

Model District Policy

(for the rest of us)

Prepared by the Curriculum Committee, and the PCA Committee
Riverside Community College District

This is a user-friendly supplement to the *Model District Policy on Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Advisories*, and is intended to assist anyone interested in the curriculum process, and how to establish and implement restrictions on enrollment. It is essential that when prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories are implemented, that proper steps be taken protect student, faculty, and district interests. We must keep in mind that our goal is student success. If establishing and enforcing prerequisites, corequisites and advisories will improve student success, and this can be shown, then it is the responsibility of the faculty to adopt these standards.

This supplement is written in terms that are somewhat understandable, so that the reader can get the basic idea of what each portion of policy is trying to say. This set of notes is designed to accompany the presentation presented to you by the prerequisite subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. For further information, please refer to the *Model District Policy on Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Advisories on Recommended Preparation*.

I. College Policies and Procedures

I.A. Information in the Catalog and Schedule of Classes:

All information must be made available to the students, and clearly stated. This information is generally found in the school catalog, course schedules, Guidance 45, and student orientation.

1. Definitions of prerequisites, and corequisites. These terms must be clearly defined and explained.
2. Procedures for how students can challenge any P/C/A. What are the minimum steps that students can take?

I.B. The Challenge Process:

The District must establish formal challenge procedures, and make sure that all students have the information available to them that allows them the opportunity to challenge any prerequisite, corequisites, or advisory. Under the Section 55201 (e) of Title 5, it is the legal right for any student to make a challenge at any time.

I.B.1. Reservation of space for a student who is challenging a prerequisites or corequisites. The District shall reserve a space (if available) for a student who is making a formal challenge.

Here are the steps involved in the challenge process:

1. The District has five (5) days to resolve the student challenge.
2. If the challenge is upheld, or five (5) days have passed since the challenge, the student is enrolled, if space is available.
3. If no space is available when the challenge is filed, and the challenge is upheld, then the student shall be allowed to enroll the following semester.
4. The student, however, should not wait until the last minute to file a challenge.

I.B.2. Grounds for a challenge:

I.B.2.a. Grounds for student challenges are specified in Title 5, Section 55201(e).

I.B.2.b. Courses that involve intercollegiate competition, public performance, or courses limited to a cohort of students:

Student shall be enrolled if this course would offer a delay in their attaining a degree or certificate program, specified in their educational plan. If other courses are offered, and are available, the student is not delayed.

There is no obligation to honor student preference of courses that they want to take, or what order they want to take their courses in.

I.B.2.c. Prerequisites established to protect public health and safety:

If a student with a disability wants enrollment in a course with a prerequisite designed to protect health and safety, the college must furnish evidence that there is no accommodation available that would protect public health and safety, while allowing the student to enroll, without undue cost to the district.

This is an American with Disabilities Act of 1990 issue. All issues concerning disabled students needs to be addressed with RCCD disabled student services.

I.B.3. The District shall establish a formal challenge process including:

I.B.3.a. Who makes the determination of whether the challenge is valid:

Someone other than the specific course instructor within the department or discipline. This person should be part of the discipline or department, and who is qualified to make the determination. As a general rule, a committee is preferred to an individual when making establishing the guidelines, although an individual (like the Department Chairperson) can follow these guidelines.

I.B.3.b. The possibility of an appeal by the student:

If the determination of the challenge is made by one person rather than a committee, then an appeal of this decision must be an option. If the determination is made by a committee, then there is no grounds for an appeal.

If the department or discipline sets the grounds for challenges, and the department chairman makes the decision based on these guidelines, then there are less grounds for the challenge.

The challenge can be appealed to the Matriculation department, which will consult with the department prior to rendering a decision.

I.B.3.c. The student must provide satisfactory evidence that the challenge should be upheld. If the District has information that is vital for the student to make his/her case, then the District must provide this information.

I.C. Curriculum review process:

I.C.1. The Curriculum Committee shall be established by the Academic Senate and Administration. This is a Title 5, Section 55002(a)(1) regulation. The Curriculum Committee has historically dealt with prerequisite issues.

I.C.2. The Curriculum Committee shall establish Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Advisories upon recommendation by the Academic Senate:

A Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Advisory (P/C/A) subcommittee has already been established, and makes recommendations for the Curriculum committee. In reality, the Academic Senate maintains its final responsibility (Title 5, Sections 53200 - 53204). The P/C/A subcommittee and the Curriculum Committee have acting authority of the Academic Senate.

I.C.3. Establish Prerequisites, Corequisites, Advisories, and limitations on enrollment only if:

I.C.3.a. Faculty in discipline or department do all of the following:

I.C.3.a.(1) Faculty in the discipline or department approve the course.

It is fact that any faculty member can propose any course, but generally it is a good idea for the department or discipline to be involved in curricular initiation.

I.C.3.a.(2) Faculty in the discipline (or department if there are no faculty in the discipline) approve the prerequisite as a separate action from the actual course approval.

This is not required that the faculty in the discipline approve the P/C/A, just that they have had input. There are obvious reasons why it is a good idea to get the approval of the department or discipline. Department or discipline meeting minutes are required. If the discipline or department does not approve the P/C/A, the Curriculum Committee will inquire as to why this is not the case.

The approval of the course is to be acted on as an independent issue, and the Prerequisites, Corequisites, or Advisories shall be acted upon separately. This means that if the course is approved, then the P/C/A will be voted on as a separate issue.

Title 5 mandates that all prerequisites and academic professional matters be matters for the Board to rely primarily on the Academic Senate, or in joint agreement with the Senate.

I.C.3.a.(2) Only approve the Prerequisite or Corequisite if:

I.C.3.a.(2)(A) The Prerequisite or Corequisite is an appropriate and rational measure of student readiness to take the course. This must be demonstrated by Content Review, and must include, at minimum, all of the following:

1. Involvement of faculty with appropriate expertise.
2. Consideration of course objectives set by department.
3. Be based on detailed course syllabus, outline of record, materials, and grading criteria.
4. Specify body of knowledge/skills deemed necessary.
5. Identify or review the Prerequisites and Corequisites which develop skills outlined in the

step above.

6. Match knowledge/skills of the targeted course with the Prerequisite and Corequisite course exit skills.

7. Maintain documentation that the above steps were taken.

Content Review is the first, and arguably the most important, step in the initiation of any P/C/A or LOE. You must show, through content review, why this limitation is justified.

I.C.3.a.(2)(B) The Prerequisite or Corequisite must meet scrutiny specified in II.A.1.a. through II.A.1.g., and specify which:

1. The review needs to be based on the course syllabus, texts, and tests.
2. If the proposed course is new, faculty shall submit these documents with the proposal.
3. If the prerequisite or corequisite is required for a degree requirement course, then faculty shall submit these documents with the proposal.

I.C.3.a.(3) The approval of any limitation on enrollment that is being established:

1. Honors course or section.
2. Intercollegiate competition or public performance.
3. In order to establish a cohort of students enrolled in two or more courses.

I.C.3.a.(4) The approval that the course meets academic standards required for:

1. Degree applicable, non-degree applicable, or non-credit courses.
2. Community service courses.
3. The regulation listed in Title 5, Section 55002 states that these examples can only be approved if they meet specific criteria.
4. If success requires communication or computation skills, then English and/or math will be required.

I.C.3.a.(4)(A) A complete review of the official course outline of record:

1. Would the student be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade without the prerequisite or corequisite?
2. Does the student need knowledge or skills not taught in the course?
3. These criteria need to be established and approved by the Curriculum Committee.

I.C.3.a.(4)(B) Determination of whether communication or computational skills are required:

1. It must be shown that such skills are mandatory.
2. After all the requirements have been demonstrated, then the degree applicable course with prerequisites or corequisites in English or mathematics may be approved.
3. Examples of English courses: Eng 81 (open access), Eng 82 (some skills@), Eng 83.
4. Established data must be provided to support this decision by the Curriculum Committee.

I.C.3.a.(4)(C) Title 5, Sections 55002(a)(2)(D) and (E) require that all conditions must be met prior to the Curriculum Committee approving any course for degree credit.

First step, establish need (these are examples of acceptable language):

ΔA student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade, unless the student has knowledge or skills not taught in the course.@

Δ Success in the course is dependent on communication or computational skills.@

Second step, make sure all requirements have been met:

If the requirements have not been met:

1. Further work must be done to meet requirements, or
2. The course can only be approved as a non-credit degree, non-credit, or community service course.

I.D. Program Review

Every six years a Prerequisite, Corequisite, or Advisory must be reviewed, and support must be established by both the discipline/department and the Curriculum Committee. This is also continually done through the Program Review Process that each discipline or department regularly conducts.

I.E. Implementation of Prerequisites, Corequisites, and limitations on enrollment:

1. Explicit statement on implementation of Prerequisites, Corequisites, and limitations on enrollment is required. These need to be published, and given in orientation.
2. Must be consistent among all students.
3. Decision must not be left exclusively to the classroom instructor.
4. Every attempt must be made to enroll the student through the registration process.
5. The student cannot enroll unless he/she has met all of the requirements.

If a student has not met all requirements:

1. Pending challenge (The student is enrolled until challenge is decided upon).
2. Further information (If transcripts or test results are the issue, the school can enforce the limitations based on Δbest available data@).

I.F. Instructors formal agreement to teach the course as described:

1. Courses with prerequisites or corequisites shall be taught in accordance with the official course outline of record on file with the Curriculum Committee.
2. Instructors cannot waive a prerequisite, but the student can challenge.
3. In addition, the prerequisite or corequisite course must also be taught according to its official course outline of record. This is the foundation for the establishment of the prerequisite or corequisite.

II. Review of individual courses:

II.A. Levels of Scrutiny for prerequisites and corequisites:

II.A.1.a. The standard prerequisite or corequisite:

1. Specify within the course outline of record of three UC/CSU campuses which reflect within their catalogs that they offer equivalent courses with equivalent prerequisites or corequisites.
2. This is in addition to the discipline/department and Curriculum Committee review.

II.A.1.b. Sequential courses within and across disciplines:

Review by discipline/department and Curriculum Committee is required.
Do exit skills of prerequisite course match entry skills or course in question?

II.A.1.c. Courses with communication or computational prerequisite skills:

You cannot establish communication or computational prerequisites or corequisites curriculum-wide, unless you do this on a course-by-course basis. Generally speaking, communication skills refer to English language ability, and computational skills refer to mathematical ability. Communication and computational skill requirements can be implemented, but they require more rigor.

II.A.1.c.(1) A list of skills in the course outline of record.

II.A.1.c.(2) Research must be conducted:

1. Policy must specify how data is collected and analyzed, based on sound research practices. This policy has been established at RCCD.
2. It is crucial that data justify the establishment of prerequisites or corequisites.

All requests for research must be initiated through the PCA subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. Once the PCA committee has established the need for research, then a formal request to Institutional Research will be made. Remember, content review must be conducted prior to the initiation of statistical research.

II.A.1.c.(3) Prerequisites or corequisites can be established for two (2) years while statistical data is gathered:

What percentage of total grade does student need from the required skills? There is no need to make this percentage too high. In example, 25% of course grade from one research paper = 90% of remaining points required to receive a letter grade of A-C@.

If students can earn enough extra credit to offset losses from not having the prerequisite or corequisite, then these requirements are not needed. For example, if you deem that 25% of your course requires the prerequisite skills, but the instructor offers 30% of total points as extra-credit, then there is no justification for even having a prerequisite. The students can bypass these essential skills.

II.A.1.d. Cut scores and prerequisites:

You cannot use cut scores as a stand-alone prerequisite.

You can use cut scores as part of a larger package of standards.

Data needs to be collected to validate assessment and cut scores as P/C=s.

If your data don=t justify cut scores as a prerequisite, you cannot print this as a prerequisite.

If your data don=t justify cut score as a prerequisite, you can make it an advisory for now.

II.A.1.e. Establishing a prerequisite or corequisite as part of Programs:

A prerequisite for a program must be stated as a prerequisite at least for one course as part of the program.

You cannot establish a prerequisite to enter the program. It must be correlated to at least one specific course within the program.

II.A.1.f. Prerequisites for courses concerning Health and safety:

If the course is one in which the student can endanger his or her health and safety, or the health and safety of others, a prerequisite can be established.

II.A.1.f.(1) The student may endanger his/her health/safety or the health/safety of others.

II.A.1.f.(2) Prerequisite is that student possess what is necessary to protect his/her health/safety, and the health/safety of others.

II.A.1.g. Recency and other measures of readiness:

Recency deals with the amount of time since the student has taken a course with the necessary skills required by your course. If you wish to establish a recency requirement, and a time frame by which to base this recency, then you have to establish (for example) why the material in a course that was offered five years ago is significantly different than a course that the student took six years ago, and how this difference would contribute to student success in your course. At the present time, no course at RCC has a recency requirement.

II.A.1.g.(1) List of specific skills the student must possess, as outlined in the course outline of record.

II.A.1.g.(2) Data are gathered in at least one area:

Student surveys of existing or former students to show support for prerequisite or corequisite. This is done through Institutional Research. The only way research can be requested is through the Prerequisite, Corequisite, and Advisory subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. This committee will determine if research is needed, and if so, direct Institutional Research to conduct the research according to established protocol.

Comparison of faculty appraisal of readiness with whether or not student met prerequisite or corequisite. This can be done at any time through quantified means including exams, assignments, and participation. This can be done with faculty assistance.

Comparison of student performance at any point of course to prerequisite or corequisite, beginning at six weeks into the course. You may also use final grades for this comparison.

Comparison of student performance to assessment scores or cut scores for the course.

II.A.1.g.(3) The Astandard@ by which comparisons are made:

AThe student is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course unless he/she has met the proposed prerequisite or corequisite.@

This needs to be confirmed with data.

II.A.1.g.(4) A new prerequisite or corequisite may be established for up to two (2) years, to collect data, provided:

All other requirements to establish the prerequisite or corequisite have been met.

Students that do not take the prerequisite or corequisite must be informed that they may enroll, provided that they do not make up more than 20% of the students enrolled in the section. This provides for a meaningful control for research. The student may either petition, or be allowed to enroll on a first-come basis.

Existing prerequisites (which are exempt at time of inception) must have research to validate continuing the prerequisite. This must be done within six (6) years prior to review.

II.A.2 Additional rules are outlined in Title 5, Section 55202.

II.B. Advisories on recommended preparation:

1. The college can recommend that a student meet a standard of readiness, only if recommended by the faculty in the discipline/department and the Curriculum Committee.
2. Terminology used must be consistent in the course catalog.
3. Approval for advisory must be explicit, and not inferred from the approval for the course.
4. Provision for those with expertise in the discipline/department be given an adequate voice in the content review process.

II.C. Limitations on enrollment:

1. Can only be established by the curriculum review process (discipline/department and the Curriculum Committee).
2. Limitations are only allowed if student has other means by which to attain AA degree.
3. Limitations must be reviewed regularly (every six years).
4. This is an academic matter.
5. Collective bargaining or outside agency requirements (ie. Fire Dept.) may also influence limitations.
6. Limitation on enrollment is not required or encouraged.

II.C.1. Performance courses:

Establishment of an audition or try-out for limits on enrollment that include public performance or intercollegiate competition (ie. band, orchestra, theater, athletics).

II.C.1.a. Options must be made clearly available for degree requirements.

II.C.1.b. List of each certificate or AA degree requirement that course meets in outline of record.

List of other courses that also meet that requirement.

II.C.1.c. Review every six (6) years.

Is audition/try-out having a disproportionate impact on any group?

If so, a plan to seek remedy shall be implemented.

II.C.2. Honors courses:

1. You can limit enrollment in an honors course provided other courses which meet degree or graduation requirements are offered.

2. Alternative courses must be listed on the outline of record.

II.C.3. Blocks or courses or sections:

Blocks of courses designed to form cohorts can be established provided that there is another section or course(s) that satisfy the same requirement.