

Paths of Study

FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do all these different terms (Paths, CATs, conveners, etc.) mean?

A: See the Glossary!

Q: What is meant by an overview?

A: We're looking for clear, descriptive language about the Path's content and/or thematic focus that can be shared with fellow faculty interested in affiliating, and with other interested members of the campus community, including student leaders. Here's a sample of the kind of language we're after: "The Literary Arts Path encompasses creative writing, literary arts, and literary studies. Our intention is to provide the structure for capstone projects in either critical or creative work, or some combination thereof. Our current emphasis is toward writing / literary arts as a field emphasizing creative production with strong critical and contextual framing and interdisciplinary/intermedia possibilities." Another example: "The Computational, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences Path integrates these three subjects. Regularly offered Foundational work leads to Advanced work specializing in one of the Path's areas."

Q: Who can be included in a Path's five-year calendar?

A: In a time of scarce resources, commitments to Path offerings should primarily come from regular faculty. If your Path's five-year calendar is completely filled by regular faculty, and your Path meets the other criteria, the College will commit to your Path. If your area has been historically supported by EWS offerings and cannot run without them, we encourage you to include these offerings as part of the Path proposal. And any regular faculty can teach in a Path they are not formally affiliated with.

Q: What if we cannot build a five-year calendar using the categories of faculty listed in the previous question?

A: If your Path's five-year calendar has gaps, please clearly identify them. We will do our best to problem solve with you to fill these gaps, based on the overall shape of the curriculum. We cannot guarantee, however, that resources necessary to fill in all of the gaps will be available.

Q: Who can teach in Paths?

A: The short answer is: any faculty member who is on contract. Regular faculty must affiliate with at least one Path as described in the CBA. Regular faculty who are not formally affiliated can also support Path offerings. Visiting lines for 19-20 should be allocated in the next month, so you will know whether you will have additional support for your 19-20 offerings before formally submitting your proposal.

Q: Can we include offerings other than Foundational and Advanced in the five-year calendar?

A: Five-year calendars must include yearly Foundational and Advanced offerings; they may include Intermediate and Exploratory offerings. Staffing the five-year plan for Foundational and Advanced offerings is the minimum criterion for approval.

Q: What if I don't fit into a Path?

A: If you find that you don't fit into a path, the issue is with the Path criteria, not with you. The transition coordinators are eager to work with you to support your Path in moving forward.

Q: What is the difference between a major and a minor commitment?

A: A major commitment is dedicating 50% of your teaching to a single Path of Study. A minor commitment is dedicating **25% of your teaching to a single Path of Study**. You need to make only a *minor* commitment to teaching in just *one* Path of Study.

Q: What if I want to teach in two radically different Paths of Study, and commit myself to both?

A: That's fine, but you need commit just 25% of your time to one.

Q: This looks and feels like we are moving toward stricter disciplinarity; is that true?

A: No. The Paths of Study are being designed to allow *greater* interdisciplinarity by virtue of the fact that they each represent only a two-year plan of Foundational and Advanced studies. Faculty who are not staffing either Foundational or Advanced may teach across divisions, or in first-year programs, or in some other brilliant configuration.

Q: Are these majors?

A: No. Paths of Study are a way for faculty to provide clarity for students who wish to move from a Foundational level through Advanced studies in a particular area of the curriculum. Not every student will do this, but the opportunity and clarity are important.

Q: Won't students just do what they want to do?

A: Yes. And some of our students will welcome the opportunity to move into advanced-level work in an Evergreen program. Some will not, preferring to move laterally from program to program. That's okay, too. A student could spend four years in different foundational programs if they felt like it.

Q: I have no idea what I'm teaching next year, let alone in five years. What should I do?

A: Each proposal needs a five-year plan with just two *placeholder categories* each year: Foundational and Advanced. There will necessarily be room, then, in your own five-year plan for first-year teaching, anticipated leaves, and cross-divisional work as you desire.

Q: What if our Foundational program alternates each year between one major field and another?

A: That is no problem. We recognize that a particular discipline might not be offered at the Foundational level every year. If your Path of Study can support a Foundational program in one field only every other year but can do a different one in the alternate year, write it into your proposal.

Q: Can one Foundational program prepare students for more than one Advanced program?

A: Yes. Imagine a historian and an artist doing a Foundational program for two quarters. At the end of the second quarter, the students could well be prepared for advanced work in either history or art.

Q: What is required for a Foundational program?

A: Those elements will be determined by the members of the Path of Study in winter quarter, once the Paths have been approved.

Q: An Advanced program in our Path is inherently interdisciplinary. Is that a problem?

A: Not at all! We trust faculty in Paths to determine what Advanced work looks like.

Q: Should Advanced programs require a signature?

A: That will be up to your Path. But you should clearly state the prerequisites (and there should be prerequisites) in your catalog copy, regardless.

Q: What about crucial subjects such as language study, gender, LBGTQIA+ studies, and others?

A: There are a number of Paths which are working on centering these important subjects. The Transition Coordinators and the Standing Committee on the Curriculum are also exploring other options for making offerings that cut across Paths visible to students. We welcome your good thinking on this question.

Q: Do we have a means by which these Paths of Study will be assessed?

A: That conversation will be part of our work in winter quarter.

Q: Do I have to teach in a Foundational or Advanced program in order for my teaching in the Path to count?

A: Questions about how faculty will meet their obligation under the CBA are best answered by the groups responsible for contract implementation (the UFE and the Administration). From the Transition Coordinators' perspective, any Path offering (including optional Exploratory or Intermediate offerings) should count as Path teaching.

Glossary of Key Terms

Path: A sequence of courses or programs that leverages faculty interest and expertise to help students achieve interdisciplinary breadth and depth.

Paths represent a commitment to students about curricular areas where they can consistently move from Foundational to Advanced levels of work. Many students will continue to build their own Path; the Paths of study planned by faculty will be an optional route for those students who want more structure and guidance, and a direct route to advanced work.

Overview: Overviews provide clear, descriptive language about the Path's content and/or thematic focus, that can be shared with fellow faculty interested in affiliating, and with other interested members of the campus community, including student leaders

Coherent: A coherent Path has a clear organizing logic that helps to characterize its uniqueness and distinguishes it from other paths.

In other words, the Path has a clear reason for existing as such, and is not merely a gathering of offerings lacking a shared goal.

Foundational: Necessary for developing the content knowledge and capacities expected of students in advanced programs.

We think of Foundational as an initial deep dive into the Path that is accessible to all students—with the caveat that Foundational programs may involve reasonable prerequisites (reasonable in that they are available regularly in our curriculum and don't constitute a major barrier). The number of credits/quarters is up to faculty in the path, though we may provide recommendations and feedback.

Reasonable prerequisites: Skills or courses that student could reasonably acquire at Evergreen or that transfer students could have acquired before matriculating.

An example of a reasonable prerequisite for a Foundational science program, for instance, might be pre-calculus. It's a course students could have taken before coming to Evergreen, but is also made consistently available at Evergreen. Prerequisites may also be expressed as skills and capacities rather than specific courses. The main goal is for students to be able to self-assess their level of preparedness as accurately as possible. We want to stress that many Paths may choose not to have any prerequisites for their Foundational offerings, while others may choose to impose a signature requirement. Mediaworks is a good example of a successful Foundational program that requires an application.

Advanced: Necessary for developing a degree of mastery, i.e., supporting the student in achieving a deep understanding of the subject(s) or skills covered in the Path.

Advanced work need not be exclusively academic—internships and community-based research are important ways students can demonstrate mastery. For the purpose of making such opportunities visible and accessible to all students, however, there must be Advanced work in Paths available through programs and courses, not just standalone ILCs and INTs.

Intermediate: Course or program work that moves the student from Foundational to Advanced study.

*Intermediate courses and programs are **not** required for approval.*

Convener: Responsible for leading the Path group in developing and updating its 5-year curriculum, as well as coordinating with CAT leaders and curriculum deans.

This is a governance assignment. Conveners are nominated by faculty in the path, and will be compensated each fall for writing an annual report, as well as for any summer work they take on. (For more information, see 8.2.7 of the CBA.)