

Guidelines for Making Degree Works Exceptions

Introduction

Degree Works is the University of South Alabama's degree audit system. Degree Works matches student's coursework with degree requirements and shows how the courses apply toward the student's degree.

Some academic advisors are authorized by the Dean of their College to make exceptions in Degree Works. Such advisors are able to use the exceptions function to modify the degree completion requirements for individual students. The authorization to make exceptions to a student's degree completion requirements comes with significant responsibility. In making exceptions, advisors must check and carefully document that the modified degree requirements preserve the academic integrity of the corresponding degree. They also must uphold the standards for degree requirements imposed by accrediting agencies, which include the regional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC), the Alabama Commission of Higher Education's Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC), as well as college- or discipline-specific accrediting bodies.

In general, exceptions to degree requirements are not encouraged and should be granted only in appropriate circumstances. Many exceptions require an approval process, which is based on the type of curriculum requirement for the exception being made.

This guide is intended to assist advisors with making and properly documenting exceptions in Degree Works.

Modifications and Exceptions

Modifications are changes that should be applied to all students that meet the modification conditions. For example, a transfer course that is currently brought in as HY 101A but is found to be equivalent to an existing History course should be a transfer modification. Once entered as a transfer modification, all students with the transferred course receive the new equivalent credit, with no further documentation required.

Exceptions apply to an individual student, or in some cases, a group of students in a similar situation who can be covered by a single blanket memo. Most exceptions require documentation, as indicated below.

Exception Types

Degree Works exceptions may include changes in the credit hour requirement, grade requirement, course requirement, and/or a waiver of a required course. The exceptions are: Also Allow, Apply Here, Substitute, and Remove Course/Change the Limit.

Also Allow is used when additional options for a required course have been approved. This function expands the course options available for a requirement. Generally, these exceptions are used for new courses that may not be listed in the Bulletin.

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Apply Here moves a course from one area to another. This exception should only be used in rare circumstances as it will lock a course to a requirement.

Substitute is an exception that is used as a one for one course substitution. The course used to substitute can be in-progress or already completed. If there is a course restriction (e.g., minimum grade of B or better), and the substituted course does not meet that rule after the grade has posted, the exception will not be enforced.

Remove Course/Change the Limit changes credit limits or the number of courses required. This exception is generally used for partially completed requirements with department approval (e.g., a student receives authorization to satisfy a requirement with 3 credit hours as opposed to the required 4 hours).

Documenting Exceptions

Although most exceptions require documentation, some do not. In particular, Remove Course and Change the Limit exceptions, when made to insure audit functionality, do not require documentation to enter. Note however, that any adjustment that changes the hours in a program *does* require supporting documentation.

All other exceptions types should be documented as indicated below. Exceptions should be documented at the time they are made. Once the documentation justifying an exception is received by the advisor, it is the advisor's responsibility to enter the exception in Degree Works and to scan, name, and store the justification document at the appropriate location.

Exception types described below should be indicated in Degree Works using the following common abbreviation codes:

Code	Exception Type
FI	Functionality Issues (Remove Course, Change the Limit)
BM	Blanket Memos
PA	Program Adjustments
CX	Cross-listing Adjustment
C#	Course Number Change
NC	New Course Approved for Elective Group
TE	Transfer Equivalency
TCA	Study Abroad Course

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Individual Program exceptions

Program exceptions for an individual student should normally be documented with a program exception form completed and signed by the appropriate department chair. An email from a department chair or note in Degree Works from the department chair may also serve as documentation for exceptions made to a student's program.

All supporting documentation should be scanned and uploaded Xtender in the student's degree file. Instructions for logging-in to ApplicationXtender appear in **Appendix A** to this guide, and upload instructions are provided in **Appendix B**.

Memos and Blanket approvals

Sometimes, a program may allow exceptions to be applied for any student who meets certain conditions. This may happen for several reasons, such as changes in curriculum offerings that affect students on older bulletin versions. In such cases, a memo or a blanket approval from the Department Chair, which clearly indicates the allowed exception, may be applied to multiple students.

Many blanket memo adjustments can be automatically made in Degree Works with a hidden scribe request. Make such requests to the Registrar's Office by completing the Request for Scribe Changes form

[\[https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/eforms/registrar/request_for_scribe_changes_in_degree_works.pdf\]](https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/eforms/registrar/request_for_scribe_changes_in_degree_works.pdf).

Blanket memos that are not entered as a hidden scribe should be documented as follows:

- i. Assign a memo number to the blanket approval with the following format:

[BM][COLLEGE ABBREVIATION][DEPT ABBREVIATION][YEAR].[MEMO NUMBER]

So for instance, the first Geography blanket memo for 2015 would receive the memo number "BMASGEO2015.1"

- ii. Upload the memo to the following shared drive location [\\usanas\oor\$\DW Exceptions]
- iii. Document the exception in Degree Works by noting the substitution and referring to the justifying memo. For example:

"Replace GEO 480 with GEO 485. BMASGEO2015.1"

General Education Exceptions

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Exceptions to general education requirements should always be made in a way that conforms with the intent of the Articulation and General Studies Committee's (AGSC) area descriptions, which are as follows:

Area I - Written Composition. Effective written communication skills are essential in a literate society. Minimum requirements include at least 6 semester hours in written composition.

Area II - Humanities and Fine Arts. Study in the humanities addresses the ability to deal with questions of values, ethics, or aesthetics as they are represented in literature, philosophy, religion, and the arts, and is fundamental to general education. Minimum requirements include at least 12 semester hours in humanities with a minimum of 3 semester hours in literature*, 3 semester hours in the arts, and the remaining semester hours from the humanities and/or fine arts. In addition to literature, disciplines in the humanities include, but are not limited to, philosophy, religious studies, speech, foreign languages, art, music, theatre, and dance.

Courses should be broad in scope and content rather than specific and should emphasize a global perspective. Courses in the arts should emphasize history and appreciation rather than performance. Examples in the humanities and fine arts include, but are not limited to, world literature, art history, music appreciation, comparative religions, and history or origins of dance.

Area III - Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Study in the natural sciences and mathematics emphasizes the scientific method and applies quantitative or inductive reasoning. Minimum requirements include at least 11 semester hours with at least 3 semester hours in mathematics** at the pre-calculus algebra level or Finite Mathematics level unless otherwise specified and at least 8 semester hours in the natural sciences which must include laboratory experiences. Disciplines in the natural sciences include but are not limited to, astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, and physics.

Area IV - History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences. Study in history and the social and behavioral sciences deals primarily with the study of human behavior, social and political structures, and economics. Minimum requirements include 12 semester hours with at least a 3 semester hours course in history* and at least 6 semester hours from among other disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences. Disciplines include, but are not limited to, anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology.

The AGSC adds that general education courses should be broad in scope and content.

SACS-COC gives similar guidelines for identifying general education courses. It requires that general education courses provide a breadth of knowledge, not focusing on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to the student's occupation. In its rationale statement, SACS-COC adds that general education courses should not have multiple prerequisites. Multiple prerequisites for a course indicate more specific course content than general education courses are intended to have.

Some general education exceptions require additional documentation. In particular, documentation is required for general education exceptions that involve any of the following:

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- substituting a different area for the required general education course (e.g., substituting a humanities course for a natural science and mathematics requirement);
- substituting a junior- or senior-level course (300 or 400 level) to satisfy a general education requirement;
- a substitution into the written composition area, or;
- substituting with a variable topics course.

Document these types of general education exceptions using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form, available on the Academic Affairs forms page. **Appendix C**, below, provides some specific examples of general education exceptions that require the use of the General Education Program Adjustment form, as well as examples that do not require it.

Approved General Education Program Adjustments should be uploaded by the advisor in Xtender to the student's degree file, and the adjustment entered by the advisor in Degree Works.

Hours or other exceptions

Adjusting hours for program requirements (major or minor) requires documented approval from the student's department chair.

AGSC state minimum hours for General Education requirements must be met. Degree program total hours requirements cannot be adjusted below the minimum specified by SACS-COC (currently 120 hours for a Bachelors's degree).

Making Scribe Change Requests for Frequent Exceptions

If you find you are making exceptions of the same type repeatedly, a scribe change request in Degree Works may be appropriate. Please coordinate scribe change requests with Bulletin revisions. Scribe change requests can be sent to: degreeworks@southalabama.edu.

Appendix A

How to Log into ApplicationXtender

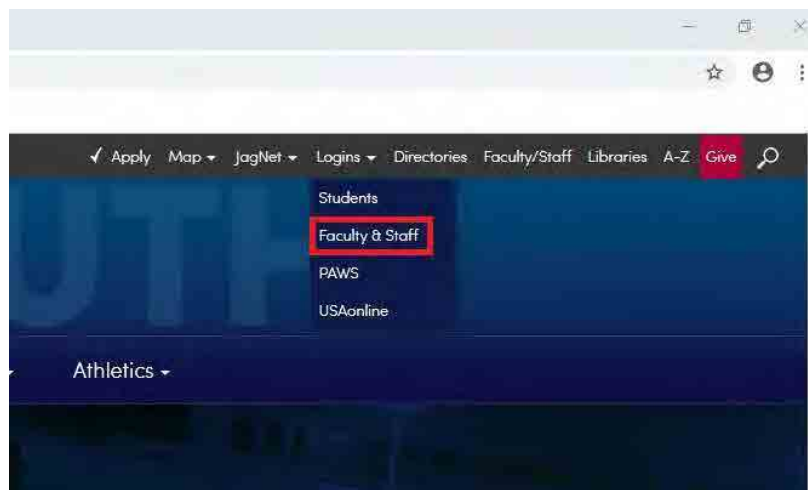
ApplicationXtender is an online application the USA Registrar's office uses to archive student information on a digital platform for easier access to those qualified. This appendix manual will take you through each step to access this website.

1. Go to the University of South Alabama's homepage (<https://www.southalabama.edu/>) and locate the **BLACK BANNER** at the top of the page.

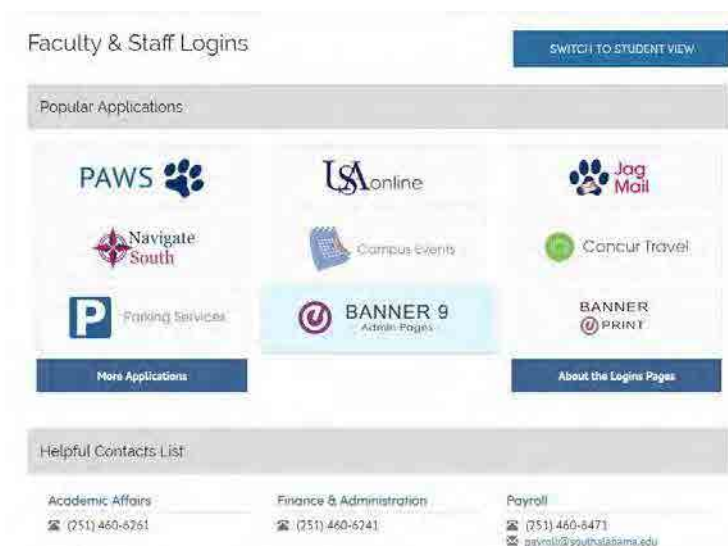


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2. Once you have located the **BLACK BANNER**, you will select the **LOGINS** tab. A small drop menu will appear with options for you to select. Select **FACULTY & STAFF**.



3. Select the **BANNER 9 ADMIN** tab on the Faculty & Staff Logins page.

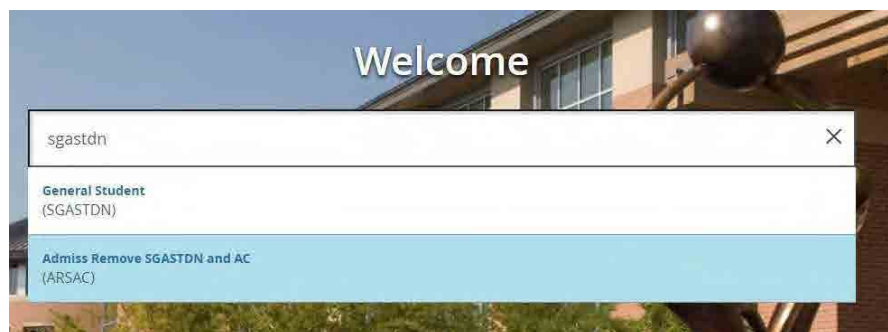


4. A sign in page will open upon selecting the Banner 9 tab, please enter your **JAG NUMBER** and **JAGMAIL PASSWORD** to continue.

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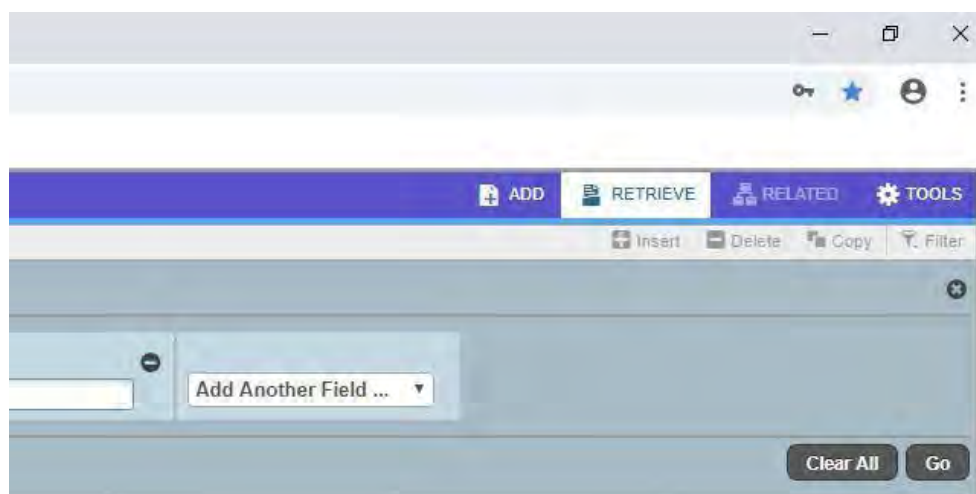


5. After logging in, you will be taken to the Banner 9 Dashboard. Enter the code **SGASTDN** into the **SEARCH BAR** to continue.



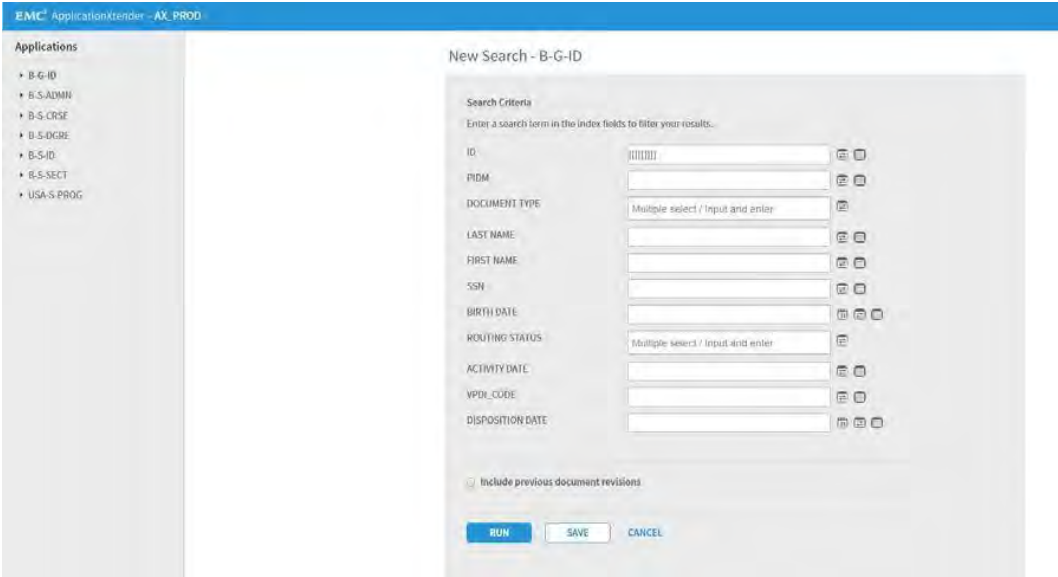
NOTE: SGASTDN is one of the many ways to get to ApplicationXtender.

6. Once you have entered into this particular search engine, go to the top right hand corner and select **RETRIEVE (Alt+R)** on the blue banner.



7. You now have access to ApplicationXtender and its affiliate application: *B-S-DGRE*.

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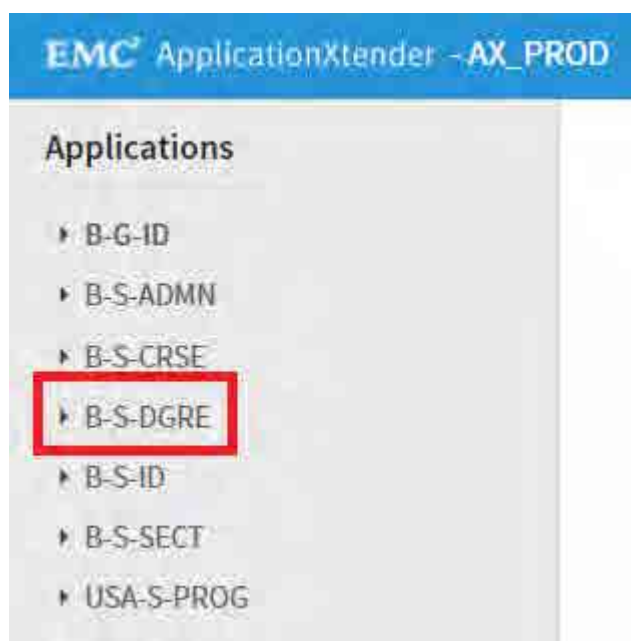
Appendix B

How to Add Documents to ApplicationXtender

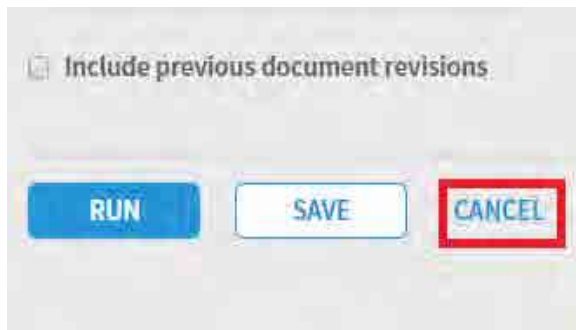
Now that you know how to access ApplicationXtender from Appendix A, you need to know how to add documents to categories so you can complete your indexing batches. These instructions will take you step by step through the process.

NOTE: You must be logged into ApplicationXtender to follow these instructions.

1. Select the B-S-DGRE application.



2. Locate the blue words at the bottom of the greyed out menu and select



CANCEL. This will remove the New Search from your screen, leaving you with a blank page that says **B-S-DGRE – BANNER STUDENT DEGREE.**

3. In the far right of the screen there are two blue icons that you can select.

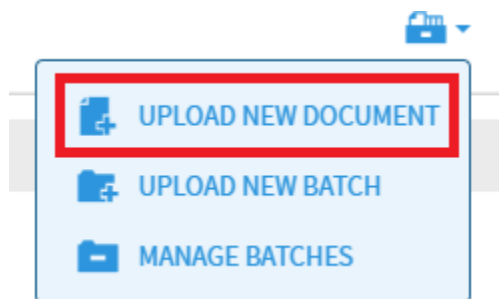
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4. Select the filing cabinet icon then select **UPLOAD NEW DOCUMENT**.

NOTE: Selecting NEW DOCUMENT will assign everything in the file you uploaded to a single Jag number when indexing while NEW BATCH allows for flexibility when indexing different documents for

different students.



5. A small window will appear where you are prompted to select the desired **APPLICATION** category, **NAME** of the document and the **FILE** you will be importing. Fill these out according to the document you are indexing.

NOTE: NAME should follow the naming conventions listed in the Guidelines for Making Exceptions in Degree Works.

Upload New Batch

Application* B-S-DGRE

Name * South Paw

Description Enter a description (optional).

File* Choose Files Exception d...tudents.pdf

CANCEL UPLOAD

6. Once you have filled out all the necessary information, select **UPLOAD**.
7. Now, you can index the document you imported into the system.

Appendix C

Examples of General Education Exceptions

The examples below are intended to provide guidance in making exceptions in general education Areas II-IV.

Examples marked below as “Acceptable – no review required” illustrate exceptions that could be made without further review. Note that examples of acceptable exceptions may still require documentation in Degree Works as described under Documenting Exceptions, above.

Examples flagged below as “Review Required” are questionable in some way and would not normally be allowed. In exceptional cases, and advisor or department chair may nonetheless feel an exception is justified. In such cases, approval should be requested and received using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form, prior to the exception being entered. If the completed Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment is approved, the form should be uploaded to the student’s degree file using Xtender.

Area II

Literature Examples

Acceptable – no review required

EH 216 – Introduction to Literature (USA = EH 203 - Literary Genres)

This course is acceptable as a Literature course without paperwork as it is a literature course that is broad in scope. However, it may not be used as part of a literature sequence.

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UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM BIRMINGHAM, AL

EH 216 INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Short stories, novellas, poems, and plays from variety of historical periods and cultures. Emphasis on techniques of each genre. Writing is a significant component of this course.

Units:	3
Prerequisite:	EH 102 [Min Grade: C]
Department:	ENGLISH ☒
Source catalog:	University of Alabama Birmingham Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016
Course history:	View Detail ☒

Review required

EH 241- Literature of the Supernatural is too narrow in scope to satisfy the Literature requirement. This course could be used as a Humanities elective without paperwork. An exception should only be entered for courses such as this if it has been approved using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM BIRMINGHAM, AL

EH 241 LITERATURE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Critical examination and historical survey of fairy tale, ghost story, wonder tale, and gothic narrative.

Units:	3
Prerequisite:	EH 102 [Min Grade: C]
Department:	ENGLISH ☒
Source catalog:	University of Alabama Birmingham Undergraduate Catalog 2014-2015
Course history:	View Detail ☒

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Fine Art Examples

Acceptable – No review required

The example below, MUS 105, was not equated to MUL 101 – Introduction to Music because MUS 105 is only 2 hours, however, this course is acceptable as satisfying the Fine Art requirement in Area II.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE LA CROSSE, WI

MUS 105 MUSIC APPRECIATION

The Western classical tradition. A survey of the forms and styles within each period since the Baroque. Emphasis on the content of specific masterpieces to enhance perceptive learning. Not applicable to major or minor. Not open to students with credit in MUS 110. General education course.

Units:	2
Offered:	Fall, Spring
Department:	MUSIC ⓧ
Source catalog:	University of Wisconsin La Crosse 2017-2018
Course history:	View Detail ⓧ

Acceptable – No review required

The survey course below, THR 102, is broad in scope and content with a global perspective. It also emphasizes a historical and artistic appreciation; therefore, it meets the Fine Art criteria for Area II.

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[INSTITUTION](#) → [DATA SET](#) → [COURSE LIST](#) → [COURSE DETAIL](#)

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM BIRMINGHAM, AL

THR 102 INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA

A survey of the world's greatest films and filmmakers emphasizing historical context and development of the art form over time. This course meets the Core Curriculum requirements for Area II: Fine Arts.

Units: 3
Department: THEATRE [⊕](#)
Source catalog: University of Alabama Birmingham Undergraduate Catalog 2018-2019
Course history: [View Detail](#) [⊕](#)

Review Required

ARH 205 is narrow in scope and focus, therefore it is not normally acceptable for a Fine Arts course. An exception should only be entered for courses such as this if it has received approval using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM BIRMINGHAM, AL

ARH 205 AFRICAN, NATIVE AMERICAN AND OCEANIC ART

Significant monuments and styles of these tribal cultures.

Units: 3
Department: ART HISTORY [⊕](#)
Source catalog: University of Alabama Birmingham Undergraduate Catalog 2001-2003
Course history: [View Detail](#) [⊕](#)

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Area III, Natural Sciences and Math

Lab Science Examples

Review Required

Although both examples below are lower level lab science courses, they do not meet the standard Physical Science criteria. In both cases, the course is vocationally-specific and a component of a vocationally-specific major. An exception should only be entered for courses such as these if they have been approved using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY AUBURN UNIVERSITY, AL

ANSC 1000 INTRODUCTION TO ANIMAL SCIENCES	
The importance of livestock to agriculture and to the health and nutrition of a modern society. Livestock terminology, selection, reproduction, nutrition, management, marketing, and species characteristics of beef and dairy cattle, swine, sheep and horses.	
Units:	4
Lecture hours:	3
Lab hours:	2
Department:	ANIMAL SCIENCES ⊕
Source catalog:	Auburn University 2011-2012
Course history:	View Detail ⊕

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INSTITUTION BY DATABASE BY COURSE LIST BY COURSE DETAIL

AUBURN UNIVERSITY AUBURN UNIVERSITY, AL

NUFS 2050 SCIENCE OF FOOD

Basic chemical and biological principles of food and food preparation methods, concepts of food quality, nutrition, sanitation, processing and food laws.

Units:	4
Lecture hours:	3
Lab hours:	3
Prerequisite:	NUFS 2000, BIOL 1000 or BIOL 1020
Offered:	Fall
Department:	NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCE ⊞
Source catalog:	Auburn University 2008-2009
Course history:	View Detail ⊞

Acceptable – No review required

Both examples below are non-vocationally oriented lab science courses in the area of Physical Science.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA TUSCALOOSA, AL

GEO 104 HAZARDOUS EARTH

This natural science course examines geologic and other Earth hazards that impact humans and ways that human activities often increase these hazards. The course consists of lecture and lab, and includes field trips and videos that illustrate various natural hazards.

Units:	4
Department:	GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES ⊞
Source catalog:	University of Alabama Undergraduate Catalog 2014-2015
Course history:	View Detail ⊞

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA TUSCALOOSA, AL

NEW 243 INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCES

This seminar demonstrates how the nature of the laboratory experience plays an essential role in the understanding and advancement of science. Several multidisciplinary experiments are performed in geology, chemistry, physics, and biology.

Units:	4
Department:	NEW COLLEGE +
Source catalog:	University of Alabama Undergraduate Catalog 2016-2017
Course history:	View Detail +

Course Description: This seminar demonstrates how laboratory and field research play an essential role in the understanding and advancement of science. Several multidisciplinary experiments and exercises are performed in an effort to increase scientific literacy and to provide knowledge for addressing the scientific basis of real-world problems. Examples of assignments include laboratory write-ups, student presentations, and discussions of scientific topics. Readings are taken from a variety of sources providing fundamental scientific knowledge on topics related to laboratory exercises. This is a field-based class that involves frequent outdoor excursions and hands-on activities. This 4.0 credit hour seminar is designated as a natural science (N) course with a lab.

In the case of NEW 243 – Interdisciplinary Sciences, a quick review of the course description found on the syllabus online, above, verified that it included a lab.

Math Examples

Review Required

Although the course below is college level, its content is not comparable to MA 110 or MA 112. An exception should only be entered for courses such as this if it has received approval using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form.

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SPRING HILL COLLEGE MOBILE, AL

MTH 104 SOCIAL JUSTICE MATHEMATICS Utilizing mathematics as a tool to identify and study many realistic problems, all of which pertain to social justice. Potential topics include quantitative literacy, democracy and fairness, allocation of wealth, statistics, and the history of mathematics. Social Justice.	EQUIV: There is
Units: 3	EVALU: There is
Corequisite:	
Department: MATHEMATICS ☒	
Source catalog: Spring Hill College 2017-2018	
Course history: View Detail ☒	

Acceptable – No review required

As the description shows, MGF 1106 is a college level math course at or above the level of MA 110 at USA.

PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE PENSACOLA, FL

MGF 1106 MATHEMATICS FOR LIBERAL ARTS I This course consists of the following topics: set theory, symbolic logic, introductory combinatorics, probability, descriptive statistics, number theory, linear programming and geometries with applications, history of mathematics, and algebra applications. Meets A.A. general education Category III. College credit. 3 hours.
Units: 3
Prerequisite: Appropriate score on Florida Entry-Level Placement Exam or MAT 1033
Department: MGF ☒
Source catalog: Pensacola Junior College 2000-2001
Course history: View Detail ☒

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Area IV

History

Acceptable – No Review Required

Versions of the following courses are typically acceptable for substitutions of a history course in Area IV:

World History I & II (with or without a specified date range)

Western Civilization I & II

US History I & II (with or without a specified date range)

Review Required

History courses with specific content, such as those below, may be too narrow in scope to satisfy the Area IV history requirement. An exception should only be entered for courses such as these if they have received approval using the Authorization for General Education Program Adjustment form. Note, however, that these courses may be eligible for an Area IV elective.

Asian Civilization/History

African American History

Modern US History

Native American History