UCM Academic Advising Handbook

This handbook was in use until the academic year 2014-2015, and has been updated for use as a CREATES example of faculty advising handbooks in 2020.

Note:
This material was developed at UCM is included in the CREATES Toolkit for Faculty Advising as a sample higher education advising tool or practice.

For more information and additional educational tools, visit: http://europe-creates.eu

Introduction

Over the years, it has become clear that the freedom of choice and the positive learning climate at UCM generates high expectations. As it is only a fine line between excitement and stress, we are all aware of the need to support our students while we stimulate them to be independent learners, and to reassure them while we tell them to make their own decisions.

As advisors, we are in a unique position: more than anyone else within the formal learning environment of our students, we can do both: stimulate and support, be critical and reassure. Whenever you as an advisor feel you need to assistance, or second opinion, from us at the office of Academic Advising, let us know.

The purpose of this handbook is to present UCM's academic advisors with concise but sufficient and relevant information that will allow them to perform the daunting task of advising our students through three years of liberal arts education.

We have tried to include all the relevant facts and backgrounds, and at the same time not overwhelm you. If, however, you feel that information is missing that should be there, or have other suggestions for improvements, please let us know.

This Handbook consists of 8 sections, each dealing with a particular aspect of your work as advisor. In the margins you will find references to other sources of information. Many of these references contain abbreviations, which are listed and explained below. The references are not (just) there to provide you with additional homework, but also to *familiarize* you with these other sources. Keep in mind that most of the sources, most notably both sets of Rules & Regulations, that all students receive during the introduction days.

References in the margins

Academic advisors continue to play a crucial role in the way students plan their curriculum. Without the feedback and advice from their advisors, many students would probably get lost in the jungle of courses, skills and projects – and that scary thing called "future". On behalf of UCM we thank you very much for all your efforts!

The Academic Advising Coordinators

Abbreviations:

REE: Regulations on Education and Examinations of University College Maastricht

R&R: Rules and Regulations concerning the Bachelor Examination of University College Maastricht

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Section 1: UCM and Academic Advising

A: THE AIMS OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISING PROGRAM

- ◇ *The Mission for Academic Advising at UCM*
- ◇ *Goals*
- ◇ *The roles and responsibilities of academic advisors and their advisees*

The Mission for Academic Advising at UCM

Academic Advising at UCM assists students in the development of educational plans in accordance with the objectives of UCM's open curriculum. Such plans reflect the ambitions and abilities of the individual student, allow for further successful (graduate) education and continued intellectual and professional development. Academic advising at UCM is an important part of the educational program, and as such teaches students how to evaluate their own plans and progress, relate these to the curriculum, and make responsible decisions with regard to curriculum planning.

Within the framework of the curriculum and its requirements, the role of the advisor is to provide constructive and effective feedback and support, based on their academic expertise as well as their understanding of the advisees' academic and professional aspirations. In addition to this primary role, the advisor may refer advisees to other support resources, both within UCM and within UM.

The role of the student as advisee is to assume responsibility for (planning) their education, by gathering and processing information with regards to their own academic progress, the UCM curriculum, graduate programs, informing their advisor in a timely fashion, and by preparing for meetings with their advisors.

Goals

From this mission several goals for academic advising at UCM can be derived. Here a distinction can be made between goals for the specific advising interaction between advisors and advisees on the one hand (A), and goals for academic advising as part of the institutional framework on the other (B):

(A) Advisors and Advisees

- Assist students in assessing their interests and abilities, examining their educational goals, making decisions and developing short-term and long-term plans to meet their objectives with regards to educational, career, and life goals;
- Assist students to understand the educational context within which they are enrolled;
- Provide feedback and support with regard to the selection of appropriate courses and other educational experiences;
- Evaluate and monitor student academic progress (expressed in indicators such as GPA and PR), and the impact on achievement of goals;
- Reinforce student self-direction and self-sufficiency
- Direct students with educational, career or personal concerns, or skill/learning deficiencies to other UM (or other) resources (SSC).
- Monitor and enhance the effectiveness of student evaluation and professionalization of advising.

(B) Advising as part of the institutional framework

- Collect and distribute relevant data about student needs, preferences, and performance for use in institutional decisions and policy
- Provide accurate and timely information and interpret institutional, general education, and major requirements
- Clarify institutional policies and procedures
- Monitor curriculum planning and curriculum development from the perspective of advising, and relay observations and recommendations to the relevant officials
- Make students aware of educational, institutional, and community resources and services (e.g., internship, study abroad, honors, service- learning, research opportunities)
- Evaluate advising as a program, in the larger institutional context.

The roles and responsibilities of academic advisors and their advisees

In order to provide clarity with regards to the mutual responsibilities and roles of advisors and advisees, we have formulated two sets of expectations, one dealing with the expectations advisees are justified to have with regards to their advisors, and another one listing the expectations advisors may have about their advisees.

The role of the academic advisor is:

1. to understand the structure of the UCM curriculum and the academic and administrative processes involved (*specifically: registration, course requirements, study abroad, credit transfer, exemption, withdrawal, external education*), and their aims;
2. to understand the particular academic and other relevant aspirations of their advisees, and their concerns affecting their academic progress. This will be done through individual meetings with advisees;
3. to help their advisees to understand the expected standards of achievement and the likelihood of success in certain areas of study – specifically their intended/chosen concentration and track;
4. to help their advisees to develop an independent and clear understanding of their own educational (and career) objectives, and of how these objectives suit their demonstrated abilities and interests;
5. to help their advisees develop an independent understanding of the relationships between courses, skills, projects, and tracks, concentrations, semester abroad, and the requirements for graduating in a timely and relevant way;
6. to help their advisees to plan their own course of study. Advisors neither grant nor deny *approval* for particular academic actions;
7. to refer advisees to other resources when appropriate (such as the student psychologists, students deans, UM CareerServices, or other support services);
8. to attend meetings and sessions aimed at informing and training.

The role of the advisee is:

- to understand the structure of the UCM curriculum and the academic and administrative processes involved (*specifically: registration, course requirements, study abroad, credit transfer, exemption, withdrawal, external education*), and their aims;

- to acquire the information needed to assume final responsibility for course scheduling, curriculum planning, and the successful completion of all graduation requirements;
- to independently seek the academic (and career) information needed to formulate and meet educational goals;
- to know the relevant policies, procedures, and rules of the College (and Maastricht University and the national Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs if applicable);
- to be prepared with accurate information, relevant information and updated Curriculum Planning Matrix when contacting the advisor;
- to keep the academic advisor up to date about of any developments that are relevant to the academic progress and planning of the advisee.

It goes without saying that academic advising warrants complete and mutual confidentiality between advisor and advisee. It is understood that advisors will not share sensitive information about an advisee with others without the advisee's prior consent.

B. ACADEMIC ADVISING IN PRACTICE

- ◇ *General structure of Academic Advising at UCM*
- ◇ *Course Registration*
- ◇ *Summary of (formal) issues to deal with regarding registration:*
- ◇ *The first meeting between advisor and student*
- ◇ *Disabled students*
- ◇ *Study delay*
- ◇ *Staying informed and up-to-date*
- ◇ *Professional development*
- ◇ *Evaluation*
- ◇ *The Office of Academic Advising*
- ◇ *The UCM Study Advisor*

General structure of Academic Advising at UCM

Each student is assigned an academic advisor in the first semester. In principle a student will keep the same academic advisor for the full three years he or she is enrolled at the college. However, as these assignments are based on the initial academic preferences (intended concentration) of the student and the academic background of the academic advisor, a student might be assigned a different academic advisor after he or she has declared his or her concentration.

Also, if there are insurmountable personal differences of opinion between an advisor and an advisee about the way in which the advisee's curriculum should be approached and discussed, either side or both may request a transfer of the advisee to another advisor. Usually, before making such a decision, the Office of Academic Advising will make at least one attempt to mediate between advisor and advisee.

Section 6 of this handbook lists those moments in the academic year that are particularly relevant to the task of an academic advisor: academic advisor meetings, academic advisor-student meetings and other moments in which contact between student and advisor, or between advisors as a group, will be necessary.

Besides those pre-scheduled moments, during the academic year students are free to contact their advisors and seek their advice. Likewise, an academic advisor may at any time call upon their advisees to discuss with them urgent matters pertaining to their academic performance.

In order to facilitate the work of the academic advisor and in addition to this handbook, UCM has created an online environment for advisors and advising. The Office is always available for answering questions.

Course Registration

Probably the most important meetings between students and their advisor are those concerning course registration. Twice a year all advisees meet with their advisors in individual meetings. The tangible outcome of this meeting should be a complete registration form, signed by both the student and his/her advisor. It is important to note that the advisor's signature does *not represent a formal approval* of the courses selected by the student. The advisor's signature is an indication of the fact that student and advisor actually did sit down to discuss the plans and progress of the student, and his/her course selection for next semester.

If students wish to do any kind of exceptional course work (third course, third skill, external education, etc.), this will require approval from the Examination Committee. It will be the student's responsibility to direct such a request to the Examination Committee before expiration of the deadline indicated for such a request; however, it will be useful to discuss the content of the request with the academic advisor. The student's course selection is considered to be a definitive choice, and should therefore not be taken lightly.

Students are expected to make an appointment for the registration meeting through the UCM Secretariat. The Office of Academic Advising will send reminders to advisors eight weeks in advance of the actual meetings, asking them to inform the secretariat about their availability during the course registration week.

Students are responsible for preparing an updated version of their curriculum planning matrix, and preferably making it available to their advisor one week prior to the meeting the latest.

Curriculum Planning Matrix, see pages 23-24, and appendices

When students select courses, please remind them of the fact that they need to check the schedules for these courses, in order to avoid clashes between schedules. (This means that no courses should be selected that are listed on the same row on the course registration form.)

Summary of (formal) issues to deal with regarding registration:

- Updated *curriculum planning matrix* necessary: discuss plans and progress
- Requests for exceptional course load to Examination Committee
- Approval for waiver of prerequisites obtained from the Course Coordinator (hard copy of e-mail to be attached to course registration form)
- End of second semester: declare concentration, request for Interdisciplinary Concentration to Examination Committee
- Avoid conflicting schedules of courses (courses listed within the same row on the course registration form cannot be taken together)
- Check:
    - No more than four 1000-level (introductory) courses within the concentration – please note this is a maximum, not a *minimum requirement!*
    - At least four 3000-level courses within concentration
    - First year Skills and Projects are mandatory
    - All four core courses are mandatory, but students are free to decide *when* they take them.

The first meeting between advisor and student

At the beginning of their first semester, students will meet with their advisor for the first time. This meeting serves two purposes:

1. It will be the first mutual introduction, during which the background, plans and expectations of the student should be discussed.
2. Registration for the courses the student wants to follow during the second course period of that semester. (Students are given the opportunity to indicate their course preferences for the first course period as part of the

overall application and registration procedure).

During the introductory week at the beginning of the academic year students receive instructions on how they can prepare for this first meeting. As part of these instructions, they are asked to make a (very tentative) list of courses they would like to follow, and to write a rationale for their course preferences.

Disabled students

UCM and UM allow for special provisions and services for disabled students. The sooner any disability has been formally recognized the better. If a student during the first meeting with an advisor indicates that he/she may have a handicap that may affect their academic progress, the advisor should contact the Office of Academic Advising. The Examination Committee of UCM needs to grant approval for special regulations and/or exemptions from existing regulations regarding examination, and normally does so on the basis of a formal assessment by the Studentendecanen at SSC.

Your role as an advisor is to alert advisees to whom this may apply to the fact that they should contact SSC Studentendecanen directly, or via the UCM Study Advisor – if they haven't already.

Study delay: not 'ready' yet?

One of the risks involved in an open curriculum such as we have, is that students may continue to feel – even after having built a solid and interesting concentration – that they are not 'done' yet; that they need to stay longer to 'complete' their education. This may be the case sometimes, but oftentimes these students seem to underestimate what they have already achieved, and that it is really time for them to move on to the next level. Based on the experience of many UCM alumni, we know that many UCM students are much more intimidated by the graduate level than is warranted by the level of knowledge and skills that they have acquired at UCM. Be critical when an advisee claims that s/he is not yet 'ready' to graduate. Ask what criteria they use, what these are based upon, and how much research they have done into what is expected of them at the next level. Encourage them to contact alumni, to use the internet, and most importantly, to tell you (and themselves) the 'story' of all that they have done and learned. Making that explicit usually helps them see that they are more 'ready' than they thought they were.

Staying informed and up-to-date

As we constantly remind our students of the importance of being and staying well-informed about developments regarding the curriculum, other regulations and social life at UCM, it would seem logical that this necessity also applies to our staff, including the academic advisors.

The Office of Academic Advising will be responsible for updating and informing the community of advisors through e-mails and professional development sessions – and hopefully an online platform in the near future. Likewise, academic advisors are expected to stay informed by taking advantage of any source of information relevant. If you, as an advisor, have any questions regarding procedures and proceedings at UCM, you encouraged to ask, and inform the Coordinator about possible lacks, gaps and holes in the information process.

The primary sources of information for advisors are:

1. This Handbook
2. The Student Hanbook (available again in printed form!);
3. E-mails and professional development sessions from and organized by the Office of Academic Advising
4. the Coordinators and if necessary (preferably with a c.c. to the Coordinators) other officials at UCM
5. The UCM Course Catalogue

Professional development

As we believe that merely consuming information and keeping oneself up-to-date is not enough to become and stay an effective advisor, who understands and believes in what he/she is doing, we will also gradually increase the variety of ways in which advisors can develop themselves. In addition to the online environment for advisors, we continue to see "in real life" meetings as a vital means to nurture the sense of community, and to facilitate direct exchange of information and experience between advisors, and between advisors and the Office of Academic Advising. Every academic year we visit the various faculties, departments and schools where UCM advisors are located, to discuss current issues and gather input that will be used to create an optimal structure for professional development. We will also continue to host so-called *Practice analysis* sessions, during which we provide updates on development at UCM, and invite academic advisor to engage in exchanging experiences and ideas on the basis of actual and/or fictitious cases.

Evaluation and Recognition

Academic advising is evaluated annually. Based on this student evaluation, we will make changes and improvements to the advising program, and recommendations to individual advisors. The evaluation survey is conducted in conjunction with course registration in May. The questionnaire is based upon the mission and learning objectives for advising, and a sample copy can be found in Section 9 of this handbook.

Based on the annual evaluation an award is given to the two 'advisors of the year', one for a UCM-based advisor, one for an advisor from one of the other departments of Maastricht University.

The Office of Academic Advising

The overall academic advising effort at UCM is being coordinated by the Office of Academic Advising (OAA), room XX at UCM. The coordinators monitor the advising process, and provide academic advisors and students with general updates and other relevant information. On principle, the coordinators will not deal with advisees (other than their own) at the specific, individual level, unless this is deemed necessary by either advisor, student or both. The Coordinators are:
XX
They can both be reached via e-mail at:

ucm-academicadvising@maastrichtuniversity.nl

The UCM Student Counselor

In order to close the gap between academic advising, which focuses on curriculum planning and study-related issues, and support services offered by Maastricht University – e.g. financial advice, psychological counseling –the Office Academic Advising also includes two Student Counselors. The role of the Student Counselors is to assist students with issues that may not relate *directly* to curriculum planning, but that may affect their studies nonetheless. If students are homesick, have motivation or other psychological issues, financial problems, or are otherwise dealing with issues beyond the role of the academic advisor, the Student Counselors are available for help – of proper further reference to other support services within or outside Maastricht University.

Furthermore the Student Counselors will pay special attention to the students in their first year, by leading the Milestones workshops (mandatory for first year students), and by participating in the First year students Monitor meetings with students who are at risk and providing follow-up support for them.

The study advisor is X, UCM room X, email address

C: Further Reading – Background and context: Academic advising and the open curriculum

Open Curriculum: one step beyond Liberal Arts

UCM is characterized by having an 'open curriculum'. Students to a large extent choose their own courses, and thus build an individual curriculum, geared towards their personal interests and ambitions. This freedom to choose is essential, but it can be a burden as well. This is why UCM feels it should support students in the process of curriculum planning. Academic advisors work with a small group of students whom they help selecting relevant courses, and reflecting upon their overall interests, capabilities and educational goals. This section briefly describes the background of the idea of an 'open curriculum', and the role of academic advising.

The UCM curriculum is often compared to the "liberal arts" curriculum that is so common in many American institutions for undergraduate education. On most occasions, such a quick reference will suffice. In order, however, to thoroughly understand the actual structure and philosophy of the UCM curriculum, and to fully appreciate its implications for academic advising, we need to take a closer look.

The model that UCM has adopted is a variation on a theme within the broader genre of liberal arts education. It is most commonly referred to as the "open curriculum", which emphasizes the large extent of choice that students have within this particular structure. The concept of an "open curriculum" is in itself still "open" enough to allow for several types to exist within the category, but the commonalities within the basic assumptions allow for a list of desired "learning outcomes" that most open curriculum institutions share. A list of such learning outcomes can be found in *The Values of the Open Curriculum: an Alternative Tradition in Liberal Education*, a so-called "White Paper" published

June 2006 under the auspices of the Teagle Foundation . This foundation aims at promoting the development of liberal education by "marshalling the intellectual and financial resources necessary to ensure that today's students have access to challenging, wide-ranging, and enriching college educations."[1] The white paper is the outcome of an exchange of ideas and experiences between several leading US (undergraduate) institutions, including schools such as Brown University, Amherst College, Wesleyan University and Sarah Lawrence College.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the White Paper is that the participating schools recognize that higher education is about more than the mere transfer of certain specific types of knowledge and skills. Rather, they see this stage in the lives of undergraduate students as formative for the entire personality, during which students ideally develop into individuals who can make their own choices, reflect on their ambitions and abilities, and form their own, educated and critical opinion on issues relevant to them. This implies a broadening of the goals of higher education, and consequently puts the notion of "teaching" in a wider context. Or, as it is put in the white paper: "The open curriculum is based on a belief in the power of student choice exercised in collaboration with faculty. […] Such a curriculum gives students great freedom but expects considerable responsibility in return, and it requires significant faculty engagement to shape, support and inspire students learning."

The desired learning outcomes as are mentioned in the white paper are that students:

1. Become autonomous learners with intellectual self-reliance;
2. Become "self-starters" who engage in self-initiated work for which they feel ownership;
3. Develop a love of learning and a habit of life-long learning;
4. Acquire agility in the imaginative use of intellectual, critical and creative resources;
5. Develop a facility with a range of analytic vocabularies, textual styles, and modes of problem-solving and an understanding of interdisciplinary approaches;
6. Achieve competence in understanding and negotiating the differences between cultures;
7. Acquire an ability to develop an independent, critical perspective on a problem or issue;
8. Learn how to use and apply knowledge;
9. Develop ethical and social responsibility.

These objectives clearly resonate in the "aims of the degree program" as these are listed in article 1.3 of the Regulations on Education and Examinations of University College Maastricht. Furthermore, the learning outcomes from the Teagle White Paper have played a pivotal role in the formal *self-evaluations* of UCM.

"Advising is teaching"

As is being observed in the White Paper, "*An emphasis on developing the capacity for problem-solving and on promoting creativity, curiosity, and independent thinking is […] characteristic of the culture of learning that an open curriculum makes possible. Alumni and faculty agree, however, that these*

[1] Retrieved from the internet (Sept. 2007): http://www.teaglefoundation.org/about/mission.aspx

positive outcomes are not guaranteed, but require effective, engaged advising."

From the perspective of the learning outcomes for the open curriculum, academic advising takes on a meaning that goes beyond mere assistance in registration issues, the so-called "prescriptive advising". A stronger emphasis on the developmental aspect of the learning process during higher education, suggest that the advisor, by stimulating the students to reflect upon his or her own development, and by helping the students in making choices, is actually "teaching". The slogan "academic advising is teaching", that rapidly gains popularity in America, should be understood against this backdrop of a *developmental* philosophy of higher education.

Such an interpretation of academic advising does not mean that advisors are now to be seen as therapists. Advisors "teach" by acting as a "sparring partner" and by providing feedback to the plans and considerations of their advisees. Often times, this feedback will be based on the specific academic expertise of the advisors in their own academic discipline: which courses seem essential, what would be interesting and current issues to explore, what is 'hot' right now, etc. However, particularly at the start of the advisee's academic career, the emphasis will be on a more general – educated and commonsensical – approach, aimed at helping the student to develop a sense of direction. At any stage of their studies, the academic advisor will provide his/her advisees with feedback and incentives to actively take responsibility for how they organize their studies, and to formulate concrete answers to questions such as:

- What do I find interesting?
- How do I combine my various interests into a meaningful curriculum?
- How do I evaluate my own academic progress?
- What kind of Master's program would I like to pursue upon graduation from UCM?
- What are my strengths, and where do I recognize the need and possibilities for improvement?

The role of the advisor is limited to the extent that academic advisors can and will not be expected to act as counselors in every respect: if a student feels hindered in accomplishing their academic goals by issues which are in themselves not of an educational or academic nature (i.e. stress, mental depression, anxiety etc.), the academic advisor will guide him/her to specific forms of assistance and support or counseling, as are being provided by services such as the UM Student Service Center.

All students benefit from Academic Advising! From the perspective of a more developmental approach to advising, it is obvious that good and solid academic advising is as crucial to the successful student as it is to those who are struggling their way through the curriculum. Both need regular feedback on what they are doing and planning, and will benefit from the advisor's input.

NACADA – the Global Community for Academic Advising

Since the Summer of 2007, there has been a very fruitful cooperation between UCM and NACADA, the American *National Academic Advising Association*. The core philosophy of NACADA, that advising is an integral part of the learning experience of students, and as such, of the curriculum, resonates strongly with the way we see advising at UCM. For those advisors who would like to read more about advising, we refer to the NACADA website, where a host of information is available, also for non-members.

Section 2. About the degree program

A. Rules and regulations

- ◇ *Two important documents: REE and RRBE*
- ◇ *Entry requirements for UCM*
- ◇ *Binding Study Advice (BSA)*

Two important documents: REE and RRBE

The structure and organization of the degree program at UCM and the examination procedure are laid down in detail in the *Regulations on Education and Examinations of UCM*, and the *Rules and Regulations concerning the Bachelor Examination of UCM*. What follows in this section is based on these two documents, but in cases of doubt or dispute about the rules and their implications, one should always consult the Examination Committee. The most recent editions of both REE and RRBE (or R&R) will be made available to all academic advisors at the beginning of the academic year. Students receive a copy of the regulations at the beginning of the academic year. For issues regarding the Rules & Regulations, please refer students to the *Examination Committee.* They are the authority that applies and interprets the rules and regulations (that were instituted with the approval of the elected Student Council). Academic advisors are not expected to know all the details, finesses and implications of every article of the Rules & Regulations.

Entry requirements for UCM

UCM selects its students. Above and beyond having obtained a VWO diploma or equivalent thereof and having obtained a sufficient level of proficiency in the English language, students are expected to display clear academic interest and capability. However, the application procedure includes an extensive application form to be filled in by the applicant, a personal statement by the applicant, as well as an interview with the applicant by two staff members or a staff member and a member of the Student Interview Team, who act on behalf of the UCM Board of Admissions. Based on an overall evaluation upon completion of the application procedure, the Board decides on the application.

Binding Study Advice (BSA)

As of the academic year 2004-2005, at the end of their first year UCM students receive an advice as to the continuation of their studies at UCM, in accordance with Dutch legislation on higher education (WHW). This advice will be *binding*, meaning that if the advice is negative, students can no longer study at UCM. With the exception of certain clauses regarding hardship, students will be required to have obtained at least 45 ECTS out of 60 ECTS by the end of their first year. In order to monitor their progress, and thus allowing for an 'early warning' of possible problems later on, the Examination Committee reviews all first year transcripts at the end of the first semester. Students whose performance is cause for concern will be invited by the Examination Committee to discuss their situation, as well as ways to improve their performance. Academic advisors will be notified in case one or more of their advisees will receive such an invitation. In addition to this advice at the end of the first year, students who fail to obtain 60 ECTS before the end of their second year will also not be allowed to continue their education at UCM.

B. THE DEGREE PROGRAM

- ◇ *The Curriculum: overview of the basic structure*
- ◇ *Course prerequisites*
- ◇ *The Concentration*
- ◇ *Coherence within the concentration*
- ◇ *Interdisciplinary Concentrations*
- ◇ *The Core Courses*
- ◇ *The General Education Requirement*
- ◇ *Skills and Projects*
- ◇ *Language Courses as Skills*
- ◇ *Capstone*
- ◇ *URG Undergraduate Research at UCM*
- ◇ *Credit transfer and exemptions from required courses*
- ◇ *Semester Abroad*
- ◇ *External education*

The Curriculum: overview of the basic structure

REE par 3

In order to graduate, students should meet the basic criterion of having obtained a total of 180 ECTS (this implies have passes a sufficient amount of course, skills and projects with at least a "C" or 2.0 grade; for specific distribution of these credits, see below).
During the sixth and final semester, students have to complete a Capstone assignment, which – although not formally listed as such in the REE – for all intends and purposes may be considered a third graduation requirement. Capstone will be explained below. The table below gives the various parts of the curriculum that together yield 180 ECTS, the amount of credits necessary to graduate: Core Courses (4 courses), General Education (4 courses), Concentration (16 courses), Skills (10 courses), Projects (5 projects).

Core: 4 compulsory introductory courses x 5 ECTS =	20 ECTS
General Education: 2 x 2 courses outside concentration x 5 ECTS =	20 ECTS
Concentration: 16 courses x 5 ECTS = *no more than* 4 introductory or 1000 level *at least* 4 advanced or 3000 level	80 ECTS
Skills: 10 skills courses x 2,5 ECTS = 4 introductory or 1000 level (mandatory) 6 intermediate (2000 level) *or* advanced (3000 level)	25 ECTS
Projects: 6 projects x 5 ECTS = 2 introductory or 1000 level (mandatory) 3 intermediate (2000 level) *or* advanced (3000 level)	25 ECTS
Capstone (3000-level)	10 ECTS
Total	**180 ECTS**

All courses offered by UCM are listed in the *Course Catalogue* with both a course *title* and a course *code*. The course code refers to the part of College program to

which a course belongs, as well as the level of the course. The course code consists of three letters and a four digit number (e.g. HUM2052). These are the three-letter abbreviations:

HUM	Humanities	PRO	Projects
SSC	Social Sciences	COR	Academic Core
SCI	(Life) Sciences	SKI	Academic Skills
CAP	Capstone	EXT	External Education
UGR	Undergraduate Research (PEERS)		

The first digit of the four digit number in the course code indicates the level of each course:

1 = 1000-level	introductory courses (are open to all students)
2 = 2000-level	intermediate courses (may have prerequisites)
3 = 3000-level	advanced courses (do have prerequisites)

With the introduction of the MUSL administrative system, we moved from two-letter/three digits codes to the current system. *Please note however that officially we will continue to refer to the introductory level as "one hundred level", instead of "one thousand", etc.*

Course prerequisites

The differentiation into three different course levels, 1000, 2000 and 3000, has implications for the order in which students should want and are allowed to take these courses.

A 1000-level course presupposes no specific background knowledge, whereas a 2000-level course does; and most 3000-level courses require the rather specific background knowledge that is usually provided by 2000-level courses.

The UCM course catalogue indicates when specific prerequisites, in the form of previous courses, do apply. However, also where no explicit indication of an expected or required entry level is given, it is important that students (and their advisors) thoroughly familiarize themselves with the content and examination criteria of the intended course.

If students feel they qualify for a course even though they do not meet the prerequisites, they should obtain prior permission to enroll in the course from the course coordinator. Only with this prior approval students can register for the course. Students have to print the e-mail with the approval of the course coordinator and attach it to the course registration form.

Quite often, higher level courses that are "open" to all students still implicitly assume a certain amount of knowledge and skills that can only be acquired in courses within the same subject area, but at a lower level. Students should be made aware of this, to avoid frustration and poor results.

The Concentration

The large majority of our students have enrolled with the ultimate goal of qualifying themselves for admission into a master's program. Choosing a concentration and, within that concentration, a coherent set of courses, plays an important role towards fulfilling that goal. At UCM, students can choose from three concentrations: Social Sciences, Humanities, and Life Science. They may also opt for a combination of courses from two or three concentrations and thus

create their own "Interdisciplinary Concentration", an option which will be briefly explained below. Students declare a concentration at the end of their first year, when they sign up for courses for the first semester of the second year. As this is a decision with profound consequences for the remainder of their career at UCM, as well as their future prospects in terms of further study or employment, it has to be well-considered.

Coherence within the concentration

No matter which concentration students choose, it will be crucial that the courses they select within that concentration form a coherent set. The following questions/criteria may help in that process:

1. Is there a clear and single, common 'theme' underlying the various courses that I am taking?
2. Is there a clear and logical progression in level and content?
3. Do these courses optimally fit my interests and capabilities?
4. Does this course selection work towards meeting the entry requirements of the (range of) master's program(s) that I am interested in?

These questions presuppose some serious soul-searching and extensive research on the part of the student. It is the academic advisor's role to assist and "spar", but not to do this work *for* the student!

Please note that within a concentration, students may take no more than four courses at the 1000-level, and should take at least four courses at the 3000-level.

Interdisciplinary Concentrations

REE art. 3.3.11

For those students who wish to combine subject areas from more than one concentration, it is possible to create an "interdisciplinary concentration". These students write a formal request to the Examination Committee at the end of the first year, indicating which subject areas / concentrations they wish to combine, and providing an explanation of why and how they want to do this. The criteria mentioned above will play an important role in the Committee's decision whether or not to approve the intended "interdisciplinary". The request form can be found on EleUM: UCM Students>Forms.

The Core Courses

REE art. 3.2.1

The four courses that every student is required to take are considered to be fundamental for a broad academic education. They are:

1. Philosophy of Science (COR1002)
2. Contemporary World History (COR1003)
3. Political Philosophy (COR1004)
4. Modeling Nature (COR1005)

Core courses can be followed at any given time during the three years at UCM. They are offered twice a year; students need to check the course catalogue to see when they are offered. Those core courses that also serve as a prerequisite or preparation for higher level courses the student intends to follow should best be taken early on, but others should be taken at moments that are most appropriate, in relation to the availability of other courses and other factors, such as semester abroad.

REE art.32.2.

The General Education Requirement

Once a student has declared a concentration s/he has thereby also automatically determined the nature of the General Education component of the curriculum which has to be filled with two courses from each of the two concentrations that were *not* chosen.
In the case of an "interdisciplinary concentration" this is of course no longer possible. The breadth of scope already implied by the interdisciplinary concentration waves the requirements of having two sets of clearly distinct courses from other concentrations taken under general education. In this case, general education will consist of two courses from the 'remaining concentration' and two other courses, which the student is free to choose.

REE art 3.3.6-7

Skills and Projects

In addition to the regular courses students participate in Skills and Projects. Skills run parallel to the courses; Projects are planned in the month following courses, hence in January and June. During their first year all students participate in the same mandatory Skills and Projects, which are all focused on basic academic skills like critical analysis, reading and writing, research methods, time management, etc. During their second and third year, students may choose from a growing number of Skills. They continue to be aimed at further developing various skills, such as writing, presentation and argumentation.
The Projects usually involve an entire tier or year of students, and combine academic content with skill: writing and discussing an academic paper, academic debate, ThinkTank, etc.

REE art. 3.3.8-9

Language Courses as Skills

A special case of Skills are the Language Courses offered by the Language Centre of Maastricht University. During their 3rd and 4th semesters students may take language courses, *up to a total of two*. These courses usually overlap two regular course periods, starting half-way the first period, ending half-way the second. Taking a language course means that the work load would be distributed over a semester like this:

Course period 1	**Course period 2**
2 regular courses	2 regular courses
1 skill period *1*	***or:*** 1 skill during period *2*
And: 1 Language Course, starting in period 1, ending in period 2	

Please note that students should register for the language courses themselves, although prior consent from the academic advisor is necessary.
The course needs to be indicated on the course registration form, but that alone is not enough to guarantee a place: students should realize that *two registration*

deadlines are being observed: one at UCM, one at the Language Center.

Capstone

REE art. 3.3.10

Capstone is the culmination of a students academic course work at UCM. The Capstone program enables students to express their individual academic profile through a scholarly project during the last semester at UCM. As a subsidiary goal Capstone assists senior students in the preparation for the transition from undergraduate education to a master program or the labor market.
Capstone is a 19-weeks module for which students receive 10 ECTS. During regular group meetings, students receive general instruction and feedback from peer and a tutor. In addition, each student has an individual Capstone advisor. Students themselves are responsible for arranging this Capstone advisor. The Capstone advisor is a faculty member of Maastricht University who, on the basis of his or her academic background can provide the student with advice and guidance on the content of the Capstone.

URG Undergraduate Research at UCM

The undergraduate research projects are part of a more broadly defined project "PEERS", in which UCM will explore new ways of research and learning at the undergraduate level. PEERS will develop along three, equally important axes or dimensions: student-student collaboration; student-staff collaboration; and collaboration between academe and the 'outside world'.
Within that broader context, the overall objective of the undergraduate research project is to prepare students for graduate research by introducing them to and educating them in the relevant skills and knowledge. The project will emphasize the ability to, individually and in collaboration with others, identify and formulate academic problems, and to select and apply relevant research methodology accordingly. In addition to developing skills and knowledge proper, the project also aims at reinforcing the awareness of how academic work relates to society: how it may respond to trends and issues in society, and how it may initiate new ideas.
Small groups of students will conduct research under the guidance of a senior researcher of one of the UM departments, in conjunction with a UCM staff member. They will act as a group, but engage in individual work as well. During the project, specific skills will be addressed at the appropriate time: e.g. problem analysis, writing proposal at the beginning, followed by data selection and analysis, towards reporting and presenting at the end. This will be done by the researcher leading the project as well as through centrally arranged lectures/workshops for all participating students in all projects.
The PEERS URG project will replace two skills and one project, similar to the Capstone project. PEERS and other projects at UCM will mutually affect each other: topics may evolve out of other projects such as ThinkTank or Conference, but from the undergraduate research projects may also emerge new topics *for* such projects. Eventually, students will select *courses* relevant to their PEERS research as well.

Credit transfer and exemptions from required courses

REE art.2.6

For students who have transferred from another university, it may be useful to request a credit transfer or exemption from mandatory courses. At a student's request the Examination Committee may exempt a student from required

courses (core or skills), or allow a credit transfer, up to a combined total of 60 credits.

Exemption means that a student is no longer required to take a certain course. In the case of exemption, the graduation requirement (normally 180 ECTS) is lowered by the amount of credits carried by the exempted course(s). Thus, if a student is granted exemption from two courses, it means this student needs 170 ECTS in order to graduate.

Credit Transfer means that a student may use credits received for prior coursework towards graduation at UCM. It is important for students to realize that transferred course credit will have an immediate impact on the nature of their curriculum. A student who is granted a credit transfer for, say, six courses in economics, will have no other choice than to build a concentration involving a substantial amount of economics. This may be just what the student wants, but if the student came to UCM with the intention of doing something different from what he/she has done before, it might be wiser to opt for a smaller credit transfer.

Exemptions and Credit Transfer may be granted on one of two conditions: that the student

- either has completed in contents and level similar module or modules of a degree program at another university, but these credits have not been part of a fulfilled graduation requirement yet;
- or demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and skills with regard to the module concerned as a result of his or her work or professional experience.

The Examination Committee decides upon credit transfer and exemptions prior to the student's enrollment in the degree program. The Examination Committee decides on the credit value of the transferred education and their relation to the modules (Courses, Skills and Projects) in the degree program. It is important that students clearly indicate from which courses from their previous school they want to transfer credits to their UCM transcript, or from which courses they feel they should be exempted based on coursework at (a) previous school(s), and that they provide the Examination Committee with any information on those courses, that may help the committee in understanding the nature and gravity of the course(s).

Semester Abroad

REE art 3.4

Students have the option of *one* semester of studying abroad. This will take place during either the 4th or 5th semester. It is important that students who intend to spend a semester abroad start making arrangements on time. These arrangements include making a proper plan as to how the courses they will follow abroad will fit into their curriculum: will it allow them to fulfill concentration requirements; how will it interfere with requirements like the core and the general education requirement; etc.

The amount of credits taken abroad is limited to 30 ECTS, and the amount of credit taken abroad will decrease the amount of credit a student can accumulate at another UM department or through other forms of external education.

Specific rules and procedures pertaining to the semester abroad program can be found in the Semester Abroad Guide.

External education

REE art 3.4

For students who have progressed to the advanced level courses, and who need courses to strengthen their concentration, which are not offered through UCM, there is a possibility of enrolling in courses offered at other UM faculties. This possibility is limited to the 3000-level, and requires prior approval by the UCM Examination Committee. Registration for such courses at the other faculty should be done by the student, who needs to make sure that there will be no scheduling issues between external courses, and the UCM program. As a rule of thumb, courses offered in the third year of the undergraduate program at the other faculty will be considered 3000-level, but as this is not always the case, it is important that students provide the Examination Committee with sufficient information (e.g. course description from faculty catalogue).

Please note that students are required to obtain a minimum of 120 ECTS through courses taken at UCM. This is particularly relevant to students who are considering exemptions/credit transfer, external education and *a semester abroad!*

Section 3: Curriculum Planning

- ◇ *Choosing courses: freedom within certain limitations*
- ◇ *The Curriculum Planning Matrix*
- ◇ *Curriculum Planning support*
- ◇ *New developments in curriculum planning support*

Choosing courses: freedom within certain limitations

At UCM, students have a relatively large freedom to choose the courses they want to enroll in. As we saw in Section 2, there are certain formal limitations to that freedom, such as the requirement to enroll and succeed, at one point or other during their studies at UCM, in the four core courses. Another requirement dictated by the Regulations deals with the proper balance between concentration and general education courses, and the levels at which these courses are taken. REE and RRBE are clear on these limitations, and they are summarized in the table in Section 2.

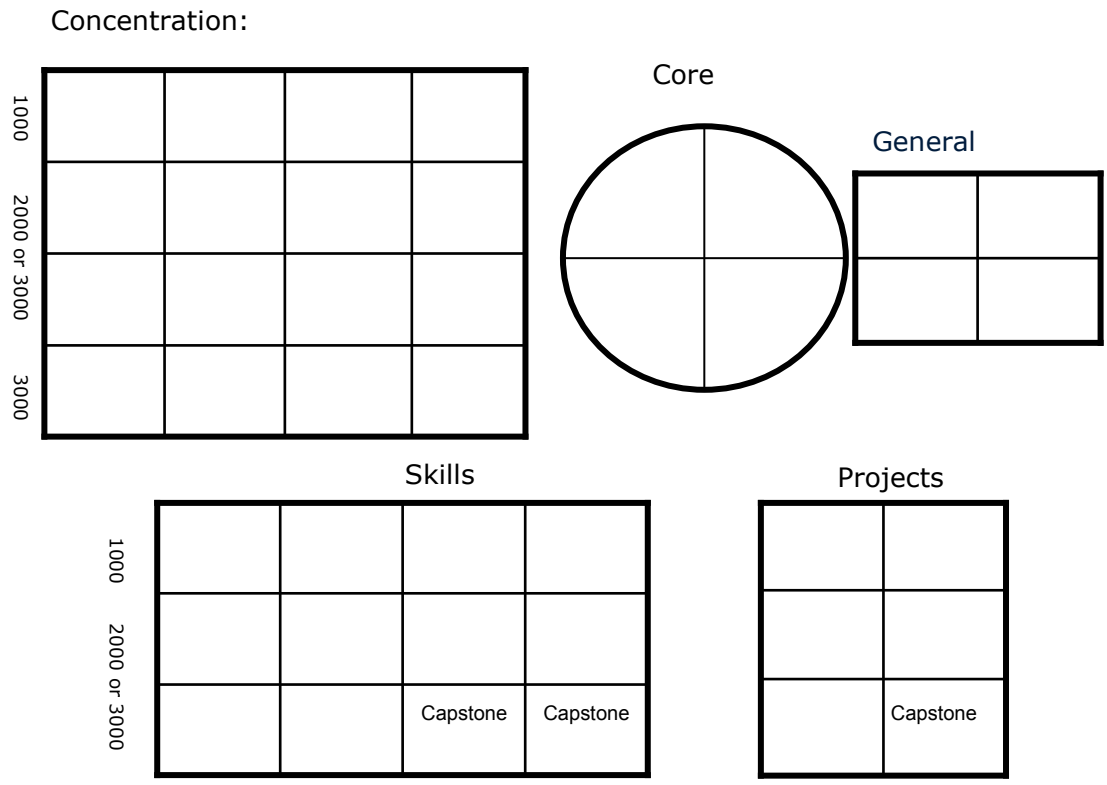
Less clear, but at least equally important, are those limitations that are due to the individual aspirations, capabilities and determination of your advisees. Students who come to UCM with a clear idea or even plan to focus on a specific concentration, will plan their first and following years differently than those who need their first year to further discover their interests and ambitions. The former type of student, as a rule, allows for more planning ahead than the latter. In general, these are important factors to take into consideration. They may weigh differently, depending on the individual student's expectations and situation, but they are relevant to every student:

1. Prior performance in various disciplines and skills (high school, previous university/college experience);
2. Performance in various disciplines and skills at UCM;
3. Desired concentration;
4. Post-UCM plans;
5. The availability of courses now and in the future: next period, next semester, next year;
6. The possibility / desire to spend a semester at a university or college abroad (4th or 5th semester)

The Curriculum Planning Matrix

In order to provide students and advisors with an at-a-glance overview of the individual curriculum, UCM has developed a 'curriculum planning matrix'. The core of the matrix is a set of boxes, representing the various components of the degree program: concentration, core courses, general education, skills and projects. By entering each course they pass into this matrix, students keep a quick overview of how far they are, and which requirements still need to be fulfilled.

The Matrix comes with an overview per semester, where students can fill in what they did and what they want to do per semester, but the key part of the form is an overview per graduation requirement. An example of that part of the Matrix is given on the next page.



We strongly recommend advisors to require students to bring an updated version of their curriculum planning matrix to all meetings, specifically those concerning course registration. An old fashioned but effective method for using the matrix is to fill in those courses that are passed with pen, and those that are planned with pencil. If each update is done properly, it will be obvious from the matrix how many 1000-level courses a student still can take within the concentration, or which core courses still need to be taken, etc.

Curriculum Planning support

Above and beyond the assistance provided by academic advisors, UCM offers more support with regards to curriculum planning. During the introductory days (at the beginning of the academic year) students receive information about curriculum planning through a presentation by the coordinator of academic advising, and they all do two hands-on exercises on curriculum planning. One exercise is about an imaginary student who has certain objectives he wants to reach at UCM – students are asked to make a curriculum plan for his first three semesters. For this exercise, they use the student handbook and course catalogue as primary sources. An example of this "Bob" exercise can be found on page 38 of this handbook.

The second exercise forms the first step in actual curriculum planning for the individual student, as they tentatively plan their first year, and describe their hopes and ambitions. The information is shared with the respective academic advisors. (See page 41 of this handbook.)

During the mandatory skills training " Intro to Academic Skills II", students once more work on their curriculum planning in an organized and structured fashion, and prepare a document for their advisors similar to the one made during introduction.

Monitoring first year students
UCM follows its first year students intensively, inviting those who failed one or more courses during their first period for a meeting in which we discuss the reasons for these start-up problems, and discussing possible solutions. We continue to monitor all first year students, and invited those back who were still having difficulties passing courses at the end of the first semester, and the end of the 4th period.

Web tool and Milestones
Two tools are available to students, to help take take charge of planning their curriculum.
The first tool is a web-based program, developed at UCM, which provides students with the opportunity to find information on 550+ UCM alumni. By submitting their actual – or hypothetical – individual curriculum into the online version of the curriculum planning matrix, students see where alumni, who took similar courses to them, went to do their graduate education. There will always be several options, and students can 'play around' with courses, to see what avenues they have been or could be creating for themselves…
In conjunction with the web-tool, there is an 'academic advising' curriculum of our students, consisting of workshops and other co-curricular activities. The "advising syllabus" thus developed be revolves around "Milestones", important steps we think students should have taken or objectives they should have attained at specific points in their curriculum. The idea of the web tool and the Milestones is NOT to prescribe certain curricula; the emphasis in the advising effort will always be on the need and desirability to truly match one's own ambitions and capabilities with the graduate level. We do expect however that seeing examples of what other did before you, will have a reassuring and empowering effect on students.
You will find an overview of these Milestones in the appendices.
Working with the web tool and the Milestones helps students identify the steps they need to take to develop a better understanding of what they find interesting, and what their strengths and weaknesses are – and how this relates to finding suitable graduate-level programs.

Section 4. Beyond academic advising: referring to other support offices within UM

- ◇ *Student psychologists*
- ◇ *Student Deans*
- ◇ *Career counselors*

As stated above, we believe academic advising should be about *academic* issues. Realizing however, how academic advisors will often be the first person students turn to, regardless the nature of their problem, it is fair to say academic advisors should be aware of the various options Maastricht University offers through the SSC (Studenten Service Centrum) for further counseling and advising. Knowing about these services may actually make it easier for the advisor to recognize a specific type of problem, and refer his/her advisees to other counselors and/or advisors.

It is in the interest of both advisee and advisor to maintain a clear working relationship that is not obscured by matters that go beyond the competence and original role of the advisor. In case of doubt, please contact the Office of Academic Advising at UCM.

Please note that students are free to contact counselors or advisors at SSC, without prior consultation with or permission from their UCM advisor.
Office hours, phone numbers, etc. can be found at the SSC website, at http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/ServiceCentres/SSC.htm

Student psychologists
Student psychologists may be consulted in the case of personal problems. Examples of complaints and problems include: study stress, fear of failure, psychological complaints such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, stress-related complaints, lack of confidence, difficulties making and maintaining contacts, problems and conflicts with parents, family, or boyfriend/girlfriend, dealing with traumatic experiences, etc. It need not be clear and obvious beforehand what the problem is before an appointment can be made with one of the student psychologists. The first meeting is always an exploratory one and has the aim of clarifying the problem and - naturally - to determine what to do about it. Sometimes one meeting may be sufficient to get one back on track, but in other cases a number of follow-up meetings may be useful.
Help is always of limited duration. If long-term or more specialized help is necessary, it is decided in mutual consultation which institution would be more suitable for the specific problem involved. This may result in referral. In addition to individual consultations, the psychological help service also provides group activities, such as a training course on fear of failing.
Please note: There may be a waiting list for an appointment with a student psychologist. If you feel that psychological help for an advisee is urgent, you may contact the student psychologists (or us) directly and indicate the need for a quick appointment, which can usually be facilitated.
The student psychologists only work by appointment. Appointments via the Information Desk of the Student Service Centre, Bonnefantenstraat 2, or by telephone: 043-388 5388.

Student Deans

The student deans of UM provide assistance in *a variety of areas,* in particular those relating to the *legal position of students*. Given the specific nature of the UCM program, there exists a certain overlap between the role of the UCM academic advisor, and the UM student dean. The student dean is particularly relevant in cases which may have serious *legal and/or financial* implications. Decisions or situations that are the result of an interruption of studies; switching studies; illness, pregnancy or special circumstances; termination of studies; poor study results; and/or financial problems may have a number of consequences, not in the last place in the field of financial assistance.

The regional offices of the "Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs" (DUO, previously known as Informatie Beheer Groep (IB-G)) are the primary addresses to turn to for more information on one's individual entitlement to financial assistance. But in a number of cases, the DUO will refer students to an student dean: for example, if parents refuse to contribute to the costs of a student's studies and the student concerned wishes to appeal to the so-called *substantiation clause,* or if a student wishes to apply for extended financial assistance because of *functional impairment*. Also, students may have questions relating to their specific situation regarding information provided by the DUO, or they may disagree with the information provided or decisions taken by the DUO. In such cases, student deans may be called upon, who will often be able to refer or even offer mediation. Student deans may also be able to offer help in other financial matters. They have no access to any funds, but they may be able to advise on available possibilities (and restrictions). Students who experience financial problems must not wait too long before they approach an student dean. No one should be ashamed. Experience has shown that the longer one waits in such situations, the more difficult it becomes to find a solution.

Student deans can also provide information on, and help apply for the Emergency Fund, the Financial Support Students Maastricht University, child care, facilities relating to a functional impairment. The student deans have open visiting hours, provide telephone consultations and also work by appointment. They can be reached at: 043-388 5388, or the SSC information desk at Bonnefantenstraat 2.

Career counselors

As with the student dean, there is a degree of overlap between the roles of the UCM academic advisor, and the UM career counselor. The career counselors specialize in the fields of study choice, career choice and the labor market: what are one's abilities, which job would one most like to have, and how can this be achieved. Career counselors offer assistance with all such questions, clarifying career perspectives, even assessing job application letters and CVs. Guidance is provided individually or in groups, through workshops, training sessions and courses. The university's career advisers only work by appointment. Appointments via the Student Careers Advisory Services: 043 - 388 xxxx

Many students will prefer to make some investigations without the assistance of a career counselor. They may turn to the "Career & Information Center"

Here students can inform themselves about career and study opportunities within the Netherlands and abroad.

Section 5. Important Dates 20xx-20xx

Section 6. Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about formal procedures are the bane of the advisor's existence. Or at least, they have the potential. As indicated above, in the description of the role of the advisor, and the mutual expectations between advisors and advisees, be aware of the following: although advisors are expected to have a good understanding of the UCM curriculum, they are not there to answer the FAQ's of UCM. Most of these questions are answered in the Student Handbook. Application and interpretation of the rules is usually a matter for the Examination Committee or the Office of Student Affairs. However, to make life a little easier, on this and the next pages we included a quick overview of some of these frequently asked questions concerning recurring procedures, with a brief answer or explanation.

Contains questions on:

- ◇ *Course registration*
- ◇ *Transcripts, passing and failing*
- ◇ *Attendance and absence*
- ◇ *Semester Abroad*
- ◇ *Future plans*

Course registration

1. Are **prerequisites** really necessary in choosing courses?
    - ◇ *That depends on the individual course. Source: Course Catalogue*
2. How many courses of each **level** can I take?
    - ◇ *Within concentration: max 4 x 1000-level, minimum of 4 x 3000-level*
3. How many courses do I have to take within my **concentration**?
    - ◇ *16*
4. Can I **switch** my preliminary registration of courses?
    - ◇ *No; you can withdraw within the first two weeks, with good reasons – enrolment into another course cannot be guaranteed and is up to OSA (*see the separate section on withdrawal below*).*
5. What is an **interdisciplinary** concentration?
    - ◇ *In an interdisciplinary concentration you combine courses from 2 concentrations. There is no specific ratio demanded. If you do an interdisciplinary concentration, you still need to take 2 courses from the third concentration as part of the General Education requirement (see 7.) The remaining space in General Education (two courses) can be used in any way you see fit.*
6. How can I apply for an **interdisciplinary** concentration?
    - ◇ *Request permission from the Examination Committee at the end of first year; give clear rationale and describe the intended focus of the interdisciplinary concentration. Forms from: UCM Students>Examination Committee>Request Forms*
7. How **many courses** of each concentration should I take?

- ◇ *16 within own concentration, 2 from each of the other two = 4 courses (=General Education)*

8. Can I follow **three courses** at the same time?
   - ◇ *Only with prior commission from the Examination Committee. Request permission by giving rationale; ExCom will look at PR and GPA;*

9. How do I apply for that?
   - ◇ *Forms from: UCM Students>Examination Committee>Request Forms*

10. How can I follow **courses at another faculty** which are not listed in UCM?
    - ◇ *This is called "external education" See below: this is only possible at 3000-level, and with permission from ExCom. NOTE: out of the 180 percent total credits you need for graduation, at least 120 need to be obtained at UCM.*

11. Where can I find **information about the courses at other UM faculties**?
    - ◇ *In the course catalogue of the other UM faculty, or from one of their study advisors.*

12. How can I **register for courses at other faculties**?
    - ◇ *At UCM you indicate external education on registration form, registration itself has to go through other faculty. External education requires permission from the Examination Committee. In case of a conflicting schedule, UCM unfortunately cannot accommodate!*

Transcripts, passing and failing

1. What is a **transcript**?
   - ◇ *An overview of all the modules (courses, skills and projects) you have taken at UCM, with the grades, ECTS, attendance.*

2. What is a **GPA**?
   - ◇ *Grade Point Average: at UCM the average of the grades of all the modules you have passed*

3. What is a **PR**?
   - ◇ *Progress Rate: all the courses you have passed, divided by all the courses you could have passed at a particular point in time, measured at the end of each semester. Example: after two semester, having obtained 50 ECTS where 60 is possible, the PR is 50/60 = 0.83*

4. Can I **compensate** for failed courses? How?
   - ◇ *Yes, but there are several strict requirements, and it is compartmentalized according to types of modules (courses, skills, projects). See the Rules and Regulations concerning the Bachelor Examination of University College Maastricht, Article 3, sections 1.c (courses), 2.c (skills), 3.c (projects)*

5. When I can I do a **resit**?
   - ◇ *Resits are only available to students who failed a course, and usually under the condition that they made a serious effort on all previous parts of the examination for that course. The resit procedure should be given in the course manual and/or the EleUM course environment.*

Attendance and absence

1. What do I do when I get **sick**?
    - ◇ *Inform OSA a.s.a.p.*

2. How often may I **miss a tutorial group meeting**?
    - ◇ *15% of total number of tutorial group meetings;*

3. How do I fix an **attendance problem**?
    - ◇ *If you have not missed more than 30%, you may qualify for an additional assignment. This is up to the course coordinator. Request an additional assignment within 10 working days after the end of the course, by submitting a form to the coordinator (to be obtained from OSA).*

Semester Abroad

1. **When** can I do my semester abroad?
    - ◇ *In semester 4 or 5, and with sufficient PR and GPA – see the Semester Abroad Guide*
2. What are the **selection criteria** in selecting students for the countries?
    - ◇ *Vary: consult the Semester Abroad Guide, or ask the International Relations Office*
3. What are the possibilities for **learning another language** as part of my curriculum?
    - ◇ *Two skills of 2,5 ECTS at 2000-level*
4. What is the **minimum level of acquired language** skills when going abroad (i.e. Portuguese, Spanish, French, and German)?
    - ◇ *This varies, consult the Office of International Relations*
5. When are the **deadlines** for the Semester abroad applications?
    - ◇ *See the Semester Abroad Guide.*
6. I want to arrange an **extra semester abroad** myself. Where and when do I ask for permission and credit transfer of the courses?
    - ◇ *First person to talk to: Ina Engelen - A lot of useful information can be found in the Semester Abroad Guide!!!*

Future plans

1. What are **graduates** of UCM doing right now?
    - ◇ *Many of them do one (or more) MA programs at places raging from Maastricht to Germany, England (LSE, Warwick), and many other places.*
2. What courses are needed for my **Master**?
    - ◇ *A question to do your own research about, and then discuss with your academic advisor. Attend open days, surf the net, talk to alumni.*
3. Where can I find information on relevant **MA programmes**?
    - ◇ *Good place to start: UMCareerServices*

Special attention: withdrawing from a course

If at the start of a new period a student discover s/he really made a mistaken concerning a course s/he has registered for, there is the option to withdraw from the course. Students can also request to be enrolled in a different course instead, but this cannot be guaranteed. As other students may have taken the place of a student who withdraw from a course, the decision to withdraw is definitive, also if placement in another course turns out to be impossible – hence

the decision to withdraw should not be taken lightly!
A standard request form for withdraw/switch can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs. Students need a signature from *their own academic advisor*, and need to submit the form during the first week of a course period – after the first week, withdrawing from course is no longer possible. Not attending the course will then result in the course being listed as 'failed' on the transcript.

Section 7. UCM offices, phone numbers, mail addresses

Office of Academic Advising:

Board of Examiners:

Office of Student Affairs:

International Relations Office:

Secretariat:

Recruitment & Admissions:

Section 8. Appendices

1. UCM Milestones. This checklist of Milestones has been designed to provide students with a framework within which to organize their individual planning. It will pay a core role in the new advising curriculum.

2. Checklist: *Meetings with students*: how to structure your meetings with advisees

3. *Course registration flow chart* for advisors: this document gives a visual overview of which steps need to be taken concerning course registration. This flow chart can also be downloaded from EleUM: UCM Academic Advisors>Forms

4. *Course registration flow chart* for students, this is the counterpart of the previous document, as we hand it out to students

5. "Student Bob: Making the World Better": the first curriculum planning exercise during the UCM Introduction

6. *Curriculum Planning Exercise* – this exercise is the first step towards planning the individual curriculum at UCM. Once filled out (during the introduction), one copy of the form will be forwarded to the academic advisor.

7. *Academic Advising Evaluation Form*: once a year a survey is conducted amongst students, evaluating academic advising in general, and the individual academic advisors. You will be informed about the results once the data have been processed.

UCM Milestones

Checklist for effective academic planning

The checklist below has been designed to provide you with a framework within which to organize your individual planning. Every year you will reach certain Milestones. Under most Milestones you can see suggestions on how you could reach them. Print this list out for your convenience, and check off the items at the end of each semester. Many items from this list will be topics for discussion when you meet with your academic advisor. Feel free to bring this list to your Academic Advisor meetings.

Milestones reached:

1st Semester:

- ✓ I obtained a good overview of UCM, courses available, curriculum options and program structure
  - Curriculum Planning Lecture during Intro Days
  - Academic Rules & Regulations booklet
  - MyUCM/Eleum

- ✓ I started to discover my academic interests, skills and values
  - Workshop 1
  - First few courses at UCM

- ✓ I have started thinking about what concentration I'd like to choose
  - Workshop 1
  - Meeting with your Study/Academic Advisor

- ✓ I checked the course prerequisites for the next and following semesters and know which courses to take in semester 2
  - Consulting Course Catalogue

2nd Semester:

- ✓ I obtained an overview of scientific methods and basics of academic fields
  - Workshop 2
  - First few courses and their exam style

- ✓ I declared a concentration / rough academic direction
  - Meet with your Study/Academic Advisor to declare a concentration

- ✓ I checked the course prerequisites for the following semesters and know which courses to take in semester 3 (include *general education* & *core courses*)
  - Consulting Course Catalogue

- ✓ I know how to obtain reliable academic information (Library, Journal search etc.)
  - Introduction to Academic Skills (Practical sessions)

- ✓ I found a suitable Academic Advisor
  - With the help of the Study Advisor

- ✓ I have a tentative plan of my 2nd and 3rd year at UCM and of my semester abroad
  - Check the Semester Abroad booklet

- Take a look at interesting courses offered via Course Catalogue, check external course offerings as well

✓ *Optional:* if going aboard in 4th semester I finalized the course planning
- With help of Academic Advisor
- Checking exchange University's course offerings

----------Year 1 complete!----------

Milestones reached:

3rd semester:

✓ I started to tackle 1000 Level, General Education and Core course requirements

✓ I checked the course prerequisites for the following semesters and know which courses to take in semester 4
- Consulting Course Catalogue

✓ My curriculum adopts a sensible shape and form
- Feedback from Academic Advisor

✓ I identified my academic niche and have a clear idea about my study direction at UCM

✓ I initiated my MA program/scholarship search using the Web tool
- Workshop 3

✓ *Optional:* if going aboard in 5th semester I finalized the course planning
- With help of Academic Advisor
- Checking exchange University's course offerings

4th Semester:

✓ Review of my curriculum so far. What courses do I still need to take based on Master Program requirements, my own academic track definition?
- Advice / Feedback from Academic Advisor

✓ I checked for course deficiencies that need to be fixed through additional external education
- Advice / Feedback from Academic Advisor
- Check external course offerings and send request to Examination Committee

✓ I obtained info about the Master program application process. Make a list of programs, check deadlines, scholarship info
- Workshop 4
- Webtool
- Roadmap to a Master Program
- Decision Making worksheet

✓ I talked to my Academic Advisor about my plans after graduation

✓ I checked the course prerequisites for the following semesters and know which courses to take in semester 5

- Consulting Course Catalogue

----------Year 2 complete!----------

Milestones reached:

5th semester

- ✓ I have formulated a 'Plan B'
  - Workshop 5
  - Webtool
- ✓ I checked the course prerequisites for my last semester and know which courses to take in order to complete my curriculum
  - Consulting Course Catalogue
  - Advice / Feedback from Academic Advisor
- ✓ I have prepared my application materials for Master programs and sent or started to send them out
  - Ask for Recommendation Letters
- ✓ I completed my curriculum and tailored it to academic interests
  - Advice / Feedback from Academic Advisor

6th semester:

- ✓ I have a clear vision of what to do after UCM
- ✓ I have met all graduation requirements
  - Academic Rules & Regulations booklet
  - MyUCM/Eleum
- ✓ I have a clear idea of the value of my Bachelor Liberal Arts Diploma; what academic and soft skills I acquired during my study and can communicate this clearly to employers/MA programs, etc.
- ✓ I know of UCM Luminous, UCM's Alumni Association and became a member
  - Happens automatically when you graduate. More info on graduation day.

----------Final year complete!----------

Checklist: Meetings with students

Below you find a checklist that you may want to use while preparing, during and after meetings with your advisees.

Preparation:

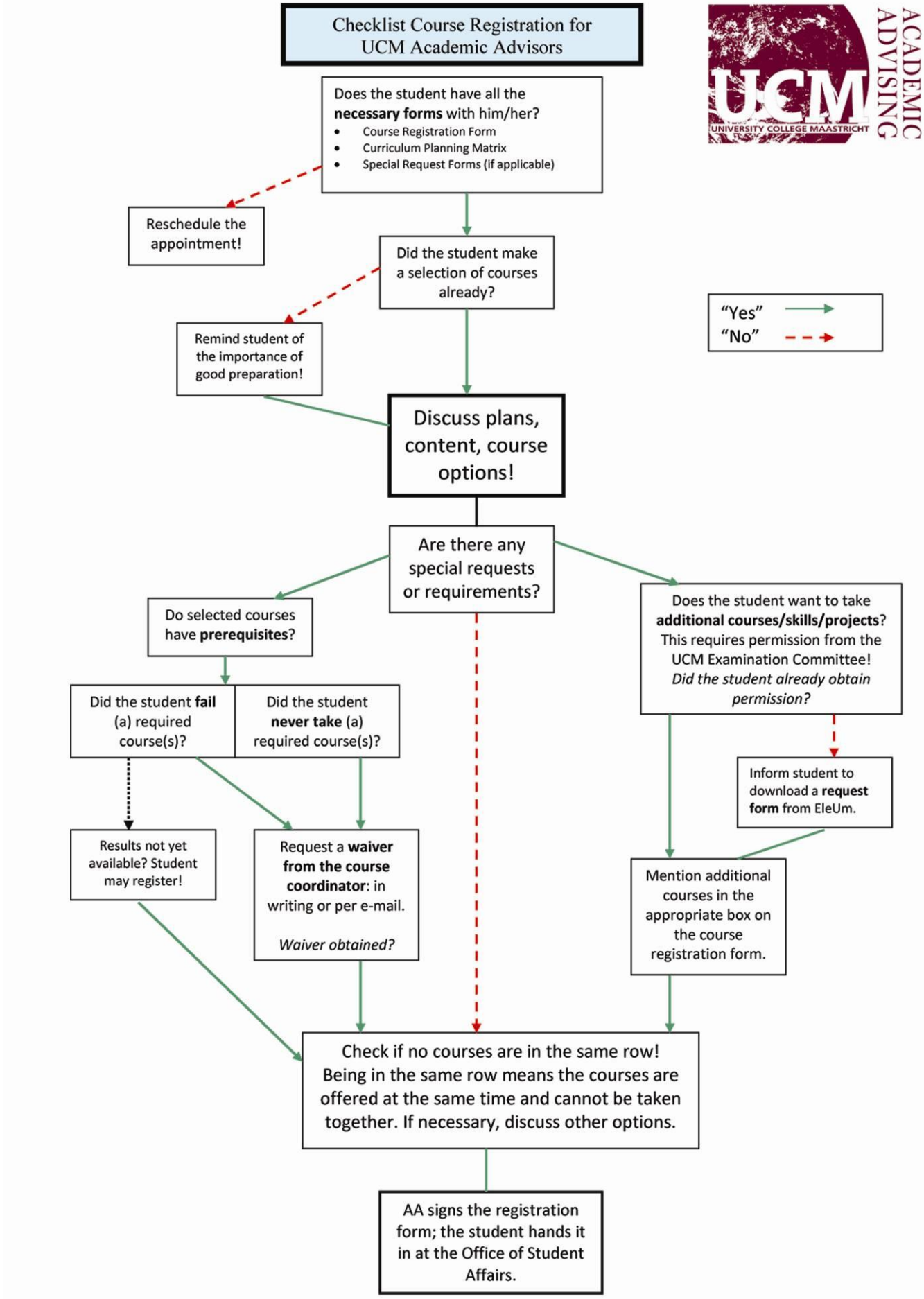
1. Remind students to send you an updated version of their Curriculum Planning Matrix
2. Have available a current UCM course catalogue
3. Have available calendar for current academic year
4. Check STIC for update on advisee's progress
5. Read student's Matrix
6. Read records of previous contacts with student

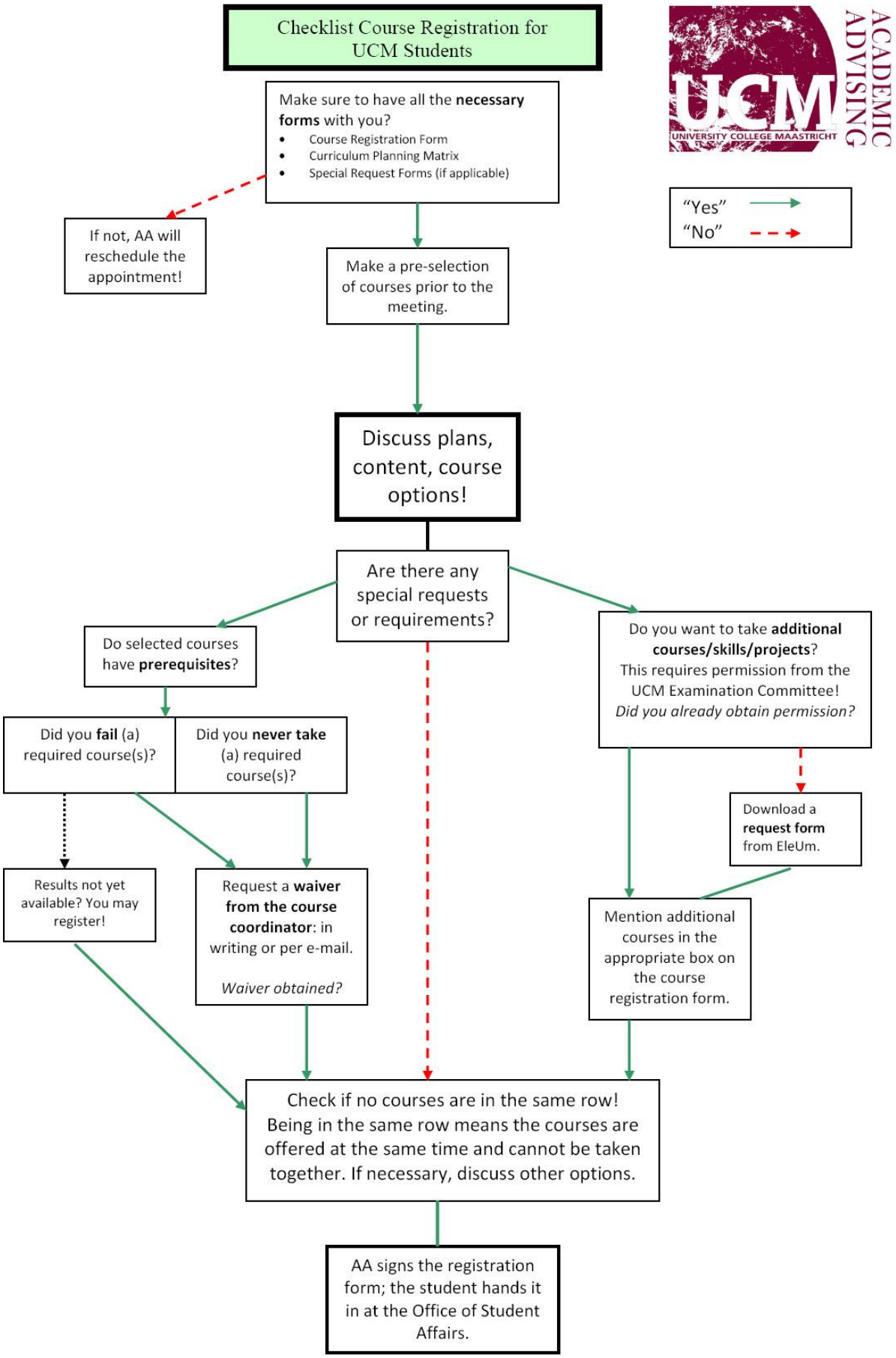
During a meeting:

1. Use preparation to inform about student's progress
2. Check your information with student
3. (Help) clearly define the issue(s) at hand; if necessary refer to other types of advising and/or counseling
4. Do not use your computer, but do take notes
5. Make clear decisions and/or action plan with advisee
6. Agree on clear goals, deadlines, and - if necessary - next meeting

After meeting:

1. Use notes to make new contact entry in STIC file
2. Indicate nature and conclusion of meeting
3. Make a note on your calendar if specific deadlines have been agreed upon


Checklist Course Registration for UCM Academic Advisors
ACADEMIC ADVISING
UCM
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MAASTRICHT
Does the student have all the necessary forms with him/her?
Course Registration Form
Curriculum Planning Matrix
Special Request Forms (if applicable)
Reschedule the appointment!
Did the student make a selection of courses already?
Remind student of the importance of good preparation!
"Yes"
"No"
Discuss plans, content, course options!
Are there any special requests or requirements?
Do selected courses have prerequisites?
Did the student fail (a) required course(s)?
Did the student never take (a) required course(s)?
Results not yet available? Student may register!
Request a waiver from the course coordinator: in writing or per e-mail.
Waiver obtained?
Does the student want to take additional courses/skills/projects? This requires permission from the UCM Examination Committee!
Did the student already obtain permission?
Inform student to download a request form from EleUm.
Mention additional courses in the appropriate box on the course registration form.
Check if no courses are in the same row! Being in the same row means the courses are offered at the same time and cannot be taken together. If necessary, discuss other options.
AA signs the registration form; the student hands it in at the Office of Student Affairs.


Checklist Course Registration for UCM Students
ACADEMIC ADVISING
UCM
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MAASTRICHT
"Yes"
"No"
Make sure to have all the necessary forms with you?
Course Registration Form
Curriculum Planning Matrix
Special Request Forms (if applicable)
If not, AA will reschedule the appointment!
Make a pre-selection of courses prior to the meeting.
Discuss plans, content, course options!
Are there any special requests or requirements?
Do selected courses have prerequisites?
Did you fail (a) required course(s)?
Did you never take (a) required course(s)?
Results not yet available? You may register!
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Curriculum Planning

University College Maastricht

Name: Bob (Case Study)

August 2011

Student Bob: making the world better

Bob believes that an understanding of sociology and international cooperation is necessary to make the world a better place. He wants to build a firm foundation for that approach, while later on he may want to take courses about global affairs, conflict resolution, international organizations, peace keeping operations, etc. He once hopes have a job at an international organization himself, and possibly contribute towards a more lasting peace… He aims at being admitted into a Master's program that deals with *international peace studies and conflict resolution*.

In order to broaden his horizon, Bob considers going abroad for one semester (his 4th or 5th) , possibly in Washington, or at the universities of Queensland or Adelaide, as he has heard that these venues offer a wide range of *higher level courses in political science and international relations*. (Although he is not too sure about the prerequisites that these courses may have, he expects to be required to have a *basic background in political science and international law*).

See if you can plan the first three semesters for our Bob. After that, for now, Bob wants to keep his options open a bit. He realizes that he may want to go in a slightly different direction after having "sampled" some of the areas he is now interested in. And so may you!
Please note that "SSC1006 International Relations: themes and theories" cannot be taken by first year students in their first semester!
Make sure to look into items such as:

- Course offering: what are they about?
- Schedules: which period are they being offered?
- Prerequisites: does Bob need to take another course first?
- Requirements for going abroad

At the end of this exercise, you may have discovered that for some courses you need to fulfill certain prerequisites, whereas other are accessible to all students, even at the more advanced levels.

Our general advice is this: *Work with a plan, but allow for some flexibility*;
Courses may not be available, you may fail a course, or you may change your mind about what it is you want to do;
During your second year, your aims and plans should become clear; most

students use their first year to explore their possibilities and interest.

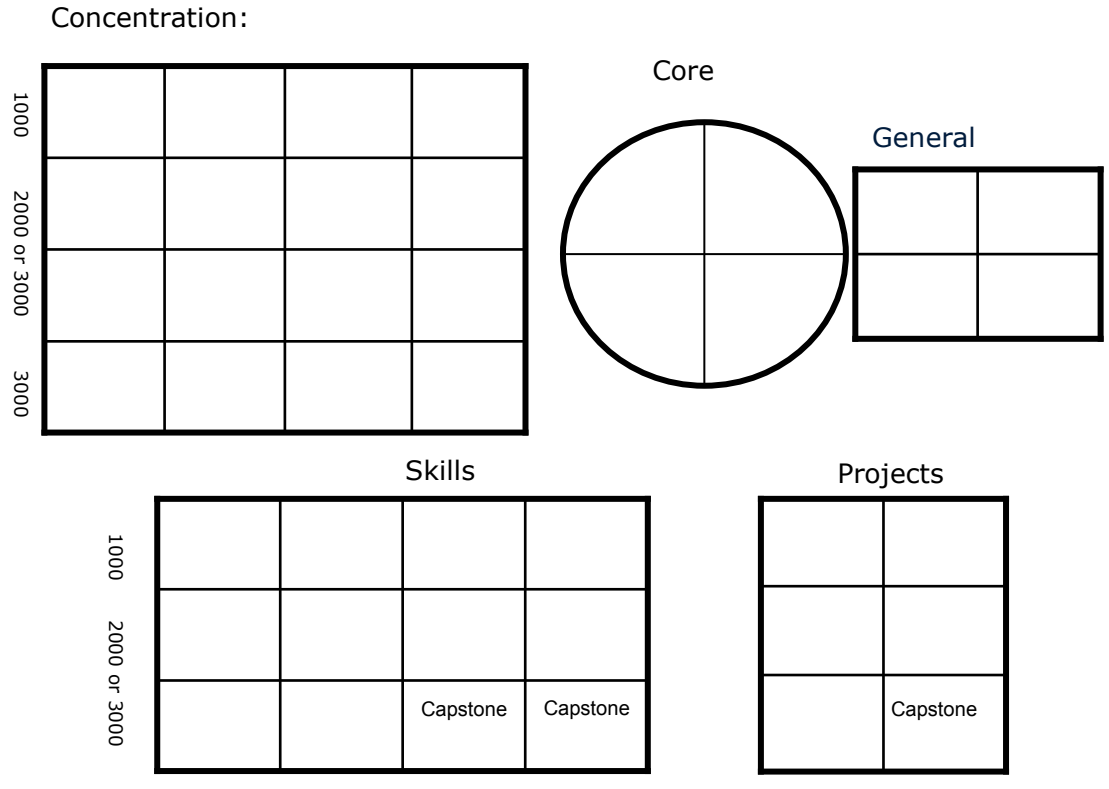
Semester 1	
	Code and Title
Period 1	
Course	
Course	
Skill	
Period 2	
Course	
Course	
Skill	
Period 3	
Project	

Semester 2	
	Code and Title
Period 4	
Course	
Course	
Skill	
Period 5	
Course	
Course	
Skill	
Period 6	
Project	

Semester 3	
Code and Title	
Period 1	
Course	
Course	
Skill	
Period 2	
Course	
Course	
Skill	
Period 3	
Project	

The Curriculum planning matrix

The Matrix below allows students to create a quick inventory of courses, learning communities and projects taken per semester with an at-a-glance overview of how these modules fit into the UCM graduation requirements. It may help you making plans for Bob, and in the next exercise, also for yourself.



Curriculum Planning

Name:_____

In general, which (academic) subjects do you find most interesting? Try to explain why.
At UCM, what do you expect will be your concentration, and *what will be the **focus** of that concentration?*
After UCM: *What would you like to (be able to) do **after** UCM?*
The near future: which courses would you want to take in period 2 (November – December)?
Course 1:
Course 2:
What are the most urgent questions you would like to ask your advisor?

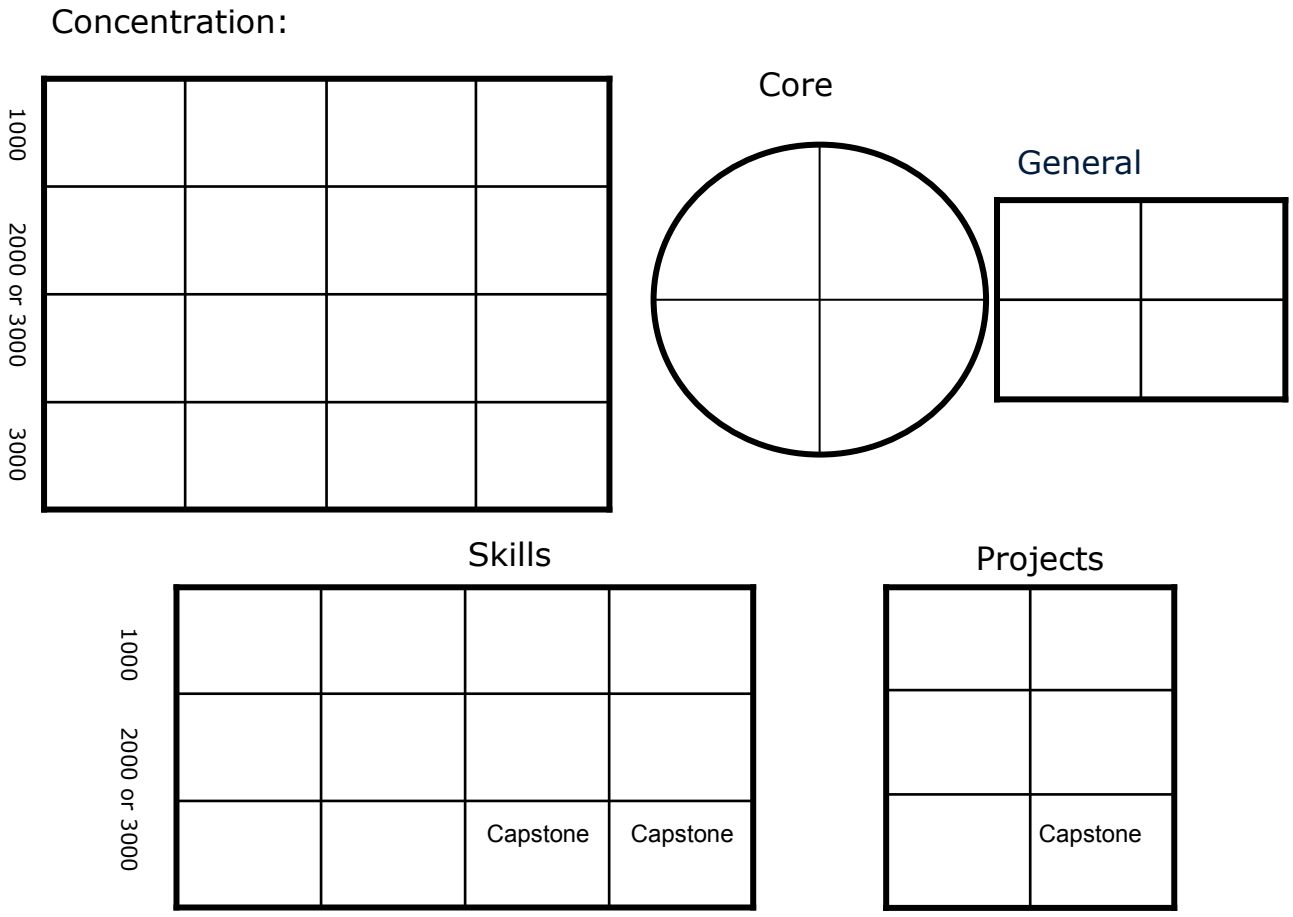
Use the two boxes below, to ***tentatively*** plan your first year. Take into account that at the end of this year, you want to have explored your various interests, yet at the same time you will need to have taken certain courses in order to be able to follow courses in the same field, but at a higher level. This balancing act can definitely be done, but it takes preparation and a serious approach!

Semester 1			
	Code and Title		**Alternatives** ***Code and Title***
Period 1			
Course			
Course			
Skill			
Period 2			
Course			
Course			
Skill			
Period 3			
Project			

Semester 2			
	Code and Title		**Alternatives** ***Code and Title***
Period 1			
Course			
Course			
Skill			
Period 2			
Course			
Course			
Skill			
Period 3			
Project			

The Curriculum planning matrix

The Matrix below allows students to create a quick inventory of courses, learning communities and projects taken per semester with an at-a-glance overview of how these modules fit into the UCM graduation requirements. It may help you making plans for yourself.



Academic Advising Questionnaire

2010-2011

ID- Number:								

Dear student,

Academic Advising is an essential part of curriculum planning at UCM, and we are very interested to hear your opinion about it. This is why we ask you to complete this short survey. The survey consists of 21 questions on a 1-5 scale in four categories: UCM and advising in general; your advisor; you as an advisee; and five open ended question at the end.

Instructions:

1. Please write down your ID-number on this page, **and on the open questions page**. We need this to be able to evaluate our academic advisors.
2. Questionnaires will be processed **anonymously**. No individual information will be made available.
3. Do not forget to hand in the questionnaire after completion! **Hand in the questionnaire immediately together with the Course Registration Form using the Office of Student Affairs mailbox** in the Green Zone (UCM building, next to the lockers).

Thanks in advance for your help!

Oscar van den Wijngaard and Nicolai Manie

For each question below, circle one of the following statements:
(NA)= not applicable, (1) = I completely disagree, (2) = I disagree, (3) = I don't agree or disagree, (4) = I agree, (5) = I completely agree

			completely disaaree				*completely agree*
UCM and advising							
1.	Information about curriculum planning is easily accessible.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Information about administrative procedures (course registration, withdraw, etc.) is easily accessible.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The course registration procedure is clear to me.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The procedure to make an appointment with my academic advisor is clear to me.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The curriculum planning exercises during the Introduction and Intro to Academic Skills were helpful.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The Student-to-student Advising Meeting, preceding course registration was helpful.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
I, as an advisee:							
7.	...sign up on time, and kept appointments to see my advisor for course registration.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
8.	...was well prepared for my appointments.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
9.	...know where to find the information necessary for my curriculum planning.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
10.	...know where to find the information about graduate programs and professional career.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
11.	...meet ... times per semester with my academic advisor (incl. the course registration meetings):		_____ times				
My advisor:							
12.	...is easy to get in touch with.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
13.	...gives me as much time as I need when we meet.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
14.	...takes a personal interest in me.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
15.	...encourages me to express my thoughts and feelings.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
16.	...has sufficient knowledge of the UCM curriculum and procedures.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
17.	...considers my personal abilities and interests when advising me about courses or programs of study.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
18.	...has assisted me in developing a long-term education plan towards an MA program.	NA	1	2	3	4	5

19.	…has sufficient knowledge about other advising and support resources within the University.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
20.	…helps me make important educational decisions (selecting courses, study abroad opportunities, external education, etc.).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
21.	…has a critical stance on my choices.	NA	1	2	3	4	5

Open questions

22. What do you consider to be the main purpose of academic advising?

23. What do you find hardest to understand about rules, regulations and procedures at UCM?

24. What could you do to improve the quality of your curriculum planning?

25. What could your advisor do to improve the quality of his/her advising?

26. Any other comments or suggestions?

Thank you very much!
Hand in the questionnaire together with your Course Registration Form
via the Office of Student Affairs mailbox in the Green Zone!