

UMass Amherst Course Enrollment Management Guidelines

UMass Amherst strives to provide a rich curriculum for its students at all levels, which entails a mix of courses for undergraduates ranging from large lecture courses to small seminars, and for graduate students from required courses to specialized topical seminars of importance for advanced training. There are also other more intimate instructional settings, such as art and music studio classes, as well as research mentoring. We recognize our dual responsibility to mount this robust curriculum in all of its variety and to pay attention to the prudent deployment of faculty teaching time. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the value of face-to-face education in a research-rich environment is fully realized by our students, particularly as they progress to specialized classes in their chosen concentrations. We must avoid unduly large upper division and graduate classes which compromise extended interaction between professor and student. We must also ensure that undergraduate and graduate students are able to complete the courses we require of them in a timely fashion. Hence a “first, do no harm,” principle must be our touchstone in applying these guidelines.

As already acknowledged, at a university with broad disciplinary diversity such as ours, one-size does not fit all. Based on national norms and our own past practices, the following guidelines are meant to be the benchmark around which discussions of when deviation (either unintended or intended) may occur.

I. Minimum Enrollment Guidelines

1. Normally, and unless specifically exempted (per below), courses may be subject to cancellation if enrollment is below:
 - 12 for undergraduate courses (lower and upper division 100-400 level)
 - 6 for graduate courses (described as 500 level and above)
2. These guidelines are applicable to all regularly scheduled, on-load, non-CPE courses of at least three credits that have not been exempted as described below.
3. Exemptions to the minimum enrollment guidelines can be requested by the department Head/Chair with approval by the Dean of the School/College. A one-time exemption may be granted if remedial action is being undertaken. A “continuing” exemption (subject to review every five years) may be granted for degree requirements and special pedagogical reasons.
4. The Office of Institutional Research will provide Deans and Heads/Chairs with reports on current and past enrollment in courses subject to these guidelines. The Dean will work with the Head/Chair (who will work with the department curriculum committee or graduate studies committee) to develop a management plan for courses that chronically fall below the guideline minima.
 - The management plan may include revision of the curriculum, offering courses less frequently, and other methods appropriate to the department and School/College.
 - Management plans must conform to the workload provisions of the UMass-MSP Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

II. Timing and Process

1. The monitoring of course enrollments by department Heads/Chairs and the relevant Dean’s office can begin immediately after student course enrollment takes place, keeping in mind

course enrollment time periods for new students (first-year and transfer) and graduate students during the summer and winter months.

2. The instructor of record should be informed about the cancellation no later than 14 calendar days before the start of the semester.
3. The department should notify the Registrar's Office of the course cancellation, notify students enrolled in the course, and assist them in finding an alternative course to take.
4. If a course is cancelled, the department Head/Chair will consult with the faculty member/instructor of record about their teaching schedule and course assignments. Arrangements will be made to fulfill the faculty member's workload obligations under the CBA.