



The Drake Commitment

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we offering the Drake Commitment? The Drake Commitment is our way of differentiating the Drake experience and providing added value to students and their families; ideally, this will position us strongly in the marketplace.

How did we choose the four elements of the Drake Commitment? Using qualitative and quantitative evidence and industry analysis, President Martin, Interim Provost Lenz, deans, and others determined that these academic experiences differentiate Drake from its competitors and can provide some of the more powerful experiences Drake already offers students to prepare them for professional accomplishments, meaningful personal lives, and responsible global citizenship.

Were faculty and/or staff involved in the development of the Drake Commitment? Yes. The president and interim provost discussed the commitment with Faculty Senate Executive Council; deans invited comment from their faculty; and staff in Institutional Research, Student Records, and other offices helped shape the Commitment.

How will Drake deliver on these commitments? To ensure students experience each academic opportunity, the University will ensure that:

- Required courses are regularly available
- Faculty advising is available
- J-Term is maintained
- Experiential learning opportunities are available

At the same time, students will also have responsibilities to ensure that the Commitment is met—students must:

- Meet admission requirements.
- Be a full-time, degree-seeking first-year student who follows the outlined four-year course of study plan for graduation published for a single major and maintains that program's academic progression and requirements.
- Successfully complete all prerequisites and required courses and GPA requirements that may be specified for an internship or undergraduate research.
- Actively engage with an adviser, Professional & Career Development Services, and/or department or college to discuss and determine appropriate internship or research opportunities.
- Register for J-Term during the appropriate designated period and, for travel seminars, pay the required deposit by the due date and fulfill other pre-course responsibilities. (Note: Course enrollment is determined by seniority; preferred courses may not be available.)

It is important to note that these are commitments rather than promises. While we will do everything we can to ensure students have these experiences, students must take an active role in their academic experience.

Does the Drake Commitment apply to pharmacy students? It applies to those students entering as pre-pharmacy majors.

Does the Drake Commitment apply to graduate students? While it doesn't apply to graduate students, Drake's graduate programs are grounded in many of the same principles as undergraduate programs, including hands-on learning, faculty mentorship, and service-learning.

Does the Drake Commitment apply to transfer students? Yes. If a student transfers into the Class of 2021, the Drake Commitment applies to them.

Does the Drake Commitment apply to part-time students? It does not, although there is a strong possibility that the courses they take at Drake will have some of these experiences—such as service-learning—built in.

Why aren't we offering this to current students? The Drake Commitment is really about embracing and communicating what we already do in a new way. Current students still have plentiful opportunities to engage in each of these high impact learning practices.

How will the Drake Commitment influence our academic offerings? It may not influence our academic offerings at all. We are able to make the commitment to experiential learning, community-based learning, and J-Term because these opportunities already exist and are already embedded into our curriculum—through internships, practicums, capstones, and other experiences—as well as in cocurricular activities and organizations. Presently 92 percent of our students report having such experiences by the time they graduate, which is why we can confidently make this commitment. That said, being more mindful that we have made this commitment may make us more intentional about integrating these experiences into our courses, majors, or the Drake Curriculum. For instance, one of the learning outcomes for the proposed revision to the Drake Curriculum currently under study and discussion by Faculty Senate is to “Put knowledge into practice through experiential learning and civic engagement.”

How will the faculty mentorship commitment impact my advising duties? It shouldn't impact your advising responsibilities. We are not committing to anything we are not already providing to students—an assigned adviser.

How will faculty mentors be assigned? We are using the terms mentor and adviser interchangeably. Faculty advisers will continue to be assigned by their college or school office, just as they currently are.

Will we need to increase how many J-Term courses we offer? Unless we get a huge enrollment surge (entering first-year classes of over 1,100), we will not need to increase the number of J-Term courses. As reported to Faculty Senate, Drake offered a total of 71 classes (both on campus and travel) during J-Term 2016, providing 1,108 seats for students. That means that if an entire senior class (currently about 700) had not yet taken a J-Term course, we could accommodate them all, and then some.

Will service-learning become a required component of courses? Community-based learning is already a component of some courses, and more faculty may choose to integrate it into their courses. Remember, however, that community-based learning is not restricted to the classroom. Such experiences are also available through student clubs and organizations. With Drake students contributing 220,000 hours of service annually to the Des Moines community, there is already plenty of opportunity.

Do students have to participate in each of the academic commitments? For example, what if a student doesn't want to go on a J-Term? Students do not have to participate in each of the academic commitments. It should be noted that the choice to not participate will not affect the cost of tuition.

Is there any legal risk involved in making this commitment? Because this is a commitment, not a promise or contract, there is no legal risk. We are committed to making opportunities available to students. It is still up to the students whether to take advantage of those opportunities.

How will we measure our progress in fulfilling these commitments? We currently track participation in experiential learning (including research) and community-based learning through student responses to the National Survey of Student Experience (NSSE) and through the graduation survey we conduct. However, rather than rely on student self-reporting, each college and school office will track their student participation in experiential learning, internships, research, and community-based learning, and these reports will help inform the University's Continuous Improvement Planning and balanced scorecard.