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October 12, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: State University Council of Academic Vice Presidents
Florida College Council on Instructional Affairs

FROM: Dr. Heather R. Sherry, Director, Office of Articulation

THRU: Dr. Dorothy Minear, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor
Academic and Student Affairs
Board of Governors - State University System

Dr. Judith Bilsky, Executive Vice Chancellor
Division of Florida Colleges – The Florida College System

SUBJECT: Final Updates to the 2009-2010 Common Prerequisite Manual

Section 1007.25(5), Florida Statutes, directs the Department of Education to “identify common prerequisite courses and course substitutions for degree programs across all institutions.” Common degree program prerequisites must be accepted by all state universities and Florida College System institutions, except in cases approved by the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors, as appropriate (see attached “Common Prerequisite Expectations” document for specific requirements and expectations). The statute also directs the Department to “develop a centralized database containing the list of courses and course substitutions that meet the prerequisite requirements for each baccalaureate degree program.” This database (the Common Prerequisite Manual) is intended to be the official repository of all state-approved common prerequisites.

Project Overview

In 2008, the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) began a comprehensive update/revision of the common prerequisites for all baccalaureate degree programs to ensure alignment with institutional practice. The goal of this project was to facilitate student transition from an associate’s degree to the upper division at a 4-year public institution through the accurate publication of newly approved, commonly agreed upon, prerequisite courses in the Common Prerequisite Manual housed on the FACTS.org Web site. The need for this project was also supported by the findings of OPPAGA Report No. 08-11, entitled *Inconsistent Implementation of Common Prerequisites Creates Barriers to Effective 2+2 Articulation*.

HEATHER R. SHERRY, PH.D.
Director, Office of Articulation

Throughout the course of this project, approximately 800 postsecondary faculty members served on 28 discipline committees which included a number of subcommittees associated with specific majors in each discipline. Recommendations from each discipline committee were reviewed by the Oversight Committee and then forwarded to the ACC for approval. The committees were directed to conduct their review with the objective of reducing the number of different “tracks” within 6-digit CIP programs, wherever possible.

- There were 225 degree programs (318 tracks) listed in the 2008-2009 *Common Prerequisite Manual*. Three (3) of these programs have been terminated. Thirteen (13) newly-implemented degree programs were added to the 2009-2010 Common Prerequisite Manual.
- 228 degree program common prerequisites have been approved by the Oversight Committee and the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC). Due to the magnitude of the project, ACC approval was granted in three phases: 1) October 2008; 2) February 2009; and 3) May 2009.
- There were 318 degree program tracks in the 2008-2009 manual. As of July 2009, 288 tracks have been approved by the ACC. When the few remaining programs are approved for the 2010-2011 manual, there will be fewer tracks, even though the number of degree programs will be greater than in 2008.

Implementation of Changes to Program Prerequisites

The final updates to the 2009-2010 Common Prerequisite Manual have been posted on the FACTS.org Web site under the Counselors and Educators tab. All revisions are effective beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year and any new requirements should be applied only to entering freshman in fall 2009 and thereafter. Students are expected to be responsible for completion of the prerequisites listed in the Common Prerequisite Manual published 2 years prior to admission to the upper division. For example, if a student applies for admission to the upper division in fall 2011, the student should be held responsible for completing the prerequisites listed in the 2009-2010 Common Prerequisite Manual. Exceptions to this policy may be granted if the requirements of a later Common Prerequisite Manual would be beneficial to the student (i.e., fewer courses required). However, given the comprehensive nature of the project and the delay in final posting of the 2009-2010 manual beyond the start of the fall 2009 semester, ***institutions are strongly encouraged to remain flexible for students who are currently enrolled as freshmen.*** It is suggested that students be allowed to adhere to either the 2008-2009 OR 2009-2010 Manual for degree programs that 1) have prerequisites that must be completed during the freshman year or 2) had major changes to required coursework as a result of this project.

Process for Future Review

By October 28, 2009, a comprehensive review of ALL degree programs will be completed via this project, and the intent is to develop a process that will allow for future review of common prerequisite requirements to be conducted in a cyclical, staggered manner. This will allow for appropriate oversight and review without necessitating an overwhelming amount of change in any given year. Future manuals are expected to be posted on the FACTS.org Web site in January of each year, which will allow ample time for information from the new manual to be included in institutional catalogs for the following fall. The 2010-2011 manual will be posted in January 2010.

We are in the process of developing a web-based form which will make it easier to electronically initiate change requests for future manuals. In the meantime, any requests for changes or concerns regarding discrepancies between the manual and institutional practice should be sent to Dr. Heather Sherry, Director, Office of Articulation, at: Articulation@fldoe.org.

Common Prerequisite Expectations

- Common prerequisites and any related common grade expectations for entry into each upper-division major shall be approved by the ACC, utilizing the ACC's established process.
- Some ACC-approved common prerequisite courses or their alternatives may not be widely available throughout the state. Institutions offering baccalaureates requiring unique prerequisite courses are expected to, within fiscal and programmatic constraints, provide transfer students with an opportunity to access the prerequisite courses.
- Each institution shall establish processes to ensure that the curriculum of each of its baccalaureate majors contains *no lower-division prerequisites not approved by the ACC*. This requirement does not preclude a program from having additional lower-division course requirements, as long as there is room in the second half of the program to fulfill these requirements without extending the program beyond its approved length.
- Institutions are expected to consult with staff in their respective chancellor's office during the process of planning a new baccalaureate program to ensure compliance with ACC-approved common prerequisite requirements and the early resolution of potential conflicts.
- Upon approval, common prerequisites (including acceptable alternatives and any minimum common course grade expectations) shall be posted in a common format and location prescribed by the ACC (i.e. the Common Prerequisite Manual).
- Public institutions offering baccalaureate programs shall publish the ACC-approved common prerequisites and any related ACC-approved minimum grades required for admission to their upper-division majors and/or provide links to the full array of common prerequisites and acceptable alternatives. They shall establish processes to ensure that information provided in the institution's catalog, on departmental Web sites, in advising tracking/mapping systems, to FACTS.org, and through other venues, includes the same ACC-approved common prerequisite information and/or a link to that information.
- For some majors, an institution may prefer that native students take specific common prerequisites from a list of approved course alternatives. This preference may be noted in institutional documents. However, the institution still must accept ACC-approved alternatives and list the alternatives and/or provide a link to the full array of acceptable alternatives.
- Institutions offering baccalaureate programs shall provide students with an appeals process regarding common prerequisite decisions.
- Students who transfer from one public institution to another in the State University System and The Florida College System within two (2) years of their matriculation and seek admittance to the upper division come under the common prerequisite requirements of their entering catalog. However, if the student does not seek admittance within two years of his or her matriculation, he or she will come under the manual dated two years prior to transfer. For example, if the student enters in fall 1999, but does not transfer until fall 2005, he or she must meet the requirements of the 2003-2004 Manual. Institutions may make an exception to the two-year catalog policy, if it is beneficial to the student.