

Curriculum – Advice for some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Where do I begin? Where can I get information?

Information about the procedures for proposing NEW and EXPERIMENTAL course proposals can be obtained at the following link - <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/arts/faculty-and-staff-forms/curric-forms.html>

Additionally, The Senate Curriculum Committee operates on the good faith principle that Departmental/Program Curricular Committees have vetted and reviewed the courses and forms being proposed and which are ultimately submitted. Effective communication and evaluation of curricular development and submissions at the Departmental/Program level helps create a wider, inclusive dialogue about curriculum offerings at the university.

How do I select a course number?

Consult with your department assistant. They have access to the master lists of course numbers that are available to use. Note that some course numbers, while they may seem available in the current calendar, may already be delegated to a course that is currently “inactive.” Numbers for such inactive courses cannot be used. Department assistants will be able to tell you which course numbers apply to “inactive” courses – and consequently cannot be used.

How do I write an effective calendar description?

For the calendar description, you may use a maximum of 100 words to communicate the content of your course. For a well-written description, the Senate Curriculum Committee recommends that you use active subjects when possible, choose the active present tense for your verbs, and avoid the use of the verb “will” (see examples below). Following these guidelines will result in a more effective calendar description.

* *Active present-tense verbs are action verbs. Try to avoid use of “to be” + “verb-ed”.*

Write this: “Students explore the idea of gender in this course.”

Avoid this: “The idea of gender is explored in this course.”

* *Active subjects are subjects capable of acting. Some examples of active subjects are: students, learners, course members, instructor. Examples of subjects that are not capable of acting include: course, texts, concepts.*

Write this: “Students examine and discuss the works of several authors in this course.”

Avoid this: “This course examines the works of several authors.”

* *Active present-tense verbs do not include the use of the verb “will” (which is future tense).*

Write this: “In this course, students investigate the impact of this concept on later thinkers.”

Avoid this: “In this course, students will investigate the impact of this concept on later thinkers.”

I'm proposing a course that has a fieldwork or off-campus component. What should I know?

The Senate Curriculum Committee evaluates curricular matters. Approval from that committee, however, does not automatically mean a course can operate. Any course that contains an off-campus component (this includes all fieldwork – broadly defined here, and inclusive of all off-campus activities or trips, even if to local, off-campus, destinations and for only one class) must clear Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations. Consult the Vice President (Human Resources, Audit & Sustainability) on behalf of the Administration of the University, who is responsible for the development, administration, communication, distribution and review of these procedures.

I'm proposing a course that requires ethics approval. What should I do?

As stated on the University of Winnipeg Ethics Webpage: "Any research, teaching or testing conducted using University facilities, or undertaken by individuals connected to the University involving animals, human subjects, radioisotopes, and biohazards must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate University Committee/Review Board." As such relate to curricular matters, ethics approval is not the jurisdiction of the Senate Curriculum Committee, but must be obtained, prior to any implementation of a course affected, from the University Committee/Review Board. Information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/research-ethics.html>

What should I include in the course outline/syllabus provided to the committee?

The committee places great emphasis on the curricular aspects of the course outline/syllabus. A detailed list of topics considered in the course is essential in this respect. Ideally, it is best to structure these on a week-by-week basis for how the class will operate. The relevant readings and other curricular components that comprise the various topics/subjects/activities are further required.

Evaluation criteria must also be provided, with a description about what is entailed with each. These descriptions are especially integral to evaluation components such as "class participation", "reflection exercises", and "experiential learning" criteria. Be detailed here as to what is expected with each of these aspects, so that the committee can understand the academic rigour and evaluation criteria of such components.

What about courses that are 3000/4000 cross-listed?

A number of courses are engaging with this format. A few things to note here: first, make sure that you detail in the course outline how the evaluation criteria differ between the two offerings. What will be more demanding about the 4000 level version of the course (e.g., longer assignments?, more assignments?, greater expectations?). These can be rather subjective, so it is essential to show the committee how you will make the distinction between these 3000 vs. the 4000 curricular components and their evaluation.

Second, in the case of 3000/4000 cross-listed courses you must add a line in the 100-word calendar description that informs the student of the distinction between the two levels. Typically, a sentence such as "Additional in-depth work is required to receive credit at the 4000-level" suffices.

Finally, make sure that your note in the “Restrictions” that a student may not receive credit for both the 3000 and 4000 versions of the course. There may be other restrictions as well (e.g., permission to register at the 4000-level).

How should I deal with consults to other departments?

Consults can sometimes be frustrating (e.g., take time, not sure where to send them, etc.). A suggestion to facilitate timely transmission and receipt of these consult forms is to relay these through departmental assistants. These individuals are often better-informed of who the individual chairs of the various department curricular committees are. Moreover, they can often better track materials to ensure that materials are returned back in the 10-day period advised at the top of the consult forms. Please be respectful of this 10-day deadline, and do not submit incomplete packages of materials to the Senate Curriculum Committee that do not include all consults.

In the case of consults that are returned to departments with comments requiring some type of follow-up (e.g., overlap concerns, suggestions and questions addressed by other departments, etc.), please consult with the affected department/program and address these matters **before** submitting the package of materials to the Senate Curriculum Committee. Often, communication between parties at this stage can find mutual ground for the concerns addressed. Explain in the rationale for the course what was done to resolve such concerns in the case of consults that propose changes, or address concerns. The more the Senate Curriculum Committee is informed of how such matters were addressed and resolved, mutually, at this earlier level, the less likely proposal will be tabled as the Committee seeks to understand matters between affected parties.