CUNY-wide Common Core
Review Processes and Submission Best Practices

November 2016

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance, clarity, and best practices to CUNY colleges as they submit courses to be reviewed by the CUNY-wide Common Core Course Review Committee (CCCRC). This document also provides transparency regarding the processes and the scope of the CCCRC’s responsibilities.

Scope of Review
The CUNY-wide Common Core Course Review Committee (CCCRC), composed of faculty from across CUNY, reviews courses to confirm that they meet the relevant learning outcomes in each of the Common Core areas. The CCCRC focuses on the learning outcomes and not on other issues—such as the distribution of courses across Common Core areas.

The learning outcomes can be found here (Required Common Core and Flexible Common Core): http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/undergraduate-studies/pathways/gened/

Governance
Courses must first go through local college governance processes before being submitted to the CCCRC. After CCCRC approval, courses must be submitted to the Chancellor’s University Report before being coded as Common Core courses in CUNYfirst.

Disciplines
The areas of the Common Core are not defined by discipline. The list of example disciplines is not meant to be exhaustive, or to imply that any course submitted from a particular discipline should be approved for the Common Core area. Similarly, the absence of any discipline from a Common Core area does not preclude such courses from approval.

All courses in the Common Core must be liberal arts and sciences courses as defined by New York State (http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/lrp/liberalarts.htm). Based on the course content, colleges may determine whether a course meets the definition of liberal arts and sciences. Colleges must submit courses with the liberal arts and sciences designation to the Chancellor’s University Report and code courses as such in CUNYfirst.
Courses submitted to the CCCRC may be submitted for only one area of the Common Core, except for STEM variant courses (see below).

**Credits and Hours**
Courses submitted to the CCCRC must be three credits. Since fall 2014, the University does not specify a limit on course hours.

**Course Submission Form**
The Course Submission Form was developed so that colleges could be explicit about the course assignments and activities that meet the learning outcomes. The blank field next to each relevant learning outcome should explain the assignments and course activities that will address that learning outcome.

For the Required Core (English Composition, Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning, and Life and Physical Sciences), courses must meet each of the learning outcomes listed.

For the Flexible Core, there are two groups of learning outcomes. Courses must meet each of the three learning outcomes listed in the first group—plus at least three of the learning outcomes in the second group (colleges can choose which three).

Each college has designated one person (“Submitter”) to submit the Course Submission Forms and syllabi via CUNYfirst. The Submitter also receives the voting results and comments from the CCCRC via CUNYfirst.

**Syllabus**
The CCCRC considers both the Course Submission Form and the syllabus when determining if a course meets the learning outcomes. The syllabus should provide additional context, but does not have to repeat all of the same information included on the Course Submission Form, as long as the two documents do not conflict. Also, because different course sections will be taught by different professors using different approaches, the syllabus is representative.

It’s advisable for colleges to make it as easy as possible for the CCCRC to determine if learning outcomes are met. For example, colleges should provide specific details about reading and writing assignments.

At the same time, colleges should be mindful about the materials they submit and not overburden the CCCRC. The syllabus should not exceed five pages (please omit classroom policies, etc.), should be free of significant errors, and should focus on evidence that learning outcomes will be met. Colleges are also encouraged to attach an example assignment to the syllabus (which will not count against the five-page limit).
Linked Courses (Co-Requisites)
Colleges may link a course in one of the areas of the Common Core with a course in another one of the areas of the Common Core, making them co-requisites. For example, a course in the Life and Physical Sciences area could be linked to a course in the Scientific World area, with one of them being a three-credit lab course and the other a three-credit lecture course (as long as transfer students do not have to take any additional general education courses as a result of this linkage).

STEM Variant Courses
Colleges may choose to offer STEM Variant courses in one or more of the three STEM areas of the Common Core (Math and Quantitative Reasoning, Life and Physical Sciences, Scientific World). These courses must meet a requirement for at least one major and must be approved by the Office of Academic Affairs. They do not need to be reviewed by the CCCRC.

Students in any field of study may fulfill these Common Core areas with STEM Variant courses if they choose to do so. STEM Variant courses may be any number of credits, while non-STEM Variant courses in the Common Core must be three credits. Colleges may choose to offer a STEM variant course in more than one of the areas of the Common Core. For example, a STEM variant Biology course could be offered in both the Life and Physical Sciences and Scientific World areas, and students could choose which of the areas the course fulfills.

http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/academic-news/2012/07/06/additional-pathways-policy-information-concerning-the-stem-variant-and-the-college-option/

Voting and Feedback
The CCCRC subcommittees review and vote on courses on a schedule influenced by the meetings of the Board of Trustees http://www2.cuny.edu/about/trustees/schedule-of-the-board/.

The CCCRC attempts to review courses in time for colleges to submit approved courses to the Chancellor’s University Report before Board of Trustees meetings.

Each CCCRC subcommittee must achieve a quorum (in person and/or remotely) for voting to occur. A quorum is a simple majority of subcommittee members. For example, if a subcommittee has 16 members, at least 9 members must participate in order to conduct business.

Among those participating, the course must receive a majority of votes to be approved. For example, if 9 subcommittee members participate in the meeting, at least 5 must vote to approve the course.

The CCCRC determines a course to be:
- **Approved**: Meets learning outcomes for the Common Core area.
- **Needs Revision**: Needs more evidence/explanation to determine if the course meets learning outcomes.
- **DNMLO (Does Not Meet Learning Outcomes)**: Does not appear to fit in the particular Common Core area, but could be reviewed again with a resubmission.
The CCCRC is charged with providing specific, constructive comments for courses deemed “Needs Revision” or “DNMLO” to help the college revise and resubmit the course as appropriate. Feedback reflects the consensus of the whole committee.

Colleges are encouraged to reach out to the subcommittee chairs http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/undergraduate-studies/pathways/about/ccrc/ or to the Central Office of Academic Affairs (pathways@cuny.edu) if more clarity on CCCRC decisions is needed.

Please email pathways@cuny.edu with any questions or suggestions about this document.

Please also review the CUNY Pathways website:
http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/undergraduate-studies/pathways/
http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/undergraduate-studies/pathways/about/policies/