

Subject Rules Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) University policy discourages the use of subject rules including prerequisites, co-requisites, incompatible subjects and subject quotas except where there is a compelling pedagogic and/or logistic reason.

(2) The purpose of this Policy is to establish provisions for required and banned combinations of subjects and for subjects with quotas and the procedures further explain the provisions for required and banned combinations of subjects and for subjects with quotas.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) Applies to:

- a. All campuses
- b. All higher education coursework programs
- c. All higher education students

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) La Trobe University is committed to promoting steady student progression, encouraging cross-college study, and facilitating movement between courses. Accordingly the University discourages the imposition of subject rules including:

- a. Pre-requisites
- b. Co-requisites
- c. Incompatible subjects
- d. Quotas

(5) Subject rules may be set only where there is a compelling pedagogic reason or, in the case of quotas, logistic reason. Incompatible subjects, for example, are appropriate only where necessary to prevent students from repeating content already passed; equivalent subjects are appropriate where a subject code is replaced by a new subject code.

(6) Subject rules may be waived only in exceptional circumstances, normally where it can be demonstrated that the requirements and/or conditions reflected in the rules have been met.

(7) Prerequisites, co-requisites, incompatible subjects and quotas must be published in the Course Handbook and in relevant subject-specific materials.

Section 4 - Procedure

Only Core Subjects Should Be Prerequisites or Co-requisites

(8) Normally only core or compulsory subjects – not electives – should be Pre-requisites or Co-requisites for other subjects. For generic degrees, subjects contained within approved majors or minors may be considered core for purposes of this section. As far as possible, elective or optional subjects should be unencumbered by rules.

Time Frame for Finalising Rules

(9) All subject rules should be finalised by the end of August for application during the pre-enrolment, re-enrolment and enrolment periods. The rules must remain in effect for the whole of the Academic Year to which they apply.

Examples of Allowable Prerequisite Rules

(10) Prerequisite rules may take any of the following forms:

- a. Requires coordinator's approval.
- b. Must have passed [number of subjects] from [list of subjects].
- c. Must have passed [number of credit points] at [level] from [list of disciplines] or [belonging to a specific teaching department].
- d. Must be enrolled in [course version].
- e. Must have a pass mark of [number] or greater for [name of subject(s)].
- f. If the student is enrolled in [course(s)] then no rule applies. All other students ...

(11) Normally no more than two conditions may apply. Alternatives are allowed; see clause 18 below.

Examples of Allowable Co-requisite Rules

(12) Co-requisite rules may take any of the following forms:

- a. Any [number] Co-requisite subject(s) from [list of subjects].

(13) Normally no more than two conditions may apply. Alternatives are allowed; see clause 18 below.

Examples of Allowable Incompatible Subject Rules

(14) Incompatible subject rules may take any of the following forms:

- a. Must not be enrolled in [course version].
- b. Must not have passed [list of subjects].
- c. Must not be enrolled in [list of subjects].

(15) Normally no more than two conditions may apply.

Examples of Allowable Equivalent Subject Rules

(16) Equivalent subject rules may take the following form:

- a. [new subject code] – subject also coded [old subject code1] [old subject code 2] [old subject code 3]

Conditions that Justify Quotas

(17) A quota may be placed on a subject only where the subject:

- a. is taught by an intensive teaching method that necessarily limits the number of students who can be accommodated;
- b. is based on a clinical or practical placement;
- c. requires the use of specialist teaching space that can accommodate only a certain number of students.

Incompatible and Equivalent Subjects

(18) Colleges may specify subjects which are considered alternatives to each other (Incompatible Subjects, Equivalent Subjects). Only one subject within any set of incompatible subjects or equivalent subjects may be counted towards a student's degree.

(19) Prerequisite and co-requisite rules may specify equivalent subjects as alternatives to the listed subjects.

Failing Prerequisite Precludes Enrolment

(20) La Trobe students who have not yet passed the prerequisite for entry to a La Trobe subject cannot be admitted to that subject unless the rule is expressly waived by the Head of the relevant academic division or the Head's delegate.

Student May Pre-enrol in Subject Before Starting the Prerequisite

(21) Students may pre-enrol in subjects for a future teaching period before they start or complete the prerequisite subjects in the current teaching period. However, they must be enrolled in the prerequisite subject.

Consequences of Failing the Prerequisite

(22) Students who fail a prerequisite for a subject in a subsequent teaching period will have their subsequent enrolment in the subject withdrawn. They may select an alternative subject provided that it satisfies the course requirements for the teaching period.

Co-requisites Normally Must Be Done at the Same Time

(23) If two subjects are co-requisites, students must arrange to do both at the one time. Part-time students for whom this is unduly harsh may seek permission from the college to vary the co-requisite rule.

Consequences of Failing a Co-Requisite

(24) Failure of a co-requisite subject will not invalidate the result for the complementary subject. However, the failed subject or an equivalent must be completed successfully. If a student fails the same subject again at a second attempt, he or she will be judged to be at risk of unsatisfactory academic progress: refer to the [Academic Progress Review Policy](#).

Release of Results Must Be Timely

(25) For semester 1 and 2, results, release dates are published in the Academic Year calendar available from the Student Services Division website. In general, the University must release results as soon as possible after the completion of assessment in any teaching period. Colleges must reasonably comply with this requirement, to facilitate students' progression.

Waiving of Subject Rules

(26) Subject rules may be waived by the Head of the relevant academic division or the Head's delegate. Details of the waiver, including the reasons for it, must be documented and placed on the appropriate student file. Note that rules which are repeatedly waived may lose their status as rules; see clause 27 below.

Subject Rules Should Be Monitored for Continuing Need

(27) Colleges are required to monitor subject rules for continuing need. Where rule waivers account for more than 5% of the enrolments in a subject in a given teaching period, the college must review the rule and amend it in the next academic year. NOTE: This provision does not apply to quotas.

Subject Rules Must Not Be Changed During an Enrolment Period

(28) Where a subject rule is in place at the start of a teaching period, it must remain in place for the duration of that Academic Year. Where a rule change is necessary, it should apply to all affected students, should not disadvantage any student, and should be updated wherever the rule is published. It may be necessary to contact potentially affected students to inform them of the rule change.

Conceded Passes Do Not Satisfy Prerequisites

(29) All conceded passes are terminal passes. They normally cannot be counted as fulfilling a prerequisite for later-year study. Refer to the [Conceded Passes Policy](#).

Advanced Standing May Satisfy Prerequisite

(30) Advanced standing awarded in recognition of study outside the University can satisfy a prerequisite. Prerequisites that have been satisfied should be specified in the recognition of advanced standing. This may require a rule waiver which is not to be counted for purposes of applying clause 27.

Section 5 - Definitions

(31) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Academic Year: the year running from 1 January to 31 December inclusive.
- b. Co-requisite: A condition that must be met in order for a student to enrol concurrently in a designated subject. The condition may relate to enrolment in a course or in another subject.
- c. Equivalent Subjects: The subjects that arise through the creation of a new subject code for an existing subject. Under the Equivalent rule, students who completed a subject when it had the old code will be deemed to have completed the subject with the new code. Equivalent Subjects are also Incompatible with each other.
- d. Generic degree: A degree whose title and purpose reflect a broad area of study rather than a narrow field of specialisation, although diverse specialisations (or majors) may be possible within the degree. Examples include the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business or Bachelor of Science.
- e. Incompatible Subjects: Subjects that cover substantially the same content or that represent a single subject by different names.
- f. Incompatible Subjects: Subjects that cover substantially the same content or that represent a single subject by different codes.
- g. Prerequisite: A condition that a student must meet before the student may enrol in a designated subject. The condition may relate to enrolment in a course or, more usually, in another subject.
- h. Quota: A limit on the number of students who may enrol in a subject, often accompanied by conditions (e.g. preference may go to students enrolled in a particular course).

- i. Subject Rules: rules that govern admission to subjects, either by requiring enrolment or by prohibiting enrolment.
- j. Teaching Period: the time between the beginning of the first teaching session and the end of the last teaching session in any given subject.
- k. Terminal Pass: A pass, represented by the grade NC, that counts towards a qualification but does not satisfy a prerequisite. If subject X is a prerequisite for subject Y, a student who receives a terminal pass for subject X receives the full credit point value of subject X but is not entitled to proceed to subject Y.
- l. Withdrawn: removed from a student's active enrolment.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Heads of School; and College General Managers.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Student Services and Administration.

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