

Senate Curricula & Courses Committee
Report to the University Senate
May 2, 2022 presentation - Approved November 28, 2022

By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the University Senate, II.C.1.c. Exemptions and Substitutions and II.C.2. General Education Curriculum

Background: The Senate C&C Committee presents these changes to the By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the University Senate as part of the proposed Common Curriculum program. A vote on these amendments will take place following discussion and vote on the upcoming implementation plan. These changes are being presented now and will serve as the required due notice.

II.C.1.c. Exemptions and Substitutions

Students who for any reason, desire to be excused from any requirements, or to substitute other courses for those prescribed, shall consult the dean of the school or college concerned. Such exemption or substitutions must be recommended by the dean of the school or college and approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

For transfer students (those admitted to the University with advanced standing from another institution of higher education), exemptions and substitutions in the Common Curriculum requirements for their prior academic work must be approved by the dean of the college or school to which the prospective student is seeking admission. These exemptions and substitutions should be made at the time of the student's enrollment at the University.

II.C.2 Common Curriculum

The Common Curriculum provides academic breadth with a set of intellectually rigorous and challenging courses that foster skills and attributes associated with leadership and global citizenship.

Every undergraduate student in a baccalaureate degree program in the University, on all campuses, must complete the Common Curriculum. The Common Curriculum comprises six Topics of Inquiry and five Competencies

The purpose of the Common Curriculum is to ensure that all University of Connecticut undergraduate students are experienced with different ways of knowing and many kinds of knowledge beyond career preparation, and that they enter society and their professions with a strong sense of moral, ethical, and social responsibility. It is vital to the accomplishment of the University's mission that a balance between professional and general education be established and maintained in which each is complementary to and compatible with the other. A leader and global citizen needs to be able to listen, speak, and cultivate compassion with those outside their own majors, disciplines, professions, communities, and cultures and to make connections between their own knowledge and perspectives and those of others.

a. *Topics of Inquiry*

Students must pass at least three credits of coursework in each of six Topics of Inquiry (TOI): TOI-1—Creativity: Design, Expression, Innovation; TOI-2—Cultural Dimensions of Human Experiences; TOI-3—Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice; TOI-4—Environmental Literacy; TOI-5—Individual Values and Social Institutions; and TOI-6—Science and Empirical Inquiry. At least one course must be passed in each Topic of Inquiry (some courses fulfill two). Students must also satisfy a Focus requirement, by either successfully completing three courses in a single Topic of Inquiry or all requirements of at least one Theme. Students may also take a set of courses that comprise a faculty-designed Theme spanning multiple disciplines. Themes are recommended but not required. Topic of Inquiry courses may be counted toward the major.

Including the Focus or Theme, students must pass at least 21 credits of TOI courses. The 21 credits of TOI courses must be from at least six different subject areas as designated by subject code (e.g., ANTH). Exceptions to this rule are subject heading designations that group interdisciplinary studies through cross listing, such as LLAS, AFRA, WGSS, AAAS, URBN, ENV5, EVST, or HRTS. No more than six credits with the INTD prefix may be elected by any student to meet the Common Curriculum requirements.

b. *Competencies*

The Common Curriculum includes competencies in quantitative skills, second language proficiency, and writing. Two additional competencies--information and digital media literacy and dialogue--are infused across the Common Curriculum within TOIs. Quantitative Literacy is established by completing two courses that are designated for this purpose as Q courses. One Q course must be a MATH or STAT course. Second Language Competency is established by passing either 1) the third-year high school level course in a language other than English or 2) the second semester course in the first-year sequence of college level study in a language other than English. Writing Competency is established by passing two courses that are designated for this purpose as W courses, one of which must be in the major field of study at the 2000-level or above. First-year writing courses are prerequisites for W courses.

c. *Courses*

All courses offered for Common Curriculum credit must be recommended for approval by the Common Curriculum Committee (CCC) (see II.C.2.d, *Oversight*).

Courses in the six Topics of Inquiry may have only Common Curriculum courses as prerequisites and corequisites, with the exception of (a) Honors courses for which Honors student status is a prerequisite, and (b) TOI-6 courses and TOI courses that are also Writing Competency courses which may have prerequisites and corequisites that are not Common Curriculum courses.

Any academic unit may offer courses for any Topic of Inquiry or Competency. Courses approved for the Common Curriculum are approved for Topics of Inquiry or Competencies in all schools and colleges.

A course may be approved to satisfy one or two Topics of Inquiry. Students may use a course that has multiple TOI designations to fulfill the TOI requirements for which the course has been approved, if the regulations listed in II.C.2.a. *Topics of Inquiry* are met. Courses at the 2000-level or above may combine Quantitative and Writing Competency designations. Courses with Quantitative and/or Writing Competency designations may also be approved for Topics of Inquiry.

No academic unit may set enrollment bars or priorities for its own students for any Common Curriculum course, with the following exceptions:

- An academic unit may reserve any percentage of seats for its own students in a 2000+-level or above W course that is not also approved for a TOI.
- An academic unit may reserve a maximum of 50% of capacity for its own students in any section of a 2000-level or above course.

Students seeking an additional degree or a double major must complete each degree's/major's Writing Competency coursework. If an individual course is approved for a competency in both degrees/majors, passing that course will meet that requirement for both degrees/majors.

All students entering the University of Connecticut or changing school or college within the University are expected to complete the Common Curriculum of the academic year in which they enter the University. Adjustments to coursework for the Second Language and Quantitative Competencies can be made by designees of the dean of the admitting school or college, as well as by the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) in consultation with relevant faculty. The CSD will submit a report of such substitutions by the end of the Spring semester each year.

Undergraduate students with bachelor's degrees from institutions that have been accredited by regional accreditation agencies (e.g., NECHE) are exempt from the Common Curriculum Requirements.

d. *Oversight*

The Common Curriculum Committee (CCC) is a subcommittee of, and reports its actions to, the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee. The CCC receives financial support for its activities from the Office of the Provost.

The CCC is charged with:

- proposing to the Senate goals and objectives of the Topics of Inquiry and Competencies;
- proposing policy regarding the University-wide Common Curriculum program;
- reviewing proposals for including, revising, deleting, and offering in intensive sessions of four weeks or less, courses that are in the Common Curriculum;
- reporting on enrollment in courses in the Common Curriculum and how the courses are staffed;

- monitoring courses in the Common Curriculum to ensure that they continue to meet curricular goals and objectives approved by the Senate, and recommending removal of courses from the Common Curriculum that no longer meet these criteria; and,
- reviewing the Common Curriculum to ensure that its goals and objectives are aligned with the academic plan of the University.

The CCC chair need not be a Senator. The chair serves one three-year term and may not be re-appointed for a consecutive term. Responsibilities of the chair in leadership of CCC include management of CCC meetings, coordination of all CCC functions, communication with the University community about the Common Curriculum, and recognizing and responding to the changing needs of the University with respect to the Common Curriculum. Because of the unusually demanding nature of this position, the chair will be given at least 50% release time and be provided with administrative support.

The membership of the CCC will be representative of schools and colleges. Appointment to the CCC will follow Senate Nominating Committee practice and will include consultation with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Voting members of the CCC will be faculty appointed by the Senate and an undergraduate representative. Non-voting members of the CCC will include the chair of the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee, directors or associate directors of the Quantitative and Writing Centers, directors or associate directors of the First-Year Writing Program, and one individual who represents the following five institutes: Africana Studies Institute, Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, El Instituto, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. When a director or associate director of these units is a CCC subcommittee chair and is faculty, they will retain voting rights in the CCC.

Voting member appointments to the CCC are for two years, except the student member who serves a one-year term. Any voting member who has served for two consecutive two-year terms may not be re-appointed for another consecutive term.

The CCC appoints members to Topic of Inquiry and Competency subcommittees. Subcommittees are chaired by voting members of the CCC and are representative of schools and colleges. Each subcommittee must review and recommend courses for inclusion, removal, and revision in their respective area.

CCC approvals of changes to the Common Curriculum are submitted to the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee and then to the Senate for final approval.

The Senate Budget Committee is charged with determining if sufficient resources are available to support the Common Curriculum.