

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 28, 2011

TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Advisors

FROM: Thomas Fleming, Chair, University-wide General Education Committee
Celeste Pardee, Curriculum Associate, Curricular Affairs

RE: General Education Tier One Course Designations

Since 1998 the General Education Tier One courses have shared identical course prefixes and numbers. Courses in the three Tier One study areas--Traditions & Cultures, Individuals & Societies, and Natural Sciences--have been identified as TRAD, INDV, and NATS, respectively. As a result, the prefix for each study area has been associated with multiple courses offered by different departments but distinguished only by a unique subtitle. The generic prefixes have confused incoming freshmen when they select their classes, continuing students when they wish to repeat a course for GRO, and incoming transfer students as they consider how transfer credits apply to Tier One requirements. The prefixes created a more serious problem in 2010 when the Schedule of Classes was created under the new UAccess system. Since the course prefix/number did not correspond to a unique course title, it was very difficult to locate individual Tier One course titles and descriptions in the Fall 2010 Schedule of Classes.

To address these issues, the University-wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) has changed the course prefixes and numbers of all Tier One courses so that each course has a unique course prefix/number. The change is effective now for Fall 2011 Priority Registration.

The new course prefix identifies the offering department. Three numbers--150, 160, and 170--designate the Tier One study areas so students will know how a course applies toward a study area requirement. The number "150" is used for INDV courses, "160" for TRAD courses, and "170" for NATS courses. The course number is followed by a letter that denotes the study area category of the course (formerly 101, 102, 103, or 104). Finally, a single digit number follows the letter to account for multiple courses offered by a department in a single study area category. For the vast majority of Tier One courses, the last digit is "1." See the conversion from old to new Tier One course designations on the UWGEC Web site, <http://gened.oia.arizona.edu/content/tier-one-numbering-system>.

The current course titles and descriptions also display the old and new numbers, <http://gened.oia.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Renumbered%20Tier%20One%203.10.11.pdf>. The Additional Search - Course Attribute function in UAccess Student enables students to pull a list of course offerings within each study area category (e.g., NATS 101 or Tier 1-Natural Sciences).

Note that the Tier One structure of three study areas--Traditions & Cultures, Individuals & Societies, and Natural Sciences--has not changed. The Tier One requirements are unchanged--students must complete two courses from each study area in different categories for a total of six courses. The policy on double use of Tier One courses is the same, "courses used to fulfill the . . . Tier One Requirements may not apply to a major or minor" (see http://catalog.arizona.edu/2010-11/policies/double_use.htm).

The new Tier One course prefixes/numbers have obvious benefits for students and departments, but the implementation in UAccess has raised new issues:

1. Duplicate courses-the same course may be offered by two departments. The duplicate courses have unique prefixes and titles but identical numbers and content. Those courses with identical or very similar content within the same study area category are identified as "equivalent" in the course descriptions so that students won't mistakenly retake the same course. UWGEC will periodically examine the course syllabi to determine whether existing courses have substantially different content; if the courses are deemed unique, they will no longer be coded as equivalents/duplicates.

2. The policy of earning credit for one course per study area category. Now that unique courses are clearly identified, it is possible for a second course taken in a study area category (e.g., two TRAD 101 courses with different titles) to apply toward the student's degree as elective credit. The policy in effect since 1998 was that the second completed TRAD 101 course, regardless of content, was treated as a "repeat" without credit, unless the student's advisor determined it was acceptable elective credit and made an exception. In most instances, advisors made this exception. Pending a review of this policy, the second course taken in a study area category will be designated as elective credit on the student's Advisement Report. This policy issue was recently forwarded by UWGEC to the Undergraduate Council, which will consider if/how multiple courses taken in one study area category should apply toward the student's degree.

Questions or comments about the new Tier One course prefixes/numbers may be addressed to Tom Fleming, UWGEC Chair, taf@as.arizona.edu. Policy questions or comments may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curriculum Associate, cpardee@u.arizona.edu.