**Curriculum Committee Policy**

**CONTENT REVIEW PROCESS for PREREQUISITES**

**Introduction:**

The purpose of content review is to clarify the skills and concepts developed in a course, to identify possible gaps in skill development between a course and its prerequisite, and to assure smooth transition between the two courses.

**Goal:** to establish entrance criteria for a course needing a prerequisite by comparing the exit criteria of the prerequisite course with entrance-level skills in the target course.

A course prerequisite represents a professional judgment by the institution's faculty that a student's ability to succeed in a particular course is dependent on possessing certain abilities, skills, and/or knowledge prior to taking the course. In determining course objectives, various assumptions are made about the entering students' abilities, skills, and knowledge. The classification of these assumptions and the review of a prerequisite require faculty judgment and scrutiny.

**Procedure**

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| **STEP 1:** | **Define entrance expectations in the target course and exit skills obtained in the prerequisite course.** |
|  | A. Determination of need for prerequisite: Instructors of target course determine success rates of students who have completed the proposed prerequisite vs. those who have not.  B. Once the need for a prerequisite has been established, each instructor who teaches the target course reviews the course outline, syllabus, reading assignments, tests, and any other course materials used. |
|  | C. Each instructor compiles a list of entrance skills.  For a **pre- or co-requisite**, the entrance skills are those without which, in the professional judgment of the instructor, the student is ***highly unlikely to succeed*** in the course.  For an **advisory on recommended preparation** (rather than a pre-co-requisite), the entrance skills are those which, in the professional judgment of the instructor, will enrich or deepen the student's knowledge obtained from the course, but without which the student ***may still succeed in the course.*** |
|  | D. The instructors teaching the course resolve any differences and compile a final list of skills by consensus. |

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| **STEP 2:** | **Identify means of obtaining abilities, skills and knowledge.** |
|  | Once entrance expectations are clarified, the faculty determines how the necessary abilities, skills, and knowledge can be obtained or assessed. Courses in the college's curriculum or assessment processes that provide the exit skills needed for the target course are identified. For courses in the curriculum, these exit skills are listed in the course outcomes and/or objectives sections of the course outline of record. |

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| **STEP 3:** | **Compare the exit skills for the prerequisite course and the entrance skills for the target course.** |
|  | A. To compare the exit skills of the prerequisite course with the entrance skills of the outcome course, a matrix might be formed with entrance skills across the top and exit skills down the side. At the points where the two match, a notation can be made in the matrix. The faculty should then examine the matrix to determine if the entrance skills are met by the prerequisite course. Are the exit skills of the prerequisite course much lower, about the same, or much greater than the entrance skills of the target course? |
|  | B. If the entrance skills of the target course are very similar or the same as the exit skills for the prerequisite course, then the choice is a good one. If the prerequisite course’s exit skills are greater or more diverse than the entrance skills of the target course, the faculty should carefully consider whether requiring the course as a prerequisite is justified. |
|  | C. If the exit skills do not clearly match the needs listed by the faculty of the target course, a discussion between the groups of instructors may be helpful. It may be that differing perceptions about the curriculum can be resolved or gaps which have been identified in the student’s preparation can be corrected by modifying the curriculum of either the prerequisite course or the target course. |
|  | D. Upon completion of the content review by the discipline faculty, the revised course outline of record containing the prerequisite skills section and attached matrix (or other tool documenting the content review) is submitted to the Curriculum Committee to facilitate their review of the process and approval of the recommended prerequisite. |

**SAMPLE PREREQUISITE SKILLS MATRIX**

**Entrance Skills**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. |
|  | 1. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Exit Skills** | 4. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 5. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 6. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 7. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 8. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 9. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 10. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Where the skills intersect, note whether the skills are helpful, necessary or critical to determine the level of need.