

Undergraduate Master Course Inventory Policy

ACA-81

Scope

All Indiana University campuses, schools and departments.

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Policy Statement

Campuses that adopt existing IU courses from the MCI have a responsibility to ensure adequate comparability with existing offerings on other campuses. Units planning to initiate new campus offerings through the adoption of course listings from the Master Course Inventory must request syllabi and other pertinent information about recent offerings of the course from relevant IU campuses. The initiating unit will formulate a proposed syllabus in awareness of practices on other campuses, to be circulated for remonstrance among campuses currently offering the course through CARMin. Disagreements as to whether the proposed offering is adequately comparable to existing offerings to be designated with an identical number will be adjudicated through the Course Conflict Resolution process below in the event that they cannot be resolved between or among the departments across campus lines.

To ensure comparability among identically numbered courses, there should be a mutually agreed upon “model framework” for each IU course that will apply system wide, which should include:

1. A brief but informative description of the content of the course,
 2. the nature of prerequisite qualifications for students taking the course,
 3. the student learning outcomes for the course,
 4. standards of competency as defined by the discipline, and
 5. any other agreed upon features essential to assure the comparability of course offerings.
- A “model framework” with the above information will be developed for any new courses as well as any courses that are adopted from the MCI at any campus from the date of this policy forward.

- When an existing course at multiple campuses is challenged for comparability, the above framework will be developed for that course, if it does not exist. If the challenged course is deemed incomparable, a new number and name will be assigned and a “model framework” will be designed by the campuses offering the new course.
- The “model frameworks” will be designed through CARMI and housed in the University Records Office (this will serve as the official reference and repository for courses that campuses wish to offer from the MCI.)
- When there is a challenge to the equivalency of a course, all faculty who regularly teach the course will be invited to discuss the issues involved; however, only the challenging campus and the campus that is being challenged will be required to resolve any differences. The opportunity for participation from the other campuses that teach the course could further the comparability of IU coursework.
- The Course Conflict Resolution process will be used as a means of resolving any discrepancies and facilitated through the University Transfer Office (UTO).
- Recommendations as a result of this process will be forwarded to the UFC for a final decision. UFC decisions will be binding.
- Appeals on these decisions will be submitted to the UTO and the UFC campus representative for consideration at UFC. The appeal can only be based on process. The UTO will also be informed of the appeal for information purposes.

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Reason for Policy

In 2002, the UFC passed the Indiana University Master Course Inventory Policy with the explicit goal of ensuring that identically numbered/titled courses on multiple IU campuses have sufficient comparability that their full inter-campus transferability for all degree requirements positions students as equivalently as possible across the campuses that offer the course.

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Procedures

Master Course Inventory (MCI) Principles

1. Identically numbered courses must be sufficiently comparable to allow substitution/interchangeability.
2. Identically numbered courses should be treated equivalently on all campuses. (This is not to suggest that degree requirements be the same across campuses. Requirements must remain in the hands of the degree-granting academic units.)

The intent, however, is that if a given course is determined as appropriate to fulfill a given requirement, that determination should apply to every offering of the given course, regardless of the campus of enrollment.)

3. Differences in mode of delivery are not indicative of incomparability, but changes in method for some courses (e.g., lab courses, language courses), may create substantial enough differences in student proficiency that may create a discrepancy in the learning outcomes.
4. Comparability should also include consideration of what the purpose for the course is, i.e., proficiency for subsequent courses in a major versus the same course on another campus to only meet general education requirements. For example, a proficiency in a language course that is preparing a student for a major in the language may be very different from a language course on a campus with no major and a different mission.
5. Courses that are not sufficiently comparable must have different course numbers.
6. When identically numbered courses are determined not to be sufficiently comparable, the campus(es) which will retain the original number will be based on the following considerations:
 - a. For which campuses is the original name and number integral to their degree program(s)?
 - b. Which campus originated the course and how are they using it (i.e., gen ed, requirement, general elective, etc.)?
 - c. How often is the course offered?
The final decision for any changes will rest within the Course Conflict Resolution Process.
7. Substantive changes proposed for existing courses offered on multiple campuses must be discussed with the appropriate faculty on all affected campuses prior to the remonstrance period.

Revisions of MCI Information

Once adoption of courses and equivalencies across campuses have been established, it is the responsibility of units on campuses offering the course periodically to review the information to assure that it is current and represents a standard for comparability. Substantial changes in course content, method, or requirements that may affect comparability should not be initiated on any campus, except in an experimental way, without communication with relevant units on other campuses. If course improvements have changed comparability measures, relevant departments should determine whether to alter the model framework for the course to reflect these improvements and make them university-wide, or to alter course numbering to reflect the fact that different campus offerings are no longer comparable for degree requirement purposes.

Course Conflict Resolution

Inevitably, discrepancies become apparent from time to time in already established courses with the same name and number. The process for communicating any incompatibilities should follow usual academic hierarchies, i.e., faculty report to chairs who report issues to the Dean, etc. Incompatibilities should be well-documented before this process is engaged. When offerings of identically numbered courses are found to be incompatible in terms of content, requirements, and standards, the following procedure will be followed (this will take the place of the UFC Committee on Course Comparability stipulated in the original MCI policy):

1. Any discrepancy among or between identically numbered courses offered at different campuses of Indiana University will be reported to the appropriate school and campus officials, who will notify the University Transfer Office (UTO). The UTO will in turn report the discrepancy to the IU Articulation and Transfer Committee (IU A&T) for discussion.
2. The members of IU A&T who represent the affected campuses will consult with representatives of the appropriate academic unit and with one another regarding possible resolution of the discrepancy. These discussions will be facilitated through the UTO.
3. If no solution can be reached through discussion by the IU A&T representatives, the UTO will gather pertinent information and documents, including but not limited to syllabi, statement of course goals and learning outcomes, schedule of topics covered, readings, assignments, and a brief summary of the issue and will convene disciplinary faculty from all IU campuses to establish the scope, purpose, and outcomes of the course within their program and for their curricular needs. These faculty may also recommend actions on course names and numbers to UFC as appropriate.
4. The UTO will inform the UFC of the issue and present the summary, documentation, and recommendation to the UFC.
5. The UFC shall vote on the recommendation, and their decision will be binding.
6. The UTO will inform the appropriate academic officers, the IU Records Office, track necessary changes, and report the results to IU A&T.
7. Appeals on the UFC decisions will be submitted to the UTO and the UFC campus representative for consideration at UFC. The appeal can only be based on a breach of process rather than substance. The UTO will also be informed of the appeal for information purposes.

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Definitions

Wherever the future MCI is referred to as a “web-based document,” it should be understood that some or all components of the future MCI may be located within the PeopleSoft course inventory. It is not yet clear in what respects the MCI will employ the PeopleSoft course inventory to accomplish the goals of this policy.

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History

Approved by the University Faculty Council: April 24, 2001; by action of the University Faculty Council: April 23, 2002

Revised and approved by University Faculty Council: February 23, 2016

Revised on February 24, 2023, to remove clarifying language that was added in April 2022 that had the unintended consequence of altering the approved policy.

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