

Common Course Numbers

The Montana University System has migrated to the use of common course numbers in all undergraduate courses for all public institutions in Montana.

What This Means

All public colleges and universities in Montana will use the same subject abbreviations (the letter codes that indicate the course subject), numbers, and titles for courses taught on more than one campus.

- If students transfer to another campus, courses that have undergone the common course numbering with the same prefix and number also taught at the new campus will automatically transfer as equivalent. All other courses will continue to transfer.
- Most current MSU-Northern subject abbreviations and numbers have changed.
- Many course titles have changed as well.
- Some courses changed level (e.g., from the 300-level to the 400-level).
- Course content is the purview of faculty and will NOT be changed as a result of this process.
- During the transition period the course numbers were updated yearly to reflect the changes.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a list of the most commonly asked questions with responses.

How will this affect my transcript?

A: None of the changes will affect how courses you have already taken will appear on your transcript. All courses will appear as they did when you registered for them.

What if I repeat a course and the number has changed?

A: Courses that are renumbered will be treated as equivalent for the purpose of repeats. The original course and grade will remain on your transcript (as has always been the case) but the MOST RECENT attempt will be used in calculating your GPA.

My catalog of record says I must take MATH 112 so will I be OK if I take M 121?

A: Yes! Curricula will be updated online to indicate the new course number, but advising sheets, program sheets printed catalogs prior to Fall 2009 will continue to show the old number. They are interchangeable.

Will my old transfer work change on my transcript?

A: No. This will not impact what is currently posted on your transcript.

How do I find out what the new courses are called in my discipline?

A: Go to the Common Courses Equivalency tool (https://prodmyinfo.montana.edu/pls/hvagent/pk_ws_ccint.P_Dispatch_CCNcw) and select the old course code you want to learn about. For instance, selecting CHEM will show you the new numbers for all of the chemistry courses.

My department used to have only one course code. Why are the courses now called three different things?

A: To create a system that can work across all campuses, we have had to move away from course codes based on departmental names to those based on subjects. So, where a multidisciplinary department may have had all of its courses under one course code, it may now have several because the faculty teach in various subject areas.

Why did perfectly good course codes (e.g., MATH) have to change?

A: In most subjects, there were so many courses being taught across the state using so many different numbers that keeping a popular course code would necessarily have meant renumbering courses to something that was already in use for a different course. Imagine the confusion if MATH 112 were changed to MATH 110 and MATH 110 were changed to MATH 116, etc. The same course number could end up meaning different things.