



## Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee

### Response to Charge S-2324

February 26, 2024

#### **Title- Investigate Sunsetting of Academic Credit Across Campuses and Review Any Proposed Changes**

**Description-**Review how course credits earned at Rutgers can be sun downed across all Rutgers campuses, recognizing many students are unable to complete a desired academic degree in the usual time sequence. Report and explain the rationale for any proposed changes and offer possible recommendations concerning changes to policy of earned credit toward graduation, with consideration of potential complexities with respect to professional/graduate studies that are externally accredited.

#### **Background**

Concern has been expressed that some Rutgers students who have stepped-out of their program for either personal, financial, public service, or medical reasons and wish to return their respective schools to complete their degree, have encountered some issues with their transcript evaluation within a period of time wherein the current curriculum may have changed and rendered some courses obsolete, elongating the student's time to graduation. Certain majors like information technology, computer science, and management information systems along with accountancy have a higher rate of curricula updates which render courses outdated within a seven-year period. Other prior completed courses, such as those in mathematics, are rendered problematic not due to course or topic changes but rather students' current cognitive grasp of material especially when it is integral to other courses within the major. When a Rutgers student returns to his/her school, the re-enrollment process is initiated through dedicated webpages for each school.

The general criteria include:<sup>1</sup>

- You must have stepped out for at least one fall or spring academic term (not including summer or winter session. You must have been in good academic standing with your Rutgers school prior to not enrolling.

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<sup>1</sup> Details for specific reenrollment criteria by school can be found at this link-  
<https://www.ugadmissions.rutgers.edu/reenrollment/req.aspx>

- You must have completed a minimum of one fall and/or spring academic term as a matriculated student at Rutgers University. (Not including summer or winter sessions.)
- You must have been in good academic standing with your school prior to not enrolling for at least one (1) semester or more.

ASRAC was charged to explore the current policies on each campus with its respective schools (except RBHS) as to how specific courses are rendered outdated /or expired. ASRAC members (some of whom are in decanal positions handling admissions for their respective schools) discussed their respective school policies and shared their experiences within their own programs. We learned that both Newark and New Brunswick campuses allow for students to retest in their math course if the course exceeds 7 or more years. This can be accomplished through the Accuplacer test or through administering a math course final and achieving a B or better grade. In contrast, Rutgers Business School has its entire business core and major eligibility courses expired between 7-10 years. Rutgers SEBS re-enrolled students who have completed 60 or more-degree credits will follow their original graduation requirements versus the re-enrolled students with fewer than 60-degree credits will complete the SEBS core and major requirements in effect at their re-enrollment.

It was decided to have staff members familiar with these review processes from the Newark and New Brunswick campus schools attend one of our scheduled meetings to outline their policy and rationale for having students repeat specific courses. Since we have representation from RU-SASN, SEBS, and RBS, our February 16, 2024, meeting was augmented by the attendance of Dr. Cristal Harry- RU-SCJ; Dr. Alyssa Sofman, RU-SPAA; and Assistant Dean Milagros Arroyo from RU-NB SAS who each spoke about the relevant policies in their respective schools.

This area has been recognized by senior university officeholders, including recently by Rutgers University-NB Chancellor Francine Conway, who emphasized in her presentation to the full Rutgers University Board of Trustees, the need to further prioritize on-time graduation maximizing flexibility with course requirements and high-impact learning opportunities in a welcoming and equitable environment (public session; 12/07/23).

### **Discussion and Considerations-**

Dean Sofman from RU-N SPAA shared the following about SPAA's policy, "if a student has been out for 7+ years, we would first see if the curriculum has changed. If it had, part of our re-enrollment policy stipulates that we can update them to the new curriculum. We would then determine if any of the courses previously taken fit into the new curriculum and award them the equivalency, but they otherwise must complete what is outstanding."

Dean Cristal Harry RUSCJ expressed similar review of courses exceeding a 7-year period regarding a curriculum change, but cautioned this happens rarely and SCJ is looking to keep students on track for graduation with few delays.

Dean Milagros Arroyo from SAS-NB noted that there was not a policy outdated any courses, with different applications for different types of students seeking reenrollment. The main goal is to get the re-enrolled students to an advisor as quickly as possible with a specific degree course plan and timeline.

In comparison to the general admission pool, the re-enrollment applications are very small (0.25% or less) and do not appear to present an unfair burden to the departments. ASRAC agrees with the current policies on each campus, that final review of student's application for review of the validity of their courses should be placed on department level faculty rather than administrative decisions.

### **Summary and Synthesis**

1. It appears Rutgers University already has well thought out policies and protocols in place for reviewing and assessing outdated student coursework. Rationale provided by the respective schools, were deemed necessary and reasonable for degree completion.
2. However, it is the ASRAC's recommendation that each school should publicize their policy on their website with easy-to-follow directions and instructions to students who stop-out and want to return to complete their degrees so that they have a realistic expectation of completing their degree within a specific timeframe.
3. Simultaneously, publishing the Rutgers' promise for the prioritization of flexibility to achieve on-time graduation and impactful opportunities is key in building on current academic progress to best prepare students.

### **Recommendations- Be it resolved, the University Senate recommends that:**

1. Individual school's websites should be updated, when necessary, with its current policy on this subject and should provide easy-to-follow directions for re-enrollment, and credit evaluation.
2. Individual schools should set up a designated contact person in each school's academic dean's office with email for follow-up and next steps.
3. Sufficient funds should be allocated for website updates and staff personnel involved in this process.
4. Updates should emphasize the University's continuing commitment to non-traditional students and that helping and encouraging these students to complete their degrees remains a high priority.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**ASRAC Committee Chairs**

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