structure of Advising at Bowdoin

I. Pre-Major Academic Advising

In our liberal arts setting, pre-major academic advisors take a more generalist advising approach while major academic advisors assume more of a specialist approach. The pre-major academic advising system is intended to help you take full advantage of your first two years at Bowdoin and to begin to plan the remaining years. It provides a framework within which you can work with a faculty member to make informed academic decisions. Such a partnership is particularly important during the period of transition and adjustment of your first year.

All pre-major academic advisors are familiar with the College distribution and division requirements. Your pre-major academic advisor may make recommendations about courses and combinations of courses, or direct you toward other resources of the College.

Informal collaboration between advisors is also common, and this helps serve your needs as well. For example, one advisor will turn to another faculty member who is more knowledgeable about the pre-health professions course work, or one advisor will put one of her or his advisees with an interest in majoring in classics in touch with a member of the classics faculty, and so on. And lastly, your advisor is available to you when you encounter academic difficulty.

All full-time, permanent members of the faculty who have taught at Bowdoin for at

least one academic year and who will be teaching in both the fall and the spring semesters are eligible to serve as pre-major academic advisors for new students.

Your pre-major academic advisor will work with you until the point at which you declare a major in the spring of your sophomore year or until she or he temporarily (sabbatical or leave) or permanently leaves the College (refer to Advisor Reassignment Process in section C below).

The principal goals of pre-major academic advising are the following:

- to provide guidance in your selection of courses, i.e., to be sure degree requirements will be met, selected courses represent a reasonable balance of work, and curricular options are not prematurely foreclosed;
- to encourage you to think strategically about your progress through college—to think several steps ahead, to relate general purposes to specific decisions, and so forth;
- to communicate the values of a liberal arts education—ask (and answer) questions such as, “Why seek breadth? What is a major? Why study away?”; and
- to intervene, when useful, in cases of academic difficulty, typically in response to a “comment card” sent to advisors and deans by a faculty member.

Your pre-major academic advisor is available to:

- assist you with your academic adjustment to Bowdoin;
- assist you with your academic planning on the micro level (course selection, course scheduling, and the like), and make referrals to other faculty, departments, and appropriate campus resources to assist you with macro-level academic planning (study away, major selection, pre-professional programs) so you can develop a cohesive academic plan;
- help you develop academic and personal goals and priorities;
- answer your questions about the academic program and general degree requirements;
- challenge you by asking you difficult questions to help you clarify your choices;
- help you identify key resources and services as needed or desired;
- offer suggestions regarding study methods.

Your pre-major academic advisor will expect you to:

- view your advisor as a resource for ideas based on the information and experience your advisor possesses;
- take the initiative to make timely appointments, keep them, and come see your advisor, especially when you are having problems;

- think about issues (course selections, ways to address difficulties in courses, your academic program) before you come talk to your advisor, and come prepared to meetings with questions;
- be open and honest (in confidence) about your academic strengths, weaknesses, hopes, fears, and aspirations;
- keep your advisor apprised of your progress and plans.

If you have any questions or concerns about pre-major academic advising at Bowdoin, you should turn to the dean of first-year students in the Office of Student Affairs (725-3149).

2. Major Academic Advising

Once you declare a major, typically during the spring semester of your sophomore year, the advising responsibility will shift from your pre-major academic advisor to your major department or program. Where your pre-major academic advisor assumed more of a generalist's approach, exposing you to the breadth of Bowdoin's liberal arts curriculum, your major academic advisor will take more of a specialist's approach. Major academic advisors are familiar with the subtleties and nuances of individual majors and will make sure that you meet the various requirements of your major. This relationship will continue until you complete your degree (or change your major).

The principal goals of major academic advising are the following:

- to help you compose a major program that is appropriate to your interests and abilities, that makes sense intellectually, and that exhibits the features regarded as desirable in the major (e.g., adequate coverage of subfields, appropriate exposure to advanced work);
- to ensure that you meet the requirements of the major;
- to encourage you to choose courses in related fields of study that will complement and support your work within the major;
- to encourage you to consider course and non-course opportunities to enrich the intellectual experience of the major (e.g., honors work, study away, internship possibilities, attendance at departmental colloquia, and the like); and
- to stimulate you to think about where work within the major might lead you after Bowdoin (e.g., graduate school, employment).

As far as the assignment of major advisors is concerned, every department has a different method of matching majors with advisors. In some cases, the chair of the department or another designee will advise you and all the other majors. In other cases, you select your own advisor, perhaps according to your area of academic focus or specialization. In still other cases, all the members of the department share in your advising.

Regardless of your major, you should be prepared to take the initiative to determine what major advising model your department employs. A good place to start is with the department coordinator or chair of your department. You should address questions or concerns about major academic advising to the chair of your major department or program.



B. The Advisor/Advisee Matching and Reassignment Process

The dean of first-year students matches incoming students with pre-major academic advisors. This match is done according to any number of factors, including academic interest, co-curricular interest, identified special needs, expectations of the advising relationship, and the like obtained from the Academic Advising Questionnaire, which is distributed to incoming students and advisors.

Some students need or want to change their pre-major academic advisor. Perhaps your advisor is taking a leave or sabbatical or is permanently leaving the College. Or, perhaps the relationship is simply not a productive one for you. To initiate a change, you will need to complete an Advisor

Change card. If you are leaning toward a particular field of study, consider selecting someone in that field. Alternatively, if there's a faculty member to whom you feel particularly close or whose judgment about broader questions you value, select him or her. Your current advisor may be able to offer suggestions or provide an introduction. Either way, simply approach the person directly and ask the person if she or he would be willing to take you on as an advisee. Then fill out an Advisor Change card (available in the Student Affairs Office), and return it to the Student Affairs Office, second floor Moulton Union, right away. A Student Affairs staff member will update the system so you won't have any problems registering for classes or modifying your course schedule. Your file will also be forwarded to your new advisor. If you have trouble identifying a new advisor, contact your dean, and he or she will be glad to assist you.

C. Tips on How to Get the Most out of Your Relationship with Your Advisor

Many students aren't sure how to use an advisor, and this uncertainty often leads to disappointment with the advising relationship. This section offers five practical tips aimed at helping you develop a productive and meaningful relationship with your advisor.

I. Recognize your advisor as a resource.

The whole notion of an advisor may be a novelty to you. Perhaps the only time you made a special trip to see a teacher in high school was if there were some sort of

problem. If, while at Bowdoin you choose not to talk to any faculty member on a regular basis about your educational goals and decisions, then the phenomenon of course card signing unaccompanied by meaningful conversations will result. To get the most out of your relationship with your advisor, you need to do some real thinking about your expectations, your needs, and how your advisor can be helpful.

2. Discuss expectations of the advising relationship and make sure they are realistic.

Your advisor can help you with many aspects of your education, but he or she is not a caretaker of all your needs. Increasingly, students and parents are asking that advisors also serve the roles of walk-in therapists, surrogate parents, understanding deans, accommodating registrars, instant career counselors, residential life assistants, and personal references. Expecting your advisor to do all these things effectively is unrealistic. That's why the College has resources such as the Dean's Office, the Registrar's Office, the Center for Learning and Teaching, the Counseling Service, Residential Life, Career Planning, and so on. If your advisor can't answer your question or help you address your needs, she or he will be able to point you to the office or person who can.

What's important is to discuss expectations with your advisor. Figure out how your needs mesh with his or her style. For instance, what will your advisor expect of you in terms of course exploration before coming to her or his office to discuss courses for the coming semester? Will

your advisor contact you periodically to review your experiences, or does she or he expect you to initiate the contact? Will you interact with your advisor only when you are experiencing trouble? Will your advisor expect to discuss your course selections with you before signing off on your course registration form or can anyone in the department sign? Would your advisor prefer communication by e-mail or phone? Would your advisor join you for lunch? Note: the Student Affairs Office will pay for a faculty member's meal if it is with a student(s).

3. Articulate and communicate your needs.

You've already had one opportunity to do this when you completed your Academic Advising Questionnaire. Your advisor has a copy and will use this to get to know you better. However, it's a good idea to take some time to go over this form together. And feel free to supplement the information you provided. Remember, it's your responsibility to keep your advisor informed.

Good advising is the result of good communication, and if your advisor does not know your needs, then he or she will be unable to effectively assist and support you.

4. Take initiative and come prepared to ask questions.

Many an advising meeting takes place in which the interaction between an advisor and advisee is very pleasant and congenial but there's little probing, prodding, or provoking engaged in by the advisor and little genuine questioning or searching

engaged in by the student. Hence, not much takes place except the signing of the registration card, and the student (and perhaps the faculty member) leaves feeling somewhat unsatisfied. Don't let this happen. Remember, the relationship is a two-way street, and you must hold up your end. Come with questions and come prepared to engage in a dialogue about your goals, aspirations, and fears. Many faculty, not unreasonably, feel that students should assume a good part of the responsibility for seeking out advice. Do so.

5. Recognize that good advice will not come exclusively from the person who is designated as your official advisor.

A great deal of productive, informal advising occurs on campus. When choosing courses, feel free to consult with course instructors, upperclass students, and deans for their insights and perspectives. Relying exclusively on your advisor divorces you from these other important sources of information.

Chapter 4

Designing Your Academic Program



Designing your academic program, the defining component of your Bowdoin education, is an exciting opportunity that requires careful thought and attention. You will find that the College provides you with a great deal of latitude; distribution and division requirements are relatively few in number. With this freedom, however, comes the need to think carefully about your academic experience. What will you select as a major and course of study? Will you integrate a study-away experience as part of your academic program? Are there research and internship opportunities that are available to you that can serve to supplement your classroom training? What

post-Bowdoin fellowship and scholarship opportunities might you consider as a mechanism for continuing your education? To help you start thinking about your academic program, you would do well to complete “Designing Your Bowdoin Education” included in the packet you receive over the summer.

A. Selecting a Major and Course of Study

Perhaps you will arrive at Bowdoin knowing exactly what you intend to elect as a major. Most students, however, will not be so certain, and many of those students who arrive with a major field firmly in mind will change their minds—sometimes more than once—before they reach the point of actually declaring a major. This is a perfectly healthy condition. One of the features of a liberal arts curriculum is that it allows you to sample a number of fields before committing to a single area of specialization, and you should take advantage of this opportunity to explore a number of disciplines. The time will come, however, specifically near the end of the sophomore year, when you will be asked to declare a major field of study.

The idea behind the major requirement is that a liberal arts curriculum must have depth as well as breadth, and that the opportunity to explore and master a single area of study should be a part of your education. There are many benefits to such specialization: the development of research methods and analytical skills; the opportunity to work closely with faculty members and fellow students who share

your interest in a subject; the establishment of a scholarly foundation for possible postgraduate study; and the satisfaction of knowing that you have made at least one field of study your own.

In choosing a major, or in simply looking ahead to the day when you will make that decision, there are some factors and some misconceptions you should consider:

1. Although you won't declare a major until you near the end of your sophomore year, many departments require certain courses as prerequisites for their majors, and it's important to be aware of those requirements as you plan your first- and second-year course selections. (Consult the Catalogue and faculty members of specific departments.) If you envision a career in the health sciences, law, or education, you will want to discuss your course of study with members of the faculty who can advise you on matters pertaining to those disciplines.

2. Your choice of a major is not irrevocable. Although you must declare a major during your sophomore year, you may change your major at any time prior to the last semester of your senior year. This is not to suggest that your original decision should be made lightly. A change of major often severely limits your options in your junior and senior years, particularly if the second choice has one or more prerequisites; however, if you have already completed many of the courses required for a major other than the one you initially declared, you may have little difficulty in making the shift.

3. Your major need not be related, directly or indirectly, to the profession you intend to pursue after graduation. A student who hopes to make a career in the health sciences will want to elect certain courses in chemistry and biology just as those who intend to study law may find courses in government or sociology appropriate to their interests. But the day is past when medical schools expected that all their applicants would have majored in chemistry, or when law schools insisted that their candidates be government majors. Many Bowdoin graduates who are now pursuing careers in the sciences majored in one of the humanities or social sciences, while many alumni currently active in the arts were science majors. There's nothing wrong in electing a major that points the way to a future career, but choosing a major based solely on the assumption that there are no other alternatives places an unnecessary limitation on one's options.

4. In addition to a departmental major, there are three other types of majors with which you can satisfy the major requirement: the coordinate major (for students who wish to pursue environmental studies), the interdisciplinary major, and the student-designed major. Information on these alternative majors can be found in the Bowdoin College Catalogue. You are also permitted to declare two majors, but you should think seriously about the consequences involved in doing a double major. The decision may make perfect sense, particularly where a foreign language is one of the components, but many students attempt a double major simply

because "everyone is doing it," or because "it will look good on my transcript," or because "I need the second major if I ever decide to do graduate work in that subject."

Only the third of those reasons is really worthy of consideration, and even that reason is debatable. As stated above, most graduate programs don't insist that an applicant have a complete major in their discipline; if a student is one or two courses short of a major but has done exemplary work in the courses he or she has taken in that field, the decision of a graduate school admissions committee almost certainly will be based on quality, not quantity. If you have doubts about this, take the time to inquire of graduate schools to which you might apply. The argument against doing a double major is grounded in the basic principle underlying a liberal arts education: that you should have the opportunity to become educated in a number of diverse fields. That opportunity is severely diminished when you concentrate on two fields. For example, depending on the disciplines and their prerequisites, a double major might involve as many as twenty-four courses that are required or strongly recommended by the two departments, and this would amount to 75 percent of the credits required for graduation. Such a concentration—one that allows only eight elections outside of the two major fields—so restricts the breadth of your education that the purpose of enrolling in a liberal arts college is called into question.

5. If you are interested in a second field but don't wish to pursue a full major in that field, you may elect to minor in that subject.

This might be particularly appropriate if you want to demonstrate some familiarity with a foreign language, or if you have spent some time pursuing a specific subject in an off-campus study program. Most minors require about half the number of courses required for a major.

6. Finally, and most importantly, your choice of a major should grow naturally out of a vital interest in the subject. It may or may not point to a career in that discipline, but the field should so engage your intellect and your imagination that you will never regret having devoted a good deal of time and energy to it. The worst thing you can do is to major in a subject because you think it's expected of you. The best thing you can do is to major in a subject because it excites you.



B. Bowdoin's Pre-Professional Programs

I. Pre-health

[www.bowdoin.edu/healthprofessions]

Bowdoin College does not have a specific program or major for students who are interested in the health professions. We encourage you to use your undergraduate years to develop interests and abilities in many areas. You may major in any department and successfully prepare for a career in the health professions. We think there's no better preparation for medical school than the liberal arts education you will have available to you at Bowdoin. Medical school admissions committees are searching for candidates who will be successful in the lifelong learning required of physicians, not only in the sciences but in the social sciences and humanities as well. Take advantage of the opportunities to explore areas of interest within the College. Even if you concentrate in the sciences, you should be certain to take a minimum of one non-science class each year. Work with your advisor to ensure that your college transcript will reflect your interests, potential, and commitment to learning.

While the requirements for medical school are relatively standard, the route to completing them is in no way prescribed. The challenge is to find the right path for you to follow in preparing for medical school. Perhaps you will complete all of your premedical requirements through courses in the College or instead will choose to focus the College years on a non-science area of interest and postpone

the science prerequisites, completing a post-baccalaureate program. Or, you might find that a combination of these options, perhaps even combined with summer courses, is the right path. You should choose to concentrate in an area that excites you, one for which you have a passion. The success of your application will not be affected by your choice of concentration. It will be affected by your academic performance and intellectual enthusiasm. For more information about the health professions and a list of post-baccalaureate programs, stop by the Office of Health Professions Advising on the second floor of the Dudley Coe Building.

2. Pre-law

[www.bowdoin.edu/cpc]

Likewise, if you are interested in the possibility of attending law school, you should design your academic program to develop crucial skills that are generally important in a liberal arts education. There are no specific courses or majors that are more or less appropriate for students preparing for law school. Law schools are much more interested in the quality of the academic work done in a challenging and thoughtfully selected array of courses than in the particular major you choose to pursue as an undergraduate. Analytical thinking, critical reading, oral presentation, and concise and clear writing are important qualities that a good liberal arts education should nurture. You should seek out courses that help develop these skills and create a coherent academic program accordingly.

There's an active Legal Studies Advisory

Group (contact Bowdoin Career Planning at 725-3717 for a list of members) at the College that meets periodically with students to provide information and answer questions about law schools and the application process. Faculty and staff on that committee are available to meet individually with you to help you with such challenges as thinking through the decision to apply to law school, selecting which schools to apply to, and preparing a personal statement for your application.

3. Pre-teaching

[www.bowdoin.edu/education]

The Department of Education provides students with the opportunity to prepare for a meaningful career as a teacher through its teaching minor and teacher certification programs.

Teaching Minor

The teaching minor is appropriate for students who are committed to teaching in some capacity following graduation from Bowdoin. Students pursuing a teaching minor begin a gradual and sequential preparation for professional practice in introductory courses, where they engage in participant teaching. Responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating lessons continues throughout intermediate and advanced courses, increasing in frequency and length as students gain more professional knowledge and experience.

The four courses comprising the teaching minor are:

- Education 20: The Educational Crusade, or Education 101: Contemporary American Education

- Education 203: Educating All Students
- Education 301: Teaching
- Education 303: Curriculum
- Admissions essay and interview with education department members
- Status as a community member in good standing

Teacher Certification

Candidates who successfully complete the teacher certification program receive a Maine State Teaching Credential that can be used to teach in a public secondary school in any of the fifty states and Washington, D.C.

The seven courses required for teacher certification are:

- The four courses comprising the teaching minor (Education 101, 203, 301 and 303)
- Education 302: Student Teaching Practicum (Student-Teaching)
- Education 304: Senior Seminar: Analysis of Teaching and Learning
- Education 305: Adolescents in Schools

Requirements for admission to the teacher certification program are:

- Senior standing
- A major in a subject area of certification offered by Bowdoin College with State of Maine endorsement (mathematics, life science, physical science, English, foreign language, or social studies)
- A 3.0 grade point average in Education 301 and 303
- A cumulative 3.0 grade point average at the end of the junior year

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with education department faculty early in their undergraduate experience to discuss their candidacies for teacher certification.

C. Supplementing and Supporting Your Academic Program with Study Off Campus [www.bowdoin.edu/ocs]

Off-campus study allows you to expand your academic program at Bowdoin, whatever your discipline, by spending a semester or a full academic year at another institution, either abroad or in the United States. The potential benefits depend on the institution and the country to which you go but should combine the academic and the cultural. All off-campus study should deepen and bring fresh perspectives to your understanding of an academic field. It may also expose you to a foreign language and culture; give you field experience unavailable at Bowdoin; introduce you to different methods of instruction and learning; further your understanding of the complexity and diversity of world affairs; help you reexamine your values and your culture as others view them; show you what graduate study is like at a larger institution; and strengthen resourcefulness and maturity.

You should start planning in the fall semester of the year before you hope to study off campus. You will need to consult the library and staff of the Off-Campus Study Office (OCS); attend relevant

informational meetings; research the options available, using the resources in the OCS library and elsewhere; and discuss your plans in detail with your advisor(s) in your intended major(s). You should submit an application to Bowdoin for permission to study on your chosen program no later than February 23 of the year preceding your program. If you feel that you have unusual needs that justify your studying on a program that is not on Bowdoin's options list, you must submit a petition instead by the same deadline.

D. Supplementing and Supporting Your Academic Program with Research Opportunities



Research is intrinsic to academic life. It is, quite simply, the discovery of knowledge worth sharing with others. It may involve the decisive uncovering of new facts or a concerted rearrangement of what has been previously established in a manner that causes others to reconsider the significance of normative assertions. It is not merely the synthesizing of what others have written and published, or solving problems assigned as part of course work, but it is original reflection that elicits a creative response

to established paradigms of knowing. Successful research extends the parameters of knowledge.

Ostensibly, a student's fundamental goal of the Bowdoin undergraduate experience is to be educated liberally in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, and to gain an awareness of how world views are or have been constructed not only in Euro-American traditions, but also in broader global cultures as well. While the cultivation of awareness about how knowledge is constructed and how it has been (or can be) put to use is often personally transformative, a matter of engaging in critical thought, research is the academic process in which knowledge is actually produced. Once produced, knowledge is as liberating as it is liberating; that is, it transcends the strictly personal and becomes part of the collective pursuit.

Many Bowdoin faculty contribute to and help to shape national and even international scholarly conversations taking place in a variety of academic fields. For these faculty, research is a lifestyle. They teach at Bowdoin, and not at major research universities, because they are eager to share this lifestyle with bright and curious undergraduate students whose quest for knowledge is not merely utilitarian in nature. Their introductory and intermediate courses may be aimed at imparting or building platforms of knowledge essential to understanding important issues and methodologies in their respective fields. But what takes place in the upper divisions of the curriculum, within the context of advanced seminars and

independent study courses, is a different matter. It is within these contexts that you can be seriously challenged to participate in learning that requires a discipline of sustained intellectual inquiry, the engagement of refined critical thought, and the application of paradigms of knowledge.

How do you gain the threshold to this lifestyle? You may arrive gradually, through the collective learning experience of a series of courses taken within a particular field or discipline. If this is the case, you may discover a need for research when you determine that the courses offered within the curriculum do not satisfactorily address your intellectual interests. Or you might become suddenly galvanized, perhaps through a study-away experience that proves genuinely catalytic. Whether the journey is gradual or sudden, the impetus for research stems from a realization that the production of new knowledge always requires independent thought that extends the boundaries of convention and convenience.

Bowdoin has a vibrant research-active environment for students. Each summer more than one hundred students from all disciplines engage in faculty-mentored research, the majority of which is supported by College funds designated solely for student research. Interested students should talk with their faculty mentors and be prepared to submit a fellowship application between mid-February and early March. The College Catalogue offers general information about these awards and the Office of Student Fellowships and Research is happy to answer additional questions.

E. Supplementing and Supporting Your Academic Program with Internship Opportunities

A liberal arts education opens a world of possibilities for you to explore; we encourage you to consider supplementing your academic experience with opportunities available outside of the classroom. In an internship, you may have a chance to apply and refine the skills and knowledge base you acquire through courses across the curriculum as well as in your major(s). While Bowdoin does not award academic credit for internship programs, an internship experience can both supplement your academic program and allow you to gain first-hand insight into an area of potential career interest.

The staff in Bowdoin Career Planning, and the career exploration counselor in particular, will be glad to meet with you to help you determine which internship opportunities might best complement and support your academic study. Through Bowdoin's own database and that of the Liberal Arts Career Network, you have ready access to information on over 10,000 internship opportunities worldwide. If your schedule permits, you might consider an internship near campus during the academic year; however, your options will most likely be greater during summer vacation and winter break.

Whether pursued full time or part time, internships can enhance and enrich your college experience. Increasingly, graduate and professional school admissions committees and employers screening candidates for entry-level positions are

seeking individuals who have demonstrated a capacity to learn and achieve beyond the confines of the classroom. In planning your undergraduate years, you have an exciting array of possibilities from which to select.

F. Exploring Post-Bowdoin Fellowship and Scholarship Opportunities

Each year, Bowdoin students receive some of the country's most prestigious awards for graduate study and international travel. Most of these opportunities are open to seniors and recent graduates (e.g., Rhodes, Fulbright, and Marshall), but some are open to sophomores and juniors (e.g., Udall and Goldwater). You can strengthen your chances of success by preparing for these opportunities well in advance of submission deadlines. Look for fellowships that match your interests and experience, and think about how you can develop your qualifications to the fullest by the time you are eligible to apply.

Prestigious national fellowships are highly competitive and require a lot of work, but the process itself is rewarding. Applicants have the opportunity to synthesize their experiences, articulate goals, and conceptualize the next stage of their life – an important experience, regardless of whether it results in a major award. The Office of Student Fellowships and Research is happy to provide you with information about nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships. This office holds informational meetings throughout the year and sends periodic notices, updates, and reminders via e-mail to students and relevant academic departments.

Chapter 5

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers



A. Degree Requirements

Can one course satisfy two different distribution requirements?

No. Courses may have two distribution designations assigned to them, but only one can count toward distribution requirements. If a course has two distribution designations assigned to it, the course will go into a “pending” status until another course is taken to fulfill one of the distributions. For instance, if a student takes a course with a MCSR, INS designations, it goes into a pending status. In the second semester, the same student takes a course with an MCSR designation. At the end of the semester, the first course will fulfill the INS distribution, and the second course will fulfill the MCRS distribution.

Can a course satisfy a distribution AND a division requirement?

In most cases, yes. The only exception is with the humanities “c” division requirement IF the course also has a VPA

distribution designation. In these instances the course will count only as one or the other (and it will be determined when the student takes the second course, which fulfills one of them).

If I earn a "D" will this course still fulfill a distribution requirement?

Yes.

Can I take a first-year seminar, distribution or division requirement Credit/D/Fail?

No. Students must take these courses as graded if they want them to count toward a requirement.

Can a transfer credit count toward a distribution and/or division requirement?

No. Distribution and division requirements must be fulfilled at Bowdoin. It is recommended that students attempt to complete their distribution and division requirements by the end of their sophomore year. You should plan your course schedules accordingly and anticipate that these requirements MUST be fulfilled at Bowdoin.

Can I complete three majors?

No.

Can I complete two minors?

No.

Can I self-design a minor?

No.

Can I major in Education at Bowdoin?

No, but you can minor in Education, and you can become certified

to teach on the secondary school level in a majority of the states. If you are interest in education, you should visit personnel in the Department of Education.

Can I major in environmental studies at Bowdoin?

The Environmental Studies Program at Bowdoin is a coordinate major, meaning that you must "coordinate" it with a departmental major. See the Bowdoin College Catalogue for more information about this specific major option.

If I am ahead (or behind) in credits, can I change my class year?

No. The class year never changes. However, if you anticipate graduating early, or you do not think that you will meet the requirements for the Bowdoin degree on time, then you should complete the Change of Graduation Year form, which is online, and return it to the Registrar's Office.

What does "Academic Standing" refer to?

Students are expected to make normal progress toward the degree defined as passing (grades of C- or better) the equivalent of four full credit courses each semester. Students may be placed on academic probation or suspension, or dismissed permanently from the College based on your academic performance. Please refer to the College Catalogue for more information. If you get a letter from the Registrar's Office on behalf of the Recording Committee that states that you have been placed on academic probation, you should immediately contact your dean. Your dean will help you to understand what it means to be placed on academic

probation. She or he will discuss resources that are available to you and work with you to help you get back to good academic standing.

B. Non-Bowdoin Credit

Can I receive transfer credit for college courses I took while in high school?

You may transfer in a total of eight prematriculation credits, which may include Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or college credit. Courses must be comparable to Bowdoin's courses and will transfer based on the College's transfer of credit policy. The course must be taught at a college, by college faculty, and with other college students. You must provide three things to be considered for transfer of credit: the Application of Transfer of Credit form approved by the appropriate Bowdoin department chair; a letter from your high school guidance counselor on high school letterhead that states these college courses did not count toward your high school graduation requirements; an official transcript from the college sent directly to the Office of the Registrar at Bowdoin.

Why haven't my Advanced Placement (AP) credits been posted?

If the letter you received from the Registrar indicates they do not have any AP credits on file for you, you should call the College Board (609-771-7300) to request that your AP scores be sent to the Registrar's Office. Second, you should check the AP guidelines on the Registrar's Web site, because some AP credits cannot

be posted until required courses have been completed at Bowdoin. AP credit is reviewed and awarded within the two weeks that follow grades being posted to Bearings. If something is unclear or you have questions, visit the Registrar's Office in Moulton Union.

Can I take additional summer credits at another college or university?

You must obtain prior approval on the Application for Transfer of Credit form from the appropriate department chair for any courses that you plan to transfer to Bowdoin. A maximum of four summer courses can transfer to your degree at Bowdoin. Courses must be taken at a four-year accredited college or university. Bowdoin does not approve credit from community or technical colleges or for online courses. If you do not obtain prior approval using an Application for Transfer of Credit form, then you will need to petition the Recording Committee to receive credit. If you did obtain prior approval for the course(s), check to be certain that an official transcript has been sent to the Registrar's Office at Bowdoin. If you have any questions regarding transfer of credit, please contact the Registrar's Office.

If a course is completed at another institution, will it transfer on a one-to-one basis?

Not necessarily. Refer to the Application for Transfer of Credit form for the transfer of credit translation. It is always best to get this question answered by the host institution's Registrar before you enroll in a class at another institution. Students have

been disappointed in the past when a course does not transfer back to Bowdoin as a full credit.

Can I get credit for an internship program?

No. Bowdoin does not award credit for internship programs.

Which year should I study off campus?

The great majority of students study away in their junior year, and most programs assume that applicants will be at this stage of their college careers. But it's possible to study away as a senior, usually in the fall, and, less commonly, as a sophomore, usually in the spring. Off-campus study in your senior year will, of course, make it impossible to work on an honors project (and other departmental requirements may be affected); and transcripts from spring programs often don't arrive early enough for credit to be transferred in time for graduation. If you wish to study away in the sophomore year, you will encounter some complications; you will need to start planning almost as soon as you arrive at Bowdoin and to demonstrate to a program that you have the level of experience required. If large numbers of applicants are competing for study-away places in the junior year, you will also have to present a particularly convincing academic rationale in your application to Bowdoin.

Will I get full credit for the courses I complete during my off-campus study?

Prior approval from Bowdoin is essential if academic credit earned in an off-campus study program is to count

toward the Bowdoin degree. Most students earn either credit toward a major or minor and/or general Bowdoin credit. The total credit earned is the normal four credits per semester. Whether or not you hope to earn major credit, it's vital for your advisor(s) in your department(s) to be informed of and endorse your off-campus study plans. Their signatures on your application to Bowdoin indicate that they approve of your general plan and, provisionally, that those courses for which you are asking major credit will be acceptable to the appropriate department.

C. Registration and Course Information



What if one of the courses I want is full?

The best advice is to attend the first class and speak with the course instructor. Some faculty members will allow additional students to register for their class. You may also e-mail the instructor ahead of time to see if you can be added to a wait list.

What is the best way to find my advisor for his/her signature?

Your advisor is a busy person. Don't wait until the last minute to get his/her signature. It's best to try the phone or e-mail first and set up an appointment. You may also contact the department coordinator to determine the availability of a faculty member.

How many courses am I allowed to take Credit/D/Fail?

You may elect no more than one course in a normal four-course load or two in a five-course load each semester on a Credit/D/Fail basis. During your entire Bowdoin career you may elect to take no more than four of the thirty-two courses required for graduation on a Credit/D/Fail basis. However, courses that can be taken only Credit/D/Fail (most music ensemble and dance performance courses) are not counted within this restriction. You may not take courses Credit/D/Fail if you are taking fewer than four credits in a semester.

Can I take only a three-credit course load at Bowdoin during a given semester?

The typical load is four credits. The majority of courses at Bowdoin are one-credit courses. If you are a junior or senior who is within sixteen credits of graduating and have accumulated extra credits, you may carry a three-credit load once during any of your last four semesters.

Can I take a five-credit course load at Bowdoin? What about more than five?

Yes. In the case of a five-credit course load, it's a good idea to consult with

your advisor before registering for your courses. It is highly recommended that first-year students do not attempt to take more than four courses in their first semester at Bowdoin.

If I take a reduced course load, will I be charged reduced tuition?

No. You are charged standard tuition and fees regardless of your credit course load. The only exception might be if you have already attended Bowdoin for eight semesters and need additional time to complete your degree.

What if I am unable to complete a class?

It's possible to receive an incomplete in a class given certain unavoidable circumstances (i.e., serious illness, family emergency, and the like). A grade of incomplete must be negotiated between and approved by your instructor, you, and your dean. When an incomplete grade is assigned, a date is selected by which the work must be completed. The instructor will then evaluate the work and submit a final grade. Remember, the length of an incomplete will be equivalent to the amount of time that you are "out of commission." Extensions to incomplete deadlines can be given only by the Dean of Student Affairs and are rarely given.

What do I do if I have a conflict with a class and an athletic contest?

Talk to your course instructor immediately. You are responsible for all material in the class. If the class has a scheduled test or exam, you will want to negotiate an alternative date, but remember

that the faculty member may choose not to allow you to take the test or exam at an alternative time. If this is the case, you must choose between taking the exam or attending the contest. Note: In the case of lab courses, be sure to check with your lab instructor well in advance.

What if I have a question about my final grade in a class, or I think there was a mistake?

You should first contact the instructor of the class. If your grade is incorrect because of the result of a clerical error, the instructor can simply notify the Registrar's Office and the mistake will be corrected. If your grade was not the result of a clerical error and you still have a concern after speaking with the instructor, you will need to appeal to the Recording Committee for a grade change. Recording Committee Petition forms are available in the Student Affairs Office. Note: A grade change for a reason other than a clerical error is extremely unusual.

D. General Questions

Whose signature do I need on this form?

The list below outlines the signatures that are required for registration, adding a class, dropping a class, applying for transfer credits, declaring a major, changing a major, changing a minor, and petitioning the Recording Committee:

- Course Registration: Advisor; Advisor and Instructor for Independent Study or waived prerequisites
- Add: Instructor and Advisor
- Drop: Advisor

- Application for transfer credit: Advisor and Department Representative
- Major declaration: Department Representative (in major)
- Change of major: Department Representative of new major
- Change of minor: Department Representative of new minor
- Recording Committee Petition: Dean; Dean and Instructor if a course is involved

Some Bowdoin Web Resources

A. For an overall A-Z index to Bowdoin Web pages, use bowdoin.edu/help/siteindex

B. Web pages mentioned in this Guide

- www.bowdoin.edu/academic-affairs
- www.bowdoin.edu/athletics
- www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center
- www.bowdoin.edu/catalogue
- www.bowdoin.edu/communications
- www.bowdoin.edu/counseling
- www.bowdoin.edu/cpc
- www.bowdoin.edu/education
- www.bowdoin.edu/cpc/fellowships
- www.bowdoin.edu/health
- www.bowdoin.edu/healthprofessions
- www.bowdoin.edu/ocs
- www.bowdoin.edu/qskills
- www.bowdoin.edu/registrar
- www.bowdoin.edu/reslife
- www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs
- www.bowdoin.edu/writing-project

Office of the Dean of Student Affairs
Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Maine 04011

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