

IAI Elementary and Secondary Education Major Panel
Course Approval Criteria
Revised Fall 2025

An institutionally approved representative syllabus in electronic format is required by the panel for its review. Institutions should submit an actual and recent instructor syllabus which is not more than three years old. If the course is yet to be taught, a sample syllabus intended for future students is still required.

The representative course syllabus and any additional submission materials must include:

- **Institutional name**
- **Course prefix, number, and title**
- **Course description:** Including the full catalog course description is required. The course description should compare favorably with the proposed IAI course description.
- **Number of credit hours:** For combined lecture and lab/studio courses, please include lecture credit hours, lab/studio credit hours as well as contact hours for lecture and lab/studio components. Indicate if these are semester or quarter hours.
- **Prerequisites and co-requisites:** If prerequisites are required for a course, it is preferred that the course prefix, course number, course name, and when IAI approved, the IAI code, are included in the submitted syllabus. Important note: as a rule, general education (GECC) courses in IAI should not have prerequisites. There are a few exceptions to this rule for sequences such as written composition and calculus; see panel specific information. Major courses may have prerequisites as appropriate. Co-requisite courses should show the credit hour breakdown between the two courses.
- **Textbooks, additional readings, additional course materials:** Please note if different resources are required for different delivery modes. Course materials should reflect content outcomes and requirements, and should be recently produced. For published texts, please include author, title, edition, date of publication, publisher, and the ISBN. If the course utilizes online or OER materials, please include an active hyperlink; hyperlinks cannot be embedded in the LMS nor be blocked by a password because the panel needs to have full access to the resource.
- **Delivery mode:** traditional/nontraditional, in-person/online/hybrid, etc.
- **Course Objectives:** The course objectives should clearly support the course description.
- **Assignment descriptions:** Please include a detailed description of assignments, readings, projects, etc. Assignment details should be clearly evident and referenced, and show connection to the course learning objectives. Assignments should demonstrate the rigor and scope of the course.
- **Methods of evaluating student learning:** The syllabus should state clearly how learning outcomes will be assessed, such as through objective/subjective examinations, quizzes, written assignments, oral presentations, projects, etc.
- **Grading scale and assignment weighting:** Please provide a grading scale and indicate the relative weight of assignments or evaluation categories (e.g., exams, essays, projects, etc.).
- **Detailed course outline, daily/weekly/hourly schedule:** A detailed topical outline and weekly schedule that **goes beyond chapter numbers and titles from a textbook (or select readings)** must be included and it should provide specific details of topics being presented in class. This may include assignments, readings, projects, etc. as appropriate. This could be done using a few bullet points or a couple of sentences. This level of detail is also appropriate for the lab/studio outline in courses that contain a lab or studio component. The lab/studio outline should include similar information but also detail the tools, materials, equipment, and instruments being used and the outcomes or topics that the students will be exploring.

General Coding Practice:

A course can only be assigned to one IAI code/description per panel. Institutions should be clear and careful in determining which IAI code is identified for any syllabus submitted for approval. The institution should also ensure that the course meets the minimum semester credit hour requirement included with the IAI course description.

A student may “count” only one course per code in fulfilling transfer requirements, even though an institution may assign more than one course to a code. In some cases, however, students at schools on a quarter calendar may need to complete two courses to equate to a one-semester course. An equivalency in this circumstance would be three quarter-credits equals two semester credit hours and five quarter-credits equal three semester credit hours.

Panel Specific Requirements:

Course Credit Hours

- If a course has clinical experiences, the number of hours should be clearly listed; the type of clinical experience should be identified and described within the syllabus.
- Submitted courses should be 3 credit hours unless the course includes clinical experiences, which could include **field experience** or **directed observation** (see [ISBE 23 Illinois Administrative Code 25 – 25.610, Subtitle A, Subchapter b](#)). Per the code, “*Directed Observation*” means a clinical experience involving observation of practitioners working under the direction of representatives of schools or educator preparation institutions. This experience is planned, guided, and evaluated by a mentor or supervisor and can occur in a variety of educational settings and situations. “*Field Experiences*” means a variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, or conduct research. Field experiences may occur in off-campus settings such as schools, community centers, or homeless shelters.”

Course Objectives and/or Student Learning Outcomes

- Should clearly demonstrate alignment with the panel descriptor and include IPES standards.
- Courses submitted to the ESE Major identifiers should align with the ISBE standards as appropriate.

Common Reasons Courses Are Not Approved

In order to facilitate the prompt approval of course submissions, it may be helpful to be aware of some common reasons for which courses are not approved:

- Course title does not match course description.
- Course clinical experiences, when included, are not compatible with the ISBE administrative code.
- Course objectives and/or student learning outcomes do not match course description.
- Course objectives and/or student learning outcomes do not align with the IAI course description.
- Course is too broad or too narrow in scope.
- Course is an upper division course.
- Course syllabus has weak course objectives and/or student learning outcomes.
- Course syllabus has no means of assessment and evaluation.
- Course syllabus has no grading scale.
- Course outline/schedule lack sufficient detail.
- Other reasons, as appropriate, within review.