

Guidelines Regarding the Reuse of Course Numbers

A course number that has been used previously for a course in a specific discipline cannot be reused until the last catalog in which the course appeared is no longer in effect (the reuse of numbers after that time is still strongly discouraged). This term is a minimum of six years for both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. The justification for this is that “formerly” and “credit cannot be earned” statements remain in the catalog for six years after the course has been removed from the catalog and reusing a course number may conflict with these statements.

The reuse of course numbers also creates the potential for problems concerning students records (such as students being erroneously assessed a surcharge under the Three-Attempt Rule; courses incorrectly counted in the GPA, etc.). Banner and Degree Works use duplicate course numbers within a discipline for identification of the repeat of a course. These duplicate numbers are pulled from a student’s entire academic history, so even if the two courses had different content, the student would be identified as repeating the same course.

- Course numbers should not be reused, even after the six-year period has expired, given the potential problems this may cause to student records. Exceptions to this may need to be made in disciplines that have few available numbers.
- If a number must be reused due to the lack of available numbers within a discipline, the number should be from a course with no academic history (the course was never offered or was offered but there was no enrollment) or a number from a course with minimal past enrollment.

Updating course descriptions and titles is necessary in order to reflect changing terminology and technology; however, substantial modifications to a course description that change the content of the course are effectively creating a new course.

- Substantial modifications to a course description that reflect a change in course content (and may or may not result in a change in the Classification of Instructional Programs [CIP] Code) would require assigning the course a new course number. If there is some question about the significance of the modifications, the decisive question should be: if a student took the course in question under a previous catalog, should they earn credit toward their degree for the past course *and* the revised course, if they registered for it today? If the answer is “yes,” then it should be considered a new course.
- Modifying the course title only would not require assigning a new number to a course, even if the title change is substantial. However, a “formerly titled” statement must appear in the description. The notation of the former title will remain in the course description until the catalog in which the former title last appeared is no longer in effect.
- A course that has been removed from the catalog and course inventory can be reinstated without assigning a new number to the course, provided that the title and description remain unchanged from when the course was previously offered.
- A course that is being moved from one discipline to another with the content remaining the same should keep the same course number, unless that number is currently in use, or has been previously used, in the discipline acquiring the course.

The final decision concerning the need to assign a new number (i.e., create a new course) based on substantial modifications to an existing course description that change the content of the course will rest with the academic department under which the course falls, or the college Dean’s office if the discipline is not housed within an academic department. Departments are encouraged to think long term in order to minimize changes requiring the renumbering of courses, and strongly discouraged from re-sequencing courses within a discipline in order to make courses fall in the order they should be taken by students. This reduces the available numbers the discipline has available for new courses.