

Note: this clean version contains suggested revisions by John Bailey and Rebecca Mathern.

Course Designators

A course designator (or subject code) is an administrative abbreviation representing the department, college, or program offering a course. For example, MB indicates that a course is offered through the Department of Microbiology. Creation or alteration of a course designator represents a significant change in the curricular structure of the University. It has implications for the catalog, schedule of classes, Student Information System, *MyDegrees*, and transfer articulation with dozens of collaborating institutions. Our ability to maintain consistent guidance to students affects their success and our accreditation. Furthermore, accreditation standards require that designators be “consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.”

Procedural Steps:

1. An academic unit contacts the Curriculum Coordinator in the Office of Academic Programs and Assessment (APA) to initiate a course designator request via the curriculum request tool. This process addresses the important questions listed below.
2. Availability of the proposed designator is confirmed with the Registrar. Previously used course designators are not available for re-use, nor are abbreviations that could be considered offensive or controversial.
3. The completed course designator request is reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Council. This request is often considered in tandem with current or proposed degree program proposals and new course proposals.
4. Following approval by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Council, the new course designator is recorded and established in appropriate systems.

In the case of migrating multiple courses from one designator to another, once the new designator is approved, the course changes submitted can also include the migration of course designator.

Rationale for New or Changed Course Designator:

Course Designator requests must address the purpose, accountability, and impact of a proposed course designator. Responses to all questions below must be included in the request; the question text should be included in the response for clarity.

Purpose: The proposed course designator should have an identified purpose within the curricular structure of Oregon State University.

- What academic programs, including majors, certificates, options and minors will be served by courses within the proposed new course designator?
- In what ways will the content within the scope of the course designator constitute a coherent body of knowledge?
- Is the proposed usage of the course designator consistent with practices at OSU and other institutions? Give examples.

Accountability: Responsibility for the integrity and oversight of the proposed course designator should be clearly identified.

- What will be the academic home of the proposed course designator (College, School, Department, or Program)?
- Who will be responsible for administering the courses with the new designator, e.g. scheduling and catalog updates? Who will be the faculty contacts?
- Who will be responsible for consistency and outcome assessment for courses with the new course designator?
- Which units will receive credit for the Student Credit Hours generated by courses with the new subject code?
- Who will be responsible for communicating information about the new course designator to students, advisors, Admissions, and other stakeholders?

Impacts: Who will benefit from the new course designator, and what changes will result from its implementation?

- How will the new course designator benefit students?
- Will courses with the new course designator duplicate or compete with existing course designators?
- Will there be expected cross-listings or curricular equivalencies?
- How is the new course designator expected to affect transfer credits?
- Will any existing course designators expire when the new course designator is implemented, and who is impacted by that?

Approval by Curriculum Council:

Approval & Revisions: March 8, 2013 (revised by APA: January 31, 2017)

Additional Information: [List of Course Designators](#)