New Course and Course Change Proposal Guidelines

General Information and processes

For an overview of course approval process and application submission guidelines for new courses, course changes, and drops (with links to specific details) see:

UW Office of the Registrar: https://registrar.washington.edu/curriculum/approval-process/

And for some common application concerns and specific pointers, see: https://registrar.washington.edu/course-applications/

For useful information about grading and grading dilemmas, along with and university policies about grading practices (including policies on grading on participation and behavior, and on requiring students to provide proof of illness or emergency) see:

UW Faculty Resources on Grading: https://depts.washington.edu/grading/

For tips, tutorials and troubleshooting related to the curriculum management system (CMS) or kuali, including how to track proposals, search for potentially overlapping or affected courses in other units, and to connect to IT Help, see:

UW Curriculum Management: https://helpcenter.uw.edu/uw-curriculum-management-system/

In addition, your school or department may have additional requirements, norms and resources for course development, syllabus content, and review.

Common "application issues" that can hold up proposals at one or more stages of review:

- **Syllabus:** A complete and representative syllabus must be included. It should include a course schedule with course topics and readings. Ideally, the syllabus should serve as a template for future instances of the course; that is, it should outline learning objectives, topics and general methods of instruction and evaluation that will be roughly the same from year to year and instructor to instructor.

    - *Information on syllabus must align with the information on the application* (e.g., evaluation details should be the same on the application and the syllabus).

- **Course Description/Catalog Description:** The course description you provide for the application will become public catalog copy and live on long after the application process, or your instantiation of the course. It must begin with a verb, must be checked for spelling, grammar, punctuation (the registrar does not copy edit for you). If you are requesting an AofK designation like Div or VLPA, the CD should reflect (and support) that. The course description for the syllabus need not be identical to the application CD, but it definitely cannot contradict it. (The syllabus might include information about course activities and processes, for example, but these should not be in the catalog copy unless they are somehow crucial to the overall objectives and substance of the course).

- **Justification:** Remember this speaks to several levels of review, and to campus and tri-campus audiences, not just to your program or school (and so involves attention to other programs or schools affected by the addition or change). If you are requesting credit changes (from 3 to 5 for example), an AofK designation that isn't completely obvious from the course title or field (Diversity in general, or NW for a social science course), changing to distance learning (DL) or hybrid (over 50% online delivery), proposing a new course that essentially replicates existing courses offered on campus, or any requests involving academic standards or the broader curriculum, these should be addressed in the justification. Similarly, if you are including prerequisites for your course (especially if these are numerous or sequenced), address how easy or difficult it will be for students to take those courses: frequency of offerings, what happens if a student doesn't pass the one course offered in a year, etc. In short, anticipate curricular overlap, scheduling, advising, and academic standards questions in the justification.

- **Learning objectives**: Learning objectives must be included on the syllabus *and* the application (and while they need not be identical, they cannot contradict and should convey the same meaning).
    - The learning objectives for the course should apply to the course *as an institution*, what this specific course and number will (always) impart to students as learning *outcomes.*
    - Learning objectives must describe learning **outcomes** and be written so as to complete the stem "At the end of this course students will be able to:" or "demonstrate the ability to:" These should be **measurable,** at least conceivably, and they should be **durable**.
    - These should **not** be descriptions of course activities or processes (your syllabus can include an additional set of process goals/descriptions, but these should be given a separate heading).
    - Aim for elegance and some parsimony. Avoid repetition. Use active verbs as much as possible. (Boyer's taxonomy might be helpful for framing and clarifying LOs, see attached).
    - If you are asking for specific area of knowledge designation (VLPA, NW, I&S, Diversity, Composition, QSR) that should be reflected in the stated learning objectives (evidence that relevant skills and knowledge will be taught and assessed).

- **Grading/evaluation methods** must be included on the application and syllabus (and they can't contradict):

    - Grading/evaluation methods **cannot include grading on student behavior. This means that students can't be graded on attendance**. This also means that **students can't be graded on "conduct"** (see http://depts.washington.edu/grading/conduct/grading.html or see attached for further information). As a rule of thumb, you should only grade on what you've taught ("content not conduct"). If your course or program involves assessment of things like professional conduct or clinical performance, what that means, how it has been taught, and how it is being evaluated must be made explicit.

    - Policies on late work or make up exams **cannot be contingent on providing documentation or proof of illness or other emergencies.** (This not only constitutes a violation of privacy, it also entails expense to the student, and it still leaves the instructor with the problem of evaluating legitimacy).

o If grading/evaluation includes over 15% of **grade based on participation**, then the syllabus must provide corresponding listing the **objective** measures by which participation will be evaluated. These should be transparent to students. These should not include grading on attendance or conduct (see above). If peer evaluations (of group work or writing, as examples) are being used in grading, it must be made clear how the instructor is using that information to determine grades: students cannot grade other students.

Area of Knowledge Designations

- Content for requested **Areas of Knowledge designation(s)** must be **apparent** (and **proportionate**) in the course description, learning objectives, course assignments and evaluation, and course materials/readings (and should also be addressed in the justification section of the application). A minimum of 40% of course content, goals and activities should be directly connected to the area to justify the designation; for the Diversity designation the minimum is 60%. In general, try to respect the commitment to *general education* goals and values, along with the goals and objectives of the school and campus. Note that at both the campus and tri-campus levels, review of A of K designations has become more stringent than in the past (and new guidelines are under development). Be judicious with requests: Students are only required to complete 3 "Diversity" credits out of 190 needed to graduate, should your course be *the course* they take if they take only one Diversity course? Similarly, students are required to take a limited number of VLPA, NW and I&S courses (25 credits each), so consider whether your course sufficiently addresses those content area objectives to warrant the designation (simply showing films or reading fiction in a class is not sufficient to justify a VLPA designation, a short module on fetal development is not sufficient to justify NW).

Affected programs, departments and schools (and duplication and overlap of courses)

Proposing faculty should perform a **due diligence search for schools and programs that may be affected by a new course or course change,** and provide information about which, whether and in what way (or what way not) those courses or programs are affected by the proposed course(s). This often means looking for existing courses that are similar (or similarly concerned) to the new course or departments or programs addressing the same or overlapping curriculum. This can be done with a keyword search on kuali (https://uw.kuali.co/cm/#/courses), and it is typically faculty who can best determine appropriate or inappropriate keywords to use, as well as which courses represent meaningful overlap, equivalency, or similarity but no overlap or equivalency. In cases where no overlap or equivalency is identified, but the new course may be of interest or value to another program, a simple acknowledgment is appropriate. **Note that the registrar's office will perform its own search if proposers provide no or insufficient information (this could result in a very long list of potentially affected schools or programs), so it is best to be proactive and guide this process.**

Course level and numbers

- **Assigning Course Numbers:** Course level, along with course credit and course enrollment, is an important element in the allocation of University Resources. It is essential to have clear guidelines for determining course level. The following broad definitions are to be used in

determining the correct level for a proposed undergraduate course (your school or department may other more specific guidelines).

- **Lower-Division Courses** are courses which are offered at the 100- and 200-levels, and should have the following characteristics:

  o Lower-division courses generally do not have extensive college-level prerequisites (aside from preceding courses in the same sequence). They may require substantial secondary school preparation.

  o Lower division courses usually are **not limited to students majoring in the field in which the courses are offered.**

  o Any lower-division course, assuming qualified staff and other resources are available, could be offered through a community college. It also important to **avoid or reduce overlap and duplication in lower-division and pre-major courses on a campus** (e.g., a different instantiation of introductory statistics in several schools or departments) without establishing clear and reciprocal equivalency, and justifying the need for new course covering the same material and curricular needs.

  o Concerning specific course levels:

    ▪ 100-level courses should be suitable for first-year students.

    ▪ 200-level courses are directed toward college sophomores, though they are open to qualified first-years.

- **Upper-Division Courses:** Upper-division courses are courses which are offered at the 300- and 400-levels, and which require substantial college-level preparation on the part of the student. Ordinarily this should be indicated in the course description by a discussion of the recommended background which will describe to both students and advisors what is expected. Recommended background can be indicated in several ways, among them:

  o Specifying particular University courses (or their equivalents) which should have been completed prior to enrollment.

  o Specifying a certain number of credits in specified areas which should have been completed prior to enrollment.

  o Specifying the level of academic progress (such as junior or senior standing) or specifying a certain number of total college credits which should have been completed prior to enrollment.

  o Specifying permission or requiring an entry code so that some sort of direct assessment of the student's qualification is made.

- With respect to specific course levels:

  o 300-level courses are directed primarily at juniors and seniors. Ordinarily they are not appropriate for well-prepared graduate students.

- 400-level courses should be appropriate for either seniors or graduate students.

- **400-500 Parallel Courses**

  - Courses that are likely to be taken by both undergraduate students and graduate students should have both an undergraduate course number and a graduate course number per the Provost's 400-500 Parallel Course Guidelines. It must be clear how the 500-level course is appropriate to graduate students and graduate education.

- **Graduate-Level Courses:** Graduate courses (500-899) must conform to the standards set by the Graduate School of the University of Washington. Reserved numbers for graduate courses are: 600-Independent Study or Research, 601-Internship, 700-Master's Thesis, 800-Doctoral Dissertation, and 801-Practice Doctorate Project/Capstone.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Competency	Skill Demonstrated	Action Verbs
Knowledge	• Observation and recall of information • Knowledge of dates, events, places • Knowledge of major ideas • Mastery of subject matter	List, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where
Comprehension	• Understanding information • Grasp meaning • Translate knowledge into new context • Interpret facts, compare, contrast	Summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend
Application	• Use information • Use methods, concepts, theories in new situations • Solve problems using required skills or knowledge	Apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover
Analysis	• Seeing patterns • Organization of parts • Recognition of hidden meanings • Identification of components	Analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer
Synthesis	• Use old ideas to create new ones • Generalize from given facts • Relate knowledge from several areas • Predict, draw conclusions	Combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite
Evaluation	• Compare and discriminate between ideas • Assess value of theories, presentations • Make choices based on reasoned argument • Verify value of evidence • Recognize subjectivity	Assess, decide, rand, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize

Reference: Illinois Online Network
http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/assessment/bloomtaxonomy.asp

Grading Issues Related to Conduct

You have the right to:
- establish rules for your classroom in order to ensure a constructive learning environment.
- judge a student's expertise in your academic discipline. You may grade a student on any of the learning goals you set for and communicate to that student.

You do NOT have the right to:
- grade a student based on his or her behavior alone.

Grading on Mastery of Content vs. Conduct

The difference between behavior and academic fitness can get quite fuzzy. Part of the learning goals of clinical medicine is the ability to interact effectively with patients and other medical colleagues. Thus, a medical student might be graded on his/her ability to be personable and could be graded down in this area if they were considered rude or difficult to interact with. A student in entry level science courses is responsible for mastering academic skills and content and no matter how rude or difficult this person is, he/she should not be graded down because of it. On the other hand, a student in a course where one of the learning goals is the ability to work and create knowledge in collaboration with other students, might be graded on his/her ability to collaborate.

Grading a student on behavior	Grading a student on course learning goals
Grading a student on attendance in a large lecture course (attendance is not part of the learning goals for such a course)	Grading a student on attendance in a clinical or lab course where their ability to contribute to a group is part of the learning goal
Grading a student down for handing in papers late in order to punish him or her for lazy or disorganized behavior	Grading a student down on a paper handed in late in a course designed to teach study skills for college

Because students are assured of the right to due process, if you choose to include student behavior as a criterion for course grading it is important to have clear distinctions between grading on mastery of academic content and grading on conduct. It is equally important to develop strategies for clarifying expectations for students and for letting students know what opportunities are available if they wish to discuss grading issues with you.

Grading on mastery of content. Because the instructor is universally recognized as the authority on course content, barring the "arbitrary" or "capricious" assigning of grades, instructors are granted the right to evaluate a student's mastery of content or skills in the academic discipline. You may evaluate students on any learning goals established for a course and fail students who do not meet minimal academic standards you have established. As part of due process, however, you are encouraged to develop clear criteria for evaluation, identify those criteria for students, let students know the level of mastery expected for each criterion, and provide opportunities for

students to discuss directly with you concerns about the grades you have assigned. In this way, grading cannot be perceived as "capricious" or "arbitrary".

Grading on conduct. Inappropriate classroom behavior should be confronted apart from the instructor's grading practices and processed through the University's regular conduct system (see Student Conduct Code). In cases where misconduct is at issue, courts expect university personnel to follow due process procedures.

Class grades should be assigned on mastery of course content unless it can be clearly shown that a direct link exists between the misbehavior and a specific course goal. Under any circumstances, the student's due process rights must be respected. Once again, for cases of misconduct, instructors are encouraged to use the University's formal administrative channels. Unless a student's misbehavior is linked to course goals, an instructor should not use conduct as a grading criterion.

Example: A situation in which no relationship exists between the misbehavior and class goals
- A student who is responsible for and can demonstrate mastery of course content in an entry-level course but is rude and inconsiderate toward the instructor. (The instructor should request that the student change the behavior, and depending on the student's response and the seriousness of the misconduct, use the University's normal channels to charge the student with violation of the Student Conduct Code. An appropriate penalty would then be determined through that process.)

Example: A situation in which a possible relationship exists between the misbehavior and class goals
- A student appears to demonstrate disorganization and/or lack of motivation by being consistently late to class. (The instructor may request that the student change the behavior because it is distracting to others, or lower the student's grade for any learning that is lost because of the tardiness, i.e., a missed quiz at the beginning of class, inability to participate in an initial group discussion that is essential to the learning in the class, etc.).

Example: Situations in which a clear relationship exists between the behavior and class goals
- A student's inability to communicate effectively in a clinical course in which a major goal is to develop the ability to interact effectively with patients and colleagues. (Mastery of certain communication skills is part of the competency required in the course. As a result, the behavioral competency is stated in the course goals. Attendance in such clinical or laboratory learning environments may, indeed, relate to mastery of the subject.)
- A student's inability to collaborate in a course in which a learning goal is to create knowledge in collaboration with other students. (Ability to collaborate is clearly stated as a skill required in the course, so the student has been given notice; and the instructor can assess student's mastery of collaborative skills.)

Grading on Attendance or Late Submissions

Although, on the surface, lowering grades because of absences or late papers may appear to violate students' rights, instructors may use such conduct in determining grades when students are given notice that such behaviors are criteria for evaluating student performance. To avoid pitfalls, instructors who choose to lower grades for poor attendance or late submissions should provide students with information regarding how and why these behaviors negatively affect course mastery.

Including attendance as a criterion for grading
- Be sure that the students understand that you are not merely grading on attendance but rather whether their learning is affected by absences (it is usually helpful to clarify this both orally and in the syllabus).
- Link attendance to specific course goals (i.e., learning to work in groups, generating insights through class discussion, developing skills under the instructor's supervision because immediate feedback is an important part of the process, etc.).
- Consider making attendance part of a participation grade (i.e., suggest than in important part of the learning in a course comes from interaction among students and the instructor and that students are not experiencing the development of ideas in a course if they are not present for the interactions).
- Let students know what their options are if they wish to discuss grading procedures with you.

Taking off points for late papers
- Be explicit that you are not grading on students' laziness or lack of ability to organize their time.
- Tell students both orally and in the syllabus that assignment due dates serve to determine how well students can master the content in a specified amount of time and that anyone needing extra time (excepting students with disabilities who may need special accommodations) will be docked points as an indication that they did not show an acceptable level of mastery in the time allotted.
- Let students know that, for the sake of equity and fairness, all students will have the same amount of time to demonstrate their mastery of assignments.
- Inform students that it is essential that they reach acceptable levels of mastery by a certain time so that you can move on to new material or skills.
- Let students know what their options are if they wish to discuss grading procedures with you.