

## **COCI FAQ for Instructors of Record of Student-Facilitated Courses**

### **What is a student-facilitated course/DeCal?**

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) allows students to facilitate courses offered under the numbers 98 and 198 (directed/organized group study) and graded passed/not passed (P/NP) only. These courses enable students to direct their own learning and to explore topics that may not be typically offered through your academic program. Many student facilitators choose to advertise the courses publicly through the DeCal student organization (please see <https://decal.berkeley.edu/> for more information), so the terms are often used interchangeably. DeCal is the student run organization while student-facilitated course is the UC term for such courses.

### **Who can sponsor one?**

Anyone who has been approved to serve as instructor of record for a course on campus, excluding graduate students. Please check with your department if you are unsure of your status.

### **Why would I want to sponsor one?**

There are many reasons. Student-facilitated courses can enrich a department's (and the campus) course offerings. They help student facilitators to develop valuable leadership, collaboration, and teaching skills. They can join instructors of record and student facilitators in a shared project. Ultimately, sponsorship of a course is a service to the students involved. A well-planned and conducted course can be a capstone-type project and a great way to expand the intellectual horizons of both the student facilitator(s) and the students taking the course.

### **Do I get teaching credit?**

No, but sponsoring a course does count as mentorship of students, and can be mentioned in merit and promotion letters.

### **Do I have to say yes?**

No. Instructors should feel completely free to choose whether to sponsor a student-facilitated course or not. While you are not obligated to sponsor any courses, if you consider any specific student-facilitated course to be beneficial to students, then you may agree to sponsor it. You might also take into account your own knowledge of the student facilitator(s). If you do not know enough about them to be confident that they would be able to run a course effectively, you should probably encourage them to seek out a different sponsor. Student-facilitated courses require guidance from sponsoring faculty. If you do not have time during the semester proposed for the course, you should decline to sponsor.

### **Does the course have to fit in to my department?**

COCI expects the content of the course to be within the scope of your department's academic program, or that there is a good reason why the department wishes to sponsor the course (such as your own expertise possibly extending to topics not traditionally taught in your department).

### **How much do I have to know about the topic?**

Enough to be able to guide the student facilitator. The course content should be within the scope of your knowledge base, or, at a minimum, the type of material or the disciplinary lens applied to the material must be within your scope.

### **How much work do I have to do?**

A good student-facilitated course must have support from of the instructor of record. You will be expected to work with the student to develop a syllabus and write a letter of recommendation for the course proposal. You are also responsible for supervising the student facilitator throughout the semester, as well as submitting final grades. You may also be asked to set up a bCourses site for the course. Ultimately you are responsible for these courses with the same level of obligation as for the courses you teach. If you do not have time to do perform these duties, then you may want to reconsider sponsoring the course.

### **How do I set up a bCourses site?**

ETS has provided a step-by-step guide and instructional videos on its website. Please see the bCourses website for more information:  
<http://ets.berkeley.edu/bcourses/>.

### **How many courses can I sponsor?**

Senate regulations (BDR A205) specify that instructors can be in charge of only one undergraduate course graded passed/not passed in any term, exclusive of individual study or research courses, except with the consent of the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered. COCI expects to be provided notice of such consent.

### **Who can answer my questions?**

Please seek guidance from your department chair, or a staff member in your department who manages student-facilitated courses. The Student Learning Center's Undergraduate Course Facilitator Training and Resources (<http://slc.berkeley.edu/ucftr>) can provide advice based on experience working with student facilitators. Lastly, COCI Academic Senate staff can answer policy questions about student-facilitated courses ([acad\\_sen@berkeley.edu](mailto:acad_sen@berkeley.edu)).