**Notes for Faculty**

All new graduate degrees and courses require approval from the Graduate School’s Graduate Curriculum Committee. The committee’s role in the approval process is twofold. It is an expression of the commitment that Baylor’s faculty have oversight of the university’s curriculum. It is also a means for fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that curricular changes meet the standards of our accrediting agency, [SACSCOC](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf). This document is meant to help faculty navigate the course proposal process.

Note: When degree proposals include new courses, the course proposals can accompany the degree proposal and be submitted by the [deadline](https://registrar.web.baylor.edu/courses-catalogs/catalog-curriculum-deadlines-facultystaff) set by the Office of the Provost.

**Key Portions of the SACSCOC Guidelines**

The following statements are taken from the SACSCOC Resource Manual, Section 9.6

Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.

Graduate education builds upon the foundation of undergraduate education. Hence, there is an expectation that postgraduate professional degree programs and graduate programs demand more rigor and higher-order learning than undergraduate work on the same subject.

This expectation for graduate education also implies that requirements in courses not exclusively designed for graduate credit, but that allow both undergraduate and graduate enrollment, ensure that there is a clear distinction between the requirements of undergraduate students and graduate students.

Questions to Consider

* Are there clear indications of more advanced content in graduate and post-baccalaureate programs when compared to the institution’s own undergraduate programs in similar subjects?
* How does the institution maintain higher rigor for graduate and post-baccalaureate programs if the same course is offered (or cross-listed) to both graduate/post-baccalaureate students and undergraduate students?
* How is the literature of the discipline incorporated into curriculum requirements?
* How does the institution ensure its graduate and post-baccalaureate students are engaged in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences?

**Key Portions of the Course Proposal**

*Justification Narrative*

The CIM process provides a place for a justification of the proposed course. This is an opportunity to briefly explain the need for the course and address questions you can anticipate from the committee. For example:

* Why is this course being proposed?
* Who is the intended audience and where does it fit in the department curriculum?
* If you are using course materials that seem dated, why are you doing so?

Including answers to these types of questions can greatly facilitate the approval process.

*Catalog Description*

This brief statement is the course description that will appear in the Graduate School Catalog. It should be free of errors.

*Syllabus or Course Action Form*

Though not expected to be a final product, the syllabus should be complete and coherent enough to be easily understood by the committee and contain the following items.

* Course description and learning objectives
* Assignments and Grading Scale
* Required materials and readings
* If a 4000-level course, a description of additional requirements and expectations for graduate students and a grading scale for the assignments required to receive graduate credit

*Learning Objectives*

SACSCOC requires learning objectives/outcomes for each course. These are the demonstrable outcomes students should achieve by the end of the term. It is common practice to list the most important objectives in the course syllabus. They should also be listed in the course request form in CIM under the section labeled “course objectives.”

Learning objectives differ from course descriptions in several key ways. Rather than describing the opportunities or experiences the course will offer, they describe the assessable knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should gain or refine from the course. For example, a course description might state that students will gain “tangible skills” or “effective strategies” of some kind. Learning objectives name some of the skills and strategies that will be developed. Thus, for example, objectives might describe how students will be expected to analyze, critique, assess, justify, explain, or synthesize the information, arguments, or ideas covered in the course.

**Graduate Curriculum Committee Course Proposal Review Rubric**

This rubric is intended to provide examples of the kinds of questions considered by the curriculum committee.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Justification** | Yes | Revisions Needed |
| * Does it explain the need for the course? (E.g., it’s place in the curriculum & sequence; the intended audience, its connection to accreditation standards, etc.)
 |  |  |
| **Course Description** |
| * Does it adequately describe the course?
 |  |  |
| * Is it “catalog ready?”
 |  |  |
| **Learning Objectives** |
| * Do they describe the knowledge, skills, or abilities students will gain in the class?
 |  |  |
| * Are they assessable?
 |  |  |
| * Do they match the course description?
 |  |  |
| * Do they reflect a graduate level course?
 |  |  |
| **Syllabus** |
| * Does it state the learning objectives?
 |  |  |
| * Do the assignments match the course description and learning objectives?
 |  |  |
| * Does it include the required material and readings?
 |  |  |
| * Does the grading scale meet Baylor’s requirements and fit with the assignments described for the course?
 |  |  |
| * If a 4000-level course, are the graduate requirements adequately explained?
 |  |  |