

Curriculum Handbook

5. The Course Outline of Record

Overview

This section defines and explains the components of credit courses. Topics include:

- The Purpose of the Course Outline of Record
- Course Discipline Assignment
- Required Components of the Credit Course Outline of Record
- Standards for the Major Components of the Course Outline of Record

I. The Purpose of the Course Outline of Record

The Course Outline of Record (COR) is the primary course-level curriculum document in our college. It provides the template for course syllabi, offers the students, community, and other educational institutions information about our courses and programs, and plays an integral role in program evaluation and accreditation review. It is also the primary vehicle for individual programs and departments to outline the scope, rigor and direction of their curriculum.

The Course Outline of Record:

- Facilitates articulation with four-year schools.
- Provides faculty with a template indicating the objectives, content, evaluation standards, methods of instruction, and assignment types required in all sections of a given course and is used to develop individual syllabi.
- Provides data for the review and revision of course and program sequence, rigor, and scope during Program Evaluation and Planning.
- Documents academic standards in the Accreditation Review process.
- Serves as an educational contract between the students and Napa Valley College.

The following selection from the State Academic Senate Curriculum Committee provides further explanation:

Overview

The course outline of record plays a critical educational role on campus. It is the primary vehicle for course planning. When a course is revised or updated, it is the course outline that records the changes. As such, it forms the basis for a contract among the student, instructor, and institution identifying the expectations which will serve as the basis of the student's grade and giving the fundamental required components of the course which the student is guaranteed to receive from the instructor and institution. More than just specifying the required components of the course, the outline of record states the content and level of rigor for which students—across all sections of the course—will be held accountable. Courses are designed to provide a coherent body of knowledge to prepare students in a particular subject. The prerequisites students need to advance successfully through a series of such courses are based on information in the outline of record.

Function of the Course Outline of Record

As various instructors, both full- and part-time, teach our courses it is by reviewing the course outline that they may clearly identify the standards and content of the course they are to teach. In addition, the course outline plays a critical role in the on-going process of program review by which a college seeks to keep its curriculum relevant and to allocate its resources sufficiently to maintain its programs. When new programs are designed, it is through the selection of courses and construction of new course outlines that the program design is evaluated for its ability to meet the newly identified needs of students.

Certainly, the course outline should reflect the individual styles of the faculty originator and the college, and this paper is not intended to impose on the academic freedom of instructors to express that individuality. That said, it must be recognized that the purpose of the course outline goes beyond expressing the content of the course and the way it is taught. It is the document that is reviewed to meet accreditation requirements, intersegmental standards, and articulation needs. This broader audience outside the individual campus calls for expanded writing styles to meet the expectations of those groups. Experience has shown that certain methods of presentation are more effective than others in conveying the components of the course to meet those expectations. This paper represents the collective wisdom of the faculty of the California Community Colleges in good practices of writing course outlines.

Differences between Course Outlines of Record and Syllabi

The course outline of record should not

- b. Interdisciplinary Example: Both PSYC 123 and SOCI 123 ~ Social Psychology list the following in Section A2 of their CORs: “Interdisciplinary: Psychology and Sociology.” This requires faculty to meet minimum qualifications for both Psyc and Soci as described on the BOG Disciplines List under Interdisciplinary Studies.

III. Course Discipline Assignment

Each course reviewed and recommended for approval by the curriculum committee must be assigned to the appropriate discipline/s from the Board of Governors (BOG) Disciplines List, indicating that the minimum qualifications for service on the list provide appropriate academic or vocational training to teach the content of a particular course. This information is recorded in Section A2 on the Napa Valley College COR. While Title 5 does not specify that course disciplines be listed on the Course Outline of Record, this is the logical repository for discipline data as it allows review and approval of this assignment through the regular curriculum process and provides easy access to this information. The process of placing courses within disciplines is a local Academic Senate responsibility spelled out in Title 5 §53200.

Courses may be assigned to disciplines as follows:

- x Single Discipline
- x Cross-listed (Multiple Disciplines): Course content is common to all listed disciplines.
- x Interdisciplinary: Course content requires preparation in two or more of the listed disciplines.

Courses assigned to more than one discipline or assigned as Interdisciplinary may be considered for double-coding as previously described. Double-coding cross-listed courses is not required. The Curriculum Committee will consider the professional judgment of the originating faculty author on this matter.

The following text, taken from the “COR: Curriculum Reference Guide” published by the ASCCC in 2008, clarifies the process and, further, recommends that discipline assignment be a stated duty of the curriculum committee as it is functionally related to other CC decisions.

(1) The district must identify the courses which are to be repeatable, and designate such courses in its catalog.

(2) The district must determine and certify that each identified course is one in which either:

(A) the course content differs each time it is offered; or

(B) the course is an activity course where the student meets course objectives by repeating a similar primary educational activity and the student gains an expanded educational experience each time the course is repeated for one of the following reasons:

(i) Skills or proficiencies are enhanced by supervised repetition and practice within class periods; or

(ii) Active participatory experience in individual study or group assignments is the basic means by which learning objectives are obtained.

(3) Activity courses which may qualify as repeatable courses meeting the requirements of paragraph (2)(B) of this subdivision include, but are not limited to the following:

(A) Physical education courses; or

(B) Visual or performing arts courses in music, fine arts, theater or dance.

(4) foreign language courses, ESL courses and nondegree-applicable basic skills courses are not considered "activity courses" for purposes of paragraph (2)(B) of this subdivision).

(5) The district must develop and implement a mechanism for the proper monitoring of such repetition.

(6) Students may repeat a course pursuant to this subdivision for not more than three semesters or five quarters. For purposes of this subdivision, semesters or quarters include summer or intersessions.

(7)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, where a college establishes several levels of courses which consist of similar educational activities, the repetition limitation in paragraph (6) of this subdivision applies to all levels of courses that involve a similar primary educational activity regardless of whether the repetitions reflect

multiple enrollments in a single course or in multiple courses involving the same primary activity.

(B) Visual or performing arts courses in music, fine arts, theater or dance which are part

Title 5 §55003(b) & (e) require requisites be based upon “data collected using sound research practices” for the skills of communication and computation when they are being required outside of those respective programs. This requirement does not affect the general requisite “content review” requirement for those programs specializing in communication and computation. An English course having a prerequisite of a lower level English course must validate this need through content review, but a business course requiring that same lower level English course is additionally required to base this need upon “data collected using sound research practices.”

Some common limitations on enrollment are: a requirement to pass a tryout prior to being enrolled in an athletic course or team, or physical requirement where the student’s safety would be compromised by an inability to meet specific physical capabilities. While the specific criteria of the limitation does not have to be in the course outline of record, such should be well defined and be as measurably objective as possible. So, a sight acuity limitation might include specific vision parameters and list any medical conditions that impose or exacerbate the limitation. If it is a tryout for athletics, the criteria should be very specific and realistic to the needs. So “be able to swim ten laps in a standard competition pool in under eight minutes” would be reasonable for a water polo tryout, but requiring this be done in less than one minute would be extreme.

Regulatory Requirements – Title 5

Prerequisites and Co-requisites §55002(a)2D

When the college and/or district curriculum committee determines, based on a review of the course outline of record, that a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student has knowledge or skills not taught in the course, then the course shall require prerequisites or co-requisites that are established, reviewed, and applied in accordance with the requirements of this article.

Title 5 provides the rules for requisites to be implemented and enforced in any credit courses, degree applicable or non-degree applicable, and specifically gives the determination for this need to the college curriculum committee. In integrating an outline, the objectives, content, learning materials, methods of instruction and evaluation should all reflect the need for the required entry skills. The relationship is one-way in that an objective may or may not have an entry requirement, but every entry requirement must be reflected by at least one of the objectives, content, learning materials, methods of instruction or methods of evaluation.

Basic Skills Requirements §55002(a)2E

If success in the course is dependent upon communication or computation skills, then the course shall require, consistent with the provisions of this article, as prerequisites or co-requisites eligibility for enrollment in associate degree credit courses in English and/or mathematics, respectively.

This standard mandates the requisites of communication and computation skills if the likelihood for success is dependent upon them. It sets the level at that which is required for eligibility into degree-applicable credit courses. This does not, however, eliminate the need for requisite validation as provided for in §55003 in the communication and computation areas.

D. Distance Education Status

er) or Distance Education (51% or over) status, must undergo

Title 5 § 55206:

If any portion of the instruction in a proposed or existing course or course section is designed to be provided through distance education in lieu of face-to-face interaction between instructor and student, the course shall be separately reviewed and approved according to the district's adopted course approval procedures.

66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901

ommodated the separate review regulation with the addition of
tance Education. This form contains all requisite elements
through distance education will meet the same academic and

- Have sufficient substance to drive decision about what students should learn.
- Are realistic and achievable within a reasonable time frame.
- Are verifiable/measurable using qualitative or quantitative methods.

3. Course Objectives

- Outlines the main topics and subtopics commonly included in a course, with enough detail to allow for consistency of instruction whenever new faculty are assigned to this course.
- Should be presented in outline format with major topics and sub-headings.
- Provides a detailed-enough list of content to give direction to a new instructor but leaves some room for individual instructors to interpret the subject matter according to their area of expertise.
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