



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)
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GRADUATE COURSE APPROVAL AND CRF 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

Requests for new graduate courses in the 200-699 series are transmitted using the existing Course Request Form (CRF) in Excel spreadsheet format. Transition to a web-based format is foreseen in the near future.

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.

Requests for UC Merced Extension courses in the X300-X499 series are managed through UC Merced Extension's course request system.

Notes: Throughout this document, the term "Graduate Program" refers to either a CCGA approved Interdepartmental/Departmental Program or to a Graduate Emphasis under UC Merced's Interim Individual Graduate Program (IIGP). For courses in 200-699 series, a checklist for CRF submission appears at the bottom of section III of this document to aid in preparing the CRF packet.

III. Procedure for CRF Submission for Graduate Courses in the 200-699 Series

1. All CRFs 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. Documentation of approval by the graduate program, usually in the form of a cover letter from the group chair, must accompany submission of the CRF. Beginning in Spring 2013, all CRFs should also be accompanied by documentation of review by the relevant graduate assessment coordinator, usually in the form of a cover letter, providing his/her evaluation of WSCUC requirements when syllabi are initially developed or revised for CRF submission. All CRFs must also be signed by the faculty member proposing the course or course change, and by the lead dean for the submitting graduate program. Draft catalog copy should also be provided. 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 should be indicated as such on the CRF, include a preliminary new course number and should have attached a syllabus providing the course goals/objectives, course learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, contact information, class policies, academic integrity policy, disability services information, a brief course schedule and the number and types of readings/assignments/assessments, the number of units earned, and assessment/grading policy. 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. 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. The course schedule required by Graduate Council 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](#).
3. Modifications to an existing course should be indicated as such on the CRF. The explanation box should explain briefly the reason for the proposed change and should have an accompanying syllabus with all required information. A clean copy of the syllabus and an edited copy (using track changes or the equivalent) should be provided.
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 CRF, complete with syllabus, 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 CRF. In addition, the relevant graduate assessment coordinator must review the CRF 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 CRF, complete with syllabus, 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. Distance or blended courses are graduate courses that are hybrid or involve distance education elements (e.g. web-based, audio conferencing, satellite). CRFs for distance or blended courses must be submitted with a completed [Supplemental Questionnaire](#).
7. Completed CRFs should be submitted by the graduate program to the Registrar's Office (to RegistrarSecure@ucmerced.edu). Upon receipt of the CRF, the Registrar will check the form for completeness, dean's signature, graduate program approval, 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. Forms submitted without required authorizations and incomplete forms will be returned to the originating graduate program.
8. Completed CRFs will be transmitted to the Senate Office 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?
 - 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?
 - Has the assessment coordinator confirmed that the syllabus contains information required by WSCUC?
 - Does the subject matter of the course substantially overlap with that of another course? If so, does the CRF or course outline 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 defined and answered?
9. If GC requires further information or indicates that modification of the CRF 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 CRF in its final form will be transmitted to the Registrar. The Registrar will notify the originating graduate program of approval, usually in the form of an email notification, and the course will be entered into the catalog.

Checklist for graduate CRF submission:

- ✓ Completed CRF form, signed by submitting instructor and school dean

- ✓ A syllabus with all required information (clean copy and “track changes or the equivalent” copy for revised CRFs are requested)
- ✓ Draft catalog copy
- ✓ Graduate program cover letter, documenting CRF vote and compliance with SR 762 (conjoined courses only)
- ✓ Graduate assessment coordinator cover letter, documenting review
- ✓ For cross-listed courses - accompanying CRF, syllabus, catalog copy, and documentation for all courses to be cross-listed with submitted CRF
- ✓ For conjoined courses - simultaneous submission of undergraduate CRF to UGC
- ✓ For distance or blended courses- supplemental questionnaire

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

University Extension courses are governed in accordance with Senate Regulations [[SR 790 – SR814](#)].

1. Course requests for X300 – X499 series courses are prepared in accordance with UC Merced Extension procedures.
2. Complete course requests 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 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. CRFs 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.

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