South Carolina

Curriculum Proposal Best Practices

PART I: INTRODUCTION

As stated in University Academic Affairs policy ACAF 2.03, university faculty have legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curricula on the campus where they serve. For the Columbia campus, the Faculty Senate Curricula and Courses Committee (C&C) is charged with reviewing and approving all requests to create, revise, or eliminate undergraduate courses (i.e., 100-600 level) to ensure that all offerings meet the academic expectations of the university.

The ACAF 2.03 document is the authoritative document that outlines what must be included in a proposal to either create or change a course. By the time a proposal reaches C&C, it has already been reviewed and approved at multiple levels including the department, college, and UofSC Registrar (which looks at Banner and Degree Audit issues). Each level of review focuses on different aspects of the proposal, but it is the responsibility of C&C to ensure that the final proposal meets the specifications given in ACAF 2.03 before being sent to Faculty Senate.

Attention: It is not recommended that multiple proposals for the same course or program be submitted for the same bulletin year or by different proponents. Changes approved in previous proposal(s) for the upcoming bulletin year would need to be included in the new proposal information in order to not revert back to curriculum information from the previous bulletin year.

PART II: CHECKLIST WHEN PREPARING YOUR COURSE PROPOSAL

Course description:
- The course description included in the syllabus (which is mandatory) must be identical to the course description listed in the bulletin.
- The course description should not include information that is not part of the description. (i.e. restrictions, cross-listings, prerequisites, etc.)

Pre/Co-Requisites:
- Pre/co-requisites must be included on all course syllabi.
- The Pre/co-requisites included in the syllabus (which is mandatory) must be identical to the Pre/co-requisites listed in the bulletin.
- If the course does not have a pre-requisite, a statement of "none" should be included.
- The minimum letter grade of the pre-requisite should also be included. For example, Pre-requisite: PSYC 101, minimum grade of C or higher required.
- If the Pre/co-requisite(s) are from a different department, letter(s) of concurrence are required.
- Changes/additions to Pre/co-requisite often affect programs and minors and may require changes to those programs/minors to accommodate the modification to the course.

Credit Hours:
- Type: Fixed or Variable.
- If hours are variable, the minimum and maximum number of credit hours for a single offering must be specified.

Number of times a course can be taken for credit:
- The majority of courses can be taken for credit only one time (1). The wording in APPS is a bit confusing. Many proponents think APPS is asking many times a course can be repeated (in case of failure to pass). This is not the case. The statement is asking how many times it can be counted on the transcript as part of the program of study. Only courses that would have a number other than one (1) would be a special topics course, and possibly an internship to gain varied experiences. If it is greater than one (1), it is a good idea to explain this in the proposal comments.

Instructional Method/Delivery (face-to-face, online/blended, or hybrid)
- Distributed Learning are courses that are taught 50% or more online or through electronic mode.
- If the course change is only to delivery method, it can be effective for the next semester.
- 50% or more online requires a change in delivery.
- Once approved for distributed learning, it can be taught in any format going forward.
- Justification statement must include explanation of types of interaction between students, faculty and content; and reason for changing to online format.
- Distributed Learning (DL) syllabus may require additional components than a traditional syllabus.
- DL Checklist

Course Title
- The course title in the syllabus must match that in the proposal field for "Course Title."

Learning Outcomes:
- Course proposals must use the term Learning Outcomes, and not "Learning Objectives," "Student Outcomes," or something similar.
- Learning Outcomes are statements that describe significant and essential learning that students will achieve and can reliably demonstrate at the end of a course or program.
- Learning outcomes identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or program.
- Learning outcomes must be phrased with action verbs that identify quantifiable or measurable actions. For guidance on writing effective Learning Outcomes see (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/coursedevelopment/learning_outcomes/).
- **Sample Syllabus Statements** - The Center for Teaching Excellence provides useful information and example syllabi statements related to academic integrity, attendance policy, and disability services (see https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/coursedevelopment/example_syllabus_statements/).

Grading system:
- Standard:
  - Standard only means you include letter grades.
  - Grades must include "A" through "F"
  - Instructors have the option to include "plus" (e.g., B+). The university does not include an "A+" grade.
  - The university does not have "minus" system (e.g., B-).
- Pass/fail:
  - Pass/fail grades are allowed on any course.

- If a pass/fail grade is indicated on the proposal, the course syllabus must include a statement indicating the grade required to earn a passing grade.

Impact on Other Units or Palmetto College:
- Courses – If the course topic is taught in another department outside your academic unit, is used in a program of study in another academic unit, is designed for pre-school through 12th grade personnel and/or to prepare graduates to work in P-12 schools, or is taught on a Palmetto College campus (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter or Union), then you must indicate this impact and include a letter of concurrence from the unit(s).
- Programs – If the program proposal affects the curriculum, students or academic interest of any other unit at the Columbia or on a Palmetto College Campus, includes courses from another academic unit, requires students to take different Carolina Core courses as a result of a change, or the program is designed for pre-school through 12th grade personnel and/or to prepare graduate students to work in P-12 schools, then you must indicate this impact and include a letter of concurrence from the unit(s).

Cross-listed course:
- Defined:
    - A cross-listed course is defined as an identical course that is offered in a different department and/or college within the UofSC campus.
- Requirements to obtain cross listing:
    - Identical course title.
    - Identical course bulletin description.
    - Identical learning objectives.
    - Identical restrictions.
    - Identical designation (Carolina Core, Integrative, GLD)
    - Identical grade mode.
    - Identical schedule type.
    - Letter of concurrence from all cross-listed course departments.
    - Course syllabus from each department.
    - Course number from each cross-listed department must be at the same level (e.g., 300-400 level or 100-200 level).
    - Have the same pre-requisites and/or co-requisites.
    - All courses associated with the cross listings must be uploaded into APPS at the same time.
    - All courses associated with the cross listings will be reviewed by C&C during the same review cycle (i.e., the same month).

Delete a Course:
- Deletion of a course is typically routine unless it impacts another unit.
- If the deletion of a course impacts another unit, a letter of concurrence is required.
- Course deletions/terminations often affect programs and minors and may require changes to those programs/minors to accommodate the course deletion.
- If the course's number was previously changed to a new number, then a course deletion/termination is not needed for the old number.

Carolina Core Course:
- Learn more about **Carolina Core** online.
- **Foundational Course**

- o Meets one or more learning outcomes from the Carolina Core, which must be specified in the proposal.
  - o If it meets more than one learning outcome, it is an overlay eligible course and both learning outcomes must be specified in the proposal.
  - o Overlay courses must include at least one learning outcome from CMS, INF, or VSR.
  - o Courses should only be proposed for learning outcomes from colleges/departments that are experts on content pertaining to the learning outcome.
- **Integrative Course**
  - o A major course that meets at least one learning outcome from the Carolina Core.
  - o The proposal must specify the program(s) for which it is integrative.
  - o If the integrative course is a cross-listed course, then both courses are integrative for the same program(s).
  - o If an integrative course is cross-listed, it doesn't have to be integrative for the programs of the other department(s) offering the course. (i.e. ARTH 551, FAMS 511, MART 591 are cross-listed courses. They are all integrative for only the Film and Media Studies, BA program)

Special Topics Course
- If a specific topic has been taught multiple times, it should be proposed as a new course.
- Often are variable credit and can be taken multiple times. The proposal should include the range of hours, number of times the course can be taken for credit and the maximum number of credit hours that can be applied to the degree.
  - o Number of times the course can be taken for credit is not how many attempts a student can have to pass the course, but is how many times it can be taken, usually under different topics or studies.
  - o Example: Credit hours minimum for a single offering is 1. Credit hours maximum for a single offering is 6. Number of times the course can be taken is 6. Number of credit hours if course can be taken multiple times is 12.
- Often have restrictions, which should be included in the proposal.
- Example course description: Analysis of current topics, issues and practices in various areas of accounting. May be repeated as content varies by title.
- A sample syllabus should be included with the course name and number that match the Special Topics course name and number.
- Special Topics Course Approval form will have to be filled out each semester and submitted to the Registrar for each topic offered.

Independent Study Course
- Often are GLD courses because of the research (or other) component of the course
- Often are variable credit and can be taken multiple times. The proposal should include the range of hours, number of times the course can be taken for credit and the maximum number of credit hours that can be applied to the degree.
  - o Number of times the course can be taken for credit is not how many attempts a student can have to pass the course, but is how many times it can be taken, usually under different topics or studies.
  - o Example: Credit hours minimum for a single offering is 1. Credit hours maximum for a single offering is 6. Number of times the course can be taken is 6. Number of credit hours if course can be taken multiple times is 12.
- Often have restrictions, which should be included in the proposal.
- Often require a contract, which should be mentioned in the course description.

- Example course description: Independent study for advanced undergraduate majors and graduate students in art history. Approved independent study contract required for enrollment. May be repeated, but no more than 12 credits of Independent Study may be applied to the degree.
- A sample syllabus should be included with the course name and number that match the Independent Study course name and number.

Education Abroad Courses
- If it is to be an online, virtual delivery course, then it might be necessary to change the delivery method. (If that is the only change, then it can be effective for the next term.)

Physical Education Abroad Faculty-Led Courses (Global Classrooms Programs)
- Contact: **globalcarolina@sc.edu**
- Refer to Blackboard Organization "Global Classroom Resources" for materials on proposal process
  - Visit [here](#) to be added to Blackboard
  - Visit "Steps to Lead Abroad" and follow timeline
- Automatically experiential learning and applicable for GLD
- Proposal signed off on by department and includes syllabus, itinerary, and various information about the program leader
  - Overseas insurance form must be submitted with the proposal
- Reviewed by OPAC for international components, academics, and health & safety
  - Approval valid for 3 years with short renewal, barring major changes (i.e. location change, leader change, course change)
  - Complete renewal required after 3-year period

Virtual Education Abroad Faculty-Led Courses (Global Learning Experiences)
- Contact: **globalcarolina@sc.edu**
- Refer to Blackboard Organization "Global Classroom Resources" for materials on proposal process
  - Visit [here](#) to be added to Blackboard
  - Visit "Steps to Lead Abroad" and follow timeline
  - Pay special attention to CIEL section, including "Education Abroad Syllabus Requirements"
- Proposal signed off on by department and includes syllabus, itinerary, and various information about the program leader
- Reviewed by OPAC subcommittee, including CIEL expert, to approve the course for international components, academics, and experiential learning
  - Approval valid for 3 years with short renewal, barring major changes (i.e. location change, leader change, course change)
  - Complete renewal required after 3-year period

PART III: COURSE SYLLABUS

The syllabus is the single most important instrument of structure in a course. The syllabus establishes the standards, and sets the tone, for a course. It outlines what is to be learned, how learning will occur, and how learning will be evaluated.

Proposals that require a syllabus
- New course
- Significant change in the course description
- Change in Carolina Core or GLD designations

- When required by other committees (i.e., Carolina Core Courses and Distributed Learning Courses)

Proposals that do not require a syllabus
- Minor revisions to the course description
- Change in co-requisites or pre-requisites
- Change in course title
- Change in course number
- Change in course level, if not changing to/from 500 or 600.
- Change in Catalog Restrictions
- Change in Grade Mode
- Change in Schedule Type
- Deleting a course

Requirements in a syllabus
All undergraduate and graduate courses must have a course syllabus that includes the following:
- Course title (including course subject designator and number)
- Instructor name and relevant contact information
- Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletin course description
- Course Learning Outcomes
    - Note the phrase is Learning Outcome…not Learning Objectives
    - The Learning Outcomes must be measurable
    - Use Bloom's taxonomy https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/
- Required text(s) and/or suggested readings, as appropriate
- Pre-requisites include minimum grade of pre-requisite course
- Number of student credit hours
- Course requirements and grading:
    - Grading scheme and weights including what a student must do to receive a grade of A through F for a letter grade-based course, or an S or U, or a T or U, as appropriate for a non-letter grade course.
    - Assignments, projects, quizzes, and/or exams with brief descriptions of expectations with points/weights assigned to each activity.
    - Class meeting days, times, and location, or equivalent
    - Topical outline of content to be covered and time allocated to each topic
- Courses at the Advanced Undergraduate/Entry Level Graduate Courses (500 and 600--level) must include one or more assignments for graduate credit that are clearly differentiated from undergraduate assignments. Graduate work is normally evaluated on a more rigorous basis than that of Undergraduate work.
- Statement regarding academic integrity, honorable behavior and/or the Carolinian Creed (or excerpt thereof).
- Course attendance policy consistent with the expectations stated in the Academic Bulletin.
- Statement regarding disability services.
- Statement of compliance with copyright policies (required for courses offered 50% or more online and recommended for all other courses).
  Examples of syllabus statements can be found here:
  https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_templates/syllabus_statement_examples/index.php

PART IV: ADVANCED UNDERGRADUATE/ENTRY LEVEL GRADUATE COURSES (500-600 LEVEL COURSES)
- Both undergraduate and graduate students can take these courses. (The course cannot be restricted to one or the other.)
- The syllabus must include <u>separate</u> grading schemes for undergraduate and graduate credit.
- The syllabus must include <u>one or more requirements</u> for graduate credit that are clearly differentiated from undergraduate assignments. Graduate work is normally evaluated on a more rigorous basis than that of Undergraduate work.
- There needs to be different grading criteria for graduate students. This difference must amount to one letter grade if not done (e.g., student cannot earn an A if not completed). *These differences must be described in the syllabus.*

PART V: LETTERS OF CONCURRENCE
A letter of concurrence from other units is required for curricula proposals in the following cases:
- A subject matter mentioned in the course syllabus is primarily taught in a different college.
- A proposal impacts another college; for example, if a proposed course will be required (as opposed to recommended) in college A that is like a course offered in college B, but with an emphasis on college A's specialization, and can be expected to reduce enrollment in college B's course or a program proposal includes courses from another academic unit as major or supporting courses.
- The course proposal is cross-listed with a course in another college.
- An existing course requires a minor change that would affect another college, i.e., changes to: (a) the prerequisite or co-requisite, (b) wording (but not the substance) of the bulletin description, (c) the number of credit hours whereby the change does not modify the course subject matter, or (d) the mode of delivery.
- Letters of concurrence are required from departments for any courses added or removed that are from a department different from the program in the proposal.

In each of the above cases, proponents should contact the head of the affected unit prior to submitting the proposal to request a letter of concurrence--an email stating agreement to the proposal will suffice. Proponents should include a snapshot of the letter of concurrence where indicated in the curriculum change software and keep a copy of the email or letter on file for verification purposes.

Note on Carolina Core Courses:
Changes in the Carolina Core courses certainly do impact every unit within the university. These courses, however, are not considered under the letter of concurrence restrictions. A committee oversees all changes in Carolina Core courses. For example, a proposal for a change in ENGL 101 does not require letters of concurrence by units teaching components in writing. The committee which oversees the Carolina Core will examine this request. Once approved, the proposal moves forward to C&C.

A letter of concurrence from other units is note required under the following circumstances:
- A change in the course proposal is from the same college.
- An existing course requires a minor change that does not affect another college, i.e., changes to: (a) the prerequisite or co-requisite if these courses are offered by the College making the change, (b) wording (but not the substance) of the bulletin description, (c) the number of credit hours whereby the change does not modify the course subject matter, or (d) mode of delivery.
- Minor changes to an existing course that has verbiage that may indicate subject-matter overlap with a different college, but the minor change does not involve the learning outcomes or syllabus content details. For example, an approved ARTS course with a bulletin description that mentions "visual

communication" would not require a new letter of concurrence from any other unit if the proposed change involved: (a) reduction in credit hours, (b) an unrelated minor change in the bulletin description, (c) a change in prerequisites if those pre-requisites are offered by the College making the change, or (d) change of delivery method.

Notes on process of evaluating course proposals:
- The committee chair organizes proposals for committee review. If at this stage the chair notes that a letter of concurrence is required but not in the proposal, the chair will request that the proponent supply a letter of concurrence.
- Sometimes a committee does not identify a conflict between units. When the agenda is distributed, any faculty member may contact the chair to identify a concern. If this occurs, the chair will contact the proponent and explain the situation. In almost all cases, the proposal is withdrawn pending unit discussions.
- The chair communicates with proponents whose proposals require minor changes. With the proponents' approval, the chair will make the changes in the proposal—as opposed to returning it and requiring resubmission through the process. This process has dramatically reduced the average time from proposal submission to consideration by the Faculty Senate.

PART VI: CHECKLIST WHEN PREPARING YOUR PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Program Curriculum
- Learning Outcomes are not approved through APPS. Use the [Academic Assessment Plan Composer](#) or contact [La Trice Ratcliff-Small](#) in OIRAA with questions regarding learning outcomes.
- Language in progression requirements should match the requirements of the program. (e.g., If the progression requirements mention "upper division," does the program clearly show or define the "upper division.")
- Letters of concurrence are required from departments for any courses added or removed that are from a department different from the program in the proposal.
- Prescribed courses to meet Carolina Core learning outcomes must be approved to meet the learning outcome which they fulfill. (e.g. MATH 111 prescribed as the course for the Carolina Core Analytical Reasoning and Problem Solving (ARP) component. MATH 111 is not an approved course to meet the ARP component and should not be included as a prescribed course in the proposal)
- Prerequisites for courses should be built into the program. (Except MATH 111/111i/112/115/116)
- Courses removed from a program may affect other required courses in the program if they are prerequisites and should be accounted for with additional course proposals to remove the prerequisite(s) from the required course in the program. (e.g., If Biological Sciences, BS were to remove BIOL 302 from the degree requirements, then a course proposal would be needed for BIOL 425, also a degree requirement, to remove BIOL 302 as a prerequisite. There are several courses in Biological Sciences, BS that require BIOL 302 as a prerequisite, so they would all need to remove 302 as a prerequisite if it were removed from the program.)
- Degree requirements must be arranged in the Program of Study format (see ACAF 2.00)
- Include any minimum grade requirements on each course or section for which the requirement is higher than a D.
- Requirements should be defined for students and programmable for the degree audit, even if they allow for student selection (i.e., FAMS 300+; any 300+ course in ACCT, ECON, FINA, IBUS, MGMT, MKTG, or MGST; or a list of course options; Examples of vague requirements: 3 hours of biological anthropology; 2 business courses; 6 hours of natural science)
- A [Carolina Core Integrative Course](#) must be required (not just an option) in the program.
- Concentrations are within the major and requirements must be clear.

- Must a student choose a concentration, or is it optional?
- Are the concentration hours in addition to the base major or in place of the base major?
- If students must choose a concentration, then a Carolina Core integrative course must be required for each of the concentrations, so all students graduate with the requirement.

Hours
- Degree requirements must equal the total degree hours.
- Requirements in each component of the Program of Study must equal the hours for component.
- Degree hours should meet university and any college standards, i.e., minimum of 120 hours, 128 for some B.S. degrees.
- Changes to hours in one component of the Program of Study may affect hours in another component, as elective hours needed often depend upon how many hours are required in other degree components.