



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

First Year Seminar Exemption/Exception Policy

Policy Number 7-02

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Endorsed by the University Senate on 4/11/24

Issued by President Bashar W. Hanna as Policy 7-02 on 5/31/24

Responsible Office: First Year Experience

1. Purpose

New undergraduate students matriculating at Commonwealth University beginning in the fall 2023 semester are required to complete a First-Year Seminar (FYS) as part of the General Education Curriculum. FYS 100 promotes the retention of first year students by introducing them to skills in support of their academic success, encouraging them to engage with the wider university community outside of the classroom, helping them foster their personal development and wellness, and promoting a greater understanding of diversity and social responsibility. These courses pair this core curriculum with a topic that reflects the instructor's pedagogical or personal interests.

2. Scope

First-year students, potential transfer students, advisors, instructors, the FYS Coordinating body.

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1. **FYS:** First Year Seminar

3.2. Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1. Division of Student Success and Campus Life: Executive Director of First-Year Experience; Chair of Commonwealth University Senate First-Year Experience Subcommittee (currently both roles occupied by Dr. Rebecca Willoughby)

4. Policy

4.1 Student Exemptions from First-Year Seminar

- 4.1.1. The exemption policy applies to any student who, before enrolling at CU, has completed one semester as a full-time, degree-seeking student with at least 12 credits. These stipulations indicate that all transfer students meeting this criteria qualify for an automatic exemption with no submitted paperwork. Additionally, students adhering to legacy general education requirement curriculum are not required to complete FYS 100.
- 4.1.1.1 This supports the mission and goals of the FYS 100 course within the general education curriculum.
- 4.1.1.2 This policy allows for transfer students to be exempt from the class.
- 4.1.1.3 Other considerations will be made if a student has proof of taking FYS-equivalent coursework at another institution (e.g., transfer in FYS 100 or another equivalent, such as ISTD 199).
- 4.1.2. Students re-enrolling after more than one academic year may elect to opt-in to First-Year Seminar. Transfer students who may qualify for exemption may also elect to opt-in to an FYS 100 course as a mechanism for connecting with their new home campus.
- 4.1.3. Regardless of the number of incoming credits, dual-enrollment students will select an FYS course.
- 4.1.4. Students should consult with their academic advisor to discuss alternatives or special circumstances.

5. Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines

5.1 Exemption Form Process

- 5.1.1. An exemption form not accessible to students (and on the whole not advertised) would be initiated by the student's advisor or other faculty member for the student to complete.
- 5.1.2. Addendums to this form provided by the student would allow the student to demonstrate that they had met the SLOs of the FYS 100 course via previous coursework at another institution or via dual-enrollment.
- 5.1.3. That form, when complete, would route to the Chair, then Dean, then Registrar as a petition for exception.

5 Compliance and Enforcement

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed every five years by the First-Year Experience Subcommittee.

7. Additional Information

7.1 History

- 7.1.1. Endorsed by the University Senate on 4/11/24; Issued as Commonwealth University Policy 7-02 on 5/31/24 by the Office of the President.
- 7.1.2. Effective Date – 5/31/24

7.2 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting

Office of First Year Experience

Commonwealth University

Attn: Dr. Rebecca Willoughby, rwilloug@commonwealthu.edu, 570.389.4829