

Linked Courses FAQs

General FAQs

1. What are linked courses?
 - a. Linked courses at BGSU are a type of academic learning community in which a group of students is co-registered across 2-3 course courses, allowing the students to take those courses as a cohort. Linking occurs behind the scenes and students are not aware that they are being enrolled in a Linked Course. This linking provides the opportunity to introduce academic as well as social coherence to the students' educational experience.
2. Why are we doing linked courses?
 - a. The linked courses effort is part of BGSU's continued focus on student success, providing opportunities to engage students with their peers and faculty as they transition into the university environment. There is evidence that linked courses can lead to improvements in grades, course completion, retention, and persistence. Many universities use some form of coordinated scheduling to engage new students in this type of learning community
3. Who picks the courses and sections to be included in links?
 - a. Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs/Directors, and Senior Advisors identify courses to link for incoming freshmen. Links are defined by major or, for undecided students, exploration area. Links between courses are then developed by the Office of Undergraduate Education based upon the feedback provided by each college or department.

FAQs for Instructors

4. What are the 3000-series section numbers in courses associated with a link?
 - a. 3000-series sections (linked sections) are created complementary to the Regular 1000 and 2000-series sections (general availability sections). 3000-series sections are established as linked sections and seats for new freshmen are reserved in those linked sections, reducing the number of seats available in the corresponding 1000 or 2000 level section (general availability section) by a corresponding number. Between the two sections (3000 and 1000 or 2000) the overall enrollment cap is maintained. If there is a need to "shift" seats between complementary sections (e.g., to accommodate continuing students), the Office of Undergraduate Education and Registration & Records will work with advisors and departments to determine the appropriate number of seats to "shift" and the manner in which they should be shifted (e.g., made available for a specific student, opened to accommodate wait-listed students, etc.)
5. I am teaching a linked course section. What is expected of me?
 - a. Faculty members and TA's are invited to collaborate with the instructor(s) in course sections linked to theirs as they determine to be appropriate.

Linked Courses FAQs

This could be simply sharing your syllabus with the other instructors (e.g., to not schedule major exams or project due dates at the same times), or it could involve deeper, content-based linking, as this is a rich opportunity to engage students across several courses.

- b. The Office of Undergraduate Education will be making individualized “linkage” reports available that show, for each instructor’s linked course/section, the other course/sections involved in the link as well as the names of the instructors of those linked course/sections, if available.
- 6. What will I see in the MyBGSU Faculty Center for my linked course?
 - a. When viewed through the Faculty Center within the MyBGSU portal, the complementary linked and general availability sections will be listed individually, each with its own roster. Grade rosters for these sections will also be separate.
- 7. I am using Canvas to teach my linked course. What will I see in Canvas?
 - a. Canvas will have one course shell that applies to both the linked and general availability sections. It also provides the capability to show all students enrolled in the course or section-specific enrollments.
- 8. Will my linked section be occupied entirely by students in a particular cohort?
 - a. In some cases, entire sections of a linked course will be occupied by students of the same major or cohort – especially for majors involving a large number of incoming students. In other cases, such as large lecture sections or courses in links for majors having a small number of incoming students, the section may include students from several cohorts.

FAQs for Advisors

- 1. How do students get enrolled in the linked course sections?
 - a. New freshmen are enrolled in linked courses by advisors before and/or during their SOAR session. Enrolling a student in a track results in the component course sections being added to the student’s schedule
 - b. Students cannot enroll themselves in linked course sections.
- 2. Can Links be broken?
 - a. Links can be broken – that is, any linked course section in which a student has been enrolled can be dropped from a student’s schedule without affecting the other course sections to which it was linked. However, because one of the intents of linked courses is to maintain cohorts of students across the linked course sections, linkages should only be broken within reason. Students do not have the ability to drop out of the links on their own.
- 3. What is a “Super User”?
 - a. In order to be able to “protect” the seats reserved - in linked sections - for new freshmen, courses having sections involved in links are placed under the exclusive control of Registration and Records. A consequence of this is that departments and college advisors are no longer able to do things

Linked Courses FAQs

such as override pre-requisites, change enrollment caps or open and close sections. As a result, each college, working with Registration & Records, identified individuals who were provided the necessary security authorization within CSS to perform those actions for the departments' linked courses, as well as others required by the linked course initiative.

4. Will the system allow a student to be enrolled into a placement-based course's (e.g., GSW) linked section if the student has not been placed?
 - a. As is the case with non-linked sections, placement criteria must be met for the student to be enrolled in such a course, unless overridden by an individual having the appropriate system security/authorization level.
5. Must a student's major (academic plan) match the track into which they are pre-enrolled?
 - a. A student's major (academic plan) does not have to match the track into which they are pre-enrolled. For the convenience of individuals doing the pre-enrollment, the system will initially show the tracks that have been developed for the student's major but does not limit the tracks into which the student can be enrolled. Other tracks into which the student could be enrolled can be found by searching based upon academic plan, subplan, or "student group" (such as Honors).
6. What happens if a pre-enrolled student comes to SOAR and indicates they are changing majors? Will advisors be able to move the student into an appropriate linkage?
 - a. A SOAR advisor will be able to drop the student from the track associated with the old major and, if possible, enroll the student in a track associated with the new major.
7. If all of the seats reserved for new freshmen in a linked section are not used in pre-enrollment, what happens to them?
 - a. "Leftover" seats in linked sections are shifted into the complementary general availability sections as determinations are made that those seats are no longer needed for pre-enrollment.
8. Who can I contact with questions or for more information regarding linked courses?
 - a. Contact: Kim Brooks, Associate Director, Office of Undergraduate Education, kbrooks@bgsu.edu , 419-372-4869