

Maximizing Advising & Registration

Begin Early. Keep an eye out in early October and March for emails from Records and Registration (and most likely from your Academic Department or School) informing you about the upcoming registration window. Planning early alleviates stress, provides more time to talk with advisors, and allows you to make the best informed choices about your coursework and class sequencing.

Check Holds. Registration holds may be placed from your Academic Department, Student Accounts, CAPS or Health Services, Student Conduct or other on-campus offices. Holds can be found in the upper right hand corner of your PAWS Student Center and more information about the hold can be found by clicking on “details.” Students will not be permitted to register for classes if any holds are in place and they **MUST** be removed by the department who has placed the hold.

Know Your Registration Date and Time. You may view your initial enrollment date by visiting the “Enrollment Appointment” section in the PAWS Student Center. Clicking on “details” will allow you to view time of your enrollment appointment. Be mindful that enrollment windows run every two hours, so although you are permitted to register after your window opens, it’s encouraged that students enroll in classes during their window to maximize class availability. Be aware that enrollment appointments are based on earned units. Therefore, students coded as seniors will register before juniors, and students who’ve come into TCNJ with AP or transfer credit will register earlier than their peers who have not.

Understand PAWS and Your Curriculum. Your Academic Requirements Report is an up-to-date snapshot of your program: what you’ve completed, what’s remaining, and your options for liberal learning, your major, and any additional programs you’ve added (minor, Liberal Learning concentration, double major). Understanding this report, as well as any additional departmental advising tools such as a paper planner are critical as they help shape your course planning. If you’re interested in modifying any of your programs (or if you are an Open Option student), a “what if report” can filter your current coursework into your major/minor/concentration of interest, but be mindful that each department has a unique and competitive major application process.

PAWS also houses any Advanced Placement (AP) or transfer credit you may have taken. If a class you’ve taken elsewhere does not appear under your “Transfer Credit” on PAWS, you’ll want to contact the offering school (or College Board for AP) to have the transcript sent directly to TCNJ. If you’ve taken a pre-requisite class elsewhere and it’s not yet on PAWS, you won’t be permitted to register.

Understand your Liberal Learning requirements and how they are unique to your program. Example: while STA 115 Introduction to Statistics might indeed count as a “Quantitative Reasoning” course, your program might require different math classes. Don’t compare your requirements to your peers, as every program differs slightly.

Your Academic Requirements report on PAWS is the official method of tracking your graduation. Therefore, if your advisor or chair has agreed to a substitution, make sure that’s communicated by the department.

Build and Validate Your Shopping Cart. Building your PAWS shopping cart can happen as soon as the schedule is released. The shopping cart is a way for you to store your ideas for classes, check for pre-requisite issues, and prepare for a smoother registration day. You can find classes through PAWS via the “Search for Classes” button on the Student Center, your PAWS Academic Requirements Report, or the “Enrollment” tab on PAWS.

Once you've found a particular class of interest, you are able to view its description and important details including meeting days/times and pre-requisites. You're then able to add the course to your cart. Keep in mind that you are not reserving a seat in the class by building a cart; students must officially enroll in classes during the registration period. Students are encouraged to populate their shopping carts with many options, including multiple sections of the same class to maximize a successful registration. Often, students will map out several scenarios with "1st choice, 2nd choice," etc. Keeping classes in your cart will allow you to easily keep an eye on their status (open/closed as well as number of remaining seats).

Students should validate their shopping carts early to check for potential pre-requisite issues. Some potential problems include: Class reserved for a particular major or class level or pre-requisite or co-requisite courses.

Be mindful "seat holds." Often a class appears open on PAWS but the offering department is keeping a set number of reserved seats for a particular major or level of student.

Seek Advisement. (*See below for tips to maximize your advising appointment)

Enroll! Proper planning can lead to a smoother, less stressful, registration. Keep in mind, while you're allowed to add, drop and swap after your initial registration, you'll want to make sure you have at least one course on your schedule before the end of the registration period to avoid a late fee. Students are permitted to make changes to their schedule through the add/drop period (first week of classes).

***Maximizing Your Advising Appointment**

Taking time to understand your PAWS academic requirements report, reviewing any supplemental advising material from your department (ie: advising newsletter), and building a shopping cart with class options are great steps in preparing for your advising appointment.

It's up to the student to reach out to the academic advisor for an advising appointment. Advisors are listed on the PAWS "Student Center" and can be emailed by clicking on their name. Reaching out the day before your enrollment window is not appropriate as advisors often have many students to accommodate/assist. Students should contact their advisor soon after the schedule of classes is released to schedule an appointment.

Students should come to their advising appointment with classes in their shopping cart and questions in mind. Areas to discuss may include major and minor exploration/planning, study abroad, career and internship opportunities, research, and class sequencing. Your advisor will also want an update on your current classes, so be honest if you need guidance/support.

While many programs require (and all encourage) an advising appointment before registration, successful students maximize the advisor/advisee relationship by establishing an early and frequent connection.