



**MEMO**

To: Academic Deans and Associate Deans  
From: Brian Reed, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning *BR*  
RE: New Operating Policies and Procedures for Course Listings and Course Monitoring  
CC: David V. Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President  
Date: November 13, 2018

I am writing to advise you of new operating policies and procedures for course listings and course monitoring. The necessity of these measures became apparent from our re-accreditation self-study and the work of the Educational Stewardship Committee. The purposes are to provide students with accurate information, to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and University policy, to help prevent content overlap between proposed new and existing courses, and to promote collaboration among departments and their schools and colleges.

Please designate one or more people to complete the noted tasks in the following three categories.

**I. Deactivate Courses That Have Not Been Offered for Three Years**

**Policy:** Per NECHE<sup>1</sup> Standard 9.22, active courses that have not been offered for three consecutive years cannot be listed in the University Catalogue.

**Procedure:** A year will be counted as beginning with the fall semester, extending through the subsequent spring semester, and ending at the conclusion of the summer session. The new deactivation process is as follows:

- Each August, in conjunction with the Spring Schedule of Courses production, the Registrar’s Office will send a list of active courses that have not been listed in the Schedule of Courses during the prior two years as defined above. The list will include courses from the last 2 years, plus the first term (Fall) of year 3. Special topics courses and “standardized” courses (internship, independent study, undergraduate research, etc.) will be exempt from deactivation because they are not regular course offerings in a content area.
- The Dean’s Office designee(s) will distribute lists of courses to the appropriate department chairs notifying them the course will be deactivated if there are no firm plans to offer it in either the Spring or Summer of year three.
- The Registrar’s Office will re-run the list in January. Any course remaining on this list will automatically be deactivated and will not appear in the following year’s Catalogue. Exceptions will be made for courses that appear on the upcoming Fall (start of year 4) Schedule of Courses – the Registrar’s Office will contact the department(s) to confirm the course is being offered.
- Deactivated courses can be reactivated. Course action forms must be received in the Provost’s Office by February 15 for the course to be reactivated in the following academic year.

The procedure for deactivating courses not offered for three consecutive years will go into effect in August 2019. The course list review at that time will include:

Year 1: Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018

Year 2: Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Summer 2019

Fall of Year 3: Fall 2019

Additions for the remainder of year 3 (Spring 2020 and Summer 2020) will be listed in January 2020

<sup>1</sup> New England Commission on Higher Education (UVM’s regional accrediting authority)

## II. Ensure Special Topics Courses have a Description & are Offered No More Than Three Times

**Policy:** University policy states that a special topics (ST) course can be offered no more than three times within a ten-year period. When this threshold is reached, the course must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate curriculum committee(s) and assigned a permanent course number before it may be offered again. In addition, per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Article 16.20), and because ST courses are not listed in the University Catalogue, each course listed in the Schedule of Courses, *including ST courses*, must have an Expanded Section Description or course syllabus posted and accessible via the student portal.

We have become aware of infractions of these policies, therefore, the following rules of operation are effective immediately:

- The academic units must ensure compliance with the University policy on ST course offerings (the “three-times rule”).
- The academic units must ensure their special topics courses listed in the Schedule of Courses have an Expanded Section Description or link to the current or a recent course syllabus.
- Changing the title of a special topics course to avoid the “three-times rule” is not permitted.
- Each unit is responsible for maintaining a permanent historical record of all ST courses and their contents (students and graduates often request such information).

### **Procedures:**

- The dean’s designee(s) will be responsible for monitoring the school or college’s ST courses to identify any that have been offered two (or more) times and/or do not have an Expanded Section Description posted, and initiating actions to ensure compliance with the policies.
- **Three-Times Rule for Special Topics Courses:** Procedures posted on the MyUVM portal under the *Dean or Chair* tab may be used to identify ST courses that have been offered three or more times over the past ten years. The responsible department/faculty should be directed to submit the identified course(s) for curricular review and approval if they want to continue to offer it. The course(s) may only be offered again under a permanent course number.
- **Expanded Section Descriptions:** Five weeks prior to registration, the Registrar’s Office will post and update daily a list of all courses for the registration period, including ST courses, that do not have an Expanded Section Description. The responsible faculty for the course should be directed to post an Expanded Section Description.

## III. Monitor for Potential Course Overlap

Proposed new courses and course changes are posted for public review for a period of 14 days before their inclusion in the next edition of the University Catalogue. These postings occur between three and five times per year. While unit-level curriculum committees and faculty members initiating new courses or course changes are responsible for identifying potential course overlap and preventing duplication with existing courses, review of the posting of proposed changes by the Dean’s Office designee(s) serves as a final check.

### **Procedures:**

- The dean’s designee will be responsible for reviewing the list and notifying relevant department chairs/faculty if a proposed new course or course change appears to create overlap with a course offered by that department/program.
- To resolve a perceived issue of course overlap/duplication, the department chair or program director should notify the Assistant Provost, and then follow the [Procedure for Resolving Curricular Disputes Between Academic Units](#), the first step of which is to try to resolve the issue through informal discussion with the other party.