

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DEGREES AND PROGRAMS SECTION IN THE COCKRELL SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING CHAPTER IN THE UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG 2016-2018 or LAW SCHOOL CATALOG 2016-2018

TYPE OF CHANGE:¹ Academic Change
 Degree Program Change (THECB² form required)

PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION:³ Exclusive General Major

1. IF THE ANSWER TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IS YES, THE COLLEGE MUST CONSULT LINDA DICKENS, DIRECTOR OF ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT, TO DETERMINE IF SACSCOC APPROVAL IS REQUIRED.

- Is this a new degree program? Yes No
- Is this program being deleted? Yes No
- Does the program offer courses that will be taught off campus? Yes No
- Will courses in this program be delivered electronically? Yes No

Comment [DLR1]: Check the appropriate box.
Done.

2. EXPLAIN CHANGE TO DEGREE PROGRAM AND GIVE A DETAILED RATIONALE FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CHANGE:

Instituting credit/no-credit grade option for Cockrell School of Engineering semester exchange students. The Cockrell School of Engineering (CSE) seeks to encourage undergraduate students to include an international experience in their undergraduate program of study. Among the several options for gaining such an experience, semester exchange programs rise to the top because they are the best vehicle for cultural immersion and they represent the lowest cost to CSE. To undertake semester exchange programs, students need to see the academic risks as manageable. The two key concerns in this regard are:

Comment [DLR2]: Please give a detailed rationale explaining the credit/no-credit option.
Included.

1. Will the courses taken abroad count toward a degree?
2. Will the grades assigned abroad be reasonable relative to the standards applied at UT?

We only send academically strong students on exchange programs so the grade issue can be important to their career goals (e.g., grad school admission).

Grading standards and culture differ not just between UT and our partner universities but also among our various partner universities, such that the grading issues vary depending on the university the student is attending. The grading, assessment style, and frequency may be dramatically different than UT's, except for those very few partners whose academic systems are aligned with the American system. At most partner universities the final exam accounts for most of the grade, not allowing students to know where they stand until a comprehensive final exam is administered and graded at the end of the semester. Many universities will allow students to re-take the final, but this option is usually impractical for our students because they have already returned home.

In the recent years, we have been developing exchanges with higher-ranking university partners, which are often the least "Americanized" in terms of their educational systems (e.g., TU Delft). As a result, we have had recent problems with very good students getting very low grades. Growing student concern about grades is now threatening student willingness to participate in semester exchange programs.

The McCombs School of Business encountered this problem in the past and addressed it by allowing students to choose their grading standard after the study-abroad grades are received at UT as follows:

1. Accept the equivalent UT letter grade earned for the course at the international university
2. Choose to convert the letter grade to a Credit/No Credit grade at UT

McCombs allows no more than four study-abroad courses in the degree program to be taken Credit/No Credit, and all university-level core courses must be taken for a grade per the requirements of the School of Undergraduate Studies. It is also our understanding that many of our peer engineering schools make accommodations for students in assigning grades for semester exchange courses.

To provide context, the current CSE policy is that no course in an undergraduate degree program can be taken Credit/No Credit. The purpose of this proposal is to lay out a policy similar to that of the McCombs School of Business for CSE students.

Peer School Comparison on Grades for Exchange Students

Peer School	Engineering Study Abroad Grades Computed in GPA
University of Wisconsin-Madison	No
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	No
Purdue	No, for all ME students
	No w/ advisor permission outside of ME
Georgia Tech	No
Berkeley	Yes
University of Michigan	No

3. THIS PROPOSAL INVOLVES: (Please check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses in other colleges | <input type="checkbox"/> Courses in proposer's college that are frequently taken by students in other colleges | <input type="checkbox"/> Flags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course in the core curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in course sequencing for an existing program | <input type="checkbox"/> Courses that have to be added to the inventory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change in admission requirements (external or internal) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requirements not explicit in the catalog language (e.g., lists of acceptable courses maintained by department office) | |

4. SCOPE OF PROPOSED CHANGE:

- a. Does this proposal impact other colleges/schools? Yes No
If yes, then how would you do so?
- b. Do you anticipate a net change in the number of students in your college? Yes No
If yes, how many more (or fewer) students do you expect?
- c. Do you anticipate a net increase (or decrease) in the number of students from outside of your college taking classes in your college? Yes No
If yes, please indicate the number of students and/or class seats involved.
- d. Do you anticipate a net increase (or decrease) in the number of students from your college taking courses in other colleges? Yes No
If yes, please indicate the number of students and/or class seats involved.

If 4 a, b, c, or d was answered with yes, please answer the following questions:
If the proposal has potential budgetary impacts for another college/school, such as requiring new sections or a non-negligible increase in the number of seats offered, at least one contact must be at the college-level.

How many students do you expect to be impacted?
Impacted schools must be contacted and their response(s) included:
Person communicated with:
Date of communication:
Response:

e. Does this proposal involve changes to the core curriculum or other basic education requirements (42-hour core, signature courses, flags)? If yes, explain: NO

If yes, Undergraduate Studies must be informed of the proposed changes and their response included:

Person communicated with:
Date of communication:
Response:

f. Will this proposal change the number of hours required for degree completion? If yes, explain: NO

5. COLLEGE/SCHOOL APPROVAL PROCESS

Department approval date: Dec. 2015 Approved by whom: Dept. Chairs submitted comments to the associate dean of school
College approval date: March 29, 2016 Approved by whom: Degrees & Courses Committee
Dean approval date: April 6, 2016 Approved by whom: Sharon L. Wood

PROPOSED NEW CATALOG TEXT:⁴

Under ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

{subcategory} **Grade Policy for Semester Exchange (Study Abroad) Students**

With permission of the undergraduate advisor in their department, engineering students may elect to place up to four exchange courses on their records with a CR, rather than with a UT letter grade. The following restrictions apply:

- 1. Only courses completed on exchange at a Cockrell School of Engineering partner institution qualify.
- 2. Students must choose the CR/NC option by the usual UT mid-semester deadline and must have prior permission of their undergraduate advisor before doing so. If the exchange university does not follow the same academic calendar at UT Austin the student must make this request before 60% of the course completion (usually about 9 weeks from the start of class).
- 3. The corresponding course in the UT degree plan will determine the minimum grade requirement to obtain the CR grade (i.e., if the UT course requires a C- or better, the student must have earned the equivalent of C- or better on the exchange course to receive a CR; in the absence of a specified minimum grade requirement, the standard is an equivalent of D- or better).
- 4. Courses taken on exchange programs with the CR grade option may be counted toward any requirements for the degree except courses being applied toward the 42-hour, UT core curriculum requirements.
- 5. No matter how many exchange courses a student takes, no more than four courses with the CR grade can be applied toward the degree.
- 6. Once a course is placed on the UT record the grade designation may not be changed.

Comment [SSD3]: We have also updated the catalog copy/policy. This is what was actually final approved. A previous version was included on the earlier submission.

This policy is effective beginning with students on exchange programs in fall 2016 and later, and is applicable to all catalogs.

¹ See <https://facultycouncil.utexas.edu/degree-program-changes> for detailed explanations.

² Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board forms: <https://facultycouncil.utexas.edu/download-forms>

³ **EXCLUSIVE:** of *exclusive* application and of primary interest only to a single college or school ("no protest" period is *seven calendar days*); **GENERAL:** of *general* interest to more than one college or school (but not for submission to the General Faculty) ("no protest" period is *fourteen calendar days*); *major* legislation must be submitted to the General Faculty for adoption ("no protest" period is *fourteen calendar days*).

⁴ The proposed text should be based on the text of the current catalog available at: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/undergraduate/>

Strike through and replace (with underlines) only the specific language to be changed. Do NOT use track changes. Submit form electronically to the Office of the General Faculty and Faculty Council at fc@austin.utexas.edu. For questions on completing this section, please contact Victoria Cervantes, vc@austin.utexas.edu, 471-5934 or Brenda Schumann, brenda.schumann@austin.utexas.edu, 475-7654.