Foreign Language Course Attribute Policy

v.2 01 March 2018

This policy replaces v.1 approved by the UCC on 28 April 2017

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Introduction

There are requirements in various degree programs across the University that involve the completion of courses that focus on the study of a language other than English. The University of Wisconsin-Madison is a national leader in foreign language instruction and offers instruction in more than 40 languages.

Given the expansive offerings it is not always easy for students to understand what languages are offered, or which courses are at the introductory and sequentially higher levels. These courses also are eligible to award retroactive credits ("retro-credits") that grant credit for previous language study when students complete an appropriate course at the University with a grade of B or higher.

The study of language involves vocabulary, grammar (morphology and syntax), phonology, pronunciation, culture, history, text interpretation, and other skills. This attribute proposal is intended to create a way of delineating language courses where the primary focus of the course is teaching students a method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way and to differentiate them from courses that focus on the culture, literature, history and polity or other aspects of language learning.

The implementation of this proposal will facilitate more effective communication with current and future students about courses that meet foreign language requirements and courses that are eligible to award retro-credit. It will also facilitate communication with the broad range of interested non-student stakeholders (e.g. degree audit programmers, advisors in departments, and student service units).

Policy Statement

The proposal recommends the use of a course attribute and course attribute values that will be associated with courses in languages other than English that focus on the study of systems of human communication that include grammar (morphology and syntax), phonology, and vocabulary necessary for oral and/or written communication.

The primary focus of the learning outcomes of courses that have this attribute involve:
- the ability to read and write a language other than English
- the ability to speak and understand a language other than English
- the advancement of communication skills in a language other than English

Level 1
• First-semester language course. Course in a language other than English for students with no prior experience in the language. These courses are not retro-credit eligible.

Level 2
• Second-semester language course. Course in a language other than English that requires a Level 1 course a requisite. These courses are retro-credit eligible.

Level 3
• Third-semester language course. Course in a language other than English that requires a Level 2 course a requisite. These courses are retro-credit eligible.

Level 4
• Fourth-semester language course. Course in a language other than English that requires a Level 3 course a requisite. These courses are retro-credit eligible

Level 5+
• Fifth-semester and above language course. Course in a language other than English that requires a Level 4 or Level 5 course a requisite. These courses are retro-credit eligible.

Courses with a 5+ designation could be sequenced or non-sequenced language courses beyond the fourth semester, or literature or culture courses taught in the language that require a Level 4 or Level 5 course requisite. Because these are language courses, they are retro-credit eligible.

Impact and Benefits
Department faculty and staff who are responsible for a language curriculum should consider including this attribute if it is appropriate during the course proposal process.

The attribute will be included in the Course Guide and in the Guide.

The attributes can be used by the schools and colleges for degree audit encoding purposes in place of having to compile lists of hundreds of courses.

The attribute will clearly communicate to students and stakeholders which courses are eligible to award retro-credit.

Implementation
Most of this policy has already been implemented. Courses have had the levels 1-4 attributes added in the SIS course catalog and this information is included in the Guide and Course Guide and is being used by degree audits. A list of courses that should be given the Level 5+ attribute will be developed based on existing course lists in L&S DARS entries. Preliminary discussions with the Office of the Registrar have taken place concerning updating the process for awarding retro-credits. While the table that determines what courses are used in awarding retro-credits will remain separate from the course attribute, a business practice that the two will be updated in concert has been agreed upon, and auditing to assure that the two data sources remain in sync will be done.