

November 3, 2017

From the Undergraduate Programs Council meeting October 23, 2017

Proposed update of language about Prerequisites in the catalog

<http://catalog.iastate.edu/informationaboutcourses/#prerequisitetext>

Course Prerequisite <http://catalog.iastate.edu/informationaboutcourses/#prerequisitetext>

A prerequisite indicates the specific academic background or general academic maturity considered necessary for the student to be ready to undertake the course. Prerequisites are usually stated in terms of specific courses, but equivalent preparation is usually acceptable. An instructor may, however, direct a student whose background does not meet the stated prerequisite, or its equivalent, to drop the course. Conversely, an instructor may waive the prerequisite for a course for which he or she is responsible. Thus, permission of the instructor is understood to be an alternate to the stated prerequisites in all courses.

It is university policy that the department or instructor may inform the students no later than the first day of class at the beginning of each course if that students who have not met the prerequisite requirements must drop the course. Instructors have the right to neither accept, nor grade the work of a student who does not meet the stated prerequisite, or its equivalent (as determined by the process established in the department offering the course).

Some courses have been approved by their colleges to use administrative drops to enforce prerequisites. In such cases, the department shall inform enrolled students prior to the start of the semester that students who have not met the prerequisite requirements must drop the course or provide evidence of equivalent preparation to be reviewed by the department. After such notification (via email or Canvas announcement), students have 72 hours to either drop the course or initiate a review of their equivalent preparation. If a student neither drops the course nor initiates a review of equivalent preparation, the department or instructor may initiate an administrative drop to remove the student from the course. Students whose request to waive the prerequisite is denied will be administratively dropped from the course. Course prerequisites are listed in the Schedule of Classes as well as in the Courses and Programs section of this publication.

Notes for Discussion: Administrative Drops occur when courses are removed from a student's schedule without the drop being counted against the total number of drops a student is allowed during a university career. Such drops are used when either the student, or the university, initiates the action.

Administrative drops at the request of a student. Examples of administrative drops initiated at the request of a student include: drops due to student objection to the use of explicit materials in the course [FH 10.6.1]; or drops made when a student is called to active duty in the military.

Administrative drops used at the request of administrator. Examples of administrative drops initiated at the request of administrators occur when a student's enrollment in a course is ended under the

Disruptive Student policy and drops that are the result of a situation beyond the responsibility of the student, e.g. incorrect advising or staff error in adding a class.

The proposed new language related to Course Prerequisites creates another instance of a drop made at the request of an administrator.

Implementation Ideas:

- Use of an administrative drop to enforce prerequisites is limited to courses that have been approved by the College office of the department that owns the course.
 - Courses that have been approved to enforce prerequisites through administrative drops should indicate the practice with a note in the schedule of classes. “Prereqs or equivalent background will be enforced for this course. Students not having the prereqs will be administratively dropped from the course. Students who have the background, but not the designated courses, may submit a written request for waiver of the prereq to the instructor/department.”
- An administrative drop to enforce a prerequisite will not happen before the student has been informed in writing (e.g. email or Canvas course announcement or syllabus). This notice should include clear information about how students can submit a written request for a waiver of the prerequisite based on equivalent preparation.
- The prerequisite policy allows for the use of administrative drops to enforce prerequisites, but it does not require such use.
- This kind of administrative drop does not absolve the student from responsibility for “checking the accuracy of his/her schedule on AccessPlus, including schedule adjustments (i.e., adds, drops, section changes)” and understanding the potential impact of such a drop on full-time status or financial aid. Students should never assume that faculty will drop them from a class.
- Students who contact the department or instructor to initiate a review of equivalent preparation, should not be administratively dropped until a decision has been made based on the evidence they present and the student has been informed that their request has been denied.
- In general, prerequisites enforced by administrative drops should be reserved for courses where the evidence of student success is clearly correlated to the prerequisite.

Previous Faculty Senate Discussion

Academic Affairs Council discussion minutes from 2015

C. Prerequisite policy (Holger – by email to committee)

Holger: There seems to be a strong sentiment that we need to enforce prerequisites more rigorously, both to enhance student success and to help accommodate growing capacity requirements. My sense from a fairly substantial amount of input that I have received is that we need to develop a policy and processes with some or all of the following features:

- Course prerequisites listed in the catalog will generally be enforced. There may, as is always the case, be special case exceptions, but they should be rare and may require approval beyond that of the course instructor (department level in some cases?)

- An efficient mechanism will be developed to identify students who enroll in a course and do not have prerequisites
- Students who do not have prerequisites will be administratively dropped from the course unless (in rare instances) an exception is granted. The drop will be initiated administratively, not by the student or instructor.
- At some point we will develop registration software (Workday) with the capability of not allowing registration unless prerequisites have been met or are currently enrolled courses.
- The FSCC may wish to consider the development of a new category of recommended, but not required, prior course background.
- Current prerequisites will be examined to the extent necessary to determine if they are in fact required prerequisites under the new policy.

Committee members expressed concerns that administrative changes to a student's schedule might put them in jeopardy of full time status. Alternative is to fail student, but takes time to enforce. Committee members expressed concern that this is an AAC issue and not a curriculum committee issue. The opinion is that curriculum committee should establish prerequisites, but not enforcement or consequences.

The committee will ask the Provost's Office to draft a statement of what will be done. However, committee members were in favor of the concept.