

# Minnesota State Community and Technical College

## Course Outline Style Guide

The following guidelines have been established by the M| State Academic Affairs and Standard Council to ensure uniformity within the curriculum of the College.

### Course Numbering

- Courses within the 1000 series are considered to be first-year courses, and courses within the 2000 series are considered to be second-year courses.
- Second-year courses might not require pre-requisites, but if prior knowledge is expected, it should be indicated.

### Course Title

- Course titles must be written using complete words and sentences. No symbols (such as the & symbol) or abbreviations should be used within a course title. Even abbreviations that seem obvious should be spelled out.
  - Example: Department of Transportation rather than DOT.

### Course Description

- Course descriptions must be written using complete sentences.
- Course descriptions should reflect the competencies students can expect to learn.
- Course descriptions should avoid information such as URLs that may change from time to time. While it may be necessary to include vendor names or other specifics, if these tend to change as the course develops, it is best to avoid them.
  - Example: "This course will cover the security features of current and recent operating systems" rather than: "This course will cover the security features of Windows XP."
- MnTC course descriptions must list the goal areas in the first sentence of the description.
  - Example: Meets MnTC Goal Areas 5 and 6.
- No abbreviations should be used within a course description until you have first spelled out what the abbreviation stands for with the abbreviation in parentheses following it. Even abbreviations that seem obvious should be spelled out. Once you do this in the description, though, you can go ahead and use the abbreviation.
  - Example: "Department of Transportation (DOT)."

## Pre-requisites

- Pre-requisite courses within the same prefix (i.e. BIOL, HLTH) should be numbered sequentially if at all possible.
  - Example: ACBD1150 should have a pre-requisite with a number equal to or less than ABCD1149.
- Pre-requisites can be from another area.
  - Example: An ADMM course could have a pre-requisite from the HLTH area.
- Only the highest course in a series of pre-requisites should be listed.
  - Example: CADD 1102 is a pre-requisite for CADD 1114  
CADD 1114 is a pre-requisite for CADD 2214  
Only CADD 1114 should be listed as a pre-requisite for CADD 2214, not all the courses in the sequence.

## Co-requisites

- Faculty may wish to enter a co-requisite course. ISRS does not have the ability to prevent a student from registering for a course that has a co-requisite. If you choose a co-requisite, please understand that they can only be monitored through the advising process.

## Competencies

- As a rule of thumb, a competency is considered to be a skill, understanding, or point of knowledge that can be assessed using a single assessment. This means competencies can be written with multiple verbs and one object or with one verb and multiple objects.
  - Example:
    - Collect, record, and assess a comprehensive health history, including social history.
    - Evaluate the role of water-soluble vitamins, nonwater-soluble vitamins, and minerals in the body.
- There should be at least three competencies listed for each credit awarded in a course.
- Each competency must map to at least one of the claimed program outcomes.
- The first word in each competency should be a verb (a good list of possible verbs can be found by looking at Bloom's Taxonomy Verb List, Cognitive Domain).
- A period should be used at the end of every competency to identify the competency as a complete thought.
  - Example: Collect dietary intake data.

- The first word of a competency should be capitalized. Only those words that would normally be capitalized should be capitalized in the remainder of the competency.
  - Example:
    - Correct: Identify common sources of food contamination.
    - Incorrect: Identify Common Sources of Food Contamination.

You may wish to use the How to Write Effective Course Competencies provided by AASC as a resource when writing your course competencies.

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