

May Experience Primer for Faculty

The following are questions and answers that were formulated by the ITF Steering Committee in consultation with the Provost, Associate Academic Dean, Associate Dean for Academic Records and University Registrar, Assistant Academic Dean for Study Away and International Education, and members of the May Experience Subcommittee, Academic Policies Committee, Policies and Procedures Committee, Study Away Committee, Curriculum Committee, Furman Advantage Committee, and Curriculum Review Committee. May Experience policies will be periodically reviewed, and modified, if needed.

What is the May Experience?

The May Experience is an optional three-week term following spring commencement that encourages innovative and intensive academic experiences. Successful completion of May Experience courses will yield two credits. May Experience courses cannot meet General Education Requirements, be independent studies, be courses offering during the fall and spring terms, or be required for the major. They can, however, carry concentration credit or be an elective in a major.

Who will oversee the May Experience?

For the first two years an ad hoc May Experience Committee will have primary oversight responsibility for the program. The responsibilities of this committee, as defined by the May Experience Subcommittee, will be to “(1) hold forums or arrange for information sessions to assist faculty in planning courses, (2) work in the advising system to make the May Experience appealing to students, and (3) generally serve as an advocate for the May Experience.” This committee will also review May Experience course proposals. After two May Experiences, the University will consider whether there is a need for a director of the program and/or a May Experience Faculty Standing Committee.

Who can propose and teach May Experience courses?

Typically May Experience courses will be taught by tenure-track or tenured faculty. Other faculty (adjunct, part-time, and emeritus) who wish to offer May Experience courses should discuss the matter with the Dean of the Faculty. Librarians with faculty status and the Director of the CCLC and the CTCL IDCs can develop May Experience course proposals after consulting with their supervisors and the Dean of the Faculty. These proposals should be evaluated by a sponsoring department.

How many courses can a faculty member teach during a May Experience? One.

How will faculty who teach in the May Experience be compensated?

Faculty members will earn two credits for teaching a May Experience course. Accordingly, a faculty member who has taught two May Experience courses, which do not have to be in consecutive years, will earn one four-credit course reduction during the fall or spring semester. The faculty member should consult with the department chair to determine when the course reduction will occur and how that reduction will affect the department’s course offerings. Under special circumstances, the Dean of Faculty may consider alternate means of compensation.

Can faculty team teach a May Experience course?

Yes. Faculty wishing to team teach a May Experience course should discuss this matter with the Dean of the Faculty. Typically, compensation for a two-person team-taught course will be one credit per faculty member (May Experience courses taught by a single faculty member receive two credits; i.e., one-half course). Those wishing to team teach a study away May Experience course should also meet with the Assistant Dean for Study Away and International Education to discuss the impact upon student travel fees, since those fees will need to cover the travel expenses of both faculty members.

How should interdisciplinary May Experience course proposals be evaluated?

Proposals for interdisciplinary May Experience courses that count towards a major or majors should be evaluated by those departments. Proposals for team-taught interdisciplinary May Experience courses that do not count towards a major(s) should be evaluated by the departments of the faculty who will teach the course. Proposals for interdisciplinary courses involving two or three disciplines but taught by one faculty member should be evaluated by the departments representing those disciplines. Proposals for interdisciplinary courses involving more than three disciplines and taught by a single faculty member should be evaluated by the department of the faculty member who created the course proposal and at least two other departments.

How will the May Experience impact the course load for faculty?

Typically, faculty will teach five four-credit courses during the fall and spring terms. Teaching in the May Experience is optional. Faculty who accumulate four credits from teaching May Experience courses, after consultation with the department chair, can take a course reduction during a subsequent fall or spring term.

Can faculty offer May Experience courses that last less than three weeks? No.

Can faculty offer May Experience courses that begin before commencement? No.

Can May Experience courses have pre-requisites?

Yes, but most should not in order to encourage a wide variety of students to participate in this innovative program of study.

Can faculty limit enrollment in fall or spring term courses to those students who will take a May Experience course with that faculty member?

With the exception of two-credit courses that students enroll in to prepare for a travel-study May Experience course, professors should not design fall or spring courses solely as preparation for a May Experience course or limit enrollment.

Can faculty couple a May Experience course with a summer study away program?

Yes. Students will earn two credits for the May Experience course, even if they are unable to complete the summer study away program.

How many courses can a student take during a May Experience? One.

Can May Experience courses be taken pass/fail?

At present, yes. May Experience courses will follow our current academic policies, including pass/fail. The Academic Policies Committee will soon study Furman's pass/fail system and at a later date may recommend some policy changes.

Can students participate at the same time in the May Experience and a full-time research or internship experience? Because May Experience courses require an intensive time commitment, students cannot be involved simultaneously in a research or an internship experience that requires **full-time** participation and a May Experience course. Students can, however, take a May Experience research methods course that combines instruction with research, or they can take a May Experience course and then participate in a subsequent full-time summer research project or internship.

Can graduating seniors participate in the May Experience?

Yes. Students meeting degree requirements in the spring may participate in the May Experience with no additional tuition charge. They may be immediately re-admitted as post-baccalaureate students, or they may choose to delay their graduation to include the May Experience in their undergraduate program.

Do May Experience courses require any special academic policies?

No. These courses will follow existing academic policies.

Are there enrollment limits for May Experience courses?

The Dean of Faculty and University Registrar will review courses with five or fewer students and consult with the department chair and instructor about the viability of the course. Having five or fewer students does not automatically mean a course cannot be offered.

Will students be charged for May Experience courses?

No additional tuition charges will apply for full-time students participating in the May Experience. On-campus housing will be available at a discounted rate. Students participating in study away courses will pay a fee to cover costs associated with travel.

Is there any financial aid designated for the May Experience?

At present there is none. Provost Kazez is well aware of the faculty's desire for financial aid to enable students to participate in these courses, especially those involving study away, and is exploring options. Furman's current fundraising campaign will be seeking gifts for study away scholarships. The expectation is that a percentage of these funds will be allocated to the May Experience.

What criteria distinguish a study away May Experience program from other May Experience courses?

A study away May Experience program is any program receiving Furman credit that requires off-campus housing, whether domestic or international. (Off-campus housing is not meant to include accommodations associated with domestic field trips of short duration.)

What process does a faculty member follow to propose a May Experience course?

For a **course not involving study away** the following steps should be followed:

- The faculty member consults with the department chair.
- The faculty member completes a course proposal using the online Course Proposal System. The system directs the proposal to a department and, if the course involves concentration credit, to a concentration oversight committee for review. Then, following the model for First Year Seminars, the proposal will be reviewed by the May Experience Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and--if the course counts towards a concentration-- the Academic Policies Committee. If endorsed by the Curriculum Committee and the Academic Policies Committee, if appropriate, the course will be presented to the faculty for approval.

For a **study away course** the following steps should be followed:

For Study Away Program Approval

- The faculty member discusses plans with the Assistant Dean for Study Away and International Education.
- The faculty member submits a study away program proposal to the Assistant Dean for Study Away and International Education and the Study Away Committee. A copy of the proposal guidelines is available from the Assistant Dean.
- The Study Away Committee reviews the safety and feasibility of the study away program, but does not evaluate the course content, which is the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee. The Study Away Committee will present the study away program to the faculty for approval.

Please note the following:

- Once a May Experience study away program has been approved, it does not need to be submitted again, unless the program has significant changes. The Study Away Committee will determine whether changes are significant enough to warrant a new program proposal.
- In any given year, final approval for a May Experience program will be determined by the Provost, based on resource availability and any other relevant considerations, even if it has received prior approval from the Study Away Committee and the faculty.
- The Assistant Dean for Study Away and International Education and the Study Away Committee may develop additional policies for May Experience study away programs.

For Study Away Course Approval

- The faculty member submits a proposal through the online Course Proposal System. As with on-campus May Experience courses, the proposal will be reviewed by a department, and, if the course counts towards a concentration, by a concentration oversight committee, then by the May Experience Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Academic Policies Committee, if involving concentration credit. Then, if endorsed by the Curriculum Committee and the Academic Policies Committee, if appropriate, the course will be presented to the faculty for approval.

What is the planning and registration process for 2008 May Experience courses?

August 15, 2008 - Faculty submit course proposals by this deadline. Faculty--especially those proposing study away courses-- are encouraged to submit their proposals during the spring term of 2008.

May Experience courses requiring invitation and/or an application process can begin selection after the course proposal has been approved by the faculty.

Early to mid-September 2008 - University Registrar surveys department chairs for intentions to offer May Experience courses in 2009.

Mid-October 2008 - May Experience 2009 offerings are finalized.

November 3, 2008 - May Experience 2009 offerings are publicized via www.furman.edu/mayx.

December 1, 2008 – Registration begins via ARMS on a first-come, first-serve basis (no priority order, pre-requisites fully enforced).

March 6, 2009 – Open registration for May Experience 2009 closes. Students wishing to add a course after registration closes must obtain permission from the instructor.

March 9-13, 2009 – University Registrar decides on course offerings and course cancellations, and confirms campus housing needs.

May 11, 2009 - May Experience courses begin.