

Modifying Early Evaluation Policy Population DRAFT PROPOSAL

Last Updated: March 31, 2021

I. Executive summary

Based on the changing nature of our undergraduate population and their educational experiences prior to matriculation, the student population included in the current early evaluation policy as mandated by the Bloomington Faculty Council should be amended to solicit early evaluation feedback for all students who are considered 'beginners', i.e. 'First Year Undergraduates'.

II. Overview

Currently, on the Bloomington campus, in the first half of each major term (Fall and Spring), all instructors are required to comply with the following enrollment policy.

Early Evaluation Grades (formerly mid-term), mandated by Bloomington Faculty Council, and amended December 2020. (<https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/policies/bl-aca-h28-instructional-responsibilities/index.html>)

Bloomington Campus Procedures on Early Evaluations

Early assessment and feedback about student progress are valuable to students, faculty, and academic advisors, allowing each to make informed decisions. Early feedback is especially valuable for beginning students, and for those taking classes outside their primary areas of interest. To prompt such feedback, all instructors of courses in which there are freshmen or University Division sophomores enrolled, as well as instructors of all students enrolled in General Education Common Ground courses, shall receive a request for an evaluation of students' academic progress in the fourth week of the regular semester, with a submission deadline of Sunday after the sixth week. The method by which an early letter grade evaluation is determined, and the percentage of the final grade which that evaluation represents (if the evaluation is in the form of a letter grade), are decided by the instructor. The evaluation may consist of observations and recommendations to the student instead of, or in addition to, a letter grade. This evaluation will be accessible to the student and the student's academic advisor.

Recognizing that ongoing evaluation of all undergraduate students is important, the faculty further recommends that all undergraduates receive a written or oral evaluation of their performance in a course as early as compatible with the nature of the course, but not later than after two-thirds of the semester has elapsed.

(Bloomington Campus Procedures on Early Evaluations section approved by Bloomington Faculty Council 12/18/09, 4/29/14, 12/1/20).

III. Proposed Policy Change

Below is the proposed change to the policy and procedures as adopted by the BFC in 2014 (amended in December 2020) ([Faculty Instructional Responsibilities, BL-ACA-H28](#)) regarding early evaluation grades on the Bloomington campus:

Modify Mandatory Student Feedback Criteria to be based on beginning students (the beginning cohort).

Students to be included in the Early Evaluation process would be based solely on *student-based* parameters identifying students as 'beginners' at Indiana University – Bloomington during their first year

of enrollment. (The current criteria use a combination of *student-based* parameters and *course-based* parameters (e.g., enrolled in any General Education course), as set by the IU Bloomington General Education committee). The new criteria for selection are proposed below:

- For fall, students identified by the Office of Enrollment Management as First-Year Undergraduates as of *that fall, summer (summer beginners are considered part of the fall cohort) and spring* would receive feedback in all enrolled courses.
- Feedback would be requested not only for their first major term of enrollment, but for the second. Thus, students first enrolled in the fall would also be evaluated in the spring. Students identified as First Year Undergraduates who begin in the spring term would be evaluated in their first term (spring) as well as the following major term (fall).

IV. Rationale for Policy Change

Target Students Who are New to University Study

Historically, the early evaluation policy's purpose was to provide information to students regarding their academic progress in their beginning years at Indiana University. The original text of this policy referenced 'all Junior Division students', as historically, nearly all students started their university experience in this division rather than the school from which they would graduate.

Over time, this policy was amended to reflect changes to the students' university experience. The verbiage 'Junior Division' was amended to indicate all freshmen, and sophomores in University Division. With the implementation of General Education, students in these courses were added to the population.

In today's environment, students have a wide variety of options to prepare for university study. Students can achieve college credit via several avenues prior to admission to Indiana University, including Dual Credit and Credit by examination such as:

- Advanced Placement - Students can opt to take the Advanced Placement test. If a score of 3 or higher is achieved, students will be awarded IU credit for the equivalent course.
- Special Credit – Students can take departmental exams prior to their first term of enrollment, and be awarded credit within that department as mapped to IU coursework.
- Advanced College Project (ACP) – Students can take courses at their high school, which are designated as part of the ACP curriculum, and those courses will appear on an IU transcript as valid IU coursework.
- Pre-College IU Enrollment – Students take courses at IU prior to graduation from high school.
- Pre-College non-IU Enrollment – Students take courses at other institutions which then transfer into IU as credit-bearing coursework.

Some students now begin their college career with enough credits to bypass the class standing of freshmen (classified as students with 25 or less credit hours.)

First Year Beginner	Fall 2011	Fall 2020	Change	% Change
Freshman	7,167	6,877	(290)	-4.0%
Sophomore	365	999	634	173.7%
Junior	18	93	75	416.7%
Senior	2	2	-	0.0%
Total	7,552	7,971	419	5.5%

**Note, this table is only for those students classified as First Year Undergraduates, by University Institutional Research and Reporting. This is illustrative of the changing class standing over the past ten years; however it is now suggested that Transfer and Intercampus Transfer Students could benefit from Early Evaluations as well. Thus, it is now recommended those two populations be included in the proposed policy change.*

The following table shows what the population would look like if all students who are new to IU Bloomington were included. While these students have already been exposed to higher education, persistence rates are lower than first year beginners, and thus, it would be beneficial to the students for them to receive feedback from their instructors during their first year of attendance at IUB. Historically, many of these transfer students would not be included the current EE population selection.

Fall 2020 Enrollments	Admit Type 4202, 4205, 4208			
Student Level	First Year Undergrad	Inter-campus Transfer	Transfer	Grand Total
Freshman	6,745	39	144	6,928
Sophomore	1,057	126	403	1,586
Junior	98	42	207	347
Senior	1	11	34	46
Grand Total	7,901	218	788	8,907

**In order to capture inter-campus transfer, a different data source was used for this table, thus the difference in numbers for FYU.*

In addition, students are now more likely to be directly admitted to their chosen school rather than begin in University Division. Using the current population selection, these students would still be selected if they had 25 or less hours earned; however, if they had 26 hours or more, they would no longer meet the criteria for sophomores (enrolled in University Division). See below for change in University Division sophomores.

Student Based EE Population	Fall 2011	Fall 2020	Change	% Change
Freshmen	7,766	7,791	25	0.3%
University Division Sophomores	3,058	1,288	(1,770)	-57.9%
Total	10,824	9,079	(1,745)	-16.1%

With the changes to the student experience, the current population definition does not accurately capture all students that are new to the university. As the policy is used to increase retention and student success, it is prudent to try to realign the population with a more accurate reflection of 'beginning' or 'new' student.

When the definition was amended to include all students in General Education courses (100- and 200-level), some of the beginning students missed by the changes above were provided feedback. However, the new criteria included all students enrolled in these courses, even seasoned juniors and seniors. and occasionally even graduate students.

Fall 2020 General Education Courses - Unique Students by Class Level	
Freshman	7,743
Sophomore	7,370
Junior	4,931
Senior	4,063
Masters	23
Doctorate	16
Other	149
Total	24,295

Note: Most freshmen or sophomores in University Division are enrolled in General Education courses. Therefore there is crossover between the student-based and course-based population.

V. Impact of Policy Change on Faculty

For Fall 2020, using the current Early Evaluation populations, the unique counts of students/faculty/grades are as follows:

Early Evaluation Population Counts - Current Population	Total
Unique Students	24,390
Unique Instructors of Record	933
Unique Count of Class Sections	2,678
Average # of Students per Class	27
Number of required EE in Class	71,194

When using the proposed population as a base (now including all First Year Undergraduate, Transfer Undergraduate, and Intercampus Transfer who have started within the last two terms, the counts are as follows:

Early Evaluation Population Counts - Proposed Population (FYU, TRU, ICT)	Total
Unique Students	8,907
Unique Instructors of Record	1,785
Unique Count of Class Sections	2,999
Average # of Students Per Class	15
Number of Required EE in Class	46,715

In the proposed population, the number of students decreases, as does the average number of students in those classes which would require some level of evaluation. The number of total evaluations required also decreases. The number of instructors and sections increases; however, those instructors will deal with smaller populations of students to evaluate.

In this model, *all beginners, including transfers*, will receive consistent feedback across their courses. All of their courses should be represented. All beginners would have valuable feedback, even those students at advanced standing, as they adjust to the university environment.

Coming this fall, a new tool will be available to provide faculty with the beginner population which requires feedback. This tool, called a Progress Report, is a feature of the Student Engagement Roster.

VI. Textual Changes to Existing Policy and Procedures

<https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/policies/bl-aca-h28-instructional-responsibilities/index.html>

Bloomington Campus Procedures on Early Evaluations

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university environment, and to help promote persistence and student success. To prompt such feedback, all instructors of courses in which there are ~~freshmen or University Division sophomores~~ ~~beginning students~~ enrolled, ~~as well as instructors of all students enrolled in General Education Common Ground courses~~, shall receive a request for an evaluation of students' academic progress in the fourth week of the regular semester, with a submission deadline of Sunday after the sixth week. ~~The definition of a beginning student, for this express purpose, is any student who has first attended Indiana University at Bloomington during the relevant semester (for fall, summer is included in this definition), and the major semester immediately following (for fall beginners, they would be evaluated the following spring.)~~ The evaluation may consist of observations and recommendations to the student ~~instead of, or in addition to, a letter grade~~. The method by which an early ~~letter grade~~ evaluation is determined, and the percentage of the final grade which that evaluation represents (if the evaluation is in the form of a letter grade), are decided by the instructor. This evaluation will be accessible to the student and the student's academic advisor.

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