

Current Policy for State Core Courses

Effective catalog year 2015, all UF students fulfilling the General Education requirements at UF will be required to complete 15 of the 36 hours from approved state lists, five credits from each of the following five areas: Composition, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Science, Mathematics, and Physical/Biological Sciences. These courses cannot be “substituted” for other courses by advisers. The course numbers must be the same.

Currently, as we accept transfer coursework from non SCNS institutions (private and out of state schools), Transfer Evaluation will code these courses with the discipline from which it arrives, a discipline prefix and a course number of 0000 on the transcript, the number of credits, the grade, and the course title. This means that such coursework will NOT fall into the State Core requirement. For Example MAC0000 from another institution with the title “Calculus 1” will not fulfill State Core Math requirements, despite the fact that Calculus 1 is an approved State Core course if it has the number MAC2311. As the State Core has not yet begun, there are no provisions for petitions or methods of handling transfer coursework from non-SCNS institutions (via transient coursework, or for our out of state/private institution transfer students in lower or upper division status).

UF has existing the infrastructure for a transfer equivalency database. This database gives a UF course number to coursework from particular institutions that have been vetted by UF staff previously. While implemented for the entire university several years ago, currently only one college is updating it with coursework due to the amount of work required by academic departments to evaluate transfer courses.¹ The current mechanism involves sending syllabi, catalog descriptions, etc. for transfer coursework to relevant departments (i.e. the Math department evaluates ALL math courses and establishes an equivalency with Admissions). This work is only done for students that have been admitted to UF.

UF Online Opportunities

The implementation of UF Online in conjunction with the General Education State Core requirement presents the University with the unique opportunity to potentially admit more students with such coursework. According to Admissions, we received 2009 applications for admission by upper division out of state or private institution students for the 2014 academic year. Of those 354 were admitted, and 229 actually registered. But this figure is expected to grow as new UF Online programs attract additions students to UF.

Institutions that have robust online programs often offer prospective students the opportunity to see how their coursework would transfer into online programs *before* they apply to the program. This is done by having a robust database of time-sensitive course equivalencies for other institutions. Students can put in course they took elsewhere, name the institution, and the grades/credits they received, and websites will show how those courses would count at the institution should the student enroll.

¹ Arizona State University currently has a cadre in their Admissions office that is responsible for establishing equivalencies for lower division transfer coursework centrally, contacting departments when necessary to clear up discrepancies to facilitate their Online equivalency systems.

Proposed Options for Evaluating Courses in Light of Upcoming Changes

In the absence of guidance about how to handle transfer coursework for the State Core starting in the 2015 catalog year (this July), the following proposal is put forward for immediate implementation:

If students have non-SCNS coursework on their record that an adviser feels is equivalent to UF specific coursework that would fulfil the General Education State Core requirement based upon a review of the transfer course(s) syllabi and catalog description in comparison to the General Education learning outcomes, the adviser can contact the Director of Curriculum Monitoring and Analysis to allow the course to count in the State Core General Education area of the degree audit.

In the long term, if we are able to build a robust database of equivalencies from students that are admitted with transfer coursework, we can leverage that infrastructure to provide prospective student the ability to view how course would transfer. Rather than farming ALL of the work of establishing equivalencies to the departments, the following is proposed:

Advisers shall have the ability to evaluate course descriptions and syllabi for lower division transfer coursework from other institutions, and establish a UF equivalent course number based upon a review of UF syllabi, course descriptions, and learning outcomes. This would then be submitted into the UF central database of course equivalencies.

Upper division coursework would still be sent to the relevant academic departments for evaluation.

In cases where there is a difference of opinion about a UF equivalency for lower division coursework, such courses will be sent to the relevant academic department for a resolution.