

**4xx/5xx-Level Course: Ideas for Delineating Graduate-Level Requirements
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The distinction between a 4xx-level undergraduate course and 5xx-level graduate course should go beyond adding an additional course requirement for graduate students. While many elements of the course may be the same, it is anticipated that courses taken for credit at the graduate level will have more rigor, cover content in greater depth and breadth, have enhanced course requirements, and have higher expectations for demonstrating mastery of the subject matter.

Courses identified as 4xx/5xx level should identify elements that make the course a 5xx-level graduate course. Areas to distinguish the course as graduate-level could include:

- Course description
- Student learning outcomes
- Course requirements
- Evaluation methods

Each of these elements is described in more detail below.

Course Description

When developing the course description, consider if the purpose of the course is in any way enhanced for graduate students. If so, the course description should reflect the differences. Options for writing the description include:

- Writing a separate course description for the 5xx-level graduate course. Clearly label the description statement as the graduate course description.
- Add additional “graduate course” information to the undergraduate course description. Clearly identify the information in the description statement that applies only to the course as a 5xx-level graduate course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes describe what students are able to do as a result of completing the course. It is expected that the learning outcomes for graduate students will be enhanced. Learning outcomes for graduate students in most instances will reflect higher order cognitive skills. Refer to *Writing Graduate-Level Student Learning Outcomes* for more information about Bloom’s Taxonomy and writing SLOs.

Bloom’s Taxonomy (listed in order from lower level cognitive skills to higher level cognitive skills:

- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Graduate-level student learning outcomes can be delineated from undergraduate-level learning outcomes by writing the mastery required at a higher level of cognitive skill.

- For example, an undergraduate student may be required to “apply”, while a graduate student is required to “analyze” the specific knowledge and/or skill reflected in the learning outcome.

In addition to delineating graduate-level learning outcomes by higher level of cognitive skills, the learning outcomes may:

- Be written as a distinct set of learning outcomes for graduate students.
 - In this case, undergraduate and graduate students each have distinct learning outcomes.
 - Learning outcomes for graduate students should reflect higher level cognitive skills
- Include additional learning outcomes for graduate students only.
 - In this case, some or all of the undergraduate learning outcomes are used, with additional learning outcomes written for graduate students.
 - Learning outcomes for graduate students should reflect higher level cognitive skills

Course Requirements

Course requirements should be enhanced for graduate students taking the course at the 5xx-level. Course requirements include the activities that students will engage in to facilitate the learning. Options for enhancing the course requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Additional required reading
 - Book (s)
 - Chapter (s)
 - Journal articles
 - Government documents
 - Other types of reading materials
- Additional course topics
- Additional assignments (written, presentation, performance, experiment, etc.)
- Additional hours (internship, practicum, service learning, etc.)

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods include what students will do to demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes and the criteria that will be used to evaluate mastery at the graduate level.

The assignments required of graduate students taking the course at the 5xx-level should be created to demonstrate mastery of the graduate-level learning outcomes. Options include:

- Modifying undergraduate students’ assignment(s) for graduate students.
 - The modification should reflect the higher level of cognitive mastery required of graduate students.
 - The modification should go beyond adding more of the same requirement for graduate students without enhancing the depth, breadth, or rigor of the assignment. For instance, additional page requirements, or additional presentation time is not sufficient.
- Create assignment(s) specifically for graduate student.

The criteria used to evaluate mastery at the graduate level should be clearly delineated. Options include, but are not limited to:

- Create a separate scoring rubric for assignments completed by both undergraduate and graduate students. The scoring rubric will delineate the enhanced expectations for graduate students.
- Create a more rigorous point system for graduate students.
 - For example, in order to earn an “A”, graduate students must earn a higher percentage of points on a given assignment and in the course.