Options for Managing Courses that are Preferred or Recommend (Sometimes Hidden)

Approved by the Undergraduate Deans

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Background: Several degrees have courses that may be used to fulfill requirements that are not the recommended or preferred course. However, if the student has already taken the course, it would fulfill the requirement. In other cases, there are courses that may fit a particular student's need because they are heading for a particular post-undergraduate experience such as medical school or veterinary medicine.

One of the challenges is balancing the need to be transparent so that students know about these options while steering the majority of the students down the preferred path to earn the degree. To this end, below are two approaches that are meant to strike that balance while avoiding "hiding" classes so that students can't see them on the catalog/degree audit.

Departments may use either or both.

Some of the AU's are already deploying these approaches.

Option 1 - Labeling courses as "Recommended" and "Also Accepted" as well as "Transfer Only."

Below are illustrations showing how this looks on the audit and in the catalog.

Audit

> ☒ 1) Probablity and Statistics I
>
> NEEDS: 1 course/set of courses
>
> SELECT FROM: RECOMMENDED STAT 1200 OR 1250
> ALSO ACCEPTED STAT 1400,2500
> TRANSFER ONLY STAT 1250A & 1250B

Catalog

Major core requirements		
Entry courses		
SOCIOL 1000	Introduction to Sociology (Recommended)	3
or RU_SOC 1000	Rural Sociology	
SOCIOL 2200	Social Inequalities	3
Basic courses		

Two guiding principles will ensure that labeling adheres to the "simple, transparent, and consistent" tenets:

1) All AUs/departments will use the same wording in the catalog to describe the options:
   - *Recommended*
   - *Also Accepted*
   - *Transfer Only*

2) Degree Audits will use the same wording as the catalog. e.g., if a course appears as *Recommended* in the catalog, it would also appear as *RECOMMENDED* in the degree audit report.

Option 2 – **Offering "options" or "tracks"**: Students can choose from various paths that ultimately lead to the degree. There could be options or tracks for "Pre-Vet Med" or a "Pre-Med," etc. Once chosen for the student the option or track is part of the degree audit. These will be spelled out in the catalog. This approach works well when there is a subset of students who routinely want to follow an alternative, acceptable path to the degree.

Students cannot select a track themselves. The degree audit report directs them to contact an advisor, which provides an opportunity to discuss the appropriateness of the track. Once the student chooses a track, the advisor adds the track to the student record in myDegreePlanner. The set of requirements contained in the track is then incorporated into the degree audit (there is also an option to initially display all tracks, in which case, after the advisor specifies which track the student will pursue, all but the selected track cease to display); the audit will not "complete" without completion of a track.

Notes

- "Fragments of courses" that transfer in as part A, B, C, etc., of a course, will remain in the "hidden" zone instead of using the TRANSFER ONLY label if they represent an infrequent occurrence and if listing all the possible combinations would unnecessarily clutter the audit report. e.g., if STAT 2500 is displayed as meeting a requirement, then the combination of (STAT 2500A AND STAT 2500B) or (STAT 2500A AND STAT 2500B AND STAT 2500C) could be encoded as a hidden acceptable alternative.
- Other instances in which courses may remain hidden would be "by contract" courses and transfer courses that lack an exact articulation match (e.g., BIO_SCI ELECT**).
- The link to the Gen Ed pages in the degree audit and catalog will continue to be used instead of attempting to display all of the General Education options. This keeps the information displayed in the two places in synch and prevents the audit reports from being excessively long (some Gen Ed requirements accept several hundred courses).
- Tracks are not part of the myZou official academic record. They do not print on transcripts.