

Preparing a Core Appeal

All student appeals of core curriculum requirements will be reviewed by faculty from the core area under consideration and by a representative from the student's college. This document is intended to provide guidance about the main factors that will be considered.

Along with the cover sheet, please provide a letter addressing the basis for your appeal. The letter should be addressed to the members of CERC (Core Equivalency Review Committee). Before submitting your proposal to the Registrar's Office, please meet with the assistant or associate dean of your college to discuss your situation and the merits of your petition.

CERC can grant one of two types of exceptions: a substitution or a waiver.

Substitution

A substitution is granted when the board is persuaded that a *transfer course*, originally evaluated as not counting toward the core, should be transferred to MSU as a core course in a particular category. When granted, the transfer equivalency guide will be changed to reflect the board's decision such the course will be automatically included in the core for subsequent students from that institution. To assist the board, please provide as much information as possible. This should include the course catalog description, an explanation of how the course fits into the general education at its' home institution (if appropriate), and a course syllabus (if possible), which is often available on-line or can be sent by the current instructor. In addition, please address briefly why you believe that the course addresses the core learning outcomes found at www.montana.edu/core2/overview.html.

Please note that the board will not consider MSU courses for substitution. If you believe that an MSU course should be included in our core, consider speaking with the instructor or department head about this. Courses are included in the core only when the application is initiated by faculty.

Waiver

A waiver is a decision by the board that there are special circumstances making it appropriate for you to be deemed to have satisfied a specific core requirement without completing the course requirements. This decision applies to you alone, and will not extend to other students. Although the board will consider all applications, most will fit into one of the following categories:

1. Learning Disability – The board recognizes that certain learning disabilities can prevent students from being able to satisfy MSU's requirements in specific areas. Petitions of this type must be initiated at the Office of Disability, Re-Entry, and Veterans Services, which is located on the ground level of the Strand Union.
2. Advanced Coursework – Some students complete advanced MSU courses without completing the pre-requisite courses (often in the core). These courses do not automatically satisfy the core requirements because often they are focused on a narrow range of topics rather than dealing with broader issues of how knowledge is created in the discipline. Your application should include specific information about how the course you took addressed the specific learning outcomes for the core area being sought. In addition, please describe any other experience or training that you have had that prepared you for this more advanced course. The board will also consider letters of support from the faculty who taught the course.
3. Non-Course Experience – If you have significant training (e.g. music training) that you believe has provided an education that meets or exceeds the learning outcomes for the core area, please describe these and provide as much documentation as possible. If a member of the faculty is familiar with your work in the area, a letter of support would be very helpful.

Please note that MSU's Diversity category has specific learning outcomes that are not necessarily met simply by living in a foreign country. If you are requesting a waiver based on an international experience, be sure to describe carefully how your experience address the specific learning outcomes for Diversity courses listed at the website.

If you have any questions, please contact Dagny Mest in the Registrar's Office (994-5089; dmest@montana.edu) or Jeff Adams in the Office of the Provost (994-4371; jadams@montana.edu).