

Meeting the Mandate to Limit Repetition Within the FHDA Community College District: Determining “Equivalent” Courses

Q. What is this “mandate” exactly?

A. Title 5 was recently changed to limit the number of times a student may enroll in a class within a community college district. To remain in compliance with the new regulations, our District had to revise its Board Policy on Course Repetition ([BP 6124](#)). The language most important to us from this policy is,

“Students may repeat a course that is not designated by Title 5 as a repeatable course if they have received a non-evaluative notation of “W” or a substandard evaluative notation of D, F, or NP.

Any courses taken in an effort to alleviate substandard academic work may be repeated twice for a maximum of three times in the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. This total includes all attempts in which a student has received a “W” or a substandard academic notation, and is inclusive of courses taken at either Foothill College or De Anza College.”

Q. What’s the big deal? What happens if we are out of compliance?

A. If Foothill and/or De Anza is found to be in violation, we will have to repay apportionment received for student enrollments in excess of the maximum allowed.

Q. How should we start?! What would be our criteria for flagging a potentially equivalent to one of our Foothill courses?

A. Grab a nice cup of coffee with your discipline colleagues, have a seat, and start looking at the course descriptions in the appropriate discipline(s) in De Anza’s course catalog: <http://www.deanza.edu/publications/catalog/2012-2013/courses.html>. At this point, we need faculty to identify courses that may be “equivalent” from the State’s perspective. If the course description leaves any doubt in your mind, take a look at the Course Outline of Record to see whether the outcomes/objectives and content look reasonably equivalent. It might also be helpful to look at the course-level student learning outcomes.

Q. Is there any other criteria we could use to determine equivalency?

A. Yes, you could look at courses that meet the same articulation criteria for C-ID course numbering at http://www.c-id.net/course_compare.html or other institutional articulation at http://web1.assist.org/web-assist/help/help-using_assist.html.

Q. What do you mean, “reasonably equivalent”? This isn’t an exact science, is it?

A. Nope, it’s not. ☹ The goal here is to comply with the State’s repetition limits while minimizing any potential negative impacts on our students. If you’re on the fence, a good question to ask is, *“Based on the course descriptions (and/or course outlines) could a student take the course at either school and end up with the same knowledge, skills and abilities? The same preparation for subsequent coursework?”* If YES, then you should flag them as equivalent.

Q. What if our Foothill course has a lab and the De Anza course doesn’t? (Or vice versa?)

A. It depends. If the course “traditionally” has a lab associated with it, e.g. physics, ceramics, microbiology, etc. and UC/CSU articulation is dependent upon inclusion of the lab component, but either Foothill’s or De Anza’s course does not have the lab component, then they are not

equivalent. If a lab component is traditionally optional, e.g. nutrition, and it's absence would not jeopardize articulation, they should be flagged as potentially equivalent if the lecture components are roughly equivalent.

Q. ACK! I have to look through the whole De Anza catalog?!?!

A. No! You only need to look at the courses in YOUR discipline. E.g. if you teach biology, just look at the biology courses.

Q. Is it possible for us to look at the De Anza Course Outline of Record?

A. Yes. If you'd like to look at a COR for more detail, visit, "Enhanced Searchable Course Catalog" at <http://www.deanza.edu/publications/catalog/search/index.html>. Select the year and department from the pull down menus, and on the subsequent screen click on the class you're interested in. You'll get a description of the course, and at the bottom you have the option to "View active course outline."

Q. Do the two courses have to have the exact same units?

A. No!

Q. If our course is a FH GE course does the DA course need to be a DA GE as well (or visa versa) ?

A. No!

Q. Do the two courses have to have the same name?

A. No!

Q. What if we have a sequence of courses at Foothill that is roughly equivalent to a sequence of courses at De Anza, but the individual courses in the sequences don't align exactly?

A. Please simply make a note of this. You can specify that, "although the individual courses are not equivalent, if a student completes the sequence at Foothill it's roughly equivalent to completing the sequence at De Anza."

Q. What should we do when we find a course that looks equivalent?

1. As you and your Foothill discipline colleagues are reviewing the appropriate area(s) of the De Anza catalog, keep a list of potentially equivalent classes.
2. When you're finished, email your list to your discipline colleagues at De Anza and ask them to take a look, and together you should come to agreement.
3. Email the finalized list of courses that you agree are equivalent to your CCC reps. Please cc Kimberlee Messina and Carolyn Holcroft on your email.

Q. What if the Foothill faculty and De Anza faculty cannot reach agreement?

A. Contact Kimberlee Messina for assistance.