SGS Policy and Guidelines on Graduate Courses and Other Academic Activities

[the Policy is for inclusion in the Calendar; the Guidelines depend on the Policy but are not for inclusion in the Calendar]

POLICY ON GRADUATE COURSES AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES:

Graduate Courses
All graduate programs are composed of a number of academic requirements that include graduate courses and other academic activities. A graduate course is a discrete, time-delimited unit of instructional/learning activity identified by a course code, in which students enroll. Graduate courses must be approved according to the relevant SGS policies and procedures. All graduate courses must have an instructor in charge who has a graduate faculty appointment in the graduate unit(s) responsible for the course. A full graduate course (course weight of one full course equivalent or 1.0 FCE) should involve a minimum of 48-72 hours of organized activity (e.g. 2 lectures or 3 hours of laboratory work a week over two sessions); a half course (0.5 FCE) should require approximately half this time commitment. Normally the beginning and end dates for courses should coincide with the beginning and end dates of University sessions.

Graduate courses may take many forms and their timing may not always coincide with the normal beginning and end of classes in each session.

Course Codes
All graduate courses have course codes consisting of:
- a prefix associated with the academic unit (three letters);
- a four-digit course number; and
- a suffix associated with the course weight (alpha character).

Normally, course weight is measured in full-course equivalencies (FCE) and is indicated via a Y or H suffix:
- Y Full course: 1.0 FCE normally taken over two sessions
- H Half Course: 0.5 FCE normally taken over one session

Course weight variations occur in some graduate programs. These variations often take the form of modular courses. A modular course is a course that has a non-standard weight, may have non-standard start and end dates within a session, and is usually combined with other course components so that the total equals 0.5 or 1.0 FCE. The minimum contact hour requirement applies to modular courses, equivalent to course weight.

Other Academic Activities
Graduate programs may have a variety of requirements that are not courses but constitute other academic activities which have been approved according to SGS policies and procedures. Some common non-course academic activities are major research papers, comprehensive examinations, practica, internships, etc.
GUIDELINES ON GRADUATE COURSES AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES:

See the Policy on Graduate Courses and Other Academic Activities for more information and for the definition of graduate courses.

Course Variations in Timing (see also modular courses under Course Codes above)

Intensive course: A course that is offered through a compressed timeframe. The minimum contact hours are equivalent to the course weight.

Extended course (+): A course in which the work continues into another academic session.

Continuous course (o): A course which may extend throughout a student’s program.

Course Delivery Modes

Face-to-Face: A course in which students are in the same place at the same time.

Distance-delivery: A course which uses a variety of technologically-mediated instruction. This course mode may include online instruction, webcast, podcast, audio/video and may be either synchronous or asynchronous.

Mixed: A course that is a mixture of face-to-face and technologically-mediated instruction

Alternate Course Types

The following descriptions of course types beyond the regular course description found in the policy section above are intended to provide guidelines for graduate courses structures and to clarify common terminology. They are not intended to constrain pedagogical innovation.

Reading and research course: Reading and/or research courses should involve as much reading and work as a normal seminar or other type of graduate course; written work should be a requirement of the course. Reading and/or research courses are subject to the grading practices policies in the same way as any other course. Only faculty holding a graduate appointment may direct a reading and/or research course, and they must hold a faculty appointment in the graduate unit where the course is being offered, normally in the student’s home graduate unit. In general, both the student and instructor should be on campus and the frequency of their meeting should be consistent with other courses. Approval to take a reading and/or research course is given by the graduate unit.

Seminar/Workshop Courses¹: Some graduate units offer seminar/workshop courses. These courses vary in format and delivery from unit to unit, and they may or may not count towards the number of courses required for the completion of a degree program. Consult the home graduate unit for details and program requirements.

Laboratory Courses: Some graduate units offer laboratory courses. These courses may vary in their requirements only in the site and method of learning.

¹ See also Graduate Seminar Series Courses: Guidelines for Graduate Units, June 2010
**Joint Courses:** Joint courses exist where two or more graduate units participate to offer the course. A joint course has a three-letter course code prefix that begins with J. Joint courses are approved by both graduate units.

**Cross-listed Courses:** Cross-listed courses are those that are listed in the offerings of another graduate unit with the permission of both units. The course code does not change when cross-listed.

**Topics Courses:** Some graduate units offer topics courses. These courses vary from regular courses in that the content of these courses may vary from offering to offering.

*(revised 5 March 2010; 24 November 2011)*