



Minimum Class Size Guidelines for Undergraduate Courses

The following guidelines on minimum class size apply to undergraduate courses during the academic year, excluding summer school. The purpose of setting a minimum class size is to ensure curricular effectiveness and at the same time to achieve an efficient use of resources. Minimum class size is intended to serve as a “flag” for the provost’s office, the deans’ offices, and department chairs to review small classes with the intention of either cancelling or consolidating them, or articulating a rationale for their continuation.

A high degree of academic advisement and program planning will be required, with the result that deans and department chairs may elect to offer courses in cycles such as every other semester or possibly every other year. Courses with low enrollments may also encourage faculty to use technology as a pedagogical tool so that blended courses across the campuses become standard.

These guidelines do not apply to summer school, directed readings, laboratories with limited spaces, or music lessons, nor do they imply that minimum class size should become the default and drive enrollment planning. On the contrary, courses that enroll students in numbers higher than the floor are desirable both for educational purposes as well as for fiscal prudence.

Exceptions will be considered for courses needed for graduation or because they are essential to the major, or because they are specialized courses that prepare students for graduate education, with directed studies being the first option explored.

1. Multiple sections of the same course should be combined with caps set according to the norms of each discipline.
2. Rarely should classes run with fewer than 10 students, though ideally the number of students per course should rise to at least 12.
3. On the recommendation of the Dean to the Provost, selected honors courses, language courses, and majors with small numbers of students may still be offered. Where appropriate, they will be offered in a blended fashion across the campuses, as a multi-level course (for example: studio art - intro, intermediate, and advanced students in same class (listed as 3 sections) but with the same faculty member counting the class as one class in load) or other arrangements that maximize the number of students a faculty member engages.

Effective January 2015