

CCC Guidelines for Course Enrollment Limits

According to University rules, individual faculty members or departments may not limit course size unilaterally or arbitrarily. The principal feature of the Brown curriculum is the freedom students have to pursue a broad range of intellectual interests, shaping their course choices to their own perceived interests and needs. This freedom means very little unless the University offers a rich set of options that are readily available. Large numbers of limited enrollment courses can be a *de facto* restriction on student curriculum planning. However, the curriculum does include courses that are designed to be of limited size, either for pedagogical reasons (e.g., senior seminars, creative writing courses, or elementary foreign language courses) or because of restrictions created by limited rehearsal, studio or laboratory space, limited equipment, or the number of teaching assistants available.

If a course is to be restricted for pedagogical reasons, the maximum enrollment for each course, the educational reasons for the upper limit, and the criteria by which applicants will be accepted or rejected for permission to join the course must be approved first by the department and then by the College Curriculum Council.

The Council will usually grant enrollment limits to certain types of courses as follows:

- Courses that are primarily instruction in languages with emphasis on skills' acquisition may have a limit of 18 students.
- Courses that are primarily instruction in writing, either creative or expository, may be granted an enrollment limit of 17 students. Such courses have writing requirements substantially exceeding the customary load (cf. the *CCC Guidelines for New Course Proposals*), and evaluation of this coursework entails a close critique of style as well as content.
- Seminar courses, particularly senior seminars designed as capstone experiences for concentrators, may be granted a limit of 20 students.
- Courses taught by a single instructor in a combined lecture and seminar-like discussion format may be granted a limit of 30 students.

It is not generally appropriate to limit enrollment in introductory or survey courses, particularly those that are gateway courses to a discipline or that are for non-concentrators. When such courses have sections with significant variations in content between sections, enrollment in each section should not be limited. The exception to this rule is the lack of sufficient TA support, which will be considered by the CCC on a case-by-case basis. Limits may be set in proportion to the number of available TAs.

In considering requests for new enrollment limits, the Council may examine the balance between limited and open enrollment classes in a department's courses and may consider the University's need for general courses.

If enrollment is to be restricted for reasons of staff or facilities, the request must be reviewed by the Dean of the Faculty and is submitted to that office first.

Limitations granted because of available resources may be reviewed every five years or whenever the resource availability changes markedly. Limitations for experiments in teaching must be reviewed after two years.

It is the department's responsibility to determine the basis for selection (*e.g.*, first-come, first-served; preference by class or concentration; random selection; departmental wait list, etc.) and to inform students about the criteria and procedures. That notice should be clearly and publicly posted to avoid an appearance of favoritism or hidden requirements. The preferred means for such advertisement is the course description in Banner but when that is impractical, then prominent notice on the class preview web site repeated on the course site is sufficient.

Approval to limit course size should be obtained, if at all possible, well before the beginning of preregistration so that the appropriate information can be added to the on-line catalog description before students actually sign up for courses. The course description must specify the number of students who can be accommodated, the basis for selection, and any special qualifications a student must have to be given preference. Action to restrict the size of a course after students have registered and without prior notification shall be avoided if at all possible.

Courses, particularly advanced (1000-level) classes, frequently require permission of the instructor for enrollment. This allows the instructor to determine if a student has the requisite background, skills, and interests for the course and allows the instructor to add the student to the course by override. It is not appropriate that this mechanism be used to limit the number of students in the course. The Council may require an explicit, written statement of the criteria for granting permission both in the application for new course approval and for public posting for potential students.

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