Department Course Enrollment Policy

This policy establishes consistent standards for offering, monitoring, and managing low-enrollment courses. The goals are to:

- Ensure predictable planning for students, faculty, and staff.

- Maintain a sustainable teaching load distribution.

- Preserve curricular breadth while directing resources to high-demand courses.

- Avoid last-minute cancellations that negatively affect students and faculty and create scheduling pressure.

1. Minimum Enrollment Standards

A course is expected to meet the following minimum enrollments to count toward a faculty member's teaching load:

- **Undergraduate courses:** 10 students

- **Graduate courses (daytime):** 5 students

- **Joint undergraduate–graduate courses:**

    o At least 5 graduate students *or*

    o At least 10 students in total across all levels

Enrollment for cross-listed or jointly offered courses is the sum total across all listings.

2. Enrollment Monitoring

A course that falls below minimum enrollment is placed on Monitoring Status, unless the Associate Chair for Education determines that the low enrollment was clearly anomalous (e.g., scheduling conflict, curriculum changes, new prerequisites, unique external factor, unusual class time).

Monitoring Status serves as an early signal that:

- The course may require additional outreach/advertising or adjustments (e.g., schedule/time-slot review to avoid competing with required courses), and

- Adjustments might need to be made to the course content, prerequisites, title, and

- Future offerings may not count toward teaching load if low enrollment persists.

Once a course is placed on Monitoring Status, the Associate Chair for Education notifies:

- The course instructor

- The relevant curriculum group chair

- The curriculum management, scheduling, and student advising staff

This typically occurs shortly after the UW registrar's census date for the quarter (end of the unrestricted add/drop period, typically around the second week of the quarter).

A course on Monitoring Status that fails to meet minimum enrollment in a future offering may be offered but will not count toward the instructor's teaching load unless approved by the Department Chair or Associate Chair for Education based on programmatic need.

Faculty choosing to teach such a course do so with an informed understanding of how it will count.

3. Removal from Monitoring Status

A course is removed from Monitoring Status when it achieves:

- Two consecutive offerings that meet minimum enrollment thresholds, or

- One offering that reaches double the minimum enrollment.

The Associate Chair for Education may remove a course earlier if:

- A clear corrective plan is in place (e.g., curriculum revision, new prerequisite structure), or

- The low-enrollment context has demonstrably changed.

4. Treatment of New or Revived Courses

A newly developed course is exempt from Monitoring Status during its first offering.

Courses not taught for four or more years may be treated as new courses at the Associate Chair for Education's discretion.

The department will strongly assist with outreach, student communication, and advising visibility for new or revived courses.

5. Waiver / Keep Open Criteria

Low enrollment courses satisfying these criteria will be offered and count as a full load:

- Courses required for graduation within the next 2 quarters; or impacting prerequisite chain(s) or needed to be offered due to student financial aid/visa constraints

- A necessary course offered only once per year as approved by Associate Chair for Education
- A new course (first offering) or a revived course (see Section 4)
- Courses that are strategic program needs (e.g., accreditation coverage)

6. Teaching Load Reconciliation

If a faculty member includes a Monitoring Status course in their regular load and the course does not meet minimum enrollment at the deadline specified in Section 2, the instructor will have a Teaching Load Reconciliation obligation equivalent to one course in the *following* academic year.

With approval of the Department Chair or Associate Chair for Education, the faculty member may satisfy this obligation by:

1. **Teaching an additional course** in the next academic year (default).

2. **Taking a buyout**, if eligible and compliant with funding rules, to remove one course from that year's load.

3. **Serving in an approved service or leadership role** that carries a corresponding course release.

4. **Providing instructional support** (e.g., leading labs or discussion sections, developing significant course materials) for a term equivalent in effort to one course.

5. **Other department-approved contributions** of comparable instructional value.

Sabbaticals or other faculty leaves delay but do not eliminate the reconciliation obligation.

No more than one course adjustment must be pending at a time without Chair approval.

Course adjustments must be resolved within two academic years.

7. Governance and Review

- The policy is administered by the Associate Chair for Education in collaboration with curriculum group chairs.

- The Curriculum Committee will review Monitoring Status decisions annually.

- Department will publish an annual summary of enrollment patterns to maintain transparency.

- Appeals may be submitted to the Department Chair.