

Instructions for Explaining the 4XX/5XX Differential

Dual-listed courses are numbered 4XX/5XX and are offered at both the upper-division (undergraduate) and graduate-student level. Credits and prerequisites are the same, yet students at the graduate level are expected to complete a substantive and measurable difference in the type and amount of work required for credit.

Departments and instructors are responsible for providing a graduate-level learning experience for those students enrolled in 5xx sections. Course proposals and syllabi must clearly distinguish between the undergraduate assignments and learning outcomes and those intended for graduate students. Graduate students should undertake more complex, in-depth work. Graduate students and faculty members must be able to identify and understand how the mastery of course content at the graduate level differs from successful mastery at the undergraduate level.

For 4XX/5XX level courses, both proposal forms and syllabi must state explicitly the substantive and measurable differences in type and amount of work for the two levels. The following “substantive differences” should be clearly stated in the course syllabus:

1. graduate-level work appropriate to the field (e.g., additional readings, papers, projects, problem sets); and/or
2. course work significantly more rigorous in both depth of study and methodology.

These requirements are in addition to the already specified time commitment for the credits. Requiring graduate students enrolled in 5xx sections to lead discussion sections, lecture for the instructor, lead group projects, or in any other way take responsibility for undergraduate students’ learning experiences is not acceptable as a “substantive difference” (unless the course itself is a pedagogy course) and is in violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Graduate students are expected to perform work of higher quantity and more in-depth than undergraduate students, typically with forty hours of student engagement for each student credit hour (compared to thirty hours of undergraduate student engagement for each student credit hour). Therefore, a 3-credit graduate course would typically engage students for approximately 120 hours; a 4-credit graduate course may be expected to entail approximately 160 hours for the average graduate student for whom the course is designed.

An engagement and assessment inventory (sample shown below) is especially helpful for specifying the grading and expectation differential between undergraduate and graduate students.



Educational Activity	Hours Undergraduates Engaged	Hours Graduate Students Engaged	Undergraduate Assessment	Graduate Student Assessment
Attendance	40	40		
Readings	40	40		
Writing Assignments	35	48		
Lab		7		
Review Preparation		20		
Class Activities	5	5		
Total Hours	120	160		
Attendance and participation			15%	15%
2 quizzes			20% (10% each)	10% (5% each)
Critical review			5%	10%
Analytical report			20%	20%
Presentation			15%	10%
Proposal for field sampling				10%
Essay			25%	25%
Total			100%	100%