

Enrollment Management for Academic Unit Heads

Updated Fall 2026 with an effective date of Fall 2027

To ensure the long-term health of the university, course schedules must be built with an awareness of both students' curricular needs and the university's budgetary sustainability. By adopting a data-informed approach, academic unit heads can proactively reduce the occurrence of low-enrolled courses and prevent last-minute scrambles for additional seats in high-demand areas.

Strategic Planning Responsibilities

Academic unit heads, in consultation with college deans, are expected to act with awareness of university resources as they build course schedules. Strategic planning should include:

- **Curricular Design:** Thoughtfully considering overall design and course sequencing to minimize adjustments after registration begins.
- **Flexibility:** Incorporating opportunities for flexibility to ensure students can progress in their programs of study without interruption.
- **Program Review:** Reflecting recommendations from the unit's most recent program review in the upcoming schedule.

Primary Data Sources

Prior to submitting unit schedules, unit heads should utilize relevant data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analytics, the Provost, the Registrar, the Center for Student Success, and the Office of Admission. Key data points include:

- **Super CAPPs:** Reviewing the degree progress of currently enrolled students to determine their remaining curricular needs.
- **Historical Fill Rates:** Analyzing past course enrollment data to identify trends in student demand.
- **Incoming Student Data:** Considering the intended majors of both first-year and transfer students to anticipate seat needs.

Efficiency and Monitoring

In building their schedule, academic unit heads should monitor the following:

- **Consistency:** Whenever possible, course enrollments should be consistent across terms and sections of the same course, with student enrollment thresholds set in consultation with the college dean. To ensure institutional efficiency, lowering caps from previous levels must be approved by your college dean.
- **Average Number of Students Per Course:** As potential opportunities for curricular change arise, review the average number of students per 4-credit course for the entire program to ensure overall sustainability. **Unfilled Seats:** Explore your unit's recent offerings to identify where there are unused seats. Consider opportunities to bolster those enrollments or revise curricula.

- **Space, Equipment, and/or Pedagogical Constraints:** Utilization of "note" columns in schedule drafts to document when specialized equipment, available space, logistics of required rooms, or documented pedagogical requirements dictate specific enrollment caps.

General Education Course Size Thresholds

General education course sizes have been set by the Office of the Provost in consultation with the college deans and relevant academic units.

The number of seats that must be available (as posted in the course schedule) for courses carrying general education elements are as follows:

- 100 and 200 level general education courses = minimum 30 students
- 300 and 400 level general education courses = minimum 24 students

Common exceptions to this policy for general education courses include:

COURSE TYPE	MINIMUM ENROLLMENTS
FYEP/WRIT 101 and IHON 111/112	Minimum 17 students; summer enrollment trends often require adjustments to 20 student minimums.
FYEP 102	Minimum 22 students
IHON 200 and 300-level courses	Minimum 22 students
Writing, Performance, and Studio courses (see definitions below)	Minimum 15 students
100 and 200-level world language courses	Minimum 20 students
100 and 200-level mathematics courses	Minimum 28 students
FTWL activity courses	30 students or more; limited exceptions based on the nature and location of the activity
Lab courses, or courses with accompanying labs	Variable based on limitations related to lab space and/or fieldwork requirements
Music Ensembles and Choirs	Variable based on the nature of the program
Culminating Experience	Minimum 15 students

Recognizing that student demand often shifts long after faculty schedules are set, the Office of the Provost, in consultation with college deans and program chairs, maintains needed flexibility to increase enrollment caps.

Writing, Performance, and Studio courses

In writing courses that count for FYEP or CX, writing is the subject of the course. In a writing course, emphasis is placed on strategies for effective communication and the mastery of writing conventions. Students undertake a slow, recursive, and revision-focused writing process. Importantly, **a writing course is different from a writing-intensive course**, where students may do a great deal of writing, but this writing is mobilized toward the learning of course content. *The difference can be understood as a difference between a course focused on “learning to write” as opposed to a course focused on “writing to learn.”* In a writing course (“learning to write”), the writing process and convention are central to the learning outcomes of the class. In a “writing to learn” course, learning goals can typically be achieved via alternative assignments.

In Performance and Studio courses that count for CX, “making” art will be at the center of the curriculum. These are courses about learning how to draw, paint, sing, play an instrument, create media, etc. In these courses, students learn a creative process under the guidance of the instructor, often in collaboration and dialogue with peers. Elements of performance and/or artistic creation are central to the learning outcomes of the course.

Exceptions to the General Education Course Size Standards

Requests for exceptions to course size standards should be submitted by the academic unit head to the Office of the Provost via the college dean. Adjustments to course sizes for courses carrying general education attributes must be approved by the college dean and the associate provost for the core curriculum.

Requests should be supported by a concrete rationale for one of the exceptions described above (or some other exception based on unique circumstances). Exception requests must include a clear and specific explanation for how the combination of content *and* pedagogical approach necessitate that the particular course is different from other similar courses and should have fewer students. *Exceptions must be approved periodically and, in most cases, will be approved annually.*

Major/Minor/Elective Course Size (4 credit courses)

Courses designed for students in academic majors or minors, or which can be used in fulfillment of elective credits toward graduation but not part of the general education program, should also meet sustainable enrollment thresholds. In general, these courses should have a minimum cap of 24 students each. Exceptions may be made for courses in newly approved programs, and/or exceptional circumstances approved by the college dean.

Special Cases

Courses that are fewer than four credits or that carry non-standard faculty load are evaluated by the college dean.

Study away course sizes are set by the Wang Center for Global and Community Engaged Education, in partnership with the course instructor(s), based upon in-country logistical considerations. Timelines for study away course cancellation are established by the Wang Center.

Team-taught courses should carry commensurate faculty load (e.g., count as teaching ½ course).

Summer Sessions operates on a distinct budgeting model, with a stand-alone tuition/fee and compensation structure. Enrollment expectations are established and reviewed annually by the Office of the Provost.

Graduate programs operate on a budgeting model that differs from the undergraduate model for tuition/fees and credits. College deans are responsible for ensuring course sizes are sustainable.