

Guidelines and Suggestions for University-wide Use of V9R Courses

Goal

To enroll all students engaged in research or other scholarly activity under the direction of a faculty mentor in the appropriate V9R course.

Purpose and Rationale

A key purpose of V9R courses is to organize and assist undergraduate students in formalizing their faculty-mentored research experiences. The university-wide use of V9R courses will allow the acquisition of reliable data on undergraduate research conducted across the university. Currently, there is no systematic method in place to analyze or equitably support and recognize students or faculty involved in undergraduate research. Good data are essential to effective organization, assessment, and continued growth of an undergraduate research enterprise experiencing increased demand as Baylor enjoys R1 status and attracts an increasing volume of high-ability students. Information gathered through V9R course registration allows the university to know more about which students and faculty are engaged in undergraduate research, and with that knowledge, learn how we can better support and recognize them institutionally.

Benefits

Beyond having reliable data, the V9R course initiative has direct benefits to students, faculty, and the university in many other ways.

Students will benefit by having transcripts that accurately reflect participation in research or scholarly activity under the guidance of a faculty member. The V9R courses will show the level and duration of research that a student has experienced. These courses will also affirm that students have developed a specific skill set and have gone above and beyond most degree requirements. Having the V9R courses on their transcript also provides helpful information as they build their resume and apply for internships, fellowships, awards, professional and graduate schools, or employment. Finally, students in V9R courses will be more easily identified and invited to apply for prestigious internships and awards (e.g. Fulbright, Goldwater, etc.) that they may not know of otherwise.

Faculty mentors also benefit from having their students enrolled in V9R courses. Such courses provide a systematic process for faculty to formalize expectations and hold students accountable for their responsibilities. Beyond communicating expectations clearly, faculty will have an objective record of the number of students that they have mentored, which is important for annual performance reviews, grant proposals, and awards and recognition. For faculty, V9R courses will provide demonstration of the depth and breadth of their commitment to the university's teaching and research missions. As data are collected and research across the university is recognized and celebrated, there will be increased opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary projects.

Baylor University will benefit from this initiative by having all schools and departments adopt V9R courses. This allows administrative departments to see the “big picture” and perform assessment on undergraduate research and mentorship. At present, only a few departments are using V9R courses for their faculty mentoring research and scholarly activities. By having comprehensive information, the university can create objective goals of providing further support and resources that directly support the teaching and research mission of the university. Long-term data from V9R courses will allow for assessment and help inform decisions for future directions.

Course numbering and credit

The first step to offering V9R courses is to add the courses to the department’s class schedule. All units with approved V9R courses can offer the courses using their departmental prefix at the 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 level. This may be initiated at the departmental level during submission of the semester teaching schedule (or anytime during the “add” period when a student and faculty member agree to mentored research). In most cases, each faculty mentor will have their own section. Since research and scholarly activities differ across academic disciplines, each department will set the expectations and criteria for their V9R courses and the procedure for registration, but there are some universal standards that can be adapted for any discipline.

In many schools and departments, there are 4 levels of V9R courses: 1V9R, 2V9R, 3V9R, and 4V9R. Variable Credit hours (V) means the student may register for 0-4 hours. The catalog describes each of these courses as: “Undergraduate research undertaken under the supervision of a faculty member. May be taken for a maximum of 6 hours.” The number of hours or other course requirements is determined through a syllabus listing expectations for the student and faculty mentor. A new syllabus should be issued for each semester in which the student is enrolled.

Credit hours should be assigned in accordance with the [guidelines for Credit Hours](#) in the Undergraduate Catalog.

The following can help guide schools and departments in accordance with the Catalog.

- 0 credit hour is typically used:
 - during the summer,
 - when students are exploring a project and not expected to complete the same level of research activities,
 - when a student is being paid for their research participation.
- 1 credit hour: 3 hours per week of supervised research
- 2 credit hours: 6 hours per week of supervised research
- 3 credit hours: 9 hours per week of supervised research
- 4 credit hours: Rarely used; 12 hours per week of supervised research

The following figure illustrates a continuum of research and mentoring that may take place. The horizontal axis illustrates that research may be the faculty member's research, with the student learning and contributing as an assistant, or it could be the student's original idea or independent project, or somewhere in between. Likewise, the vertical axis indicates a continuum in the level of research, somewhere in between exploratory and a professional publication. This framework helps determine which course might be most appropriate for a student. For example, a student interested in joining a research team may begin as a freshman, exploring the types of projects that are available (1V9R); work with a mentor during their sophomore or junior year and learn techniques and protocols (3V9R), and then propose their own experiment or research question (4V9R). Each course should incorporate a syllabus that outlines the expectations and assessment methods.

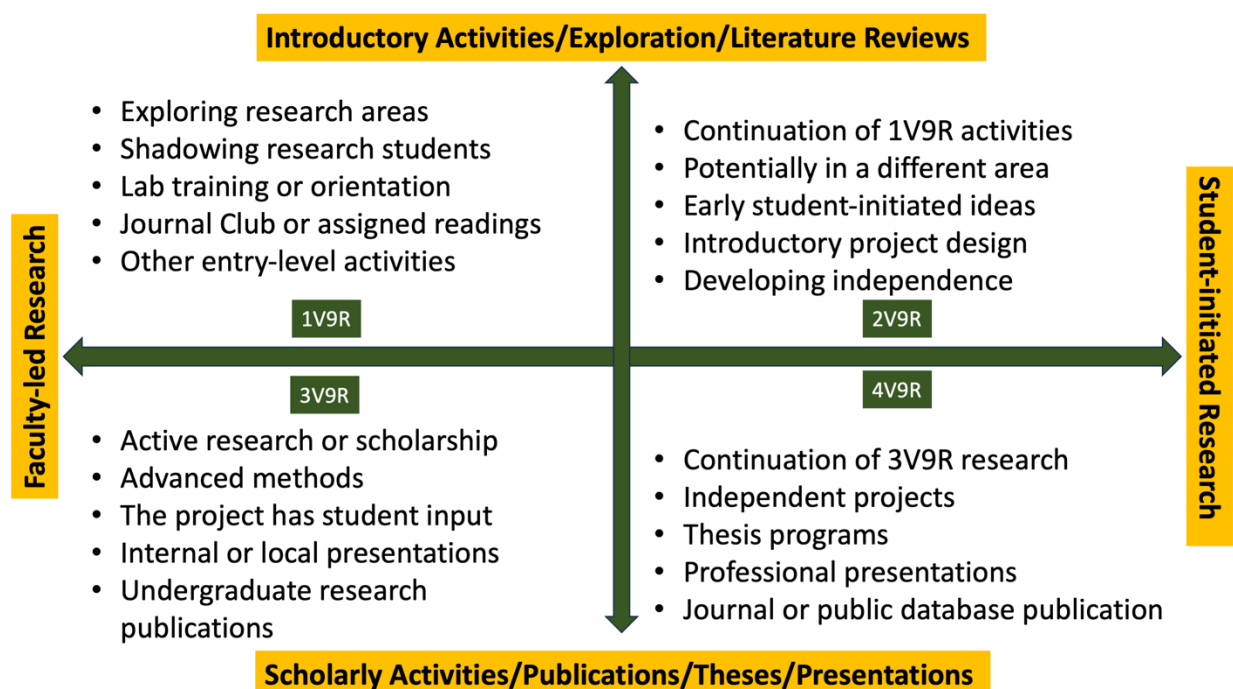


Figure 1: Framework for V9R courses

Example Procedure for V9R registration

The procedure for creating and registering for a V9R course may differ depending on the discipline and organization of the department. The following provides an example of processes that have been used in some departments currently utilizing V9R courses.

1. Students meet with the faculty. Some faculty may require an interview or an application before agreeing to accept a student. It is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty mentor and set up a time for an interview.
2. Once accepted, the student and faculty will discuss and complete a list of expectations. The faculty member agrees to mentor the student for a specific V9R course and credit hours. The document also includes the number of hours per week

and any other required information. [Here is an example of a Qualtrics form used to collect the content for a syllabus.](#)

3. Once the form is submitted, a specified staff or faculty member reviews the form and sends a copy to the faculty mentor for final approval. The permit/overrides for registration are entered and the student is notified that they may enroll.
4. In some cases, when there are large number of V9R students in the department, a designated staff member serves as the V9R Director to coordinate and oversee this process.

The specifics of setting up V9R courses will vary by school and department. The Office of Engaged Learning is available as an ongoing resource as questions and new circumstances arise.