

## Guidelines for Course Prerequisites

The University distinguishes between prerequisites that are mandatory and those that are advisory.

**Mandatory prerequisites** (noted simply as "Prerequisites" in University publications) stipulate a level of preparation for a course such that, without this preparation, the student is unlikely to complete the course satisfactorily. The prerequisite is usually expressed in terms of a specific skill level or one or more courses. The instructor/department has the option to de-register any student who has not completed the mandatory prerequisites or equivalent preparation, regardless of whether it is "enforced" by PeopleSoft.

**Advisory prerequisites** (noted as "Advisory Prerequisites" in University publications) are intended to warn students about the level of maturity, skills, or knowledge normally to be expected of students in the course. Students who do not meet these levels may manage to perform adequately in the course but will not obtain the same benefits from the course as those who are better prepared. They may even risk failure unless they work harder to compensate for their poor preparation. Instructors may wish to discourage poorly prepared students from taking the course; however, they may not seek to de-register students who have not completed advisory prerequisites.

**Permission of the instructor** or department is understood (not stated) to be an alternative to both mandatory and advisory prerequisites, i.e., the instructor may, through consultation with the student, determine that the student has the necessary preparation for the course without having completed the specific prerequisites.

Permission of Instructor or Department should only be stated as a prerequisite if the department wishes to require every student interested in the course to consult the instructor/department. In requesting a stated "permission of instructor/department" prerequisite, the department should indicate why screening is necessary, how students will be screened, and how students will be registered. Note: Students will not be able to register using the self service system unless the department or instructor has issued a "permission number" in PeopleSoft.

**Enforcement of prerequisites** under the current PeopleSoft system, it is expected that enforcement of prerequisites will occur at the time of registration; that is, students lacking the mandatory prerequisites will be prevented from registering for a course. Students lacking the published prerequisites will only be able to register after obtaining the instructor's permission.

However, as of Spring 2008, the university has not yet activated enforcement of prerequisites for ALL courses.

Alternately, departments may

- 1) The department/instructor may review the records of students registered for a course at any time before the start of the semester. (In the case of students with transfer credit, this would also involve review of transfer records, available from the Undergraduate Transfer Office.)
- 2) The department/instructor may require, on the first day of classes, that students in a course produce proof of having satisfied the prerequisites.

In either case, the department may then request de-registration of any students lacking the required prerequisites by informing the Dean's office and registrar.