

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR A STANDARDIZED, UNIVERSITY-WIDE COURSE NUMBERING POLICY

The following is a suggestion for university-wide standardized course numbering. This is intended to simplify the experience of both current and prospective Illinois Tech students, particularly for those transferring into Illinois Tech from other schools, and with an eye to Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) compliance and viability, improving retention, time to graduation, university rankings, graduate outcomes and assessment, and being able to offer a fundamentally less risky path through college for those applying as first years as well.

The standardization addresses a number of situations where both completion of degree requirements and transferring in and out of the university is complicated by non-standard numbering. Additionally, standardization of numbering will considerably simplify forthcoming reforms to the Illinois Tech core curriculum, as we reorganize what has hitherto been perhaps the toughest-to-complete core in the IAI.

The aim is for this to form the basis of a policy change that would be developed through the studies committees. Please note that the plan as shown here currently includes graduate classifications as well; a parallel proposal will be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee, as UGSC on its own would not have any jurisdiction over the 500 and 600 levels given here.

Courses at Illinois Tech under the policy would be classified as follows, across all departments.

000-level (001-099): These are developmental and remedial courses that do not receive credit toward graduation but may be required of certain students and do have administrative credit for the purpose of calculating tuition, full-time versus part time status, eligibility for financial aid, compliance with federal financial aid policies, and satisfaction of specific program requirements.

100-level (100-199): These courses represent introductory courses that provide foundational disciplinary knowledge in the discipline and include the introductory components of the core curriculum. They are accessible to high school graduates without prerequisites unless they are part of a 100-level sequence such as with different stages of math and lab courses. The courses do not carry advanced-level credit. Courses are open to all undergraduate students, subject to prerequisites in sequenced courses.

200-level (200-299): These courses are intended for students who have completed the appropriate 100-level prerequisites or in certain cases at least U2 (sophomore) standing.

These include in-depth foundational courses such as survey courses, advanced core curriculum courses. This tier also includes introductory courses that require a 100-level prerequisite in another discipline. U1 students may register when they have satisfied prerequisites through AP high school courses, verified proficiency, or placement tests.

300-level (300-399): This designation includes courses that have at least one 200-level prerequisite, and are generally targeted at U3 and U4 students. If there is no specific prerequisite, this tier requires at least U3 standing – this scenario may apply in professional programs, for example. These courses are of sufficient complexity or difficulty that they require a broader educational background and maturity to perform at optimal levels. These are considered upper-level undergraduate courses, but are not eligible for graduate credit. This tier includes all senior seminar and thesis courses.

400-level (400-499): This tier of advanced undergraduate- and graduate-level courses allows undergraduate and graduate students alike to register. Graduate students receive graduate credit for these courses. This tier is also commonly applicable in coterminal degree programs. Academic units have the option to close these courses to undergraduates and make them graduate-only. Overall, graduate credit is allowed up to limits set by graduate programs and in some situations these limits are also affected by regulatory compliance.

500-level (500-599): These courses are exclusively for graduate students and post-baccalaureate professional-degree students. This tier typically includes all coursework for the PhD degree.

600-level (600-699): This is a special-purpose numbering tier for advanced coursework and research at the graduate level.