

Bowdoin College
Curriculum Implementation Committee (CIC)
Procedures and Principles

In general:

- CIC recognizes that faculty are experts regarding their own courses. Furthermore, when a department chair examines a proposal and signs off on it, they are providing an important layer of disciplinary oversight to the process. CIC thus strives to frame our interventions in the course proposal process in terms of suggestions offered by thoughtful readers, and we are attentive to the possibility that our work could be perceived as interference or gatekeeping if we do not approach it with humility and respect.
- Our practices are governed by [the Faculty Handbook](#). See in particular “Approval of Courses to Be Offered for Credit” (section V.G., p. 52) and the committee charge (section VI.D., pp. 66-7). *Note that page numbers may shift in future editions of the handbook.*

Questions to be considered by all CIC members:

Course title (long and short):

- Will the long title reach the intended audience (as determined by its level, prerequisites, etc.)? Note that here our student members are important guides to us!
- Note that the short title is the transcript title. Will it (considered in conjunction with the subject code) be legible to outside readers (graduate school admissions committees, potential employers, etc.)?

Course description:

- Does the description articulate the course content in clear (and potentially compelling) ways?
- Is the description likely to be legible to its intended audience (as determined by its level, prerequisites, etc.)? Here again, note that we should pay particular attention to the wisdom of our student committee members.
- Before we suggest changes to what we perceive as obscure terms, ask ourselves if it’s possible that the use of obscure terms may be intentional (for the purposes of provocation, enticing curiosity, signaling commitments, etc.)
- Are there terms, phrases, or assumptions in the description that could be perceived as betraying biases?

Cross-listing (and other interdisciplinary matters):

- If the course seems appropriate for cross-listing but has not requested one, does CIC wish to suggest the possibility of cross-listing to the professor proposing it, and possibly to their Chair? (There is no necessity to suggest this, and the faculty member/Chair are under no obligation to follow up on cross-listing the course.)
- Whether or not the course is cross-listed, are there other faculty on campus teaching related courses, and if so, might the faculty member who submitted the proposal benefit from knowing about their interests and expertise?
- If the proposed course presents parallels to topics covered in other departments, would the faculty member submitting the proposal be served well by being made aware of those parallels, and perhaps being encouraged to engage in some outreach to those other departments to alert them to the new course? (Note that the Registrar and Associate Dean will also be looking for these possible connections in advance of our meeting.)

Distribution requirements:

- (For DPI:) Has Katie Byrnes informed us that the intent of the Difference, Power, and Inequity requirement will be met by the course?
- (For FYWS:) Has Meredith McCarroll informed us that the course meets the expectations of our First-Year Writing Seminar program?
- (For other requirements:) Are the qualifying questions sufficiently answered (in line with expectations laid out on the webpages describing the course proposal process)?
- Note that we focus solely on the answers to qualifying questions when evaluating whether a course should receive approval for distribution requirement credit; we do not parse other elements of the proposal to discern the content/intent of the course for distribution requirement purposes.

Dean for Academic Affairs purview:**Course mechanics:**

- Does the proposal raise concerns about staffing?

Office of the Registrar (and Academic Affairs Deans) purview:**Course mechanics:**

- Numbering system
- Course enrollment caps (these are mandated by faculty, as per [the Faculty Handbook](#), section V.H., p. 53, and those limits can only be altered due to considerations of facility capacities, safety considerations, etc.)
- Frequency of offering
- Other course mechanics (how it counts within a departmental distribution, etc.)

**Initial review by the Office of the Registrar (and Academic Affairs Deans),
with possible follow-up conversation by CIC:****Prerequisites:**

- Do they conform to departmental practice?
- If not, is there a reason for them to deviate from departmental norms?
- Would re-thinking the prerequisites better allow the course to meet the goals that the department has set for it?

Registration Preferences:

- Do they conform to departmental practice?
- If not, is there a reason for them to deviate from departmental norms?
- Would re-thinking the preferencing better allow the course to meet the goals that the department has set for it?