GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF COURSE PROPOSALS to the GRADUATE SCHOOL

1. Introduction

In order to facilitate the approval process for new and changed graduate courses, the Graduate School has instituted a fairly straightforward form to document each request. While the document is primarily concerned with providing hints in completing the form for New Course/Proposals, sections have been provided to address course modifications, eliminations, sunsets, and reactivations.

2. The Role of the Graduate Curriculum Committee

In order to better understand the content of the course change form, it is helpful to consider the role of the Graduate Curriculum Committee in the course approval process. The goals of the committee are twofold:

a. to ensure that graduate students have a clear understanding of the programs and courses offered by the Graduate School, and

b. to ensure that resource issues have been addressed.

The information requested on the course change form helps the committee in the above regard. Specifically, for a new course offering the committee asks for:

- A course outline,
- Any textbooks and/or supplementary reading material to be assigned in the course,
- The identity of the instructor(s) who will teach the course in the foreseeable future,
- A rationale for why the course is being introduced at this time and
- The ability of the institution to provide the resources necessary for the course.

The above information together with a presentation made by a representative from the department initiating the course change(s), provides the committee with the information necessary to review the course.

3. Proposed Catalog Description

Of great concern to the committee is the clarity and focus of the catalog description. If necessary, rewrites of this description are done, in conjunction with the department representative, for two purposes:

a. to ensure that the catalog description is as clear as possible given space limitations, and

b. to ensure that the catalog description contains only that information necessary to describe the course, leaving contextual information such as frequency and time of offering and how the course relates to existing programs to documents describing such matters.

Since publishing and mailing costs are high and rising higher, it is extremely important for the Graduate School to be able to produce a streamlined graduate catalog. We ask, therefore, that each department do its part by streamlining its catalog entries by giving careful thought to the inclusion (or exclusion) of *every word* in a proposed catalog description. If it adds to the description, keep it there, but if it doesn't, cut it.

The following are a number of rules of thumb in constructing a "minimal" course description.

- Don't repeat the title in the catalog description.
- Don't write in complete sentences.
- Remember that the aim of this description is to give the student an *integrated* view of topical coverage. Simply enumerating topics might not in itself be sufficient.
- Information about curriculum structure should be minimized. For example, prerequisites, co-requisites, and course sequences are acceptable, but other information may be more appropriate in a separate curriculum document such as the course syllabus.
- Above all, don't state what can reasonably be assumed from context. For example, phrases such as *an intensive study, a graduate course,* and *for biological scientists who* are arguably unnecessary.

The following examples illustrate how the committee approaches the *editing process.*

Example 1:
Original Catalog Entry:

SVE 533 Image Processing in Remote Sensing

Introduction to image processing techniques that are suitable to the processing of remote sensing data. Image digitization, quantization, and sampling. Image storage, display, and image file management. Geometric operations, rectification, registration, and resampling techniques. Image enhancements, point operations, and filtering. Multispectral imaging concepts, supervised and unsupervised classification techniques, clustering. Fourier transforms, intensity-hue-saturation transform. Interfaces to image processing systems. Use of image processing facilities and laboratories. Prerequisite: SVE 433. Cr 3.

Rewritten Catalog Entry:

SVE 533 Image Processing in Remote Sensing

Image processing techniques for remote sensing data. Image digitization, quantization, and sampling. Image storage, display, and image file management. Image enhancements and multispectral imaging concepts. Fourier transforms, intensity-hue-saturation transform. Interfaces to image processing systems. Prerequisite: SVE 433 Cr 3.

- Unless there is a possibility of interpreting a course as being an advanced treatment, *Introduction to…* is not necessary.
- Topical coverage is over detailed. *Geometric operations, rectification, registration, and resampling techniques* removed.
- *Use of image processing facilities and laboratories* can be assumed through context.

Example 2:

Original Catalog Entry:

SWK 540 Social Welfare Policy and Issues for Generalist Practitioners

First graduate level course in a 3 course sequence. Provides an analytic perspective on the provision of social services and the interrelatedness of practice and policy analysis. The dimensions of choice in social welfare policy and major issues in provision of services are examined. Prerequisite: Admission to MSW program or permission. Cr 3.

Rewritten Catalog Entry:

SWK 540 Social Welfare Policy and Issues for Generalist Practitioners

Analytic perspective on the provision of social services and interrelatedness of practice and policy analysis. Dimensions of choice in social welfare policy and major issues in provision of services are examined. First of a 3 course sequence. Prerequisite: permission. Cr 3.

Changes:

- *Graduate* assumed.
- Removal of *Provides an* and *The.*
- Removal of *are examined.* This is assumed.
- Course curriculum related information placed at end.

Example 3:

Original Catalog Entry:

ECO 535 Advanced Public Finance

Covers microeconomic principles of taxation and public expenditure. Cr 3.

Rewritten Catalog Entry:

ECO 535 Advanced Public Finance

Microeconomic principles of taxation and public expenditure. Cr 3.

Changes:

- Removal of *Covers.* This is assumed.

Example 4:
Original Catalog Entry:

PSS 551 Environmental Biology Measuring Methods

An intensive study of research techniques and methods for biological scientists who need to determine the local physical environment in which plants and animals live. Prerequisites: PHY 111 and 112, MAT 152 or permission. Rec 2, Lab 2. Cr 3.

Rewritten Catalog Entry:

PSS 551 Environmental Biology Measuring Methods

Research techniques and methods to determine the local physical environment of plants and animals. Prerequisites: PHY 111 and 112, MAT 152 or permission. Rec 2, Lab 2. Cr 3.

Changes:

- *An intensive study* not necessary. It is assumed of a graduate course.
- *..for biological scientists who need to..* not necessary. It can be determined through context.
- *In which plants and animals live* "streamlined" to *of plants and animals.*

Example 5:
Original Catalog Entry:

ECO 525 Advanced Topics in Economic Development

An advanced readings seminar examining those concepts, tools, and models…

Rewritten Catalog Entry:

ECO 525 Advanced Topics in Economic Development

Concepts, tools, and models…

Changes:

- *An advanced readings seminar examining those…* removed, since it is assumed from the title.

4. Rationale for a Proposed Course

All courses exist within the context of the program or programs offered by the initiating department. This contextual information should be provided in the rationale for the course. Issues to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- How does the course fit in the program(s) of the department?
- Does the course replace another course or courses in the program(s) of the department?

- If the course is presented as part of a "package" of interrelated courses, and if so, how do these new courses interrelate?
- Will the course be a requirement for some or all students?
- How often will the course be offered?
- What is the expected enrollment for the course?

The choice of course number (500, 600) will in some cases determine the mix of undergraduate and graduate students that enroll in the course. A clear reason why such a choice is made needs to be stated in the course rationale.

5. Resource Utilization

Factors to be considered when addressing utilization include:

a. Institutional Library support: an indication of the present and future library holdings necessary for the course. In the case of library holdings to be acquired, some indication of the priority of such acquisitions needs to be provided.

b. Other sources for library support: including the department/college, personal faculty holdings, off campus holdings, etc.

c. Space and Equipment: the availability of classroom and/or laboratory space, and the availability of laboratory equipment. Issues include the permanence of existing equipment and the expectation of new equipment purchases.

d. Computer Resources: hardware source(s), including the IBM mainframe, terminal support, PC clusters, and workstation support. Issues include the expectation of any new special purpose hardware. Also important is the availability of software, including new purchases.

e. Student assistant support: includes the expectation of graduate and/or undergraduate support for grading, lab work, etc.

Although resource utilization is listed as a separate topic to be addressed, other areas listed also effect this important issue. These areas include:

a. Instructor availability: an indication as to who the instructor or instructors will be for the course, and the ability of the department to provide the course as a regular catalog offering.

b. Rationale: in cases where there is the possibility of replication of course content between courses, especially between departments, a clear description of the differences between such courses needs to be presented. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the department to determine the extent of any overlaps and explain why such an overlap needs to exist.

6. Course Modification

Course modifications vary from a simple change in credits or change in course number to a major change in catalog description. The latter change should be treated much like a new course offering, with course outline, instructor(s), and rationale for the change. In all cases we ask that a rationale section be provided explaining the change.

While course modifications need only be addressed by the committee if changes in the catalog description are necessary, we do ask that the changed course content be "true" to the course description. For example, if a catalog description clearly indicates that a course is a survey course, changing it to a topics course should not be done without changing the catalog description.

7. Course Elimination/Sunsetting

A large number of courses currently exist on the books that for one reason or another will never again be given in the form described in the catalog description. We ask that departments lend a hand and "clean out" such old courses through course elimination requests.

Other courses might still be relevant to the curriculum, but for various reasons (inadequate resources, no qualified faculty) will not be offered in the foreseeable future. These courses should be "sunsetted". Sunsetted courses can be reactivated by contacting the Graduate School or the Office of Student Records within 5 years of the sunset date.