	ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GUIDELINES

Section 2.4	Academic Curricula	
Title:	Common Course Guidelines	
Number (Current Format)	**Number (Prior Format)**	**Date Last Revised**
2.4.1.A	IV.A, 1.11	12/2023
Reference:	BOR Policy 2.4.1 - System Course and Curriculum Governance	
Related Form(s):		

1. **Purpose**

   The Board of Regents governs the shared course catalog. The shared course catalog serves as the foundation for intra-system transfers, multi-institutional learning, and collaborative programs. By empowering flexibility and student choice (learning mode, course progression, etc.), the common course structure facilitates timely completion of programs, seamless transfer – an overarching goal for the regental system.

2. **History**

   In 2002, changes relevant to higher education prompted the South Dakota Board of Regents (BOR) to rethink the established culture and operating structure of its six-university system. As an outcome, the Regents opted to adopt a student-focused service model – without doubt, a transformational decision. 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 (an information technology solution to move from six instances to one instance of a student information system). The BOR implemented a service model for students. A key driver pointed to the student experience: convenience, success, and satisfaction. Specific goals included a seamless and effective navigation of the regental system, with special consideration afforded to multi-institutional students and intra-regental transfer students.

3. **Governance**

   The Board of Regents governs the Regental system in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and SDCL § 13-49 through § 13-53 provides the authority to govern academic programming. BOR Policy 2.4.1 (previously 2:22) provides policy governance regarding curriculum. Each institution working through their processes/practices as outlined within their academic units and institutional policy promotes the continuation of the shared catalog.

   3.1.1. Academic Unit: Faculty, Department Heads and Deans work collaboratively to adopt and use common courses should work through their academic leadership on proposed changes.

3.1.2. Academic Affairs Council (AAC): AAC completes the first-tier review of all relevant course requests, provides university-based input, and either confers or denies preliminary recommendations.

3.1.3. System Vice-President of Academic Affairs or designee: The Board of Regents academic leader or designee conducts a review of such course requests and either confers, approves or denies AAC recommendations.

3.1.4. Executive Director: The System Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director for the Regents will finalize the approval through the notification to the Board in their Interim Report at the next appropriate Board meeting. These decisions are final.

3.1.5. BOR Enrollment Services Center: The Board of Regents enrollment service center, following approval, collaboratively processes all course requests in the regental Student Information System (SIS).

4. **Definitions**

4.1. **Classification of Instructional Program Codes**: A taxonomic coding scheme of instructional programs to facilitate the organization, collection, and reporting of fields of study and program completions.

4.2. **Common Course**: A course offered by one or more Regental institutions that has essentially the same content (subjects/breadth) and level of instruction (depth) as a course offered.

4.3. **Common Course Catalog:** A system wide managed Regental course catalog used to maintain all common and unique courses.

4.4. **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.

4.5. **Equated Course**: Two or more courses at the same level (either graduate or undergraduate) that appear to be different, however, the academic experience for the students are identical.

4.6. **Student Information System (SIS):** This is the information system that processes all student related activity (registration, advising, cohorts, activities, degree audit, degree attainment, etc.).

4.7. **Student Information System (SIS) Course:** The SIS infrastructure for the catalog Courses are centralized and managed by the BOR Enrollment Service Center.

4.8. **Student Information System Section:** Defined as the SIS section which generates student registrations, faculty rosters, academic history, transcripts, etc. Sections are decentralized and performed by institutional academic staff. SIS sections must have a SIS course to be utilized.

5. **Common Course Policy Statements**

5.1 The Board of Regents has a vested interest in maintaining the integrity of the Common Course Catalog. Institutions are required to align new courses with existing courses in the Regental system ensuring transfer equivalency process for students (BOR Policy 2.2.2.1).

5.2 Common courses that are equated (considered the same course for degree completion) in the Student Information System (SIS) are considered common courses.

5.3 Common courses include courses that are cross or dual listed with a common course.

5.4 Courses approved as meeting system general education requirements are not necessarily considered common courses.

5.5 Common courses are not necessarily offered at all Regental institutions.

6. **Requirements for Common Courses**

   6.1. **Data Elements**

      6.1.1. **Required Identical Data Elements**: For each common course, certain data elements must be identical across institutions due to the student information system requirements and BOR requirements. Those required identical elements should include:

   - Course Number shall be identical.

   - Titles (both short and long) shall be identical.

   - Classification of Instructional Programming Code (CIP code) shall be identical.

   - Course Description shall be identical.

   - Prerequisite structure shall be identical.

   - Credits at the 100/200 level, credits must be identical.

      6.1.2 **Required Variable Data Elements:** For each common course, there are some delineations that can be accommodated. Those required elements that can have variability may include:

   - Grade Mode is based on level and can have some variability by institution.

   - Delivery method can be variable by institution; multiple delivery methods may be entered at the course level; a single method – which must reflect institution need– is selected at the section level.

   - Instructional method can be variable by institution; however, each institution must identify and adhere to one method (one instructional method per course).

   - Credits at the 300/400 level can be variable.

   - Registration restrictions may vary by university (restrictions to include program of study, degree, field of study, class, college, department, student attribute and cohort).

6.1.3 **Required Element Exceptions at the 100/200 Level for Credits**

Academic Affairs Council evaluated all common courses. AAC approved exceptions to the common course requirement for which can only include the following:

- 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)

6.2. **Course Numbering**

Each course number is three characters in length; all characters are numbers. 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 (i.e., 100 BIOL/100L BIOL). The only letter approved for comprehensive use at all levels is L (for Laboratory). Each prefix + number combination may be used only once (regardless of course status – active or inactive).

7. **Common Courses X9X Series**

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 institutions authorized to teach or utilize its prefix. Approval to teach is accomplished through submission of Minor Modification Requests. X9X courses are not equated to others in the Student Information System.

7.1. **X9X Structure/Schematic**

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, the integrity of the established X9X title must be maintained; truncations must align with approved stipulations.

Basic Schematic:

- X90 = Seminar
- X91 = Independent Study (limited use)
- 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

7.2. X9X Series Course Details

7.2.1. Seminar – X90

A highly focused and topical course. The format includes student presentations and discussions of reports based on literature, practices, problems, and research. A seminar course is not intended to substitute or to be used for low-enrolled courses or to replace major specific required courses.

- Instructional Method = E (Seminar) for 300-level (and higher) courses;

- Instructional Method = D (Discussion) or O (Orientation) for 100/200-level courses

7.2.2. Independent Study – X91

Course that are intended to pursue topics that are not currently offered through regular coursework. Independent study is not intended to substitute or to be used for low-enrolled courses or to replace major specific required courses. To be eligible, students complete individualized plans of study which include significant one-on-one student-teacher involvement. The faculty members 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; independent study meets this unique need.

7.2.3. 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. A topics course is not intended to substitute or to be used for low-enrolled courses or to replace major specific required courses.

- 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.*

7.2.4. 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)

7.2.5. **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)

7.2.6. **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)

7.2.7. **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)

7.2.8. **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)

7.2.9. **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)

7.2.10. **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)

7.2.11. **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)

7.2.12. **Dissertation – 898D/898S**

A formal dissertation 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. For this structure D reflects doctoral degree; S reflects specialist degree.

- 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

APPENDICES/RESOURCES:
None

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