

GRADUATE CREDIT

Courses with Graduate Credit

Courses taught at UNL must comply with the accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission. Specifically, UNL must ensure that: (1) Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded, and (2) the institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs. (SOURCE: HLC Criteria for Accreditation)

UNL distinguishes undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses using a numbering system. Courses numbered 100-199 are freshman level, 200-299 are sophomore level, 300-399 are junior level, and 400-499 are senior level. Courses numbered 500-599, 600-699, and 700-799 are reserved for Architecture, Law, Dentistry, Medicine, and other professional school offerings. Courses numbered 800-899 and 900-999 are graduate level. Law courses identified with the letter “G” following the course number may be taken for graduate credit.

Safeguarding the integrity of graduate education requires graduate courses to have characteristics common to all disciplines. These characteristics differentiate graduate courses from undergraduate courses by having more advanced graduate-level work and student performance expectations, not by the level of those enrolled. Therefore, all graduate courses are expected to reflect the high standards of graduate education by requiring students to:

- Demonstrate a greater depth of knowledge, understanding, and independence than is normally required for undergraduate students in the discipline.
- Demonstrate advanced skill, methodology, and competence than is normally required for undergraduate students in the discipline.
- Demonstrate a greater degree of analysis, synthesis, and critical thought than is normally required for undergraduate students in the discipline.

The diversity of graduate programs may necessitate interpretation of these characteristics within the context of a specific discipline. There is no intent to eliminate judgment by establishing an inflexible set of rules; however, proposers of new graduate courses are expected to offer a thorough explanation when deviating from the criteria required for graduate courses.

Courses with Undergraduate and Graduate Credit

So-called “dual-level,” “cross-listed” or “graduate tie-in” courses occur when an undergraduate and graduate course are offered at the same time, with the same instructor, and in the same physical or online space. While the classroom experience is shared between the undergraduate and graduate students, dual-level courses are expected to have differentiated content, learning goals, and assessment measures that are distinct. Students enrolled at the graduate level shall be held to higher academic standards than undergraduate students in the same course, consistent with the Higher Learning Commission criteria for accreditation.

The syllabus of a dual-level course must clearly distinguish the undergraduate and graduate components. In addition to the components required by the UNL Syllabus Policy (<https://www.unl.edu/facultysenate/>),

unl-syllabus-policy/), a dual-level course syllabus must describe the graduate level objectives, content, and performance expectations that are different from the undergraduate components. Students enrolled at the graduate level are expected to do more challenging work, not just more work. The syllabus must also describe assessment measures that are unique to students enrolled at the graduate level, including a grading rubric (if applicable), the value distribution (as points or percentages) for each assignment and examination, and any other performance measure specific to the graduate-level work.

A student cannot enroll in a dual-level course at the graduate level if they previously received credit at the undergraduate level. A dual-level course completed and recorded on transcripts at the undergraduate level cannot be retroactively changed to the graduate course.

Accessibility of Graduate Courses

UNL is committed to creating a climate that emphasizes, prioritizes, and expands inclusive excellence and diversity in higher education (SOURCE: N2025 Strategic Plan). Instructors of graduate courses should reflect this commitment by ensuring accessibility. Course syllabi, assignments, examinations, materials, and other resources should be designed with accessibility in mind to meet the needs of diverse learners. Instructors are encouraged to develop content and adhere to practices that do not intentionally or unintentionally introduce learning barriers by:

- Using inclusive language in course documents and interactions with students, including respecting students' preferred name and pronouns and avoiding unnecessary gendered course content.
- Ensuring that required course materials such as books and supplies are appropriate, essential, and available at low or no cost whenever possible.
- Informing students of relevant accessibility information such as library resources, institutional health and food safety resources, institutional offices and centers of support, and critical phone lines (e.g., campus emergency, suicide prevention, sexual violence response, etc.).
- Practicing inclusive teaching and course management. For example, consider using late work strategies and flexible assessments that support the academic success of low income students and students with disabilities, noting that disabled students are often unaware of their own disability, lack the economic resources to provide proof of disability, and are often discouraged by the stigmatization of disability in society.
- Reviewing the available scholarly literature, relevant policies, and institutional training related to diversity, access, and inclusion in higher education (See: UNL Office of Diversity and Inclusion Resources (<https://diversity.unl.edu/>)).

Course proposers are also encouraged to incorporate these and other evidence-based actions to enhance the diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of academia in their proposed syllabus.

In this manner, instructors at UNL are to remain informed and aware of the multitude of barriers to success in higher education (e.g. historical, cultural, economic, systemic, logistical), as well as of practices to mitigate said barriers in order to effectively practice inclusive pedagogy.

SOURCE: UNL Graduate Council Minutes (February 4, 2021)

Credit by Examination

Credit by examination cannot be earned in graduate-level courses or applied to graduate degree programs.

Transfer Credit

All graduate credits to be counted toward the satisfaction of post-baccalaureate degree requirements, including all transfer credits, must be recommended by the cognizant graduate committee of the student's major department or area. Not less than 50 percent of the course work (excluding thesis) required for any post-baccalaureate graduate degree must be completed at the University of Nebraska. No graduate credits will be accepted as transfer credits unless earned at an institution fully accredited to offer graduate work in the field of the student's major; nor shall any graduate credits to be transferred unless the graduate committee evaluates the quality and suitability and determines that they are equal to or superior to offerings available at the University of Nebraska. (*SOURCE: Executive Graduate Council Minutes, April 3, 1975; amended November 30, 2011*)

No graduate credits will be accepted as transfer credit toward a master's program at UNL if the course work is 10 years or older or if the course work has been applied toward a previously completed post-baccalaureate degree at any institution, including UNL. Similarly, no graduate credits will be accepted as transfer credit toward a doctoral program if the course work has been applied toward a previously completed doctoral degree at any institution, including UNL. Professional courses cannot count toward a graduate degree. Courses completed at institutions other than the University of Nebraska cannot count toward a graduate certificate.

Approval of the Office of Graduate Studies is required for the transfer of graduate work taken elsewhere toward a graduate degree at the UNL. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that official transcripts of graduate work taken elsewhere are received in the Office of Graduate Studies well before the student plans to complete all other requirements for the graduate degree at UNL.

Graduate Credit for Undergraduates

Seniors at UNL may be permitted up to 12 hours of credit for graduate courses, provided that these credits are earned the calendar year prior to receipt of the baccalaureate. The student should consult Scholarships and Financial Aid (<http://financialaid.unl.edu/>) regarding continuation of any undergraduate scholarships or financial aid.

Before registering for a graduate course, a senior must obtain approval from Graduate Studies using the Request for Graduate Credit (<http://ris-vm2.unl.edu/gradstudies/credit/>) form, indicating whether the course will be used toward the bachelor's degree. If used in the bachelor's degree, the course cannot also be used toward a future graduate program unless the student is accepted into, and the courses are part of, an Accelerated Master's Program. Graduate courses taken prior to completion of a bachelor's degree do not always transfer as graduate credit to other institutions, nor are they guaranteed by Graduate Studies to apply toward a UNL graduate program.

SOURCE: Executive Graduate Council Minutes (September 26, 1974; amended April 25, 2018)