



Academic Assistance Guide

There are many academic issues that can arise during your time at Rice. If you are dissatisfied with your course performance, several resources are available. While the most appropriate resource depends on your situation, using a combination of resources is usually helpful.

It is okay to ask for help! No one goes through college alone; everyone has to ask for help at some point for something. Rice has built in many resources to help you during your time here.

Your Professors

Professors are often your most valuable resource. If you have specific or general questions about a course, you are encouraged to ask the professor directly. Professors can most accurately assess your performance in the class, and they can provide valuable insight about study techniques. They are most familiar with what is necessary to perform well in the class. Most professors have regularly scheduled office hours, where you can drop in and ask questions. However, many professors are willing to set up time outside of those to discuss your performance.

Teaching/Course Assistants

If your class has a Teaching Assistant (TA) or Course Assistant, they may be a valuable resource too. They are typically graduate or advanced undergraduate students that have previously taken the course and mastered the material. They may be able to assess your performance in the class, as well as answer any questions about the subject matter. Further, since they have been in your position recently, they can provide you with helpful tools and insight as to how to approach the material.

Course Recitations and Tutorials

Some courses have regularly scheduled class recitations and/or tutorials in addition to the normal lectures. These sessions are intended to enable students to gain a better understanding of the course material. They may cover important material not covered in lectures. If a course has a tutorial or recitation, you are encouraged to attend.

College Academic Programs

Each residential college has an [Academic Fellows or Mentors Society](#), an honorary service organization dedicated to academic life in the college. All Fellows and Mentors Societies provide free academic assistance on a regular basis through advertised review sessions, "office hours", or requested individual meetings. Two major advantages of consulting a Fellow or Mentor include: 1) the convenience and proximity of the source, 2) the familiarity of the Fellow or Mentor with the specific course.

Other Sources of Academic Assistance and Advice

Student Success Initiatives

Advisors in the Office of Student Success Initiatives are able to help students develop concrete academic and non-academic strategies for success, including problem solving, goal setting, time management, and study skills. Advisors are available 9am-4pm for walk-ins, or you can schedule an appointment by email at success@rice.edu.



Disability Support Services

Disability Support Services will facilitate reasonable accommodations for students with a wide range of disabilities including learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and physical, psychological, or other medical conditions. Accommodations are academic adjustments, services, and/or equipment that allow a student with a disability to have equal access to academic programs. If you think you may need disability support, complete an online Preliminary Notification of Disability-Related Needs form available at <https://dss.rice.edu/>.

Office of Academic Advising

You can schedule a meeting with an advisor in the Office of Academic Advising by phone at 713-348-4060 or by stopping in our office, which is Suite 132 of the Ley Student Center. Meeting with an academic advisor can be useful if you are reconsidering your major or overall course plans, or if you do not feel your faculty advisor is the most appropriate person for your particular situation. They can also help you find the appropriate source of help, if you are not sure where to turn.

Wellbeing and Counseling

The Wellbeing and Counseling center is a good first point of contact for students wanting to talk to someone about their wellbeing and mental health concerns. Their professional team can meet with you to discuss topics that may affect your academic performance, including anxiety, depression, stress management, relationships, cultural identity, sexual orientation, and the like. The Wellbeing and Counseling Center is open year round, except for scheduled University holidays, and provide emergency after-hours on-call services via telephone. They are located on the first floor of the Barbara and David Gibbs Wellness Center and can be reached at 713-348-3311.

Magisters and Divisional Advisors

Your Magisters oversee all academic and non-academic aspects of your residential college, and have probably helped other students with similar concerns. Your divisional advisor addressed your overall course plans during pre-registration. They probably have insight into why a particular course is not going well and can help you consider your options.

College Coordinators, Resident Associates and, Head Resident Fellows

Your College Coordinators, Resident Associates (RAs), and Head Resident Fellows (HRFs) are often your first point of contact within your residential college. They are familiar with the issues that commonly face students at Rice, and the most appropriate ways to deal with those issues.

Peer Academic Advisors

Each college has a group of Peer Academic Advisors (PAAs) who are willing and able to answer general and specific questions related to academic issues. They have been trained extensively about rules and regulations as well as academic resources at Rice. As fellow students, they are familiar with many of the issues you face.

Rice Health Advisors



Each college has a group of Rice Health Advisors (RHAs) who serve as peer wellness advisors on campus. They are trained extensively on a variety of wellbeing topics, including mental health and suicide prevention. They are willing to listen and support during times of distress. They can also point you to the various resources on campus, and as peers, are familiar with some of the issues that you may face.

Other Students

Talking to other students currently in your class, or who have taken the class previously from the same professor might be helpful. Also, your friends are likely aware of non-academic factors that might be impacting your performance.

Drop or Pass/Fail

If a course is not going well, sometimes the best course of action is to drop the course or take it pass/fail. Things to keep in mind with such a decision include the relevant deadlines (see the academic calendar) and whether the course is required for your major, minor, or certificate. Do not hesitate to speak with an OAA advisor if you are unsure.