McCausland College of Arts and Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

POLICY: Course Enrollment Management – Graduate Level Courses

DATE: July 20, 2026 (Revised)

I. POLICY

The McCausland College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office and the faculty members and instructional staff in College units share a commitment to providing the highest quality education to our students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The College and all departments and academic programs have a shared interest in ensuring that teaching resources are allocated and used responsibly. To effectively serve our students and meet our financial obligations, the College and departments must work together to manage the curriculum and maintain fiscal responsibility. Accordingly, it is imperative that all units make optimal use of the teaching capacity of their faculty members and instructional staff.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an institutional framework for departments and academic programs in the McCausland College of Arts and Sciences in graduate level course enrollment management.

This policy applies to all units within the McCausland College of Arts and Sciences. The College policy is subordinate to related policies outlined in the University of South Carolina Faculty Manual. In cases of inconsistencies between this policy and the university, state, or federal policies, the university, state, or federal policy rules are the final authority.

II. GRADUATE LEVEL COURSE ENROLLMENT MINIMUM STANDARDS

Course enrollment minimum standards in the College are established by the Office of the Dean. All College courses taught as part of a faculty member's teaching load must meet the minimum standards specified below unless approved for a Low Enrollment Waiver as outlined in this policy. Courses which do not meet the terms of this policy must be cancelled or offered as individualized instruction.

Low enrollment waivers and all compensation adjustments must be approved in advance by the Office of the Dean (See **Section IV**).

Departments are expected to monitor course enrollment throughout the registration period and coordinate with the Office of the Dean as needed.

The following standards apply to all courses at the 700 level or above. They also apply to

"meets with" courses when one or more of the courses are at the 700 level or above.

A. Fall and Spring Courses

The minimum enrollment standard for all graduate level courses taught during the fall and spring except as listed in section II.D below is 6 (six) students per section, with an opportunity for limited pre-approvals for low enrollment outlined in section II.E. below.

B. Winter and Summer Sessions Courses

Minimum enrollment standards for all graduate level courses taught during the Winter and Summer sessions except as listed in section II.D below is 6 (six) students per section.

Compensation for approved low enrolled courses taught during the summer and winter sessions by TFAC or by FTE faculty teaching outside of the normal faculty teaching load will be adjusted according to the following scale:

Course Level	100% compensation	75% compensation	50% compensation
700 and above	6 or more	5	4

C. Team Teaching

1. Team taught courses must enroll enough students to meet minimum enrollment requirements for **all** instructors of record. For example, during the fall and spring semesters the enrollment standard for a course with **two instructors of record** would be 12 students per section.

2. Team taught classes that do not meet minimum enrollment standards for both instructors of record must be changed to single-instructor courses or instructors must teach the course as an uncompensated overload.

D. Exceptions

1. Enrollment maximum set by **external program accreditation** – the College will approve courses that reach at least 80% of the enrollment maximum. Programs must provide documentation to the College regarding the accreditation standard.

2. **Required practicum courses** (e.g., teacher certification programs) – the College will approve courses with a minimum of 4 students. Programs must provide documentation to the College regarding the practicum requirement. For practicum courses that do not meet the minimum of 4 students departments may request approval to offer the course as compensated overload.

3. Practice-oriented degrees whose accreditation standards include **required**

public performances – courses that are directly related to required public performances are exempt from the low-enrollment policy. Programs must provide documentation to the College regarding the accreditation standard and associated courses.

E. Limited Pre-Approvals for Low Enrollment

The following provisions extend additional autonomy to departments as they respond to critical needs in program progression, support the development of new courses, and create meaningful opportunities for entering graduate students to coalesce in cohorts.

It is expected that departments will use these pre-approvals to strengthen graduate programs. In determining their use, departments are expected to exercise good judgement and give due consideration to issues of equity in faculty workload, efficiency of program design, historical enrollment patterns and the appropriate frequency of course offerings.

1. In addition to the exceptions listed in section II.D., each department may, at its discretion, identify one course each fall and spring semester to offer below the established enrollment minimum. It is the responsibility of the department to notify the College which course, if any, they are electing to offer below standard enrollment.

2. Units with small graduate programs may, at their discretion, select a second course each fall and spring semester to offer below the established enrollment minimum. It is the responsibility of the department to notify the College which additional course, if any, they are electing to offer below standard enrollment.

   Small graduate programs are defined as programs in which the average cohort size over the preceding three years is fewer than 6 (six) students.

   For the purposes of this calculation a cohort will be determined at the department level and include all graduate students seeking a terminal degree and entering the department in the fall term.

Including authorizations under both clause one and clause two, the maximum number of pre-approved low enrolled courses awarded under this section is two per semester per department.

F. Exclusions

The following types of courses are normally taught as individual student instruction or supervision and not included as part of faculty load. As such they are excluded from the low enrollment policy:

- Independent study

- Directed research
- Thesis preparation
- Dissertation preparation
- Internship supervision, except in cases where coordination of an internship program has been approved in writing by the College as acceptable faculty load. In those instances, College approval will include a statement regarding enrollment standards for the course.

III. COURSE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

For management procedures please refer to the Course Enrollment Management section of the College's policy on Faculty Workload and Course Enrollment Management.

IV. WAIVERS

A. Low Enrollment Waivers

Outside of the exceptions, pre-approvals, and exclusions listed above low enrollment waivers will be granted only under extreme circumstances, evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All departments must take appropriate steps to minimize the need to offer low enrolled graduate courses. This includes regular review of program requirements, tracking of registration and enrollment patterns, optimizing the frequency of course offerings, and seeking opportunities to collaborate with other programs.

Departments must equitably manage faculty workload, considering both the frequency with which low enrolled courses count towards a faculty member's teaching load and the frequency with which a faculty member teaches low enrolled courses outside of load. In instances where a course is at risk of not meeting enrollment criteria, departments must anticipate the possibility and identify an alternative teaching assignment to ensure that the faculty member meets their teaching load requirement.

B. Documentation, Waiver, Cancellation, or Reduced Compensation Request Procedures

1. Units may submit required documentation for exceptions and pre-approvals or request approval for a Low Enrollment Waiver, a course cancellation, or reduced compensation via an email to Karen Thompson in the Office of the Dean.

2. The emailed request must include the name and number/section of the course, instructor of record, and a brief justification. The request must copy the unit chair or director.

V. RELATED POLICIES

University Policy ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses
CAS Policy: Faculty Salary Savings (August 2025)
CAS Policy: Faculty Course Buyouts (July 2026)
CAS Policy: Faculty-Led Education Abroad
Faculty Workload and Course Enrollment Management
Instructional Compensation Guide