| ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION | POLICY NUMBER |
|---|---|
| Academic Affairs | ACAF 2.03 |
| **POLICY TITLE** | |
| Creation and Revision of Academic Courses | |
| SCOPE OF POLICY | DATE OF REVISION |
| USC System | February 24, 2025 |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER | ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE |
| Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost | Office of the Provost |

**PURPOSE**

The University of South Carolina is committed to the creation, review, and revision of academic courses as a fundamental part of the ongoing development of essential and up-to-date curriculum.

**DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**Academic Program Liaisons (APL)**: An Academic Program Liaison (APL) is designated for each college/school at the university, for each comprehensive university, and for the regional Palmetto College campuses and may be a faculty member, administrator, or professional staff member. The APLs serve as the main information resource on academic program actions and as the liaison to the Office of the Provost for their respective units. They also ensure that academic course and program proposals adhere to university policies. The list of current Academic Program Liaisons can be found at
https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/planning/academicprograms/program-actions/academic-program-liasons.php

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

- **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.

- **Distributed Learning Instruction**: Courses offered through distributed learning use technology to facilitate learning, whether on- or off-campus, in real-time or at student discretion. Distributed learning courses include online courses which use the internet, streaming video or web conferencing and blended or hybrid courses which use a combination of face-to-face and online instruction modes with over 50% of the instruction delivered online. 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 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs).

**Course Level**: Courses area divided into levels as defined below.

- **Lower Division Undergraduate Courses** (100/200 level courses, course number 100-299): Typically, lower division or introductory courses are taken during the freshman and sophomore year.

- **Upper Division Undergraduate Courses** (300/400 level courses, course number 300-499): Typically, upper division undergraduate courses are more advanced and are taken during the sophomore, junior and senior years.

- **Mixed/Advanced Undergraduate/Entry Level Graduate Courses** (500/600 level courses, course number 500-699): These courses may be taken by advanced undergraduates or graduate students unless prohibited by specific campus regulations. Graduate students are expected to perform at a higher level with additional graduate level requirements.

- **Graduate Courses** (700 level and above): These courses are normally restricted to graduate students. Undergraduate students may only enroll in these courses through the special permission processes managed by the Graduate School.

- **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.

**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 (7) years.

**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.

**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 the electronic curriculum processing system.

**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. When a course is created, it is identified as either a fixed credit course or a variable credit course:

- **Fixed Credit**: Course in which it may only be taken for the allotted number of credit hours posted (e.g., 3 credit hours).

- **Variable Credit**: Course which may be taken for a range of credit hours as indicated

(e.g., 1-6 credit hours).

- **Zero Credit Courses**: With appropriate justification, a course may be listed as a zero-credit course. Zero credit courses are typically used for select professional development, internship, and performance courses. 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.

**Cross-Listed Course**: A cross-listed course is a course that is offered under more than one course subject and is not appropriate for courses with the same course subject. Once a cross-listed course is approved, the courses are viewed as equivalent and identical and should ideally be able to be taken interchangeably within degree programs which require the course.

**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.

- On-campus: Courses offered on the geographic site of the home campus.

- Off-campus: Courses offered at locations geographically apart from the home campus. Internships and other experiential learning courses are not considered off-campus courses.

- Blended Location of Instruction: Courses may be considered "blended location" if more than one delivery location is used.

**Instructor of Record**: The instructor of record is the faculty/instructor/adjunct listed in Banner as the instructor for the course. (See also ACAF 1.19 Instructor of Record and ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record.)

**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. Learning outcomes for the Carolina Core courses must include the approved learning outcomes indicated on the Carolina Core website.

**Meets with Course**: Courses that are not linked through a formal cross-listing are occasionally scheduled to meet concurrently.

**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.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Academic courses form the foundation of the University of South Carolina's graduate, professional 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 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 respective *Academic Bulletin.*

A. Distributed Learning Instruction

1. Courses for which fifty percent or more of the learning activities are online or facilitated through technology require Distributed Learning (DL) approval.

2. Courses for which less than fifty percent of the learning activities are online or facilitated through technology do not require DL approval.

B. Cross-listed Courses

Cross-listed courses must have the exact same criteria as listed below:

1. Course Number (if possible; at minimum the course numbers for the cross-listed courses must be at the same level, i.e., lower division, upper division, mixed, graduate)

2. Title

3. Course Description

4. Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

5. Catalog Restrictions (e.g., by student level or program)

6. Carolina Core or GLD designations (if applicable)

7. Grade Mode (i.e., letter grade or pass/fail)

8. Schedule Type (e.g., lecture, lab, seminar)

   a. Cross-listed courses may have different course delivery and location.

C. Meets with Courses

1. Courses should not be scheduled to meet with those at a lower/higher level (e.g. 400/700 courses).

   a. Courses scheduled to meet concurrently should be at the same course level or adjacent course levels (e.g., lower and upper division undergraduate, upper division undergraduate and mixed, mixed and graduate).

   b. If the higher course level includes graduate credit, the course syllabi must satisfy the assignment and grading requirements of mixed level courses.

2. Mixed Level (Advanced Undergraduate/Entry) Level Graduate Courses

Course syllabi must specify how the requirements for the course are quantitatively and qualitatively different for undergraduate and graduate credit. Requirements for graduate credit must reflect additional depth and rigor relative to requirements for undergraduate credit. Failure to complete the differential requirements for graduate credit should result in at least one letter grade deficit for the course. Course learning outcomes must be appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate credit.

3. Course Syllabus

Instructors of all undergraduate and graduate courses shall provide students with a course syllabus no later than the first class meeting. In exceptional circumstances, the syllabus may be provided no later than the end of the first week of classes. All undergraduate and graduate courses must have a course syllabus that includes the following:

a. Course title (including course subject designator and number)

b. Credit hours

c. Instructor name, affiliated department/program/organization, degree(s) held (if any), and relevant contact information

d. Final Exam Day and time, as appropriate (from Office of the Registrar's website)

e. Class meeting days, times, and location, or equivalent

f. Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletin course description

g. Course learning outcomes. Distributed Learning courses must include a learning outcomes equivalency statement (e.g., "All learning outcomes in this Distributed Learning course are equivalent to face-to-face (F2F) version of this course.").

h. Required text(s) and/or suggested readings, where applicable. When included, must also include a fair use statement (e.g., "All readings/materials comply with copyright/fair use policies.").

i. Course requirements and grading

   i. Assignments, projects, quizzes, and/or exams with brief descriptions of expectations with points/weights assigned to each activity.
   ii. Mixed (Advanced Undergraduate/Entry Level Graduate) Courses (500/600-- level) must include separate grading schemes for undergraduate and graduate credit and one or more assignments for graduate credit that are clearly differentiated from undergraduate assignments.
   iii. 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. Grading scheme must adhere to the policies published in the *Academic Bulletin.*

j.  Topical outline of content to be covered, including 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 above.

k.  For Distributed Learning Courses, the syllabus is expected to articulate a schedule for course topics and activities that demonstrates students will be expected to expend total time and effort consistent with course credit hours as defined above. The Committee on Instructional Development shall maintain and administer guidelines for such courses.

l.  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/](www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/)). Sample syllabi statements  may be found on the Center for Teaching Excellence website: [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_te mpla](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_templa) [tes/syllabus_statement_examples/index.php](tes/syllabus_statement_examples/index.php)

m.  Course attendance policy consistent with the expectations stated in the respective Academic Bulletin.

n.  Statement regarding disability services. Additional information may be found at the Student Disability Resource Center website: [www.sa.sc.edu/sds/](www.sa.sc.edu/sds/)  and in policy [STAF 6.02 Support Services and Accommodations for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities](STAF). Sample syllabi statements may be found on the Center for Teaching Excellence website: [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_templ a](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_templa) [tes/syllabus_statement_examples/index.php.](tes/syllabus_statement_examples/index.php.)

o.  Statement regarding mental health resources for students.   Additional information can be found on the Student Health Services website [https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/mental-health/get-help.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/mental-health/get-help.php). Sample syllabi statements may be found on the Center for Teaching Excellence website [https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_templates/syllab us_sta](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/syllabus_templates/syllabus_sta) [tement_examples/index.php](tement_examples/index.php).

D.  Learning Management System

Course syllabi and grades must be posted to the university's official learning management system.

**PROCEDURES**

A.  Faculty Oversight

The faculty of the university has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum at the institution where they serve. Faculty governance bodies at each institution 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.  Institution and Unit Oversight

The deans of the colleges and schools at the Columbia campus, the campus deans at the regional Palmetto College campuses, and the chief academic affairs officers at the comprehensive universities are responsible for implementing this policy and maintaining unit- and institution-level compliance with CHE and SACSCOC 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.  Faculty Governance

1.  Initiation of Course Actions and Unit Approval

    a.  Course actions will begin in a department or unit of a campus, college or school. On the Columbia campus, the proponent of a course action should consult the unit Academic Program Liaison (APL) early in this process.

    b.  If a course action has the potential to impact the curriculum offering of other units or campuses, then the proponent is responsible for procuring a letter of acknowledgement indicating the unit or campus's support of or dissent to the proposal from such units or campuses; units and campuses must supply this letter when requested. Letters of acknowledgement may also be procured or submitted independent from the proponent.

    c.  Proposals for course actions shall be approved and so documented by the appropriate unit-level curriculum committees.

    d.  The proponent of the course action shall submit the proposal in the electronic curriculum approval system after the above approvals have been obtained.

    Courses may be cross-listed only with other courses at the same level (see policy section B). Course actions involving cross-listed courses shall be submitted per instructions provided at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/planning/academicprograms/

2.  Procedures for the Columbia Campus

    a.  The course action proposal shall be submitted in the electronic curriculum approval system. Instructions for proposal development for new courses and course revisions

can be found at
https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/planning/academicprograms/cours
es/.

b. If course actions impact the curriculum offerings at the regional Palmetto College campuses, the Palmetto College Office will review the proposed action.

c. Submitted proposals for course actions shall be approved by the unit head (chair, director, dean, or other defined unit head).

d. Proposals for course actions shall then be approved by the college/school representative.

e. If course actions impact the curriculum of P-12 educator preparation programs, the Dean of the College of Education must approve the action.

d. The Office of the Provost completes a preliminary review of all course proposals to evaluate any administrative or budgetary implications of the proposal.

e. Course actions for Carolina Core courses must be approved by the Carolina Core Approval Committee.

f. Course actions for undergraduate courses (courses numbered 499 and below) shall be submitted to the Committee on Curricula and Courses of the Faculty Senate for review and approval. Upon approval by the Committee on Curricula and Courses, this committee shall submit the proposal to the Faculty Senate for campus faculty approval.

g. Course actions for mixed undergraduate/graduate courses (courses numbered 500-699) shall be submitted to the Committee on Curricula 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.

h. 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.

i. Course actions for courses offered exclusively as part of professional degree (i.e., J.D., M.D., or Pharm.D.) shall be approved by the faculty of the professional college/school.

j. 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 Office of the Registrar for bulletin entry. Units are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the approved action. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for updating published Carolina Core requirements.

3.  Procedures for Comprehensive Universities

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

    a.  Course actions shall be initiated in accordance with procedure section C.1.

    b.  Course actions for undergraduate and graduate courses must then be reviewed and approved by the appropriate faculty governance body.

    c.  If course actions impact the curriculum offerings at the regional Palmetto College campuses, the comprehensive university Office of the Registrar must notify the Palmetto College Office.

    d.  Once the appropriate faculty governance structure has given their approval, the campus shall submit the approved course action to the University Office of the Registrar for bulletin entry. Units are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the approved action.

4.  Procedures for Regional Palmetto College Campuses

    a.  New or revised Palmetto College Campus (PCAM) courses must first be approved by the appropriate campus faculty.

    b.  Course actions must then be reviewed and approved by the regional Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate (PCCFS).

    c.  If course actions impact the curriculum offerings at Columbia campus or comprehensive universities, the Office of Academic Program Planning and Decision Support and Office of System Affairs will be notified.

    d.  Once the PCCFS has given its approval, the PCCFS designee shall submit the approved course action in the electronic curriculum approval system used by Columbia for bulletin entry. Units are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the approved action.

5.  University Bulletin

    ACAF 3.50 Academic Bulletins and Planning Calendar 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.

D.  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 Office of the Registrar's 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. At 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).

E.  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 the university and an outside agency or a university academic unit and a university 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.

        See 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 university

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 https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/education/partnerships_outreach/edoutreach/index.p hp.

F.  Special Topics Courses

Special Topics course numbers are established by the procedures in Section C, 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.

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.

G.  Independent Study Courses

Independent Study courses are initially established by the procedures in procedure section c 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.

H.  Internships and Experiential Learning Courses

Internships and experiential learning courses are initially established by the procedures in procedure section c, 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 assessment of student learning.

I.  Professional Development Courses

Professional development courses are initially established by the procedures in procedure section

C, 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.

J.  Additional Procedures for Columbia Campus and regional Palmetto College Campuses

The instructor of record is the individual designated by the academic unit as responsible for the course. The instructor of record is the primary instructor on the class section record. (See ACAF 1.19 Instructor of Record).

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 campus or the comprehensive university department or college/school.

Instructors must have the required credentials and meet the SACSCOC criteria for teaching at the appropriate level as described in ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructor Record. 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.

**RELATED POLICIES**
ACAF 1.19 Instructor of Record)
ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructor Record
ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs
ACAF 2.04 Dual Enrollment Courses
ACAF 3.50 Academic Bulletins and Planning Calendar
BTRU 1.04 Authority to Sign Contracts
STAF 6.02 Support Services and Accommodations for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities

**HISTORY OF REVISIONS**

| DATE OF REVISION | REASON FOR REVISION |
| --- | --- |
| August 14, 2009 | New policy approval |
| September 2, 2011 | Policy updated to specify the requirement for periodic review of contractual agreements and to describe factors to be considered in their evaluation |

| February 23, 2017 | 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. |
|---|---|
| July 05, 2019 | Policy updated to include definitions and to clarify workflow with the course approval systems. |
| February 7, 2020 | Policy updated to add link to guidance for proposal development and to update approval process for special topic courses. |
| July 30, 2020 | Policy updated to reflect revised definition and guidance for distributed learning. |
| June 13, 2023 | Policy updated to reflect revised procedures resulting from the implementation of a new version of the electronic curriculum processing system (APPS) as well as recent faculty manual changes (e.g., Instructional Development Committee no longer reviews DL courses). |
| February 24, 2025 | Policy updated reviewed and updated to reflect current practices. |