

## **Guidelines Defining Undergraduate Course Levels**

Adapted from the University Curriculum Board Report No. 69, May 1975  
Reaffirmed by the Faculty Council on Academic Standards, January 28, 2005

### **Preface**

Course level, along with course credit and course enrollment, is an important element in the allocation of University Resources. It is essential to have clear guidelines for determining course level. The following broad definitions are to be used in determining the correct level for a proposed undergraduate course

### **Lower-division Courses**

Lower-division courses are courses which are offered at the 100- and 200-levels, and should have the following characteristics:

Lower-division courses generally do not have extensive college-level prerequisites (aside from preceding courses in the same sequence). They may require substantial secondary school preparation.

Lower division courses usually are not limited to students majoring in the field in which the courses are offered.

Any lower-division course, assuming qualified staff and other resources are available, could be offered through a community college.

Survey courses which are general introductions to a field of study offered for nonmajors are lower-division courses. So are "orientation" courses. Concerning specific course levels:

- 100-level courses should be suitable for college freshmen.
- 200-level courses are directed toward college sophomores, though they are open to qualified freshmen.

### **Upper-division Courses**

Upper-division courses are courses which are offered at the 300- and 400-levels, and which require substantial college-level preparation on the part of the student. Ordinarily this should be indicated in the course description by a discussion of the recommended background which will describe to both students and advisors what is expected. Recommended background can be indicated in several ways, among them:

Specifying particular University courses (or their equivalents) which should have been completed prior to enrollment.

Specifying a certain number of credits in specified areas which should have been completed prior to enrollment.

Specifying the level of academic progress (such as junior or senior standing) or specifying a certain number of total college credits which should have been completed prior to enrollment.

Specifying permission or requiring an entry code so that some sort of direct assessment of the student's qualification is made.

With respect to specific course levels:

- 300-level courses are directed primarily at juniors and seniors. Ordinarily they are not appropriate for well-prepared graduate students.
- 400-level courses should be appropriate for either seniors or graduate students.