



Proposal to Establish a University Policy on Repeating Undergraduate Courses

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DATE Sept. 18, 2018

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DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE

The campus does not currently have an official policy dictating how repeated courses are treated in an undergraduate student's record, nor what if any limits are imposed on the repetition of courses. The effective practice is described in the Undergraduate Catalog, but without the backing of official policy students have little solid ground on which to stand when trying to rectify problems caused by the potentially varied interpretation and implementation of this practice around campus. Furthermore, the current practice handles different conditions of repeating courses in sometimes inconsistent manners. Greater consistency and clarity to the handling of repeated courses would be a benefit to students, faculty, advisors and administrators alike.

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE

First and foremost, we would like to see the repeated course practice elevated to official policy. A workgroup consisting of Assistant/Associate Deans and representative from the Registrar's Office convened and generated a draft (attached) of a proposed repeat policy for undergraduate students. This draft was informed by interviews with advising offices from each College or School on campus, a survey of similar policies from peer institutions, and nearly a year of discussion around the guiding principles that such a policy should abide. The goals were clarity, consistency, the promotion of student success, and maintaining the integrity of the student transcript.

SUGGESTION FOR HOW YOUR PROPOSAL WOULD BE PUT INTO PRACTICE

The proposed Undergraduate Course Repeat Policy is, for the most part, a formalization of existing practices in the form of official University policy. There are, however, a few places where the proposed policy differs from existing practice. To the extent that these changes would have to be implemented in our Student Information System, the input of the Registrar's Office would be required to estimate the timeline and cost of such changes. But most of the current implementation involves manual processes. Therefore, most of the implementation would require training and communication.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A draft of the proposed Undergraduate Course Repeat Policy and the current language in the Undergraduate Catalog are included as attachments.

Course Repeat Policy - Undergraduate Students

Introduction

Undergraduate students at the University of Maryland are allowed to repeat courses within the guidelines specified in this policy. The policy aims to strike a balance among several concerns: promoting timely progress toward and the successful completion of degree programs; efficient utilization of instructional resources; an understanding that students, for a variety of reasons, may not realize success in an initial attempt at a course; and a recognition that the adjustment to the University of Maryland campus is not always easy.

Definitions

- For the purposes of this policy a **Repeated Course** will be defined as an attempt beyond the initial attempt of a University of Maryland course that has not been designated as repeatable for additional content. The subsequent attempt at the course may be either:
 - The same course with the same course number
 - The same course offered under a new number
 - Indicated in the Schedule of Classes as “Previously offered as...”
 - The same course offered using a cross-listed number
 - Indicated in the Schedule of Classes as “Also offered as...”
 - A different course whose content and learning objectives overlap sufficiently with the content and learning objectives of the original course such that course credit should not be earned for both courses
 - Indicated in the Schedule of Classes as “Credit may only be granted for one of...”
 - A transfer course that has been evaluated as being equivalent to the University of Maryland course

It should be noted that some courses may not be repeatable. For example, a course may not be offered again, or a course may have restrictions in place that would not permit a student to repeat it.

In this definition of Repeated Course initial attempt only refers to courses that are taken as resident credit at the University of Maryland. If a student receives transfer or prior learning credit for a course and subsequently takes the course at the University of Maryland, the first attempt at Maryland would not be considered a repeat.

- An **Attempt** at a course refers to a course for which a student received a grade of A+ through F, XF, P, S, W, I, NG, or AU (a notation of WW does not count as an attempt).

- **Prior Learning Credit** refers to academic credit awarded for knowledge and achievements gained through prior learning/competency-based education experiences. Details regarding acceptable forms of prior learning credit are given in Maryland Policy III-1.41(A).
- **Transfer Credit** generally refers to academic credit awarded for college-level courses completed through regionally accredited institutions of higher education, provided that the transfer course is similar in level, scope, content and expected learning outcomes to courses offered at the University of Maryland and a grade of C- or higher is earned (grades of D- or higher for courses completed at Maryland public institutions). Details regarding acceptable forms of transfer credit are given in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Limits on Repeats

The following limits apply to repeating courses:

1. Students are allowed ONE repeat of a previously attempted course.
2. Students are allowed up to 18 attempted repeat credits.

Exceptions to Repeat Limits

Under very unusual circumstances, a student may obtain an exception to these limitations by appealing to the dean of the student's primary advising college. The justification for granting such exceptions must be well documented and include, at a minimum, the student's plan for successfully completing the course and degree, and a contingency plan (such as changing majors) should the exception not facilitate the desired outcome.

Effect of Repeated Courses on Total Credits Earned

Students will not receive duplicative credit for repeated courses. When the repeated attempt of a course is at a lower credit level than the original attempt, the student will lose credit upon a completed repeat attempt. This loss of credit also applies to cases where Prior Learning Credit or Transfer Credit has been awarded, followed by an attempt at a University of Maryland course whose content is deemed equivalent and whose credit level is lower. In all cases, the earned credit will come from the most recent attempt of a course.

Effect of Repeated Courses on GPA

With the exception of the New Student Forgiveness policy described below, all grades earned in courses at the University of Maryland will enter into the student's official Maryland cumulative GPA calculation. While repeated courses will not earn academic credit multiple times, all grades will be used in the GPA calculation.

New Student Forgiveness

To help freshmen and transfer students adjust to the University of Maryland, the following two exceptions allow for the student's cumulative GPA to be calculated using only the most recent grade from repeated courses taken at the University of Maryland:

1. when the repeated course was taken within the student's first regular (Fall or Spring) semester at Maryland (this normally applies to students who begin at the University as a transfer student), or
2. when the repeated course was taken either prior to or within the semester during which the student reached 24 credit hours attempted (including transfer credit) (this normally applies to students who begin at the University as freshmen) .

The grade or grades from any attempt at a course at Maryland that falls within either of these two conditions shall be replaced in the cumulative GPA calculation by the most recent earned grade provided that all attempts were taken with the same grading method. All grades will, however, remain on the student's transcript and all attempts at the course will enter into the student's total repeated credits and course attempts calculations. **Note:** grades from Prior Learning Credit or Transfer Credit are never calculated into the Maryland cumulative GPA. Also, New Student Forgiveness only applies to courses taken at the University of Maryland. Neither transfer nor prior learning credit can be used to satisfy the conditions above.

Students may appeal to the dean of the student's primary advising college if they want to forgo the New Student Forgiveness being applied and keep all grades in their GPA calculation. This practice can only be exercised for attempts at courses taken at the University of Maryland and does not apply to transfer or prior learning credit.

6. Satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) marks may be used.
7. All Mid-Term Grades must be submitted as specified by the Office of the Registrar.

Refer to policy for details: <http://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-iii-academic-affairs/iii-600b>

Pass-Fail Grading

The following Pass-Fail policy was approved by the Board of Regents for implementation beginning with the Spring 1989 semester:

1. To register for a course under the pass-fail option, an undergraduate must have completed 30 or more credit hours of college credit with a GPA of at least 2.0. At least 15 of these credit hours must have been completed at the University of Maryland, College Park with a University of Maryland GPA of at least 2.0.
2. Courses for which this option applies must be electives in the student's program. The courses may not be college, major, field of concentration, or general education program requirements.
3. Only one course per semester may be registered for under the pass-fail option.
4. No more than 12 semester hours of credit may be taken under the pass-fail option during a student's college career.
5. Students may not choose this option when re-registering for a course.
6. When registering under the pass-fail option, a course that is passed will count as hours in the student's record but will not be computed in the grade point average. A course that is failed will appear on the student's record and will be computed both in the overall average and the semester average.
7. Students registering for a course under the pass-fail option are required to complete all regular course requirements. Their work will be evaluated by the instructor by the normal procedure for letter grades. The instructor will submit the normal grade. The grades A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D or D- will automatically be converted by the Office of the Registrar to the grade P on the student's permanent record. The grade F will remain as given. The choice of grading option may be changed only during the schedule adjustment period for courses in which the student is currently registered.

Repeat Course Guidelines

The following repeat course guidelines apply to ALL courses that may not be repeated for additional credit.

1. The following students are required to follow the repeat guidelines effective Fall 1990:
 - a. All new freshmen who began at University of Maryland, College Park Fall 1990 and after.
 - b. Transfer students from schools other than Maryland community colleges who began at University of Maryland, College Park, Fall 1990 and after. This includes transfer students from another University of Maryland institution.
2. There is a limit to the number of times a student may repeat a course. Students may have one repeat of any course in which they earned an A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F, P, S, W, NG or Audit; they cannot be registered (after the schedule adjustment period) for any given course more than twice. A student's dean's office may grant an exception allowing an additional course repeat. In this case, students must present a plan for successfully completing the course. All

attempts will be counted toward the total limit for repeatable credits.

Note: Students may not choose the Pass-Fail option when re-registering for a course or re-register for a course in which a grade of "I" has been noted.

3. Students may repeat no more than 18 credits. Additionally, if a student withdraws from all courses during a semester, those courses are not included in this limit.
4. The grade point average will include all attempts at a given course that result in a grade of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, or F. However, to help freshmen and transfer students adjust to the University of Maryland, College Park, the following two exceptions allow for the cumulative GPA to be calculated so that only the higher grade is included:
 - a. When the repeated course was taken within the student's first semester at University of Maryland, College Park, or
 - b. When the repeated course was taken within the student's first 24 credit hours attempted (including transfer credits) or within the semester during which the student reached the 24th credit hour attempted. Advanced Placement Exam credits do not count toward the 24 credit count.
5. Any grade earned in prior attempts of a repeated course will appear on the student's transcript, regardless of whether the grade is dropped from, or included in, the cumulative grade point average.
6. Repeat by transfer: If a student repeats by transfer a course that was taken before or during the semester in which the student reached 24 credits attempted (including transfer credits) and the transfer grade is higher, then the original grade in the course will be excluded from the GPA calculation.
 - a. If the course was taken after the semester in which the student reached 24 credits attempted, the original grade remains in the GPA calculation.

Repeat Guidelines Prior to Fall 1990

The following students follow the previous repeat guidelines:

- Students who began at University of Maryland, College Park, before the Fall 1990 semester (including students who enter University of Maryland, College Park for summer 1990).
- Transfer students who began at a Maryland community college before Fall 1990.
- UMBC College of Engineering students who began before 1990.

The highest grade received in the repeated course is used to calculate the GPA. A student may repeat any course; however no student may be registered for a course more than three times.

If a student repeats a course in which he or she has already earned a mark of A, B, C, D, P, or S, the subsequent attempt shall not increase the total hours earned toward the degree. Only the highest mark will be used in computation of the student's cumulative average. Under unusual circumstances, the student's dean may grant an exception.

Statement on Classroom Climate

The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body and is committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students. Patterns of interaction in the classroom between the faculty member and students and among the students themselves may inadvertently communicate preconceptions about student abilities based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. These patterns are due in

part to the differences the students themselves bring to the classroom. Classroom instructors should be particularly sensitive to being equitable in the opportunities they provide students to answer questions in class, to contribute their own ideas, and to participate fully in projects in and outside of the classroom.

Of equal importance to equity in the classroom is the need to attend to potential devaluation of students that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion. Joking at the expense of any group creates an inhospitable environment and is inappropriate. Moreover, in providing evaluations of students, it is essential that instructors avoid distorting these evaluations with preconceived expectations about the intellectual capacities of any group.

It is the responsibility of individual faculty members to review their classroom behaviors, and those of any teaching assistants they supervise, to ensure that students are treated equitably and not discouraged or devalued based on their differences. Resources for self-evaluation and training for faculty members on classroom climate and interaction patterns are available from the Office of Human Relations.
