

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC 15

Application for Exceptions to Credit Caps on Majors

The 2015-2016 Academic Policy Committee (APC) Recommendation For Implementing the Exceptions to Credit Caps on Majors Established in Senate Document 1814F

On December 4th, 2014 the Senate approved Senate Document (SD) 1814F. This document reads:

APC recommends that the combination of major (including all concentrations, excluding Teacher Licensure) and LAC requirements may not exceed 100 hours and that no more than 45 required hours in the major (including all concentrations, excluding Teacher Licensure) may come from a single prefix. Departments may petition to APC for exceptions by providing supportive data and curricular comparisons with peer universities.

APC recommends that the petition policy described in SD 1814F be implemented as follows:

1. Procedure

- a. Before the start of each academic year the Registrar's office will identify departments and concentrations whose combination of major (including all concentrations, excluding Teacher Licensure) and LAC requirements and/or required hours in the major (including all concentrations, excluding Teacher Licensure) exceed the credit caps established in SD 1814F or its successor documents. They will do so using a formula based on the LAC and credit cap requirements current to the academic year in which the analysis is conducted. The formula used to determine if the LAC credit hour cap is exceeded will add the total number of LAC credit hours and major credit hours in the concentration for which the determination is being made and then subtract the total number of credit hours for which major requirements and LAC requirements overlap. The overlap will include elective courses that satisfy major requirements as long as these elective courses are offered at least once every year.

Example:

In AY 2015-16 the General Concentration in Economics requires 34 hours of courses with an ECON prefix and 4 hours with a STAT prefix. As enumerated in SD0713F (2013-2014) – the Liberal Arts Core Implementation Proposal – the sum of the credit hours needed to meet the LAC requirement is 47. Completion of either ECON 101 or ECON 102, courses that are offered every semester, satisfies the Social Science LAC requirement, completion of ECON 230, which is offered every spring, satisfies the Diversity Intensive LAC requirement, and completion of STAT 185, which is offered every semester, satisfies the Mathematics LAC requirement. Thus the minimum total number of hours in the General Concentration in Economics is $34 + 4 = 38$ and the minimum total number of hours to satisfy the major plus LAC requirements is $38 + 47 - 3 - 3 - 4 = 75$.

- b. The Registrar's Office will provide the Provost, the Deans, the department Chairs, and APC the results of their credit cap analysis prior to the start of each academic year.
- c. Departments identified as exceeding the caps will be invited to visit APC within two full academic semesters and present either of the following:
 - i. A curricular revision that satisfies the credit caps established in SD 1814F or its successor documents plus a 4-year semester-by-semester plan listing the department's anticipated course offerings and the instructors assigned to teach each section. The purpose of the plan is to help APC understand the department's curricular needs and aid APC's assessment of the department's ability to deliver their proposed curriculum.
 - ii. A petition for exemption that:
 - (1) Uses a table to compare the department's course titles, content, credit hours, and number of concentrations to the same at a minimum of 6 peer and aspirational schools. At least 4 of these schools must be chosen by the department from a list provided by APC and the remaining 2 schools may be chosen at the discretion of the department. Of the 4 chosen from APC's list, at least two must be from a list of public schools deemed comparable by both BOG and APC and at most 2 may be from a list of private schools deemed comparable by APC. The current lists are attached as Appendix A. APC will weigh multiple factors including, but not limited to, enrollment, number of faculty, Carnegie classification, retention, and 4-year graduation rates when considering the appropriateness of the comparisons with the schools chosen by the departments that are not on APC's list.
 - (2) Provides a rationale for the number of concentrations and the number of courses and credit hours in each concentration (all concentrations, not just those over the caps). The rationale must include a component that is comparative in nature and makes use of the table described above.

- (3) Includes a 4-year semester-by-semester plan listing the department's anticipated course offerings and the instructors assigned to teach each section of each course. The purpose of the plan is to help APC understand the department's curricular needs and aid APC's assessment of the department's ability to deliver their proposed curriculum.

APC will evaluate the petitions and weigh factors that include, but may not be limited to, apparent disciplinary norms, impact on teaching resources, time to graduation, and value added by exceptions to the major and total required course caps. If granted, the exemptions will last for the shorter of five years or changes in course offerings (including the frequency with which courses that satisfy both major and LAC requirements are offered) or graduation requirements (the department's or the University's) that put the department and any of its concentrations over the cap(s).

2. Consequences

- a. APC will not approve changes to majors with concentrations over the cap limits unless the department has been granted an exemption. This applies to all concentrations within the major, not just those over the cap(s).
- b. The Provost and Deans will receive the petitions for exemption and APC's decisions regarding them at the same time APC and the departments do. It is likely the Provost and the Deans will communicate to the departments the benefits of curricular changes that put the departments under the caps. These benefits may include, but are not limited to, the greater likelihood of position requests and Personal Development Leaves being granted. Because they are not constrained by APC's decisions, however, the grant of an exemption by APC is no guarantee that the Provost and the Deans will grant similar exemptions from their policies with respect to credit caps.

3. Rationale

This document completes the charge made to APC in Senate Document (SD) 1814F. Our intent is to create a transparent process that helps departments prepare petitions we are most likely to find persuasive. In addition, by describing the *minimum* elements that must be included (e.g., "a minimum of 6 peer and aspirational schools" and "[t]he rationale must include a component that is comparative in nature ") we have by design created a process with room for departments to add data and arguments they believe make their case for exemptions.