

Proposal for Batch FYS Exemption

Background: As of Fall 2021, all incoming students, or students who transfer in with fewer than 30 credits, are required to complete a first-year seminar (FYS) course while they are still freshman. To avoid adding to total credit requirements, we have implemented this via a “tag” added to specific sections of courses that also meet another gen-ed requirement. Enrollment in FYS offerings is restricted to students with 29 or fewer credits.

Challenges: Insufficient Capacity and Advising/Compliance

We have been slow to add sufficient capacity to accommodate all students who need this requirement; this has been exacerbated by (at least) the following factors:

1. Limited scheduling and modality options and minimal offering coordination – open sections may be offered at times that conflict with other scheduling constraints;
2. Some students have ended up completing multiple FYS courses; and
3. Some degree programs require specific gen-ed courses that are only offered with the FYS tag.

Because we offered FYS courses as a recommended option prior to Fall 2021, it has taken some time to develop universal understanding that it is indeed a requirement now. There were misunderstandings about which courses fulfilled FYS with some people thinking EDUC-U 100 or HON-H 100 counted as FYS (note: as of Fall 2023 Honors Students are now exempted from FYS upon completion of HON-H 100).

Additionally, students may choose to not follow advising recommendations, and we have not had a formal mechanism to ensure compliance within the freshman year.

Current Reality: The following tabulation quantifies the number of First-Year Beginner Undergrad (FYU) admits who have (“>=1 FYS”) and have not (“No FYS”) completed an FYS by entry semester through Spring 2023. FYU admits for Summer and Fall 2023 are not included because there is still time for them to complete an FYS as sophomores. We are especially concerned about students not meeting the FYS requirement who will be moving to junior and senior status in Fall 2024.

	Summer & Fall 2021		Spring 2022		Summer & Fall 2022		Spring 2023		All Semesters	
	N	% Tot	N	% Tot	N	% Tot	N	% Tot	N	% Tot
No FYS	357	50%	48	60%	350	45%	62	57%	817	48%
>= 1 FYS	358	50%	32	40%	436	55%	46	43%	872	52%
Group Total	715		80		786		108		1689	

The total numbers of students missing an FYS may be even higher than shown:

1. All successful FYS completions prior to Spring 2024 (corrected grades of D- or higher) are included in addition to all FYS in Spring 2024 according to census date counts (no grade data yet)
2. Only FYU students are included in the table, but Transfer Student Undergrad (TRU) admits with <30 credits are also required to complete an FYS.

Proposal

We request a batch exemption for all FYU/TRU students with admit term Fall 2021 and forward who will reach junior or senior standing in Fall 2024 without having completed an FYS; the number of affected students will likely exceed 800. Although the Senate General Education Committee typically handles substitution and exemption petitions, we believe that the scope of this problem warrants the attention of the entire Faculty Senate.

Note: this request will be followed with a proposal to modify how we implement and manage FYS to avoid this problem going forward.