# School of Public Health and Information Sciences

## Policy/Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: Policy on Course Sections</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Peter L. Walton, M.D., Associate Dean</td>
<td>Effective Date: 08/26/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage: All courses offered by the school.</td>
<td>Revision: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Purpose:
To establish consistent sections for a course, including one-to-one courses and online courses taken by local students.

### Policy:
1) Each section of a course is required to be consistent, to the extent practicable, with every other section of the course with regard to objectives, content, operations, and student evaluation.
2) A one-to-one course is required to have one section per student and one student per section whenever the course is taught. A faculty member may direct more than one section.
3) A course that is offered online and taken by local students who are enrolled in one of the school’s academic programs is required to have at least one section for local students each time the course is offered. The fees for the section or sections for local students are the same as for courses given in physical classrooms. The course director, at his or her discretion, may choose to combine local and distance student sections and deliver a single online course.
4) A course that is not a one-to-one course may be divided into multiple sections based on the number of students, provided that the policy for online courses for local students stated in (3), above, is observed.

### Terminology:
For the purposes of this policy, the following terminology is used:
- A section of a course, or course section, is an instance of the course given during the same semester or term as other instances of the course and whose enrolled students are in no other section of the course. A section of a course may differ from other sections of the course in other ways, such as different class times, class locations, instructor, tuition, or method of delivery.
- A one-to-one course is a course that has no group activities for all students enrolled in the course and in which each student is dealt with individually and separately from any other student in the class by a single faculty member for the most part.
- Local students are those students whose geographical location relative to the school is such that it is reasonable for them to physically attend a course given in an actual classroom.

### Procedure:
1) For a course with more than one section:
   a. The syllabus used in one section is identical to the syllabus used in every other section with regard to objectives, content, and student evaluation and is equivalent with regard to operations.
   b. In one-to-one courses, each section (student) may have details in a syllabus addendum or other document that are specific to the section (student) with regard to objectives, content, and student evaluation; however, the overall intent of the course is reflected in each section and its syllabus.
   c. Each section has a section director, who is responsible for the section. A faculty member may direct more than one section.
   d. The course director, who may or may not direct one or more sections, is responsible for the course, its sections, and the section directors’ compliance with this policy.
2) The home department for a one-to-one course sends a request to student services to schedule the course (see “Policy for Scheduling and Rescheduling of Courses”) that includes each section director in the course and the number of sections he or she is directing. The total number of sections is equal to the anticipated number of students. Student services sets up the stated number of sections for each listed faculty member; each section has a limit of one student. The home department is responsible for making sure students register for the appropriate section. Student services also consults with the appropriate department and program to set up sections that were not listed as anticipated.
3) Upon receipt of a request to schedule a course (see “Policy for Scheduling and Rescheduling of Courses”) that is considered an online course, student services automatically sets up a
section for local students and notifies the home department, course director, and the director of the school-based academic program, if applicable, of the action. Student services, in consultation with department and program personnel as needed, works with students to make sure they enroll in the appropriate section.

4) For a course that is to be sectioned based on number of students and is not a one-to-one course, the home department sends a request to student services that states the number of sections for the course and the student limit in each section. Student services reviews the request with the associate dean responsible for academic affairs, who consults with the home department as needed. Student services sets up the sections and their enrollment limits. In the event the course is sectioned after some students have registered for it, the home department is responsible for making sure students register for the appropriate section, working with student services as needed.

Examples:

2) Examples of one-to-one courses requiring a section for each student:
   - MPH practicum experience courses
   - Dissertation and thesis research courses
   - Independent study courses

3) Examples of courses that require sections for local students:
   - PHEP-601 Introduction to Epidemiology
   - PHST-600 Introduction to Biostatistics I
   - PHPB-601 Introduction to Health Behavior

Discussion:

1) The university and various accrediting bodies require that sections of a course be equivalent without clearly defining what constitutes equivalency. The procedures established in this policy provide an added level of definition.

2) Sections with one student and one faculty member are set up for one-to-one courses to document faculty teaching work effort as accurately as possible. Without separate sections it is difficult if not impossible to identify which faculty taught which students. In addition, such sections for one-to-one courses are essential for assigning proper credit for teaching work effort to departments.

3) Sections for local students are set up for online courses to address the ethical problem of charging local students the premium for online courses. This approach has the support of the provost’s office.

4) Sectioning a course with a large number of students is a judgment by the course director and department chair (and/or perhaps program director) that also takes into account available resources, available instructors, and other factors. Because sectioning of courses has potential effects on how teaching revenue to the school is allocated to individual departments, the dean’s office reviews sectioning requests to understand these potential effects.

See also: Policy for Scheduling and Rescheduling of Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>08/26/08</td>
<td>Peter L. Walton, M.D.</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>