

AP 4260 Prerequisites and Co-requisites

Reference:

Title 5 Sections 55000 et seq.

Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites:

Prerequisites, co-requisites, advisories, and limitations are necessary to ensure that students succeed in their coursework and have access to the courses they require. It is important to have prerequisites in place where they are a vital factor in maintaining academic standards. It is also necessary to ensure that prerequisites, co-requisites, advisories, and limitations do not constitute unjustifiable obstacles to student access and success. Therefore, to foster the appropriate balance between these two concerns, the Education Code requires that prerequisites, co-requisites, advisories, and limitations be established based solely on content review or content review with statistical validation.

1. The college shall provide the following explanations both in the college catalog and in the schedule of courses.
 - a. Definitions of prerequisites, co-requisites, and limitations on enrollment including the differences among them and the specific prerequisites, co-requisites, and limitations on enrollment that have been established.
 - b. Procedures for a student to challenge prerequisites, co-requisites, and limitations on enrollment and circumstances under which a student is encouraged to make such a challenge. The information about challenges must include, at a minimum, the specific process including any deadlines, the various types of challenge that are established in law, and any additional types of challenge permitted by the college.
 - c. Definitions of advisories on recommended preparation, the right of a student to choose to take a course without meeting the advisory, and circumstances under which a student is encouraged to exercise that right.
 - d. Definitions of contract course, co-requisite, noncredit basic skills course, non-degree-applicable basic skills courses, prerequisite and satisfactory grade.
2. The college will assure that appropriate courses that do not require prerequisites or corequisites, whether basic skills or degree-applicable courses, and prerequisites or corequisite courses are made reasonably available to students.

3. In order to be certified to approve stand-alone credit courses locally allowed in Title 5, section 55100, the college will annually certify that all individuals, who will be involved in the curriculum approval process at each college, have been trained in accordance with the regulations and the following criteria:
 - * The college curriculum committee and all other individuals who will be involved in the curriculum approval process have completed training on stand-alone course approval
 - * The District will annually certify that all faculty and staff involved in the curriculum approval process have completed training

Challenge Process

1. Any student who does not meet a prerequisite or co-requisite or who is not permitted to enroll due to a limitation on enrollment but who provides satisfactory evidence may seek entry into the course as follows:
 - a. Students must file a petition to challenge the prerequisite or co-requisite. Once the petition is processed, the student is contacted and is eligible to enroll in the class. The petition to challenge must be resolved within five working days.
 - b. If no space is available in the course when a challenge is filed, the challenge shall be resolved prior to the beginning of registration for the next term and, if the challenge is upheld, the student shall be permitted to enroll if space is available when the student registers for that subsequent term.

Grounds for challenge shall include the following:

1. Those grounds for challenge specified in title 5, Section 55201(f).
2. The student seeks to enroll and has not been allowed to enroll due to a competition or public performance, or one or more of the courses for which enrollment has been limited to a cohort of students. The student shall be allowed to enroll in such a course if otherwise he/she would be delayed by a semester or more in attaining the degree or certificate specified in his/her educational plan.

3. The student seeks to enroll in a course that has a prerequisite established to protect health and safety, and the student demonstrates that he/she does not pose a threat to himself/herself or others.
4. The student has the obligation to provide satisfactory evidence that the challenge should be upheld. However, where facts essential to a determination of whether the student's challenge should be upheld are or ought to be in the college's own records, then the college has the obligation to produce that information.

Curriculum Review Process

The curriculum review process shall at a minimum be in accordance with all of the following:

1. Establish a curriculum committee and its membership in a manner that is mutually agreeable to the college administration and the academic senate.
2. Establish prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories on recommended preparation (advisories) only upon the recommendation of the academic senate except that the academic senate may delegate this task to the curriculum committee without forfeiting its rights or responsibilities under Section 53200-53204 of Title 5. Certain limitations on enrollment must be established in the same manner.
3. Establish prerequisites, co-requisites, advisories on recommended preparation, and limitations on enrollment only if:
 - a. The faculty in the discipline or, if the college has no faculty member in the discipline, the faculty in the department do all of the following:
 - i. Approve the course; and,
 - ii. As a separate action, approve any prerequisite or co-requisite, only if:
 - 1.) The prerequisite or co-requisite is an appropriate and rational measure of a student's readiness to enter the course or program as demonstrated by a content review including, at a minimum, all of the following:
 - a.) involvement of faculty with appropriate expertise;

- b.) consideration of course objectives set by relevant department(s). The curriculum review process should be done in a manner that is in accordance with accreditation standards.
 - c.) be based on a detailed course syllabus and outline of record, tests, related instructional materials, course format, type and number of examinations, and grading criteria;
 - d.) specification of the body of knowledge and/or skills which are deemed necessary at entry and/or concurrent with enrollment;
 - e.) identification and review of the prerequisite or co-requisite which develops the body of knowledge and/or measures skills identified under iv.
 - f.) matching of the knowledge and skills in the targeted course (identified under iv.) and those developed or measured by the prerequisite or co-requisite (i.e., the course or assessment identified under v.); and
 - g.) maintain documentation that the above steps were taken.
- 2.) The prerequisite or co-requisite meets the scrutiny specified in one of the procedures for review of individual courses (see below), and specify which.
- iii. Approve any limitation on enrollment that is being established for an honors course or section, for a course that includes intercollegiate competition or public performance, or so that a cohort of students will be enrolled in two or more courses, and, in a separate action, specify which.
- iv. Approve that the course meets the academic standards required for degree applicable courses, non-degree applicable courses, non-credit courses, or community service respectively.

- v. Review the course outline to determine if a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student had knowledge or skills not taught in the course. If the student would need knowledge or skills not taught in the course itself, then the course may be approved for degree applicable credit only if all requirements for establishing the appropriate prerequisite have been met excepting only approval by the curriculum committee.
 - vi. Review the course outline to determine whether receiving a satisfactory grade is dependent on skills in communication or computation. If receiving a satisfactory grade is sufficiently dependent on such skills, then the course may be approved for degree applicable credit only if all requirements have been met for establishing a prerequisite or co-requisite of not less than eligibility for enrollment to a degree-applicable course in English or mathematics, respectively.
- b. A course which should have a prerequisite or co-requisite as provided in (5) or (6) but for which one or more of the requirements for establishing a prerequisite have not been met may only:
- i. Be reviewed and approved pursuant to the standards for non-degree applicable credit, non-credit, or community service; or
 - ii. Be revised and reviewed as required to meet the criteria for establishing the necessary prerequisites or co-requisites.
- c. The curriculum committee also reviews the course and prerequisite in a manner that meets each of the requirements specified above.
4. Program Review. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years for regular courses and every 2 years for vocational education courses, the college shall review each prerequisite, co-requisite, or advisory to establish that each is still supported by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the curriculum committee and is still in compliance with all other provisions of this policy and with the law. Any prerequisite or co-requisite that is still supported shall be reviewed promptly thereafter to assure that it is in compliance with all other provisions of this policy and with the law.
5. Implementing Prerequisites, Co-requisites, and Limitations on Enrollment. Implementation of prerequisites, co-requisites, and limitations on enrollment

must be done in a consistent manner and not left exclusively to the classroom instructor. Every attempt shall be made to enforce all conditions a student must meet to be enrolled in the course through the registration process so that a student is not permitted to enroll unless he or she has met all the conditions or has met all except those for which he or she has a pending challenge or for which further information is needed before final determination is possible of whether the student has met the condition.

Review of Individual Courses

If the student's enrollment in a course or program is to be contingent on his or her having met the proposed prerequisite(s) or co-requisite(s), then such a prerequisite or co-requisite must be established as follows. If enrollment is not blocked, then what is being established is not a prerequisite or co-requisite but, rather, an advisory on recommended preparation and must be identified as such in the schedule and catalog. Establishing advisories does not require all the following steps.

1. Prerequisites and Co-requisites

a. Levels of Scrutiny. Prerequisites and co-requisites must meet the requirements of at least one of the following subsections:

- i. **The Standard Prerequisites or Co-requisites.** The college may establish satisfactory completion of a course as prerequisite or co-requisite for another course provided that, in addition to obtaining the review of the faculty in the discipline or department and the curriculum committee as provided above, the college specifies as part of the course outline of record at least three of the campuses of the University of California and the California State University which reflect in their catalogs that they offer the equivalent course with the equivalent prerequisite(s) or co-requisite(s). Any combination of University of California campuses and California State University campuses is acceptable in satisfaction of this requirement.
- ii. **Sequential Courses Within and Across Disciplines.** A course may be established as a prerequisite or co-requisite for another course provided that, in addition to the review by faculty in the department or discipline and by the curriculum committee as described above, skills, concepts, and/or information taught in the first course are presupposed in the second course, and a list of the specific skills and/or knowledge a student must possess in order to

be ready to take the second course is included in its outline of record.

iii. Courses in Communication or Computation Skills. Prerequisites establishing communication or computational skill requirements may not be established across the entire curriculum unless established on a course by course basis. A course in communication or computation skills, or eligibility for enrollment in such a course, may be established as a prerequisite or co-requisite for any course other than another course in communication or computation skills if, in addition to the review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the curriculum committee as provided above, the following is also done:

- 1.) A list of the specific skills a student must possess in order to be ready to take the course is included in the course outline of record; and
- 2.) Research is conducted as provided above. The prerequisite or co-requisite may be established for a period of not more than two years while the research is being conducted provided that a determination is made that a student who lacks the particular skills is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade because a sufficient percentage of the grade is directly dependent on these skills. This determination must be approved both by the faculty in the discipline and by the curriculum committee as provided above and must be based on a review of the syllabus as well as samples of tests and other assignments on which the grade is based.

b. Cut Scores and Prerequisites. Whether or not research is required to establish a prerequisite, data collected to validate assessment instruments and cut scores is always relevant to reviewing the prerequisites for the associated courses. If such data are insufficient to establish the cut scores, any course prerequisites established for the same course or courses may not be printed in subsequent catalogs and schedules nor enforced in subsequent semesters until the problems are resolved, and sufficient data exist to establish the cut scores. In such a case, the collection of these data shall be done in the manner prescribed above in addition to other requirements of law. Such a prerequisite may be changed to an advisory on recommended preparation while the problems are being resolved.

- c. Programs. In order to establish a prerequisite for a program, the proposed prerequisite must be approved as provided for a course prerequisite in regard to at least one course that is required as part of the program.
- d. Health and Safety. A prerequisite or co-requisite may be established provided that, in addition to the review by faculty in the department or division and by the curriculum committee as provided above:
 - i. The course for which the prerequisite is proposed is one in which the student might endanger his or her own health and safety or the health and safety of others; and
 - ii. The prerequisite is that the student possesses what is necessary to protect his or her health and safety and the health and safety of others before entering the course.
- e. Recency and Other Measures of Readiness: Recency and other measures of readiness may be established as a prerequisite or co-requisite only if, in addition to the review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the curriculum committee as provided above, the following is also done:
 - i. A list of the specific skills a student must possess in order to be ready to take the course is included in the course outline of record.
 - ii. Data are gathered according to sound research practices in at least one of the following areas:
 - 1.) The extent to which students, those currently enrolled in the course or those who have completed it, believe the proposed prerequisite or co-requisite is necessary.
 - 2.) Comparison of the faculty members' appraisal of students' readiness for the course to whether students met the proposed prerequisite or co-requisite. The faculty appraisal could be done at any time in the semester that the college determined was appropriate and based on independent assignments, quizzes and exams, participation in courses or other indicators that the student was or was not ready to take the course.
 - 3.) Comparison of students' performance at any point in the course with completion of the proposed prerequisite or co-requisite.

4.) Comparison of student performance in the course to their scores on assessment instruments in the manner required to validate an assessment instrument and cut scores for the course in question as described above.

ii. The standard for any comparison done shall be that a student is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course unless the student has met the proposed prerequisite or co-requisite. The research design, operational definitions, and numerical standards, if appropriate, shall be developed by research personnel, discipline faculty, and representatives of the academic senate. If the evidence fails to meet the standard established, each college may establish the proposed prerequisite or co-requisite as a recommended preparation and may seek to establish it as a prerequisite or co-requisite only by following the process described in this policy and any applicable college policies.

iv. If the curriculum committee has determined as provided in these procedures that a new course needs to have a prerequisite or co-requisite, then the prerequisite or co-requisite may be established for a single period of not more than two years while research is being conducted and a determination is being made, provided that:

- 1.) All other requirements for establishing the prerequisite or co-requisite have already been met; and
- 2.) Students are informed that they may enroll in the course although they do not meet the prerequisite. However, students who lack the prerequisite may not constitute more than 20% of those enrolled in any section of the course. Prerequisites and co-requisites that are exempt from review at the time they are, or were, established are not eligible for this exception, and the research must be conducted during the six years before they must be reviewed.

f. Additional Rules. Title 5, Section 55202 specifies additional rules, which are to be considered part of this document as though reproduced here.

2. Advisories on Recommended Preparation.

The college may recommend that a student meet a standard of readiness at entry only if recommended by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the curriculum committee as provided in above. This process is required

whether the college used to describe such recommendations in its catalog or schedule as "prerequisites," or "recommended," or by any other term.

3. Limitations on Enrollment.

The types of limitation on enrollment specified below may only be established through the curriculum review process by the discipline or department faculty and the curriculum committee specified above including the requirement to review them again at least every six years; for example, as part of program review. The following requirements must also be met in order to establish these particular limitations on enrollment.

a. Performance Courses. The college may establish audition or try-out as a limitation on enrollment for courses that include public performance or intercollegiate competition such as but not limited to band, orchestra, theater, competitive speech, chorus, journalism, dance, and intercollegiate athletics provided that:

- i. For any certificate or associate degree requirement which can be met by taking this course, there is another course or courses which satisfy the same requirement; and
- ii. The college includes in the course outline of record a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which meet the same requirement.

Limitations on enrollment established as provided for performance courses shall be reviewed during program review or at least every six years to determine whether the audition or try-out process is having a disproportionate impact on any historically under-represented group and, if so, a plan shall be adopted to seek to remedy the disproportionate impact. If disproportionate impact has been found, the limitation on enrollment may not be printed in subsequent catalogs or schedules nor enforced in any subsequent term until such a plan has been endorsed by the department and the college administration and put into effect.

Implementing Prerequisites, Co-Requisites, and Limitations on Enrollment

Implementation of prerequisites, co-requisites, and limitations on enrollment must be done in a consistent manner and not left exclusively to the classroom instructor. Every attempt shall be made to enforce all conditions a student must meet to be enrolled in the course through the registration process so that a student is not permitted to enroll unless he/she has met all the conditions or has met all except those for which he/she has a pending challenge or for

which further information is needed before final determination is possible of whether the student has met the condition.

Instructors Formal Agreement to Teach the Course as Described

Each college shall establish a procedure so that courses for which prerequisites or co-requisites are established will be taught in accordance with the course outline that are the basis for justifying the establishment by consulting collegially with the local academic senate and, if appropriate, the local bargaining unit.

Honors Courses

A limitation on enrollment for an honors course or an honors section of a course may be established if, in addition to the review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the curriculum committee as provided above, there is another section or another course or courses at the college which satisfy the same requirements. If the limitation is for an honors course and not only for an honors section, the college must also include in the course outline of record a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which meet the same associate degree or certificate requirement.

Blocks of Courses or Sections

Blocks of courses or blocks of sections of courses are two or more courses or sections for which enrollment is limited in order to create a cohort of students. Such a limitation on enrollment may be established if, in addition to review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the curriculum committee as provided above, there is another section or another course or courses that satisfy the same requirement. If the cohort is created through limitations on enrollment in the courses rather than limitations on specific sections of courses, then the college must include in the course outline of record a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which satisfy the same associate degree or certificate requirement.