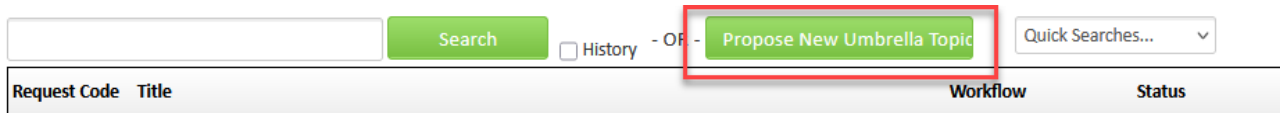# UMBRELLA TOPICS
(a.k.a. special topics or test topics)

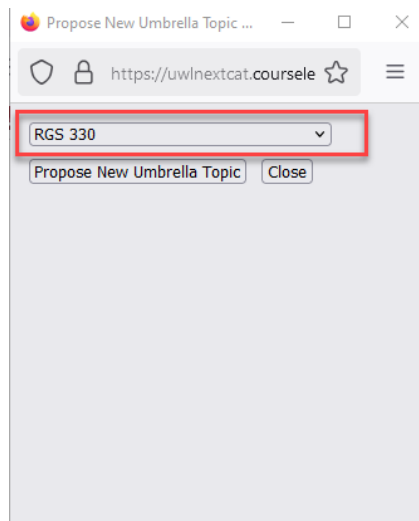If unfamiliar with the difference between a regular course with topics and an umbrella course, please review the Umbrella Courses Policy before submitting a form. Information about the procedures for creating and scheduling umbrella topics is at the end of this guide.

Creating a NEW Umbrella Topic

1. There are **two ways** to start a new umbrella topic: Login using your UWL user id and password to one of the below.

   a. Login to Umbrella Topics Forms
      i. If you don't know which of your courses is the umbrella course, this method narrows down your choices to only umbrella courses. You can also return to this page and view all existing topics, both those fully approved and those being proposed.
      ii. Click on Propose New Umbrella Topic. A small window will popup. Select your umbrella parent course from the list. If you don't see one under your department's prefixes, then your department doesn't have an umbrella course.
      iii. Once the course is selected, click the Propose New Umbrella Topic underneath.

   b. Login to Course Forms
      i. If you know the umbrella parent course number already, this way may be faster. ***However, once saved, the topic form can only be edited again in the Umbrella Topics Form site.***
      ii. Search for the parent umbrella course (i.e. RGS 330). Once it has come up, click the Add New Topic button on the right. It is the second button down.

2. Complete all the required fields not greyed out, except for the Topic ID field. The Topic ID field will be filled in later by the Records Office. Fields that are greyed out contain information that belongs to the parent course. To update those fields, you would need to edit the parent course, and UCC or GCC action is required.

3. **Credits:** if the course has a set number of credits in **Course Credits**, enter that number in the **Topic Credits**. If the course has a range of credits in **Course Credits**, enter the number from that range that applies to your topic in **Topic Credits**. For the example above, this topic has be for 3 credits as the parent course was only approved for 3 credits.

4. **Effective Term:** select the term in which the topic will be scheduled.

5. **Prerequisites:** The umbrella topic form defaults to the approved prerequisite from the parent course. If you would like this topic to have different prerequisites, select **No** to the question

Will proposal use the existing prerequisite? Then the prerequisite(s) field will become editable. Please note that changes the prerequisite on this topic only. To change the overall default prerequisite, the parent course must be updated.

Topic Description

1600 characters remaining

Will proposal use the existing prerequisite? ⊙ Yes ○ No

Prerequisite(s): sophomore standing.

6. The course learning outcomes default to the learning outcome from the parent course, but these **must** be updated to the learning outcomes for this specific topic.

Course Learning Outcomes and Content Outline

If your course description is changing significantly, you must update the below fields. Failure to do so will result in the proposal being sent back to you.

Individualize and enter the specific learning outcomes for your topic.

Enter in each Student Learning Outcome individually. Use the green plus sign to add additional SLOs. If it has not been done yet, you may copy and paste the "Old Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes" into the new field as a starting place.

For further guidance on how to complete the Student Learning Outcomes and Outline below, refer to the Course Form FAQs.

Student Learning Outcomes ⓘ

Student Learning Outcomes ⊕

1 | SLOs will be individualized based on the particular independent study in a given semester, but will address one or more program RGSS SLOs. ❌

Course Content Outline ⓘ

[B I U x² x₂ formatting toolbar: Format, Styles, Source]

7. After completing the form, select one of the following:

[Cancel] [Save as Draft] [Start Workflow]

a. **Save as Draft -** to save your work and come back later. This save does not submit the form and will allow saving without filling out all required fields. When searching for your topic again later, make sure to go to the Umbrella Topics Form site as you won't

be able to find it in the regular Course Form site. Then enter in the parent course's number with an * at the end in the search box. Alternatively, you can use the Edited Requests option from the Quick Searches drop down.

a. **Start Workflow** - to save and submit all changes for approval. <u>All required fields must be filled out</u> before the proposal can be submitted. The form saves and notifies the next approver in the workflow with an automated email explaining that they can now review, edit, approve, or reject the course proposal.

b. **Cancel** – to erase any changes you made in this session, but only this session. You are returned to the previous screen. Form will not be submitted.

Re-using an EXISTING Umbrella Topic

1. Login to the Umbrella Topics Forms using your UWL user id and password.
2. Search for the existing topics by entering the parent course <u>and including an * after the prefix and number</u> (i.e. MGT 400*). All umbrella topic titles previously submitted will appear with a period added to the end of the course number. The number after the period is the Topic ID. Scroll through the list to find the desired existing topic. Select the topic.

Note: The results come up in numerical order by the first digit after the period, rather than the whole number. You may need to scroll down to see the single digit numbers.

3. Select the green **Edit Request** button. The form will come up with all the information that had been previously approved for this topic.
   a. You may make changes to all the information on this form as needed, which the exception of greyed out fields and the topic title.

b. **If changing the title of the course, please submit a new form with the new title.** You may cut and paste information over to the new form. Due to how topic titles are saved in WINGS, a new form and topic ID is required to keep the history of the old title in our records. However, the number of times the topic can be offered is based on the number of times the content has been offered, not the title.
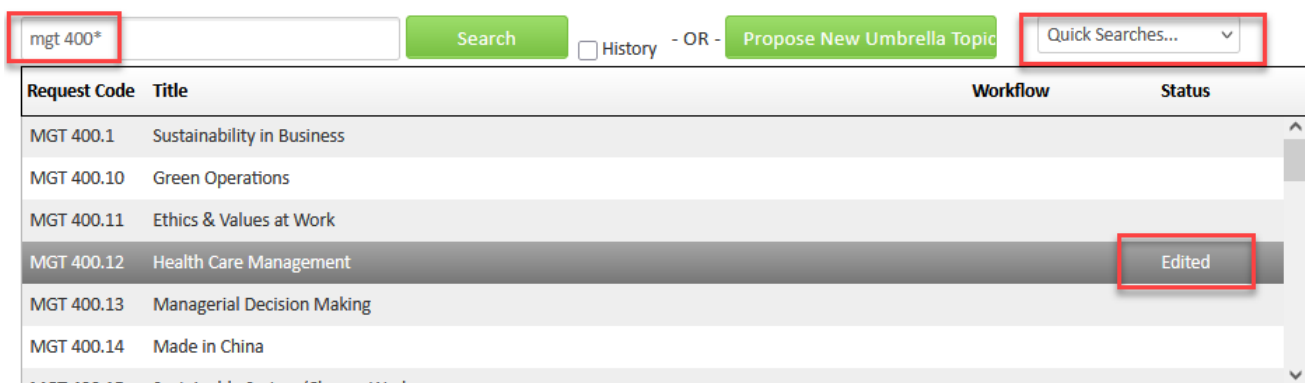
4. Edit the rest of the form as needed.

5. After completing the form, select one of the following:

a. **Save as Draft -** to save your work and come back later. This save does not submit the form and will allow saving without completing all required fields. When searching for your topic again later, make sure to go to the Umbrella Topics Form site as you won't be able to find it in the regular Course Form site. Then enter in the parent course's number with an * at the end in the search box. Alternatively, you can use the Edited Requests option from the Quick Searches drop down.

c. **Start Workflow** - to save and submit all changes for approval. All required fields must be filled out before the proposal can be submitted. The form saves and notifies the next approver in the workflow with an automated email explaining that they can now review, edit, approve, or reject the course proposal.

Notes and Procedures:
- **Steps to scheduling an umbrella topic:**
  1. Make sure your department has a parent umbrella course for topics. A **Yes** answer will be given to the "**Is this an Umbrella Course**" question on the CIM Course form.
  2. Complete and submit an Umbrella Topic Form before the scheduling deadline.
  3. The ADA for your department should notify their college's scheduling contact in the Records office that they will be scheduling that topic when submitting the department's schedule. A section without a topic may be scheduled before final approval to reserve a room and time in the schedule. The Records Office may not enter the topic title into the schedule until final approval is given for the topic.

4. After the form is approved at the Deans Office step, the Records Office will enter the topic in the schedule and verify it is scheduled correctly with the department ADA. The Records Office will also ensure that the title appears on the student's transcript and it is applied to the correct categories in the Advisement Report (AR), if applicable.

- **The department should submit or resubmit the form each time the test topic is offered so the most up-to-date version of the title, approved outline, and outcomes are on record.**
- If it has been scheduled before but the instructor wants to change the topic's title, a new form should be submitted.
- Per university policy, topics with similar course content may be offered a maximum of three times within an unlimited number of years or an unlimited number of times within three calendar years. **If a department wants to offer the topic more than that, they must make the topic into an independent course with its own course number.**
- Workflow approvals:
  - <u>Umbrella Topic approval steps:</u> department chair, dean's office, and Registrar. Your college's curriculum committee may also need to approve.
  - <u>Umbrella Parent Courses approval steps</u>: department chair, dean's office, Registrar, and UCC/GCC. Your college's curriculum committee may also need to approve.
- Quick differences between <u>umbrella topics</u> and <u>topics for regular courses</u>:
  - Umbrella topic
    - Can only be offered a limited number of times before becoming its own course
    - Requires a form and approval of content and structure because the parent umbrella course's structure is so generic. The Records office keeps a copy of this information indefinitely.
    - Can be a wide variety of topics, as long as they fall under the department's content. The umbrella parent course will not have very many outcomes or an outline. That information will be on the topics form.
    - The test topics are not published in the catalog, but the generic umbrella parent course is.
  - Topic on a regular course:
    - Is offered on a regular, rotating basis on regular courses
    - Does not require a form because the regular parent course was specific enough when it was approved to cover the topics underneath it. Departments should keep a copy of the syllabi and learning outcomes in their office for these topics.
    - The parent course's description limits, at least somewhat, the content of the subtopics being offered under it and will have learning outcomes that apply to all subtopics.
    - Rotating topics do not usually become separate courses and can be offered an indefinite number of times.
- The [Umbrella Courses Policy](#) has official descriptions of what is an umbrella parent course, an umbrella topic, a regular course, and a regular course with topics.

Erasing all edits - Contact the curriculum administrators in the Records and Registration office (curriculum@uwlax.edu) to erase your edits and start over.

Questions? Additional guides can be found on [http://www.uwlax.edu/records/faculty-staff-resources/curriculum-resources/,](http://www.uwlax.edu/records/faculty-staff-resources/curriculum-resources/) or contact the Records and Registration's Curriculum Team at [curriculum@uwlax.edu.](mailto:curriculum@uwlax.edu)