

## THE MODEL DISTRICT POLICY

This model is written as a district policy for a multi-college district. Districts that have only one college may wish to edit accordingly. Indeed, even multi-college districts may prefer a policy that leaves more or less discretion to the colleges.

Some parts of the model are specifically required by the regulations and, therefore, must be part of every district's policy. Such required sections are marked "Regulation" in the margin. Parts of the model are crucial to satisfactory implementation of the regulations and are marked "Crucial" in the margin. Districts may change these crucial parts of the model as they draft their own local policies. However, they must submit a rationale for any changes in the crucial areas of the model, and those changes require the approval of the Chancellor. Still other parts of the model are only advisory. They represent the counsel of those faculty and administrators who have studied these issues carefully over the last many months but may be changed in whatever manner the local district sees fit.

Since this model as it stands provides for all requirements of state law, a district which simply adopts this model and submits it as its local policy will thereby have met all related provisions of law and will receive prompt approval and support by the Chancellor's Office. If, however, the district believes it has a better way to establish, review, and provide for challenges to prerequisites, corequisites, advisories, and limitations on enrollment, it is welcome to adopt the policies it deems most advisable and, then, to submit that policy to the Chancellor together with a rationale for changes in the crucial areas of the model. If the district delegates certain of these matters, then the college policies or procedures must be submitted at the same time. The Chancellor's staff will review the policies joined. If the task force's recommendation is accepted, by people from the field, both faculty and appropriate administrators. If the policies offer sound processes and comply with the regulations, they will be approved. If the district policy is challenged legally after being approved by the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Office will support the district by attesting to the fact that the policy meets all applicable provisions of law.

It has been difficult to develop a model policy that balances access and quality, that seeks to get meaningful information to students, maintain academic quality and integrity while also avoiding the creation of unnecessary obstacles to the achievement of students' goals. This document was developed by a Chancellor's Task Force relying on work not only by its own subcommittee but also by the Academic Senate, the Chief Instructional Officers, and others. Those who developed this model hope it will meet the needs of many and serve as a fruitful basis for discussion and local policy development for all.

The [name] Community College District adopts the following policy in order to provide for the establishing, reviewing, and challenging of prerequisites, corequisites, advisories on recommended preparation, and certain limitations on enrollment in a manner consistent with law and good practice. The board recognizes that, if these prerequisites, corequisites, advisories, and limitations are established unnecessarily or inappropriately, they constitute unjustifiable obstacles to student access and success and, therefore, the board adopts this policy which calls for caution and careful scrutiny in establishing them. Nonetheless, the board also recognizes that it is as important to have prerequisites in place where they are a vital factor in maintaining academic standards as it is to avoid establishing prerequisites where they are not needed. For these reasons, the board has sought to establish a policy that fosters the appropriate balance between these two concerns.

### I. College Policies and Procedures

#### A. Information in the Catalog and Schedule of Classes

Each college shall provide the following explanations both in the college catalog and in the schedule of classes:

1. Definitions of prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment including the differences among them and the specific prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment which have been established.
2. Procedures for a student to challenge prerequisites, corequisites, 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.<sup>1</sup>
3. Define 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.

##### *1.A Crucial*

*The college must be required to provide clear and unambiguous information at least in the catalog and schedule defining prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation, explaining the differences between these terms, explaining student rights to challenge prerequisites and corequisites or to enroll despite lacking the preparation recommended in the advisory, and listing every prerequisite or corequisite which will be enforced.*

#### B. Challenge Process

Each college shall establish a process by which any student who does not meet a prerequisite or corequisite or who is not permitted to enroll due to a limitation on enrollment but who provides satisfactory evidence may seek entry into the class as follows:

##### *1.B. Regulation*

*Section 65201(e) requires that colleges have a challenge process, provide challenge at least on several specified grounds, and inform students of their rights.*

1. If space is available in a course when a student files a challenge to the Prerequisite or corequisite, the district shall reserve a seat for the student and resolve the challenge within five (5) working days. If the challenge is

upheld or the district fails to resolve the challenge within the five (5) working-day period, the student shall be allowed to enroll in the course. 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.<sup>3</sup>

*1.B.1. Crucial*

*It is required that provision be made for resolving challenges in a timely manner. It is crucial that, if the challenge process takes more than five working days, the student is assured a seat in the class if the challenge is ultimately upheld.*

2. Grounds for challenge shall include the following:
  - a. Those grounds for challenge specified in Section 55201(e) of Title V.
  - b. The student seeks to enroll and has not been allowed to enroll due to a limitation on enrollment established for a course that involves intercollegiate 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 or she would be delayed<sup>3</sup> by a semester or more in attaining the degree or certificate specified in his or her Student Educational Plan.
  - c. The student seeks to enroll in a course which has a prerequisite established to protect health and safety, and the student demonstrates that he or she does not pose a threat to himself or herself or others.<sup>4</sup>
3. The college shall formally establish a challenge process including:
  - a. Who makes the determination of whether the challenge is valid. For challenges concerning academic qualifications, the initial determination should be made by someone who is knowledgeable about the discipline, preferably someone qualified to teach in the discipline, but not the person who is the instructor of the section in which the student wishes to enroll.
  - b. What possibility of appeal exists. If the validity of the challenge is determined by one person and not a committee, there must be an opportunity to appeal.
  - c. 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.<sup>5</sup>

*1.B.3. Crucial*

*Colleges must be required to specify who handles the challenge and the appeal process, if one is being established.*

C. Curriculum Review Process

The curriculum review process at each college 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.

*1.C.1. Regulation*

*A curriculum committee established by mutual agreement of the administration and the senate is required. However, the committee may be either a committee of the academic senate or a committee which includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate [Title V, Section 55002(a)(1)]*

2. Establish prerequisites, corequisites, 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 V. Certain limitations on enrollment must be established in the same manner. See II.C. below.

*1.C.2. Crucial*

*Title V, Sections 53200-204 mandates that prerequisites are one of the issues on which a board must consult collegially with the academic senate. The specific language of the model is the council of the drafting committee but is not required.*

3. Establish prerequisites, corequisites, advisories on recommended preparation, and limitations on enrollment only if:

*1.C.3. Crucial*

*Section 55201(b)(1) requires that there be content review as part of the process for establishing any prerequisite, corequisite, or advisory. It is crucial that there be a careful content review process and that the specific steps of that process are clearly specified in the policy. It is also crucial that the approval of the prerequisite or corequisite (or advisory) be done explicitly and not be inferred from the approval of the course. Lastly, it is also crucial that provision be made for providing those with expertise on the discipline in question an adequate voice in the content review process.*

- 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:
  - (1) Approve the course;<sup>6</sup> and,
  - (2) As a separate action, approve any prerequisite or corequisite, only if:
    - (a) The prerequisite or corequisite 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:

- i. involvement of faculty with appropriate expertise;
  - ii. 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;
  - iii. 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;
  - iv. specification of the body of knowledge and/or skills which are deemed necessary at entry and/or concurrent with enrollment;
  - v. identification and review of the prerequisite or corequisite which develops the body of knowledge and/or measures skills identified under iv;
  - vi. matching of the knowledge and skills in the targeted course (identified under iv.) and those developed or measured by the prerequisite or corequisite (i.e., the course or assessment identified under v.); and
  - vii. maintain documentation that the above steps were taken.
- (b) The prerequisite or corequisite meets the scrutiny specified in one of the following II.A.1.a through II.A.1.g. and specify which.<sup>7</sup>
- (3) 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.
- (4) Approve that the course meets the academic standards required for degree applicable courses, non-degree applicable courses, non-credit courses, or community service respectively.<sup>8</sup>

*1.C.3.a.(4) Regulation*

*Section 55002 requires that courses be approved only if they meet specific criteria established for degree credit courses, non-degree applicable credit courses, non-credit courses, or community service courses. Subsections (a)(2)(D) and (a)(2)(E) of Section 55002 require further that courses that should have prerequisites to ensure academic standards may only be approved as degree applicable courses provided that the criteria have been met for establishing the needed prerequisites*

- (a) 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 accepting only approval by the curriculum committee.
- (b) 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 corequisite of not less than eligibility for enrollment to a degree-applicable course in English or mathematics, respectively.<sup>9</sup>
- (c) A course which should have a prerequisite or corequisite as provided in (A) or (B) but for which one or more of the requirements for establishing a prerequisite have not been met may only:<sup>10</sup>

*1.C.3.a.(4)(C) Regulation*

*Section 55002(a) specifies conditions a course must meet before a curriculum committee may approve it for degree applicable credit. Subsections 55002(a)(2)(D) and (E) specify that establishing a prerequisite or corequisite is a condition for approval if a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student has knowledge or skills not taught in the course for, success in the course is dependent upon communication or computation skills.*

- [1] Be reviewed and approved pursuant to the standards for non-degree applicable credit, non-credit, or community service; (Section 55002), or
- [2] Be revised and reviewed as required to meet the criteria for establishing the necessary prerequisites or corequisites.<sup>11</sup>

- b. The curriculum committee also reviews the course and prerequisite in a manner that meets each of the requirements specified in 1.C.3.a.(1)(4).

**D. Program Review**

As a regular part of the Program Review process or at least every six years, the college shall review each prerequisite, corequisite, 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. Prerequisites or corequisites established between July 6, 1990, and October 31, 1993, shall be reviewed by July 1, 1996. Any prerequisite or corequisite which is successfully challenged under subsections (1), (2) or (3) of Section 55201(f) shall be reviewed promptly thereafter to assure that it is in compliance with all other provisions of this policy and with the law.

*1.D. Crucial*

*Section 55201 (b)(3) requires that prerequisites and corequisites be reviewed at least once every six years. The regulation only requires that advisories be reviewed periodically. However, it is crucial that the district policy specify some reasonable frequency for reviewing advisories.*

- E. Implementing Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Limitations on Enrollment  
Implementation of prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment must be done in some 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 class 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.<sup>12</sup>

*IE. Crucial*

*It is crucial that there be an explicit statement of how prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment will be implemented. It is also crucial that the implementation not be left exclusively to each individual classroom faculty member and that it be clear in what way the registration process will be used for the implementation.*

- F. Instructor's Formal Agreement to Teach the Course as Described  
Each college shall establish a procedure so that courses for which prerequisites or corequisites are established will be taught in accordance with the course outline, particularly those aspects of the course outline that are the basis for justifying the establishment of the prerequisite or corequisite. The process shall be established by consulting collegially with the local academic senate and, if appropriate, the local bargaining unit.

*I.F. Crucial*

*Section 55201 (b) (2) requires that there be procedures for assuring that any course for which there is a prerequisite or corequisite will be taught in a manner that fits with the documents on the basis of which the prerequisite or corequisite was established.*

II. 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 corequisite(s), then such a prerequisite or corequisite must be established as follows. If enrollment is not blocked, then what is being established is not a prerequisite or corequisite 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. (See II.B below.)

A. Prerequisites and Corequisites

1. Levels of Scrutiny

*IIA.1. Regulation*

*Section 55201 (b)(1) requires that there be different levels of recruiting for different types of prerequisites, corequisites. The policy must state explicitly what these levels are and for which types of prerequisites and corequisites they will be used. In addition, Section 55201 (c)(2) requires that the standard of scrutiny for any course be that a student who lacked the skills, concepts, and/or information would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course, namely a grade of Cr or ÖCÖ or better as determined by content review alone or with data collection or other scrutiny.*

Prerequisites and corequisites must meet the requirements of at least one of the following subsections:<sup>13</sup>

a. The Standard Prerequisites or Corequisites<sup>14</sup>

Each college may establish satisfactory completion of a course<sup>15</sup> as prerequisite or corequisite 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 corequisite(s). Any combination of University of California campuses and California State University campuses is acceptable in satisfaction of this requirement.

b. Sequential Courses Within and Across Disciplines<sup>16</sup>

A course may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite 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 or record.

c. 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 corequisite 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:

*IIA.1.c. Regulation*

*Section 55202(b)*

- (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 in IIA.1.g.
- (3) The prerequisite or corequisite 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 skill is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade because a sufficient percentage of the grade is directly dependent on these skills.<sup>17</sup> This determination must be approved both by the faculty in the discipline as provided in 1.C.3.a. and by the curriculum committee as provided in 1.C.3.b. 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.<sup>18</sup>

*IIA.1.c.d.g. Crucial*

*It is crucial that data be required at least for establishing these types of prerequisites and corequisites. It is also crucial that the policy specify how data will be gathered and evaluated and however it is done be consistent with sound research practices. Further, it is crucial that the policy state what the criteria will be for determining whether the data do in fact justify the establishing of the prerequisite or corequisite. Lastly, the policy must specify that a prerequisite may be put into effect before the required data have been collected only when the prerequisite is determined by the curriculum committee to be necessary pursuant to Section 55002(a)(2)(D) or (E) or other provisions of law, and that the period during which such a provisional prerequisite could be in effect be no longer than two years.*

d. 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.<sup>19</sup> 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 this data shall be done in the manner prescribed in IIA.1.g. of this policy in addition to other requirements of law.<sup>20</sup> Such a prerequisite may be changed to an advisory on recommended preparation while the problems are being resolved.

*IIA.1.d Crucial*

*See note at IIA.1.c.*

e. 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.<sup>21</sup>

*IIA.1.e. Regulation*

*Section 55201(c)(2) requires at least this justification for establishing a prerequisite for admission to a program.*

f. Health and Safety<sup>22</sup>

A prerequisite or corequisite 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:

- (1) 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
- (2) The prerequisite is that the student possess what is necessary to protect his or her health and safety and the health and safety of others before entering the course.

g. Recency and Other Measures of Readiness

Recency and other measures of readiness may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite 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:

*IIA.1.g. Crucial*

*See note at IIA.1.c.*

- (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.
- (2) Data are gathered according to sound research practices in at least one of the following areas:
  - (a) The extent to which students, those currently enrolled in the course or those who have completed it, believe the proposed prerequisite to corequisite is necessary.
  - (b) Comparison of the faculty members' appraisal of students' readiness for the course to whether students met the proposed prerequisite or corequisite. 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 class, or other indicators that the student was or was not ready to take the course.
  - (c) Comparison of students' performance at any point in the course with completion of the proposed prerequisite or corequisite.<sup>23</sup>

- (d) 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 in II.A.1.d.
- (3) The standard for any comparison done pursuant to II.A.2.(A)-(D) 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 corequisite.<sup>24</sup> The research design, operational definition, 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 corequisite as a recommended preparation and may seek to establish it as a prerequisite or corequisite only by following the process described in this policy and any applicable college policies.
- (4) If the curriculum committee has determined as provided in 1.C.3.A.(4)(a) or (b) that a new course needs to have a prerequisite or corequisite, then the prerequisite or corequisite may be established for a single period of not more than two years<sup>25</sup> while research is being conducted and a determination is being made, provided that
  - (a) All other requirements for establishing the prerequisite or corequisite have already been met; and
  - (b) 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.<sup>26</sup>
  - (c) Prerequisites and corequisites which are exempt from review at the time they are, or were, established, as provided in Section 55201(d), are not eligible for this exception, and the research must be conducted during the six years before they must be reviewed. (See I.D. above.)

*II.A.1.g.(4) Crucial*

*It is crucial that some provision be made for a course that is determined by the curriculum committee to require a prerequisite or corequisite pursuant to Section 55002(a)(2)(D) or (E) but is also a type of course which is required by the district policy to use data as a necessary part of establishing any prerequisite or corequisite in order to prevent the possibility that the course would be required to have the prerequisite before it could be offered for degree applicable credit but also prohibited from having such a prerequisite until data had been collected. The provision offered in the model is one way to bring these two provisions into harmony.*

2. Additional Rules

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

*II.A.2. Regulation*

B. Advisories on Recommended Preparation

Each 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 I.C. 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.

*II.B. Regulation*

*See also I.C. A properly constituted curriculum committee and content review are required. An explicit statement of the content review process is crucial and also that the content review process be careful and the specific steps of that process be clearly specified in the policy. It is also crucial that the approval of the advisory be done explicitly and not be inferred from the approval of the course. Lastly, it is also crucial that provision be made for providing those with expertise on the discipline in question an adequate voice in the content review process.*

C. Limitations on Enrollment

*II.C. Crucial*

*Section 58106 lists the only ways it is permissible to limit enrollment. In addition, it is crucial that the policy specify an adequate voice for experts in the discipline on the specific limitations mentioned in the model and that these limitations be permitted only if the student would have other ways to meet any associate degree graduation requirement. Lastly, it is also crucial that such limitations be reviewed regularly and that the policy specify a reasonable schedule for such review.*

The types of limitation on enrollment specified below<sup>27</sup> 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.

1. Performance Courses

Each 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:

- a. 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
- b. The college includes in the course outline or 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.
- c. 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 underrepresented group and, if so, a plan shall be adopted to seek to remedy the disproportionate impact.<sup>28</sup> 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. (See also Sections 55502(e) and 55512.)

*II.C.I.c. Crucial*

*It is crucial that courses which have try-out or audition as a means for permitting students to enroll in the course also be reviewed for whether the tryout or audition is having a disproportionate impact on any historically underrepresented group. (Section 55512 requires that Any assessment instrument, method or procedure must be evaluated for disproportionate impact on particular groups of students described in terms of ethnicity, gender, age or disability, as defined by the Chancellor.)*

2. Honors Courses<sup>29</sup>

A limitation on enrollment for an course or an honors section of a course may be established if, in addition to the review by the faculty in 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.

3. Blocks of Courses or Sections<sup>30</sup>

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 which 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.

**Model District Policy - Footnotes**

- 1 Colleges should also publish this information in the student handbook, if the college publishes one, or in whatever other documents that are published to assist students in understanding college rules and procedures.
- 2 The college has an obligation to resolve challenges in a “timely manner.” [See Section 55201 (e).] However, the student should not wait until the last minute to file the challenge. If the college could not meet the one-week timeline, it could reserve a seat for the student or make provision in its policies on maximum class size to exceed the set size for such a student.
- 3 If other courses are available which meet the same requirement, the student is not being delayed. There is no obligation to honor a student’s preference. The point is that this type of limitation on enrollment should not even be established unless alternative choices exist to meet any graduation requirement satisfied by taking the performance course.
- 4 The Federal Government’s Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires further that if a student with a disability seeks admission to a course which has a prerequisite designed to protect health and safety, then the burden is on the college to establish that there is no accommodation available that would protect health and safety and permit the student to enroll without undue costs to the district.
- 5 For example, if a student challenges on the basis of claiming that a prerequisite was not established properly, that the student must show some legitimate reason for believing that the prerequisite was not established properly. However, if the student makes a prima facie case, the college must then produce the relevant information from its own files and not expect the student to request the files and search out the information.
- 6 The main point here is that the faculty, and the curriculum committee as well, **must approve the prerequisite as a separate action from any approval of the course.** However, **it is not required that the faculty in the department in fact approve the course,** although there are obvious reasons why that is recommended good practice. Title V requires only approval of the course by a curriculum committee that is a committee of the Academic Senate or established in a manner agreeable to the Senate and the campus administration (Section 55002). Title V further requires that prerequisites and all academic and professional matters be matters for the board to rely primarily on the Senate or reach joint agreement with it. (Sections 53200 et seq.)

- 7 It is strongly encouraged that this review be based on the actual syllabus, texts, and tests for the course. Only in that way is it possible to determine not merely what the course theoretically should be requiring students to know but, rather, what in practice the course actually does require students to know. If the course is new and exams have not yet been written, an advisory could be established instead of a prerequisite or the instructor could prepare sample tests and submit them at the same time the course is being proposed. If the prerequisite or corequisite is required for the course to be approved for degree applicable credit, then the instructor shall be required to submit sample tests at the same time the course is being proposed.
- 8 Individual courses will need to be reviewed first to determine whether, if appropriate academic standards are upheld, the students would need to have met a prerequisite or enroll in a corequisite: "When the college and/or district curriculum committee determines, based on a review of the course outline of record, that a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student has knowledge or skills not taught in the course, then the course shall require prerequisites or corequisites which are established, reviewed, and applied in accordance with the requirements of Article 2 (commencing with Section 55200)," and "If success in the course is dependent upon communication or computation skills, then the course shall require ... as pre- or corequisites eligibility for enrollment in associate degree credit courses in English and/or mathematics, respectively." [Section 55002(a)(2)(E), emphasis added] Secondly, that texts and other grading criteria for the course would need to be examined to see whether in actual fact the students do need to have the indicated skills or knowledge. If a course should require a prerequisite as determined by the first review, but does not meet the criteria required for establishing the prerequisite, then it must be revised so it does meet that standard, or it may not be offered as a degree applicable credit course.
- 9 See II.A.1.c.(3) for the treatment of a course which would be required to have a prerequisite or corequisite in order to be a degree applicable course but for which data is normally required before such a prerequisite or corequisite could be established.
- 10 It is possible to have degree applicable courses which have no prerequisites at all. For example, although reading would be assigned in an art history class, it might be possible to learn enough through visual and auditory means to get a satisfactory grade even though the student had difficulty with the reading and, yet the level of instruction be collegiate.
- 11 For example, the committee receives a proposal for a physics course that is described as requiring calculus. The curriculum committee would first determine whether a calculus prerequisite seemed necessary to the course being taught at the indicated level. Since this course would appear to need a calculus prerequisite, the second step is to see whether all the requirements have been met for establishing such a prerequisite. If they have not, then the committee could not approve the course unless either (a) the further work was done to meet all the requirements for a prerequisite; or (b) the course was approved only for non-degree applicable credit, noncredit, or community service.
- 12 For example, this further information might require waiting for a final grade from the previous semester to be submitted or an assessment test to be scored. If a college is not able to put information into its data base from the transcripts of all students transferring into the college, it could simply inform the student that, according to their data, he or she has not met the prerequisite. If the student believes a course taken at another institution should satisfy the prerequisite, the student could then file a challenge and be enrolled in the course pending the resolution of the challenge. A college may also routinely ask students at the time of registration if they have met the prerequisite for the course in question and permit the student to enroll if the student says he or she has met the prerequisite. The college must then routinely check to confirm that the student has indeed met the prerequisite and, if not, the student's enrollment be canceled even if instruction has already begun.
- 13 Certain types of prerequisites need not be reviewed in this way until the next time the program of which they are a part is due for Program Review. See Section 56201(d).
- 14 This section would allow the standard and obvious prerequisites to be established with a minimum of review, enhancing the transfer function in particular and allowing for the resources of the college to be expended on the problematic cases. Examples that would fit well here are standard science class prerequisites or standard foreign language classes. Since this section is intended for very common cases, a college that is having difficulty finding three UC or CSU campuses that have the same prerequisite and the same courses should instead seek to establish the prerequisite under another subsection. However, the CAN system might provide a quick source of information on which campuses teach the most common courses. The Subject A English course is required by all UC campuses as a prerequisite for English composition classes.
- 15 Some courses have more than one prerequisite. Each prerequisite would have to be approved as provided.
- 16 Vocational courses often have obvious prerequisites, but the courses are not offered at enough UC or CSU campuses to meet the requirements of II.A.1.a. Although most such prerequisites would be within the discipline, others would not. For example, the health professions commonly have prerequisites outside the discipline such as anatomy and physiology for nursing. This same level of scrutiny could be used for establishing one course in reading or writing courses as a prerequisite for another course in reading or writing except that such prerequisites would need to be changed to advisories on recommended preparation if the data collected to establish cut-off scores on assessment tests were not sufficient for that purpose. See II.A.1.e. below.



- 17 That percentage need not be so high that the student who lost all those points would be certain to obtain an unsatisfactory grade. For example, if the student would lose 25% of the total points possible by failing the research paper assignment, then he or she could receive a "C" only by obtaining more than 90% of the remaining points, a very difficult task.
- 18 For example, if calculus is required and if problems involving calculus are on the exams but there are also extra credit opportunities sufficient to offset point lost by lacking the knowledge of calculus, then calculus is not in fact necessary. If material that is presented in reading assignments tested is also presented in class, so that it is realistic that a student with less than the recommended reading skills could nonetheless learn the material through the classroom presentations, then that level of reading preparation should only be an advisory on recommended preparation rather than a prerequisite.
- 19 Assessment tests and cut scores may only be established in the manner prescribed in "Standards, Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Assessment Instruments Used in the California Community Colleges," August, 1992.
- 20 These requirements are spelled out in the document referenced in the previous footnote.
- 21 If a college wishes to establish requirements to complete a course or courses before admission to a program in order to establish priorities for admission to the program, such a requirement may only be established as provided in Section 58106 of Title V on enrollment priorities. For example, nursing programs sometimes require completion of all requirements for the associate degree prior to admission to the nursing program itself.
- 22 Districts should also review the applicable provisions of the Federal Government's Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in regard to any requirements that apply specifically to students with disabilities.
- 23 Student performance could be measured using final grades, or it could be measured using their performance up to any point as early as six weeks into the course. The later the date chosen for measuring student performance, the more extraneous factors like change in work schedule or personal illness will also affect the data. The option described in g.(2)(b) above would permit the instructor to adjust for such irrelevant factors and even for the student who simply is not doing the assigned work as distinguished from the student who is doing the work but unsuccessfully or provide for these other factors in some other way in the research design. On the other hand, others believe that the use of faculty perception is more subjective and grades more objective. This issue is left for discussion at the campus, since all of these approaches are legitimate research methodologies, and there are no conclusive reasons to require any one of them.
- 24 This standard, that a student is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course unless the student has met the proposed prerequisite, is not an additional measure but, rather, is the point of whatever measure is used. Whether the comparison is with student final grades or with a midterm grade or student satisfaction with the prerequisite or faculty assessment of student preparation, the point is to confirm that the student would be unlikely to succeed unless he or she met the prerequisite.
- 25 Although this language would permit two years of grace, the intent is that normally the issue would be resolved during the first year. A second year is permitted only if unanticipated problems arise in the data collection process itself such that the data are lost or are rendered meaningless or unintelligible.
- 26 Provision is made here for admitting students who have not met the prerequisite since collecting meaningful data on the value of the prerequisite required being able to compare students who did meet it to students who did not. However, since a prerequisite of this type has been judged to be vital to maintaining academic standards, the qualified students should be at least 80% of any section of the course. The college might implement this provision through labeling such prerequisites as provisional and, then, permitting individual students to challenge on that basis. The college may also simply program its computer to permit students to enroll on a first-come, first-served basis and, until the 20% limit is reached, permit students who do not have the prerequisite to simply enroll in the regular registration process. In any case, the issue of how to implement this provision is left to the district or college to determine so long as students are notified of their right under this section and so long as students who lack the prerequisite are in some manner limited to not more than 20% of the total enrollment in any one section.
- 27 These limitations on enrollment are academic matters and need to be established through the curriculum process. Other limitations on enrollment may also be determined to be academic and professional matters as provided in Section 53200 et seq., or be included in collective bargaining agreements or be imposed by outside agencies such as fire departments. This document should not be interpreted to require or encourage any particular method for establishing other limitations on enrollment.
- 28 The determination of disproportionate impact should normally be done by comparing students enrolled in the course to the general student population.

- 29 If the honors section is a separate course, and an articulation agreement exists that treats the course differently upon transfer or if there are other extrinsic, concrete benefits to taking the honors course, then restriction on enrollment should be established as provided for prerequisites rather than as provided here for limitations on enrollment.
- 30 The Puente Program is perhaps the most well-known example of such a program.