

SMALL CLASS POLICY

DEFINITIONS:

Long sessions

A small class is either an organized undergraduate course with fewer than 10 registrants, or an organized graduate-level course with fewer than five graduate registrants.

Graduate courses meeting with undergraduate courses:

A class that is cross-listed and has both undergraduate- and graduate- level sections, will be defined as a small class if there are fewer than ten undergraduate registrants in the class or fewer than five graduate registrants in the class.

Example of small undergraduate and graduate meets-with course:

4 grad registrants + 7 undergrad registrants = 11 total registrants

Summer sessions

A small class is either an organized undergraduate lower-division course with fewer than 20 registrants, an organized undergraduate upper-division course with fewer than 15 registrants, or an organized graduate-level course with fewer than ten graduate registrants.

BEFORE PETITIONING:

Department chairs/program directors should take preemptive steps to cancel small classes before the first class day unless they meet the “compelling reasons” parameters. This helps to minimize the impact on both the students’ and the instructor’s schedule.

Compelling Reasons

In accordance with Texas Education Code, §51.403(d), public universities may offer an organized small class which:

- (1) is a required course for graduation (the course is not offered each semester, and, if canceled, may affect the date of graduation of those enrolled);
- (2) is a required course for majors in this field and should be completed this semester+ to keep proper sequence in courses;
- (3) is a course in a newly established degree program, concentration, or support area;
- (4) is part of an interdepartmental (multi-section) course taught as a single class by the same faculty at the same station, provided that the combined enrollments do not constitute a small class;
- (5) is a first-time offering of the course;
- (6) is class size-limited by accreditation or state licensing standards;
- (7) is class size-limited by availability of laboratory or clinical facilities; or
- (8) is voluntarily offered by a faculty member in excess of the institutional teaching load requirement and for which the faculty member receives no additional compensation.

The College interprets item 8 in the following manner: “small” classes will NOT be canceled if the instructor teaches it as an overload. Chairs/Directors will still need to submit a petition.

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PETITIONS:

Petitions should include the unique number, course number and title, instructor name and rank, number of students enrolled, the “compelling reason” or other justification for retaining the course (see Compelling Reasons above), whether the course/instructor is being funded through grants, and steps that may be taken to ensure future compliance.

Deadline

If undergraduate courses are below the minimum on the first class day, petitions should be submitted as soon as possible to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Courses should be checked for low enrollment every day through the fifth class day during a long session, or first and second class day of a summer session. Unless petitions are approved, all small classes may be canceled. Once a decision has been made, usually by the morning of the fifth class day, to cancel a small class, the department must submit the appropriate forms canceling the course, inform the registered students, and inform the faculty member as soon as possible. The faculty member may be required to teach an overload in the subsequent long semester to fulfill the College’s teaching load requirements. If the instructor is a lecturer, their appointment may be reduced proportionately.

Petitions are not required for classes that fall below the minimum after the fifth class day of a long session or the second class day of a summer session.

TOOL:

The CS command in *NRRECS lists possible small classes using long session criteria when a YYS and department abbreviation are entered. The listing shows the current enrollment to the right of the unique number, followed by the closing limit. Classes that are cross-listed will show the combined enrollment for all sections.