

Change in Core Curriculum Requirements for Freshman English

Policy Memorandum No. 54

Recommended by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies
 Approved by University Council: June 4, 1984
 Approved by the President: June 4, 1984
 Effective: Fall Quarter, 1984

The University Council approved changes in Freshman English requirements on recommendation of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and after previous approval at the Department of English and College of Arts and Sciences levels. The changes establish a more flexible set of requirements for freshmen, depending on the freshman's individual preparation and skill in English writing.

As originally passed in January, 1983, the University Core Curriculum required that all students take three quarters of freshman English, except for honors students who were required to take a two-quarter honors sequence. Essentially this was a formalization of the requirements that had existed on the collegiate level for the last several years. Because students come to Virginia Tech with different degrees of preparation and practice in writing, the English Department had evolved a complex system of placement and exemption through advanced placement and credit by examination.

The new policy is aimed at simplifying the old system and solving three problems that existed in it: 1) students were often exempted at the end of the freshman English sequence (through credit by examination in English 1122 or 1123) instead of the beginning, while the new system recognizes that when students come in with different degrees of writing skills, it makes more sense to START them at an appropriate level; 2) students were exempted with credit, since the major means of recognizing individual differences was through credit by examination, while the new system will exempt WITHOUT credit (except for students with advanced placement credit); 3) the honors English program had become so large that it was no longer really an honors program, while under the new system, students can take only two quarters of freshman English in the REGULAR sequence, beginning in English 1122.

Following is a description of the new policy:

The University Core Curriculum requires that each student complete one, two, three, or four quarters of freshman English, depending on two criteria: 1) entering test scores (an average of the SAT-Verbal, the Test of Standard Written English, and the Composition Achievement Test); and 2) a placement essay. Students will be placed as follows, and the total amount of credit in freshman English required for graduation will be determined by that placement:

Courses Required	Credit Toward Graduation
Top group of students (roughly 1 H1220)	3
Next highest group (roughly 2 1122, 1123)	6
	9

Average group
(roughly 6 1121, 1122, 1123)

Lowest group
(roughly 5 1000, 1121, 1122, 1123)⁹

(English 1000 carries two credits for purposes of determining the quarter's total load, but the credits do not count toward graduation).

The present system of awarding credit based on the College Board Advanced Placement exam will be retained, and the placement implied in that credit will override any lower placement students might otherwise receive. Credit by examination will be restricted to transfer students and other special cases. (Transfer students will be required to have the regular nine hours in the freshman English sequence unless they submit standardized test scores and begin the sequence here).

President's Policy Memorandum

URL: <http://purl.vt.edu/vtdocs/policies/ppm54>