

## **Differentiation Between 5000- and 6000-Level Courses**

(Approved by Graduate Council, April 21, 1994)  
(Revised, April 24, 2017)

### The 5000-Level Course

The 5000-level course should be a graduate course with content manageable by the graduate student who has completed the B.S. or B.A. degree in an appropriate field of study. While master's education may differ between professional and academic disciplines, master's level courses should provide knowledge beyond the undergraduate level and oriented toward the practitioner in the field or to the preparation for advanced study. Master's level courses should make maximum use of modern technology and other available resources. In addition to expanding the student's knowledge base, courses must place emphasis on the analysis and synthesis of information. Students completing these courses must possess a thorough knowledge of scholarly writing techniques and of research methodologies appropriate to the discipline. The instructor for the 5000-level course must be broadly and deeply conversant with the field of study, to include not only historical studies but also the most recent information available in textbooks and scholarly articles or electronic networks.

### The 6000-Level Course

The 6000-level course should require previous graduate study and some prior research activity, and should list prerequisites in the course description. A 6000-level course, as compared to a 5000-level course, should be more focused on theory, demand a higher level of critical thinking, necessitate considerably more intellectual rigor, and demand integration of information into frameworks of knowledge. Students in these classes must be capable of sustained, independent inquiry and analysis. These courses should also require advanced, scholarly writing skills; a thorough knowledge of the major research methodologies of the discipline; and the highest skill in accessing information germane to the subject matter. Courses at the 6000-level will build extensively on the most important historical or current research available. These courses will be designed for students pursuing the doctorate and will therefore require that the instructor be currently active in the field of study as a reviewer/researcher.

Note: Students in master's degree programs will be permitted to enroll in 6000-level courses only with the permission of the instructor. This process will insure that the student has met all prerequisites and will allow the instructor to assess the student's ability to understand the more complex level of instruction.

| <b>5000 Level</b>                      | <b>6000 Level</b>                      |
|--|--|
| Mostly secondary sources; some primary | Primary sources; some secondary        |
| Analysis and synthesis of theory       | Synthesis and generation of theory     |
| BA/BS degree background of student     | Graduate course or research background |
| Knowledgeable instructor               | Instructor active in area              |

### **Expectations for Faculty Teaching 5000- and 6000-Level Courses**

#### **5000-Level Courses**

Faculty teaching 5000-level courses (master's degree courses) should:

1. maintain currency in the field through reading of professional journals, participation in professional organizations, and, continuing education;
2. have completed advanced graduate credit above a master's level or equivalent professional experience;
3. provide in-depth and current presentation material that facilitates student analysis and synthesis of content area;
4. provide students with a thorough grounding in current practices and innovations in the discipline, with a solid foundation in research methodologies, and acquaintance with professional organizations and leading journals; and
5. chair theses and/or professional papers.

#### **6000-Level Courses**

Faculty teaching 6000-level courses (doctoral degree courses) should:

1. be active as a reader/reviewer of the literature in the field;

2. be actively involved in contributing to the knowledge base of the discipline via research or other creative activities;
3. serve as a resource to students, faculty, and community in area of expertise;
4. facilitate student learning through presentation of current material, encouraging critical thinking and evaluation, empowering students to direct their own learning, and mentoring students in their scholarly research/creative activities;
5. have a portfolio which includes publications/presentations related to the field of study; and
6. chair doctoral dissertations in the field of study, as applicable.