Educational Policy Committee: Frequently Asked Questions (8/29/16)
For more information on these and other issues, please contact epc@wm.edu

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1. **What sort of changes need EPC approval?**
   The Bylaws of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences give the Educational Policy Committee responsibility for the undergraduate educational program. EPC regularly reviews all requests for changes to the curriculum. EPC may approve or disapprove these changes so long as they do not affect educational policy. When a change affects educational

policy, EPC brings the matter to FAS with a recommendation. Here are some examples of things that do or do not need EPC approval:

    A. Catalog changes. All substantive changes in the Undergraduate Catalog relating to Arts and Sciences need EPC approval. Exceptions: minor changes such as staff or semesters a course is taught, minor typographical errors, and minor (stylistic) changes can be approved by the Registrar's Office.

    B. Prerequisites. Please send requests for removing, adding, or changing prerequisites to the registrar; the registrar will inform EPC if it is the sort that needs to go to EPC. Changes in prerequisites sometimes need EPC approval. For instance, a prerequisite in another department/program must be approved by both units and EPC.

    C. Course restrictions. Enrollment restrictions based on graduating class or major do not need EPC approval. Departments and programs may decide whether courses require instructor permission.

    D. Cross-listing. Cross-listing creates a number of administrative difficulties and should be avoided where possible. Both cross-listing units must approve of the cross-list. Cross-listing normally does not need EPC approval unless a new course must be created.

    E. Topics courses. Topics courses allow faculty to experiment with new courses before adding them permanently to the curriculum. Normally, a specific topic in a topics course may be offered three times without EPC approval. The fourth time a permanent number should usually be requested and approved by EPC. When a specific topic carries a GER or COLL attribute, it must be approved the first time. The same topic will normally retain the same attribute(s) when taught for the second and third time. In rare cases, permanent GER and/or COLL domain attributes can be assigned to topics course numbers if the department/program can guarantee that all courses offered under that number will fulfill the requirements specific to the GER and/or COLL attributes in question. For such courses, language specific to the GER or COLL attribute must be included in the catalogue language for the course.

    F. Credit and contact hours: In keeping with the Academic Credit Hour Policy, EPC, chairs and directors, and deans are all responsible for monitoring credit hours. One credit hour in most courses consists of one hour of class time per week between students and instructors (where the teaching is face-to-face in the same room) for fifteen weeks. When more than 20% of a course departs from that traditional format (e.g., 25% of a course is online or involves watching movies outside of class), EPC must approve the change. Broad exceptions include internships and independent studies (including honors), where expectations differ.

    G. Online courses: These must go through the same approval processes as other courses, and must also undergo additional vetting for following best practices in e-

learning. The amount of credit earned in the absence of direct contact hours between students and faculty must also be justified.

2. **When does the Faculty of Arts and Sciences needs to approve a change?**

FAS must approve all changes in educational policy. It is up to EPC to decide when a curricular matter rises to the level of a change in educational policy. The following are guidelines:

A. New majors and minors. New majors and minors must be approved by FAS with a recommendation by EPC. The same is true for major or minor concentrations within Interdisciplinary Studies. New concentrations or tracks within majors may be approved by EPC alone.

B. Changes in the names of majors and minors must be approved by FAS with a recommendation by EPC.

C. Changes in major or minor requirements generally only need EPC approval unless the new requirements are especially heavy, light, or might impact other departments or programs. EPC will determine what changes of this sort need FAS approval

D. Changes in general education requirements, and substantive changes in other requirements and policies listed in the catalog.

E. When an educational program involves two or more schools (e.g., FAS and Law), changes must be approved by each school and by the Faculty Assembly. *Significant changes* (establishing a new degree, changing the name of a degree, etc.) require approval at higher levels (e.g. BOV, SCHEV, SACS). See the Institutional Change Policy for further information.

3. **What rules and standards does EPC observe in approving courses for the COLL curriculum?**

A. **COLL 100 and 150**
- COLL 100s and 150s are topics courses. EPC delegates approval of the communication portion of these courses to the COLL 100 Committee and the Writing Committee, respectively.
- Once approved, a particular COLL 100 or 150 topics may be repeated any number of times without EPC approval, although EPC reserves the authority to request re-submission at any time.
- COLL 100s and 150s will not normally be approved for the summer sessions.

- COLL 100s and 150s can be cross-listed as 100s and 150s, but they should not be cross-listed with courses of other types.
- Topics that were offered as 150s and 150Ws in the old system need to go through the COLL 150 approval process before they are offered as COLL 150s, since expectations have changed somewhat.
- FAS has approved a policy by which COLL 100s and COLL 150s are 4-credit courses even if they only meet for three hours per week. This policy reflects the greater expectations in these courses for writing and presentations.

B. COLL 200:

- In addition to considering whether the course description and syllabus are sound, EPC considers whether the proposer has properly identified the course's domain(s), and whether it is clear that at least 10% of the course 'reaches out' to another domain (see below on domains).
- Courses may be anchored in 2 domains (meaning a student can count it as filling requirements in either domain, but not both), but for such courses EPC wants to see clear evidence in the syllabus that the content from each domain is as close to 50% as possible.
- Consequently, a course anchored in two domains should not try to 'reach out' to the third.
- COLL 200 courses must be 3 or 4 credits. A 4-credit course that does not have at least four meeting-hours per week must go through a separate process for justifying the de-linking of credit hours and contact hours (that goes not just for COLL 200 but for all courses, with the exception of COLL 100 and 150, which are delinked automatically).

C. COLL 300:

There are basically three ways students can earn COLL 300 credit:

1. By taking any course or series of courses totaling 3 or more credits in a W&M study-abroad program approved by the International Studies Advisory Committee and administered by the Reves Center.

2. By taking a course or series of courses (totaling at least 3 credits) approved by EPC for COLL 300 credit in connection with the series of on-campus visitors arranged each semester by the Center for the Liberal Arts.

3. By engaging in a cross-cultural or international off-campus experience in connection with an on-campus course. The off-campus experience must occupy at least a week (or at least 40 waking hours of active cross-cultural or international activity). The off-campus experience may occur before, during, or after the semester in which the course is offered.

If you want to offer a COLL 300 opportunity of type 1, you do not need to seek EPC approval. Students who earn at least 3 credits in an ISAC-approved W&M study-abroad program will automatically receive credit for COLL 300. Courses in study-abroad programs may also fulfill other requirements (e.g. COLL 200), but please make sure your students are aware that they cannot count the same credits for both COLL 300 and any other COLL requirement.

For COLL 300s of type 2 (the on-campus COLL 300s), you should submit a proposal through the COLL 300 form on Curriculog. You will need to describe how your course will be integrated with the theme and the events arranged by the Center for Liberal Arts in each semester it is being offered for COLL 300 credit.

For proposals of type 3 there are a number of different options.

- If the course will always be offered with the off-campus experience, and the experience is required of all students in the course, you can apply through Curriculog to have the course permanently approved for COLL 300.
- If the off-campus experience is optional, the easiest thing to do is to ask the registrar to set up a concurrent second section of the course, and apply for the COLL 300 attribute for the second section. Students who want COLL 300 credit should then be informed to sign up for the section approved for COLL 300. Students should be made aware that if they do not engage in the off-campus experience they will not receive COLL 300 credit, even if they pass the course otherwise.
- If a single student or a small group is engaging in independent, off-campus experiences that can be integrated with a credit-bearing course of at least 3 credits, the student should fill out a COLL 300 Post-Approval form that will be submitted to the Charles Center for vetting. No application to EPC is required.

D. COLL 400
The exact form(s) that COLL 400 will take is/(are) currently under discussion. Pending further word from the dean and/or EPC, we suggest holding off on the submission of COLL 400 applications.

E. ADDITIONAL DOMAIN CREDITS:

- Over the last two years we approved domain labels for many non-COLL-200 courses that could fulfill this requirement. Requests for additional labelings have been trickling in.

- We have left it up to departments/programs to tell us which of their courses they would like to be labelled, though we have not encouraged the labelling of upper-level courses for which there are prerequisites (on the grounds that the requirement would have been satisfied already by the prerequisite).

- Departments and programs may submit lists of several courses through Curriculog for bulk domain labeling, as long as the domain requested is straightforward and obvious (e.g. Music = ALV; Chemistry = NQR). If the domain requested is not obvious (e.g. Geology = ALV) or if two domains are being requested, then an individual application should be submitted for each course (see below).

- We have decided against labelling COLL 100's and COLL 150, and also basic Math and beginning language classes (since SACS, our accrediting agency, defines these as 'skills' classes that should not count toward general education).

- We have, however, allowed the labelling of upper-level language classes in which students do not spend most of their class time learning vocabulary and grammar but are using the language to study literature/history/culture etc. We also allow the labelling of Mathematics courses that deal with issues beyond mathematical skills.

- Courses may be labelled in two domains, but they must satisfy the same 50/50 requirement as COLL 200's (see above). EPC will need to see a syllabus for any course that aspires to a two-domain designation, and the 50/50 balance will need to be evident in the readings, topics, assignments, and course objectives listed in the syllabus.

- Students must earn at least 2 credits in each domain from any combination of classes, so even 1-credit classes can be assigned to a domain.

F. DOMAINS:

- Of the three domains the two that have proved most difficult to distinguish consistently are Arts, Letters and Values (ALV) and Culture, Society and the Individual (CSI). A general rule of thumb is that the former deals with 'text' and the latter 'context'. For instance, you can study literature, art, philosophical ideas etc. for their intrinsic qualities and for their place in the development of literary/artistic/philosophical trends. You can also employ literature or art or philosophical ideas as a means of understanding the

particular social and historical context in which they were created. Courses that focus solidly on the former are clearly ALV. Courses that spend a lot of time on the latter could be CSI or could be anchored in both domains (ALV&CSI), but…

- For courses that have titles like 'Circassian Literature...' or 'Circassian Film...', or have course descriptions or syllabi that focus predominantly on literature/film/etc., EPC's presumption will be that they are predominantly ALV rather than CSI or (ALV+CSI). Historical and cultural contextualization is nowadays a normal part of the way scholars of film/literature/etc. approach their topic in the ALV realm, so performing that sort of analysis does not in itself make a course CSI (though it may be a good example of reaching out to CSI). CSI should be reserved for courses that deal primarily with how scholars study particular cultures and periods (for which the methodologically conscientious use of literature, film, etc. is often essential).
- If you are demonstrably doing both in equal measure your course may qualify for both ALV and CSI.
- COLL 200's in Math and Computer Science that deal with the application of those disciplines to ALV and CSI topics (e.g. Economics) are anchored in those domains rather than NQR. Such classes that focus on natural science applications belong in NQR.

G. ACTIVE LEARNING REQUIREMENT

In 2014-15 all existing GER 6 classes and GER 2L labs were blanket-approved for the ACTV requirement. In spring 2016, the ACTV requirement was abolished for students who enter in fall 2016 and beyond, but students who started in 15-16 will still need to satisfy the requirement, so EPC is still accepting applications for the ACTV attribute.

H. CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS PROFICIENCY:

Also in Spring 2016, the faculty created a new Creative and Performing Arts Proficiency requirement for students entering Fall 2016 and beyond. All current GER 6 courses were blanket-approved for this new attribute.

I. MATH PROFICIENCY:

Current practice is to grant the MATH attribute to any W&M course in calculus or statistics (statistics for the social sciences would qualify), and to other courses "in which students formulate mathematical arguments and use mathematical procedures in the solution or exploration of problems external to mathematics."

4. How do I submit an application to EPC?

Normally applications to EPC are submitted through the Curriculog system (http://wm.curriculog.com). Each department and program should have at least one individual trained and authorized to submit applications on behalf of the department/program – check with your department chair or program director to find out who. That individual will work with you to get the information needed for your application.

Every Curriculog submission is automatically routed to the appropriate program director or department chair for his/her approval. Then it either goes on to automatically to EPC, or to one of the bodies to which EPC has delegated approval (COLL 100 committee, Writing Committee, etc.)

There are a number of different Curriculog forms for different types of application. Below is a quick guide on which form to use in various situations. If you do not see your situation covered, contact epc@wm.edu.

- Use the "NEW COURSE APPLICATION" for creating a course that will not satisfy any GER or COLL requirements. To create a new course that does satisfy one or more of those requirements, use one of the applications listed below.

- Use the "GER Attribute Application" to apply a GER attribute to:
  o A new course that is intended to satisfy GER requirements
  o An existing course to which you want to add a GER attribute
  o A new topic for a variable topics course that is intended to satisfy GER requirements

- Similarly use one of the various COLL applications to apply a COLL attribute to
  o A new course that is intended to satisfy COLL requirements
  o An existing course to which you want to add a COLL attribute
  o A new topic for a variable topics course that is intended to satisfy COLL requirements
  There are separate applications for each of the COLL attributes (COLL 100, COLL 150, COLL 200, COLL 300, COLL 400) as well as an application that combines Domain designations (non-COLL 200), Active Learning attribute, and Creative and Performing Arts attribute.

Note that if a course satisfies more than one COLL attribute (apart from two domain designations) a separate application will need to be submitted for each attribute.

- Use the "Course Change" application to request any <u>other</u> changes to an individual course (or to a small set of similar courses). Examples of change that would go on this application are:
  - o Changing the number or title of the course
  - o Changing the wording of the course description
  - o Changing the number of credit hours for the course
  - o Requesting a permanent number for a course formerly offered as a topics course You can use this application to change any of the above on a course that already has a GER or COLL attribute, but not to request the GER or COLL attribute in the first place.

- Use the Curriculum Change application for any requested changes that involve issues broader than an individual course. Such changes might include:
  - o A change to major or minor requirements
  - o The addition of new concentrations within a major
  - o Changing the name of a major or a program
  - o Creating a new major or minor or interdisciplinary program
  - o Requesting a change to COLL and other general education requirements