

USP WORKGROUP INITIAL DRAFT RECOMMENDATION Q&As (May 2024)

The USP Workgroup was charged in late January 2024 with formulating recommendations for updating the University Studies Program. While there is still much work to be done, the Workgroup presents the following recommendations for consideration by the University community.

Q. What are the USP Workgroup's initial *short-term* recommendations?

A. These initial recommendations are designed to reduce roadblocks for students. In many instances, these are relatively easy to implement and can be done over the next academic year.

Recommendations for Reducing Curriculum Modifications and Bottlenecks

Recommendation 1: Reduce the USP lab science (XL) requirement from two *lab science* courses (8 credits) to two *science* courses, one of which must be a lab science (7-8 credits). This eliminates curriculum modifications for students transferring into UW Oshkosh and brings us into alignment with other Universities of Wisconsin schools.

Recommendation 2: Allow Philosophy 103 (*Thinking Critically*, which is a logic course) to fulfill the USP math (XM) requirement, in addition to Computer Science 131QI. Early math courses can be an insurmountable hurdle for some students, leading to them dropping out or retaking courses multiple times. This recommendation provides a *limited* path for students whose intended major may not require algebra or statistics.

Recommendation 3: Revise Associate's Degree writing requirement to allow WRT 188 or WRT 288. Current Associate's Degree requirements are written to require specifically WRT 188 or equivalent and only that. However, some transfer students bring in a course that is equivalent to WRT 288 without a WRT 188 equivalent, and these students are flagged as having an unmet WRT 188 requirement.

Recommendation 4: Collapse WRT 287 and 288 (both currently titled "Connect: Advanced Writing") into a single course (WRT 288). Change the title to "Second-Year College Writing" and change its prerequisites to "WRT 188 (or equivalent) and 30 credits." The title of WRT 188 is "First-Year College Writing" so this title change makes the sequencing clear to students. This will streamline course offerings and reduce student confusion about which writing courses to take and when.

Recommendations for Increasing Breadth in the Student Experience

Recommendation 5: Convert sustainability from a "Signature Question" to an attribute attached to both lower- and upper-level courses, ensuring our commitment to sustainability throughout the undergraduate curriculum. Students can take as many sustainability courses as they like, but *must* complete at least one.

Recommendation 6: Modify current Culture and Society requirements to three courses from *three different departments* (instead of three courses from two departments, as it is now). This increases student exposure to a variety of disciplines without adding credits to degree.

Recommendations for Updating the Quest Sequence

Recommendation 7: Rebrand "Quest I" as "First-Year Experience" (FYE). This course would draw on our existing expertise in first-year teaching and learning while also leveraging

strengths in Student Affairs. This course would still be taken in a student's first semester and feature disciplinary content that fulfills Explore requirements.

7a. FYE courses would contain more common elements (e.g., a set of common experiences, selected common readings) than they do now to increase coherence across FYE sections for students and for FYE faculty. Greater emphasis would be placed on creating first-year cohorts among students to foster a sense of belonging to UW Oshkosh and to the overall Oshkosh community.

7b. Additionally, in keeping with recommendations from the Academic Planning Workgroup, a community of practice would be created among faculty with expertise in teaching first-year students.

Recommendation 8: Create a “[Second-Year Experience](#)” (SYE) course requirement with three pathways to *experiential learning*: career exploration, community engagement, and/or research experience. SYE courses could be revised Quest II and Quest III courses and would maintain an emphasis on ethical reasoning and disciplinary content. Students would be required to take *one* SYE course but could take multiple SYE courses if they wished. SYE courses could be taken any time in a student's first two years and would fulfill Explore requirements.

8a. The SYE course would serve as the first exposure to *experiential learning* at UW Oshkosh. Many experiences (e.g., internships, student research, simulations in classes, community engagement courses [i.e., current Quest III], etc.) would count as second-level experiential learning and would carry an “Experiential Learning” attribute. Students would take these courses throughout their education at UW Oshkosh, not just in general education courses. This recommendation also allows us to revise and repurpose courses that were already developed for Quest II and Quest III.

Q. Why are these “short-term” recommendations?

A. The USP Workgroup was charged with streamlining the USP and making it more accessible to students (current, prospective, transfer, online, etc.) and their families. These recommendations are the easiest to achieve while still being impactful. While the group is also formulating longer-term recommendations, these will require more discussion in the group and with multiple institution stakeholders over the next academic year.

Q. What kinds of issues will the *longer-term* recommendations address?

A. Groups are working on refining the first-year experience (FYE), rethinking how HIPs work in our general education curriculum, revising breadth and capstone requirements, and devising ways to better close the loop on assessment of general education. These are major changes that require more discussion within the USP Workgroup and the larger campus community, especially after Academic Restructuring.

Q. What happens next?

A. This work will continue into Fall 2024. Any recommendations, should they move forward, must be approved through normal governance channels, which means the USP Faculty Senate Committee, the Academic Policies Committee, and the Faculty Senate.