

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CURRICULAR AFFAIRS

400-Level General Education Courses

(Informational)

Introduction and Rationale

The Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs (SCCA) has observed a rise in the number of *course change* and *course add* proposals requesting that a 400-level course be certified as meeting one or more General Education requirements in the undergraduate curricula. The rise in such requests was considered remarkable by the Committee in view of existing flexibilities within the Senate's curricular policy framework for how students could satisfy the spirit of General Education requirements. Given that 400-level courses have a variety of audiences, including undergraduate and post-graduate students, the Committee resolved to provide the University community with additional guidance relating to the appropriateness of 400-level courses to be certified towards meeting General Education requirements.

Guidance Statement from the Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs

The SCCA has agreed to add the following guidance statement to the *Guide to Curricular Procedures*:

University Faculty Senate Policy 171-00 on course numbering underscores the role of 400-level courses in providing advanced undergraduate students and post-graduate students with a deeper, more specialized understanding of their fields. 400-level courses are characterized by “an increased depth, by a more mature approach, and by a greater degree of independent effort” compared to lower-level courses (University Faculty Senate Policy 171-00). Given these expectations, 400-level courses generally have prerequisites that ensure students are adequately prepared for the rigorous academic challenges such courses present.

In contrast, the University's General Education requirements are designed to expose students to “the breadth of knowledge involving the major intellectual and aesthetic skills and achievements of humanity” (see University Faculty Senate Policy 140-00). This breadth of learning is typically achieved through lower-level courses (001-399), which ordinarily should be accessible to all students regardless of their undergraduate major(s). Therefore, while 400-level courses might occasionally seek Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs approval to receive one or more General Education designations, there is a presumption against the Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs granting such designations absent a unique circumstance.

To address individual students for whom a more advanced course is appropriate to their unique circumstances, the University Faculty Senate's General Education requirements already provide the flexibility for students to substitute a 200- to 499-level course in an area of General Education for a course found on the approved General Education course list; see University Faculty Senate Policies 142-00 (for baccalaureate degrees) and 160-20 (for associate degrees).

This addition to the *Guide to Curricular Procedures* will be made effective on 1 July 2025. This informational report from the Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs is laid before the University Faculty Senate for the awareness of the broader University community.

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