

Academic Governing Council
Decision Form
Course Substitutions and Course Waiver Policy

This form is to be used when the Academic Governing Council makes a decision on an issue. This form is sent to the Provost.

Decision:

Approval of the Course Substitutions and Course Waiver Policy, as follows:

Course Substitutions – Definition

A course substitution allows a student to use an alternative course to meet a program requirement

- Course substitutions are made in the context of program requirements.
- Course substitutions must maintain the integrity of the program.
- Substituted courses must include substantially the same learning outcomes as the required course.

Course Substitutions – Guidelines

- All course substitutions are granted per program and must be on a one to one basis.
- Outcomes in the substitute course must meet 2/3 of the outcomes of the required course. Program requirements for minimum course grades must be met. If no program grade requirements are specified, the GRCC institutional grading policy applies.
- One (1) course may be substituted per certificate.
- Three (3) courses may be substituted per degree.
- If a student has taken a more advanced course than the course required in the program, such as a higher level Mathematics course, the advanced course can be used to meet the requirement without counting as one of the substitutions.
- Substitutions can only be made if the student's opportunity to achieve the program learning outcomes is maintained.
- Substitutions can only be granted using GRCC courses or evaluated transfer courses.
- The final deadline for substitution approvals is the last day of the semester in which the student plans to graduate.
- If a course substitution is requested for an Articulated Pre-Major Program, the substitution must also be approved by the partner transfer institution.
- If a substitution is requested for a particular General Education distribution course, another course in that distribution category may be substituted if the program learning outcomes can still be achieved.
- *During the first cycle of this policy an exception process will be developed.*

Course Waiver - Definition

A course waiver allows a student to graduate without completing a graduation requirement or a designated program requirement.

Course Waiver – Guidelines

- The student who receives a waiver must still earn the total credit hours required for their academic program.
- All graduation requirement waivers must be approved by the Provost or her/his designee. Department course waivers are first approved by the DH/PD.
- The deadline for waiver approvals is the last day of each semester.
- One (1) course may be waived per certificate.
- Three (3) courses may be waived per degree.

Rationale:

Origin of Proposal

- The proposal began with COST – Curriculum Operations Support Team.
- The Provost asked COST to bring it as a policy to AGC.

Reasons for Policy

This is a curriculum policy, not a student policy, prompted by:

- Need for standards and criteria that are consistent across the College in order to ensure the integrity of GRCC degrees
- Need to ensure that GRCC students have the skills and knowledge they need for work or transfer
- Need to meet HLCs core components

Supporting Data:

Benchmarking

Macomb Community College

- Course substitutions must have similar course content and may only be substituted for a program requirement if the course substitute is within the academic discipline of the original course.
- Course waivers may be used in situations when the student has attained required learning outcomes in another discipline or in multiple course or in other recognized and documented learning experiences.
- Course substitutions and course waivers apply to only one program.
- Course substitutions and course waivers for specific program requirements must be approved by the Associate Dean who has responsibility for the specific program.
- The College's two-year/seven year rule applies to course waivers and substitutions.

Jackson College

- Students who encounter hardships while pursuing a planned educational program may request consideration of alternative courses through a substitution and/or waiver process.
- Each request must be reviewed and recommended by the department chair of the course under review and approved by the academic dean and registrar.

St. Clair County Community College

- Students are expected to take the courses required by the program of study in which they are enrolled. If the circumstances necessitate a substitution, the

student must obtain a Course Substitute Request form from the division administrator or academic lead presiding over their academic program.

- The division administrator, academic lead and Registrar must approve all substitutions.
- Having the course waived will not reduce the total number of credits required for an associate degree/certificate.

Oakland Community College

- In certain circumstances, students may substitute a comparable course for a required course provided that the minimum number of credit hours for the degree or certificate is met. Students should inquire about the substitution procedure at any campus counseling office.

Lansing Community College

- LCC policy states, “Core substitutions will be granted only as a result of verifiable college error, e.g. inappropriate advising, inaccurate printed materials.”

Washtenaw Community College

Course Substitutions

- Courses required for a program of study may be substituted by other courses only with the approval of the program advisor and the appropriate Division Dean and the Vice President of Instruction. A course substitution form must be filed with the Enrollment Services Office.

Waiver of Program Requirements

- Under extreme circumstance, a required course may be waived with the approval of the program advisor, the Division Dean, and the Vice President for Instruction. A Waiver of Program Requirements form must be filed with the Office of Enrollment Services.

GRCC Data

Total Number of Requested Substitutions

| Year | Requested Substitutions |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 2011 | 299 |
| 2012 | 246 |
| 2013 | 237 |
| 2014 | 289 |
| 2015* | 288 |

*as of 9/23/15

Substituted Courses (01/01/2011 – 09/23/2015)

| Course Area | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| CO | 186 |
| EL | 173 |
| MA | 166 |
| BA | 126 |
| MN | 102 |

Implications for Action:

- Develop exception process during the first cycle of this policy (Team Recommendation)
- Develop permanent process (to replace the interim process) for approving Substitutions and Waivers.
- Inform all faculty members of changes to the process.
- Update College website to inform students of the new process.

Date of Decision by AGC: November 10, 2015

Sections to be completed by the Provost:

Evaluation Plan:

The next formal review of the Course Substitutions and Waivers Policy by the AGC will occur during the 2020-21 academic year.

Faculty or staff who would propose an earlier review of the policy may do so through an Issue Paper, which the AGC membership would vote to accept or decline.

Response from Provost:

I support the AGC vote. The new Course Substitutions and Waivers Policy is approved. It will become effective at the start of Fall Semester 2016. Until that time, the College will continue to use the existing interim process.

Rami Chesley 11-24-15