Course Form
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

UCC approved 3/16/2021; GCC approved 2/16/2021

1. How do I determine what effective term to use?

The effective term determines when a change will be visible in the schedule of classes and the next catalog. Which term to use depends upon the type of change and the scheduling and catalog deadlines. The next terms' schedules come out twice a year. The current catalog is viewable at http://catalog.uwlax.edu/ and is published once a year.

For new courses, the effective term indicates when the department expects the course to be approved by the governance process. The department may offer the course for the first time any time after that. The current Fall or Spring terms work best for these proposals.

For course edits, the effective term indicates when the department plans on first teaching the course the new way. When choosing the effective term, the department should take into account the scheduling and catalog deadlines. Exceptions to these deadlines can sometimes be made, but the department should contact the Records Office if they think there is a timing issue. If the department wants to make sure the change makes it into the next year's catalog, select the next Summer's term at the latest. If the next Fall term is selected, the course change will not show in the next catalog.

The course also needs to be fully approved by the last UCC/GCC meeting of the year in order to be in the catalog. The deadlines for these changes can be found with the UCC/GCC agendas posted at:

- UCC: https://www.uwlax.edu/records/faculty-staff-resources/curriculum-resources/ucc/
- GCC: https://www.uwlax.edu/records/faculty-staff-resources/curriculum-resources/gcc/

The current Fall, next Spring, and next Summer terms work best for these proposals.

2. What information should be included in the Course Description?

Please provide a brief, comprehensive summary of the course that is appealing to potential students. Using complete sentences, try to keep the description to fewer than 1600 characters. Use the present tense when writing the course description (e.g., “Students examine . . . “, not “Students will examine . . . “). The language in this field must be carefully proofread and targeted to an audience of current and potential students and must make sense to typical reviewers of transcripts, e.g., graduate schools, employers, grant agencies. Limit disciplinespecific jargon or specialized terms unlikely to be understood by potential students. Also, do not include the names of specific instructors, information about instructional formats, or syllabus-level information that might change over time, such as the names of specific textbooks.

3. Must all items on the CIM form be completed?

Yes, all items on the CIM form must be completed, with the exception of the prerequisite field. Departments should keep that field blank if they have no prerequisites rather than putting in "none" or N/A. For items that do not apply to all courses, there is an option to select N/A, which means not applicable.

4. How do I determine if the course is compatible with the department's assessment plan?

Compare the student learning outcomes set forth in your department's assessment plan with the student learning outcomes for the course. The student learning outcomes for the course should advance the student learning outcomes set forth in the department's assessment plan. When making this evaluation, consider what data will be collected and what methods will be used to analyze that data to measure whether the students are achieving the desired outcomes for the course and for the department.

5. Where would I find my department's assessment plan?

You should be able to obtain a copy of your department's assessment plan from your department's chair or the chair of your department's program review committee. That is the easiest way to obtain a copy of that plan. UWL has maintained a database with all of the department assessment plans on it. However, UWL is in the process phasing out its original platform, Taskstream, and moving all of its materials to Canvas. This will be completed by the Fall 2021 Semester. As a result, it may be difficult to access the plans in that database directly until the transition is completed.

6. When would I need to consult with the library about required resources for the course?

The library should be consulted if you anticipate requiring specific and/or new library resources of any type to support your course or program. This is especially important when adding a new major or program that requires an entirely new curriculum. The library does not need to be consulted if your anticipated needs are general in nature and would be met by existing library resources.

7. When would I need to consult with Information Technology Services about the course?

Information Technology Services should be consulted if you anticipate requiring specific and/or new information technology resources of any type to support your course or program. This is especially important when adding a new major or program that requires an entirely new curriculum. Information Technology Services does not need to be consulted if your anticipated needs are general in nature and would be met by existing information technology resources.

8. How do I determine which departments need to be consulted about the proposed course or the proposed changes to an existing course?

Please consult with the departments affected by this change or addition. When determining which departments have been affected, be sure to consider things such as prerequisite changes, whether another department offers essentially the same course, if your course is in the same General Education category (if applicable), and anything that might cross over into another department's subject. Also, consult with other departments if your course is offered as a required or elective course in their program(s). This can be found at the top of the course form if there is a section labeled “Programs referencing this course.”

9. How should Student Learning Outcomes be formatted?

Student learning outcomes state what students are expected to know, be able to do, or value upon completion of a course. Student learning outcomes should be clear, observable and measurable and use action verbs to specify and define the observable and measurable behaviors. (Bloom’s taxonomy provides a useful framework). Course outcomes are more detailed and specific than programmatic outcomes because they identify the unique knowledge and skills expected to be gained from a given course. However, course outcomes should be broad and general enough to accommodate changes in course content over time.

When submitting learning outcomes for course or program approvals, or assessment planning and reporting, please:

- Begin with a verb (exclude any introductory text and the phrase “Students will…”, as this is assumed)
- Limit the length of each learning outcome to 400 characters

10. Are there a minimum number of Student Learning Outcomes that need to be listed for a course to be achieved?

- Typically, there are 3-7 course learning outcomes.
- Umbrella courses require at least 2 course learning outcomes which will tend to be more general than a standalone course.

11. What features (or lack thereof) of Student Learning Outcomes will likely cause a CIM form to be sent back?

- Outcomes that are not assessable (verbs not assessable and should not be used include: learn, comprehend, understand, know)
- Outcomes do not align with the course description

12. How detailed does the Course Content Outline need to be?

The course outline should provide framework of course content taught and should be specific enough to see the clear alignment of the content with the course learning outcomes. The outline should be general enough to provide the opportunity to utilize a variety of teaching strategies to teach the content or reflect multiple topics in an umbrella course.

13. The last question on the CIM course form refers to additional information. When should "additional information" be provided for a course?

Additional information should be included to assist the committee in understanding the proposal and the justification and/or rationale for the changes. Documents may include (but are not limited to) emails from other departments providing approval for changes, summary documents explaining changes as whole, sample advising sheets, etc.