The UNC Policy Manual
400.1.5.1[R][1]
Adopted 08/25/21
Technical Corrections 09/18/26

Regulation on the University of North Carolina Common Numbering System

I. Purpose. The following regulation ("this regulation") is designed to provide Systemwide consistency and clarity regarding implementation of paragraph II.7 of Section 400.1.5, of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Fostering Undergraduate Student Success* ("the policy").

A. The University of North Carolina Common Numbering System (UNC CNS) is a cooperative effort among all UNC System institutions to facilitate applicable transfer of lower-division undergraduate courses. The UNC CNS provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students, faculty and their advisors to use in determining transfer course equivalencies on a System wide basis.

B. If a student transfers a course with a UNC CNS Number, the receiving institution shall award credit in accordance with the provisions outlined in the associated CNS Operations Manual.

II. Goal. The overall goal of the UNC CNS is to improve student progression and timely degree completion, by facilitating the clear and consistent transfer of course credit for students moving from one UNC institution to another, or for students transferring between a UNC institution and a North Carolina community college.

A. The development of the UNC CNS will leverage existing articulation agreements and equivalency information, while avoiding awarding credit for material that a student has not mastered or placing a student into a course for which the student is not prepared.

B. Faculty representing relevant academic departments shall be engaged in institutional decisions for the implementation of the policy and this regulation to ensure that decisions are informed by the standards of applicable disciplines. Another benefit of faculty involvement in the implementation of the policy and this regulation will be to ensure that implementation is in alignment with the standards of the institution's accrediting agency and of accrediting bodies for specific disciplines and professions.

III. Definitions. The following operational definitions apply to the policy and this regulation:

A. "Appeals Process." If a transfer student perceives that the terms of the UNC CNS policy or regulation have not been honored, they may follow the Transfer Credit Appeal Procedure. Each UNC System institution will provide a link to the CNS Transfer Credit Appeal Procedure on its website.

B. "Appropriate Credit." A determined number of credit hours granted for a particular course or courses, aligned with the subject content and academic outcomes.

C. “Bi-directional.” The courses listed in the UNC CNS list transfer between institutions in both directions.

D. “CNS Course List.” The official list of UNC CNS Course Numbers approved by the senior vice president for academic affairs at the UNC System Office.

E. “Common Numbering System (CNS).” A common classification system of designated undergraduate lower-division courses offered by UNC System institutions.

F. “Course Exemption.” Rationales of sufficient evidentiary quality that an institution does not have an equivalent for a course listed in the UNC CNS, either because the institution does not offer the course, or the institution deems there is no existing course with content equivalency. Requests should be submitted to an institution’s chief academic officer (CAO) for consideration, and after receiving CAO approval, submitted to the UNC System senior vice president for academic affairs for approval.

G. “Course Number.” The specific and unique identifier applied to all CNS courses. The schema for the classification system is outlined in the UNC CNS Operations Manual.

H. “Disciplinary Coordinators.” Serve as spokespeople for each of the disciplines covered in the UNC CNS and work closely with the UNC System Office to maintain representation and convene meetings as governed by the UNC CNS Regulation.

I. “Faculty Disciplinary Committee.” A group of faculty members appointed as disciplinary experts to assist with the implementation and/or maintenance of the CNS.

J. “UNC CNS Operations Manual.” A document maintained by the UNC System Office that contains instructions and additional directions regarding the operation of the UNC CNS.

K. “Undergraduate Lower-Division Courses.” Undergraduate lower-division courses are those with a level of content intended for first- or second-year undergraduate students. Typically, courses numbered at the 100/200 or 1000/2000 level are considered undergraduate lower-division courses.

IV. Responsibilities of Constituent Institutions.

A. Institutions are expected to map their appropriate courses to each of the courses listed in the CNS. The list of approved courses is contained in the CNS Operations Manual. If an institution does not offer a course that corresponds to a given CNS course or if an institution deems that an existing course does not have the appropriate equivalency to a CNS course, a request for exemption must be approved by the chief academic officer of the institution and forwarded to the UNC System Office senior vice president for academic affairs for final approval. This request should include a detailed explanation of why the course does not have an equivalency.

B. The institution shall maintain the course transfer details for all CNS designated courses. Course transfer details include at least the sending institution, course taken, and course and credit

hours awarded in transfer. The course transfer details shall be reviewed annually and updated in the enterprise resource planning system (ERP). Constituent institutions must likewise develop and publicize their own policies or practices regarding UNC CNS courses and the award of credit as specified by the System Office.

C. In coordination with the UNC System Office, institutions must develop their own procedures for implementation, e.g., marketing/communication, admissions staff/advisor training, etc.

D. After implementation, institutions will establish documented procedures for reviewing new courses; proposed changes to courses, course number, prefix, description or credits; and proposed exemption of courses and submit to the UNC System Office. A full description of the procedures for submitting course updates and exemptions can be found in the CNS Operations Manual.

E. Institutions will appoint representatives from CNS disciplines to serve on faculty disciplinary committees when requested by the UNC System Office.

F. If a student transfers a course with a UNC CNS Number, the receiving institution shall first award credit for the course that the receiving institution has identified as corresponding to that CNS Number. If the receiving institution determines that another institutional course would be more beneficial to a student's degree path, they may award alternative credit in place of the CNS credit.

V. Responsibilities of the UNC System Office. The UNC System Office will:

A. Create and maintain a searchable database for approved CNS courses that are transferable between constituent institutions.

B. Maintain and publish the UNC CNS Operations Manual, which provides guidance on implementation and maintenance of the UNC CNS.

C. Establish and maintain a process for institutions to update changes to CNS courses and to request that new courses be added to the CNS list.

D. Review institutional compliance annually.

E. Provide oversight and maintenance of the UNC CNS.

F. Annually update and publish the UNC CNS Course List.

G. Convene and coordinate faculty disciplinary committees.

VI. Evaluation. The effects of the policy and this regulation, at the level of the UNC System and across its constituent institutions, shall be assessed by the UNC System Office within three years of implementation, and then on a periodic basis. Recommendations for altering the policy and this regulation shall be made accordingly to the president (for this regulation) or Board of Governors (for the policy), based on appropriate evidence.

VII. Reporting Requirements. Initial reports regarding exemptions to the policy and/or discontinuances of awarding credit for courses that are covered under the CNS by institutional chief academic officers, shall be reported to the president by May 30, 2022. Subsequent reports of exceptions, discontinuances, and/or other alterations relative to this policy shall be reported to the president annually by May 30. Reports to the president shall include full documentation of the compelling reasons considered by chief academic officers, along with documentation of the CAO's approval, for each exemption granted.

VII. Other Matters.

A. Effective Date. The requirements of this regulation shall be effective on the date of adoption of this regulation by the president.

B. Relation to State Laws. The foregoing regulation as adopted by the president is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this regulation.

[1]This regulation replaces Section 400.1.5.1[R], *Regulations on Improving Graduations Rates*, which was adopted on February 22, 1993, and repealed in April 2013.