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SECTION: Academic Affairs  
SUBJECT: Creation and Revision of Academic Courses  
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Policy for: All Campuses  
Procedure for: All Campuses  
Authorized by: Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and Vice President for System Planning  
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## I. Policy

Academic courses form the foundation of the University of South Carolina's graduate and undergraduate curricula. Courses are taught throughout the university at a range of levels and can be either credit bearing or noncredit bearing. This policy applies to credit bearing courses only. Noncredit bearing courses are governed by University Policy ACAF 1.71 Noncredit Certificate Programs.

Course actions on all campuses including the creation, revision and elimination of graduate and undergraduate courses must be approved at appropriate levels of curriculum responsibility within the university as outlined in this policy prior to advertisement or insertion into the *Graduate* and *Undergraduate Bulletins*.

### A. Faculty Oversight

The faculty of the university has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum on the campus where they serve. Faculty governance bodies on each campus shall review all requests to create, revise, or eliminate graduate and undergraduate courses to ensure that all offerings meet the academic expectations of the university. Course actions should also be reviewed to ensure that courses are not unnecessarily duplicated within each campus and are appropriate to the department requesting the course.

### B. Campus and Unit Oversight

The deans of the colleges and schools on the Columbia campus, the campus deans on the regional Palmetto College campuses, and the chief academic affairs officers on the comprehensive campuses are responsible for implementing this policy and maintaining unit- and campus-level compliance with CHE and SACS regulations.

Within units, the unit head is responsible for ensuring that programs meet the academic expectations of the university and are assessed annually, including monitoring program offerings using specific delivery methods and/or locations.

C. Academic Program Liaisons (APL)

An Academic Program Liaison (APL) is designated for each college/school on the Columbia campus, for each comprehensive campus, and for the regional Palmetto College campuses. The APLs serve as the main information resource on academic program actions and as the liaison to the Provost's Office for their respective units. The list of current Academic Program Liaisons can be found at [www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog](http://www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog).

II. Faculty Governance Procedures

A. Initiation of Course Actions and Unit Approval

1. In most cases, course actions will begin in a department or unit of a campus, college or school. The proponent of a course action may wish to consult the unit Academic Program Liaison early in this process.
2. If a course action has the potential to impact the curriculum offering of other units or campuses, then the proponent is responsible for procuring concurrence from such units or campuses.
3. Proposals for course actions shall be approved and so documented by the appropriate unit-level curriculum committees.
4. The proponent of the course action shall submit the proposal in the Academic Program Proposal System (APPS) after the above approvals have been obtained.
5. Courses may be cross-listed only with other courses at the same level. Course actions involving cross-listed courses shall be submitted as follows.
  - a. If both sides of the cross-listing are new courses, each unit shall introduce their own course, indicating cross-listing with the other.
  - b. If one course is new, and the other already exists, the unit introducing the new course shall include a statement of concurrence from the unit with the existing course. After approval, the Registrar's office shall edit the existing course's course description to reflect the new or changed cross-listing.

- c. If all courses in a cross-listing are existing courses, one of the units shall submit the course action, indicating all other courses with which the course is cross-listed. All other units shall provide to the initiating unit statements of concurrence, indicating all other courses with which the initiated course is cross-listed. After approval, the Registrar shall edit the course descriptions of the concurring unit's courses to reflect the new or changed cross-listing.

B. Procedures for Columbia Campus

1. If course actions impact the curriculum offerings at the regional Palmetto campuses, the Palmetto College Office and Vice President for System Planning will be notified.
2. Submitted proposals for course actions shall be approved by the unit head (chair, director, dean, or other defined unit head).
3. Proposals for course actions shall then be approved by the college/school representative
4. The college/school representative shall submit proposals for course actions to campus review and approval procedures. Such procedures are described below. If course actions impact the curriculum of P-12 educator preparation programs, the Dean of the College of Education must approve the action.
5. If course actions for courses numbered 100 to 699 involve the inclusion or addition of pedagogy such that 50% or more of the course may be delivered by distributed learning methods, then the proposal shall be submitted to both the Provost's Office's Distributed Learning Support Services, and the Committee on Instructional Development of the Faculty Senate for review and approval.
6. Course actions for undergraduate courses (courses numbered 499 and below) shall be submitted to the Curriculum and Courses Committee of the Faculty Senate for review and approval. Upon approval by the Committee on Curriculum and Courses, this committee shall submit the proposal to the Faculty Senate for campus faculty approval.
7. Course actions for advanced undergraduate/graduate courses (courses numbered 500-699) shall be submitted to the Committee on Curriculum and Courses of the Faculty Senate for review and approval. A representative of the Graduate Council will participate in the review and shall report the outcome to the Graduate Council. Upon approval, this committee shall submit the proposal to the Faculty Senate for campus faculty approval.

8. Course actions for graduate courses (courses numbered 700 and above) shall be submitted to the appropriate curriculum committee of the Graduate Council for review and approval. Upon approval, this committee shall submit the proposal to the Graduate Council for campus faculty approval.
9. Course actions for courses offered exclusively as part of professional degree (e.g., J.D., M.D., or Pharm.D.) shall be approved by the faculty of the professional college/school.
10. Once the appropriate faculty governance structure has given its approval, the campus faculty governance body shall submit the approved course addition, deletion or revision to the University Registrar's Office for bulletin entry. Units are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the approved action.

C. Procedures for Comprehensive Campuses

Each comprehensive campus shall develop individual campus-based procedures to implement this policy, consistent with the following guidelines.

1. Course actions shall be initiated in accordance with section II.A. above.
2. Course actions for undergraduate and graduate courses must then be reviewed and approved by the appropriate faculty governance body.
3. If course actions impact the curriculum offerings at the regional Palmetto College campuses, the comprehensive campus Registrar's office must notify the Palmetto College Office.
4. Once the appropriate faculty governance structure has given their approval, the campus shall submit the approved course action to the University Registrar's Office for bulletin entry. Units are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the approved action.

D. Procedures for Regional Palmetto College Campuses

1. New or revised Palmetto College Campus (PCAM) courses must first be approved by the appropriate campus faculty.
2. Course actions must then be reviewed and approved by the regional Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate (PCFS).
3. If course actions impact the curriculum offerings at the Columbia or Comprehensive campuses, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for System Planning will be notified.

4. Once the PCFS has given its approval, the PCFS designee shall submit the approved course action to the University Registrar's Office in Columbia for bulletin entry. Units are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the approved action.

E. University Bulletin

ACAF 2.00 describes the bulletin publication schedule. Once fully approved, a new course can be added to the bulletin. The effective date for a course change is the publication of the next bulletin.

III. Definitions

- A. **Course Subject:** Course Subject is a four letter designator maintained by an authorized academic unit. Academic units are required to approve course subjects and changes to course subjects through the course creation and revision process in APPS.
- B. **Course Number:** A course number is a three digit numeric code that signifies course level. Course numbers may not be reused for a period of seven years.
- C. **Course Suffixes:** Suffixes are values added to the end of course acronyms which help identify course characteristics such as labs sections. Suffixes are no longer used to identify special topics courses.
- D. **Credit:** The university adheres to the IPEDS definition of a credit hour as "a unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term." Therefore, each single course credit requires a minimum of 700 minutes of continuous and ongoing instructional time. A minimum of one calendar week of instruction with a cumulative total of at least 700 minutes is required for each credit offered. This time excludes breaks and final exams.
  1. **Fixed and Variable Credit Courses:** When a course is created, it is identified as either a fixed credit course or a variable credit course.
  2. **Zero Credit Courses:** On rare occasions, a course may be listed as a zero credit course. The creation of zero credit courses is only permitted under exceptional circumstances. Once a student has taken a variable credit

course for zero credit, s/he cannot subsequently enroll in the course for more than zero credit.

E. Course Level:

1. Lower Division Undergraduate Courses (100-200 level courses): Typically, lower division or introductory courses are taken during the freshman and sophomore year.
2. Upper Division Undergraduate Courses (300-400 level courses): Typically are upper division undergraduate courses.
3. Advanced Undergraduate/Entry Level Graduate Courses (500-600 level courses): These may be taken by advanced undergraduates or graduate students unless prohibited by specific campus regulations. Course syllabi must have clearly distinguished requirements for undergraduate credit and graduate credit. Graduate students are expected to perform at a higher level with additional graduate level requirements.
4. Graduate Courses (700 level and above): These are graduate level courses. Undergraduate students may only enroll in these courses through the special permission processes managed by the Graduate School. Courses at this level may not be scheduled to meet with those at a lower level, e.g. 400/700 courses.
5. Professional Degree Courses: These are courses required as part of the professional degree curriculum taught in the professional schools. Only students who have been admitted into the professional school may enroll in these courses.

F. Course Delivery

Academic programs and courses are identified based upon the delivery method(s) used to satisfy the total number of required credit hours.

1. Traditional Instruction: Courses offered in a traditional classroom setting in which the instructor is face-to-face in the same room at the same time as the students.
2. Distributed Learning Instruction: Courses offered through distributed learning use electronic modalities for fifty percent or more of the learning activities.
3. Blended Learning: Courses offered through blended learning use electronic modalities for less than fifty percent of the learning activities.

4. Courses associated with internships and other experiential learning can be considered traditional instruction if the program is identified as traditional instruction or distributed learning if the program is identified as distributed learning (see ACAF 2.00).

#### G. Course Schedule Type

Schedule types are intended to reflect the nature of activities required of students, the relationship between students and their instructors, and the settings required to deliver the content of an instructional offering. Course schedule types include the following: Lecture, Seminar, Lab, Lab/Clinical, Lecture/Lab, Lecture/Lab/Clinical, Studio, Studio PE Course, Practicum, Private Instruction, Internship / Cooperative, Field Study, Independent Study, Practice Teaching, Thesis, Dissertation.

#### H. Delivery Location

Academic programs and courses are also identified based upon the delivery location(s) or site used to offer the total number of required credit hours.

1. On-campus: Courses offered on the geographic site of the home campus.
2. Off-campus: Courses offered at locations geographically apart from the home campus. Internships and other experiential learning courses are not considered off-campus courses.
3. Blended Location of Instruction: Courses may be considered “blended” if more than one delivery location is used.

#### I. Instructor

The instructor for a course must present the course instructional materials and oversee all course assessments. The instructor must provide the largest single share of the contact hours of instruction associated with the course. The instructor is the final arbiter of grades assigned for the course.

Instructors teaching courses must be approved by the academic dean and academic unit hosting the course. For regional Palmetto College campus instructors, the approving unit is the Columbia or comprehensive campus department or college/school.

Instructors must have the required credentials and meet the SACSCOC criteria for teaching at the appropriate level. If multiple instructors are used, each instructor must meet the above criteria. Once an instructor is approved and added to the

appropriate faculty roster, the instructor will remain on the roster for that specific course only, until removed.

J. Learning Outcomes.

Learning outcomes are statements that describe significant and essential learning that learners have achieved, 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.

K. Course Syllabi

The syllabus is the single most important instrument of structure in a course. It outlines what is to be learned, how learning will occur, and how learning will be evaluated. The syllabus establishes the standards, and sets the tone, for a course. All undergraduate and graduate courses must have a course syllabus that includes the following:

1. Course title (including course subject designator and number)
2. Instructor name and relevant contact information
3. Final Exam day and time, as appropriate (from Registrar's website)
4. Class meeting days, times, and location, or equivalent
5. Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletin course description
6. Course learning outcomes
7. Required text(s) and/or suggested readings, as appropriate
8. Course requirements and grading
  - a. Assignments, projects, quizzes, and/or exams with brief descriptions of expectations with points/weights assigned to each activity.
  - b. 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.



- c. 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.
  - d. Courses at the Advanced Undergraduate/Entry Level Graduate Courses (500 and 600--level) must include separate grading schemes for undergraduate and graduate credit.
9. Topical outline of content to be covered
- a. A time allocation framework (e.g., week 1, week 2, etc. to include 14 weeks for a standard academic year course session). The time allocation framework will be adjusted for other term lengths accordingly, consistent with course credit hours as defined in section III D.
  - b. For Distributed Learning Courses, the syllabus is expected to articulate the estimated time commitments of instructional time and course activity time consistent with course credit hours as defined above. The Committee on Instructional Development shall maintain and administer guidelines for such courses.
10. Statement regarding academic integrity, honorable behavior and/or the Carolinian Creed (or excerpt thereof). Additional information may be found at the Office of Academic Integrity website ([www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/](http://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/)). Sample syllabi statements may be found on the Center for Teaching Excellence website: [www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/cte/teaching\\_resources/coursedevelopment/example\\_syllabus\\_statements/index.php](http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/coursedevelopment/example_syllabus_statements/index.php).
11. Course attendance policy consistent with the expectations stated in the Academic Bulletin.
12. Statement regarding disability services. Additional information may be found at the Student Disability services website: [www.sa.sc.edu/sds/](http://www.sa.sc.edu/sds/). Sample syllabi statements may be found on the Center for Teaching Excellence website: [www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/cte/teaching\\_resources/coursedevelopment/example\\_syllabus\\_statements/index.php](http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/coursedevelopment/example_syllabus_statements/index.php).

#### IV. Course Scheduling Guidelines

As outlined below, additional levels of approval, monitoring and/or assessment are required for certain types of courses as they are scheduled. All courses are scheduled within academic terms - Fall, Spring and Summer - which make up an Academic Year. Terms are defined by standard beginning and end dates found in the calendar section on the

Registrar's Office web page. Parts of term are subsets of terms. Each part of term has its own begin and end dates which are embedded within the full term. On the Columbia campus, Fall and Spring Terms have three standard parts of term: 30 (Full Part of Term), 3A (First 8 Week Part of Term), 3B (Second 8 Week Part of Term).

#### A. Contract Courses

Contract courses are courses offered to a group or cohort of students where a third party is paying the tuition. This includes all courses where grants are paying student tuition and fees. Agreements for contract courses may be between USC and an outside agency or a USC academic unit and a USC funded project.

##### 1. Types of Contract Courses

###### a. Regular Rate Courses

Regular rate courses are courses offered at the normal Board-approved contract tuition rate to a cohort of students.

###### b. Reduced Rate Courses

Reduced rate courses are courses offered at a tuition rate less than the regular Board approved rate including the Board approved certified teacher rate. No more than 6 hours of reduced rate courses (except for those courses identified as dual enrollment in the contract flag field) can apply to a graduate student's program of study.

###### c. Dual Enrollment Courses

Dual enrollment courses are University of South Carolina courses that are offered to eligible high school students via a contractual arrangement between the university and their school or school districts. Students enrolled in these courses earn simultaneous credit towards graduation from high school and academic credit toward either an associate or baccalaureate degree program.

All Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus dual enrollment courses must be submitted for processing by the Palmetto College Office. comprehensive campus dual enrollment courses are processed by the respective campus chief academic affairs office. See also University Policy ACAF 2.04 Dual Enrollment Courses.

## 2. Office of Educational Outreach (OEO)

The Office of Educational Outreach (OEO) in the College of Education is responsible for all regular and reduced rate contract courses in all disciplines of colleges/schools on the Columbia and regional Palmetto College campuses. Contract courses offered by these campuses must be reviewed and approved by OEO to ensure that they meet all USC and state requirements. The Office of the Provost will evaluate all contract course and program agreements against the purpose of the institution every five years or when subject to renewal. The evaluation will consider the following factors: consistency with university mission, agreement activity, appropriateness of administration, adequacy of risk and safety management, academic soundness, and viability in terms of facilities and resources. Detailed instructions regarding the development of a new contract course or the scheduling of a course in support of an existing degree program contract can be found at <http://www.ed.sc.edu/o eo>.

### B. Special Topics Courses

Special Topics course numbers are established by the procedures in Section II, above. Special Topics courses are courses that have variable content and title and may be taken multiple times.

The offering unit must notify the Office of the Registrar each time the course is offered (including the first time). The course title and description information must be filed with the Office of the Registrar for cataloging prior to course data entry for the Master Schedule each semester. Graduate course information should be forwarded to the Graduate School, which will forward to the Office of the Registrar when approved.

The course title that appears on the student's transcript each time the course is taken will vary according to the approved course content for that semester.

### C. Schedule Exceptions and Non-Standard Session Courses

Requests for schedule exceptions and non-standard session courses must be approved by the offering unit's department chair when applicable, the academic dean and the Office of the Registrar.

Schedule exceptions will be granted for justifiable reasons only. Schedule exceptions may be warranted if a course has an irregular or abbreviated meeting schedule, if the course meets over a period longer than the regular term, or if the course has a beginning and/or ending date different from the regular term.

Non-standard session and schedule exception approval is only valid for one semester.

D. Independent Study Courses

Independent Study courses are initially established by the procedures in Section II above. Independent study courses allow students to pursue an area of academic interest not adequately covered by the regular course structure. Campus/college/school policies generally govern independent study practices, such as the limits placed on the amount of independent study credit that may count toward a degree. Both undergraduate and graduate students must complete independent study contracts to register for the courses. Contracts will include learning outcomes and a clear explanation of how the grade will be determined.

E. Internships and Experiential Learning Courses

Internships and experiential learning courses are initially established by the procedures in Section II, above. Internships and experiential learning courses are courses in which students meet program-specific learning outcomes in an applied environment. They are offered for a range of credits, and include a formal mechanism for evaluating the achievement of objectives.

F. Professional Development Courses

Professional development courses are initially established by the procedures in Section II, above. Professional development courses are primarily courses intended to address a specific professional development need, and that are not regular program offerings. Typically offered in the College of Education, they will under limited conditions count as graduate credit toward the fulfillment of graduate degrees.

V. Additional Procedures for Columbia and regional Palmetto College Campuses

Detailed tutorials have been developed in APPS regarding the creation, revision or elimination of a course as well as the scheduling and delivery of courses. The tutorials are available online at <http://www.sc.edu/programproposal/>.

VI. Related Policies

University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs

University Policy ACAF 2.04 Dual Enrollment Courses

University Policy BTRU 1.04 Authority to Sign Contracts

University Policy STAF 6.02 Support Services and Accommodations for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities

VII. Reason for Revision

Policy updated to include changes in workflow and terminology associated with course action approval systems, changes in distributed learning approval processes, and appropriate syllabus information.