UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
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GRADUATE COURSE REQUEST AND APPROVAL PROCESS

I. Classification of Graduate Courses

Systemwide classification of graduate courses is governed by Systemwide Senate Regulation 740 (3-6):

- Graduate courses numbered 200-299, and ordinarily open only to students who have completed at least 18 (or 12 semester) upper division units basic to the subject matter of the course. Graduate courses must be approved by the Graduate Council concerned and, if appropriate, by the Divisional Committee on Courses of Instruction. (Am 9 Mar 83)
- Professional courses for teachers numbered 300-399, offered in Departments of Education, and in other departments and specially designed for teachers or prospective teachers.
- Other professional courses numbered 400-499.
- Individual study or research graduate courses numbered 500-599 if they may be used to satisfy minimum higher degree requirements, otherwise numbered 600-699.

For additional information, see the Registrar's Course Conventions Guide.

Systemwide classification of Extension courses is governed by Systemwide Senate Regulation 790:

- University of California Extension courses equivalent to regular session courses at Merced, which may have credit value shall be designated by the same numbers with the prefix "XM".[1]
- University of California Extension courses not equivalent to campus courses, but which may have a credit value, shall be designated by a number with the prefix "X."

II. Policy Overview

This policy addresses requests for new graduate courses and course modifications in the 200-699 series and UC Merced Extension courses in the X300 – X499 series.[2]

All requests for new graduate courses and course modifications in the 200-699 series, as well as UC Merced Extension courses in the X300-X499 series, are processed through the Curriculog course request system.

III. Procedure for Course Proposal (CP) Submission for Graduate Courses in the 200-699 Series

1. All course proposals (CPs) must be approved by a vote of the faculty of the submitting graduate program or by a committee to which that authority has been delegated. Upon this vote, the Graduate Group Chair or their designee registers the Group's approval by completing the "Department" step in Curriculog. The relevant graduate assessment coordinator provides his/her evaluation of WSCUC requirements when CPs are submitted in Curriculog. All CPs must also be approved in Curriculog by the faculty member proposing the course or course change, and by the lead dean for the submitting graduate program, or their designees. All

[1] See Systemwide Senate Regulation 792A for the basic requirements for the approval of University of California Extension courses equivalent to regular session courses, which may have credit value.
[2] University Extension does not offer courses designated X in the 200-299 series.

required fields in Curriculog Form must be filled. It is the responsibility of the graduate program faculty to review course content, programmatic contribution, overlap with other courses, and resource implications within the context of the relevant graduate program(s). Program faculty should also determine if the addition of the course might necessitate WSCUC Substantive Change Review of the program. The campus Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) will assist faculty in determining if a Substantive Change Proposal to WSCUC is necessary. Program faculty should also confirm that the syllabus addresses WSCUC requirements.

2. New courses must use the Curriculog Form for New Courses, and fill all the required fields, as well as optional fields that apply to the course. A syllabus is no longer required as a part of the CP process for graduate courses. However, a syllabus is still required for all courses when they are delivered, and, as per WSCUC requirements, the syllabus should explicitly explain the connections between course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes so that a course's contribution to the student's overall education is clear. The Curriculog form fields pertaining to PLOs and CLOs document these connections. The course schedule, to be included in the designated Curriculog Form field, should be sufficient to justify the number of units for the course. Resources for formulating a syllabus with required information are available through the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning. GC approved CLO and PLO Guidelines for the development of course learning outcomes, including for courses/units like independent research, are available through the Senate Website.

3. Modifications to an existing course may fall into one of the two categories: substantive or non-substantive. Substantive Changes are: **New Description, Unit Change, Grading Option Change, Instructional Modality Change, and Add Conjoined or Cross-listing**. All other changes are considered non-substantive modifications, and may be requested using the Abbreviated Form, which does not require GC approval. The explanation box should briefly describe the reason for the proposed change, and, when proposing a unit increase, provide the justification for the increase.

4. Cross-listed courses are graduate courses that have different prefixes, names, and/or course numbers, but are intended to be offered as the same course with the same meeting time, and with the same requirements and units. Cross-listed courses must have identical course descriptions and prerequisites. Each course that is cross-listed with another course must have its own CP in Curriculog that indicates the corresponding cross-listed course. If cross-listed courses originate within different schools, each graduate program and lead dean of each school must approve the CP in Curriculog. In addition, the relevant graduate assessment coordinator must review the CP and provide documentation.

5. Conjoined courses are graduate courses that share one or more elements (e.g. lecture, lab, fieldwork) with an undergraduate course. If a graduate course is to be conjoined, details must be provided about what parts of the course will be shared and how the requirements of Senate Regulation 762 will be met. Each course that is conjoined with another course must have its own CP in Curriculog that indicates the corresponding conjoined course. The undergraduate version of the course must be reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate Council (UGC). UGC's CRF Procedures and Approval Policy are available through the Academic Senate.

6. ***Online or Hybrid courses*** are graduate courses that include blended or online education elements. The following is a brief definition to clarify course units and activities. UC Merced courses are categorized by the following instructional delivery modes[3]:

    - Traditional Face-to-Face – 100% to 70% of course contact hours are delivered in person with the outstanding percentage of contact hours (between 0% and 29%) delivered online or via other distance education technologies (e.g., satellite, audioconference, etc.). Per the UC Merced Credit Hour Policy, contact hours are defined as the number of in-class hours in lecture, seminar, discussion, field, laboratory, tutorial, and/or studio. Non-contact hours are the number of hours students must dedicate outside of the classroom in support of each in-class element, based on the instructor's assessment of required activities (i.e., assignments,

[3] Allen, E., Seaman, J., and Garrett, R. (2007) Blending In: The Extent and Promise of Blended Education in the United States Sloan Consortium, p. 10.

fieldwork, laboratory work, performance, practice, preparation for exams, reading, research, and writing) and specified learning objectives for the course. (For example, a 4-unit class expects 12 hours of work per week per term[4]. This typically consists of 3 hours of in-class time – contact hours - and 9 non-contact hours of work done outside of the classroom per week.)

- Hybrid/Blended –Fewer than 70%, but more than 0%, of course contact hours are delivered in person with the outstanding percentage of contact hours (30% or more, but less than 100%) delivered online or via other distance education technologies. This modality blends online and in-person delivery and, as such, has some in-person meetings but a substantial portion of the contact hours are conducted online or via other distance education technologies (e.g., class lecture meets in person whereas the discussion section meets online). When counting toward a degree, all hybrid courses are considered online education.

- Hybrid Flexible, i.e. "Hyflex" - This modality blends online education and in-person delivery. During course contact hours, students have the option of participating in person or online or, over the course of the semester, via a combination of both. When counting toward a degree, all hyflex courses are considered online education.

- Online Education: 0% of course contact hours are delivered in person and 100% are delivered online or via other distance education technologies. There are no in-person meetings.

Course units per weekly hours for online or hybrid courses are calculated at the same rate as traditional in-person courses.

As per accreditation policy[5], substantive change review is required for programs in which 50% or more of the units required for the degree will be offered through online education. Program faculty are responsible for identifying, ensuring program adherence to, and communicating these substantive change requirements to the Senate Office and the Accreditation Liaison Officer. Programs should contact the campus' Accreditation Liaison Officer as the program approaches the 50% criterion. All hybrid and hyflex course offerings count as online offerings for the purposes of this criterion.

Faculty who are proposing to teach courses in which less than 70% of the contact hours (i.e., scheduled meeting time) occurs in person must explain the rationale via the Supplemental Questions for Online or Blended Course Approval Requests and must indicate in Curriculog that the course employs a web-based instructional method.

7. Course Proposals should be uploaded in Curriculog by the Originator (instructor or a graduate program's designee; School curriculum managers may not be designees). **It is the Originator's responsibility to ensure that the CP is approved by the Assessment team**, which is the first unit to review the CP. Upon Assessment's approval, the proposal moves to, and requires approval by, the Curriculum Manager, the Graduate Group, the Curriculum Committee, and the Dean, before it is forwarded to the Registrar. When the CP reaches the Registrar stage, the Registrar will check the form for completeness, and review documentation from the school assessment coordinator, check for consistency between cross- listed courses if relevant, and verify the preliminary course number if a new course. Incomplete forms will be returned to the originating graduate program.

8. Completed CPs will be transmitted to the Senate Office via Curriculog for GC's review. The following criteria will be used by GC in its review:
   - Are the standards and prerequisites of the proposed course consistent with those of related courses taught at UCM and similar courses taught at other UC campuses?

[4] Per the UC Merced Credit Hour Policy which states that one unit of credit is equivalent to 3 hours of work per week per term.

[5] https://wascsenior.app.box.com/s/6oju46p2b6mklgigo2om. To ensure the most up-to-date information, please contact GC Analyst Melanie Snyder (msnyder10@ucmerced.edu).

- Is the instructional format justified (e.g. lecture, lab)? Is the unit value for the course consistent with the Credit Hour Policy (each unit should correspond to three hours of student effort per week) as indicated by the course schedule and number/types of readings/assignments/assessments?
- Does the course appear to fit within the graduate group's subject area?
- Does the subject matter of the course substantially overlap with that of another course? If so, does the CP explain why the new course is needed?
- If the course is to be conjoined with an undergraduate course, are the subject matter and proposed format consistent with the credit hour, which requires that graduate and undergraduate courses "must have clearly differentiated and unique performance criteria, requirements, and goals." Do conjoined courses have sufficient overlap in course structure to facilitate concurrent instruction of both advanced undergraduates and graduate students? Are performance criteria, requirements, and goals of the undergraduate and graduate versions of the course clear and distinct?
- If the course is a distance or blended course, have the supplemental questions been clearly answered?

9. If GC requires further information or indicates that modification of the CP is needed, the Senate analyst, on behalf of GC, will notify the graduate program of the request. It is the responsibility of the graduate program and/or submitting instructor to provide the requested information or modification to GC in a timely fashion via the Senate analyst.

10. Once a course is approved by GC, the Registrar inputs the course details into the student information system and the academic Catalog. Faculty or a designee who submitted the proposal will be notified of its approval through an automated email from the Curriculog system.

IV. Procedure for Approving Extension Courses in the X300-X499 Series

University Extension courses are governed in accordance with Senate Regulations [SR 790 – SR 814].

1. Course proposals for X300 – X499 series courses are prepared in accordance with UC Merced Extension procedures.

2. Complete course proposals for X300-X499 series courses are approved by the Dean of University Extension and by the graduate group or department proposing the course. Complete approval must be received before any public announcement of such course is made.

3. For courses for which there is no corresponding graduate group or department, the course will be approved by a Curriculum Advisory Board convened by Extension for this purpose. Membership of the Curriculum Board will be approved by GC. Curriculum Boards will be convened for the purposes of reviewing courses of select prefixes/disciplinary foci appropriate to the membership of the Board.

4. Course proposals approved by a Curriculum Board and by the Extension Dean are transmitted to GC for approval. Complete approval must be received before any public announcement of such course is made.