VANDERBILT COURSE RENUMBERING
DECEMBER 2013

Report of the Course Renumbering Task Force
Vanderbilt University
3 December 2013

SYNOPSIS

The Fall 2013 Course Renumbering Task Force recommends a 4-digit course numbering scheme that retains existing subject-matter prefixes (such as ENGL) and utilizes course numbers ranging from 1000–4999 for credit-bearing baccalaureate courses and 5000–9999 for graduate and professional courses. Certain common and trackable aspects are included within the numbering scheme (such as writing credit, senior honors thesis, dissertation research numbers, and the like), but within broad parameters schools and programs should be able to cluster courses within a range to convey specialization and groupings for a given subject area. The goal is to complete the changeover to the new numbering system by Spring 2015, in time for Fall 2015 registration.

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

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GOALS AND CONTEXT FOR DISCUSSION

Over the course of the next two years, Vanderbilt University will move to a four-digit course numbering scheme which will combine (current) subject area prefixes with a four-digit course number in the appropriate range.

This change is overdue; indeed, the task force working on the project is the fourth to explore a ten-school solution to our course renumbering needs, and the recommendations here draw extensively on the reports of 26 Oct 2000 and 12 June 1996.

The old, largely three-digit, numbering system no longer has a large enough number range to cover all the courses needed at particular levels or in particular areas. Over the last several years, we have also fielded numerous requests from individual departments to reorder their courses to better reflect curricular ideals, and under the old system this would have necessitated the reuse of old numbers for new course content. Moreover, the lack of a consistent numbering schema across all programs has made our transcripts difficult to decode. In the recommendations that follow, we seek to provide an institution-wide approved framework that is clear to the external viewer and is in line with other schools' practices.

This work is also timely, in that the recent conversion to PeopleSoft has made available technical improvements which will facilitate implementation of this new schema.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Summer 2013	It was agreed that a new numbering system was needed and the decision to begin the process during the Fall 2013 semester was made.
August 2013	Deans selected representatives from each school to be on the course renumbering task force.
Fall 2013	The task force met monthly. The task force established broad directives for the campus-wide renumbering schema that will shift courses from the current (mostly) three-digit scheme to a four-digit scheme ranging from 0900-9999. The task force divided into smaller task teams, each of which set up common and trackable aspects within the schema for courses in the specific areas: graduate/professional, undergraduate, mixed-enrollment "Cat/Grad" courses, and hybrid/online courses. The task force submitted its recommendations to the provost for review.
Dec 2013/Jan 2014	Provost reviews recommendations and either endorses them or returns the schema to the task force for revision.
Spring 2014	The work of the Course Renumbering Task Force will inform the process of adapting to the new numbering scheme. This process will be handled at the School and/or department or program level. Each department is encouraged to cluster courses within a range to convey specialization and groupings for a given subject area. Schools and departments should seek to gain consistency where possible. Course descriptions will need to retain the old course number ("formerly XXX") for a complete cycle of students.

Summer & Fall 2014	Data entry: the new numbering system will be entered into the PeopleSoft catalog and degree audit, and other campus publications in preparation for preregistration during March of 2015. New numbering schema will also be organized and prepared in tabular form for public and online access; a web-hosted comparative table of old numbers and new numbers will provide an accessible archive of this information. Systems testing will be coordinated by the Registrar's office and EMOS. Special attention will be given to implications for OAK and other ancillary systems.
Spring 2015	Final updates to the online catalog, print catalog, and student handbooks (for F2015) will reflect the new numbering system. The new system will be introduced to the student body in time for Fall 2015 pre-registration in March.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vanderbilt's course numbering system will follow a prefix-plus-number model: ENGL 1654; MGT 6145; SPED 8723. Existing alphabetical subject-matter prefixes will (largely) be retained.

Letter identifiers have been significantly restricted, making allowances only for specific meaning. For example, ECON 3257W = satisfied writing requirements; BSCI 1501 and 1501L denote lecture and lab co-requisites; but course sequences will be designated through last digit(s), rather than a, b, c, d.

Where possible, standard numbers will be used across the curriculum for common course types (for example, independent study, senior seminar, dissertation research).

1. BASIC OUTLINE OF NUMBERING

0000–0799: Non-credit, non-degree courses that do not apply to a degree program
0800–0999: Courses that will be eventually given credit (e.g. study abroad)
1000–1999: Lower-level introductory undergraduate courses. Generally, no prerequisites
2000–2999: Lower-level intermediate undergraduate courses. May have prerequisites
3000–3999: Upper-level intermediate undergraduate courses. Likely have prerequisites or require instructor permission
      NOTE: The range 3400–3599 has been reserved for future program growth and is not to be used at the present time

4000–4999: Upper-level advanced undergraduate courses. Usually have prerequisites or require instructor permission
5000–5999: introductory-level graduate and professional courses (including those co-enrolled with undergraduates)
6000–7999: intermediate-level graduate and professional courses
8000–9999: Advanced-level graduate and professional courses

Departments will cluster courses within a range to convey specialization and groupings for a given a subject area.

2. COURSE RENUMBERING CONVENTIONS: UNDERGRADUATE

In the recommendations below, the letter "X" can be any number 0–9. Thus, 389X represents all numbers from 3890 to 3899.

New Number / Number Range	Description
SENIOR EXPERIENCES: 3900s & 4900s	
4998, 4999 3998, 3999	Honors Thesis
398X, 498X	Honors Seminars
4978, 4979 3978, 3979	Thesis
3970–77	Capstone Project - includes art studios, recitals, and projects
496X	Senior Seminars / Capstone courses
495X	Capstone Experiences (like HOD internships, student teaching)
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: 3800s	
389X	Special Topics
388X	Internships
387X	Practica
3865–69	Field Research - Includes field study
3860–64	On Campus Research - Lab research - Directed lab research - Honors Research
385X	Independent Study - Includes independent readings

New Number / Number Range	Description
384X	Directed Study - includes directed readings
383X	Service Learning - can also be tracked through course attribute outside of this number range
OTHER CONVENTIONS	
3400–3599	DO NOT USE: held for new programs needing common tracking

2000–2099	Transfer courses with no equivalent at VU
	   2000–49 = NoEq that does not count toward major
	   2050–99 = NoEq that counts toward major

111X	Freshman Seminars 1111= A&S First Year Writing Seminars (formerly 115F); 1117=Peabody first year seminars
1001	Commons Seminars
09XX and 08XX	Courses that will eventually receive credit
07XX	Non-credit experience, e.g. Visions, athletics, marching band. 0700 = VV

- Letters a,b,c that previously signified course sequences will be replaced; departments should use last digit(s) to signify course sequencing in the curriculum.
- "L": Lecture and co-requisite lab that are graded and taught as independent courses will share the same number; the lab course will be noted with "L"
- "T" will no longer be used; transfer courses will be tracked through course set-up
- "W" will be retained for writing courses

3. **COURSE RENUMBERING CONVENTIONS: GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL**

New Number / Number Range	Description
9999	Dissertation Research
8999	Non-Candidate Research
8000s and 9000s	Generally Doctoral Level
7999	Masters Thesis

New Number / Number Range	Description
6000s and 7000s	Generally Master's Level
6000–6009	Transfer no-equivalent
5000s	Preparatory courses and Grad/Prof level courses that undergrad can take

- These are intended as general guidelines only; principles of content clustering almost certainly will result in variance at the Professional School level

4. **COURSE RENUMBERING CONVENTIONS: CAT/GRAD (Courses with combined undergraduate/graduate enrollments)**

Cat/Grad courses should have two separate numbers that are close echoes of one another, e.g. HIST 3325 and HIST 5325. (Matching the numbers makes easy reference.)

In the future, all Cat/Grad courses should have separate syllabi, one for undergraduates and one for graduates, and these should reflect the differential workloads expected of the two populations.

5. **DISTANCE LEARNING, INCLUDING OFF-CAMPUS AND DIGITAL, ONLINE, AND HYBRID COURSES**

Tracking of distance learning will largely be addressed through component type and instructional mode in PeopleSoft. Departments and schools may choose to integrate or segregate such courses by number, as they prefer.

In the new scheme, the following INSTRUCTIONAL MODE values will used for courses:

Code	Value	Ask location?	Definitions
EA	Experiential Away	Ask location	Includes service learning, practica, etc.
ET	Experiential TN	Default to TN	Includes service learning, practica, etc. for students are located within TN (e.g. on-campus service learning courses).
IS	Independent Studies	Default to TN	Includes independent and directed studies.
M	Mixed	Ask location	Course is 50-79% online; includes hybrid courses; also includes student-driven combination of in-person and/or online instruction which can range from 0% to 100% online. (Reported as "hybrid" or "online" to

			external agencies.)
O	Online (replaces "WW")	Ask location	Course is more than 80% online.
P	In Person	Default to TN	Default value; may contain up to 49% online.

For those courses needing location information (identified by "ask location" on the previous table), we are investigating development of a drop-down menu prompt for use during registration that would identify a student's primary geographical location throughout the course. (TN would be a choice – not all students will be out of state.) This would address some of our State Authorization reporting needs.