Curriculum

FACULTY ACADEMIC POLICIES - CURRICULUM

SG 2.01

Date of Last Update:
February 22, 2024

Approved By:

- University Academic Senate / Provost

Responsible Office:
Provost Office

POLICY STATEMENT

A. University Curriculum Committee Procedures and Policies for Curriculum Development and Review

1. College Curriculum Committees (CCC) and the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) conduct their business during the regular academic year. Course and program proposals may be submitted via the online curriculum development system at any time during the academic year. Proposals intended for publication in the next edition of the Catalog should be submitted as soon as possible to allow time for review and any revisions.

2. Curriculum development is the responsibility of regular faculty. Adjunct faculty (as defined in Board of Trustees' Policies BOT 4.3.0) are encouraged to participate in unit-level discussions of curricular actions, but are not responsible for curricular proposals. Visiting instructors and part-time adjunct instructors may not author curriculum proposals. Affiliate faculty may author curriculum proposals with unit level approval.

3. The Graduate Council Curriculum Committee will review and approve or not approve all graduate-related proposals in a manner similar to the review that the General Education Committee (GEC) conducts for all General Education issues. After approval by the GCC and/or the Graduate Council, UCC will review the proposal.

4. If a curricular proposal involves significant budgetary implications, UCC may consult with the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) for their assessment of the proposed budget impact.

5. Proposals which move the required hours of the major above or below the stated ranges of the various degrees will require strong justification.

6. Appeals of GEC decisions should be made to UCC.

B. UCC Curricular Procedures

All curriculum proposals require action by UCC prior to approval by the Provost. Curriculum proposals undergo review by several groups or individuals before final approval. Possible reviewers include the Library, Information Technology, Graduate Council, Online Education and Microcredential Council, Unit Head, College Curriculum Committee, Academic Dean, Graduate Dean, General Education Committee, University Curriculum Committee, and the Provost. The precise set of review steps through the online curriculum system is determined by the curricular action being proposed. In general, simple proposals require less review than more complex proposals. A complete list of curricular actions and their pathways can be found on the University Curriculum Committee page under Curriculum Development Information.

1. All new course proposals, program change proposals, and changes to existing courses except spelling, grammar, and punctuation changes must be submitted via the online curriculum development system. The online system is linked from the Faculty Governance Website: www.gvsu.edu/sail/.

2. The agenda for UCC meetings is posted weekly on the Faculty Governance website. All curricular review actions taken are available in the online curriculum system.

3. After a course change proposal arrives for review at UCC it will be handled in the following manner. If the course is a prerequisite for another college, the course change proposal will be reviewed by UCC. If it is not a prerequisite for a course in another college or required by another college, and at least 30 days have elapsed since the proposal was approved by the unit of origin, then the course change proposal will be automatically approved by UCC at its next regular meeting and forwarded to the Provost for approval. Until that approval is given, any faculty member can request the UCC to review a course change proposal.

4. Proposals that are approved by the UCC will be sent to the Provost for final approval. The Provost will notify the submitting unit if final approval is granted and will send the proposal to the Registrar for inclusion in the master course list. A proposal is not approved until this last step is taken.

5. If a proposal is rejected, the submitting unit is responsible for resubmitting the proposal. Appeals of CCC decisions should be made to the appropriate dean. Appeals of the UCC decisions should be made to the Provost.

6. In extraordinary cases, a non-renewable, one year interim approval category exists.

Proposals should be submitted to the Chair of UCC. A decision will be made jointly by the Chair of the UCC and the Provost. These proposals must go through the normal curriculum review process for continued offering.

C. Honors Designation in Majors and Minors *(added Fall 2013)*

1. An Honors designation is intended to convey the fact that a program is distinguished from an existing program by its rigor, student engagement, or research, and may not be suitable for all students. Students in an Honors-designated program do not have to belong to the Honors Program or the Honors College. An Honors-designated program serves students within an academic program, whether or not those students are part of the Honors College or Honors Program.

2. Units complete a Program Change Request providing a rationale for creating the Honors-designation, how that designation would be implemented within the program (e.g., a track within a minor), and applicable admission and academic performance standards. The Program Change Request will then be sent to the Honors College for review using the standards already established by the Honors program. If supported, the Director of the Honors College will provide a letter of support to be attached to the Program Change Request after which the proposal will follow the normal curricular review process.

3. An honors track or emphasis in a major or minor must have between 6 and 12 credit hours, depending on how the courses are constituted. These credit hours can be constructed in a variety of ways as determined by the department and in consultation with the Honors College (e.g., one-credit-hour seminars linked to non-Honors- designated courses, such as capstones).

- Note: the 6-12 hours of Honors in the major cannot include Honors Foundations courses.

4. Courses must follow the parameters set forth in Meijer Honors College Guidelines for Honors Courses.

5. It is preferable that the Honors-designated courses have an internal connection with one another and/or explicitly build on other classes in the major or minor.

6. Honors-designated programs will be periodically reviewed by the Honors College at the normally scheduled time for program assessment. The program will submit a report to the Honors College with evidence that the program is meeting the original objectives agreed upon when then Honors designation was approved. If the program is found to be deficient, it will be put on a one-year probationary period, and will work collaboratively with the Honors College to address concerns and deficiencies. The Honors College will give full approval if the issues are successfully addressed. Otherwise, the Honors designation will be removed from the program.

D. Course Proposals

1. Units should be sensitive to the cost and space implications, as well as staffing needs of a course proposal. The Curriculum Resource Statement attached to course proposals should be given careful consideration and completed accurately. Proposals that require additional staff, equipment, space, supplies that have not been committed for by the appropriate administrative offices may be rejected.

2. Units should be sensitive to the impact that new courses, dropped courses, or course changes have on other courses and other programs. The Course Change Proposal and the New Course Proposal require that all units possibly affected by the proposal be notified before it is submitted to the CCC. The unit heads of the affected units should respond in writing, even if they see no problems with the proposal. The CCCs will judge overlap/duplication within a college. Although no rigid formula or guidelines can be set for this, CCCs are advised to take a conservative approach. If significant overlap is found between a proposed course and existing courses, the proposed course or course change should be rejected.

3. Uniform Course Numbering System *(Approved 4/14/06 by UAS)*

a. Refer to the Uniform Course Numbering Guidelines table.

b. Reserved Undergraduate Course Numbers:

For the four categories listed below, these numbers are reserved for exclusive use for the purposes designated. A unit may not use these numbers for any other courses. A unit may, if it has compelling reasons, choose to list one of these courses with a number other than one of the reserved numbers, or may use additional numbers for these courses (a two-semester internship, for example, would require another number besides 490).

i. The numbers 180, 280, 380 and 480 are reserved for use only as a special topics course.

ii. The numbers 399 and 499 are reserved for use only as independent study and research courses.

iii. The number 490 is reserved for use only as an internship or practicum course.

iv. The number 495 is reserved for use only as a Capstone course.

300- and 400-level courses should be justified by 100- and 200-level prerequisites or a course content/approach that clearly indicates it is not a beginning level course.

c. Reserved Graduate Course Numbers:

The following graduate-level course numbers listed below are reserved for the purposes indicated:

i. The numbers 680 and 780 are to be used for graduate special topics courses.

ii. The numbers 690 and 790 are to be used for graduate research preparation courses.

iii. The numbers 693 and 793 are to be used for graduate project courses.

iv. The numbers 695 and 795 are to be used for graduate thesis/dissertation courses.

v. The numbers 696 and 796 are to be used for graduate thesis/dissertation continuous enrollment courses

vi. The numbers 699 and 799 are to be used for graduate independent study courses.

4. Special Topics Course Policies

a. A special topics course is intended to allow a unit to offer a course on a topic that is not covered in a regular course in any program at GVSU.

b. A special topics course may be offered for various reasons. For example a new visiting faculty bringing new expertise to a unit, student interest in a topic increasing enough to temporarily offer a course on a topic, a unit wishing to pilot test a reconfiguration of an existing course, a unit wanting to judge the potential interest in a given topic before proposing a new course.

c. A unit may offer a given special topic a maximum of 3 times. If a unit wishes to schedule the topic for the third time, then it must create and submit a New Course Proposal in the online curriculum development system concurrent with the third offering.

5. Syllabus of Record

A syllabus of record must be attached to new course and course change proposals. A syllabus of record (SOR) is the official record of minimum course content – that is, content that must be present in every section of a course. In essence, it describes a department's vision of what should be taught, and (to a lesser extent) how it should be taught. Although all SOR must contain certain items of information (noted below), some of them will be more detailed than others, depending on the course. For example, if a course needs a high degree of flexibility in its various offerings, then the SOR might be somewhat vague. If another course needs to meet rigid accreditation standards, then the SOR might be extremely detailed. A detailed description of the requirements for an SOR can be found on UCC's website.

The SOR serves four audiences. (1) Faculty can use the SOR as a blueprint for designing course syllabi. Faculty are free to add to the content in the SOR, but the activities, objectives, and methods of evaluation in the SOR must be maintained. (2) Students can use the SOR to determine, before they register, the skills they can expect to achieve upon successful completion of a course. (3) The SOR provides a standard format that other schools can use to

determine transfer credit. (4) Faculty governance committees use the SOR when evaluating course-change and new course proposals.

6. Course Grades

The Academic Policies and Regulations section of the catalog describes various grade types available for a course. Unless otherwise noted below, all courses are graded with a letter grade A through F, and I (Incomplete). In addition, students may choose to permanently withdraw from a course (resulting in a W (Withdrawal) grade), or to audit a course (resulting in an AU (Audit) grade).

Units that want to assign the grade types Credit (CR), No Credit (NC), or Deferred (X) must seek approval through the curriculum review process.

The grades P (Pass), PD (Pass with Distinction), W (Withdrawal) and NC (No Credit) are the only grades that may be assigned as the final grade for a graduate thesis or dissertation.

The grade of R (Research) is the only grade that may be assigned each semester to a continuous enrollment course for a graduate thesis or dissertation (xxx-696, xxx-796).

TABLES

Uniform Course Numbering Guidelines

Category	Description
000-099	Credit in these courses does not apply to the minimum 120 credits required for the baccalaureate degree.
100-199	Introductory courses, generally without prerequisites, primarily for first year undergraduate students.

200-299	Courses primarily for second-year undergraduate students.
300-399	Courses primarily for third- and fourth-year undergraduate students.
400-499	Advanced courses primarily for fourth-year undergraduate students
500-599	Courses primarily for first-year graduate students or as prerequisites for 600- and 700-level courses
600-699	Courses primarily for students admissible to graduate programs.
700-799	Courses primarily for advanced graduate students in post-masters and doctoral programs.

UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

SG 2.02

Date of Last Update:
November 12, 2025

Approved By:

- University Academic Senate / Provost

Responsible Office:
Provost Office

POLICY STATEMENT

G. Undergraduate Certificate Program Criteria and Guidelines

1. Purpose: A certificate is awarded in recognition of completion of a well-defined program of coursework that falls within existing units at Grand Valley for a specified purpose that could not simply be achieved by obtaining a transcript. A certificate is not defined as a degree by the University; rather, it is a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student some record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. Furthermore, certificates are available to both degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking (i.e., certificate seeking) students. Therefore, they are available to a wider range of students than a traditional major.

2. Criteria:

a. Certificate programs may be either freestanding or as add-ons to existing degree programs.

b. The number of courses (credits) required for completion of a certificate program may vary from certificate to certificate.

c. A limited number of new courses may be added for certificate programs.

d. Minimum standards for academic progress should be identical to those of the parent program(s). Additional standards or requirements may be imposed.

e. The number of courses comprising the certificate program that must be completed at Grand Valley is set by the department providing the certificate program.

g. Courses accepted for transfer as part of the certificate program must be reviewed and approved by the department providing the certificate program.

h. Courses taken as part of a certificate program at another institution may be transferable and shall be evaluated on their own merits in keeping with standard procedures; however, certificates from other institutions are not transferable to Grand Valley.

i. Certificate courses may be applied toward requirements for completion of a major/emphasis or degree, as determined by the unit providing the certificate program.

3. Procedure:

a. Certificates are created using the New Certificate Proposal Form in the online curriculum system that is linked from the GVSU Faculty Governance website.

b. Certificate review follows the same curriculum review process as badges.

c. Changes to existing certificates should use the Program Change Request form.

GENERAL EDUCATION CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

SG 2.04

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January 07, 2019

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- University Academic Senate / Provost

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Provost Office

POLICY

Please visit the General Education Program website at http://www.gvsu.edu/gened/

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS OR UNITS

SG 2.05

Date of Last Update:

May 19, 2023

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- University Academic Senate / Provost

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POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

Proposals for the establishment of additional programs or units must be consistent with the University's Mission, Vision, and Values. Because the creation of any new program or unit can have significant administrative, academic, and financial implications, only those proposals which are compatible with the University's articulated Mission, Vision, and Values should be pursued.

2. Applicability of the Procedure for the Establishment of Additional Programs or Units

The criteria and procedures presented in this document govern the proposal, development, and approval of any new program or undergraduate/graduate unit (department or school within a College), program, major, minor, or degree to be established within the existing organizational structure of Grand Valley State University. Hereafter the collective reference to "program or unit" is understood to include all of the above items. The criteria and procedures presented in this document do not govern changes to the organizational structure for the University, including the proposal, development, and approval of new Colleges or Schools. Procedures for such changes in the fundamental organizational structure for the University are detailed in a separate governance procedure.

PROCEDURES

3. Governance Procedures for the Establishment of a New Program

Grand Valley State University is committed to establishing well-researched, innovative academic programs. The procedure for making proposals involves two stages: the Prospectus for a New Program, which introduces the concept for governance consideration, and New Program Proposal upon which approval and implementation will be based. Both the

Prospectus and New Program Proposal can be submitted via the online curriculum development system at any time during the academic year.

a. Prospectus

The Prospectus for a new program, major, minor, or degree may be initiated by a faculty member, faculty-planning group, or officer of the university. The Prospectus will clearly identify the proposers. Any proposal for a new program shall be developed and reviewed in accordance with the following guidelines. The proposers may withdraw a proposal at any time by notifying the New Program/New Unit Council (SG 1.03.B.13)

The Prospectus shall include the following (see online Prospectus form for full details)

i. a description of the program,

ii. the interdisciplinary impact and overlap,

iii. evidence of the desirability and feasibility of the program, and

iv. a detailed budget of resource needs.

These documents will be used to review the Prospectus and each is detailed in the online curriculum system.

The decision to proceed to the development of a detailed New Program Proposal for the proposed program will be based upon a review of the Prospectus by the New Program/New Academic Unit Council (SG 1.03.B.13). As part of its deliberations, the New Program/New Academic Unit Council will seek input from existing units that may be affected by the creation of the proposed new program. Council members make recommendations to the Provost. Their recommendation will be to “support the Prospectus as submitted,” to “support the Prospectus with requested modifications,” or to “not support the Prospectus.”

The Provost shall review the Prospectus and the recommendation of the New Program/New Academic Unit Council. The Provost may request additional information, approve the Council’s recommendation and initiate development of the New Program Proposal, or terminate the proposal. The decision of the Provost resulting from the Prospectus review shall be communicated to the writer(s) of the Prospectus, and to the New Program/New Academic Unit Council, and a detailed rationale will be sent to the Council. If the recommendation of support by the New Program/New Academic Unit Council is accepted by the Provost, the Provost will appoint a taskforce for the creation and submission of the New Program Proposal. The taskforce includes the unit head that will house the new program.

The approval processes are detailed in the online system here.

b. New Program Proposal

The New Program Proposal shall be developed by the writer(s) appointed by the Provost, in accordance with the Provost's charge for development. The writer(s) shall follow the online curriculum system.

c. Special Considerations

i. Establishment of Interdisciplinary Programs

The housing of new programs with an interdisciplinary focus and shared courses shall be made in consultation between the proposer, all affected Deans, and the Provost. The final decision rests with the Provost.

This approval shall occur before the submission of the Prospectus.

d. Governance Review Procedure

The review of the New Program Proposal shall be governed by the principles described with regard to the criteria at the Prospectus stage (SG 2.05.3.a), i.e., a description of the program; interdisciplinary impact and overlap; evidence of the desirability and feasibility of the program; and a detailed budget of resource needs. Each is detailed in the approval processes in the online curriculum system here.

4. Governance Procedures for the Establishment of a New Academic Unit

a. New Academic Unit Proposal

The proposal to establish a new academic unit may be introduced by a faculty-planning group or officer of the university. The proposal will clearly identify the proposers. The New Academic Unit Proposal shall include the following:

i. a description of the new academic unit,

ii. a strategic plan,

iii. a description of the function of the new unit,

iv. the desirability of the new unit, and

v. a detailed budget of resource needs.

Each of these elements is detailed in the approval processes in online curriculum system here. The New Academic Unit Proposal can be submitted via the online curricular system at any time during the academic year.

b. Governance Review Procedure of Proposal for New Academic Unit

The Proposal for the New Academic Unit shall be reviewed by the New Program/New Academic Unit Council (SG 1.03.B.13). As part of its deliberations, New Program/New Academic Unit Council will seek input from existing units that may be affected by the creation of the proposed new unit. Council members make recommendations to the Provost. Recommendation is either “support,” “support with requested modifications,” or “not support.”

The approval processes can be found here.

POLICY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REVISION OF CREDIT BY EXAM REQUIREMENTS

SG 2.10

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January 09, 2020

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- University Academic Senate / Provost

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POLICY

Every unit offering credit for exams (including but not limited to AP, CLEP, DANTES, and IB exams) should periodically review the current required scores to ensure that they are set at appropriate levels.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Individual units should identify the data required to determine appropriate levels. In other words, there is no prescriptive data set requirement since it is ultimately the responsibility of the originator or the change proposal to make the case for a change in a required score. Other units and offices may request that a particular unit review a current score or level, but only the unit responsible for a course may submit proposals for changes in exam scores required for credit in that course. If there is not appropriate unit to review the scores, the most closely associated College will perform this duty.

2. The units' review must include members of the office of the Registrar and Admissions in order that those offices may be informed and so that those offices may provide input as to how a particular score might have a larger impact across the university.

3. In order to suggest a change in a current score, or for recommended changes in the future, the following guidelines should be followed:

a. The proposal should include

i. Rationale for the proposed change.

ii. Data that provide a comparative analysis to similar credit for exam scores from peer and competitive institutions.

iii. Admissions, Registrar and Institutional Analysis data (or statements) that project the impact on enrollment and course offerings.

iv. An implementation plan.

v. Approval from the Dean of the college where the proposal originates.

b. The timeline for proposals should follow:

i. in September for a change two academic years later (e.g., September, 2016 for a change in August, 2018).

ii. Passed through the process outlined below by March one calendar year ahead (or else the start date is postponed a year) in order that appropriate planning for and advertising of the new required score or level can be enabled.

c. Allowances should be made for expedited review and change of scores upon request of the units. However, the proposal, as outlined above, is still required.

d. The process for changing a qualifying score proceeds as follows:

i. Unit proposal prepared with required elements, as above.

ii. To the Academic Affairs Committee for Oversight of Credit by Examination for information regarding potential impact of score change and for a recommendation. This committee includes:

- Assistant/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (that oversees advising)
- Vice President for Enrollment Development
- The chair of UCC (or designate)
- Director of General Education

iii. To the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

If the recommendation for change is approved, the Registrar, the Director of Admissions, the Student Academic Success Center, ECS and the Provost’s Cabinet are advised.

DEFINITIONS

An “appropriate level” should be considered a score that adequately positions the student for success in subsequent courses.