



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
GRADUATE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL (GRC)
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GRADUATE COURSE APPROVAL AND CRF PROCESS

Requests for new graduate courses and course modifications 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.

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). A checklist for CRF submission appears at the bottom of this document to aid in preparing the CRF packet.

Procedure for CRF submission for graduate courses:

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 from each school’s assessment coordinator, usually in the form of a cover letter, providing his/her perspective 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, resource implications within the context of the relevant graduate program(s), and WASC compliance, and need for submission of a Substantive Change Proposal to WASC. The campus Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) will assist faculty in determining if a Substantive Change Proposal TO WASC is necessary.
2. New courses should be indicated as such on the CRF, include a preliminary new course number and should have attached a WASC compliant syllabus providing the course goals/objectives, student learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, contact information, class policies, academic integrity policy, disability services information, course schedule/assignments/resources, the number of units earned, and assessment/grading policy. The syllabus should also 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. GRC 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. Resources for formulating a WASC compliant syllabus are available through the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence at <http://crte.ucmerced.edu>.
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 WASC compliant syllabus. 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 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, each school's 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 that indicates the corresponding conjoined course. The undergraduate version of the course must be reviewed and approved by UGC. The Undergraduate Council (UGC) [CRF Procedures and Approval Policy](#) are available through the Academic Senate.
6. Distance or blended courses are graduate courses that are hybrid or distance education elements (e.g. web-based, audio conferencing, satellite). Distance or blended course CRFs must be submitted by 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 a 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 GRC for review. The following criteria will be used by GRC 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)?
 - Does the course appear to fit within the graduate group's subject area?
 - Is the syllabus WASC compliant?
 - 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 GRC requires further information or indicates that modification of the CRF is needed, the senate analyst on behalf of GRC 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 GRC in a timely fashion via the senate analyst.

10. Once a course is approved by GRC, 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
- ✓ WASC compliant syllabus (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)
- ✓ School 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

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