DARS UG Audit: “Fun” Facts, Common Questions and Best Practices

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“Fun” Facts

• DARS:
  • **Degree**
  • **Audit**
  • **Reporting**
  • **System**
“Fun” Facts

What is DARS, anyway?

DARS is an automated process for tracking a student’s academic progress towards completing an academic program by indicating what requirements are fulfilled and what requirements are outstanding.
“Fun” Facts:

• Created in 1983 at Miami University
“Fun” Facts:

No, not that Miami. Miami University - Ohio
“Fun” Facts:

• Created in-house to assist their students and eventually licensed to other institutions

• Now owned by College Source who offer a suite of products and serve over 400 college and university campuses predominately in the US and Canada

• Also referred to as “u.achieve” audit
“Fun” Facts:

• The actual audit is only one part of what we use DARS for:
  • All GREPORTS that use CGPAs or credits in a program (i.e. ranking, graduation)
  • Academic Performance Evaluation (APE)
  • Academic Status Report (ASR)
  • Processes such as COPE and CLASS
  • Data extracts for statistical purposes
“Fun” Facts:

New rules implemented for 2021

• Best Grade policy: for students who have repeated courses that are considered equivalent or cross-listed, the attempt with the best grade will count and the lower grade is forfeited; if the courses preclude each other, the last attempt will count and the first is forfeited.

• Note that there is an exception to the best grade policy for students in an Engineering program. The Bachelor of Engineering program requires that the most recent attempt of a course be a passing grade in order to be eligible for graduation

• Removal of the 2.0 credit overlap rule on double counting between the major and minor
Common Questions

Why isn’t my course sitting where it’s supposed to go?

- Complicated question
Common Questions

Before we can answer that question, we need to understand the audit processing:

◦ The audit works from the top-down. It tries to place courses in the first available place that they can sit
◦ It does this while trying to respect all of the rules we have in place such as the maximum number of 1000-level courses and residency requirements
◦ It also has to respect the priorities of fulfilling the requirements and maximizing the CGPAs
◦ The audit has three tries to “match” a course before placing it
◦ When there are multiple places a course can sit and competing priorities the audit may not choose a placement we like
Common Questions

For example:
- Bachelor of Arts Combined Honours in Human Rights and Law
  - Courses needed in the Law Major sit in Human Rights instead of moving down to Law
  - Why?
    - The Human Rights and Law majors can both use the same LAWS courses
    - Courses generally sit in first available spot, so LAWS get “stuck” in Human Rights and don’t move down to where they’re required
- Solution:
  - Exceptions to move the courses
  - Course are acceptable or not acceptable in a requirement. We can’t set a “if not needed for this requirement go here” type of logic
  - Avoid overlapping requirements when ever possible
### Human Rights and Social Justice

**B.A. Combined Honours (20.0 credits)**

**A. Credits Included in the Major CGPA (7.0 credits)**

1. **1.0 credit from:**
   - [HUMR 1001 [1.0]] Introduction to Human Rights
   - [FYSM 1104 [1.0]] Human Rights: Issues and Investigations
   - [FYSM 1502 [1.0]] Selected Topics in Legal Studies (specifically the section on Global Governance and Human Rights)

or approved FYSM

2. **0.5 credit in:**
   - [HUMR 2001 [0.5]] Human Rights: Theories and Foundations

3. **0.5 credit in:**
   - [HUMR 2202 [0.5]] Power Relations and Human Rights

4. **0.5 credit from:**
   - [LAWS 2105 [0.5]] Social Justice and Human Rights
   - [PHIL 2103 [0.5]] Philosophy of Human Rights
   - [PSCI 3307 [0.5]] Politics of Human Rights

5. **2.5 credits, comprised of 0.5 credit from each of the five Thematic Groups (see list under Course Categories)**

6. **1.0 credit at the 4000-level from Thematic Groups and/or Human Rights Electives (see lists under Course Categories)**

7. **1.0 credit from** Thematic Groups and/or Human Rights Electives (see lists under Course Categories)

8. **Additional Credit Requirements (13.0 credits)**
   - The requirements for the other discipline must be satisfied
   - Sufficient free electives to make 20.0 credits total for the program

**Total Credits**

### Law

**B.A. Combined Honours (20.0 credits)**

**A. Credits included in the Law Major CGPA (6.5 credits)**

1. **1.0 credit in:**
   - [LAWS 1001 [0.5]] Introduction to Legal Studies 1
   - [LAWS 1002 [0.5]] Introduction to Legal Studies 2

2. **0.5 credit from:**
   - [LAWS 2201 [0.5]] Persons and Property
   - [LAWS 2202 [0.5]] Obligations

3. **0.5 credit from:**
   - [LAWS 2301 [0.5]] Criminal Justice System
   - [LAWS 2302 [0.5]] Criminal Law

4. **0.5 credit from:**
   - [LAWS 2103 [0.5]] Social Justice and Human Rights
   - [LAWS 2501 [0.5]] Law, State and Constitution
   - [LAWS 2502 [0.5]] Law, State and Citizen
   - [LAWS 2601 [0.5]] Public International Law

5. **0.5 credit from Items 2-4 not already used to fulfill those items.

6. **1.0 credit in:**
   - [LAWS 2908 [0.5]] Approaches in Legal Studies I
   - [LAWS 3908 [0.5]] Approaches in Legal Studies II

7. **0.5 credit in LAWS at the 3000 level or above**

8. **2.0 credits in LAWS at the 4000 level or above**

**B. Additional Requirements (13.5 credits)**

- The requirements from the other discipline must be satisfied
- Sufficient free electives to make up 20.0 credits total for the program

**Total Credits**
Common Questions

Why isn’t my course sitting where it’s supposed to go?

- Overlapping requirements or competing priorities
  - Too many options decrease functionality
- Excess courses blocking
  - If the student has extra courses sitting aside, they can be blocking a course from coming in depending on the grades
- Too many 1000-levels courses
  - 7.0 credit maximum
- CURs, TRs, LOPs, SAT, EXCs being prioritized
  - These courses are viewed as “A++” on the audit and will be prioritized
Common Questions

- **Double Counting (unlimited)**
  - Programs are no longer restricted by the maximum of 2.0 credits of double counting
  - No limit when used to satisfy both the requirements for:
    - the Major (or Majors) and the Minor; or
    - a Minor, Concentration, or Specialization and any other Minor, Concentration, or Specialization

- **Forfeited**
  - If a course is sitting in forfeit it cannot be used towards the program
  - Generally a result of repeats or precluded courses

- **Prohibited**
  - A number of programs have additional rules that prohibit particular courses from being used, for example:
    - Architecture Studio courses cannot be used for credit in BA History and Theory of Architecture
    - Students admitted into BCOMM with advanced standing will not receive credit for any grade below a C-
Common Questions

I am requesting the same exception all of the time, is there anything that can be done about this?

- “Undercoding”
  - Automatically allows a course to count in a requirement
  - Done for all students within particular calendar year(s)
  - Most commonly used for a similar requirements (i.e. MATH 1007 for MATH 1009) or for transition planning (new courses to old curriculum, old courses to new curriculum)

- Curriculum change
  - Transparency - if the unit is always willing to accept a particular course add it to the calendar entry so it’s clear to other staff and students

- Contact the DARS team to discuss potential options
Common Questions

I don’t see the Combined Honours program I’m looking for in COPE/SZADARQ, is this combination allowed?

- Most likely, almost all combined options can be added together
  - Exceptions are when the majors have overlapping requirements. If this is the case a specialized Combined version addressing the program may have been created
    - Example: Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies + Linguistics = Linguistics and Discourse Studies
- We build audits/Banner entries only when we’ve received a COPE request from a student
- AE team oversees COPE processing and is the best point of contact
I’d like to review a large number of audits, is there an easier way than printing them individually?

- Batch audits
  - DARS team can print batches for particular student populations (i.e. all HBA-45 students with 4th year standing)
  - We can also produce audits for a list of students you if provide us with the following information:
    - Student numbers
    - Program Code (HBS-60, BPAPM-P2A)
    - Contact DARS team via email with requests
I have a special topics course that is repeatable, can the audit allow it to count more than once automatically?

- Yes, we can designate courses as automatically repeatable
- However, it is up to the department to monitor to ensure that students do not register in the same topic and receive credit twice
- Alternatively, repeated courses can be allowed to forfeit and handled via exception to avoid having to monitor registration
Common Questions

What’s the “real” grade on a CLP, CEX, LOP or EXC?

- CLP=Current Letter of Permission and CEX=Current Exchange
  - These notations are the equivalent of “CUR”. If these notations appear on the audit it means the Registrar’s Office has not received a final transcript and finalized the credit
  - Some institutions (i.e. Athabasca) allow courses to be extended over a long period of time. It can be up to year before they are completed and the grade is received

- LOP= Successful Letter of Permission and EXC=Successful Exchange
  - These courses have received a passing grade and the credit has been transferred by the Registrar’s Office. As these are transferred on a pass/fail basis a grade cannot be displayed on the audit
  - The student should be able to provide a copy of their host transcript as required. If there is an issue and this isn’t possible contact the Academic Evaluation team.
Common Questions

Who do I ask about audit issues?

- Issues particular to a student – Academic Evaluations team
- Global issues such as issue discrepancy with all programs, undercoding, curriculum development, transition planning – DARS
Common Questions

Is audit training available?

- Yes, individual training is available
- Review audit basics and examples specific to the program you work with
- Customized depending on questions and needs of user
- Contact studentsystemsupport@carleton.ca or Angel/Lisa/Valentina directly
Best Practices

KISS Principle

- **Keep It Simple and Straightforward**
- Whenever possible keep curriculum as simple and straightforward as possible
- Avoid extra layers of complication unless truly necessary
  - If/When/But/Only if are statements that can lead to more complexity
  - Avoid having the same courses count for many areas
  - Be specific or give choice – try not to do both in the same requirement
  - Avoid variance from rules/regulations
- Better for audit function and student understanding
- Requirements not compatible with the system = exceptions
Best Practices

Transition Planning

◦ When curriculum changes are made the implications to both existing and new students need to be considered

◦ For existing students:
  ◦ If courses have been deleted consider what will they take as a substitute? How will these substitutions be actioned? Will there be a communication plan?
  ◦ Is there an advantage to the new curriculum? If so, will calendar year changes be recommended? What is the plan to manage this?
  ◦ If an existing student enrolls in the “new” version of the program where will their courses fit? What exceptions or substitutions will be required?
Best Practices

Best practice for transition planning:

- Have a documented plan
- Work with the Registrar’s Office and DARS team to determine what assistance we can provide
  - DARS team can provide documentation for getting started and operational consultation
- Have a communications plan for students and impacted staff (AAC)
- Transition plans can also be included when new or edited curriculum changes are submitted via CourseLeaf
Best Practices

Undercoding/Substitution Tracking

- If you are requesting background changes to the audit, track your requests for easy reference
- Substitutions will stay in place until requested otherwise and will carry forward to future calendar years
- If there’s been a lot of requests it can get confusing to figure out exactly what is being accepted and where
Coming in 2022...
Contact Us

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For more information on DARS, please visit:
https://i.carleton.ca/registrar/progression/audit/
Questions?