

Rancho Santiago Community College District
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION
Chapter 4
Academic Affairs

AR 4260 Course Prerequisites, Corequisites and Advisories

Reference(s):

Title 5 Sections 55000 et seq.

The Rancho Santiago Community College District adopts the following policy in order to provide for the establishing, reviewing, and challenging of prerequisites, corequisites, advisories on recommended preparation, and certain limitations on enrollment in a manner consistent with law and good practice. The Board recognizes that, if these prerequisites corequisites, advisories, and limitations are established unnecessarily or inappropriately, they constitute unjustifiable obstacles to student access and success and, therefore, the Board adopts this regulation which calls for caution and careful scrutiny in establishing them. Nonetheless, the Board also recognizes that it is as important to have prerequisites in place where they are needed. For these reasons, the Board has sought to establish a policy that fosters the appropriate balance between two concerns.

I. COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Information in the Catalog and Schedule of Classes

The following explanations will appear both in the college catalog and in the schedule of classes:

1. Definitions of prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment including the differences among them and the specific prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment which have been established.
2. Procedures for a student to challenge prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment and circumstances under which a student may make such a challenge. The information about challenges must include, at a minimum, the specific process including any deadlines and the various types of challenge that are established in law.
3. Define advisories on recommended preparation and the right of a student to choose to take a course without meeting the advisory.

B. Challenge Process

Any student who does not meet a prerequisite or corequisite or who is not permitted to enroll due to a limitation on enrollment but who provides satisfactory evidence may seek entry into the class as follows:

1. The student can obtain Prerequisite/Corequisite Challenge Form from a division office. The student completes the form, providing a reason and evidence for the challenge, and submits it to the appropriate Division Dean.
2. The challenge will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the Division Dean, or designee, department chair, or designee, and one department or division representative or designee.
3. If space is available in a course when a student files a challenge to the prerequisite or corequisite, the district shall reserve a seat for the student and resolve the challenge in a timely manner. If no space is available in the course when a challenge is filed, the challenge shall be resolved prior to the beginning of registration for the next term and, if the challenge is upheld, the student shall be permitted to enroll if space is available when the student registers for that subsequent term.
4. Grounds for challenge shall include the following: a. Those grounds for challenge specified in Section 55201(e) of Title 5. b. The student seeks to enroll and has not been allowed to enroll due to a limitation on enrollment established for a course that involves intercollegiate competition or public performance, or one or more to the courses for which enrollment has been limited to a cohort of students. The student shall be allowed to enroll in such a course if otherwise he or she would be delayed by a semester or more in attaining the degree or certificate specified in his or her Student Educational Plan. c. The student seeks to enroll in a course which has a prerequisite established to protect health and safety, and the student demonstrates that he or she does not pose a threat to himself or herself or others.

C. Curriculum Review Process

The curriculum review process shall at a minimum be in accordance with all of the following:

1. Establish prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories on recommended preparation (advisories) upon the recommendation of the Curriculum and Instruction Council. Certain limitations on enrollment must be established in the same manner. See II.C. below.
2. Establish prerequisites, corequisites, advisories on recommended preparation, and limitations on enrollment only if:
 - a. The faculty in the discipline or, if there is no faculty member in the discipline, the faculty in the department do all of the following:
 - (1) Approve the course, and,
 - (2) As a separate action, approve any prerequisites, or corequisites, only if:
 - (a) The prerequisite or corequisite is an appropriate and rational measure of a student's readiness to enter the course or program; and as demonstrated by a content review including, at a minimum, all of the following:
 - i. involvement of faculty with appropriate expertise;

- ii. consideration of course objectives set by relevant departments(s). The curriculum review process should be done in a manner that is in accordance with accreditation standards.
- iii. be based on a detailed course syllabus and outline of record, tests, related instruction materials, course format, type and number of examinations, and grading criteria.
- iv. specification of knowledge and/or skills which are deemed necessary at entry and/or concurrent with enrollment.
- v. identification and review of the prerequisite or corequisite which develops the body of knowledge and/or measures skills identified under iv.
- vi. Matching of the knowledge and skills in the targeted course (identified under iv.) and those developed or measured by the prerequisite or corequisite (i.e., the course or assessment identified under v.); and
- vii. maintain documentation that the above steps were taken.

(b) The prerequisite or corequisite meets the scrutiny specified in one of the following: II.A.1.a. through II.A.1.g. and specify which.

(3) Approve any limitation on enrollment that is being established for an honors course or section, for a course that includes intercollegiate competition or public performance, or so that a cohort of students will be enrolled in two or more courses, and, in a separate action, specify which.

(4) Approve that the course meets the academic standards required for degree applicable courses, non-degree applicable courses, non-credit courses, or community service respectively.

(a) Review the course outline to determine if a student would be highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student had knowledge or skills not taught in the course. If the student would need knowledge or skills not taught in the course itself, then the course may be approved for degree applicable credit only if all requirements for establishing the appropriate prerequisite have been met excepting only approval by the Curriculum and Instruction Council.

(b) Review the course outline to determine whether receiving a satisfactory grade is dependent on skills in communication or computation. If receiving a satisfactory grade is sufficiently dependent on such skills, then the course may be approved for degree applicable credit only if all requirements have been met for establishing a prerequisite or corequisite of not less than eligibility for enrollment to a degree-applicable course in English or mathematics respectively.

(c) A course which should have a prerequisite or corequisite as proved in (a) or (b) but for which one or more of the requirements for establishing a prerequisite have not been met may only:

- i. Be reviewed and approved pursuant to the standards for non-degree applicable credit, non-credit or community service; (Section 55002) or
- ii. Be revised and reviewed as required to meet the criteria for establishing the necessary prerequisites or corequisites.
- iii. The Curriculum and Instruction Council also reviews the course and prerequisite in a manner that meet each of the requirements specified in Title 5, Section 55002(a)(1).

D. Program Review

As a regular part of the curriculum review process or at least every six years, the faculty shall review each prerequisite, corequisite, or advisory to establish that each is still supported by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council and is still in compliance with all other provisions of this policy and with the law. Any prerequisite or corequisite which is successfully challenged under subsections (1), (2), or (3) of Section 55003(p) shall be reviewed promptly thereafter to assure that it is in compliance with all other provisions of this policy and with the law.

E. Implementing Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Limitations on Enrollment

Implementation of prerequisites, corequisites, and limitations on enrollment must be done in some consistent manner and not left exclusively to the classroom instructor. Every attempt shall be made to enforce all conditions a student must meet to be enrolled in the class through the registration process so that a student is not permitted to enroll unless he or she has met all the conditions or has met all except those for which he or she has a pending challenge or for which further information is needed before final determination is possible of whether the student has met the condition.

F. Instructor's Formal Agreement to Teach the Course as Described

By accepting employment with the district, faculty agree to teach in accordance with the course outline, particularly those aspects of the course outline that are the basis for justifying the establishment of the prerequisite or corequisite.

II. REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL COURSES

If the student's enrollment in a course or program is to be contingent on his or her having met the proposed prerequisite(s), then such a prerequisite or corequisite must be established as follows. If enrollment is not blocked, then what is being established is not a prerequisite or corequisite but rather, an advisory on recommended reparation and must be identified as such in the class schedule and catalog. Establishing advisories does not require all the following steps. (See II.B. below)

A. Prerequisites and Corequisites

1. Levels of Scrutiny

Prerequisites and corequisites must meet the requirements of at least one of the following subsections:

- a. The Standard Prerequisites or Corequisites

The College may establish satisfactory completion of a course as prerequisite or corequisite for another course provided that, in addition to obtaining the review of the faculty in the faculty in the discipline or department and the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided above, the College specifies as part of the course outline of record at least three of the campuses of the University of California and the California State University which reflects in their catalogs that they offer the equivalent course with the equivalent prerequisite(s) or corequisite(s). Any combination of University of California campuses and California State University campuses is acceptable in satisfaction of this requirement.

b. Sequential Courses Within and Across Disciplines

A course may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite for another course provided that, in addition to the review by faculty in the department or discipline and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as described above, skills, concepts, and/or information taught in the first course are presupposed in the second course, and a list of the specific skills and/or knowledge a student must possess in order to be ready to take the second course is included in its outline or record.

c. Courses in Communication or Computation Skills

Prerequisites establishing communication or computational skill requirements may not be established across the entire curriculum unless established on a course by course basis. A course in communication or computation skills, or eligibility for enrollment in such a course, may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite for any course other than another course in communication or computation skills if, in addition to the review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided above, the following is also done.

- (1) A list of the specific skills a student must possess in order to be ready to take the course is included in the course outline of record; and
- (2) Research is conducted as provided in II.A.1.g.
- (3) The prerequisite or corequisite may be established for a period of not more than one year while the research is being conducted provided that a determination is made that a student who lacks the particular skills is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade because a sufficient percentage of the grade is directly dependent on these skills. This determination must be approved both by the faculty in the discipline as provided in I.C.2.a. and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided in I.C.2.b. and must be based on a review of the syllabus as well as samples of tests and other assignments on which the grade is based.

d. Cut Scores and Prerequisites

Whether or not research is required to establish a prerequisite, data collected to validate assessment instruments and cut scores is always relevant to reviewing the prerequisites for the associated courses. If such data are insufficient to establish the cut scores, any course prerequisites established for the same course or courses may not be printed in subsequent catalogs and class schedules or reinforced in subsequent semesters until the problems

are resolved, and subsequent data exist to establish the cut scores. In such a case, the collection of this data shall be done in the manner prescribed in II.A.1.g. of this policy in addition to other requirements of law. Such a prerequisite may be changed to an advisory on recommended preparation while the problems are being resolved.

e. Programs

In order to establish a prerequisite for a program, the proposed prerequisite must be approved as provided for a course prerequisite in regard to at least one course that is required as part of the program.

f. Health and Safety

A prerequisite or corequisite may be established provided that, in addition to the review by faculty in the department or division and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided above:

- (1) The course for which the prerequisite is proposed is one in which the student might endanger his or her own health and safety or the health and safety of others; and
- (2) The prerequisite is that the student possesses what is necessary to protect his or her health and safety and the health and safety of others before entering the course.

g. Recency and Other Measures of Readiness

Recency and other measures of readiness may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite only if, in addition to the review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided above, the following is also done:

- (1) A list of the specific skills a student must possess in order to be ready to take the course is included in the course outline of record.
- (2) Data are gathered according to sound research practices in at least one of the following areas:
 - (a) The extent to which students, those currently enrolled in the course or those who have completed it, believe the proposed prerequisite or corequisite is necessary.
 - (b) Comparison of the faculty members' appraisal of students' readiness for the course to whether students met the proposed prerequisite or corequisite. The faculty appraisal could be done at any time in the semester that the College determined was appropriate and based on independent assignments, quizzes and exams, participation in class, or other indicators that the student was or was not ready to take the course.
 - (c) Comparison of students' performance at any point in the course with completion of the proposed prerequisite or corequisite.
 - (d) Comparison of student performance in the course to their scores on assessment instruments in the manner required to validate an assessment instrument and cut scores for the course in question as described in II.A.1.d.

- (3) The standard or any comparison done pursuant to II.A.1.g. shall be that a student is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade in the course unless the student has met the proposed prerequisite or corequisite. The research design, operational definition, and numerical standards, if appropriate, shall be developed by research personnel, discipline faculty and representatives of the Academic Senate. If the evidence fails to meet the standard established, the College may establish the proposed prerequisite or corequisite as a recommended preparation and may seek to establish it as a prerequisite or corequisite only by the following the process described in this policy and any applicable college policies.
- (4) If the Curriculum and Instruction Council has determined that a new course needs to have a prerequisite or corequisite, then the prerequisite or corequisite may be established for a single period of not more than one year while research is being conducted and a determination is being made, provided that
 - (a) All other requirements for establishing the prerequisite or corequisite have already been met; and
 - (b) Students are informed that they may enroll in the course although they do not meet the prerequisite. However, students who lack the prerequisite may not constitute more than 20% of those enrolled in any one course.
 - (c) Prerequisites and corequisites which are exempt from review at the time they are, or were, established, as provided in Section 55201(d), are not eligible for this exception, and the research must be conducted during the six years before they must be reviewed. (See 1.D. above)

2. Additional Rules

Title 5, Section 55003 specified additional rules which are to be considered part of this document as though reproduced here.

B. Advisories on Recommended Preparation

The College may recommend that a student meet a standard of readiness at entry only if recommended by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided in I.C. above. Such recommended standards of readiness are called advisory prerequisites.

C. Limitations on Enrollment

The types of limitation on enrollment specified below may only be established through the curriculum review process by the discipline or department faculty and the Curriculum and Instruction Council specified above including the requirement to review them again at least every six years. The following requirements must also be met in order to establish these particular limitations on enrollment.

1. Performance Courses

The College may establish audition or try-out as a limitation on enrollment for courses that include public performance or intercollegiate competition such as, but not limited to, band orchestra, theater, competitive speech, chorus, journalism, dance, and intercollegiate athletics provided that:

- a. For any certificate or associate degree requirement which can be met by taking this course, there is another course or courses which satisfy the same requirement; and
- b. The College includes in the course outline of record a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which meet the same requirement.
- c. Limitations on enrollment established as provided for performance courses shall be reviewed at least every six years to determine whether the audition or try-out process is having an disproportionate impact on any historically underrepresented group and, if so, a plan shall be adopted to seek to remedy the disproportionate impact. If disproportionate impact has been found, the limitation on enrollment may not be printed in subsequent catalogs or schedules nor enforced in any subsequent term until such a plan has been endorsed by the department and the college administration and put into effect. (See also Sections 55502(e) and 55512)

2. Honors Courses

A limitation on enrollment for an honors course or an honors section of a course may be established if, in addition to the review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided above there is another section or another course or courses at the College which satisfy the same requirements. If the limitation is for an honors course and not only for an honors section, the College must also include in the course outline of record a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which meet the same associate degree or certificate requirement.

3. Blocks of Courses or Sections

Blocks of courses or blocks of sections of courses are two or more courses or sections for which enrollment is limited in order to create a cohort of student. Such a limitation on enrollment may be established if, in addition to review by the faculty in the discipline or department and by the Curriculum and Instruction Council as provided above, there is another section or another course or courses which satisfy the same requirement. If the cohort is created through limitations on enrollment in the course, then the College must include in the course outline of record a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which satisfy the same associate degree or certificate requirement.

Revised: August 10, 2015 (Previously AR 6132 and 6133)

Revised: September 17, 2018