

R475, Common Course Numbering¹

R475-1 Purpose: This policy provides a lower and upper division course numbering code for the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”).

R475-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.2 Board Policy R471, Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits

R475-3 Definition

3.1 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.2 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

R475-4 Principles of Course Numbering: Course numbers provide a guide to the key learning outcomes for courses.

4.1 Course numbers shall be comprised of a uniform prefix indicating a discipline plus four digits or four digits and one letter, e.g., HIST 1700.

4.2 In most cases, increasing course numbers indicate more challenging content and higher-order learning outcomes.

4.3 Course numbering indicates the sequence in which courses should be completed. Prerequisite courses should have lower first digits, e.g., 1000- or 2000-level digits than subsequent courses.

¹ This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Adopted December 1, 2023; amended November 21, 2024.

4.4 Under Utah Code § 53B-16-105(4)(a), to ensure transferability, institutions and departments should use uniform prefixes across the system and standardized course numbers when established by faculty major committees.

R475-5 Course Numbering by Levels: Courses of similar level shall be given numbers in accordance with the following:

5.1 Precollege or Developmental Courses (0001-0999): These courses carry no credit applicable to a postsecondary certificate or degree, develop basic precollege concepts and principles related to an area of study, and are designed to lead to mastery of precollege learning outcomes.

5.2 Lower Division Courses (1000-2999): These courses are for students beginning in the study of a discipline. Lower division courses offer breadth, foundation, general education, preparation for employment, or preparation for continued study and may serve as prerequisites for upper division courses. Within the same institution, a lower division course may not be cross listed with an upper division course.

5.2.1 Special Lower Division Course Number Designations (1900-1999 and 2900-2999): Lower division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, seminars, special topics, workshops, and tutoring.

5.2.2 1000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of first-year courses include:

5.2.2.1 Display an introductory understanding of disciplinary content;

5.2.2.2 Demonstrate a beginning ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments; and

5.2.2.3 Develop a beginning ability to evaluate approaches for problem solving within the context of the course's subject matter.

5.2.3 2000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of second-year courses include:

5.2.3.1 Display knowledge and critical understanding of established concepts and principles related to the area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.2.3.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how concepts and principles have developed within the field;

5.2.3.3 Display an ability to apply concepts from the course within and outside the field;

5.2.3.4 Demonstrate a developing knowledge of the key methods of inquiry related to the field;

5.2.3.5 Articulate a developing understanding of the limitations of students' knowledge and understanding, and how this can influence their own thinking;

5.2.3.6 Demonstrate an increasing ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within the area of study;

5.2.3.7 Display an ability to undertake a critical analysis of information and propose solutions to problems; and

5.2.3.8 Show an ability to communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.3 Upper Division Courses (3000-4999): These courses are for students usually beyond their first two years of study in college and integrate and build upon learning outcomes from earlier studies. In general, upper division courses offer specialized learning outcomes for a specific degree and provide depth, specialization, refinement, and preparation for employment or graduate study. Upper division courses are directed toward the more central concepts of a discipline. Most 4000-level courses are more concentrated, narrower in scope, and involve more independent study, research, and projects outside of class than 3000-level courses. 4000-level courses may also be designed as capstone courses that integrate a broad array of learning outcomes from previous courses.

5.3.1 Special Upper Division Course Number Designations

5.3.1.1 4800-4999: Upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.3.1.2 4800: Individual research courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.3 4830: Directed reading courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.4 4860: Practicum courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.5 4890: Internship courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.6 4920: Workshops, festivals, and institutes (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.7 4950: Field trips (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.8 4990: Seminars (1-6 credits)

5.3.2 Upper Division Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of 3000- and 4000-level courses include:

5.3.2.1 Integrate and build upon concepts introduced in earlier course work to develop a deeper understanding of the subject at hand;

5.3.2.2 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of specialized terminology, ideas, and practices related to a specific topic within an area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.3.2.3 Display a developing understanding of the integrated and convergent nature of learning goals within a discipline, and an ability to demonstrate that learning, e.g., writing a computer program to solve a particular problem;

5.3.2.4 Articulate the ways in which disciplinary concepts are applied within and outside of the field, as well as to employment situations;

5.3.2.5 Display an understanding of the key methods of inquiry related to the field, and an ability to demonstrate these through inquiry-based activities;

5.3.2.6 Demonstrate an ability to present, interpret, and evaluate in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within a narrowly-defined area of the field of study;

5.3.2.7 Complete a critical analysis of information, interpret findings, and propose solutions to problems; and

5.3.2.8 Communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.4 Honors Program Courses: Honors courses will be clearly designated in institutional catalogs and meet the institution’s expectations for honors designation.

5.5 Advanced Upper Division Courses (5000-5999): These courses allow for extension beyond bachelor’s degree requirements, preparation for a graduate degree, or a natural connection between the two. Content requires significant independent thinking on the student’s part and offers opportunity for specialized seminars, directed reading, independent study, and research.

5.5.1 Special 5000-Level Course Number Designations (5800-5999): Advanced upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.5.2 Conditions for 5000-Level Course Designations

5.5.2.1 Courses should meet one or both of the following criteria:

5.5.2.1.1 Have specific prerequisites at the 4000 level;

5.5.2.1.2 Be supported by a substantial body of 3000-4000-level course offerings from which a student could normally be expected to gain adequate background for a 5000-level course.

5.5.2.2 “Credit from 5000 level coursework may be used for graduate certificates and to fulfill up to 12 credits of graduate degree requirements.”

5.5.2.3 For purposes of efficiency, an institution may offer a 5000-level course concurrently with a 6000-level graduate course, with the two sections meeting together under the same instructor. In such cases, students enrolled in the 6000-level course shall be required to complete additional and substantive learning objectives and assignments approved for graduate-level work beyond those required of students enrolled at the 5000 level.

5.6 Graduate Courses (6000-7999): These courses are limited to graduate students and graduate degrees and certificates. Graduate courses may only be offered at USHE institutions with a Board-approved mission to offer graduate-level programs.

5.6.1 Special Graduate Course Number Designations: The following designation of graduate course numbers guide, but do not constrain, institutional course numbering policies.

5.6.1.1 6800-6899: Graduate seminars, including methodology and research seminars;

5.6.1.2 6900-6999: Directed reading, individual projects, thesis, etc.;

5.6.1.3 6970-6979: Master's thesis research;

5.6.1.4 6980-6989: Master's thesis faculty research consultation;

5.6.1.5 6990: Master's thesis continuing registration;

5.6.1.6 7600-7899: Advanced graduate seminars;

5.6.1.7 7900-7969: Doctoral independent study, special topics, etc.;

5.6.1.8 7970-7979: Doctoral dissertation and project research;

5.6.1.9 7980-7989: Doctoral dissertation faculty research consultation; and

5.5.1.10 7990: Doctoral dissertation continuing registration.