Welcome to Wait List Training for Class Orderers!

In this training, we will cover what wait lists are and how they work, how to set up wait lists on classes including best practices, and frequently asked questions regarding the wait list process.

**First up: What are Wait Lists?**

Wait lists are a tool to help students get automatically enrolled into classes that are full. If a class is full but has an available wait list, students can add themselves to the wait list. Once seats open up, students are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis.

**How Do They Work?**

When the class is full, but there are still wait list seats available, a yellow triangle icon will appear in the schedule of classes indicating that there is an available wait list.

A student will then select the “Wait List if class is full” check box when registering to place themselves on the wait list.

Students will be able to see their wait list position in two places...

1) As soon as they place themselves on the wait list.
2) And when viewing their class schedule. Note that the student can see the status (shown to the left of the waitlist position) in their class schedule, indicating that they are waiting, not enrolled.

If a seat opens up in the class, the wait list engine will put the first person on the wait list in the class. An email is automatically sent to the student to let them know they made it into the wait listed class. When this happens, students will be able to see the status of “enrolled” in their schedule of classes.

**Next up: How to Set-up Wait Lists on Classes**

Wait Lists can either be set up when scheduling a new course or by making changes in Maintain Schedule of Classes. For all classes at least two things are required to enable a class to have a waitlist. In the Enrollment Cntrl tab check the “Auto Enroll from Wait List” box and enter an amount in the Wait List Capacity field. Don’t forget to click “save”. Setting a Wait List Capacity drives the ability for students to place themselves on the wait list. Clicking the “Auto Enroll From Wait List” box allows the wait list engine to run, placing students in the class as seats open up. For simple, single component, non-combined classes, this is the only set up required.

For combined classes set up in the combined sections table, first you would set up the wait list capacity and check the “auto enroll from wait list” checkbox in either Schedule New Course or Maintain Schedule of Classes just like in our first example. However, there is one more step to take. Just as you have to set a combined Enrollment Capacity under Identify Combined Sections for these classes normally, you would also have to set a Wait List Capacity. This should be the total of seats between all combined sections. For example, if both of your combined classes each have a wait list capacity of 5 seats, you would need to allow for 10 seats in the Wait List Capacity box in Identify Combined Sections. Again, don’t forget to save!

For multi-component classes, the Wait List Capacity for the non-enrollment section must equal the sum of all of the enrollment sections associated with it. For example, if you have 4 enrollment lab sections
with 2 wait list seats in each section, the non-enrollment lecture section would need to be able to accommodate 8 wait list seats. Let’s first set up our 2 wait list seats on each enrollment section. Now, we need to accommodate matching seats in the non-enrollment section. Again, for this example, we need 8 seats. This is because both the enrollment and non-enrollment sections need to have the same enrollment status for students. Even if there are seats open in the non-enrollment section, a student adding a wait list for the enrollment section needs to also be placed on the wait list for the non-enrollment section. Basically, a student cannot be enrolled in the non-enrollment section and waitlisted in the enrollment section, so you have to set it up so they can be waitlisted in both. If the seats are not set up correctly, students will get an error when attempting to add the wait list.

It may be easiest to set up the wait list capacities for multi-component classes in Update Sections of a Class on the Class Enrollment Limits tab. This is the same class we were updating previously. You can easily see which sections are set up as either enrollment or non-enrollment sections. Remember: we need 8 wait list seats in the non-enrollment section because we have 4 enrollment sections with 2 wait list seats each. If you do this, make sure to go back to Maintain Schedule of Classes and check the “Auto Enroll From Wait List” check box for every section.

Now that you know how to set them up, let’s go over some best practices.

First, wait lists are a great enrollment management tool, but they might not be a good idea for every class. They work great when you have a class with little to no prerequisites and a lot of adding and dropping. They don’t really work on a class that requires instructor or department consent or on classes that fill up and never drop down below capacity. For those classes, it’s probably still best to give students closed class permission to get into the class when appropriate.

Second, it’s entirely up to the college or department what capacity to set for the wait lists. However, you don’t want to put such a big number that you give false hope to students trying to get in.

Third, you can always adjust the wait list capacity and enrollment capacities as needed. Say you have a class with 30 students enrolled and another 5 on the wait list. If the instructor says they can handle those extra 5 students in the class, you could simply increase the enrollment capacity to 35. Assuming those students do not have any other conflicts, they should all get into the class the next time the wait list engine runs. If the instructor doesn’t want any more additions to the class, you can always drop the wait list capacity down to zero. In this scenario, make sure you do not uncheck the “Auto Enroll From Wait List” checkbox until after the waitlisted students get enrolled.

Finally: Frequently Asked Questions

*How often does the wait list engine run?*

It depends on where we are in the registration process. Typically, we will only run the wait list engine once a day during the early parts of registration. As we get closer to the beginning of the term, we will run it maybe 4-6 times a day. This typically happens around the time that Learning Community seats are released.

*Let me guess…your next question was how does it work with Learning Communities?*
Wait lists respect Learning Community (and other reserve capacity) reservations. This means that even if there are open LC seats, students will only be able to place themselves on the wait list. The wait list then will not register the student until a non-reserved seat opens up.

So what if a diligent student notices that a spot opened up in the class before the wait list engine runs? Will that student be able to jump the wait list line?

No, they will not. Wait lists respect the students on the wait list by not allowing other students to “sneak in”. If that diligent student tried to register, Catalyst would tell them the class is full, but they may be able to try for the wait list.

Can a student get on a wait list if they do not meet the prerequisites?

No, they cannot. There is a prerequisite check both when they place themselves on the wait list and when the wait list engine tries to put them in the class. This is important because a student may have gotten on the wait list when they were enrolled in the prerequisite, but if they withdraw from the prerequisite before the engine runs, they won’t be allowed in.

What happens if students on the wait list don’t pass the prerequisite?

The same process that kicks students out of enrolled classes for unmet prerequisites will also kick students off of the wait list.

What if a seat opens up, but the first student on the wait list can’t be enrolled due to varying issues?

The next student on the list will be enrolled in this scenario, assuming he or she does not have any issues such as a time conflict or being enrolled in a different section of the course. It’s important to note that these students with issues will remain on the wait list until it is purged. That means any other students wishing to get into the class will need to place themselves on the wait list and wait until the wait list engine runs in order to get registered. That’s why classes with a lot of prerequisites aren’t a great fit for wait lists.

When is the last day to add to a wait list, what is the last day the wait list engine runs, and when are wait lists purged?

The last day a student can add a wait list will be published in the Dates and Deadlines Calendar each semester. We will run the wait list engine one last time the morning after that date. Reports will be sent to the colleges showing the students who remain on the wait lists in case they want to take action to get those students registered. We will purge the wait lists shortly after the engine is stopped and the report has been sent.

What happens if a class is full with students on the wait list, and an instructor gives permission for a new student to be added directly into the class via closed class permission?

In this case, the student who was given closed class permission will be able to register and bypass the wait list. If the class capacity was 30, there are now 31 students enrolled. The students sitting on the wait list will need to wait for the enrollment to drop down to 29 (basically, two students need to drop now) in order for the first person on the wait list to get enrolled. If you have a class like this where instructors are hand-selecting who gets added in
over the capacity, a wait list is probably not a good tool to use as waitlisted students will likely never get enrolled.

How will we know who is on the wait list?

Waitlisted students will show for anyone who can see the class roster in Catalyst. You will be able to see their enrollment status as “waiting”. You can also see their position number.

That’s it! You’ve made it through wait list training. If you hit a road block, or have more questions, don’t forget to contact a Subject Matter Expert. We can be found at www.uc.edu/catalyst under the Contact dropdown.