

# Office of the Registrar

## Development of Course Offerings

This document describes the process to be followed in using the Semester Schedule Worksheets to specify the departmental course offerings for a semester. It is divided into two sections:

1. An overview of the entire process is presented as an introduction.
2. General guidelines/regulations give a detailed description of the operational impact and significance of setting up a course with the various codes and options available through the system.
  - a. Scheduling Classes
  - b. Requesting Rooms
  - c. Completing Worksheets

### I. Process Overview

The ultimate goal of this process is to establish a schedule of course offerings that will meet student and faculty needs and to produce a printed version of that schedule to assist students in registering for their courses. The entire process of setting up the course offerings for a semester is driven by the start date for Registration. We back up from the first day of Registration to set a date to begin this process that will permit sufficient time for each of the tasks required.

The very first step involves copying the course offerings from the previous year's file to the current file. For example, we copy Fall 2006 courses to create the initial version of the Fall 2007 course offerings. This file is used to produce the Semester Schedule Worksheet. These worksheets are sent to the respective departments and programs with instructions for modifying, adding and deleting courses from the offerings.

The marked-up copies of the worksheets are then returned to the Registrar's Office. Registrar staff key to the system all changes, deletions and additions indicated on the worksheets. In the process, we check for reasonableness (e.g., a 200-level course should not be tagged as a Freshman only course), accuracy of titles, and consistency (e.g., if a course is designated as requiring instructor permission, the appropriate footnote needs to be entered as well). We then produce a set of reports for use in room assignment. Using these and the marked up worksheets, we try to accommodate all room requests.

Once rooms are assigned and all other changes indicated on the Worksheets are made, new copies of the Worksheets are generated and forwarded to the departments/programs for review and adjustments. Corrected worksheets are once again returned to the Registrar's office where staff key any reported adjustments to the system.

This updated file of course offerings is downloaded to a data file. This file is massaged to fit the format of the printed Schedule of Courses booklet. Footnotes are expanded from codes to words. The "listed with the appropriate department" course entries are copied from their original departments and inserted with the program listing. Course descriptions submitted by the chairs or the instructors are inserted. Distribution requirements are checked against the master lists and the distribution tables and the offerings are cross-checked and corrected as necessary. The entire document is proofread and corrections are made to the text (and if necessary to the system files).

A "camera-ready" copy of the file is then made available for a few days via the web for the chairs to review and make any necessary additional changes. Requested changes are made to the data file and to the system as appropriate. A final print is made and sufficient copies are produced for distribution to abroad students and academic departments. Extra copies go to the Student Center for students to pick up if they desire. Additionally a .PDF version of the file is made available on the web.

## II. General Guidelines/Regulations

### A. Scheduling Classes

The designated time periods for classes were established by the faculty many years ago and have been modified over time. The associated regulations are an attempt to balance each department's offerings in such a way as to minimize the number of conflicts a student may have both within the department and among courses offered by other departments. Scheduling classes at irregular times – i.e., times not consistent with the approved periods – increases the risk of student time conflicts and is strongly discouraged.

NYS Education Department requires a designated number of courses and contact hours to award a Bachelor's degree. At SLU, a course unit requires three 60-minute contact hours or 180 minutes per week in the classroom.<sup>1</sup> The SLU scheduling scheme is presented in Appendix I. In summary, the most common schedules to meet this requirement are 60-minute sessions meeting three days per week (MWF) from a selection of six time slots; 90-minute sessions meeting two days per week (TH, MW or WF) from a selection of ten time slots; or one three-hour session (usually upper-level courses, seminars, studios, labs) available each morning, afternoon and evening. Alternative, optional 60-minute time slots are available on Tuesdays/Thursdays, but must be combined with a third 60-minute time on Mondays or Fridays.

The faculty-prescribed "Regulations in Class Scheduling" are in Appendix II. Among the primary regulations are:

- **a department should schedule all 90-minute, Tuesday/Thursday classes evenly among all four standard time slots;**
- **at least half of the 60-minute, Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes should be equally distributed;**
- **two sections of multi-section courses should not be scheduled at the same time;**
- **only upper-level courses should be scheduled in the Monday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Friday 90-minute time slots.**

Departments are strongly encouraged to coordinate their scheduling with other departments where students either commonly take courses in two or more departments or are required to do so to meet distribution or major requirements.

I strongly discourage scheduling 3-hour classes on Wednesday afternoons because of the room scheduling difficulties created. This time period overlaps with both 60 minute MWF classes and 90 minute MW or WF classes.

### B. Requesting Rooms (and Resolving Conflicts)

A few departments coordinate their room requests as well as their schedules. These departments (e.g. the sciences, govt/econ, eng/rel) are generally given first priority for rooms in those buildings. Some departments (such as Fine Arts, Speech & Theatre, Sport & Leisure), because of the unique facilities needed, have dedicated rooms which are scheduled by the respective departments. Few if any classes offered by other departments are scheduled in these rooms.

The majority of departments should follow standard guidelines when requesting rooms. All room requests should be indicated on the course worksheets. Preferably, instructors and departments should specify equipment needed (data projection, VCR, "smart board", etc.), room configuration (seminar, tiered seating, etc.), class size, building, and any other criteria pedagogically required. However, if a specific room is requested, alternatives in priority order need to be submitted. Please do not request rooms with equipment that will not be used for the majority of class sessions. Also, if the equipment or specified room is most significant, it is helpful to indicate whether a change in meeting time would be acceptable in order to get that equipment/room.

---

<sup>1</sup> Most institutions following a standard semester-unit system compute contact hours based on a 50-minute hour. SLU does not follow this standard.

## Development of Course Offerings

Page 3

8/21/07

**There is no guarantee a class will be assigned the same room as in the prior year.** If needed special equipment or features (e.g., maps, models, etc.) exist only in one room, please indicate this on the worksheet to assure proper room assignment. Similarly, if an instructor must set up special equipment and such setup and dismantling require additional time before and after class, please indicate on the Worksheet. Also, if an instructor has two (or more) back-to-back classes and requires the same special equipment, please request the rooms accordingly and an effort will be made to assign the same classroom.

**Within your own department, do not request the same room for two or more classes which meet at the same time on one or more of the same days.**

All information provided is used in the initial assigning of rooms and in resolving conflicts. Absent other information, rooms may be assigned based only on indicated maximum class size. Because of time constraints, it is not always possible to contact each instructor. Help from the department secretaries or Chairs is often needed. Please also be aware that the process for assigning rooms is completely manual – the Registrar's Office has virtually no automated tools to assist in the process.

### **C. Completing the Worksheets**

Please do not submit a list of courses to be offered, unless accompanied by the marked up worksheets. The marked up worksheet is the only means by which we can see what you are changing from last year. For example, without an appropriately marked Worksheet, we cannot tell that you are deleting a course from the offerings or changing a title.

#### **Operational Impact of Specific Codes**

All the fields displayed and entered on the Worksheet are important. Some provide information (e.g., title), but others affect operations associated with the course development or registration process (as well as transcript and advising data). This section focuses on the fields and values which impact these other processes – first, those impacting course development, then registration and, finally, other processes.

#### **Course Development.**

MAX SIZ is a required field, designating the maximum number of students allowed in the course. If it is not entered, we use 30 as a default. The value you enter in this field significantly affects the room assigned for the class. If you are setting this value lower than the actual number of people you will allow into the class, you must let us know so that we do not assign the class to a smaller room than is needed.

DAY, START TIME and END TIME designate meeting times for the course and, in combination, also affect room assignment. Without valid values in these fields, a room cannot be assigned. Please note that valid days are 'm', 't', 'w', 'h', 'f', 's', 'u'. Valid times are those indicated in Appendix I. Setting a class up with irregular times, can result in room conflicts and, ultimately, loss of the desired room.<sup>2</sup>

"Dual listed" and MAX SIZ also affect room scheduling. If the "dual listed" designation is omitted, two rooms (or more) will be assigned for the same class. If the total number of students in the class is not divided among the dual listings, a room much too large for the class will be assigned.

#### **Registration**

The majority of the fields on the Worksheet impact registration itself. In addition, while the footnotes are intended to be informative when printed in the Course Schedule booklet, they are converted to or must be

---

<sup>2</sup> Where a course is set up with an irregular meeting time and a room conflict is created, the course with the irregular times receives the lowest priority – i.e., will not get the room.

## Development of Course Offerings

Page 4

8/21/07

consistent with other restrictive fields. The operational effect of these fields and the fields associated with the footnotes are described below.

**MAX SIZE** limits the total number of students allowed in the class. If the instructor of the course signs a drop/add form, giving a student permission to register, the size limit will be overridden. At no time, however, will the maximum be exceeded without an instructor's signature/permission.

Note for dual-listed courses: the field "Dual Reg Allowed?" is a yes/no field. If set to "yes", the registration system will use the combined max size of both sections and it won't matter which department designation students requested. If set to "no", there must be available seats in the specific department designation for students to enroll.

**DAY, START TIME and END TIME** are used in checking for whether the student is creating a time conflict by adding a particular course. The system will not permit such conflicts and we have no means of overriding this restriction.<sup>3</sup>

**RESTRICTION BY CLASS** These fields are extremely powerful and override all other restrictions, including the RESERVED fields. This is in effect for both web registration and add/drop. Caution must be used in setting values for these fields. The valid values for this field are:

- r = restricted - no students in that class will be allowed to register for the course.
- n= no restriction – students in that class can register (This is the default).
- y=only that class can register (e.g. a course for seniors only could have a "y" in the SR field and all other class fields would have "r").

**RESERVED SEATS: (Please note, this is only valid for the web part of registration, not add/drop).**

- **SR/JR/SO/FR Class**

Provides a mechanism for allocating a specific number of seats by class during web registration. When seats are reserved, the number of reserved seats is subtracted from MAX SIZE. The result of this subtraction is used as the size limit for all phases of registration until the reserved seats are released. For example, if Max Size = 25 and 15 seats are reserved for FY students, the enrollment limit is 10 for all other classes throughout the web registration period unless the reserved seat field is set to zero.

- **SR/JR/SO/FR/Major**

Provides a mechanism for allocating a specific number of seats for majors by class year during web registration. There is probably no need to reserve seats for senior majors and little need to reserve seats for junior majors since they register early in the week. You may wish to reserve seats for sophomore majors so that seats are not taken by senior or junior non-majors prior to the sophomore registration period.

### **PRE-REQUISITES:**

Limits registration to those students who have completed a course or courses designated as a prerequisite(s). Only three courses maximum may be specified as alternate prerequisites. Up to four courses or sets of alternative courses may be specified as conjunctive prerequisites.

- Only courses that exist may be specified as prerequisites.
- Prerequisites should not be combined with "permission of the instructor required", since the permission restriction overrides all prerequisites – i.e., the prerequisites will be ignored and signed permission will always be required to register. Alternately, if a student presents a signed registration form, we assume that the instructor is waiving the prerequisites (as well as all other restrictions, except schedule conflicts).

### **Other Processes**

A course designated as "dual listed" with another course or courses will result in reporting of the two or more dual listed courses together. This will occur with respect to the worksheets and various enrollment reports.

---

<sup>3</sup> With signed approval from the instructors of both conflicting courses, we can override the restriction by the very cumbersome process of changing the time for one course, registering the student in the conflicting course, and restoring the correct time. This process is highly error-prone.

## **Development of Course Offerings**

Page 5

8/21/07

APPLIC MAJ/MIN fields are most important in determining which courses apply to majors and minors for purposes of calculating major and minor GPA's and for listing the course data for departments to assess progress toward completion of the major/minor. Default values exist for each department but additional designations may be made.

DIST similarly assists in assessing what courses a student has taken which meet the distribution requirements. This is printed on the internal/advisor transcripts and is critical for advising students.