


Policy on Rigor and Guidelines on Course Levels

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	File: Academic Policies / Academic Standards Policies	
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Policy on Rigor and Guidelines on Course Levels</h2>	
Policy Summary This policy defines a rigorous curriculum and establishes how an academic program will demonstrate these standards are being met.		
Policy Owner Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	Approval Date February 3, 2017	Effective Date February 3, 2017
Search Terms pvpaa, p, r, recently-approved	Scheduled for Review Spring 2021	

Policy Statement

1. Fort Lewis College sets high standards for student learning across the curriculum. Students will participate in a series of experiences that develop understanding, challenge them to integrate learning both within and across disciplines, and prepare them to succeed in an increasingly complex world.
2. The faculty of Fort Lewis College establish the following definition of rigor:
 - A. A rigorous liberal arts curriculum balances foundational coursework, inclusion of diverse perspectives, and in-depth analysis to provide students with appropriate knowledge as defined by college-wide and program learning outcomes. The rigor of a Fort Lewis College degree is ensured by the diversity of courses required by the liberal arts core and by the depth of study required by majors.
 - B. A rigorous curriculum:
 - i. Requires students to synthesize and apply course ideas.
 - ii. Reflects views and content that are relevant to current thought and practice.
 - iii. Provides a platform for students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge.
 - iv. Requires students to take active responsibility for learning.
3. Substantive evidence that a program meets these standards may include assessment reports, program reviews, and/or standards set by the discipline or external accrediting agencies. At the course level, evidence should include a combination of examples from the following: learning objectives, course assignments, exams, and/or descriptions of student activities. For both programs and courses, evidence to demonstrate rigor should be selected as appropriate to the discipline.
4. Departments shall ensure that programs and courses meet the Fort Lewis College standards for rigor. In the ordinary course of curricular review, departments may be called upon to demonstrate to the next level(s) of review (i.e., dean, curriculum committee, faculty senate, provost) that programs and courses meet these standards.
5. The faculty of Fort Lewis College establish the following general, minimum criteria for course level designations:
 - 100 Level:** Courses at the 100 level prepare students for academic success by developing foundational knowledge and skills.
 - 200 Level:** Courses at the 200 level require students to develop connections between concepts both within their field and between disciplines, expand on ideas central to the discipline, and enrich a student's perspective of the world.
 - 300 Level:** Courses at the 300 level expose students to specialized concepts and techniques central to the discipline. Students apply knowledge and skills previously learned to unfamiliar topics and problems. Students engage in the craft in a supervised or guided manner.
 - 400 Level:** Courses at the 400 level require students to synthesize advanced knowledge and master skills in the discipline and/or guide students to independent production and engagement in the craft.
 - 500 Level:** Courses at the 500 level require students to synthesize advanced scholarly knowledge and master skills in the discipline at the graduate level with independent production and engagement in the craft or discipline.
 - 600 Level:** Courses at the 600 level require students to study, master, and synthesize advanced scholarly knowledge and theoretical concepts.
 - 700 Level:** Courses at the 700 level require students to employ advanced or specialized knowledge and theoretical concepts in scholarly and/or professional settings.

Reason for Policy

Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practice B.1.e., which states "Courses that carry academic credit toward college-level credentials have content and rigor appropriate to higher education."

Responsibilities

For following policy: Faculty in each academic program

For enforcement of policy: Provost

For oversight of policy: Provost

For notification of policy: Policy Librarian

For procedures implementing policy: Faculty Senate, Deans, Provost

Revision History

The policy statement approved November 5, 2014 has been expanded to include 500, 600, and 700 level courses with a review in Spring 2019.