

To: Faculty Senate  
From: Academic Requirements Committee  
Date: January 3, 2018

The ARC propose that WOU change the graduation requirements for undergraduates as follows:

Current catalog: Complete a minimum of 180 credits, including at least 62 upper division credits.

Proposed revision: Complete a minimum of 180 credits, including at least 60 upper division credits. The 60 upper division credits will not be waived as a graduation requirement.

Rationale for this proposed change is as follows:

1. Faculty have had multiple advisees who needed to take an extra upper division course simply to meet the 62 upper division (UD) credit graduation requirement; i.e., all of their other degree requirements were fulfilled—they had completed over 180 credits of course work, the requirements for a major, and the requirements for a minor. The ARC reasons that a student who completes our major, minor, and general education requirements should not also need to take an extra course to meet our UD requirement. Evidence that other colleges and universities share this perspective is that, as described in more detail below, it is not uncommon for colleges and universities to not have an explicit UD credit requirement. At those institutions, students need to meet the general education and major degree requirements, regardless of the number of UD credits contained in the major and gen ed. By lowering the minimum UD credit requirement from 62 to 60 credits, we would reduce an obstacle for students.
2. After reviewing graduation requirements at our peer institutions (as listed on the WOU website), the Oregon public undergraduate institutions, and several Oregon private liberal arts colleges. Of the 19 institutions reviewed, 7 do not stipulate a specific number of upper division (UD) credits needed to graduate. Of the remaining 12 institutions, the average number of UD credits required for graduation is 60. Changing our UD credit requirement to a minimum of 60 would bring our curriculum in line with most of our peer and local institutions, without impacting degree offerings. The institutions and UD credits are listed below.
3. All of our course offerings are 3-, 4-, or 5-credits. 60 UD credits constitutes 20 3-credit courses, 15 4-credit courses, or 12 5-credit courses. A minimum requirement of 60 UD credits makes more sense with our typical course offerings than does a minimum 62 UD credit requirement.

University	Category	Location	Total Credits <sup>1</sup>	Upper Division <sup>1</sup>
Cal State-Stanislaus	Peer	CA	180	60
Eastern Oregon	Oregon public	OR	180	60
Eastern Washington	Peer	WA	180	60
Fort Hays State	Peer	KS	186	67.5
Lewis & Clark	Oregon Liberal Arts	OR	192	none
OIT	Oregon public	OR	180	60
Oregon	Oregon public	OR	180	62
Oregon State	Oregon public	OR	180	60
Plymouth State	Peer	NH	180	none
Portland State	Oregon public	OR	180	72
Reed	Oregon Liberal Arts	OR	180 <sup>2</sup>	none
Southeast Missouri State	Peer	MO	180	none
Southern Oregon	Oregon public	OR	180	60
Southern Utah	Peer	UT	180	60
SUNY Fredonia	Peer	NY	180	none
University of Mary Washington	Peer	VA	180	none
University of Michigan-Flint	Peer	MI	186	49.5
Willamette	Oregon Liberal Arts	OR	186	none
Wisconsin-Parkside	Peer	WI	180	54
Mean			182	60
Median			180	60
Mode			180	60

<sup>1</sup>For institutions using a semester system, credit hours were adjusted by multiplying the credit number by 1.5.

<sup>2</sup>Reed requires "30 units", with individual courses counting as 1 unit. I estimated 1 unit as a credit class based on their Biology curriculum. Reed's total credit were not used to calculate the averages.