



Undergraduate Committee Guidance on Prerequisites for Course Proposals and Revisions

Purpose & Background

As the University of Houston (UH) continues to grow into its place as a Tier 1 university, there is a need for increasing our self-expectations and standards. We can achieve clearer and higher standards by bringing intentionality to the forefront of discussions, in this case on prerequisite expectations for undergraduate courses.

The goal of this document is to assist proposers in assuring that prerequisites are intentional and serve students in their learning paths. The guidance represents a community standard of conventions agreed upon by the faculty of the Undergraduate Committee.

Recommendations

Discussion on prerequisite choice should include all stakeholders (e.g., department chair, undergraduate coordinator, instructors, etc.) and use these specific points to support dialogue. *If there is a reason for not following the recommendation, proposers are encouraged to elaborate on the course proposal form so that the reviewing committee will fully understand the intent.*

- **Consider excluding redundant prerequisites that are already included in subsequent prerequisites.**
 - For example, do not list XXXX 2333 and XXXX 2334 both as prerequisites to XXXX 3335 if 2333 is required to take 2334.
 - Provide students sufficient information regarding prerequisites to make informed decisions on course choices.
- **When choosing a prerequisite course, be certain that the target prerequisite does not have its own prerequisite, which may lead to students being unprepared and/or taking excessive credit hours.**
- **Assure that required foundational knowledge is reflected by prerequisites.**
 - When designating prerequisites, account for the foundational skills needed for success in the course. Also account for any knowledge or skill deficiency that may lead to struggling in the course if it is not present.
- **Match the degree plan path to assure that it aligns with the prerequisite.**
 - Do not allow a course to have a prerequisite that is taught later in the degree sequence. for example, a second-year course with a prerequisite not typically taken until the third year.
- **When a course is 3000 level or higher, there is typically an expectation of advanced study, and students should have proper knowledge to succeed in the course.**
 - If a course does not have any prerequisites, consider if the course truly warrants a 3000 (or higher) designation.
 - Be aware that in this case any student can register. Provide an explanation for a course at these levels with no prerequisites.
- **Consent of instructor should be used sparingly and intentionally.**

- There should be a reason to include instructor consent. There should also be a mechanism to ensure that this will be applied uniformly across all students. Provide justification so that the review committee understands this need.
- **Consider the purpose of using academic classification as a prerequisite.**
 - Due to an abundance of dual credit and advanced placement tests, academic classification (freshman, sophomore, etc.) does not necessarily reflect a student's academic experience.
- **An upper-level course (3000 or 4000) usually will not be a prerequisite for a lower-level course (1000 or 2000) within a department or program.**
- **Any expectation for corequisite or concurrent enrollment must be possible within the course offering of the department and align with program degree plans.**