

CURRICULUM HANDBOOK

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM (UCOC)



USC University of
Southern California

Compiled by:

The Curriculum Coordination Office

Academic Records and Registrar

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PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

The *Curriculum Handbook* describes the curriculum review process, the individuals involved in the curriculum review process, and nearly all relevant academic policies concerning curriculum and the catalogue at the University of Southern California (USC). Additional information and resources are available at the [Curriculum website](#).

This handbook is designed for the chairs and members of the four subject area subcommittees of the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC), as well as the Off-Campus Studies Panel. (It is not concerned with the General Education (GE) committees, which are not overseen by the Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) and send their decisions to UCOC as information items only.) The handbook should also be helpful to departments and academic units that are developing curriculum proposals – especially the section on Administrative Issues.

We hope that this handbook will help members of curriculum committees accomplish their important roles in assuring the integrity and excellence of the programs, minors and courses that the University offers to its students.

General curriculum questions should be addressed to the CCO (curriclm@usc.edu or 213-740-1162). Suggestions regarding the handbook are welcome and should be addressed to John DeMartini (jdemarti@usc.edu).

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Rachel Siegel, USC Doheny Memorial Library, plein air pen and ink

I. BASICS

A. Provost's Charge to UCOC

On March 1, 2006, then Provost Max Nikias distributed a memorandum detailing the revised curriculum review process. The role of UCOC was detailed as follows: "The UCOC advises the Provost on all matters pertaining to the adoption, elimination, and revision of courses and programs. It reviews and recommends university-wide policies on curriculum and works with units to ensure that appropriate processes are in place in each unit to provide for faculty oversight, development, and evaluation of curriculum. The Committee reviews and approves forms and checklists developed by the staff of the curriculum office. Where necessary, the Committee will mediate disputes between units concerning curricular matters. Recommendations made by the Committee are to be based entirely on academic considerations, with revenue concerns resolved by dean and the Provost."

B. Basic Principles of Curriculum Development and Review

The main goal of the revision of the curriculum review process in 2006 was to assure the primacy of faculty of the proposing departments in the development of its curriculum. Per the March 1, 2006, memorandum: "Academic units and faculty are primarily responsible for ensuring that the substance of courses and programs is appropriate and rigorous. We believe that decisions about curricular content and structure are best left to those with expertise in the field working with their colleagues to provide the most challenging, innovative, and rigorous academic program. Our goal is to streamline the process for approval of courses and programs and to assure that the primary responsibility for making decisions about curriculum belongs to the faculty and the academic leadership in the academic units."

Centralized review by UCOC and its subcommittees is necessary for several reasons:

- To ensure academic rigor and coordination of new courses and programs. (The faculty retains primary responsibility for ensuring that the courses offered meet high standards of academic rigor, but UCOC and its subcommittees retain oversight responsibility that will be exercised with an awareness that the faculty of our academic units are primarily accountable.)

- To ensure that the program descriptions and course syllabi, which are the means by which information is communicated to the university community, include appropriate information.
- To help disseminate information about curriculum broadly to faculty and students.
- To help mediate academic disagreements among units when necessary.
- To help eliminate inappropriate duplication.

An additional goal of the 2006 revision, and the subsequent revision of 2014-2015, was to expedite the review process, so that curriculum changes could be enacted more quickly and efficiently. It is assumed that because faculty and deans will be heavily involved in preparing the original proposals, proposals should be academically sound and technically accurate when they leave the school dean's office, ready for quick approval without the need for extensive clarifications and revisions.

Curriculum review is required for any additions, changes, or deletions to the portions of the catalogue that describe degree programs and courses. Any changes that do not require a change in the catalogue (e.g., revision of course details in such ways that the catalogue description of the course is still accurate) do not require curriculum review. The catalogue must provide complete and accurate information about programs and courses for students, and courses and degree requirements must conform to university policies.

NOTE: UCOC reviews all USC courses and degrees, except those leading to the MD, and graduate LAW. With regard to the Law School, new degree programs and overseas programs are reviewed by UCOC. The Law School makes revisions to their graduate-level course curriculum (including adds, drops, etc.) consistent with general university policies, however the Social Sciences Subcommittee does review undergraduate offerings. These course changes are forwarded to the curriculum office for entry into the Student Information System (SIS) and the *USC Catalogue*.

C. The Catalogue

USC's practice has long been that the official catalogue may be incomplete but not incorrect. In practice, this means that once the catalogue for a given year has been published, new courses and programs, once approved, may be offered that are not included in the catalogue, but information in the catalogue may not be changed until the next catalogue is published – i.e., revisions cannot be effective until the next catalogue is published.

1. Catalogue Structure

Each academic unit includes a section that lists the degrees offered and the requirements for them, and the departmental courses. The section on Academic Policies and Procedures includes other critical information and has separate sections for undergraduate (UG) and graduate policies.

Definitions of:

- Course numbers, units, prerequisites, 390s and 490s
([Academic and University Policies/Registration](#))
- Grading options
([Academic and University Policies/Academic Standards](#))

Undergraduate

- Progressive degrees
([Undergraduate Education/Undergraduate Degree Programs/Progressive Degree Programs](#))
- Rules, regarding Minors, Honors, Unit Requirements
([Undergraduate Education/Requirements for Graduation](#))
- Types of undergraduate degree programs, including area of emphasis, combined program, double major, second bachelors, minor
([Undergraduate Education/Undergraduate Degree Programs](#))

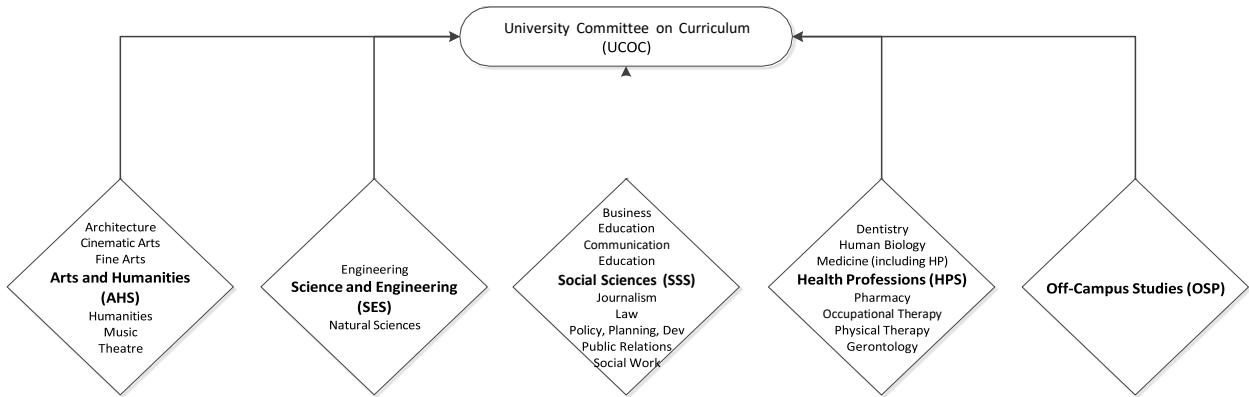
Graduate

- Graduate degree programs, including certificates and dual degrees
([Graduate and Professional Education/Requirements for Graduation/Unit Requirement](#))

List of:

- Undergraduate degree programs, Minors, Graduate degree programs and certificates, Dual degree programs and Doctoral degree programs ([Programs, Minors and Certificates](#))

II. STRUCTURE OF UCOC



A. Subject Area Committees

The four subject area subcommittees of the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) – AHS (Arts and Humanities Subcommittee), HPS (Health Professions Subcommittee), SES (Science and Engineering Subcommittee) and SSS (Social Sciences Subcommittee) – review both undergraduate and graduate proposals in their subject areas (as detailed in the above graphic). The number of members per each subcommittee may vary, per subcommittee chair request and faculty assignment by the Provost’s Office. Typically the subcommittee chair will divide the review workload amongst the members and act as second-reviewer of programs and more complex proposals. Approvals however may be made by chair alone, or in consultation with subcommittee members, as decided by the chair.

The appropriate subcommittee to review a proposal for an interdisciplinary program, minor or course is determined by the subject area that is covered most in the proposal. If the subject area is equally distributed, both subject area subcommittees may be asked to weigh in on the proposal. If the Curriculum Coordination Office is unsure about the appropriate referral, staff will consult with the Chair of UCOC and/or relevant subcommittee chairs.

Distance learning, hybrid and other technology-enhanced courses will be reviewed by the subcommittee that corresponds to the subject matter of the course.

Proposals related to a subcommittee chair's own, or affiliated, department(s) are reviewed by a subcommittee member who acts in the place of the subcommittee chair in such instances.

If a subcommittee has a high volume of proposals, the subcommittee chair may request that the CCO ask another, less busy, subcommittee to review. The choice of the stand-in subcommittee is made in consultation with the UCOC chair.

B. Off-Campus Studies Panel (OSP)

The Off-Campus Studies Panel (OSP) reviews all new and continuing undergraduate and graduate programs and courses offered by USC for off-campus studies. OSP has one chair, with a varying number of faculty members per year. Ongoing overseas and off-campus programs are reviewed on a regular basis.

C. General Education Committee (GE)

General Education requirements were revised, effective Fall 2015. The General Education Committee alone reviews General Education (GE) course proposals. New and revised courses are approved and a GE Memo is sent to the Curriculum Coordination Office for inclusion in the monthly UCOC agenda as an information item. The Curriculum Coordination Office enters the new GE designation onto existing courses with receipt of the memo. New courses are submitted with syllabi and the GE Memo by the department via the curriculum management system, Curriculog. The Curriculum Coordination Office reviews only to make sure that the proposal is technically accurate before it is sent off to the Student Information System (SIS).

General Education requirements are detailed in the *USC Catalogue*.

- [Undergraduate Education/General Education](#)

Note: With the UCOC revisions of 2014-15, the GE Committee no longer has direct membership in UCOC. Diversity is no longer required in the new GE requirements, therefore a Diversity Committee is no longer maintained under UCOC. In addition, the Writing Committee no longer reports to UCOC.

III. KEY ROLES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

A. Department or School

Changes and additions to the curriculum begin with the faculty in the department or school, depending on how each academic unit is organized, and the dean has overall responsibility for the curriculum in the school.

Faculty members or committees are ordinarily responsible for developing curriculum materials, including course syllabi, catalogue descriptions of degree programs and courses, and rationales for curriculum changes and additions. A departmental curriculum coordinator (DCC) is ordinarily responsible for preparing and entering proposals into the online curriculum management system, Curriculog, and should make sure that the proposal is reviewed properly and that questions are answered as appropriate. (However, faculty may enter a proposal into Curriculog as well.) Faculty, assisted by the DCC as needed, will be responsible for communicating with their own department(s) (and other schools when appropriate) to solicit feedback regarding changes that could affect those departments or schools.

Within Curriculog, proposals are routed to the deans of schools with “affected units.” Concerns are noted and ideally addressed between the schools before a proposal is routed forward to central university review. The assumption is that schools will vet proposals thoroughly. Departments are encouraged to ask the Curriculum Coordination Office for advice about technical aspects of proposal preparation and routing requirements during the development stage of the proposal (curriclm@usc.edu). The department is also encouraged to request a meeting to discuss the various planned proposals at their inception with the UCOC subject area subcommittee chair and CCO subject area representative.

B. Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO)

The Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) completes an initial review of all proposals, asks the department for any additional information, and clears up inconsistencies or technical issues. Departments wishing speedy review of their proposals are encouraged to respond promptly so that each proposal that is sent on to the subcommittee is as complete and accurate as possible. Proposals that have a large number of errors, omissions or inconsistencies – or when policy is in question – may be returned to the department for correction or clarification before they are sent to the subcommittee.

If a program, minor or course, is not changing in content, the CCO may administratively approve a proposal. For example, minor changes in wording of the course description or title; registration restrictions; grading option; prerequisites, co-requisites and recommended preparation; the addition or removal of a cross-list; the dropping of a course; the addition or deletion of an elective to a program or minor; and program and minor terminates. Syllabi are not required for such administrative actions. (Actions that may qualify for administrative approval are noted with a link found in the various Curriculog approval processes.) The Curriculum Coordination Office maintains UCOC minutes, pertinent memos from the Provost's Office, and guidelines produced by University leadership.

C. Registrar

The Registrar considers special circumstances posed by proposals. The Registrar may comment on proposals and/or make recommendations to the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) chair regarding proposals. Typically, such larger policy questions are addressed by UCOC as a whole at the monthly meetings from September through May.

The Registrar is responsible for the curriculum and catalogue management systems Curriculog and Acalog. Once the subject area subcommittee chair approves curriculum, the Academic Records and Registrar (ARR) division of Enrollment Services (ESD) ensures that course data is appropriately routed to the Student Information System (SIS) process, RNR.D.CATALOG, which drives RNR.U.SCHEDULE, the *Schedule of Classes* and WebReg, and that programs and minors are assigned their respective Program of Study (POST) and Minor Codes. All course, minor and program data are included and/or updated in the upcoming, academic-year, online *USC Catalogue*. Degree Progress codes all curriculum additions and updates into DARS so they will be reflected in student reporting.

D. Subcommittee Chairs

After a proposal has been reviewed by the Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO), any inconsistencies have been addressed, and new programs have received acknowledgement by the Provost's Office and reviewed by the Vice President for Enrollment Management, it is routed to the UCOC subject area subcommittee for content review. Comments by the CCO and/or Provost's Office are provided, as appropriate, and the chair is asked to respond. The CCO will communicate with the department regarding any requests for additions, changes, or review by affected department(s), unless the chair wishes to ask for this information independently.

Subcommittee chair and members may view and comment on all proposals directed to that subject area subcommittee for review. Such comments are not visible to the curriculum community; however, votes to approve or reject may be seen.

The subcommittee chair may decide on proposals alone, or in consultation with subcommittee member(s). If the subcommittee chair and a second reviewer disagree about whether to approve the proposal, or would like another opinion, the chair may ask another member to review the proposal to arrive at a potential consensus. The proposal may also be brought to the attention of UCOC as a whole for its review and feedback.

If the subcommittee chair determines that the full subcommittee, or UCOC, needs to review a proposal, the department may be invited to send a representative to the meeting. If a subcommittee denies a proposal, or if the department responds to a deferral by providing the requested information to the chair and the chair does not respond in a reasonably timely manner, the department may ask that an alternate subcommittee, or UCOC as a whole, review the decision. If the subcommittee chair does not feel that the proposal, with any minor revisions or clarifications the department can easily make, can be approved, the chair will refer the proposal to UCOC for review and a final decision.

If the subcommittee chair feels that they will not be able to review and respond within a reasonable time frame the chair may ask the CCO to route the proposal to another subcommittee or negotiate a limited time extension. If the chair has not responded in a reasonably timely manner (prior to the cut-off dates when proposal volume substantially increases), the proposal may be deemed approved by default at the discretion of the CCO, usually in consultation with the UCOC chair.

E. OSP Chair

Off-campus studies proposals are submitted via Curriculog, with all other curriculum proposals. Courses with an off-campus studies component and programs in partnership with other international universities are reviewed by the Off-Campus Studies Panel (OSP) after they have been reviewed and approved by the subject area subcommittee.

If a program is proposed, using non-USC courses, a member of the Articulation Office will review the proposal and offer their assessment, before the OSP panel reviews for health, safety and housing. As with all proposals, the CCO provides comments and input, as appropriate.

The OSP chair may contact a department directly to ask for more information, a small change in the proposal, or an affected department's opinion (copying the CCO); or the chair may ask the CCO to contact the department. They may also consult with other subcommittee members. All subcommittee members may view and comment on all proposals marked for OSP review, though usually only special cases incur extensive deliberation.

The OSP chair will ordinarily confer with at least one other member of the panel before approving a proposal. If the two faculty members do not agree to approve the program, a third reviewer will be asked to review.

If the proposal is minor, the chair may approve alone unless it was sent by their own department, in which case even minor changes would require conferral.

F. Subcommittee and OSP Members

Subcommittee and OSP members review proposals online via Curriculog when asked to do so by the chair. They should attempt to respond promptly, or to inform the chair if they cannot review.

The subcommittees and Off-Campus Studies Panel only meet as a whole if the chair has determined that there are proposals, which the chair alone, or in consultation with another member, cannot approve in their current state. In that case, the department may be invited to send a representative to the meeting. In-person meetings are rare, but members will be informed in advance if the subcommittee or panel will meet, and will be informed which items will be reviewed. They will be sent an agenda in advance of the meeting and will be asked to review the proposals and potential issue(s) on Curriculog. Members may wish to bring an electronic device to view the proposals and attachments at the meeting, or note the agenda beforehand. The subcommittee chair may also call a meeting to discuss general issues.

Subcommittees may approve, defer, or deny proposals. They may also refer decisions to UCOC if there is substantial disagreement in the subcommittee or a larger issue of policy is raised.

G. University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC)

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) meets monthly, usually on the first Wednesday of the month from September through May. It considers larger questions of policy. It also acts on proposals in the following situations:

- Subcommittee refers the decision to UCOC.
- Subcommittee denies the proposal, and the department asks UCOC to review.
- Department asks UCOC to review a proposal after the department responds to the subcommittee's request (when a proposal was deferred to the chair) and the chair has not responded within a reasonable time frame.

UCOC membership includes UCOC chair, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and all five subcommittee/panel chairs. Ex-officio members are included from the following departments: Registrar, Financial Aid, Online Programs and Program Review, and Libraries. The CCO representative serves the committee and records the decisions made by UCOC.

H. Provost's Office

All decisions are considered recommendations to the Provost and are not official until approved by the Provost's Office. Once approved, decisions are reviewed and policies are updated by the Catalogue Editor and Degree Progress.

IV. SUBCOMMITTEE AND PANEL PROCEDURES

A. Decision Making

1. Voting Procedure

All votes are by faculty, not affiliated or support staff. A majority is necessary; a tie vote fails. Subcommittee members from the requesting department are encouraged to weigh in but should not be a tie-breaking vote. All decisions of UCOC are made by majority vote of the voting members present, as long as a quorum of voting members exists. A quorum exists when a majority of voting members is participating in the decision.

If there is substantial disagreement in the subcommittee, or a larger issue of policy is raised by the proposal, the subcommittee should refer the matter to UCOC.

2. Decision Options

Chairs only, or members appointed in their stead, may approve. The CCO may administratively approve certain actions, per the UCOC 2013-14 revision to curriculum review process and procedures. Only subcommittee, panel or UCOC may defer or deny.

a) *Approve*

The proposal is approved, possibly with minor changes specified in the comments field of Curriculog – e.g., minor editing of the course or program description). The chair or subcommittee may also make suggestions, which are optional – e.g., to consider describing the course in a way to reach a wider student audience.

b) *Defer*

A deferral means that the proposal needs changes or additional information, which must be reviewed before the proposal can be approved. The needed changes, or additional information, are described in the Curriculog proposal and communicated to the department. The proposal may alternately be custom-routed directly to the person responsible for further input, to be returned to subcommittee for review when the issue is further clarified.

The subcommittee, the chair, or the CCO may be designated to decide if the revision suffices.

i. Deferral to CCO

Examples of the kinds of problems that might result in a deferral to the CCO include: specific corrections to be made in the syllabus, such as requiring that something be due on the date of the final examination (in certain cases) or that no credit be given for attendance; obtaining affected department sign off (as long as the department expresses no concerns); or cases where the proposal is approved if a specific change is made (such as changing the grading to CR/NC) and the department agrees to make this change.

ii. Deferral to Chair or Subcommittee

Examples of the kinds of issues that would require re-review by the subcommittee or subcommittee chair include: concerns about the academic quality or rigor of a course or program (such as course assignments, or evaluation or program requirements), being mindful of the Provost's charge that the primary responsibility for making decisions about curriculum belongs to the faculty and the academic leadership in the academic units; issues of overlap with other courses or departments; unclear or badly organized syllabus or degree proposal; inconsistency with university policies; concern about the number of units or course level of a course; concern about appropriateness of the degree being offered; lack of a transition plan for dropped courses or programs; or other concerns about proposal quality and about its benefit for students.

iii. Limits on Deferrals

If the proposal is deferred to the chair, they can bring a revision back to the subcommittee if it is not clear whether it has met the subcommittee's goals. In general, and in the interest of streamlining the review procedure, there is a limit on the number of times a subcommittee can defer an item, and also on the time allowed for a response by both parties.

- In most cases, a subcommittee should only refer a proposal back to the department twice. Beyond that (assuming that the department responded to the subcommittee's comments), the proposal may be sent to UCOC.
- If the proposal is deferred to the chair and the department responds, the chair should respond in reasonably timely manner. If the chair does not respond, the department may request that the proposal be sent to UCOC.
- If the department does not appropriately respond to the requests of the subcommittee for two successive subcommittee reviews, the proposal may be deemed denied. In that case, the department may not ask for a review by UCOC.

c) *Deny*

Denied proposals are considered by the subcommittee or UCOC to have serious academic problems, which are indicated in comments provided in the proposals or the meeting minutes. If a subcommittee denies a proposal, the department may request that UCOC review the request. Departments may resubmit the proposal if they deal with the problems, though timing of the curriculum and catalogue production cycle must be considered. In certain cases the CCO will not be able to honor such requests with the specific effective term desired.

B. Agenda, Reports and Minutes

1. Agendas and Reports

As of 2014-15, subcommittee, panel, and administrative action agendas and reports are no longer created for review at the monthly UCOC meetings. Proposals are decided upon by subcommittee chair. The curriculum management system Curriculog may be queried to show where, when and by whom decisions were made and why. Typically the subcommittee chair assigns proposals for review to its members during a designated time frame, with chair acting as second reviewer for programs and more complex proposals. Meetings may be arranged based on demand.

An agenda, announcing any new, or outstanding, issues to be addressed by UCOC, along with GE Memos or other relevant documents, is sent out to UCOC members for review a few days prior to the scheduled monthly meeting.

2. Minutes

UCOC minutes record the broader curriculum policy issues raised and individual proposals discussed and decided upon at the monthly UCOC meeting from September through May (if meetings take place). Once minutes are approved by UCOC they are posted on the [Curriculum website](#).

V. REVIEW CRITERIA

A. Did the Appropriate People Review the Proposal?

All proposals are routed from department to school to central university review. A proposal's progression through Curriculog indicates approval at the previous review steps. Comments point out potential issues, reservations, or further clarify approvals.

1. Requesting Department/School

Proposals are submitted by the Originator. Generally speaking, the Department Curriculum Coordinator (DCC), the Chair, and designated School Curriculum Dean must each review and approve for the proposal to move forward in the review process.

- a. Originator is any person with access to USC's Curriculog who wishes to submit a proposal.
- b. Department Curriculum Coordinator (DCC) submits and guides the proposal through the review process and is responsible for tracking the progress of proposals. They are responsible for identifying any departments potentially affected by the proposal and making sure they are notified. The DCC coordinates any discussion required around the proposal. The DCC ensures any required documentation (for instance, syllabi for courses) are attached to the proposal.
- c. Chair reviews the proposal, consults with affected units, and makes any additional edits, according to the department's intention.
- d. Curriculum Dean reviews the proposal and suggests any additional edits, according to the school's mission. The curriculum dean ensures the school's various departments have been consulted, if appropriate.

Please note: Internal reviews vary by school. Some include Department and/or School Curriculum Committee review.

The dean (or designee) of the requesting school signifies approval by approving a proposal to the CCO. When appropriate, proposals must be routed to Schools with Affected Departments in Curriculog.

2. Provost's Office

The Provost's Office consults various members of leadership for review of all new programs during the new program pre-proposal process. As of Spring 2022, a pre-proposal form must be approved by the Vice Provost for Academic Programs before being reviewed further. Pre-proposal approval does not imply endorsement but rather acknowledgement that the proposal may be sent on for UCOC review.

3. Affected Units

If units outside the proposing unit are potentially affected by a proposal, the proposal must be sent to the curriculum dean designee of each affected unit. The curriculum dean(s) will review and comment on the proposal according to the unit's findings (or simply mark with approval if there are no concerns). Proposing units are encouraged to reach out to affected units before submitting the proposal in Curriculog.

a) *Purpose of "Sign-off" by Affected Units*

Review by affected units helps to:

- Encourage coordination, communication and where appropriate, interdisciplinary cooperation among departments and schools. If departments teach similar material, or their faculty has expertise in the areas in question, they are required to communicate about the curriculum proposal.
- Ensure that if a unit uses courses offered by another unit, they are informed of any changes to, or drops of, these courses. This pertains whether the courses are prerequisites, or co-requisites, of their own courses, degree requirements for their degree, or even just listed in their degree as being among the options for fulfilling degree requirements (i.e., in a list of possible choices). For example, if Physics were to change the courses commonly taken by engineering students, they should communicate with Engineering in advance.
- Ensure that units partnering for dual degrees are informed and consulted when one of the standalone degrees is being changed or dropped.
- Ensure that units that are expected to provide resources for other units (e.g., their courses are listed as options for a minor), are informed and agree.
- Avoid excessive overlap or redundancy in the curriculum.

- Avoid a “turf war,” where different units may feel that they have priority in teaching a certain topic. (Such cases are likely to go to UCOC, if the departments have not reached an accommodation amongst themselves.)
- Communicate to units whose majors might be interested in taking a proposed course or minor are aware of it.
- Coordinate cross-listed courses with other units; both units should sign off on any proposal related to the course.

b) Timing and Procedure of Sign-offs

Ideally proposing departments should obtain all necessary sign-offs before sending the proposal to the dean designee. The CCO, subcommittee chair or members may request additional sign-offs. In this case, the CCO will ask the department to obtain the additional approvals. If a unit does not respond they are interpreted as forfeiting the right to comment. Units may state their concerns about a proposal; an affected unit’s objection to a proposal will not automatically block its approval, but will be considered by the subcommittee or perhaps UCOC. Approval by the dean designee assumes that they have consulted with the affected departments within their school as appropriate.

B. Syllabi

A sample syllabus must be provided when a new course is proposed or when changes to content are requested. The substance and style of a syllabus may vary from discipline to discipline and as appropriate given alternative forms of instruction. A syllabus should provide sufficient information about the proposed course so that the curriculum committee and students will understand the course goals/objectives, topics to be covered, readings, assignments, examinations and the percentage of a student’s grade for each assignment. A syllabus is not required when a course is dropped.

Faculty members preparing a syllabus are encouraged to keep in mind that students will often see a course syllabus as a contract, though it’s understood that a syllabus for a new course proposal serves as prospectus and may not necessarily be distributed. A sufficient level of detail should be offered to avoid misunderstandings and to clarify expectations. Required syllabus elements, the contact hour policy and guide, a link to the Center for Excellence in Teaching syllabus template, and other syllabus resources are posted on [the Resources page of the Curriculum website](#).

C. Instructors

Proposals should state the name of the instructor, and if they are not full-time, an explanation should be provided for the choice of using non-full-time faculty. Subcommittees recognize that different faculty may teach a course at different times. However, they may be concerned if a degree program appears to lack sufficient oversight and participation by full-time faculty, and sufficient resources for advising majors.

D. Academic Rigor, Value and Appropriateness

1. Courses

a) *New or Revised Courses*

- i) Is the course academically rigorous and appropriate?

Curriculum committees are charged with advising the Provost's Office regarding the academic quality of our curriculum. The faculty retains primary responsibility for ensuring that the courses offered meet high standards of academic rigor, but UCOC and its subcommittees retain oversight responsibility that will be exercised with an awareness that the faculty of our academic units are primarily accountable.

The catalogue should only contain courses aimed at students (not staff development courses, modules or trainings) that are academically sound and appropriate for USC to offer. There are a number of topics that would be helpful for students to learn (e.g., how to manage a budget, how to write a resume) for which they should presumably not receive credit toward graduation. In 1987, UGSC (a forerunner to UCOC) specified certain categories of courses which should not receive degree credit, listed in a memo from Sylvia Manning, 11/30/87: courses in personal and career counseling; courses designed to train students for university-related employment; courses designed to train students for university-related activities. In March 2013, UCOC approved the *Professional Development Guidelines* (Appendix L) to offer guidance on how to assess academic credit for courses that include professional development content.

ii) Is the numbering level correct?

The Catalogue defines levels determined by the first digit of the 3-digit course number:

- 0xx: non-credit or remedial courses; no degree credit.
- 1xx, 2xx: lower division.
- 3xx, 4xx: upper division. Graduate students may receive graduate credit for 400-level courses, but at least 2/3 of the units applied toward the graduate degree (including transfer work and not including 594 and 794) must be 500-level or higher. The very rare exceptions to this policy must be approved by UCO in advance, often in consultation with the Graduate School, on a per program basis and stated in the relevant program description of the Catalogue.
- 5xx, 6xx, 7xx: graduate. Some units may designate 5xx as master's level and 6xx as doctoral level but a university-wide standard is not established beyond the graduate designation.
Undergraduates may receive credit for graduate courses only in specified circumstances.

Upper-division courses are generally more sophisticated and demanding, with prerequisites or other limitations on enrollment. The courses "are usually intended for students who have some preparation, either in the specific discipline or more generally in academic study. They tend to concentrate more narrowly and intensively in scope than lower-division courses in the same discipline" (UGSC Minutes, April 5, 1989). Some units are structured such that 400-level courses must have prerequisites.

(*USC Catalogue: [Academic and University Policies/Registration/Classification and Numbering of Courses](#)*)

iii) Is the amount and kind of work appropriate for the level and units?

Committees should judge whether a course appears appropriate for lower division, upper division or graduate status, and whether it seems to deserve the number of units proposed.

Some guidelines: it would be unusual for a lower division course to have an upper division course as a prerequisite; parallel versions of courses on the same topic at the undergraduate and graduate level should have clearly different course requirements – otherwise, the course should be offered as a single 400-level course; if a course is revised to receive more or fewer units, there should be a corresponding increase or decrease in the workload and contact hours.

(See guidelines concerning contact hours and amount of total work recommended for each unit of credit in the following pages, or refer to the Contact Hours Reference on the Resources page of the Curriculum website.)

Subcommittees sometimes question whether a course which has no prerequisites or registration restriction (e.g., junior standing) should be 400-level, particularly if it appears that a course is being numbered as 400 primarily so that graduate students may receive credit for it (when it is not necessarily a graduate level course).

b) Dropped Courses

i) Is a dropped course a degree requirement?

If a course that is required for a program in either the offering unit or another unit is dropped, a transition plan must be provided, indicating how students whose programs required that course will be able to fulfill the requirement. Often this is managed by offering a different course instead, which is substituted using the exception process; however, in most cases, the program requirements must change. A proposal to revise the program should accompany the proposal to drop the course, detailing the effect of the dropped course on the program. Even if a course is not a program requirement but only an option in an outside program, the other unit should be considered “affected” and must sign off on the proposal.

2. Programs

a) *New Programs*

- i) Is the program necessary? Worthwhile? Appropriate? Is there an audience?

Departments are assumed to have considered these questions. Broad-based faculty consideration is essential to prevent the university from proliferating inappropriate, or unnecessary, degrees and courses, while at the same time remaining up-to-date and innovative in its offerings.

- ii) How does the program compare with similar programs at USC and elsewhere? Does it duplicate or overlap with existing programs?

- iii) Is it academically rigorous (both the courses and the degree requirements)?

As noted before, departmental faculty are primarily responsible for assuring academic rigor, but UCOC provides oversight while recognizing departmental primacy.

- iv) Are there sufficient academic resources (faculty, offices, library, computers, etc.)?

The faculty and deans proposing particular programs are responsible for judging and assuring sufficient resources. For courses relying on technology for delivery, technical issues should be resolved by the unit before the program is proposed.

- v) Is the program located in the appropriate school/department, with sufficient coordination with other units?

- vi) Is the appropriate degree being offered? Does the degree title match the apparent degree objective?

b) Revised Programs

i) Is the academic rationale for the change (which must be included) convincing? Is the program improved by the change?

ii) Will the change have any negative or unintended effects on students in the requesting or other units?

If the unit offers dual degrees or combined majors, all affected units must sign off and all appropriate catalogue copy must be reviewed and adjusted. If the change would make it impossible for current students to complete their program requirements, a transition plan must be provided indicating how they will do so.

c) Dropped Programs

i) Is there a transition plan for students currently in that program?

ii) Is the dropped program part of a dual degree?

Note: The catalogue does not include copy describing dropped programs. Students follow their original catalogue and the requirements therein.

3. Undergraduate (UG) Degrees

For a Bachelor of Arts (BA), the conferring unit is The College, even if the owning (offering) unit is another school. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) are liberal arts degrees, with the BS assumed to include more science or engineering. Some departments (e.g., Chemistry) offer both a BA and a BS, with the BS including more science, engineering, and/or industry requirements. The BS is also the appropriate degree objective for many professional programs – e.g., Business Administration (BS); Public Policy, Management and Planning (BS); Computer Science (BS) etc. The other UG degrees (e.g., Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Music) are also considered professional.

4. Graduate Degrees

See Appendix E: "GPSC Guidelines for Academic and Professional Degree Designations (10/1/03)" and Appendix J: "Guidelines for Professional Doctorates (February 2008)."

The PhD requires original research. The Master of Arts (MA) and the Master of Science (MS) emphasize theory and sometimes original research, according to the field. The professional doctorate (e.g., Doctor of Musical Arts, Doctor of Public Administration) and masters (e.g., Master of Social Work, Master of Construction Management) emphasize application of knowledge, ability to perform a highly skilled profession and, where appropriate, the preparation for receiving pertinent credentials.

Note, regarding "conferring unit":

The "conferring unit" is the unit that appears on the diploma. The "owning unit" administers the degree and provides advisement. The conferring unit is The College for all BAs (including those offered by professional schools such as Dramatic Arts and Music) and the Graduate School for all PhDs. For other degrees, the conferring unit is generally the same as the owning unit.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL ISSUES

A. Timeline for Curriculum Decisions

The detailed [Curriculum Submission Timeline](#) is posted on the Curriculum website.

1. Cut-off Dates for Inclusion in the *USC CATALOGUE*

Proposals to **REVISE/TERMINATE** programs, minors and courses must reach the CCO step in Curriculog, in approval-ready condition, no later than the **posted December date**. All revisions will have an effective term of fall of the next academic year.

Proposals for **NEW** Programs, Minors and Courses must reach the CCO step in Curriculog, in approval-ready condition, no later than the **posted February date**.

NOTE:

- If a program revision will include a newly proposed course, the course **MUST** be submitted alongside the program revision for review – i.e., the new course must adopt the REVISE submission timeline.
- Proposals that do not have appropriate sign-offs and/or lack required information and/or are submitted without tracked changes for revisions, etc. will be returned. These proposals will not be considered received by the CCO on that date.
- Curriculum proposals submitted at deadline are not guaranteed normal processing time due to the high volume of submissions received at that time.

2. Curriculum Updates to Catalogue

Approved curriculum will be imported into the production version of the *USC Catalogue* once approved. Academic units are encouraged to proofread and request any corrections once the approved curriculum is imported into the catalogue and well before the release of catalogue in early June. Additionally, it is recommended that academic units review approved courses on RNR.D.CATALOG and address any data errors promptly. (Data stored in RNR.D.CATALOG is transmitted to RNR.U.SCHEDULE, which drives the *Schedule of Classes* and Web Registration.)

3. What Happens After the Cut-Off?

Proposals that are not received on time or completed during the current curriculum submission cycle may be resubmitted to be considered for the following *USC Catalogue*. The forms for the next cycle will be released as soon as reasonably possible, but please note that priority will continue to be given to pending proposals that were received on time.

Following the guideline that the catalogue may be incomplete but not incorrect, proposals to revise programs, minors and courses submitted after the cut-off date will have an effective term that corresponds with the fall of the following catalogue production cycle. Proposals for new programs, minors and courses may have an earlier effective term so that they may be promptly offered, but they will not be published in the *USC Catalogue* until the following academic year, as above.

Please note:

- The University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) regularly reviews curriculum proposals and policies September through May, although summer reviews may be requested.
- Units should **estimate a minimum of one month for University curriculum review** – longer if additional edits and sign-offs are required.
- **SUBMIT IN THE FALL** to ensure that all involved know about the new and updated curriculum to be offered in the following academic year and to avoid the backlog of proposals that slow down the curriculum review process from February through April.

4. Important Dates for Curriculum Community Consideration

A more detailed schedule is included with the [Curriculum Submission Timeline](#), posted on the Curriculum website. Some components indicated here are rough estimates.

SPRING *Schedule of Classes* is published early October.

Registration begins late October.

First day of classes is early- to mid-January.

SUMMER *Schedule of Classes* is published mid-February.

Registration begins early March.

First day of classes is mid-May.

USC Catalogue is published in June.

FALL *Schedule of Classes* is published mid-March.

Registration begins late March to early April.

First day of classes is mid- to late-August.

B. Types of Curriculum Proposals and Materials That Must Be Provided

Detailed instructions are included in all Curriculog approval processes and referenced on the [Curriculum Management System page of the Curriculum website](#).

1. Courses

Departments may request to add, revise, or terminate courses via Curriculog. For existing courses, the user imports data from the current production catalogue (or during a limited time, the most recent *USC Catalogue*) and makes edits after launch so that changes are tracked

For each course proposal, except administrative approvals, a syllabus is attached, and the proposal is routed for approval to the curriculum chair and school dean (as well as any affected deans) before being sent to the CCO. If a course is a part of a program proposal, the program proposal should be completed and routed forward at the same time.

2. Programs

Departments may propose to create, revise or terminate programs. Catalogue copy is built within the Curriculog approval process, consisting of the program title, description and curriculum schema. As with existing courses, existing programs are imported from the production catalogue or most current *USC Catalogue* and are edited after launch so that changes are tracked.

Renamed in 2025, a completely new degree program, dual degree program, degree program with an emphasis, or certificate program requires an approved **Program Brief** as an attachment to the proposal before it can be reviewed by UCO. The Program Brief form can be found on the Resources page of the Curriculum Office [Website](#) and must be sent to the Office of Academic Programs using the designated approval process in Curriculog. Once approved, the new program can be proposed and forwarded for UCO review. A new program being processed to implement an existing program's name change does not require this step. Name change proposals with new or changed required courses or changed required units must be reviewed by UCO. Name change proposals that have unchanged required courses and required units do not need review by UCO.

Related program and course proposals should be routed forward in Curriculog for review at the same time.

3. Minors

Minor approval processes mirror program approval processes. The Provost's Office does not review/acknowledge minors.

4. Off-Campus Studies

There are various approval processes for off-campus studies in Curriculog depending on format and whether the request is to be initiated, reviewed or terminated. The forms list additional materials to be provided, such as approvals, reports, evaluations, etc.

C. Clarity of Submissions

If a major program revision is being proposed and the significance would not be obvious to those outside the field, the background and rationale should be provided. As with all revisions, changes should be tracked so that the revisions are detailed within the approval process. All attachments should be clearly labeled or numbered when appropriate.

D. What Information Must be Included

1. Courses

The Curriculum Office and Curriculog forms guide proposing units through inputting the information that must appear about courses and programs in the catalogue, so that (1) students are fully informed and (2) the necessary information is properly coded into the Student Information System (SIS) and DARS for the STARS, which together control registration, credit granted toward graduation, display on the transcript, etc. This includes:

- Course ID, title, and description (including the "L" indicating a separate, required lab); whether section titles are allowed
- Information about credit (units) and repeatability

- Information about General Education fulfillment
(Refer to [Course Numbers and Suffixes](#) section)
- Previous IDs and duplication of credit in other courses
- Grading option
- Preparation required or recommended, concurrent registration
- Restrictions (if any) on credit or registration
- Term(s) offered (optional)
- Owning and Authorized SCunit(s)

2. Programs

The following information must be included about all programs offered, including areas of emphasis, minors and requirements for honors designations, if applicable.

- All course requirements to which students will be held for graduation must be published
- Admissions requirements (minimum GPA, prerequisites, etc.)
- Graduation requirements (not only courses and units but GPA, etc.). All graduation requirements must be described in such a way that they can be monitored by the Degree Progress department.

Programs involving more than one unit (e.g., interdepartmental and combined programs) should be fully described in the catalogue section of the main offering unit and can be referenced by the other unit(s) with the help of the Catalogue Editor.

E. Policies Regarding Courses

1. Units, Contact Hours

The points below are further detailed in the memo from Elizabeth A. Graddy, 02/01/18: "Update of Guidelines on the Relationship between Contact Hours and Unit Credit" (Appendix D).

- A contact hour is defined as 50 minutes of class time, regardless of modality (synchronous or asynchronous). The expectation is that the number of 50-minute contact hours per week will match the number of units for a course following the standard 15-week session term. For non-standard session terms (the number of contact hours per week will be adjusted accordingly).
- A contact hour includes engagement with instructors through presentation, discussion, and/or other exercises that foster critical engagement with lecture materials, course materials, or discussion with classmates. For asynchronous online class sessions, this may include question & answer, or other methods, sometimes referred to as *Bidirectional Learning Tools* (BLT).
- One semester unit represents 1 hour of class time and 2 hours of outside work (3 hours total) per week for a 15-week term.
- Weekly contact hours for courses with unit values of 3, 2, or 1 should equal the number of units.
- Where the number of contact hours for a 4-unit course is reduced, the instructor and sponsoring academic unit will provide an academic rationale for the reduction (e.g., extensive reading assignments, more than the average out-of-class writing assignments, regular instructor/student tutorials, etc.) to be reviewed by UCOC. This flexibility, however, may not allow contact hours for a 4-unit course to drop below three 50-minute contact hours per week.
- The unit definition implies a maximum as well as a minimum amount of student effort. For new courses, if the number of contact hours exceeds the number of units, the UCOC should ensure that the requirements are not excessive. For existing offerings, the Registrar expects chairs and directors to do the same.
- Regarding asynchronous course offerings for which the Registrar cannot verify contact hours, the cognizant dean will verify, and certify to the Registrar, that current offerings comply with the Guidelines.

Note, in April 2011 UCOC approved the following statement: If one of the scheduled class meetings in a course falls upon a university holiday, information must be provided in the syllabus that will address how the units and material that would have been scheduled for that class will be made up.

For example, an extra class meeting may be scheduled, additional reading or projects may be assigned, online activities might be an option, etc. This is particularly important for classes that only meet once a week, and there is a holiday on the scheduled class day.

2. Description of Courses

a) *Course Numbers and Suffixes*

Course numbering guidelines and suffixes are described at
(*USC Catalogue: [Academic and University Policies/Registration/Classification and Numbering of Courses](#)*) See also the [Course Level and Numbering](#) section earlier in this handbook.

The following suffixes indicate courses that fulfill General Education (GE) requirements:

- “g” - course fulfills 2015 and/or old GE
- “w” - course fulfills 2015 GE-G: Equity in a Diverse World
- “p” - course fulfills 2015 GE-H: Traditions and Historical Foundations
- “m” - course fulfills the old GE diversity requirement

Note: New GE requirements (including GE-G: Equity in a Diverse World (“w”) and GE-H: Traditions and Historical Foundations (“p”) apply to students admitted to USC Fall 2015 and after. Old GE requirements (including the diversity requirement indicated by the suffix “m”) apply to students admitted to USC prior to Fall 2015.

There is sometimes confusion about the following:

- Sequential courses use the suffixes a-f and h-j as a formal part of the course ID. Course 100a is the prerequisite for 100b, etc.
- An “L” course has a required laboratory which consists of hands-on work typically done in a separately scheduled lab section. This is most often used for science and engineering labs and usually does not include field trips.

b) Prefixes

The Registrar's Office has oversight over course prefixes. A request to change prefixes, or assign new prefixes, does not usually need UCOC review. Units wishing to change prefixes or create new prefixes should submit a Request New Prefix proposal in Curriculog and provide necessary justification. Sufficient time for the approval of a new prefix must be factored into the review process.

c) Variable Units, Repeatable Courses

Course may be taken for the range of units indicated, particularly relevant for catalogues published before 2015:

- (2 or 4) or (2, 4): 2 or 4 units
- (2-4): 2, 3, or 4 units (If the course is not offered for 3 units, the hyphen should not be used.)
- (1-12): 1, 2, ..., 11, or 12 units

Note: For technical reasons, any range of units must be enumerated within the unit field in Curriculog – e.g., 1, 2, 3 for 1-3. Care should be taken not to obfuscate 1, 3 with 1-3, as an example. All unit values indicated will be published for all courses.

In the above examples, the course can only be taken once. If it can be taken more than once, a maximum unit value must be provided. For example, (1-3, max 9): the course can be taken for 1, 2 or 3 units repeatedly until a maximum of 9 units is earned.

Units must schedule a separate section of the course for each unit value offered, except for the occasional truly variable course, which is scheduled for multiple unit values for students to select – e.g., 490 Directed Research.

An area of possible confusion, particularly for previous catalogues:

- A hyphen can indicate either a sequential course (if there is more than one semester) or a variable unit course (if there is only one semester). As an example of a sequential course, "CHEM 322ab (4-4)" indicates that CHEM 322a is the prerequisite of CHEM 322b and each course receives 4 units. As of 2015, all sequential courses are listed in the catalogue individually.

3. Grading Options

Departments must indicate the grading option, three of which are most common:

- Letter graded (required for 390, 490 and 499/599 courses): this is the default option for all courses except in the Law School, which uses numerical grades.
- CR/NC (Credit/No Credit): to receive credit (CR), work in UG courses must be of quality equivalent to a C- or better, and in graduate courses, of quality equivalent to B. CR/NC has no effect on the GPA. Note that pass/no-pass (P/NP) is a student-chosen option specific to *letter-graded* courses. If a graduate student elects this option the course cannot be applied to a graduate degree.
- IP (In Progress): used for a course in which there are successive registrations, with the grade (Letter or CR/NC) assigned at the final registration. IP is required for all but 594 and 794 sequence courses (among others, potentially). In Progress to Credit is a common IP grading option.

4. Changes In Course Numbering, Duplicates Credit

The first digit of the course number should indicate the appropriate level. Ideally, course numbers should only be changed to reflect a change in level, or when a course is being revised so significantly that it would be misleading to continue to use the same number. The Registrar's Office discourages departments from renumbering courses to identify content of courses, as the consequent renumbering requires a large amount of overhead in the Registrar's Office and may at least initially be confusing to students.

There is sometimes confusion when a department proposes a course that is notably similar to an existing course. The department must indicate whether students are allowed to earn credit for both courses, which should not be allowed if the courses are simply changing prefix or number, without a change in content, or if they overlap in content by more than about 50%. In such cases the annotation "duplicates credit in [the other course]" should be included in the catalogue. If courses overlap in content by 80% or more, the courses may be so similar that there need not be a second, new course. Thus, if two courses overlap by about 50-80%, students should probably not earn credit for both and the courses should "duplicate credit" in each other.

When a course is renumbered or re-prefixed and the original is dropped, the annotation "duplicates credit in former [the original course]" should be included in the catalogue for three years, at which point students will soon have ceased applying the former course and the annotation can be revised out.

If both courses continue to exist, with the annotation “Duplicates credit in [the other course],” and if a department wants both of the courses to fulfill a degree requirement, the program should be revised to refer to both courses (e.g., “take A [new course] or B [earlier but still existing course]”).

Note, however, that the registration system does not recognize “Duplicates credit in [former]” language in processing prerequisites. If course B has course A as a prerequisite, students must have taken course A to be allowed (by the registration system) to register in course B; course X, which duplicates credit in course A, will not suffice. For students who took only course X, departments will need to waive course A as a prerequisite in order for students to register in course B.

When courses that are referenced in the catalog description of other courses (e.g., as prerequisite or co-requisite) are renumbered or dropped, the other courses must also be corrected. An accompanying proposal is required for every course that refers to a course that is being renumbered or dropped, whether the course is referred to as a prerequisite, co-requisite, concurrent registration, or “duplicates credit in.” These revisions are referred to as “ripple effects” and are usually approved administratively.

Care should be taken with respect to prerequisite relationships of dropped courses following a renumbering or re-prefixing. If continuing students will definitely need a dropped course to serve as prerequisite to an active course – potentially resulting in numerous prerequisite waivers – the department may wish to consider retaining the dropped course as a prerequisite option for such courses and students. As with the “duplicates credit in former” annotation, the dropped prerequisite course(s) should be revised out of the active course after about three years, when students who took it will have been replaced by the students who began taking the re-prefixed or renumbered version.

The registration system does not prevent students from registering in a course which duplicates credit in a course they passed previously, but they will not receive credit for the second course as it is considered out of sequence by the Degree Progress department.

When a course has been dropped, its number should not be reused for at least three years. It is also inadvisable to re-use numbers by adding suffixes, e.g., changing HIST 301 into HIST 301ab or vice versa, as this may confuse students.

5. Restrictions on Courses

a) *Prerequisites, Recommended Preparation*

A **prerequisite** is a course which students must have passed prior to registering for another course. The registration system checks for prerequisites and blocks registration if the student has not fulfilled the prerequisite, but a department has the option of waiving a prerequisite if the adviser believes the student has equivalent background (or for some other appropriate reason).

Therefore, a prerequisite should be stated as "Course X," not "Course X or departmental approval," since "departmental approval" is always possible and therefore redundant. The registration system cannot enforce requirements such as "knowledge of Spanish" or "high school chemistry" unless there is an appropriate placement exam. A prerequisite should not state "Instructor approval required," rather this restriction should be enforced by the department making the course a "D-Clearance" course in the scheduling system.

If course A is the prerequisite for course B in the same discipline and a student has taken course B, the student may not later take course A and receive unit or grade point credit. If course A is a prerequisite for course B which is a prerequisite for course C, course C need only list course B as a prerequisite, though it is acceptable to list both courses as prerequisite.

With "ab" courses (e.g., CHEM 105ab), it is understood that CHEM 105a must be the prerequisite for CHEM 105b. However, in a Curriculog proposal for CHEM 105b, CHEM 105a must be stated as the prerequisite in order to maintain accurate data in RNR.D.CATALOG which is enforced by the registration system.

Extra care should be taken with regard to listing multiple alternative prerequisites or co-requisites for a course. If a course has several "OR" prerequisites (e.g., the prerequisites for EE 535 are "EE 441 or EE 567 or EE 464 or EE 465," and a student takes any one of these prerequisites and then takes EE 535, the student cannot then take any of the *other* prerequisites – they will be considered "out of sequence" and credit will not be granted.

Graduate courses should not have undergraduate courses numbered below 400 as prerequisites, as any graduate students who did not attend USC could not have taken that course and the department would generally be required to waive the prerequisite; “recommended preparation” could be used instead to indicate expected knowledge.

Recommended Preparation indicates course work, or specific background, that is advisable but not mandatory in preparing the student for the designated course. This is not checked by the registration system so a freeform statement is acceptable, but verbose recommended preparation statements should be avoided.

b) Co-Requisites and Concurrent Enrollment

Please note the distinction between a **co-requisite** (a course which must be taken prior to or simultaneously with another course) and **concurrent enrollment** (a course which must be taken simultaneously with another course).

c) Credit Restriction, Registration Restriction

A **credit restriction** (marked with the suffix "x") indicates that some kind of credit (degree, major, graduate) is not given to some or all students who enroll in the class, e.g., "not available for degree credit" [to anyone], or "not available for major credit to accounting majors." Students who will not receive credit are allowed to register.

A **registration restriction** limits a course to students with a certain characteristic (usually class level or major) – e.g., "Gerontology students only" or "senior standing." It may also exclude certain students – e.g., "Not open to MBA students." The registration system will not allow excluded students to register, but departments can waive the registration restriction. If they do, students will earn credit. Registration restriction statements should appear in the catalogue with the formats “Not open to...” or “Open only to...”

Note: at this time, registration restrictions cannot be applied to minors.

6. Attendance and Peer Review

Peer evaluation can be a formative part of the grading process, but it in itself cannot be part of the final grade. Final grades must be given by the instructor and not by the students (UCOC March 2013).

Guidelines on course participation and attendance: Participation should not exceed 15% of the total grade. Where it does, the syllabus must provide an added explanation. No portion of the grade may be awarded for class attendance but non-attendance can be the basis for lowering the grade, when clearly stated on the syllabus (UCOC March 2019).

F. Special Courses with Specific Numbers and Purposes

Several course numbers are reserved for courses with specific purposes. These courses generally have prescribed units, restrictions, and approximately identical catalogue descriptions.

1. Special Problems (390)

"390 Special Problems (1-4, FaSp) Supervised, individual studies. No more than one registration permitted. Enrollment by petition only."

See Appendix H: Memo from Sylvia Manning, 2/24/86, "390 and 490 Courses." Several additional restrictions are stated with regard to 390 courses:

- Enrollment is by petition to CAPP.
- They must be letter graded.

In addition, 390 courses cannot be scheduled electronically by academic units.

2. Directed Research (490)

"490x Directed Research (1-8, max 12, FaSpSm) Individual research and readings. Not available for graduate credit."

See Appendix H: Memo from Sylvia Manning, 2/24/86, and from Douglas Shook, May 8, 2013, "390 and 490 Courses." Several other restrictions are mentioned with regard to 490 courses:

- They must be letter graded.
- Students may apply a maximum of 16 units of 490 (which would have to be from at least two different departments) toward the degree.
- Students may take a maximum of 12 units in one prefix. It is at discretion of the department to limit the minimum/maximum allowed.
- Only full-time regular faculty may be the faculty of record.
- Only available to upper-division students with superior academic performance.

As a reminder, 490 courses, like all USC courses not specifically approved for off-campus locations, must be taken at USC.

3. Directed Research (590, 790)

"590 [or 790] Directed Research (1-12) Research leading to the master's [or doctoral] degree. Maximum units which may be applied to the degree to be determined by the department. Graded CR/NC."

According to a memo from Joseph Hellige, 6/4/99, "It is not appropriate for 590/790 courses to be used as 'surrogate courses' by departments to circumvent normal curriculum committee review or to conceal the actual course activity of students. To avoid the chance of a student becoming involved in a registration- or graduation-related bind with these courses, 590/790 courses are to be used strictly for individual research activities in the student's major department."

4. Special Topics (299, 499, 599, 699)

E.g., "499 Special Topics (1-8, max 8). Selected topics in..." Letter graded.

- See attached memo from Armstrong, 6/19/95, "499s and 599s" (Appendix I).
- Effective Spring 2017, Special Topics numbered 299 and 699 may also be offered, so designated as Lower Division undergraduate and Higher Level graduate, respectively (December 2016 UCOC Minutes). These additions parallel the standard 499 configuration, with the exception that 699 courses shall be open only to doctoral students.

These course numbers are reserved to allow introduction of a new or emerging aspect of a field or to take advantage of the expertise of a new or visiting faculty member. If the course is successful and the department wishes to continue offering it, it should be offered as a permanent course and must be fully reviewed by UCOC. This is the reason for the restriction that the same course may not be offered more than twice without being proposed as a new course. The Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) monitors special topics to enforce the above restriction and to ensure that the required technical elements are met in the proposed syllabus. It is contrary to the spirit of university policy for departments to offer special topics as a way of circumventing curriculum committee review – e.g., by re-offering the same course with a slightly different title or by offering an existing permanent course with a changed unit value. The description of the course is carried in the "section title," which is also monitored by the CCO. The section title appears in the *Schedule of Classes* and appears on the transcript. A 299, 499, 599 or 699 course must be letter graded, though in October 2014 UCOC approved C/NC graded special topics with an otherwise similar configuration that have gained popularity in recent years. To date 598 is the most common number designation.

5. Thesis Courses (594, 794)

"594abz Master's Thesis. Credit on acceptance of thesis. Graded IP/CR/NC."

"794abcdz Doctoral Dissertation. Credit on acceptance of dissertation. Graded IP/CR/NC."

The "z" courses are worth/repeated for 0 units, for which 2 units of tuition are charged. GPSC (1/10/91) stated that individual departments and programs may determine whether 594 units may be applied toward the PhD degree. If a thesis is required for a degree, at least 4 units of 594 or 794 must be required by the program.

6. Cross-Listed and Interdepartmental Courses

The memo from Sylvia Manning, 7/19/91, on "Cross-Listed Courses" further details the below points (Appendix G).

Cross-listing is a way of drawing students' attention to courses outside their home department in which they may wish to enroll. A department wishing to cross-list one of its courses in another department must revise their course in Curriculog to add a cross-list in another department with the identical course title and, if possible, the same course number. Additionally, cross-listed courses may be substituted for major or minor requirements in both departments without counting against the 25% cap on substitutions. Students are directed in the *Schedule of Classes* to enroll in the "real" course, and this course (with its home department) appears on their transcript.

The home department typically submits the proposal, not the department listing the cross-list. No syllabus is necessary.

It is not possible to cross-list Special Topics designated courses.

Departments offering truly interdepartmental courses may wish to use the "MDA" (multidisciplinary activities) or "INTD" (interdepartmental, in Medicine) designation.

7. Gateway Courses

A Gateway Course is a lower-division, 3- to 4-unit course that introduces and showcases the minor or major curricula of an academic field of study. It is intended to be a student's first exposure to a field of study. A major, or minor, may have at most one gateway course, but need not have any. One course could serve as the gateway for more than one program. Gateway courses are proposed via Curriculog. The first sentence of the catalogue description must read, "Gateway to the [major, minor] in [degree name]." Gateway courses should not have prerequisites.

8. Internships

Guidelines for undergraduate and graduate internship courses (Appendix E) were developed by a joint UGSC/GPSC committee and approved by the Provost. They guide committee review of internship courses and include the number of hours of internship work required per course unit.

G. Policies Regarding Degree Programs

1. Degree Requirements: Undergraduate

Programs must comply with minimum university standards for units, GPA and residency, which are stated in the catalogue. In some instances departments may set more stringent standards, but such standards will generally be reviewed by the UCOC.

(*USC Catalogue: [Undergraduate Education/Requirements for Graduation](#)*)

a) *Units for a Degree*

At least 128 units are required for the undergraduate degree. There is no maximum number of units. Some degrees require more than 130 units. Of the 128-unit minimum, at least 32 units must be upper division.

The College requires at least 104 units in College courses for College majors, or 96 units for students with a minor outside of the College.

b) *Units for a Major*

There is no policy on the minimum, or maximum, number of units which a department may require for a major. The typical range is around 24-36 units, but some programs require more.

The College departments generally may not require fewer than 24, or more than 36 upper-division units, in the major.

Per a memo from the Provost, 2/24/95, UCOC has been asked to be very careful about authorizing increases in requirements for the major. "Adding requirements for the major while the University strives to free up units for interdisciplinary work tends to defeat the University's strategic plan for undergraduate education."

c) *GPA*

The minimum requirement for graduation is 2.0 cumulative USC GPA for undergraduates. Honors programs require a higher GPA.

d) Residence

Undergraduates are required to take at least 64 units at USC (80 if they are in the architecture program, 48 if they are in an engineering 3-2 program).

e) Courses

An undergraduate degree may not require a graduate course, although it could be an option.

2. Degree Requirements: Graduate

Programs must comply with minimum university standards for units, GPA, residency, and time to completion, which are stated in the catalogue. In some instances departments may set more stringent standards (i.e., allow more transfer units toward a graduate degree than the university maximum), but these more stringent standards must be reviewed by the curriculum committee.

(*USC Catalogue: [Graduate and Professional Education/Requirements for Graduation](#)*)

a) Units for a Degree

The minimum unit requirement for a master's degree is established at the time the program is approved and may not be waived. The course of study for the master's degree must include at least 24 units in required and elective courses. In addition, students in a program requiring a thesis must register for four units of 594ab Master's Thesis.

The minimum unit requirement for a PhD degree is 60, including research courses and at least four units of 794ab Doctoral Dissertation.

There is no maximum for master's or doctoral degrees. Some professional master's degrees require as many as 80 units. At least two-thirds of the units for graduate degrees must be at the 500 level or higher (including transfer work and not including 594 and 794).

(There is a slight variation to this requirement for [master's degrees in engineering](#).

b) GPA

The minimum requirement for graduation is 3.0 cumulative USC GPA for graduate students.

c) Summative Experience

For master's degrees conferred by the Graduate School, a comprehensive examination or summative experience may replace a thesis in certain departments.

For those master's degrees not conferred by the Graduate School, the degree-conferring school determines if a thesis, comprehensive exam or other summative experience is required. When the summative experience is not a thesis or comprehensive examination, the nature of the summative experience needs to be explicitly defined including the method by which the student's performance will be assessed and how the results of that assessment will be recorded. The summative experience requirement will often be satisfied by passing a course designed specifically for this purpose.

A PhD requires a dissertation. For professional degrees, "All new doctorate degrees must require some form of a capstone experience, culminating project or final project" (Appendix J).

d) Residency, Time Limit Requirements

Master's degrees require at least 20 units in residency, doctoral degrees require at least 24. There are limits on the amount of time graduate students have to complete a degree. Please refer to the catalogue for further details.

3. Areas of Emphasis, Tracks

a) Area of Emphasis

An area of emphasis is a certain set of courses which the student must complete within the major. These are checked by Degree Progress and listed in the catalogue. The area of emphasis appears in parentheses in the catalogue, i.e., "Civil Engineering (Environmental Engineering)," but it does not appear on the diploma. Each area of emphasis is a separate program of study (POST) and does appear on the transcript.

b) Tracks

Tracks (and their synonyms) are, like areas of emphasis, a set of courses which constitute a focus within the major. Tracks do not appear on the transcript or the diploma. Tracks usually differ from each other less than areas of emphasis do. Tracks are used for advising students into different routes to the degree, and do not HAVE to be described in the catalogue unless the department wishes to do so for purposes of publicity. Tracks in minors are not formally recognized (See Technical Guideline #14 in Guidelines for Minors, Appendix F).

H. Types of Degrees

1. Dual Degrees (Graduate Level Only)

a) *Definition*

A dual degree has coursework from two different departments or schools organized into a coherent program with a single POST. The student receives two diplomas with two different degrees (e.g., MS/MBA), as indicated by the name of the program entry in the catalogue. The requirements of the two degrees are met with fewer units because of overlap (i.e., they may share some requirements, or the electives of one degree may be used to fulfill the requirements of the other).

See "GPSC Guidelines for Dual Degree Programs (12/10/87)" (Appendix J) which gives guidelines for determining whether there is a coherent academic rationale for a proposed dual degree program.

b) *Rules on "Double Counting," Minimum Units Required*

For dual degree programs, students must complete all requirements for both degrees and then will be awarded both diplomas at the same time (GPSC, 11/12/87). These minutes also describe the rules for students enrolled in a dual degree program who later wish to receive only one of the two degrees.

In addition, there is the following limitation on "double counting:" a GPSC subcommittee (11/18/71) proposed that the requirement for each degree component not fall below those that pertain to a second master's degree. The [limits for a second master's](#) indicate how many units earned toward a first master's degree at USC may be applied toward a second master's. Revised as of October 2015, no more than 25 percent of the minimum units required for the program. For example, if a dual degree were proposed to combine a 30-unit MA and a 60-unit MS, the program requirements could be reduced by up to 7.5 units from the MA and up to 15 units from the MS, reducing the total units from 90 to 67.5. The minimum units required for the dual degree may be reduced by no more than 25 percent of the sum of the minimum units required for both, standalone degrees. However, all required courses for each degree are required for the dual degree.

If a required course for either standalone degree is not required for the dual degree, the catalogue copy must include justification for the omission (e.g., that certain courses in one degree provide comparable content to the omitted course in the other degree).

2. Progressive Degree Program

The progressive degree program enables a USC undergraduate to begin work on a master's degree while completing requirements for the bachelor's degree. Progressive degrees designed by departments must fulfill the rules detailed in the catalogue. They do not have to be described in the catalogue and they are not reviewed by UCOC. Contact the Degree Progress department for additional details.

3. University Certificates (Graduate Only)

A certificate program is an educational program which brings together an identified body of knowledge or level of expertise to accomplish particular educational objectives. Certificate programs are only allowed at the graduate level (except for the Food Industry Management program – the sole UG certificate). All university certificate programs are reviewed by UCOC. They must offer regular, for-credit courses which have been approved by UCOC. Departmental certificates are not allowed. See Appendix C, "University Certificate Programs."

- A minimum of 12 units is required.
- For certificates of 16 units or fewer, all must be at the 500 level and all must be taken at USC.
- If there are more than 16 units, not more than 25% of the course work may be at the 400 level, nor earned through transfer credits.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for the Certificate.

For university certificate programs offering credit courses meeting the criteria above, the Registrar's Office provides certificates which resemble diplomas in format. All other types of certificates must be ordered by the department. (Formats and requirements for these certificates are available in the Registrar's Office.) This includes certificates for noncredit courses. For Continuing Education Units, a CEU transcript is available from the Registrar's Office.

4. Combined Programs (Aka Combined, Double Majors, or Joint Degrees) (Undergraduate)

A combined program takes some of the content from each of two different departments or schools and combines them into one degree (one POST, one diploma). Combined programs only exist at the undergraduate level. They include a "/" in the title, e.g., "Physics/Computer Science." No more than the usual (i.e., 128) units are required. The administering unit of a combined program must be identified.

5. Types of UG Majors Within The College

(USC Catalogue: [Undergraduate Education/Undergraduate Degree Programs](#))

a) *Departmental Majors*

The College also offers interdepartmental majors in humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, or "program" majors.

b) *Double Major, Second Bachelor's Degree*

Double majors and second bachelor's degrees are designed by the student and do not require curriculum committee review. All requirements for both degrees must be met; additional requirements are detailed in the catalogue.

I. Policies Concerning Other Types of Programs

1. Minors

New or revised minors are proposed using the minor approval processes in Curriculog, and are reviewed by the appropriate subcommittee. Any new, revised or dropped courses which are part of the proposal must be referred to on the minor proposal and submitted through Curriculog as well. Appendix F describes the guidelines for minors established by the "Coupling Committee" in Spring 1998. Minor policies are also detailed in the catalogue:

(*USC Catalogue: [Undergraduate Education/Requirements for Graduation/Minor Programs](#)*)

In the Memo from February 23, 2004, Provost Armstrong stated that "minors should not have admissions requirements unless (a) certain artistic ability is required or (b) the program can accommodate only limited enrollments. In the instance of limited enrollment, the use of a GPA above 2.0 may be implemented."

2. Off-Campus Courses and Programs

USC offers a large variety and number of off-campus courses and programs (a set of courses taken usually during the summer, fall and/or spring semester). All must be reviewed and subsequently approved by the Off-Campus Studies Panel (OSP). The primary goal of OSP review is to determine that there is an academic purpose for taking students overseas and that health and safety considerations have been addressed. In addition, subsequent review of courses and programs, with overseas components, ensure that the offerings are well received, the courses and programs are academic in nature, and that health and safety are continually addressed.

Courses and programs which take place for any length of time overseas, or a semester or more off-campus domestically, require review and approval by relevant subject area subcommittee and/or at least OSP.

Any program made up of courses from another institution are also reviewed by the Registrar's Articulation Office, which reviews that the unit value of another institution's course work translates appropriately into USC units.

Courses with an overseas component typically take place during the spring or summer semesters or winter break. Special topics (temporary course offerings) are approved by OSP for their duration as a Special Topic course. Regular courses, with a specified location, are typically approved by OSP for five years.*

Programs consisting of USC courses or courses from other institutions are typically a semester (spring, summer or fall) or year long. They are also typically approved by OSP for five years.*

Global Partnership programs are formed with another institution and generally follow dual degree rules. Special exceptions may be considered for these programs.

Courses and programs with **domestic** travel for the entirety of the semester are reviewed by OSP. Courses and programs with domestic travel for only a portion of the semester are not reviewed by OSP.

*Please note, OSP may request a shorter review period than stated above.

a) Courses

Courses offered overseas are commonly referred to as Short Trips, Maymesters and International Summer Programs (ISP). Short Trips refer to courses that include overseas travel of usually no more than four weeks. Maymesters are courses with a component of (or in total) overseas travel that takes place at the end of the spring semester and concludes in early-mid June.

All courses are offered by individual departments or faculty members, not by a school's study abroad office; all are either part of a USC course, or constitute the entirety of a USC course (though a two-week course could earn at most 3 units).

Procedures for submitting an OSP Course proposal are found on the [Curriculum website](#).

b) Programs

Overseas programs are a group of USC courses, or courses offered by another institution, offered for a semester (spring, summer or fall) or year. Summer programs are called International Summer Programs (ISP).

Courses may be offered by USC (taught or overseen by USC faculty on site); an international university, enrolled in directly with native students; or an organization, such as CIEE, which specializes in organizing overseas studies programs at various sites. If a program consists of courses from another institution, USC's Articulation Office reviews and offers its recommendation with regard to USC equivalent unit values to the OSP.

The programs may be for graduate, undergraduate, or as in the case of some International Summer Programs (ISP), a mixture of both.

Summer programs may be offered by departments (e.g., language departments) which offer their own (USC) courses abroad. All other programs are offered either by the Office of Overseas Studies (OOS), which offers the vast majority and whose programs are open to any major, or by an overseas studies office or coordinator within a school. The schools which offer their own overseas programs during the academic year are: Annenberg, Architecture, Engineering, Law and Marshall (graduate and undergraduate). Except for Annenberg, these schools have historically limited their programs to their own majors.

c) Recorded

Overseas programs students participating in off-campus courses and programs may receive financial aid (during the academic year), and the courses appear on the transcript as USC courses and fulfill the residency requirement. This distinguishes USC, OSP-approved courses and programs from overseas courses and programs that the student may attend on their own, whose courses are considered transfer courses. Students may not fulfill general education requirements through overseas studies programs (except for Howard University).

All non-USC courses taken overseas are recorded on the USC transcript as CR (if the grade was a C- or higher) or NC (if the grade was below C-). (Courses taken at Howard and George Washington University receive letter grades). For graduate overseas programs, a grade must be "passing" at the offering institution to receive CR at USC.

3. Honors Programs

(*USC Catalogue: [Undergraduate Education/Requirements for Graduation/Honors Programs](#)*)

The minimum requirements for receiving departmental (as opposed to university) honors are detailed in the catalogue: “The minimal requirements for receiving departmental honors are that the student: (1) satisfactorily completes course work for an honors project and (2) achieves no less than a 3.5 GPA (A = 4.0) in the major at the time of graduation. Each program, department or school will designate what it considers the appropriate course work and honors project. Departmental honors are noted on academic transcripts but not on the diploma.”

HANDBOOK ABBREVIATIONS

AHS	Arts and Humanities Subcommittee
CAPP	Committee on Policy and Procedure
CCO	Curriculum Coordination Office
CR/NC	Credit/No Credit
DCC	Departmental Curriculum Coordinator
DL	Distance Learning
DLCC	Distance Learning Curriculum Committee (legacy)
GE	General Education
GPA	Grade Point Average
GPSC	Graduate and Professional Studies Committee (now subsumed into UCOC)
HPS	Health Professions Subcommittee
IP	In Progress (grade)
ISP	International Summer Program
LD	Lower division
OSP	Off-Campus Studies Panel
P/NP	Pass/No Pass
POST	Program of Study
SES	Science and Engineering Subcommittee
SSS	Social Sciences Subcommittee
UCC	Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (now subsumed into UCOC)
UCCPC	Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Policy Committee (now subsumed into UCOC)
UCOC	University Committee on Curriculum
UD	Upper division
UG	Undergraduate
UGSC	Undergraduate Studies Committee (forerunner to UCC and UCOC)

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A. Internship Course Guidelines

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC RECORDS

Attachment 8



MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Deans and Directors, Department Chairs

FROM: Kenneth L. Servis, Dean, *Kenneth L. Servis*
ACADEMIC RECORDS AND REGISTRAR

DATE: June 25, 1996

SUBJ: INTERNSHIP COURSES

The review of internships over the past two years has resulted in the adoption of the enclosed "Guidelines for Undergraduate and Graduate Internship Courses." These guidelines are to be used when proposing new internship courses and when evaluating existing internship courses. The guidelines will be used by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate and Professional Schools Committee when considering departmental requests to add or review internship courses. Departments are encouraged to review existing internship courses and to bring them into conformance with the attached guidelines.

/zaf

Attachment

Copies: Allen, J.
Armstrong, L., Jr.
Ide, R.
Kann, M.
Kotler, J.
Parker, A.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA • UNIVERSITY PARK, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90089-0002

8a

A. Internship Course Guidelines

Guidelines for Undergraduate and Graduate Internships Courses

Definition of Internship Courses

"Internship" refers to courses in which learning occurs through work in a field setting appropriate to a student's course of study. Such courses offer students practical experience in applying knowledge to actual work settings, such as hospitals, businesses, government agencies, and the like.

Internship courses are an integral part of both undergraduate and graduate education at USC. They include a broad array of experiential learning opportunities and can meaningfully be described in two categories: (1) internship courses that are required for professional licensure or for compliance with educational accrediting bodies, and (2) internship courses that are required or elective for a particular School, department, or program and that do not fall into the first category above.

Internship courses that are designed to comply with standards of professional licensure and educational accrediting bodies are an important part of the education process in many professional schools and applied programs at USC, such as The Law School, School of Medicine, School of Education, Independent Health Professions, School of Dentistry, School of Social Work, and the Ph.D. Program in Clinical Psychology. These courses may vary in nomenclature to include "internships," "clerkships," "field practicums," "externships," "clinical internships," "practicums," "clinical placements," "directed teaching," "field work," and "clinical practice."

Internship courses in the second category are also an important part of the curriculum of many academic units at USC, including the School of Policy, Planning, and Development, the School of Business, the School of Engineering, the School of Theatre, the School of Cinema-Television, and in certain departments in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, such as, Exercise Science, Environmental Studies, and Geography. These courses are generally referred to as "internships" and may be required or elective. They offer students the opportunity to apply knowledge and to gain practical experience in work settings appropriate to their course of study.

Internship Courses Covered by the Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to internship courses that fall into the second category above. Internship courses required for professional licensure and educational accrediting bodies are generally consistent with the guidelines described below and may include additional standards required by professional or accrediting bodies. These courses are probably best considered in the broader context of the specific academic programs and professions that they represent, and consequently are not included in the following guidelines.

A. Internship Course Guidelines

Purpose of the Guidelines

The following guidelines are meant to provide the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (formerly UGSC) and the Graduate and Professional Schools Committee with explicit and consistent guidelines for reviewing proposals for internship courses. They should help to assure that proposed internship courses represent a meaningful learning experience consistent with a student's course of study and the mission and strategic objectives of USC. The guidelines are not intended to be used as rigid rules or strict requirements. Rather, they are based on review of existing internship courses and input from relevant faculty, and represent a reasonable checklist of issues to address when assessing internship course proposals.

Guidelines

I. Academic Purpose and Value

An internship course is part of a student's program of study. It is intended to provide practical experience in applying knowledge to relevant work settings and to enable the student to acquire needed skills and knowledge that cannot be gained in the traditional classroom. Consequently, it is important that a course proposal address the following:

1. The academic purpose of the course and its value to a student's program of study.
2. The types of experiential learning that will be included in the course and how they will contribute to the skills and knowledge that the student needs to successfully complete a program of study.

II. Internship Degree Requirement

In those cases where a department or school includes an internship course as part of a degree requirement, it is important to clarify the following:

1. How course progress and completion will be tracked in the department or school.
2. The extent to which Degree Progress should hold students accountable for successful course completion as a condition for graduation.
3. Inclusion of the course as part of courses required for degree in the Catalogue.

III. Unit Values

1. Course proposals include the number of units and range of units that can be earned in a semester and the maximum number of units that can be earned if the course can be repeated for credit. (e.g., 2-6, maximum 8).
2. Internships may be part- or full-time. Courses offering a part-time internship are typically taken in the same semester that a student is taking other courses. The unit value of both undergraduate and graduate courses offering a part-time internship are generally in the range of 1 to 6 units per

A. Internship Course Guidelines

semester. Courses offering a full-time internship are ordinarily taken in the same semester that a student is not taking other courses (e.g., a full semester devoted to an internship). The unit value of an undergraduate course offering a full-time internship is generally between 12 and 16 units per semester, the unit value of a graduate course offering a full-time internship is commonly between 8 and 16 units.

3. Generally, one unit of credit for an internship requires 4-5 hours per week of offsite work experience for courses offering a part-time internship (e.g., 4 units equals 16-20 hours of offsite work). For courses offering a full-time internship, the hours per week for offsite work may vary from this standard depending on the nature of the work (e.g., an undergraduate theater course offering 16 units of full-time internship per semester may require 70 hours of work per week; a graduate engineering course offering 16 units of full-time internship credit per semester may require 50 hours of work per week).
4. Typically, a maximum of 16 units of internship course credit is counted towards an undergraduate or graduate degree.
5. Because many students engage in regular employment, it is important that course proposals emphasize that internship course credit is not generally given for performing work activities that the student would have to do anyway at their workplace.

IV. Prerequisites

1. When applicable, it is important that course proposals include clear criteria for student admittance to the course. Such prerequisites might include: minimum GPA level; departmental or school majors; other courses completed; total units completed; class status (e.g., juniors or seniors); good standing in a particular program.
2. Before registering for an internship course, a student is generally asked to complete in writing a pre-approval agreement that is signed by the director of the internship program of the department or school or the instructor of record. This agreement includes: the number of internship course units that will be taken in the semester; the specific work site and the nature of the work that will take place there; how the internship will further the student's program of study (i.e., what academic value is expected to occur from the internship beyond what a mere job would offer); specific goals that should be achieved from the internship; and how the student will be evaluated.

V. Grading

The means by which a student is evaluated in an internship course may vary based upon the kind of work involved, the site at which it is conducted, the administrative structure of the internship within the department or school, and the type of assessment utilized. Therefore, it is particularly helpful that a course proposal address the following issues:

A. Internship Course Guidelines

1. The criteria and means by which students will be evaluated and graded.
2. Generally, courses offering internships are letter graded; a grade of CR/NC is used when appropriate.
3. A USC faculty member is the instructor of record for an internship course and is responsible for grading. If an on-site supervisor other than the instructor has input into grading, the proposal must make clear the nature of that input and how the USC instructor and supervisor will interact in the grading process. UCOC, at the May 3, 2011 meeting, stated: The instructor of record, responsible for grading, must be a USC faculty member, not a staff member.
4. Typically after completing an internship, students are encouraged to reflect on their experience and summarize their learning. They may be asked to write an appropriately substantial paper reflecting on the nature and value of the internship, how it furthered their academic program, and how well the goals specified in the pre-approval agreement were met.
5. Although infrequent, a student may be terminated from an internship placement. This can occur because of the student's conduct at the workplace site or for reasons beyond the student's control, such as budget cuts and job elimination. Thus, it is important for a course proposal to clarify how unexpected termination will be addressed and how they will affect a student's course enrollment and grade.

VI. Workplace Supervision

Generally, internship courses include provision for on-site supervision of the student. This may vary depending on the type of work involved, the site at which it occurs, and the administrative structure of the internship within the department or school. Consequently, it is important that course proposals specify the following:

1. By whom and how the student will be supervised at the workplace. The instructor of record is commonly responsible for workplace supervision and may be assisted by an on-site supervisor (non-USC faculty member). It is important to clarify the role or roles of the workplace supervisor, the amount of time that will be expended on supervision of an intern, and the method of supervision (e.g., site visits, reports from the student and on-site supervisor, etc.). A course proposal may also include the requirement of a final report from the workplace supervisor characterizing the nature of the work and how well the student met the goals specified in the pre-approval agreement.
2. Generally, a student has formal contact with the instructor of record at least once during the internship course to assess progress towards the goals identified in the pre-approval agreement. The course proposal specifies the nature of this contact (e.g., meeting at mid-semester, written progress report, etc.).

A. Internship Course Guidelines

3. Departments and schools offering internship courses are encouraged to have an internship program and a director of that program. This can help to integrate the internship course into the school's or department's curriculum. Generally, the director is a faculty member at USC. Course proposals describe the program, identify the director of the internship program, and summarize that person's credentials and qualifications. In departments or schools where there are more than one internship course or program, the director may supervise a number of internship courses or there may be more than one director. Where the internship program has only one internship course, the instructor of record of that course may also be the director of the internship program.

VII. Workplace Sites

1. Course proposals generally specify how relevant sites will be chosen. They include the selection criteria that will be used to choose appropriate workplace sites. Application of the criteria to a sample workplace site may be included in the proposal.
2. Occasionally, a workplace site may prove to be an unsuccessful learning experience for internships. Thus, it is important for course proposals to specify how sites will be monitored to assure that they continue to provide meaningful work experiences relevant to the student's program of study and how they will be terminated if necessary.
3. Workplace sites may or may not provide financial compensation to the student. Because foreign students are not allowed to work for pay, it is important for course proposals to clarify how foreign students will be accommodated in site placements.

Approved by Undergraduate Studies Committee (now UCC) - 5/6/96

Approved by Graduate and Professional Schools Committee - 5/13/96

Office of Academic Records and Registrar

Kenneth L. Servis, Dean

B. Guidelines for Minors

GUIDELINES FOR MINORS

The University has embarked on a major curricular innovation in which students will have a much wider opportunity to complete a minor in addition to their major. As part of the development of that new curriculum system, the Provost has implemented a new set of guidelines for minors. These guidelines supersede any previous curriculum guidelines. Minors must conform to these guidelines, or have been granted an exception to them, by the beginning of Academic Year 1999-2000.

Conceptual Guidelines

Each minor should meet the following qualitative criteria:

1. **Quality.** USC is committed to offering only high quality degree programs to its undergraduates. A minor will only be approved if it fully utilizes the available resources throughout the University and its curriculum is of the highest quality throughout.
2. **Coherent.** A minor should be structured to provide students with a coherent field of study that is not simply a truncated version of the major. Each minor should have a unique focus and carefully considered intellectual justification.
3. **Rigor.** A minor should not be simply a choice of four or six courses from a unit's upper division offerings. Minors should be rigorously organized so the undergraduate will benefit most from the offerings.
4. **Distinctive.** Each minor should be distinctive from other minors at USC. In addition, minors should be distinctive intellectual subsets of disciplines. In these ways, the program of study will ensure that students receive a unique educational experience when they enroll in the minor.

Technical Guidelines

Exceptions will be made to the following Technical Guidelines in exceptional circumstances. Units requiring such an exception should present a strong rationale in the application materials.

The Committee has recognized that the sciences and the languages have special curricular barriers to meeting all of the Technical Guidelines. In response, the Committee formally accepted the following language to cover these areas:

Sciences

The Coupling Committee continues to urge that all departments proposing new or revising existing minors comply with the established minor regulations set out by the Committee in Fall 1997.

However, the Committee recognizes that some science departments have a special circumstance since their upper division courses have a greater number of pre-requisites than the typical USC upper division course.

B. Guidelines for Minors

The Committee, thus, agrees to allow the following exception for sciences that wish target a minor to students who are likely to have taken those pre-requisites as part of another degree program, to offer minors in which the mandatory four upper division courses have as many as 16 units of lower division pre-requisites and as many as 8 units of lower division courses in their department, for a total of 40 units. The departments should only do this as a special circumstance, and the Committee would expect that the increase in units would be proposed with a rationale explaining why the extra units were required. Further, the Committee strongly urges the Provost to prohibit any departments from revisiting their previously approved minors for the purpose of adding units to the total required.

Languages

The committee voted to make exceptions allowing certain language minors to exceed the 32-unit maximum for minors so that pre-requisite courses could be counted in the total number of courses required. The exception was based on the assumption that for these specific languages, many students will be waived out of at least some of the pre-requisite courses, although the committee felt that language minors should not exceed 36 units.

1. A minor should have no less than 16 nor more than 32 units, including pre-requisites of required courses.
2. All new and revised minors will be reviewed after five years. If no undergraduates have enrolled in the minor, the contact unit will be required to demonstrate why the minor should not be removed from the list of approved minors.
4. No specific limit will be imposed on the number of submissions from any unit. However, the committee reminds units of its conceptual commitment to approve only coherent, rigorous, distinctive, and non-redundant minors.
5. The following rules apply:
 - a. At least 16 units must be unique to the minor (i.e., required neither by G.E. nor the student's major). *If the minor comprises fewer than 16 units, the courses must be unique to the minor.
 - b. Majors may take a minor in which their unit participates so long as 16 units required for the minor are taken outside the major department.
6. Exceptions to the 16-unit minimum should be noted in a minor's catalogue copy.
7. Pre-requisites to required courses in the minor must be identified in the total units required by the minor.

B. Guidelines for Minors

8. Gateway courses (designed ONLY by the UCC) must conform to the following description:

"A Gateway Course is a lower division, 3-4 unit course that introduces or showcases the minor curriculum of an academic field of study. It is intended to be a student's first exposure to a field of study".

9. The following must be clearly identified in the proposal:

- a. Primary sponsoring unit with administrative responsibility for the minor
- b. Faculty coordinator of the minor.
- c. Faculty advisor for the minor.

10. Substitution policy:

- a. Lower-division: by department approval and articulation agreement.
- b. Upper-division: by department approval

However, substitutions are limited to no more than 25 percent of the required units defined in the catalogue for the minor. Substitution of courses with the same departmental prefix are exempted from this limit.

11. Residence requirement: Upper-division courses required by the minor must be taken in residence.

12. GPA University guidelines apply: Officially enrolled students may apply for a minor; students earning at least a 2.0 GPA in courses required for the minor will receive graduation credit for the minor. Schools, departments and programs may raise GPA requirements for their minors.

13. Minors constituted of course work from a single department (unit) may not be earned by students majoring in that department. LAS students majoring in one department may take minors in other departments within the College.

14. Tracks or other subdivisions of a minor are not formally recognized by the University; however, a minor program may have several appropriate combinations of elective courses in which a student may pursue a specialized theme. In such cases, departments would advise students in selecting the most appropriate courses within this area. (UCC minutes, April 3, 2000).

15. According to a memo from Lloyd Armstrong dated February 23, 2004, "minors should be open to all students in good academic standing unless (1) certain artistic ability is required or (b) the program can accommodate only limited enrollments. In the instance of limited enrollment, the use of a GPA above 2.0 may be implemented." If a proposal includes an admission requirement for a GPA above 2.0 or a specific skill set, this must be justified in the proposal.

C. University Certificate Programs

University Certificate Programs

(Approved by UCOC March 6, 2007)

General Principles

Post-baccalaureate certificate programs have proven useful in many academic units and disciplines. These programs may help recruit students to campus, meet their academic and professional interests, focus their coursework, and prepare them for the demands of the contemporary workplace. Innovative and entrepreneurial certificate programs help USC meet its strategic goals for learner-centered education. A certificate may be awarded in an educational program which brings together an identified body of knowledge in order to meet clearly specified educational objectives. Certificate programs might also be seen as a way to utilize the unique faculty and academic resources available at USC and in Los Angeles.

All certificate programs are housed in one or more degree granting academic units and are approved by the University Committee on Curriculum. Certificate programs are developed by the faculty (often with input from external advisors and/or professional organizations or boards) and are evaluated and affirmed in accordance with the curriculum approval processes in place within the submitting school. Such programs should be consistent with the mission of the academic unit.

Curricular Standards and Criteria

In addition to the general principles listed above, all graduate certificate programs should meet the criteria identified below. Individual academic units may request exceptions to these standards. Any exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the UCOC following an evaluation of the program proposal.

1. A minimum of 12 units is expected. The maximum number of units is not specified, and may vary from program to program.
2. For certificate programs of 16 units or fewer, all course work must be earned at USC and at the 500 level or above. For programs of more than 16 units, not more than 25% of the course work may be at the 400 level or might be gained through transfer credit.
3. A minimum cumulative USC GPA of 3.0 must be achieved on all coursework applied to the certificate.
4. Courses to be included in certificate programs must have been approved by the UCOC.
5. Admission requirements for certificate programs (including GRE scores, previous work in the field, etc.) will be determined by the academic unit in consultation with the graduate school and/or the provost.

D. Contact Hours and Unit Credit Memo



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Elizabeth A. Graddy, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs
Jeffrey J. Miller Chair in Government, Business, and the Economy

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

From: Elizabeth A. Graddy Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs

Date: February 1, 2018

Subject: Update of Guidelines on the Relationship Between Contact Hours and Unit Credit

The Provost's Task Force on the Credit Hour was charged with reviewing and updating USC's existing policy on contact hours and unit credit, ensuring the policy is followed as part of the review of new curricular submissions, and establishing a monitoring process to ensure current offerings comply with that policy.

The Task Force met during the Fall 2017 term and updated the Guidelines on the Relationship Between Contact Hours and Unit Credit. Members of the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC), the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP), the Provost's Council, and other relevant offices (i.e., Curriculum, Registrar, and Financial Aid) reviewed the recommendations, which the Provost approved. The updated policy is described in the attached Guidelines.

The Guidelines apply to all course proposals submitted to the UCOC. They should be shared with faculty preparing course submissions. Chairs, directors, and school curriculum liaisons should assume responsibility for checking submissions to ensure the number of contact hours corresponds to the unit value of the course (i.e., 1, 2, 3, or 4 units). If the number of contact hours is less than the number of units, an academic rationale must be supplied. The Guidelines provide direction on academic rationales consistent with customary educational practices.

The Office of the Registrar reviews current course offerings to ensure they conform to the Guidelines. In addition, schools, departments, and programs should monitor for compliance. If you oversee courses for which the number of units and contact hours do not match (e.g., a four-unit course that meets for three 50-minute contact hours a week over a standard 15-week semester), please discuss this with the instructor of record. An academic rationale (e.g., extensive reading assignments or more than average out-of-class writing assignments) must be provided in order to justify the discrepancy. Please check existing courses with unit values of 3, 2, or 1 to ensure the number of contact hours equals the number of units. If the number of contact hours for any of your courses exceeds the number of units, make sure requirements are not excessive.

cc: C. L. Max Nikias
Michael Quick
Academic Senate President
President's Cabinet
Provost's Cabinet

University of Southern California
3551 Trousdale Parkway, Suite 204, Los Angeles, California 90089-4019 • Tel: 213 740 6715 • vpafa@usc.edu

D. Contact Hours and Unit Credit Memo

GUIDELINES

on the

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTACT HOURS AND UNIT CREDIT

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) is responsible for reviewing course contact hours and the expected amount of work outside class to ensure that the workload is consistent with mastery of the specified body of material. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for reviewing current course offerings to ensure they conform to the following Guidelines.

- 1) A contact hour is defined as 50 minutes of class time, regardless of modality – i.e., in-person class or online (synchronous or asynchronous). The expectation is that the number of 50-minute contact hours per week will match the number of units for a course following the standard 15 week session term. For non-standard session terms (e.g., 4-, 6-, 8-, or 12-week sessions), the number of contact hours per week will be adjusted accordingly.
- 2) A contact hour includes engagement with instructors through presentation, discussion, and/or other exercises that foster critical engagement with lecture materials, course materials, or discussion with classmates. For asynchronous online class sessions, this may include question & answer, or other methods, sometimes referred to as *Bidirectional Learning Tools* (BLT).
- 3) One semester unit represents 1 hour of class time and 2 hours of outside work (3 hours total) per week for a 15-week term. For example, for courses with a lecture/discussion/seminar format, students are expected to work 2 hours outside class for each 1 hour of class time; for courses with a lab or studio format, students are expected to spend all that time in lecture and the lab or studio environment, with little, if any, outside work expected.
- 4) Weekly contact hours for courses with unit values of 3, 2, or 1 should equal the number of units.
- 5) Where the number of contact hours for a 4-unit course is reduced, the instructor and sponsoring academic unit will provide the UCOC with an academic rationale for the reduction (e.g., extensive reading assignments, more than the average out-of-class writing assignments, regular instructor/student tutorials, etc.). The UCOC will evaluate the rationale. This flexibility, however, may not allow contact hours for a 4-unit course to drop below three 50-minute contact hours per week whether in-person or online.
- 6) The unit definition implies a maximum as well as a minimum amount of student effort. For new course proposals, if the number of contact hours exceeds the number of units, the UCOC should ensure that the requirements are not excessive. For existing offerings, the Registrar expects chairs and directors to do the same.
- 7) Regarding asynchronous course offerings for which the Registrar cannot verify contact hours, the cognizant dean will verify, and certify to the Registrar, that current offerings comply with the Guidelines.
- 8) In order to encourage innovative and nontraditional course structures, the UCOC may consider other course formats deemed to provide an appropriate course experience.

E. Guidelines for Academic and Professional Degree Designations

GPSC GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREE DESIGNATIONS

October 1, 2003

What follows are guidelines intended to be presumptions of the GPSC.

Units would be responsible for (1) providing evidence that they have met the guidelines, or (2) showing why the guidelines should not apply in their particular case. These guidelines provide the GPSC with a standard for evaluating degree designations, helping units to understand how to package their proposals, or challenging units to provide an adequate justification for their unique situation.

The presumption of the GPSC is that degree designations should accurately reflect the emphasis and content of curricula. The GPSC recognizes that there is no sharp line between theoretical knowledge and the application of that knowledge. The GPSC also recognizes that the line distinguishing science from the arts may be blurred. Consequently, the GPSC is open to proposals that, due to unique circumstances and/or opportunities, do not readily meet these guidelines. In these instances, the burden of proof rests with the appropriate units to demonstrate those unique circumstances and/or opportunities.

1. GPSC policy is to insure that all graduate and professional degree programs maintain high academic standards and rigorous requirements. All graduate and professional degree programs should have demanding criteria for admissions, coursework, evaluating student performance, and granting degrees. Graduate degrees may culminate with a summative assessment through which the student demonstrates overall mastery of the academic discipline at a level which is appropriate to the degree. At the doctoral level the summative assessment is typically through an oral exam or oral dissertation defense administered by the doctoral committee. At the master's degree level, the overall mastery is typically assessed through competency examinations, a capstone experience, comprehensive oral examinations or through presentation of a thesis. The difference between academic and professional degrees is not one of quality. It is a matter of focus. The following guidelines concern focus. (They do not concern the qualitative differences between doctoral-and master's-level scholarship.)

E. Guidelines for Academic and Professional Degree Designations

2. The GPSC presumes that proposed new degree programs and revised degree programs will meet the following criteria:

Academic Degrees:

- a. The PhD is primarily a research degree with an emphasis on theory and the ability to conduct original research which expands current knowledge in the field.
 - b. The MS is a degree that emphasizes theory and sometimes original research. The GPSC presumes that a degree program with this designation primarily focuses on the natural sciences, mathematics and statistics, and quantitative behavioral studies.
 - c. The MA is a degree that emphasizes theory and sometimes original research. The GPSC presumes that a degree program with this designation primarily focuses on the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
 - d. The Professional Degree is a degree that prepares students to practice a highly skilled profession and, in many cases, to receive appropriate credentials for practicing that profession. Its primary emphasis is on the application of knowledge.
3. The GPSC presumes that units offering both academic and professional degrees will distinguish them in the following ways:
 - a. Admissions criteria will be appropriately different.
 - b. Curricula will have limited overlap.
 - c. The same faculty may teach in both degree programs, but qualified faculty will be identified for each program.
 - d. Evaluation procedures and degree requirements will reflect appropriate academic and professional criteria.
 - e. The length of full-time study beyond the bachelor's degree required to complete a graduate degree should be appropriate to the degree program. The number of units required for completion should relate to the length of full-time study for a typical student.
 - f. The minimum unit requirement for a master's degree is established at the time the program is approved and may not be waived. At least 20 of these units must be completed at USC. The minimum number of units for a doctoral degree is 60, at least 24 of which (exclusive of Doctoral Dissertation 794) must be completed at USC.
 - g. New and revised Master's program proposals should provide a benchmarking comparison with two key peer institutions with similar programs.

F. Guidelines for Dual Degree Programs

GPSC GUIDELINES FOR DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

What follows are guidelines intended to be presumptions of the GPSC.

Units would be responsible for (1) providing evidence that they have met the guidelines, or (2) showing why the guidelines should not apply in their particular case. These guidelines provide the GPSC with a standard for evaluating dual degree programs, helping units to understand how to package their proposals, or challenging units to provide an adequate justification for their unique situation.

The presumption of the GPSC is that dual degree programs are not simply the joining of two separate degree programs into a single package. These programs should have both an academic rationale and a structured curriculum that integrates established fields of inquiry. However, the GPSC is open to programs that, due to unique circumstances and/or opportunities, do not readily meet these guidelines. In these instances, the burden of proof rests with the cooperating units to demonstrate those unique circumstances and/or opportunities.

1. Dual Degree Programs should have an academic rationale as the fundamental basis for GPSC approval. That rationale might be responsive to the following questions:

- Has a new field of inquiry and/or professional practice emerged that draws on theory and application from two established fields (e.g., biophysics emerging from new findings in biology and physics)?
- Have new specializations within established fields of inquiry emerged that make it educationally advantageous for students in one unit to pursue simultaneously a degree in another unit (e.g., law students specializing in communications law pursuing a dual degree in law and communications)?
- Are USC scholars pioneering new fields or specializations that, structured into dual degree programs, would put our students at academic or professional frontiers?

2. Dual Degree Programs should be academically coherent and integrated. Program directors should provide evidence of this coherence and integration in the structure of the dual degree curriculum. Evidence of curriculum coherence and integration might include the following:

- The program has new courses specifically aimed at integration or it has revised established courses in one or both units to shift their emphasis toward integration.
- The program has courses that are team taught by faculty from both cooperating units.
- The program has a capstone project specifically aimed at integrating knowledge from the two cooperating units.
- The program is coordinated by a faculty member with a joint appointment in the two separate units or perhaps with an academic expertise that integrates knowledge from the two separate units.

3. Other important but secondary considerations include the following:

- New or better job-market opportunities for students with dual degrees or, relatedly, the growth in demand for dual degree graduates by government, industry, etc.
- The clear intention of the cooperating units to build integrated learning experiences into their separate courses.

G. Cross-listed Courses: Memo

Attachment 4

RECEIVED

JUL 19 1991

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY PARK
LOS ANGELES 90089-4019

KENNETH L. SERVIS, DEAN
ACADEMIC RECORDS & REGISTRAR
(213) 743-2101

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
EXECUTIVE VICE PROVOST

M E M O I. A N D U M

TO: Academic Deans and Directors

FROM: Sylvia Manning, Executive Vice Provost

DATE: July 19, 1991

SUBJECT: CROSS-LISTED COURSES

[Handwritten signature]

I have accepted a report from the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP) developed by a joint subcommittee of CAPP, the Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC), and the Graduate and Professional Studies Committee (GPSC), regarding cross-listed courses. Related to this is the subject of the proper use 499 and 599 Special Topic courses and 490 and 590 Directed Research courses.

Below is a list of the issues that the joint subcommittee reviewed. Each one is followed by the corresponding excerpt from the report. Please ensure that this information is distributed to the appropriate faculty and staff in your unit. Thank you.

1. The academic transcript currently records cross-listed courses only by the home department offering the course. There is no option for a parallel listing of the secondary department.

The present practice of listing the home department course name on the transcript was endorsed. Students are advantaged by this practice because it highlights the interdisciplinary nature of their major program. The confusion which would result from having identical courses with different names and different titles is avoided.

2. Procedures to establish cross-listed courses should be reviewed for any needed change.

It was decided that existing procedures are adequate. The policy requiring UGSC or GPSC approval to obtain a permanent cross-listing was reconfirmed. The procedure was not meant to accommodate last minute schedule changes.

G. Cross-listed Courses: Memo

Academic Deans and Directors
July 19, 1991
Page Two

The procedure to obtain UGSC/GPSC approval for a cross-listed course is:

- a) The home department course is identified.
- b) Other units wanting to cross-list with the course must submit a request to UGSC/GPSC to create a new course in their department with preferably an identical course title and number. Students are directed in the Schedule of Classes to enroll in the class number of the home department course.
3. What can be done when a) a cross-listing for a course has not been formally established with UGSC/GPSC approval and the department does not have enough time to do so before the course will be offered or b) it is not appropriate to have a permanent cross-listing.

Departments may direct students to enroll in courses outside the department either through advisement or by an entry in the Schedule of Classes entitled Courses of Interest (listed at the bottom of the department's course offerings). If necessary, the department may then send an Internal Memo of Substitution to the Graduation Department in the Office of Academic Records and Registrar approving the courses for major credit.

4. The proper use of 499 and 599 Special Topics Courses and 490 and 590 Directed Research Courses.

Departments may not use either 499 and 599 Special Topics courses or 490 and 590 Directed Research Courses as a mechanism to cross-list courses in lieu of UGSC or GPSC approval. This practice creates the potential for students to complete repetitious course work that the Office of Academic Records and Registrar would not be able to identify. For example, a student who has previously registered and received credit for an original course may register for and receive credit for the cross-listed course through the 499/599 or 490/590; under these circumstances it would not be recognized or counted as repetitious course work. Also, Special

Academic Deans and Directors
July 19, 1991
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Topics and Directed Research courses create an additional problem because they are set up for variable units. When they are used inappropriately to cross-list courses, students in the same class may be registered for different unit values.

5. **Truth in advertising:** Course titles and descriptions for unauthorized cross-listed courses are sometimes different from the home department course title and description.

Again, departments may not set up cross-listings independently without UGSC or GPSC approval, and therefore, the practice of using set content courses with generic titles as "catch-all" courses for cross-listings is inappropriate. All cross-listed courses must have the same course title and description.

6. **The use of Multidisciplinary Activities (MDA) Courses.**

Multidisciplinary Activities offers courses which are developed and taught by more than one program, department, and/or school. Students who enroll in MDA courses share a common interest in the subject matter but are not necessarily majors in those disciplines. Currently, there is limited use of MDA, but academic units may find it useful to explore this mechanism to accomplish their objectives.

cc: Jonathan Kotler
Kenneth Servis

H. Directed Research; 390 and 490 Courses

Attachment 6
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY PARK
LOS ANGELES 90089-4019

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST

(113) 74

TO: Academic Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors
FROM: Sylvia Manning, Vice Provost
DATE: February 24, 1986
SUBJECT: 390 and 490 Courses: New Policies

[Signature]
New policies for courses numbered 390 and 490 have been adopted effective Fall, 1986. Please ensure that all affected departments are notified. Thank you.

Background

Several semesters ago, the Academic Standards Commission (ASCOM, now superseded by the Committee on Academic Policies and Practices, CAPP) noticed an increase in the number of incorrect petitions for registration in 490 Directed Research courses, which indicated some confusion between 490 and 390 course registrations. ASCOM accordingly recommended policies for both registrations. These recommendations were reviewed by the Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC), which recommended a few modifications. The policies as amended by the UGSC were accepted by the Provost with the January, 1986 UGSC minutes. They will be effective in Fall, 1986, for all students.

Policy

The policies are printed below. Particular note should be taken of points 3, 4, and 6 in regard to 490's. More extensive record keeping is required, but compliance is fully entrusted to departments.

A 490 is a Directed Research course that is open to upper division students with evidence of superior academic performance in the field. 390's, in contrast, are generally used for graduating seniors who, due to circumstances beyond their control, must complete a few units of coursework in order to graduate on time, but who cannot fulfill the remaining degree requirement through a regularly-offered course.

490x Directed Research (2-8, maximum 8)

1. 490's are open to upper division students with evidence of superior academic performance in the field, according to criteria published by the department.
2. 490 courses shall be restricted to subject matter or topics not covered in the unit's regularly-organized courses. 490's may not be used in lieu of a canceled class.
3. Consent of the instructor is required for all 490's. A written contract outlining the elements that must be present to fulfill the course requirements and to receive academic credit must be agreed to by the instructor and student in advance of registration. A copy of the said contract shall be retained in the department files and also given to the student. A sample contract is attached for your consideration.

H. Directed Research; 390 and 490 Courses

Academic Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors
February 24, 1986
Page Two

4. Department chairs must countersign contracts and monitor enrollments in 490's to insure that the work load is distributed evenly among the faculty. Each 490 registration must be individually designed by the faculty member and the student. "Group" enrollments in 490's are possible, provided the faculty member negotiates individual contracts with each student in the group.
5. 490's are not available for graduate credit.
6. A student may accumulate a maximum of eight (8) units of 490 in any given department. A maximum of 16 total units of 490 may be applied to a degree. Exceptions must be justified and approved through the CAPP petitioning process.
7. Students may not register in 490 and then sit in on regular courses as a method of fulfilling a part of the requirements for the 490.
8. Only regular full-time faculty of the rank of assistant professor or higher may be the faculty of record for 490's. Part-time instructors and teaching assistants are not eligible to supervise 490's.
9. 490's are offered only on a letter-graded basis. The assignment of the mark of IN (incomplete) must be consistent with University policy.

390 Special Problems (1-4)

1. 390's are supervised, individual studies classes. No more than one registration is permitted toward a student's baccalaureate degree. It is expected that students taking 390's have some background in the discipline, and therefore, in most cases, a 390 will be taken in the major.
2. A written contract, outlining the elements that must be present to fulfill the course requirements and to receive academic credit, must be agreed to by the instructor and student. A copy of the said contract shall be retained in the department files and also given to the student. Departments are expected to develop their own contract forms.
3. Enrollment is by petition to CAPP only; a copy of the course contract must be submitted with the petition.
4. 390's are offered only on a letter-graded basis. The assignment of the mark of IN (Incomplete) must be consistent with University policy.

Attachment (*petition form - see underneath*)

cc: Linda Clingerman
Cornelius J. Ping

H. Directed Research; 390 and 490 Courses

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Deans and Department Chairs

From: Douglas Shook, Dean of Academic Records and Registrar

Date: May 7, 2013

Subject: Directed Research 490x

On March 6, 2013, the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) approved a university-wide revision to Directed Research 490x: the minimum units were reduced from two to one, and the maximum units allowed in any one department were increased from eight to 12.

The following revision will appear in the 2013-14 *Catalogue*:

490x Directed Research (1-8, max 12)

Courses numbered 490x are open to students who have demonstrated the ability to do independent work in the discipline. The courses require consent of the instructor and a written contract of course requirements signed by both the instructor and department chair. They are not available for graduate credit and are not open to students with less than 2.0 GPA overall or with any academic holds that restrict registration. A student may accumulate a maximum of 12 units of 490x in any one department and 16 units toward the degree.

The *Catalogue* will also state: "Departments may set their own minimum/maximum unit values within the university approved range of units."

The Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) will revise all Directed Research 490x courses to reflect the above change via the Curriculum Management System (CMS) and the Student Information System, effective all 2013.

Best regards.

Douglas Shook

Dean of Academic Records and Registrar

I. Special Topics 499 and 599 Courses

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
BOVARD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
ROOM 108
UNIVERSITY PARK
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90089-4019

PROVOST
LLOYD ARMSTRONG, JR.

Attachment 7

TELEPHONE 313-740-7001
FAX 313-740-7000

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Academic Deans and Directors
From: Lloyd Armstrong, Jr. *L.A.*
Date: June 19, 1995
Subject: 499's and 599's

It has come to my attention that the purpose for creating 499 and 599 Special Topic courses may on occasion have been forgotten or perhaps ignored. I wish to remind you of the purposes of these courses:

499 for 599 Special Topics (2-4, max 8)

Special Topics courses allow introduction of a new or emerging aspect of a field. They can be used to take advantage of the expertise of new or visiting faculty. They can be scheduled after the time has passed for curriculum committee approval. The actual description of the course is carried in the section subtitle. A particular topic may not be offered more than twice in a three-year period.

Please review your school's usage of this category. It is your responsibility to ensure that your school does not offer courses under this rubric that do not satisfy the above conditions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Your cooperation is appreciated. Feel free to share this memorandum with your chairs as appropriate.

cc: Richard S. Ide
Alice C. Parker
Kenneth L. Servis

RECEIVED

JUN 23 1995

KENNETH L. SERTIS, JEAN
ACADEMIC RECORDS & REGISTRAR

Guidelines for New Professional Doctorate Programs

February 28, 2008

The following should guide schools seeking to establish new professional doctorate degrees at the University of Southern California. These guidelines will also be used by the University Committee on Curriculum in evaluating proposals for new professional doctorate programs. The guidelines are divided into three categories: General Considerations, Specific Issues and Threshold Requirements. All three are of equal importance and should be considered explicitly by the UCOC in its evaluation. These guidelines are prospective in application; they do not apply to existing professional doctorate programs.

General Considerations

Professional doctorate programs offer opportunities to universities to incorporate innovative and competitive new programs into their curriculum. However, these emerging opportunities also present new challenges in terms of ensuring that only high quality, academically rigorous programs that are subject to appropriate oversight emerge. In order to achieve the appropriate balance between establishing innovative new programs that meet important societal needs and ensuring high quality academic programs, proposed programs must have three essential characteristics:

- The professional school offering the doctoral degree must have a significant academic rationale for the program.
- Because the primary responsibility for a school's academic programs rest with the tenured and tenure-track faculty, the professional school offering the doctoral degree must have, among its tenured and tenure-track faculty, the academic expertise to develop curriculum and guide the academic content of the professional doctoral program. Full-time clinical faculty may be actively involved in the development and implementation of a new doctoral program, but such programs must reflect, in part, the academic expertise of the tenured and tenure-track faculty.
- Mechanisms must either be in place or be developed that will enable rigorous external oversight, on an on-going basis, of the quality and effectiveness of the doctoral program.

J. Guidelines for New Professional Doctorates

Specific Issues

Proposed programs must include consideration of the following specific issues:

- What is the objective of the program? A clear justification of the program both in terms of societal and academic consideration should be given. Discussion of what the degree entitles the recipient to do should be included.
- How does the proposed doctorate degree fit into the broader field in which the flagship degree is found? If the degree represents an innovation, how does the school expect it to set the standard for such study?
- Ideally, distinctive courses – those that do not include students from other graduate programs – should comprise the degree core. If not, a justification should be provided.
- The expectation is that the university has the full-time faculty (tenured, tenure-track and clinical) to develop and teach a substantive portion of the core courses that define the degree. While other faculty (such as part-time adjunct faculty) will likely be involved in teaching courses associated with the doctoral degree, a clear justification should be given if such faculty will teach more than 50% of the courses that comprise the degree.

Threshold Requirements

The following are considered threshold or minimum requirements that all professional doctorate programs should meet:

- The standard of admission should be comparable and commensurate to the standard of admission for the Ph.D. program. If the standards are different from those for admission to a Ph.D. program, then the proposal should clearly identify the rationale for those differences and clearly outline what the appropriate standards would be.
- Ideally, an established professional society or accrediting body should recognize the proposed degree and have in place a mechanism by which quality can be externally assessed. If such a society or accrediting body does not exist, the school must establish a specific assessment mechanism that includes external review of quality and occurs on a regular basis.
- No “course work only” doctoral degrees should be established. All new doctorate degrees must require some form of a capstone experience, culminating project or final project.
- The capstone experience or culminating project, which may involve team-based projects, must include clearly identified, independent work by each individual that is subject to critical assessment of each individual’s contribution.

J. Guidelines for New Professional Doctorates

- Substantial course work *beyond* the master's degree in the field must be required.
- Academic credit may not be granted for work experience.
- Doctoral students should be part of an 'on campus' cohort of scholars for some period of time and thus a minimum of 24 units applicable toward the doctoral degree, exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation, must be completed while the student is in residence on the University Park and/or Health Sciences campuses.
- Course work that will be counted toward the professional doctorate degree may not be applied toward another graduate degree as well unless as part of a formally recognized and approved dual degree program (such as the Pharm.D./Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Sciences program).
- If a new professional doctoral program will have a significant on-line component then the on-line component should be reviewed using the same process applied to all USC programs which use on-line course delivery.

K. Guidelines for Granting Extra Credit in a Course

Guidelines for Granting Extra Credit in a Course

Note: Extra credit should be used sparingly and judiciously, and should never result in a failing grade being converted to a passing grade.

1. Extra-credit should only be worth a very small percentage of the total grade. For example, if it could move a student from a B to a B+, the student should already be on the cusp of the higher grade.
2. The extra credit assignment should be relevant to course content. For example, if students are given credit for volunteering through JEP, what they do should be relevant to the course (e.g., teaching international relations to high school students for an IR course).
3. The assignment should be unique to that course. For example, a student could not volunteer through JEP and use that as extra credit for multiple courses.
4. Extra credit should not be given to a student to the detriment of other students in the course (i.e., if the course is graded on a curve, the curve must be applied prior to the extra credit being granted).
5. Extra credit cannot be earned after the course has ended. It must be earned before the scheduled date of the final.

Approved by UCOC April 2012

L. Professional Development Guidelines

Report of the UCOC Subcommittee on Professional Development

March 1, 2013

Subcommittee Members

Diane Badame, Brian Head,
Janet Levin and Geoffrey Middlebrook

The issue was raised regarding the type of coursework that should be given credit or not for various types of activities related to job searches.

The objectives of the UCOC Subcommittee on Professional Development were to:

1. Provide guidelines on what constitutes professional development versus academic content that might be offered in courses and,
2. Provide guidance on how to assess academic credit for those courses that include elements of professional development.

Guidance on How to Assess Academic Credit for Courses that Include Professional Development Content

1. Content and activities associated solely with obtaining a job should not be given academic credit while content and coursework that cover the skills and techniques required to perform specific job functions can be given academic credit.
2. In cases in which a blend of content occurs, determine the total weight of the academic content, and use this to assess the appropriate unit value for the course. Some professional development content may be included in certain cases, but should not contribute to the academic unit determination of the course.

We suggest that departments should make available these non-academic professional development opportunities through a combination of faculty mentoring and departmental professional development seminars, as well as through programs and mentoring within Student Affairs, the Center for Excellence in Teaching, departmental and school career services, and the USC Career Center.

L. Professional Development Guidelines

Examples of Professional Development That Should Not Receive Academic Credit

- How to apply for graduate programs or job positions
- How to map out the steps to obtain a dream job
- Writing a curriculum vitae (CV) or resume
- Developing written communication for career management (cover letters, etc.)
- Obtaining networking skills
- How to conduct informational interviews
- How to develop interviewing skills
- Developing job search strategies
- How to interview for jobs
- How to evaluate and negotiate an offer
- How to get the most out of your summer internship

Examples of Content that Should Receive Academic Credit

- Improving teaching techniques, including use of various technological tools
- Learning strategies for turning dissertations into publishable articles or books
- Demonstrating communication competence in interpersonal, presentation, written, team and leadership situations.
- Effectively supporting the communication and leadership skill development of their teammates. Students will be able to evaluate their teammate's plans and coach them to greater effectiveness.
- Conducting research on businesses to assess their core competencies, sales, profits and value propositions
- Administering personality inventories and assessing the results

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