

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL
concerning a
**POLICY ON CONTINUATION REQUIREMENTS
IN THE MAJOR
FOR DESIGNATED PROGRAMS**

Presented at the
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Policy on Continuation Requirements in the Major for Designated Programs

Background

The campus's general policy is to provide access to undergraduate majors consistent with student demand and institutional priorities. This policy is intended to ensure that matriculating undergraduates in good academic standing will have the widest practicable choice in selecting a course of study and earning a degree.

At the same time, it is recognized that student choices reflect a concomitant obligation to complete degree requirements in a timely manner, including the obligation to complete prerequisite and foundational courses consistent with the curricular plan for the major.

Normally, monitoring timely progress and alignment with curricular requirements is left to the departmental advising process. However, in certain circumstances, a pattern may develop in which students defer or struggle with work appropriately mastered early in the curriculum, and as a result reach the upper division without a reasonable likelihood of success in earning a degree in that major. In such cases it may be in the interests of both students and the program to establish a formal process to determine at an earlier point whether a student should continue in the major or transfer to another degree program.

General Provisions

The primary basis for consideration of a continuation requirement is clear evidence that a substantial proportion of majors are not making timely progress in meeting degree requirements because of a failure to meet necessary standards in prerequisite or foundational coursework, and that this creates an undue burden for the program and other students. This requires the program to demonstrate 1) that course grades or other standards are directly tied to successful completion of upper-division requirements; 2) that significant numbers of students are reaching the upper division unprepared to complete degree requirements in a timely manner; and 3) that this situation imposes an unreasonable resource burden on the program.

This policy is not intended to serve as a general tool for managing enrollment in a major, nor should it disadvantage students who encounter problems with timely progress due to inadequate availability of courses. Any program seeking to establish a continuation requirement accepts the responsibility to provide adequate capacity in courses it offers related to that requirement, and to work closely with other departments to provide adequate capacity in courses offered by other units.

Establishment of continuation requirements reflects a response to a particular set of circumstances. They may be approved for up to three years, and automatically expire at the end of their approved term. Departments may petition to extend or modify continuation requirements through the same process used for initial approval.

Approval Process

1. A department seeking to establish a continuation requirement should prepare a proposal containing the following information:
 - a. The name of the major to which the requirement would apply.
 - b. The Degree requirements for the major.
 - c. The proposed standards by which to judge continuation, separately articulated for entering first-year students and for internal and external transfer students. Examples of standards:
 - Completion of a set of specified indicator courses with specified grades within a specified period.
 - Successful completion of a specific course or courses (e.g., Statistics, Calculus) by a specified time so as to be ready to successfully complete specified upper-division requirements.
 - Satisfactory progress in a specified sequence of related courses.
 - i. For first-year students entering in the major, the decision point for continuation may be no later than four semesters after entry. For internal or external transfer students, the proposal must provide for a continuation decision at the earliest reasonable time, normally by the end of the second semester in the major.
 - ii. Continuation standards may overlap with course prerequisites, but operate independently of course prerequisites.
 - d. The proposed term for the continuation requirement, not to exceed three years.
 - e. A rationale demonstrating how the proposed standard is tied to successful completion of the major. This might include such things as analyses of student performance or patterns of attrition and completion in the major.
 - f. An analysis of the number and proportion of students reaching the upper division unprepared for timely completion.
 - g. A rationale as to why the situation imposes an undue resource burden on the program. This might include such things as impact on course capacities or scheduling, analysis of course repeat patterns, or similar data.
2. The proposal must be endorsed by the Dean and the Provost, who will then forward it to the Faculty Senate for recommendation. The Registrar will maintain the official compilation of approved continuation requirements.

Implementation

1. Continuation requirements are integrally related to departmental advising, and departments have the responsibility for monitoring student progress.
2. Continuation requirements must be prominently described in all catalog entries, departmental handbooks and websites, and advising materials. Upon entry to the major, the department will provide each student a copy of any approved continuation requirements, and articulation of continuation requirements will be prominently featured in departmental orientation and advising.

3. **Departmental advising will include regular review of students' progress in continuation requirements. Every effort must be made to notify students of potential non-fulfillment, and to develop specific strategies to maintain good progress.**
4. **If a student fails to fulfill continuation requirements, the department must notify the student in writing of the specific failure(s) to fulfill and of the department's intended action. This decision must be reviewed and approved by the student's undergraduate Dean.**
5. **If the department intends to discontinue the student in a major, it must initiate a specific advising process to support the student's transition to a different major:**
 - a. **The department will contact the college-level advising office, which will assume transitional responsibility for the student.**
 - b. **The college-level advising office may enlist the assistance of Undergraduate Advising and Learning Communities (UALC) in supporting the student's transition to a new major. The student's major status may not be changed to "undeclared" without the approval of UALC.**

MOVED: 52-12 That the Faculty Senate approve the Policy on Continuation Requirements in the Major for Designated Programs, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 12-041.