

## Slash Course Policy

(Approved by GCC November 1, 2016)

(Slightly revised and approved by UCC November 8, 2016)

### Slash Course Policy:

At a comprehensive university, there are courses appropriate for both upper level undergraduates and graduate students to be enrolled in the same course. At UWL, these courses are designated 400/500 (slash) level courses. While the content for graduate and undergraduate students may be similar, even identical, there should be a distinction in learning outcomes and student experience. In most instances, the learning outcomes of the graduate students should explicitly include a level of analysis and synthesis that exceeds expectations of the undergraduate students. These different outcomes and/or different levels of expectations must be stated explicitly in the syllabi (either separate undergraduate and graduate syllabi or a clearly stated section of a common syllabus).

### CIM Forms for Slash Courses:

The CIM form for slash courses will require: 1) in the *Objectives/Learning Outcomes* section, identification of distinctions in learning outcomes for the undergraduate students and the graduate students and 2) completion of the new section titled *Difference Between the Undergraduate and Graduate Experience* (see below).

In the guidelines for **Course Objectives and/or Learning Outcomes**, include the following statement:

A distinction must be made between course objectives/learning outcomes for students taking the course for undergraduate credit and those taking the course for graduate credit. This distinction could include skills in analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation at the graduate level. These differences in course objectives/learning outcomes must be listed in the course syllabus.

### **Difference between the undergraduate and graduate experience:**

Select **one** of the following statements and provide information on how this will be accomplished in the course.

- Although this course is **taught largely at a graduate level**, the following differences exist to also make it accessible to upper level undergraduates (e.g., different assignments, different expectations, different readings).
- Although this course is **taught largely at an undergraduate level**, graduate students are receiving a graduate level experience because of the following graduate-only expectations (e.g., opportunities to teach or co-teach, graduate-only discussion sessions, community outreach/service, writing or research assignments that clearly elevate student analysis of the course content to a graduate level).

(The section above will only appear on CIM if the course is marked as a slash course on the CIM form)

**Add to course description:** Cut and paste one of the following to the end of your course description:

- This course is **taught largely at a graduate level**.
- This course is **taught largely at an undergraduate level**. Graduate students will have additional course requirements/expectations.

**Implementation of New Slash Course Policy:**

Eventually all departments will revise learning outcomes and complete the new *Difference Between the Undergraduate and Graduate Experience* section for all slash courses.

- Beginning Spring 2017, slash courses (both new and revised) brought before the Graduate Curriculum Committee and/or the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will include differentiated learning outcomes and will articulate the *Difference Between the Undergraduate and Graduate Experience*.
- No later than May 2019, all slash courses will include differentiated learning outcomes and will articulate the *Difference Between the Undergraduate and Graduate Experience*. Slash courses not updated by the end of the 2019 Spring semester should be reviewed by the department for possible deletion.
- The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Syllabi Review group will ensure inclusion of slash course learning outcomes and student experiences in slash course syllabi campus-wide. It is expected that all slash course syllabi will include distinctions between the graduate and undergraduate student learning outcomes and experiences prior to the course being taught, but no later than Spring 2019.

## 2011 Approved Slash Course Policy (CURRENT POLICY)

### Policy Action for Slash Courses

After examining the existing policy regarding slash courses, it is the recommendation of the Graduate Curriculum Committee to reaffirm the following:

1. Slash course pairings of 300/500 and 400/600 should be removed
2. If departments wish to retain currently numbered 300/500 and 400/600 courses, those courses should be renumbered to 400/500 whenever possible
3. Ask departments to examine all existing slash courses and decide whether or not they need to remain slash courses
4. Charge the Office of Records and Registration to revise the current LX form by eliminating the request for information on the differences between undergraduate and graduate experiences in 400/500 slash courses. Graduate-level learning outcomes, course content, mode and/or method of delivery, and assessment procedures should be inherent to the structure of the course.

Reasoning for policy recommendations:

Items 1-3:

The recommendations in items 1-3 above are reiterations of the recommendations made in the 1995 Faculty Senate document entitled, "Proposal on Course Numbering" (separate attachment). The Committee is, again, recommending that programs/departments examine their curriculum containing slash courses to 1) remove any 300/500 or 400/600 combinations, 2) renumber 300/500 or 400/600 combinations as 400/500 numbers, and 3) examine the true need for slash courses

Item 4:

It appears that a single sentence in a Faculty Senate document from 1995, titled "Proposal on Course Numbering" was misinterpreted. That sentence, "The addition of an 'extra paper for graduate students' does not constitute a substantive rationale," was interpreted as necessitating a distinction between the requirements for graduate and undergraduate students in slash courses (see [http://www.uwlax.edu/records/FacultyServices/Completion\\_Guide\\_Paper.htm](http://www.uwlax.edu/records/FacultyServices/Completion_Guide_Paper.htm)). However, within context of the paragraph from which that sentence was taken, slash courses (the teaching of undergraduates and graduates in a single course) were to be justified in terms of learning outcomes, course content, mode and/or method of delivery, and student assessment procedures. The addition of extra work for graduate students did not constitute a substantive justification/rationale for ESTABLISHING A SLASH COURSE. In other words, giving graduate students some form of additional work was not sufficient reason to put them into a class with undergraduate students, and vice versa.

In summary, the committee is recommending a change in the LX 139 form and to the completion guide for the LX 139. 1) The LX 139 form should be changed to show one single box for "Principal Activities" for the course and not necessarily distinguish between undergraduate and graduate activities, unless the program/department chooses to do so. 2) The LX 139 completion guidelines should be changed to delete the paragraph under "Principal Activities" or at least be modified to remove the requirement that a distinction be made between undergraduate and graduate students in slash courses.

It should be noted that these changes do not prohibit faculty/programs/departments from distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate students in their slash courses. If some still wish to do so, then fine. Instead, the change removes the requirement that all faculty/programs/departments make such distinctions. More importantly, it shifts the focus from additional work for graduate students to the original intention of the 1995 document - i.e. justification of a slash course based on learning outcomes, course content, mode and/or method of delivery, and student assessment procedures.

The policy proposed above has been shared with the university community to include department chairs and program directors.