# UW-Madison Guidelines for Establishing, Renaming, Reorganizing, or Discontinuing Course Subject Listings[1]

*Adopted by the University Academic Planning Council, October 20, 2005; Administrative Revision April 21, 2011.*

## I. Purpose of Course Subject Listings

Course Subject Listings are structures for organizing groups of courses in a related subject area or topic that represent a coherent program of study. Each course Subject Listing has an academic owner, which is usually a department or other organized group of faculty (program or center) with a structured faculty executive committee.

## II. Criteria for Approval of New Subject Listings

a) For each school and college, one general, multi-purpose Subject listing of "interdepartmental," "interdisciplinary," or "all-school/college" courses is provided if the school/college so chooses. Such Subject listings are currently active for each school and college. Any new school/college unit that may be established may choose to establish such an "all-school/college" listing and that decision should be articulated in proposals to establish the school/college. Schools and colleges are assumed to have the wherewithal and resources to support a Subject listing; the school/college curriculum committee will fill the role of executive committee unless otherwise specified.

b) Subject listings are allowed for any formally constituted academic department or department-like unit as described in Faculty Policies and Procedures (tenure granting departments). If a new academic department is established, that department is entitled to a Subject listing, if requested in the department proposal. . Departments are assumed to have the governance structure and resources to support a Subject listing. Any new department that chooses to establish a Subject listing should articulate that choice in the proposal to establish the new department so that this aspect of planning is explicit. Such actions are recorded formally in the minutes of the University Academic Planning Council, which considers proposals for new departments, and are communicated to the University community in the same manner that the information about new academic departments is communicated.

c) When new academic majors are implemented, the supporting unit may choose to make use of existing Subject listings. Alternatively, a new Subject listing may be established. If the supporting unit determines that a new Subject listing is necessary, then the request for the Subject listing should be made explicitly in conjunction with the proposal for the new academic program. The supporting unit should provide evidence that the new Subject listing is necessary

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to support course enrollment by students, that the program faculty are involved in instruction, and that the supporting unit has the resources and staffing needed to maintain a Subject listing. Actions will be recorded formally in the minutes of the University Academic Planning Council, coincident with the approval of the academic program, and reported to the University community via the same routes that are used to report the new academic program.

d) Programs or units that do not correspond to an academic department or an academic major may request a Subject listing for groupings of courses that represent a coherent program of study. The proposal for a Subject listing should address the following criteria:

i.   The proposed Subject listing is necessary to support course enrollment by students.
ii.  The courses to be included in the Subject listing represent a distinct group of courses that does not duplicate existing Subject listings.  A list of the relevant courses should be included in the proposal.
iii. At least some of the courses should be uniquely offered under the new Subject listing.  If all of the courses are cross-listed, the onus is on the proposing unit to demonstrate the value to students of providing a new grouping that fully duplicates other listings (see notes on cross-listing below).
iv.  The supporting unit for the proposed Subject listing must be a stable unit that has a long-term academic and resource foundation.
v.   The supporting unit must exhibit the staff expertise, continuity and availability to attend to all the academic and administrative responsibilities associated with maintaining a Subject listing.

The program faculty prepare a proposal and after approval by the executive committee, submit the proposal to the primary school/college dean for consideration by the curriculum committee and/or the academic planning council.  The proposal should also be submitted to other schools/colleges that have overlapping interests in the proposal for consideration. Following dean's approval, the proposal is forwarded to the provost for consideration by the University Academic Planning Council.  Given the variety in the nature of these requests, on occasion the UAPC may need to consult with other university-wide bodies, such as the Divisional Executive Committees, for specialized knowledge that may not be readily available to the UAPC.  The decision of the UAPC and the provost will be reported to the University community through usual process.  See the following section on the approval process for additional considerations.

*III.  About Cross-listed Courses*

The maintenance of cross-listed courses can be time-consuming, complex, and error-prone: cross-listing is not "resource-neutral."  Ideally, the use of cross-listing is reserved for courses that are taught within an inter- or multi-disciplinary framework and that appropriately belong in multiple Subject listings.  There may be occasions when cross-listing courses serves the broader goals of departments and programs, and since the responsibility for managing their Subject listings rests on these units, they bear responsibility for determining the proper use of cross-listing.  There is no requirement that a course be cross-listed, even when it meets the criteria for cross-listing.  The following guidelines are suggested:

i. Department and program faculty are responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to approve requests to cross-list courses with other Subject listings. Proposals for cross-listing individual courses are submitted to school/college curriculum committees and the Divisional Committees.

ii. Without exception, all course information related to cross-listed courses must be identical: this includes course numbers, attributes, descriptions, and footnotes. Approval of a cross-listing signifies that all participating units will work together to ensure accuracy of all information as it appears in each Subject listing (e.g., that variable information, like footnotes, are accurate and identical for each listing).

iii. The following conditions are presumed in cross listing:

   a. First and foremost, that important and necessary information is provided to students for enrollment in courses by virtue of the cross-listing;

   b. That the course is taught by a member of the faculty or an instructor who has a recognized, dual allegiance to both programs (e.g, via a joint appointment, formal admission as joint-governance faculty, or as a recognized affiliate); or that the course is team-taught by members of departments participating in the cross-list, and that students from all departments benefit from the joint offering; or that any of the departments participating in the cross-listing has the potential to offer the course (or that the course might rotate among participating departments); or that a substantial proportion of the course subject matter is (and will be) appropriate and relevant to all of the fields represented by participating departments. In short, tangential or insubstantial connections between programs and interests should not be sufficient for cross-listing courses across Subject listings.

The cross-listing of courses increases the complexity of scheduling classes and will add to staff workload. This should be taken into consideration when proposals for cross-listing are considered.

IV. *Process for Approval of New Subject Listings*

The process for approval of new Subject listings depends on the circumstances of implementation. When the new Subject listing is associated with the establishment of a new school/college, an academic department, or an academic major, the approval is coincident with that approval process, as described above.

In general, units requesting new Subject listings should seek the broadest reasonable consensus on the wisdom of the proposal. Units proposing new Subject listings should seek consent from existing units and programs that share a scholarly interest in the subject. For listings that are of cross-college or pan-college interest, the program faculty should seek support from all schools/colleges that are impacted or are likely to have an overlapping interest. In addition, to reduce confusion, units with similar names should also be consulted. This broad consultation should inform the school/college decision and be documented in a proposal for a new subject listing.

Proposals for new Subject listing are considered by the school/college curriculum committee and/or the school/college APC who recommend a decision to the dean. (For departments or

academic majors, this consideration takes place in the context of the new department or major approval process). Following dean's approval, the proposal should be forwarded to the provost for consideration by the University Academic Planning Council. Given the variety of requests, on occasion the UAPC may need to consult with other university-wide bodies, such as the Divisional Executive Committees, for specialized knowledge that may not be readily available to the UAPC. The decision of the UAPC and the provost will be reported to the University community using regular processes.

Following all approval steps, the new Subject listing will be reported to Registrar's Office by the provost's office. Normally, new Subject listings will be implemented during the "build" process for the schedule of classes during the next term to go through the build process.

## VI. Renaming or Reorganizing Subject Listings

Renaming requests should be explicit, and not assumed, when they are connected to a proposal to rename a department or program or other unit that supports the Subject listing. If the request to rename a Subject listing is not associated with the renaming of a supporting unit, a proposal should explicate the reasons, and especially explain the value for students and for course enrollment.

Reorganizations that require merger or deletion of some Subject listings or creation of new Subject listings should follow the pattern for new Subject listings. The proposal for reform should include evidence of the need for curricular reorganization and a plan that includes a draft timeline. Units and their schools/colleges should consult with Academic Planning and Analysis, the Registrar's Office and the Divisional Committee in the course of planning such undertakings. These reorganizations have substantial ripple effects and broad consultation is essential to plan for a smooth implementation.

## VII. Discontinuing Subject Listings

When academic departments or programs or other units with associated Subject listings are discontinued, all Subject listings associated with that department or program will also be discontinued. These issues should be explicated in the documentation that requests the discontinuation of the relevant unit or program. Typically this will mean that the courses will be deleted too. The program faculty should undertake the regular process for deleting courses. If faculty are transferred to another department or program and that department or program wants to "adopt" the course, the course could be transferred to the appropriate Subject listing rather than be deleted. For those cases where courses are cross-listed, units participating in the cross-list should also be given the option to "adopt" the orphaned course(s). If no unit is willing to take on the course, it should be deleted.

## VIII. Role of the Supporting Unit in the "Care and Feeding" of Subject Listings

Implementation of new Subject listings are not resource neutral: they have real costs to the university and add significant responsibilities to the unit that "owns" the Subject listing. The unit that is responsible for the Subject listing (usually but not always a department) has to have

the faculty and staff resources (time and skill) to maintain the course detail and its representation in the schedule of classes and all publications and advising materials.  Those responsibilities include communication to students about courses and course enrollment, communication with other units with which cross-listed courses are shared, the updating of the variable elements associated with courses each term (footnotes, instructors, meeting time and place).  These updates require skill and knowledge of the process and is best delegated to a permanent staff member who has had the appropriate training to maintain the schedule of classes and the course enrollment management features, pays attention to detail, is able to meet unforgiving deadlines, and understands the course array.  Detailed information is available in the form of a Curricular Services Toolkit posted on the Office of the Registrar's web site.

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