

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

CERTIFICATION OF CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

Preparation Date **20-Apr-15** Curriculum Bulletin _____

Effective Date **Fall 2016** Approved by EPC _____

Department **EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies**

College _____

Proposal **Revise Policy**

Proposal Name **Revision of the Midterm Evaluation Policy**

Description of proposal:

This proposal seeks to revise the Midterm Evaluation policy to provide early assessment grades to a wider student population by having it conducted in all lower-division (00000-20000) courses, instead of only to students designated as freshmen (<=29 earned hours) in all courses.

Additionally, it is proposed that midterm grades be provided to students earlier in the semester, between the fourth and seventh week (currently, it is provided in the seventh week only), so students have an opportunity to adjust their behavior, and university staff can intervene at a time when these efforts are most likely have an impact.

Describe impact on other programs, policies or procedures (e.g., duplication issues; enrollment and staffing considerations; need, audience)

Instructors teaching 00000-, 10000- and 20000-level courses will issue midterm grades for all enrolled students in those courses, rather than only to students with freshman status. Instructors teaching 30000- and 40000-level courses will not need to issue midterm grades in those courses.

Units consulted (other departments, programs or campuses affected by this proposal):

EPC Ad Hoc Committee comprises faculty, students, administrators and staff (including those from advising, registrar, provost, financial aid, institutional research). Members reached out to their respective units for feedback.

REQUIRED ENDORSEMENTS

Department Chair / School Director ____/____/____

Campus Dean (for Regional Campuses proposals) ____/____/____

College Dean (or designee) ____/____/____

Dean of Graduate Studies (for graduate proposals) ____/____/____

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee) ____/____/____

Proposal Summary

Revision of Midterm Evaluation Policy

SUBJECT SPECIFICATION

This proposal seeks to revise the Midterm Evaluation policy, as published in the University Catalog, to increase the population of students who receive midterm grades and to extend the timeline for midterm grade reporting for earlier intervention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee—charged with reviewing academic policies to support undergraduate student success—reviewed the university’s Midterm Evaluation policy in light of current academic literature suggesting the importance of early and often student assessment (see appendix A for a literature review conducted by committee members).

Presently, midterm evaluations at Kent State are made available only to freshmen and given at the halfway point in a full semester (seventh week). Research supports the value of providing midterm evaluations to assist students in their goal of successfully completing courses, and course completion is a factor in students’ persisting to graduation. Nowakowski (2006) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of early grading on final grades for the purposes of determining the value of expanding early grading beyond first-year students. For those who received early grades, the study found that final grades differed significantly and were most frequently higher than earlier grades. Springer-Sargent and Curcio (2012) found in their study on the impact of formative assessment on final grades that 70 percent of the intervention group benefitted substantially from the formative assessment materials.

Substantial gains are not limited to end of course performance but can also strengthen student learning. Black and William (1998) reviewed several studies and found that innovations that include strengthening the practice of formative assessment produced significant, and often substantial, learning gains for students. Student satisfaction with the course was also found to be an outcome in a study conducted by Fluckiger, Pasco and Danielson on formative assessment (2010).

Who Should Get a Midterm Evaluation?

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee reviewed at length four concepts:

(1) Award midterm grades to all undergraduate freshmen (current policy).

A “freshman” is classified at Kent State as someone who has earned 29 or fewer credit hours. Earned credits include transfer and alternative credit (e.g., AP, CLEP). The current policy has been in place, unchanged, since 1979. Back then, a “freshman” was synonymous with a “first-year” student. Those days are gone. Kent State has witnessed significant growth in first-year students who arrive already classified at the sophomore level or higher due to the myriad of alternative credit options and the ability to take college-level courses while in high school.

The percentage of new students at Kent State with college credit has more than doubled over the past five years, from 16 percent to 33 percent, with six percent of these students beginning college with sophomore standing (see charts 1 and 2). But while these new students have college credit, they are similar to students arriving without college credit as they all, for the first time, will be managing a full college-level course load without the direct involvement of their parents or family members, high school guidance counselors or other non-university support structures.

Revision of Midterm Evaluation Policy

In light of that data and the research on the need for on-going early assessment, the EPC Ad Hoc Committee felt the current policy is outdated and reflects a time before the rise in student transfer mobility and post-secondary options to high school students.

Chart 1: Percentage of New Students with College Credit Earned in High School

CAMPUS	2010F	2011F	2012F	2013F	2014F
System Wide	16.3%	23.4%	27.2%	31.2%	32.6%
Kent Campus	18.3%	27.8%	32.9%	38.2%	39.9%
Regional Campuses	13.5%	16.2%	17.5%	18.1%	17.8%

Chart 2: Actual Class Level of “New Freshmen” Cohort at Kent Campus

COHORT	TOTAL IN COHORT	ACTUAL FRESHMAN LEVEL	ACTUAL SOPHOMORE OR HIGHER LEVEL
2008	3,709	3,659	50 (1%)
2009	4,030	3,956	74 (2%)
2010	3,928	3,821	107 (3%)
2011	4,284	4,141	143 (3%)
2012	4,076	3,892	184 (5%)
2013	4,314	4,090	224 (5%)
2014	4,245	3,982	263 (6%)

(2) Award midterm grades to freshman and sophomore students (i.e., students with 59 or fewer earned hours).

While this concept will affect a greater population than the current policy, including more high school graduates with college credit, it still will not include all of the new students to Kent State. With the commitment of the Ohio Board of Regents in promoting tech prep articulation, 2+2 articulations between two-year and four-year colleges and the new College Credit Plus, which aims to grow the number of high school graduates with up to 120 credits of college coursework, Kent State will see an increase of new students with 60+ earned credits.

In consideration of those state initiatives, the committee discussed changing the policy to students with 59 or fewer *Kent State* credits (i.e., only those credits earned with Kent State coursework). However, that distinction will have a disparate impact on high school students who completed college courses at Kent State versus those who completed college courses at another institution. Either way—1-59 earned credits versus 1-59 Kent State credits—the committee believed that faculty will become confused about which students in their class to award midterm evaluation. And, students also may be confused and frustrated if they know their classmates received midterm evaluations, but they did not, even though they are considered first- or second-year students.

(3) Award midterm grades to all undergraduate students.

Overwhelmingly, EPC Ad Hoc Committee members were in favor of midterm grades for all undergraduate students because this would guarantee that they will continue to receive feedback on their progress throughout their entire academic time at Kent State. This concept would also include students who brought in a great deal of earned credit but are either new to Kent State or new to the full college experience. The two undergraduate student members of the EPC Ad Hoc Committee (both seniors at different campuses) advocated strongly for this concept. They felt they and their classmates would benefit from continued assessment, especially as their coursework becomes more advanced in their junior and senior years.

Revision of Midterm Evaluation Policy

However, the committee realizes that implementation would create a large resource impact on faculty and, based on feedback from faculty members outside the committee, some believed that by the time students reach their last years at Kent State, they should already have an understanding of their progress in a course, they most likely will be in smaller class-size courses in their major and should be able to reach out to their instructor more easily for feedback without the need for an “official” midterm evaluation.

(4) Award midterm grades to all students in all lower-division courses (00000, 10000, 20000 levels).

This was the concept that EPC Ad Hoc members felt was the most clear, most consistent and least confusing to all, and a good alternative to the preferred number 3 above. No matter the student level, anyone registered in a lower-division course would be given a midterm grade. The committee knew this will include upperclassmen, transfer students and even graduate students. However, members felt that these populations will still benefit from a midterm assessment, especially those undergraduate students new to Kent State but already with many earned hours, as well as graduate students who may be taking prerequisites to prepare for their graduate studies.

The committee understands that faculty members who regularly teach lower-division courses will be hit the hardest at midterm grading time. However, members discussed how there is an expectation that all faculty engage in assessing their students’ progress; whereas instructors currently are not required to enter a midterm grade for certain students in their class, they know what that grade would be if the option was there.

While new students arriving with a great deal of college credit will be able to register for upper-division credit in their first semester, they most likely still will need to take lower-division courses to complete their graduation requirements (e.g., Kent Core, diversity requirement, lower-division major courses). Therefore, they will be in the pool for midterm evaluations, unlike the first two concepts above where they will not receive an official assessment at all.

When Should They Get a Midterm Evaluation?

To ensure that students have an opportunity to adjust behavior at a time when the adjustment is most likely to affect their final learning and course performance, the EPC Ad Hoc Committee recommends beginning the midterm grade reporting time to start at the fourth week of the semester and extend to the seventh week. This extension in reporting time will allow for earlier intervention to occur. Faculty who are able to assess at that earlier date will be able to notify students earlier. Faculty who need an extra week or three will be able to notify students in that timespan. Equipped with this information earlier in the semester, academic advisors will be able to work with students to identify the necessary resources to improve course performance.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

The alternative is retaining the current Midterm Evaluation policy, which will result in a lost opportunity to further assist students in successfully completing coursework and persisting through to graduation.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The recommendation is to revise Kent State’s Midterm Evaluation policy to provide early assessment grades to a wider student population by having it conducted in all lower-division (00000-20000) courses. Additionally, it is recommended that midterm grades be provided earlier in the semester, between the fourth and seventh week, so students have an opportunity to adjust their behavior, and university staff can intervene at a time when these efforts are most likely have an impact.

Revision of Midterm Evaluation Policy

Current Policy

A midterm (seventh week) evaluation is completed for all undergraduate freshmen. Midterm results are available to advisors and college/school/campus deans and will be used for counseling purposes when achievement is considered unsatisfactory (i.e., D or F quality). This evaluation will not be included as part of the students' academic transcripts. The midterm evaluation is available to freshmen in FlashLine.

Proposed Policy

A midterm evaluation grade is completed between the fourth and seventh week for all students in lower-division undergraduate courses (levels 00000, 10000, 20000). Midterm evaluation grades are not given for summer or flexibly scheduled courses due to the short duration of these offerings. Midterm results are available to academic advisors and college/campus deans for the purpose of intervening when achievement is considered unsatisfactory according to program or university requirements. Students will be able to view their midterm grades in FlashLine for the fall or spring semester in progress. Midterm grades are not included as part of the students' academic transcript.

Marked-Up Current-to-Proposed Policy

A midterm (~~seventh week~~) evaluation grade is completed between the fourth and seventh week for all students in lower-division undergraduate courses (levels 00000, 10000, 20000) ~~all undergraduate freshmen~~. Midterm evaluation grades are not given for summer or flexibly scheduled courses due to the short duration of these offerings. Midterm results are available to academic advisors and college/campus deans ~~and will be used for the purpose of intervening~~ for the purpose of intervening ~~counseling purposes~~ when achievement is considered unsatisfactory according to program or university requirements (~~i.e., D or F quality~~). Students will be able to view their midterm grades in FlashLine for the fall or spring semester in progress. Midterm grades are ~~This evaluation will not be included as part of the students' academic transcripts.~~ ~~The midterm evaluation is available to freshmen in FlashLine.~~

TIMETABLE AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

Proposed by EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies April 17, 2015
 Approved by Educational Policies Council May 18, 2015
 Approved by Faculty Senate July 20 2015
 Implementation in University Catalog Fall 2016

References

Black, P. & William, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. Phi Delta Kappan. 80(2), 139-148.

Fluckiger, Y.T., Pasco, R., & Danielson, K. (2010). Formative feedback: involving students as partners in assessment to enhance learning. College Teaching. 58, 136-140.

Nowakowski, J. (2006). An Evaluation of the relationship between early assessment grades and final grades. College Student Journal. 40(3), 557-561.

Springer-Sargent, C. & Curcio, A. A. (2012). Empirical evidence that formative assessments improve final exams. Journal of Legal Education. 61(3), 379-405.

The following summaries provide an overview of articles on formative assessment measures.

Article	Springer-Sargent, C. Curcio, A. A. (2012). Empirical Evidence that Formative Assessments Improve Final Exams. <i>Journal of Legal Education</i> , 61(3), 379-405.	Page 1
Definition	Formative assessments seek to increase learning and motivation by offering students feedback about gaps between current and desired levels of performance.	Page 3
Examples	Students completed much of the formative assessment material in class	Page 21
Impact on Learning	70% of intervention group benefitted substantially from the formative assessment materials	Page 17
Impact on Teaching	The ease of implementing formative assessments requires less on the instructor	Page 22
Challenges	Students who were in the top two-thirds of the LSAT and UGPA benefit disproportionately	Page 22

Article	Black, P. & William, D. (1998). Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i> . 80(2), 139-148.	Page 1
Definition	Assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged	Page 2
Examples	Several studies were reviewed and all show that innovations which include strengthening the practice of formative assessment produce significant, and often substantial, learning gains.	Page 3
Impact on Learning	One study devoted to low attaining students and students with learning disabilities, shows that frequent assessment feedback helps both groups enhance their learning	Page 3
Impact on Teaching	Effective teaching requires careful scrutiny of all the man components of a teaching plan. It should include opportunity for pupils to express their understanding.	Page 7
Challenges	The process takes classroom time, and is in conflict where teachers feel under pressures to cover a statutory curriculum.	Page 12

Article	Fluckiger, Y.T., Pasco, R., & Danielson, K. (2010). Formative feedback: involving students as partners in assessment to enhance learning. <i>College Teaching</i> . 58, 136-140.	Page 1
Definition	Frequent assessment of student learning that informs instruction and help students use results to enhance learning.	Page 136
Examples	Three-color group quiz – short answer quiz – students use black ink to write what they know, green is what group knows, & blue is knowledge from textbook or lecture. Midterm conferencing. Shared revision of student generated questions and statements.	Page 137-138
Impact on Learning	The survey indicated that the majority of students felt more satisfied with their learning (95%), had more understandings clarified (90%), and felt less nervous (79%) while taking a three-color quiz than when taking a traditional closed book quiz. While 84% of the students reported that after taking the three-color quiz, they looked up what they didn't know to further learning, only 37% reported looking up what they didn't know after taking a traditional closed-book quiz. This new format was a change from the traditional quiz, and about 9% of students reported a preference for taking a traditional closed-book quiz, with 86% reporting that the three color quiz was a worthwhile learning activity.	Page 138
Impact on Teaching	Received feedback from students earlier allowing for adjustment in instructional strategies	Page 138
Challenges	Difficult to manage in large class. Suggest having peer to peer strategies.	Page 139

Article	Smith, G. (2007). How does student performance on formative assessments relate to learning assessed by exams? <i>Journal of College Science Teaching</i> . 36(7). 28-34.	Page 1
Definition	Frequent assignments that provide feedback to students and reveal the level of success with the learning outcomes for the course.	Page 29
Examples	Read. Think. Write activity. Online quizzes. Short answer exams. Research problems. In-class assignments.	Page 30
Impact on Learning	Impact varied by assessment. Group assignments may not assess all members equally. Weekly, individual, online quizzes correlate with exam success. Improved attitude toward course, faculty, and content.	Page 31-33
Impact on Teaching	Opportunity to reach out to individual students experiencing difficulty and provide additional information and additional practice for group.	Page 29
Challenges	Lack of motivation - Not all students take advantage of the feedback provided through assessments. Students who scored lower than 80% on exam were more not likely to revisit online quizzes. Students with poor attendance had low exam grades.	Page 33

The following four summaries describe the results of the implementation of comprehensive retention policies, including midterm grades, at the university level.

Article	Lorenzetti, J. P. (2008). Successful Retention at the University of New Haven. <i>Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education</i> 22(1), 6-7.	Page 1
University	University of New Haven	
Intervention	A multifaceted approach including orientation, one-credit freshman seminar, midterm grades (first semester only), residence hall programs, programs for specific populations, and a parent/student newsletter.	Page 6
Midterm Policy	Midterm grades are sent to advisers and the Director of Academic Services as well as students, and are discussed in advising sessions.	Page 6-7
Outcome	Freshman retention rates were raised from 61% in 1998 to 79% in 2006. In addition, an overarching change in university culture regarding retention was reported after the comprehensive retention strategy was implemented and faculty were educated regarding its goals.	Page 7
Challenges		

Article	Mullen, M. et al. (2012). A Multi-faceted Model to Impact Retention: Successful Initiatives at the University of Kentucky. http://www.uky.edu/Provost/meet/files/A_Multi-faceted_Model_to_Impact_Retention.pdf	Page 1
University	University of Kentucky	
Intervention	A comprehensive "War on Attrition" including mandatory midterm grades for all undergraduate courses, a comprehensive Academic Alert system that can be triggered by any of a number of issues, strategies for reinforcing student/faculty/advisor relationships, a first-semester orientation course, a center for academic support and enrichment services, and various academic preparation programs.	Page 7
Midterm Policy	Midterm grades are mandatory for all undergraduate courses in all semesters. Grades are sent to the students and their advisors.	Page 8
Outcome	Freshman retention rates rose from 76.4% in 2006 to 81.8% in 2009. Graduation rates have also risen, and there is greater faculty interest in, and awareness of, retention programs.	Page 8
Challenges		

Article	Nowakowski, J. (2006). An Evaluation of the Relationship Between Early Assessment Grades and Final Grades. <i>College Student Journal</i> 40(3), 557-561.	Page 1
University	Muskingum College	
Intervention	Faculty were considering a motion to expand early grading, but sought to assess its effectiveness in improving final grades before proceeding.	Page 557
Midterm Policy	Midterm grades are distributed each semester to all students in their first year, and to specific populations in subsequent years. Grades are sent to advisors, and students must meet with advisors to receive and discuss them.	Page 557
Outcome	Final grades differed significantly from EAGs, and the most common outcome (in seven of twelve grade categories) was that the final grade was higher. In most of the remaining categories, it was the same.	Page 557
Challenges	Calculating, distributing, and discussing EAGs is time consuming. The final grades of students with failing EAGs are not as likely to show improvement as those of students with passing EAGs.	Page 558

Article	Chandler, L. and A. Potter. (2012). Failure as Opportunity-reflection and Retention: Approaches to Supporting First Year University Students Experiencing Early Assessment Failure. <i>The International Journal of Learning</i> . 18(7), 73-88.	Page 1
University	University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia	
Intervention	A comprehensive program which assists students who have failed or just passed their first assessment to develop better self-management skills and learning strategies and to reflect on the reasons for their poor performance, their self-regulatory abilities, and their attitudes toward assessment. Students complete several workbook exercises, discuss their responses at length with a tutor and develop a multifaceted success strategy. participation in the program is on an opt-in basis.	Page 76
Midterm Policy	Midterm grades are not given; the intervention is based on grades in students' first assessment item (in Week 5 or 6). This was a pilot program offered in two large introductory courses (Communications and Visual Design).	Page 76
Outcome	Students in the Communications course who opted to participate in this pilot program had significantly higher final assessment outcomes than those who did not. Students generally also become more reflective about their learning strategies and their expectations concerning assessment.	Page 76
Challenges	It was not clear whether this pilot program could successfully be expanded to other courses with different types of assessment tasks. The effectiveness was significantly greater in the Communications course than in the Visual Design course.	Page 30