

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATION OF CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

Preparation Date _____ Curriculum Bulletin _____

Effective Date **Fall 2019** Approved by EPC _____

Department _____
College **PR - Provost**
Proposal **Revise Policy**
Proposal Name **Course Repeat Policy**

Description of proposal:

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies recommends to the EPC a revision to the course repeat policy to allow all repeated undergraduate courses to be eligible for recalculation of the GPA for graduation. Currently, only lower-division courses are eligible. Students may repeat an undergraduate course only two times (maximum three attempts of the same course).

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

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

Members of the EPC Ad Hoc Committee consulted with colleagues in their college.

REQUIRED ENDORSEMENTS

Department Chair / School Director _____/_____/_____

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

College Dean (or designee) _____/_____/_____

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

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (or designee) _____/_____/_____

Revision of Course Repeat Policy Proposal Summary

SUBJECT SPECIFICATION

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies recommends to the EPC a revision to the course repeat policy to allow all repeated undergraduate courses to be eligible for recalculation of the GPA for graduation. Currently, only lower-division courses are eligible. Students may repeat an undergraduate course only two times (maximum three attempts of the same course).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee is charged with reviewing academic policies that create barriers for student success (see end of document for committee membership and philosophy). Over the past semester, members discussed Kent State's course repeat policy, sought feedback from others, read literature and research on the matter and reviewed course repeat policies at 38 universities, including those that are considered peer, benchmark and aspirational.

The current course repeat policy allows students to repeat the same undergraduate course a maximum of two times (three attempts total). What grades apply to the GPA for repeated coursework depends on the level of the course. For lower-division courses (00000-20000 levels), only the highest grade earned in the course is counted in the GPA for graduation. For upper-division courses (30000-40000 levels), all grades earned in the course are counted in the GPA for graduation.

A policy that extends grade forgiveness for certain repeated courses but not for others creates negative consequences for students, as well as confusion. Data analysis shows that it is much harder to improve a GPA near the end of a program. By that time, students have amassed credit hours and are now taking upper-division courses in their major. If they fail or earn a below-acceptable grade for a course at this point, repeating the course and earning a better grade has minimum impact on their GPA for graduation and may even make it worse (see next page for examples of actual Kent State students). Their choices now are either to:

- (1) Continue to repeat upper-division courses to see incremental increases in their GPA, or
- (2) Repeat lower-division courses, which will have a more significant impact on their GPA for graduation, but will be unhelpful to the student's learning in their major.

The revised policy supports students who may take longer to learn a subject or, for a myriad of other reasons, did not do well in their first attempt of a course.

This revised policy to include upper-division courses in the GPA recalculation is for graduation only. The revision affects neither the student's transcript, which includes all course attempts and grades, nor the GPA used for class standing and institutional honors. In addition, all grades may be counted for admission to or progression in specific programs, for admission to graduate programs or for admission to other institutions. Credit hours for a repeated course will apply only once toward meeting program requirements.

THREE EXAMPLES OF ACTUAL STUDENTS UNDER CURRENT POLICY

1. A Kent State student completed all the requirements for his degree except for major GPA. He had earned D+ and F grades in two upper-division (UD) courses, which he repeated and earned C and D grades, respectively. However, his GPA decreased further due to the current policy, see table 1. The student left Kent State without graduating.

Table 1: 2.250 major GPA required for graduation

	Major GPA Credits	Quality Points	Major GPA
Before student earned D+, F grades in two UD courses	58	142.1	2.450
After student earned D+, F grades in the two courses	64	146.0	2.281
Under Current Course Repeat Policy			
Student repeated UD courses and earned C, D grades, and all grades (D+/C, F/D) counted in GPA	70	155.0	2.214
Under Proposed Course Repeat Policy			
Student repeated UD courses, earned C, D grades, and the grades replaced D+, F grades in GPA	64	151.1	2.360

2. A Kent State student completed all the requirements for his degree except for the major GPA. He had failed two upper-division (UD) courses, which he repeated and earned B- and D+ grades. However, his GPA decreased further due to the current policy, see table 2. The student left Kent State. He returned five years later to earn a complete degree (not his original degree).

Table 2: 2.250 major GPA required for graduation

	Major GPA Credits	Quality Points	Major GPA
Before student earned F grades in two UD courses	40	99.5	2.487
After student earned F grades in the two courses	46	99.5	2.163
Under Current Course Repeat Policy			
Student repeated UD courses and earned B-, D+ grades, and all grades (F/B-, F/D+) counted in GPA	52	111.5	2.144
Under Proposed Course Repeat Policy			
Student repeated UD courses, earned B-, D+ grades, and the grades replaced F grades in GPA	46	111.5	2.423

3. A Kent State student completed all requirements for her degree except for the major GPA. She failed an upper-division (UD) major course that was not required but counted in the major GPA. To graduate, she repeated a lower-division course that she has already passed. If she had repeated the UD course and earned less than a B grade, she would not have met the major GPA to graduate, see table 3.

Table 3: 2.000 major GPA required for graduation

	Major GPA Hours	Quality Points	Major GPA
Before student earned F grade in UD course	34	71.8	2.111
After student earned F grade in the course	37	71.8	1.940
Under Current Course Repeat Policy			
If student repeated UD course and earned D grade, and both F and D counted in GPA	40	74.8	1.870
If student repeated UD course and earned C grade, and both F and C counted in GPA	40	77.8	1.945
Under Proposed Course Repeat Policy			
If student repeated UD course and earned D grade, and the D replaced F grade in GPA	37	74.8	2.021

The revised policy is not for the high-achieving students who are consistently above average each semester. This policy serves the students who are on the cusp of meeting the required GPA to graduate (between a 2.000 and 2.490 GPA, see table 4) and then do poorly in one or more courses in their later semesters. There are few options for students towards the end of their program to rectify a low GPA to graduate.

Table 4: Fall 2018 students with junior/senior status (60+ KSU credit hours), all campuses

<u>Overall GPA</u>			<u>Major GPA*</u>		
<u>GPA Range</u>	<u>Headcount</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>GPA Range</u>	<u>Headcount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0.00 to 1.74	15	0.2%	0.00 to 1.74	368	4.0%
1.75 to 1.99	102	1.0%	1.75 to 1.99	165	1.8%
2.00 to 2.24	383	3.8%	2.00 to 2.24	286	3.1%
2.25 to 2.49	659	6.6%	2.25 to 2.49	439	4.8%
2.50 to 2.74	1,118	11.2%	2.50 to 2.74	725	7.9%
2.75 to 2.99	1,410	14.1%	2.75 to 2.99	963	10.5%
3.00 to 4.00	6,280	63.0%	3.00 to 4.00	6,211	67.8%

* 25%+ of major credits completed based on primary major

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

EPC Ad Hoc Committee members considered several options to the current policy. Those options included creating another GPA, limiting the number of courses that can be repeated and adding a restriction to what grades or courses can be recalculated in the GPA.

However, most members considered these others options too complicated, challenging and confusing to explain and implement. In addition, most of the options could not be automated, which would mean that students would have to submit a petition for their record to be updated manually—a labor-intensive administrative process that could create problems for clearing students for graduation in a timely manner.

POSSIBLE CONCERNS WITH THE PROPOSAL

Students will take the same course over and over to achieve a better grade. They will fill the course before other students are able to register for the course for the first time.

Per a current policy—which is not changing—students are unable to register for the same course after the third time (i.e., maximum two repeats of same course).

Back in 2008 when the course repeat policy was revised to allow a GPA recalculation for any repeated lower-division course, there was a concern that students would continually repeat lower-division courses. However, a subsequent five-year data study showed that the average number of course attempts was 2.15 (1 first attempt and 1.15 repeats). The majority (88%) of lower-division courses that were repeated were repeated only once, see table 5.

Table 5: Five-year data review of lower-division course repeats (2008-2013)

<u>Number of Repeats</u>	<u>Courses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	33,836	87.5%
2	4,028	10.4%
3+	652	1.7%

Please note that this data is from a time before students were limited to repeat a course a maximum of two times.

This data is remarkably similar to student data under the pre-2008 course repeat policy. In fact, the data showed that while more students took advantage of the post-2008 course repeat policy in comparison to the pre-2008 policy, students were using it for fewer courses.

Students who are overly concerned about their GPA will repeat courses they have passed just to move from an acceptable grade to one that is marginally higher.

In the past several years, there have been tighter federal aid regulations that result in financial consequences for course repeats, especially when the student earned a passing grade (D or better) in the course. The students who are incurring the time, expense and threat to their financial aid to repeat courses are doing so out of necessity in order to earn their degree.

That account is evidenced in the data. In a five-year analysis of the current policy for lower-division courses, the majority (60%) of grades in the first attempt of a repeated lower-division course was a failed grade, see table 6.

Table 6: Five-year data review of lower-division course repeats (2008-2013)

Grade in 1st Attempt	Number of Courses	Percent
A, A-	379	1.0%
B+, B, B-	479	1.4%
C+, C, C-	3,643	9.6%
D+, D	9,475	25.2%
F, NF, SF	22,554	59.8%
S, U	90	0.2%
Other	475	1.1%

Reviewing students for admission to graduate programs may become more challenging if the transcript is not an accurate reflection of student performance.

The Kent State student transcript is an accurate reflection of a student's performance since all course attempts and their respective grades are and will continue to be displayed. The vast majority of colleges and universities have a grade forgiveness policy. Therefore, graduate schools review the student's full undergraduate transcript and, typically, recalculate a GPA during the admission process for a graduate program, at Kent State and elsewhere.

Allowing upper-division grade recalculation conflicts with the university's desire to promote itself as a more rigorous institution and to attract stronger students.

A counterargument can be made that encouraging students who did poorly the first time in an upper-division course to repeat the course and show proficiency, reflected by a better grade, demonstrates Kent State's priority to ensure that students have the education, experiences and support they need to graduate. Upholding academic rigor and providing students the time to master material do not run counter to each other.

The current policy is punitive to students who did well in a repeated upper-division course because the poor grade in their previous attempt remains in their GPA for graduation. Therefore, instead of being encouraged to repeat an upper-division course (most likely in their major), students are advised to repeat a lower-division course (most likely not in their major) to improve their GPA to graduate.

Will this proposed revision to the policy override any program requirements to graduate?

Changes to the university's course repeat policy will not change or override any minimum grades required in a program's courses or the minimum GPA required to graduate from the program. The policy revision will affect how the GPA is calculated to graduate from a program.

Can a department refuse to accept grades in course repeats or refuse to allow students to repeat courses for a program?

It is the prerogative of the program faculty to determine minimum grades for coursework and to require a specific GPA to graduate from that program. If a student meets those requirements through a course repeat, the university has an obligation to graduate the student.

Program faculty can develop a progression policy (e.g., advanced study, professional phase) for students to continue in the program and include a limitation on repeating specific courses as a criterion for them to continue.

EFFECT ON CURRENT STUDENTS

If the policy is approved for the fall 2019 semester, the GPA for graduation for any current student will remain unchanged, unless the student attempts to repeat a course in fall 2019 or later.

- Scenario 1: Student has repeated an upper-division course prior to fall 2019. Both grades (initial attempt and repeat) remain in the student's GPA for graduation.
- Scenario 2: Student has attempted an upper-division course prior to fall 2019. The student repeats the course in fall 2019 or later. The student's GPA for graduation will include only the highest grade from the two attempts.
- Scenario 3: Student has repeated an upper-division course prior to fall 2019. The GPA for graduation includes both grades. The student repeats the course a second time in fall 2019 or later. The student's GPA for graduation will be recalculated to include only the highest grade from the three attempts.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

Academic policies that involve GPA pose true dilemmas for a university. The GPA should uphold the integrity and reputation of the degree. In addition, a university's mission is to educate students and help them succeed. Allowing students to repeat a course to be able to master the material, and have their GPA reflect that student learning, does not need to conflict with university integrity. Universities that give students another chance at a course to demonstrate their knowledge, but don't forgive the original grade—resulting in the student having to continually take courses just to meet the required GPA to graduate—raise the question of how the university is fulfilling its mission.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION

It is recommended that effective for fall 2019, revisions to the course repeat policy as outlined on the following pages be approved to continue the goal of removing obstacles and supporting student graduation on a timely basis.

TIMETABLE AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

Educational Policies Council.....	28 January 2019
Faculty Senate.....	11 February 2019
Proposed implementation.....	Fall 2019 Semester

REVISED COURSE REPEAT POLICY

Students must register and pay tuition and any applicable fees when repeating a class. All course attempts and grades appear on the student transcript, including grades not calculated in the GPA. A student's Kent State GPA will not be affected by repeating courses at another institution.

The university is not obligated to offer courses so that students can repeat them. If students plan to repeat a course, they are to work with their advisor to identify resources for academic support. Repeating courses could affect students' financial aid, scholarships or other assistance. Students should consult the appropriate office prior to registration.

Students may repeat courses taken at Kent State University subject to the following provisions:

Undergraduate Courses

Students may repeat undergraduate courses (00000-40000 levels) no more than two times (a maximum of three attempts per course). The university will use only the highest grade and the credit hours associated with that highest grade in all attempts of the same course in the calculation of the overall undergraduate GPA, program GPA, credit hour totals and requirements for students' program.

Additional conditions for the repeating of undergraduate courses:

- After the third attempt (second repeat), the student is restricted from registering for the course again.
- Withdrawal from a course is counted as an attempt.
- Courses designated as "repeatable for credit" (see section below) are exempt from the three-attempt limit.
- Recalculation of the student's GPA occurs automatically at the end of the semester in which the student completes the repeated course.
- All grades for all attempts at a course are used in the GPA calculation for determining institutional honors (e.g., summa cum laude) and class standing (e.g., dean's list). These GPA calculations are independent of the overall GPA as it appears on the student transcript.
- All grades for all attempts may be counted for admission to or progression in specific programs, for admission to graduate programs or for admission to other institutions.

Graduate Courses

Students may repeat graduate courses (50000-80000 levels), and the university will use all grades (passed and failed) in the calculation of the overall graduate GPA. Earned credit for a course applies only once toward meeting program requirements and credit hour totals.

Repeatable-for-Credit Courses

Some undergraduate and graduate courses are identified as "repeatable for credit" in the course description. Typically, a repeatable-for-credit course offers a different instructional experience and learning outcomes each time students take the course (e.g., internship, special topics, applied music). For those courses, students earn credit for each successful attempt, and the university uses all grades (passed and failed) for all attempts in the calculation of the GPA.

Students repeating a repeatable-for-credit course should consult the University Catalog and their advisor because some academic programs have a limit on the total number of credit hours that may be applied for these types of courses.

ORIGINAL COURSE REPEAT POLICY

Students may repeat for credit any course they have failed. They may repeat a course already passed for additional credit if the course is identified as repeatable for credit in the course description (e.g., special topics, internship, individual investigation). Some academic units place a limit on the total number of credits that may be earned toward a program for a given repeatable course. For credit limits on specific courses, students should read the course descriptions or consult their advisor.

The university is not obligated to offer courses so that students can repeat them. In some instances, repeating courses could affect financial aid, scholarships or other assistance. Students should consult the appropriate office prior to registration.

Undergraduate Courses

Students may repeat the same or designated equivalent undergraduate course no more than two times (a maximum of three attempts per course). If students plan to repeat a course, they are encouraged to work with their advisor to identify resources for academic support. After the second repeat (third attempt), students will be restricted from registering for the course again. Withdrawal from a course is counted as an attempt.

Students may repeat undergraduate lower-division (00000, 10000 and 20000 levels) courses, and the university will use only the course with the highest grade in the calculation of the undergraduate overall and major grade point average (GPA), the requirements for the student's program and cumulative credit totals.

Lower-division course repeat with GPA recalculation is subject to the following provisions:

1. The course must be repeated at Kent State University.
2. The course may not be repeated for a pass/fail grade.
3. All grades will appear on the official transcript.
4. Recalculation of the students' GPA will occur automatically at the end of the semester in which students complete the repeated course.
5. All eligible courses will be included in the recalculation.
6. Courses taken as part of a completed associate degree may be repeated under this policy.
7. All course repeats for recalculation must be completed before conferral of the student's first bachelor's degree from any college or university.
8. All grades for attempts of a course will be used in GPA calculation for determining institutional honors and class standing. All grades may be counted also for admission to or progression in specific programs, for admission to graduate programs or for admission to other institutions. These computations are independent of the overall GPA as it appears on the student transcript.
9. This policy does not apply to courses that are designated in the course description as repeatable for credit.
10. This policy was effective with the spring 2008 semester.

Students may repeat undergraduate upper-division (30000 and 40000 levels) courses to meet specific graduation requirements, and only the credit hours earned in the highest-graded attempt count toward graduation. All grades earned (passed or failed) are counted in the undergraduate overall and major GPA.

Graduate Courses

Students may repeat graduate (50000-80000 levels) courses with approval of the academic dean to meet specific graduation requirements, and only the credit hours earned in the highest-graded attempt count toward graduation. All grades earned (passed or failed) for graduate courses are counted in the graduate overall GPA.

MARK-UP OF REVISIONS TO COURSE REPEAT POLICY

Legend: Added | ~~Removed~~ | ~~Moved From~~ / Moved To

Students must register and pay tuition and any applicable fees when repeating a class. All course attempts and grades appear on the student transcript, including grades not calculated in the GPA. A student's Kent State GPA will not be affected by repeating courses at another institution. Students may repeat for credit any course they have failed. They may repeat a course already passed for additional credit if the course is identified as repeatable for credit in the course description (e.g., special topics, internship, individual investigation). Some academic units place a limit on the total number of credits that may be earned toward a program for a given repeatable course. For credit limits on specific courses, students should read the course descriptions or consult their advisor.

The university is not obligated to offer courses so that students can repeat them. If students plan to repeat a course, they are to work with their advisor to identify resources for academic support. ~~In some instances,~~ Repetiting courses could affect financial aid, scholarships or other assistance. Students should consult the appropriate office prior to registration.

~~The course must be~~ Students may ~~repeated~~ courses taken at Kent State University subject to the following provisions:

Undergraduate Courses

Students may repeat ~~the same or designated equivalent~~ undergraduate courses (00000-40000 levels) no more than two times (a maximum of three attempts per course). ~~If students plan to repeat a course, they are encouraged to work with their advisor to identify resources for academic support.~~ The university will use only the highest grade and the credit hours associated with that highest grade in all attempts of the same course credit hours in the calculation of the overall undergraduate GPA, program GPA, credit hour totals and requirements for students' program.

Additional conditions for the repeating of undergraduate courses:

- After the ~~second repeat~~ (third attempt (second repeat)), ~~the students will be~~ is restricted from registering for the course again.
- Withdrawal from a course is counted as an attempt.
- ~~This policy does not apply to~~ Courses that are designated ~~in the course description~~ as repeatable for credit (see section below) are exempt from the three-attempt limit.
- ~~Students may repeat undergraduate lower-division (00000, 10000 and 20000 levels) courses, and the university will use only the course with the highest grade in the calculation of the undergraduate overall and major grade point average (GPA), the requirements for the student's program and cumulative credit totals.~~

~~Lower-division course repeat with GPA recalculation is subject to the following provisions:~~

- ~~The course may not be repeated for a pass/fail grade.~~
- ~~All grades will appear on the official transcript.~~
- Recalculation of the students' GPA will occur automatically at the end of the semester in which students completes the repeated course.
- ~~All eligible courses will be included in the recalculation.~~
- ~~Courses taken as part of a completed associate degree may be repeated under this policy.~~
- ~~All course repeats for recalculation must be completed before conferral of the student's first bachelor's degree from any college or university.~~
- All grades for all attempts of a course are ~~will be~~ used in the GPA calculation for determining institutional honors (e.g., summa cum laude) and class standing (e.g., dean's list). These GPA calculations are independent of the overall GPA as it appears on the student transcript.

- All grades for all attempts may be counted ~~also~~ for admission to or progression in specific programs, for admission to graduate programs or for admission to other institutions. ~~These computations are independent of the overall GPA as it appears on the student transcript.~~
- ~~This policy was effective with the spring 2008 semester.~~

~~Students may repeat undergraduate upper-division (30000 and 40000 levels) courses to meet specific graduation requirements, and only the credit hours earned in the highest-graded attempt count toward graduation. All grades earned (passed or failed) are counted in the undergraduate overall and major GPA.~~

Graduate Courses

Students may repeat graduate courses (50000-80000 levels) ~~courses with approval of the academic dean to meet specific graduation requirements~~, and the university will use only the credit hours earned in the highest-graded attempt count toward graduation. ~~All grades earned (passed and or failed) in the calculation of for graduate courses are counted in the overall graduate overall GPA. Earned credit for a course applies only once toward meeting program requirements and credit hour totals.~~

Repeatable-for-Credit Courses

Some undergraduate and graduate courses are identified as “repeatable for credit” in the course description. Typically, a repeatable-for-credit course offers a different instructional experience and learning outcomes each time students take the course (e.g., internship, special topics, applied music). For those courses, students earn credit for each successful attempt, and the university uses all grades (passed and failed) for all attempts in the calculation of the GPA.

Students repeating a repeatable-for-credit course should consult the University Catalog and their advisor because some academic programs have a limit on the total number of credit hours that may be applied for these types of courses.

EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies

REPORTS TO: Educational Policies Council and provost

CHARGE: The committee will review academic policies and practices; determine the policies and practices that create obstacles for student progress toward graduation and/or do not support the quality of a Kent State University education; and make recommendations of new and revised policies that promote student success.

Philosophy

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee has agreed that any policy it recommends would be:

1. Upholding the integrity, quality and standards of a Kent State education;
The policy should connect with Kent State's mission and core values.
2. Aligned with the university's strategic priority of "Students First";
Kent State should demonstrate its commitment to educate and graduate students by providing the best opportunities for students to be successful.
3. Consistent across all programs, colleges and campuses to the greatest extent possible; and
Students regularly change programs and declare multiple programs spanning departments, schools and colleges on all campuses and locations.
4. Easy to explain, demonstrate and put into words.
The policy should be clear enough that students, faculty, advisors and administrators can understand and articulate it to each other.

Fall 2018 Membership

Chair: Melody Tankersley, Senior Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Vice-Chair: Therese Tillett, Associate Vice President, Curriculum Planning and Administration

- Stavros Atsas, Analyst, Office of Graduation Planning Systems
- Stephanie Belovich, Associate Professor, College of Podiatric Medicine
- Jessie Carduner, Associate Professor, Department of Modern and Classical Language Studies
- Liz Driscoll Dewitt, Senior Advisor II, Ashtabula Campus
- Sue Emens, Assistant Dean, Geauga Campus
- Pam Evans, Associate Professor, College of Architecture and Environmental Design
- Jill Folk, Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences
- Bill Hauck, Assistant Professor, School of Fashion Design and Merchandising
- Lynette Johnson, Associate University Registrar
- Morgan Marshall, Undergraduate Student Government, Communication Studies Major
- Steve Mitchell, Associate Dean, College of Education, Health and Human Services
- Kim Peer, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences
- Eboni Pringle, Dean, University College
- Amy Quillin, Student Ombuds, Division of Student Affairs
- Lock Reynolds, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
- Mark Rhodes, Graduate Student Senate, Geology Major
- Matt Rollyson, Assistant Dean, College of Communication and Information
- Valerie Rose, Financial Aid Coordinator, Office of Student Financial Aid
- Liz Smith, Associate Professor, Department of History
- Linnea Stafford, Senior Information Officer, Office of Institutional Research
- Cynthia Stillings, Associate Dean, College of the Arts
- Andrew Tonge, Chair, Department of Mathematical Sciences
- Don White, Professor, Department of Mathematical Sciences
- Gina Zavota, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy
- Melissa Zullo, Associate Professor, College of Public Health