



# ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GUIDELINES

<b>Section 1:</b>	Courses and Curriculum: Guidelines and Procedures	
<b>Title:</b>	Common Course Guidelines	
<b>Number (Current Format)</b>	<b>Number (Prior Format)</b>	<b>Date Last Revised</b>
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<b>Related Form(s):</b>		

## 1. Purpose

1.1 A shared course catalog serves as a vital foundation for intra-system transfers, multi-institutional learning, and collaborative programs. It drives efficiencies and promotes partnerships. Moreover, the common course approach creates opportunities for students and accommodates their personal preferences. By empowering flexibility and choice (learning mode, course progression, etc.), the common course structure facilitates timely completion of programs – an overarching goal for the regental system.

## 2. History

2.1. In 2002, dramatic changes relevant to higher education prompted the South Dakota Board of Regents (BOR) to rethink established culture and operating structure of its six-university system. As an outcome to deliberation, the Regents opted to adopt a student-focused service model – without doubt, a transformational verdict. Predicated by a strong commitment to a student-friendly experience, pursuit of this novel framework necessitated development of effective strategy.

This vital planning process ultimately gave rise to the STUDENT Project. To enable and inspire meaningful advancement, the BOR carefully developed a guiding schematic of service model requirements. A key driver pointed to the student experience: convenience, success, and satisfaction...seamless, effective navigation of the regental system, with special consideration afforded to multi-institutional students and intra-regental transfer students.

The STUDENT Project optimized utilization of the common course format, certainly an integral facet of student convenience and academic forecasting. As predicted, the merge of six university databases into a single shared instance engendered heightened potential; indeed, the merge elevated this concept of common courses to a distinctly higher level. Throughout the years, countless students have realized its benefits.

Decades later, the common course format remains valuable. As a result, the regental system continues to embrace the construct and promote its perpetuation. The Academic Affairs Council (AAC) is charged with fostering commitment at the university level – particularly among faculty members - as this type of support is vital to success.

### 3. Governance

- 3.1. Authority specific to administration of Common Course Guidelines is multi-layered; it encompasses a variety of key stakeholders.
  - 3.1.1. BOR: the membership developed this foundational concept and oversees its continuation.
  - 3.1.2. AAC: this group of chief academicians completes the first-tier review of all relevant course requests, provides university-based input, and either confers or denies preliminary approval.
  - 3.1.3. System Vice-President of Academic Policy/Planning or designee: this regental leader conducts the second-tier review of such course requests and either confers or denies ultimate approval. These decisions are final.
  - 3.1.4. BOR Enrollment Services Center: following approval, the director and assistant director collaboratively process all course requests in Banner, the regental Student Information System (SIS).

### 4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Common Course:** a course taught by two or more regental universities (exception: X9X series). University-specific, instructor-preferred, and/or level-appropriate content may be incorporated; however, course content remains essentially intact across all universities authorized to teach. Multiple versions of a common course may exist (equated and dual listed courses; see below).
- 4.2. **Equated Courses:** two or more courses at the same level (either graduate or undergraduate) that appear to be different, but in reality, provide identical academic experiences. With regard to key data elements, the versions differ only by prefix. They are equated (set up as equivalents) in Banner. In context of prerequisites, course registrations, grade point average (GPA) calculations, and program requirements, equated courses are treated as one. At the university level, multiple sections of equated courses are typically integrated and taught as a single course; enrollments are combined for purposes of reporting/evaluation of established minimums.
  - 4.2.1. If either/any course in the mix is common, then both/all versions are considered common.
  - 4.2.2. If each course in the mix is taught by only one (but differing) university, then both/all versions are considered common.
- 4.3. **Dual Listed Course:** a course which exists at both the undergraduate level (400 number) and the graduate level (500 number). The two versions vary only by number; if either is taught by two or more universities (and therefore classified as common), both versions are considered common. Typically, the two sections for any given term and university are integrated into a single course (with increased academic rigor imposed on graduate students); for purposes of section size minimums, enrollments are combined. Dual listed courses are not equated in Banner; however, they are flagged with an attribute (DUAL).

## 5. Banner Definitions

- 5.1. **Course:** the foundation of Banner infrastructure; work completed at this level creates a Banner existence for approved courses. Relevant work is centralized, falling within the BOR Enrollment Service Center's scope of authority. Work at the course level must precede that at the section level.
- 5.2. **Section:** the translation of Banner infrastructure into a meaningful, real life format. Creation of sections engenders student registrations, faculty rosters, academic history, transcripts, etc. Work of this nature is decentralized – performed by universities.

## 6. Requirements for Common Courses

- 6.1. **Data Elements:** for each common course, certain data elements must be identical across universities, while others can diverge (see delineation below). If a course exists as only one version, then the guidelines apply to all universities authorized to teach; if the course exists with multiple versions, then the guidelines apply not only to all universities authorized to teach, but also to both/all versions of that course. Set-up at the course level in Banner is consistent with this rule; creation of sections should be equally adherent. Alternately stated, sections (in which students actually register) must match courses.
  - 6.1.1. For a narrowly tailored subset of courses, section title may expound upon – but not obviate - course title; each scenario is subject to approval by the System Vice President for Academic Policy and Planning. One longstanding example is PE 100; approved course title is Activity Course. Specificity is added at the section level (badminton, bowling, basketball, etc.); however, the totality of course title must be retained.
    - Number: identical
    - Titles (both short and long): identical
    - CIP code: identical
    - Description: identical
    - Prerequisite structure: identical
    - Grade Mode: variable by university
    - Delivery method: variable by university; multiple delivery methods may be entered at the course level; a single method – which must reflect reality – is selected at the section level.
    - Instructional method: variable by university; however, each university must identify and adhere to one method (one instructional method per university per course).
    - Credits: at the 100/200 level, credits must be identical; at the 300/400 level, credits can be variable – span of the range should equal one credit.
      - Categories of exceptions at the 100/200 level:
        - Military Sciences courses (prefix of MSL)

- University/program orientation courses (instructional method of Orientation)
  - Music performance courses (instructional method of Large Ensemble or Small Ensemble)
  - Private music instruction courses (prefix of MUAP plus instructional method of Private Instruction)
  - Experiential learning courses (instructional method of Experiential)
- 6.1.2. Registration restrictions: conceivably could vary by university (restrictions to include program of study, degree, field of study, class, college, department, student attribute and cohort)

## 6.2. Numbering

- 6.2.1. Each course number is three characters in length; all characters are numbers.
- 6.2.2. In the instance of a lecture/lab combination, the lab course will retain the same number with the addition of an L at the end.
- 6.2.3. The only letter approved for comprehensive use at all levels is L (for Laboratory).
- 6.2.4. Each prefix + number combination may be used only once (regardless of course status – active or inactive).

## 7. X9X Series

- 7.1. A user-friendly subset of common courses, the X9X series includes an array of generic courses; each is designed for a highly specific, carefully defined purpose. By default, every X9X course is considered common, regardless of the number of universities authorized to teach or utilize its prefix. Approval to teach is inherent (although contingent upon authority to use the prefix of interest); consequently, creation of such courses is expedient and accomplished through submission of Minor Modification Requests. Because of their singular nature, X9X courses are not equated to others in the Student Information System.
- 7.2. The X9X series is highly structured; each course of the series corresponds to a defined title, description, and instructional method; the expectation is precise adherence. In context of title, specificity may be added at the section level in certain situations. However, integrity of the established X9X title must be maintained; truncations must align with approved stipulations.

### *Basic Schematic:*

- X90 = Seminar
- X91 = Independent Study
- X92 = Topics
- X92L = Topics Lab
- 393 through 893 = Workshop
- X94 = Internship
- X95 = Practicum

- X96 = Field Experience
- X97 = Cooperative Education
- 498 = Research
- 788 = Research Problems/Projects
- 798 = Thesis
- 898D, 898S = Dissertation

### 7.3. X9X Series Course Details

- 7.3.1. **Seminar – X90:** A highly focused and topical course. The format includes student presentations and discussions of reports based on literature, practices, problems, and research.

Instructional method = E (Seminar) for 300-level (and higher) courses;  
D (Discussion) or O (Orientation) for 100/200-level courses

- 7.3.2. **Independent Study – X91:** Students complete individualized plans of study which include significant one-on-one student-teacher involvement. The faculty member and students negotiate the details of the study plans.

Instructional method = I (Independent Study)

*The X91 course is intended for a single, exclusive purpose: accommodating students who express interest in a specific facet of an established discipline, but no course of relevance currently exists; the independent study meets this unique need. It is not intended for utilization as a strategic effort to meet section size minimums or to diminish faculty workload calculations.*

- 7.3.3. **Topics – X92:** A course devoted to a particular issue in a specified field. Course content is not wholly included in the regular curriculum. Guest artists or experts may serve as instructors.

Instructional method = D (Discussion)

*Note: The topics course is intended for only these two situations:*

- *Experimental course: piloting innovative content that may evolve into an established course*
- *Authentic topical course: offering a unique course entrenched in content that is currently – but not perpetually – relevant*

*The X92 course is not intended to be utilized as an alternative to an established course.*

- 7.3.4. **Workshop – 393 through 893:** Special, intense sessions in specific topic areas. 45 hours of student work is required for each hour of credit earned. Workshops may vary in time range, but typically use a compressed time period for delivery. They may include lectures, conferences, committee work, and group activity.

Instructional method = W (Workshop)

- 7.3.5. **Internship – X94:** Applied, monitored, and supervised field-based learning experience for which the student may or may not be paid. Students gain practical

experience; they follow a negotiated and/or directed plan of study. A higher level of supervision is provided by the instructor in these courses than is the case with field experience courses.

Instructional method = S (Internship/Practicum)

- 7.3.6. **Practicum – X95:** Applied, monitored, and supervised field-based learning experience for which the student may or may not be paid. Students gain practical experience; they follow a negotiated and/or directed plan of study. A higher level of supervision is provided by the instructor in these courses than is the case with field experience courses.

Instructional method = S (Internship/Practicum)

- 7.3.7. **Field Experience – X96:** Applied, monitored, and supervised field-based learning experience for which the student may or may not be paid. Students gain practical experience; they follow a negotiated and/or directed plan of study established by the student, instructor, and field-based supervisor. Due to the presence of a field experience supervisor, a lower level of supervision is provided by the instructor in these courses than is the case with an internship or practicum course.

Instructional method = S (Internship/Practicum)

- 7.3.8. **Cooperative Education – X97:** Applied, monitored, and supervised field-based learning experience for which the student may or may not be paid. Students gain practical experience; they follow a negotiated and/or directed plan of study established by the student, instructor, and field-based supervisor. Due to the presence of a field experience supervisor, a lower level of supervision is provided by the instructor in these courses than is the case with an internship or practicum.

Instructional method = S (Internship/Practicum)

- 7.3.9. **Research – 498:** Independent research problems/projects or scholarship activities. The plan of study is negotiated by the faculty member and student. Contact between the two may be extensive and intensive.

Instructional method = J (Research)

- 7.3.10. **Research Problems/Projects – 788:** Independent research problems/ projects that lead to research or design paper, but not to a thesis. The plan of study is negotiated by the faculty member and the candidate. Contact between the two may be extensive and intensive.

Instructional method = J (Research)

- 7.3.11. **Thesis – 798:** A formal treatise presenting the results of study submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the applicable degree. The process requires extensive and intensive one-on-one interaction between the candidate and professor with more limited interaction between and among the candidate and other members of the committee.

Instruction method = T (Thesis)

7.3.12. **Dissertation – 898D/898S (D reflects doctoral degree; S reflects specialist degree):** A formal treatise presenting the results of study submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the applicable degree. The process requires extensive and intensive one-on-one interaction between the candidate and professor with more limited interaction between and among the candidate and other members of the committee.

Instruction method = T (Thesis)

## 8. Translation of course titles to section titles:

Number:	Approved Course Title:	Section-Level Specificity Allowed:	If Used, Approved Abbreviation:
X90	Seminar	Yes	Sem:
X91	Independent Study	Yes	IS:
X92	Topics	Yes	Top:
X92L	Topics Lab	Yes	Top Lab:
X93	Workshop	Yes	Wrksp:
X94	Internship	Yes	Intrn:
X95	Practicum	Yes	Prac:
X96	Field Experience	Yes	Field Exp:
X97	Cooperative Education	Yes	Co-op:
498	Research	Yes	NA
788	Research Problems/Projects	No	NA
798	Thesis	No	NA
898S	Dissertation	No	NA
898D	Dissertation	No	NA

## 9. Common Course Requests/Approval Process

9.1. Creation of new courses: proposals for new common courses are submitted via New Course Requests; such proposals are subject to preliminary approval by the Academic Affairs Council and final approval by the System Vice-President of Academic Policy/Planning or designee.

9.2. Changes to existing courses: requests – which must reflect consensus of all universities authorized to teach both/all versions – are submitted via Revised Course Requests. These are subject to an identical approval process as outlined in the preceding bullet.

### APPENDICES/RESOURCES:

None

### SOURCE:

AAC January 2017; October 2018 (Clerical); AAC October 2019; AAC March 2023.