

Overview of curriculum production process

The Bennington College curriculum is produced each spring as a year-long (Fall/Spring) curriculum for the upcoming academic year. Changes and additions are essentially managed and made in real-time, though there are certain periods when the curriculum is frozen, largely for registration purposes.

General timeline

At the end of each fall term, and leading into the next spring term, the curriculum coordinators convene their respective discipline groups to discuss the upcoming year-long curriculum. Course information is entered into Wordpress, either by individual faculty and/or by the curriculum coordinator, and is submitted for review. The Dean's Office confirms all relevant course details, and then publishes each course; the WordPress curriculum is then made available to coordinators for purposes of a thorough check before its release to students a few days before the first Plan day.

In the fall, we anticipate certain changes or additions to the following spring's curriculum. These changes are also coordinated by the curriculum coordinators, but are communicated to the Dean's Office in a slightly different way: new classes are entered into WordPress while changes to (or removal of) existing courses are communicated directly to the Dean's Office. As in the spring, each coordinator is responsible for a thorough check of the WordPress curriculum site prior to its release to students.

Coordinator checklist

Each spring:

- ☐ Following on conversations from the previous fall, meet with Discipline Group colleagues to finalize curricular offerings for upcoming fall and spring terms, considering together:
 - ☐ the alignment of proposed courses with learning outcomes/objectives for the discipline, college-wide Capacities, as well as student Plan areas
 - ☐ the impact of any sabbaticals or course releases
- ☐ Work with associate dean on sabbatical/leave/course release replacement plans.
- ☐ Map out courses with discipline group to ensure:
 - ☐ Proper distribution of 2000- and 4000-level seats
 - ☐ Class times/days across the week, in accordance with course scheduling policy, appended to the end of this document
- ☐ Participate in CPC discussions about course offerings across disciplines, including distribution of days/times, 2000/4000 splits, curricular coverage, and co-taught courses (see attached).
- ☐ Enter (and/or coordinate entry of) all courses into WordPress, including those of any visiting faculty.
- ☐ Calculate number/distribution of fall seats that should be saved for incoming freshmen.
- ☐ Reconfirm and proofread course details in WordPress prior to official curriculum launch, including:

- ☐ Titles
- ☐ Instructors
- ☐ Credits
- ☐ Descriptions
- ☐ Meeting days/times
- ☐ Available seats
- ☐ Tags
- ☐ Assist in the coordination of registration
 - ☐ Who will be signing for whom?
 - ☐ How will registration for courses offered by visiting faculty be handled?
 - ☐ 4000-level sign-off
 - ☐ Distributing information to / relaying information from colleagues

Each fall:

- ☐ Meet with Discipline Group colleagues to review curriculum for upcoming spring term.
- ☐ Work with associate dean on replacement plans for any new faculty leaves/releases.
- ☐ Participate in CPC discussions about course offerings across disciplines, including distribution of days/times, 2000/4000 splits, curricular coverage, and co-taught courses (see attached).
- ☐ Coordinate necessary changes within your discipline:
 - ☐ New courses are entered into WordPress by coordinator
 - ☐ Modification or removal of existing courses is submitted directly to the Dean's Office
 - ☐ Confirm proper distribution of 2000- and 4000-level seats and spread of courses across the week, in accordance with course scheduling policy, appended to the end of this document
- ☐ Reconfirm and proofread course details prior to official curriculum re-launch, including:
 - ☐ Titles
 - ☐ Instructors
 - ☐ Credits
 - ☐ Descriptions
 - ☐ Meeting days/times
 - ☐ Available seats
 - ☐ Cross-listing
 - ☐ Tags
- ☐ Assist in the coordination of registration
 - ☐ Who will be signing for whom?
 - ☐ How will registration for courses offered by visiting faculty be handled?
 - ☐ 4000-level sign-off
 - ☐ Distributing information to / relaying information from colleagues

Course Scheduling Policy

The course scheduling policy, first implemented in the spring of 2011, has been revised by the Curriculum Planning Committee in the continuing effort to ease scheduling congestion for students. The revised policy, effective with the Fall 2017 curriculum, is as follows.

- The scheduling of courses is to be discussed first within each discipline group, under the direction of the curriculum coordinator, to ensure that there is a balanced spread of offerings at different time slots throughout the week. Working together, the discipline group must ensure that no more than 10% of a discipline group's courses are offered in any single two-hour block (eg, if a discipline group is offering 20 courses, no more than 2 may be scheduled in any single block). For purposes of analyzing spread throughout the week, multiple three- or seven-week courses that meet at the same time—but at different points in the term—can be counted as a single course. The Curriculum Planning Committee concurrently reviews course scheduling by discipline as well as across the disciplines, and may prompt changes to offering times if certain blocks become overly congested.
- Courses are scheduled in one or more two-hour blocks, one or more days per week. The two-hour blocks are as follows:
 - 8:00am–9:50am
 - 10:00am–11:50am
 - 12:10pm–2:00pm (M/W/F only)
 - 2:10pm–4:00pm
 - 4:10pm–6:00pm
 - 6:30pm–8:20pm
 - 8:30pm–10:20pm
- Courses that meet twice per week must follow either the Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday pattern; or they may meet Monday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Friday during the lunch block. Courses that meet after 6:30pm may be more flexibly scheduled, and may follow the Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, and Tuesday/Thursday pattern.
- Only studio, lab, and 4000-level courses can be scheduled in four-hour blocks. All other courses—including seven-week courses at any level—should be scheduled to meet once or twice weekly in two-hour blocks (depending on course credit).
- Classes that meet three times a week should be scheduled on the Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday pattern, with an additional meeting Wednesdays in the 8:10am-10:00am block or during lunch. Classes can also be scheduled Monday/Wednesday/Friday during the lunch block.
- Three- and seven-week courses must be balanced and matched within disciplines and across the curriculum generally, to ensure availability of credits for those who take these courses.

- Classes that meet during the four hour time slots of 8:00am-11:40am and 2:20pm-6:00pm can be offered Monday through Friday, as can classes that meet over the dinner-time split (4:10pm-6pm; 6:30pm-8:20pm). A limited number of four-hour classes can also be scheduled on Wednesday or Friday during the split time slot of 10:00am/2:10pm; this will be limited to five each day, to be coordinated at the Curriculum Planning Committee.

Requests for exceptions to any of the above are to be presented to the relevant curriculum coordinator, who may introduce them for discussion with the Curriculum Planning Committee. Once the curriculum has been released to students, all time and/or day changes are permitted only under extenuating circumstances, and must be submitted to the relevant curriculum coordinator for approval by the Provost and Dean's Office.

Co-Teaching Guidelines (rev. Apr, 2014)

Occasionally two or more instructors co-teach classes. There are various reasons for co-teaching—shared interests, curricular initiatives, the supervision of advanced work, the development of new courses and programs—and there have been numerous models for co-teaching here at Bennington. Co-teaching can be fruitful both within and across disciplines.

The act of co-teaching is valued here. However, it is understood that a co-taught course for which each instructor receives full credit must work for the curriculum as a whole, the curriculum for each discipline, and the potential number of students served. Therefore, if two faculty members wish to co-teach a four-credit class with each of them receiving full credit for the course, they must submit a proposal to CPC and the Dean's Office each year before the start of the spring term. Proposals should include a course description, a maximum number of students, and a description of how the faculty members propose to share the teaching load. These proposals will be considered based on the overall curricular needs of the faculty and student body at that time.

Instructors who only plan to be in the classroom half the time (i.e. only the first hour of a two-hour class, or only the first 7 weeks of a full-term class) will receive half credit each, and these classes need not be formally proposed. Any four-credit co-taught class for which the instructors do not seek more than a total of four credits between them does not need to be formally proposed to CPC and the Dean's Office and can simply be entered in the curriculum.