

Quarter to Semester Curriculum Conversion Guide

<http://oaa.osu.edu/semesterconversion.html>



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Introduction

The University System of Ohio's Strategic Plan for Higher Education encourages all universities and colleges to move to a common semester academic calendar in order to support an integrated system of higher education in Ohio. On June 11, 2009, The Ohio State University Senate formally approved a recommendation to move the institution from a quarter to a semester calendar. The calendar approved by the University Senate was to begin no earlier than autumn 2012 and will include a four-week May term. See the appendix for the 2012-2013 calendar.

The new calendar embodies President Gee's goal to "put students first." It will allow graduating students to be more competitive in the job market by having an earlier graduation date. The May term will offer faculty and students a new format for creating and delivering innovative courses and educational experiences, such as international study, internships, and service learning. Importantly, the conversion provides a valuable opportunity for faculty to re-envision and design, from the beginning, a curriculum that best serves student needs and goals.

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to communicate the principles and requirements necessary for converting courses and programs from a quarter to a semester calendar. The guide contains information about basic parameters that will be used in the new calendar and the steps each unit will need to follow to have its programs ready for an autumn 2012 delivery. This guide contains a timeline for submission of program and course proposals to the Office of Academic Affairs. Streamlined templates for submitting these proposals have been developed and can be found on the webpage for Semester Conversion Documents: <http://oaa.osu.edu/SemesterConversionDocuments.php>.

Questions and Updates

Each department/unit has a designated semester faculty point person. In addition, the college curricular associate deans are taking a major role in leading the curriculum change and will be in close communication with their respective department/unit faculty point person. Questions about the process and ongoing status of the semester conversion should be directed to the appropriate department point person and/or curricular associate dean. See the appendix for contact information. An electronic version of the guide may be found at: http://oaa.osu.edu/conversion_documents.html. Approved changes to the guide will be posted there on a regular basis.

Principles

The following are the guiding principles for the calendar conversion as articulated in the report of the University Senate's 2008-09 Ad Hoc Committee on Semesters chaired by Timothy Gerber, Professor of Music. The principles focus on both the product, i.e., a newly adopted semester calendar, and the process for implementing the transition.

The Product. A successful conversion from quarters to semesters will yield the following results:

1. A semester calendar will protect and enhance the intellectual mission and content of all academic programs.
2. The commitment to a strong general education component in all undergraduate majors will be preserved.
3. The distribution of courses by credit hour will be justifiable as judged by the impact on faculty workload and on student progress toward a degree.

4. The total amount of instruction needed to meet degree and accreditation requirements offered in any major or minor program will be approximately the same in a semester calendar as in a quarter calendar.
5. The beneficial relationship among programs will be maintained and enhanced, particularly in the service of one program area to another and especially in inter-departmental and interdisciplinary course offerings.
6. A semester-based calendar will not require substantially greater financial resources when implemented than its quarter-based predecessor.
7. A semester-based calendar will be justifiable in terms of space requirements for classrooms, laboratories, offices, and other university resources.
8. A semester-based calendar will not alter faculty allocations of time devoted to teaching, research, and service.
9. A semester-based calendar will enable substantial flexibility in stimulating and accommodating innovative approaches to course length and scheduling.
10. A semester-based calendar will facilitate opportunities for specialized programs, internships, international study, research initiatives, and service learning projects.

The Process. A successful conversion from quarters to semesters will ensure consideration of the following concerns:

1. The conversion of academic programs should be carefully coordinated to preserve the integrity of programs, especially those with an interdisciplinary focus and involving the intellectual resources of more than one department.
2. The impact of the conversion to semesters on students should not disrupt the academic progress toward degrees. Transition issues should be anticipated and planned for as a part of the process so that students are not asked to attend the University any longer than if we had stayed on a quarter system.
3. Provisions should be made to minimize complications created in the transition year by providing for additional and intensive student advising that accommodates the transition with a liberal treatment of exceptions, course substitutions, and other requirements.
4. Non-instructional staff will not be expected to increase their workload or time commitments during the transition process.
5. It is recommended that each department select an individual who will be compensated to serve as the coordinator for the redesign of courses, majors, minors and related programs.
6. Special attention should be given to concerns of regional campus faculty.

Pledge to Students

In planning and implementing its conversion from quarters to semesters for summer 2012, The Ohio State University is committed to protecting the academic progress of students.

How Ohio State Will Protect Students' Academic Progress:

1. Students completing a quarter-plus-semester degree program will receive approximately the same amount of instruction as under a quarter calendar.
2. Full-time tuition (general and instructional fees) for an academic year under semesters will not cost more than tuition for that same year would have cost under quarters.

3. The change should not adversely affect students' financial aid.
4. Academic units will continue to provide intentional, purposeful advising.
5. Good planning around a student's major will be particularly important, and the university will provide that support to students who begin their academic career under quarters and complete it under semesters.

The Importance of Advising:

Students will vary considerably in their academic progress, and each student's plan for completing degree requirements will need to be determined individually. This means that students and their advisors must work together to develop effective plans leading to timely graduation as the university converts to semesters. Academic advisors will understand how the changes in courses and curricula may affect students' degree programs, will know where and how programs can be flexible, and will be prepared to assist students in planning their remaining time to graduation.

What Students Must Do to Protect Their Academic Progress:

1. decide on their major and degree within a time compatible with four-year graduation;
2. meet the standards for progress defined by their academic unit and continue to complete appropriate course loads successfully; and
3. actively develop and follow academic plans in consultation with their academic advisors.

Organizational Structure

Established governance groups will continue to exercise decision-making authority concerning the semester conversion in accordance with university governance processes, faculty rules, and normal operating procedures. In addition, an Executive Coordinating Committee has been established to identify and resolve issues concerning the semester conversion. The committee is co-convened by Vice Provost for Academic Programs W. Randy Smith and Provost Faculty Fellow Steven Fink, Department of English. The Executive Coordinating Committee includes faculty, students, and representatives from key academic support offices, regional campuses, and partner campuses. Several subcommittees have been established to resolve more specific issues: Curriculum, Graduate Education, Advising, Information Technology, Space, Communications, and Core Business Processes.

The Provost has also created a Task Force to examine Nine-Month Faculty Appointments and to recommend a university framework for faculty workload.

Curriculum Subcommittee

The Curriculum Subcommittee is being co-convened by Provost Faculty Fellow Ann Christy, Department of Food, Agricultural, and Biological Engineering, and Terry Gustafson, Executive Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences. The committee includes the associate curricular deans from all colleges, regional campuses, and The Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute.

Graduate Education Subcommittee

The Graduate Subcommittee is being co-convened by Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Elliot Slotnick, and Professor Robert Perry, Department of Physics. The subcommittee is working closely with

the Graduate Council and the Council of Graduate Students to address graduate programs and student issues related to the calendar conversion.

General Education

The standing University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum, a subcommittee of the Council on Academic Affairs, has been charged with making recommendations for adapting and revising general education requirements for the semester calendar. Recommendations will go forward through the standard faculty approval process. For meeting details see http://oaa.osu.edu/caa_advisorycommittee.html .

Questions concerning ongoing issues should be addressed to the appropriate subcommittee. The most recent version of contacts for committees associated with the quarter to semester conversion can be found at <http://oaa.osu.edu/semester-conversion-committees.html>.

Parameters

Operating Assumptions

- A conversion from quarters to semesters generally results in a 3 to 2 conversion ratio for curricular change.
- Reduction in the number of courses offered is encouraged.
- Courses and sections offered over an academic year must be sufficient to satisfy anticipated student demand so that student graduation is not delayed.
- Parameters and assumptions apply to all campuses.
- Courses that are part of an Ohio Transfer Module or Transfer Assurance Guide must be converted in such a way that they continue to meet the requirements set by the Ohio Board of Regents for those programs.

Programs

As of April 2009, The Ohio State University offers 28 associate degrees, 146 undergraduate minors, 176 undergraduate majors, 130 masters, 103 doctoral and 7 professional degree programs in 18 colleges. With the exception of the College of Law, which is currently on semesters, all will need to be converted including an estimated 12,000 courses that comprise the degree programs.

Degree/Programs Credit Hour Minimum	Quarters	Semesters
Bachelor's	181	120
Master's	45	30*
PhD	120	80*
Associate's Degree	90	60

**Pending recommendation by the Graduate Education Subcommittee*

Courses

Course Numbering System

- A four-digit taxonomy for course numbers was recommended by the Council on Academic Affairs on August 25, 2009.
- The Office of the University Registrar will be developing proposals about common definitions of the new numbering system.

Credit Hours

- One semester credit hour will be awarded for a minimum of **750 minutes of formalized instruction** that typically requires students to work at **out-of-class assignments** an average of twice the amount of time as the amount of formalized instruction (**1,500 minutes**)
- Operating assumptions will remain the same for assigning credit hours for lecture, practical or experimental work, and laboratory work per University Rule 3335-8-24
- Typical Credit Hour Quarter-to-Semester 3-to-2 Equivalence:
 - 6 quarter credit hours → 4 semester hours
 - 4 or 5 quarter credit hours → 3 semester hours
 - 3 quarter credit hours → 2 semester hours
- Half-credit hours are under consideration

Daily Class Schedule

The University Registrar is reviewing alternative models that balance flexibility with space availability. The schedule currently under consideration includes:

- 55 minute class periods
 - Monday-Wednesday-Friday is expected to be the dominant pattern for three credit-hour courses
 - Four-day and five-day per week scheduling options will be available
- 80 minute class periods
 - Tuesday-Thursday
 - Wednesday-Friday
- Longer single-day class periods (110 minutes and 165 minutes) will be available on Mondays
- 15 minute between-class periods
- Classes may be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 9:55 p.m.
- The University Registrar will consider requests for deviations from the basic class schedule design based on classroom space availability.

A graphic representation of the proposed daily class schedule can be found at http://oaa.osu.edu/assets/files/documents/Semester_Schedule_Final%20with%20dialogue.pdf.

Semester Calendar Structure

The academic year will be comprised of four terms.

Term	Weeks of Instruction	Reading Days	Finals (exam days)
Autumn Semester	14	1	5
Spring Semester	14	1	5
May Term	4	0	to be determined
Summer Term	7	0	3

Units are encouraged to think creatively about flexible use of the semester system to optimize student learning. This may include developing 7-week courses within the autumn and spring semesters and 4-week May term courses. In general, the expectation is that courses required for graduation should not be offered solely in the May term. The dates for academic year 2012-13 can be found in the appendix.

Summer 2012

This term will be compressed, since spring quarter will not end until early June and the autumn semester will begin August 22. Classes will begin June 18 and the last day of regularly-scheduled classes will be August 3. Final examinations will be from August 6-8, with summer commencement on August 12.

Curriculum Redesign

The Ohio State University continues to grow in stature as a research institution with talented faculty and students. In concert with its research recognition, the calendar conversion is an exceptional occasion to rethink and redesign the curriculum to enhance the excellence of the institution's educational programs for the 21st century and for the success of Ohio State students. Faculty are encouraged to explore best practices within their field and to consider the following steps in the curriculum redesign process.

Approaches and Practices

Integrated planning and curricular mapping

- Begin planning holistically, considering the range and quantity of courses to be offered under semesters.
- Align course-level student learning goals with program goals to identify gaps and unwanted overlaps.
- Be intentional about content repetition and/or sequential learning expectations.

An evidence-based approach

- Use existing program goals, student performance information, program review findings, and other relevant data to inform decisions in planning the converted program.
- Build in feedback mechanisms for reviewing and updating the converted program.

Accreditation and emerging practices

- Ensure converted programs meet current disciplinary and/or accreditation standards and requirements.
- Consider how to incorporate leading-edge information and state-of-the-art delivery practices.

Coordination and communication

- Communicate with all units that offer courses required by your program.
- Have conversations within the unit so all participating faculty agree on course learning goals to make sure multiple sections of offerings support comparable student learning.
- Include expected learning goals on syllabi to make certain the goals are transparent to students and all involved in the educational environment.
- Consider ways to broaden interdisciplinary linkages.

Resources and Contacts

The University Center for the Advancement of Teaching is available to assist colleges, departments, programs, and individual faculty members in redesigning their curricula by helping them clarify desired learning goals, curricular organization, and course structure and content. Director Alan Kalish (kalish.3@osu.edu) and his staff are eager to provide assistance at all levels of the curriculum conversion process. For more information see <http://ucat.osu.edu>.

Review Process for Program/ Course Conversion Proposals

Steps in the review process for program and course proposal approvals will not change. Program and course proposals will be initiated by the department / unit, approved by the college, approved by the Curriculum Committee of the Graduate Council if applicable, and forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs. Program proposals will then be reviewed/approved by the Council on Academic Affairs and courses by the Office of Academic Affairs. Streamlined templates have been developed which replace the requirements listed in the Office of Academic Affairs' Academic Organization and Curriculum Handbook. The current version of the templates can be found at http://oaa.osu.edu/conversion_documents.html.

Transition Planning

All academic units must develop transition plans that specify how students who began under quarters will graduate under semesters. See the program conversion template. The Advising Subcommittee will develop guidelines for individual student advising plans.

Timeline for Proposal Submissions by College

To facilitate the conversion process, proposals will need to be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs in a staggered fashion across the health sciences, professional, and arts and sciences college clusters. See the table below. Units should allow sufficient time for college curriculum committees to review and approve all proposals and, when required, the Curriculum Committee of the Graduate Council.

All courses and programs will be approved through the [Course and Program Entry and Approval System](#).

College or Division	Expected Submission to the Office of Academic Affairs
Engineering	Spring 2010
Dentistry	Summer 2010
Medicine	
Optometry	
Pharmacy – I	
Arts & Sciences – I	Autumn 2010
Business	
Education and Human Ecology	
Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences	
Public Health	
Veterinary Medicine	
Arts & Sciences – II	Winter 2011
Nursing	
Pharmacy – II	
Social Work	
Law	Not applicable

Timeline for Quarter to Semester Conversion

Date	Event
SU 2011	All proposals approved
AU 2011	All information submitted to the University Registrar for allocating classroom space and posting courses to master schedule
SP 2012	Semester courses for Autumn 2012 available for student registration
SU 2012	Shortened term
AU 2012	Conversion implemented

Quarter to Semester Transition Communications

A website has been created to post semester conversion documents and key decisions at <http://oaa.osu.edu/semesterconversion.html>.

In addition, a monthly e-newsletter, QSU ([Quarter to Semester Update](#)), is being widely distributed to students, staff, and faculty during the transition.

Comments and questions related to the website and newsletter can be directed to Jay Johnson, Assistant Provost and Associate Director of Institutional Research (Johnson.1043@osu.edu).

Appendices

- The academic calendar can be found at: <http://registrar.osu.edu/staff/bigcalsem.asp>.
- The most recent version of contacts for committees associated with the quarter to semester conversion can be found at <http://oaa.osu.edu/semester-conversion-committees.html>.

Version Guide

Version Number	Date	Changes made
1.0	1/14/10	Initial release
1.1	1/27/10	Replaced the list of contacts with a link to the web page with the most recent version of each committee's membership
1.2	4/4/12	Updated the definition of the semester credit hour to include the requisite 1,500 minutes of out-of-class assignments.