

# Course Registration

by Alison DeRudder



## WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial covers the process of course registration so you can prepare to enroll in the right courses. Here is what will be discussed:

1. The Process of Course Registration

## 1. The Process of Course Registration

In order to officially become a student in a higher education course, you have to *register* for it. Registration means that you have reserved one of the available spaces in the course. Typically, you complete the registration process once per semester in preparation for the next semester. The registration process isn't difficult, but it does require some time to figure out what courses will work for you.

Before you register for courses, it's important that you spend some time thinking about what interests you and what your academic goals are. The process of choosing courses that are right for you is absolutely essential to a positive and productive higher learning experience. If you choose the wrong courses, you could wind up paying for a course you don't like or are not prepared for.



## TERM TO KNOW

### Course catalog

A course catalog is a list of all of the courses your school offers. In addition to the names of the courses, catalogs typically contain a description of the course and other logistical information about the course. You will use this information in the catalog to decide if the course is a good fit for your interests and goals.

The first step in the pre-registration decision making process is to locate the complete list of courses you have to choose from and read through it carefully. This list, with the names of courses and basic information about them, is often called a *course catalog*. Course catalogs used to be only available in print, but these days they are most widely accessed and read online.

# THE COURSE REGISTRATION PROCESS



Once you've given thoughtful consideration to all of your options in the catalog and selected your courses, and perhaps identified a few alternate courses in the event that your first choices are full, it's time to register for them. Your school should provide you with complete instructions about how and when to register. Usually this comes via email or is indicated on the school's website. If you don't receive these instructions, or if it is not apparent what you are supposed to do, contact the registrar's office or your academic advisor. As a student in higher education, it's your responsibility to register for classes and make sure you understand how to do so at your school, but you can always use the administration for support if you have questions or uncertainties.



## TERM TO KNOW

### Registration window

A registration window is a period of time that you are allowed to register for classes for the upcoming semester. This means that you can only enroll in classes during your registration window. Not all schools have registration windows, but most colleges and universities do because it allows the students with the most seniority to get into the classes they need to graduate.

Often students are given a *registration window* along with the instructions for registration from their school. A registration window is a set timeframe when you need to register. At many schools, *upper-class students*, that is, students who have more seniority or are close to completing their degrees or programs, usually get to register first. The registration hierarchy means that courses can sometimes fill before students have a chance to register for them, so remember that the process of registration is often time-sensitive.



## HINT

Students who plan ahead are more likely to get their first choice for courses. If you have the courses you want to take identified in advance, you can enroll as soon as your registration window opens and ahead of other students that may be less prepared.

When your registration window begins, proceed to enroll in the courses you want carefully, and when you're finished, double check that everything is in order.

## IN CONTEXT

You're a first-year student, so you don't get to register for your courses until all the students with seniority have had their opportunity to register. You had your eye on a particular course because it's on an interesting subject; unfortunately, you're not the only one who finds it interesting. The course has already filled up. There's another course that excites you less but has an open seat. Do you have any options when it comes to closed classes or do you have to settle for a class that has room for you? If you're really interested in a class for which enrollment is closed, there are a couple of things you might do.

First, you can look into when the class will be offered again; maybe patience is the best way forward. You can also monitor the enrollment of the course. A lot can happen to the number of students enrolled in a course with students adding and dropping, especially as the start of a term approaches. Finally, you can contact the instructor and see if they will grant you permission to enroll in their closed course; this is up to the instructor's discretion, but it is certainly not uncommon for permission to be granted.



## SUMMARY

This tutorial has detailed **the process of registering for courses**.