

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY <i>Inspiring Minds</i> Syllabus Policy	<i>Policy Sponsor:</i> Senate	<i>Approval Date:</i> Senate: April 10, 2017 Board of Governors: June 27, 2017
	<i>Responsible Unit:</i> Senate Learning and Teaching Committee	<i>Revisions:</i>

Related Policies: Grading Practices Policy, Student Accommodation Policy

A. Background & Purpose

The course syllabus provides a permanent record of a course for administrative purposes, and should communicate clearly and in writing the responsibilities of instructors and students to themselves, the course and each other. The course syllabus can, however, be more than a set of guidelines or instructions for the course. It can also set a positive tone for learning, open communication and support for student success. It can provide students with a learning guide that focuses on how to study and work successfully in the course/discipline, and indicate where and how to seek support and additional assistance when needed, both from the instructor and via campus resources. In creating or modifying a syllabus, it is expected that consideration will be given to the needs of students with different abilities and from diverse cultures and backgrounds. The precise wording of a syllabus will change over time in different offerings of the course, as instructors reflect upon their on-going teaching development, student learning, the place of the course within the Department/Faculty curriculum, available resources including technology, and the evolution of the discipline. This Policy identifies a core set of information that Senate has determined needs to be conveyed to students enrolled in a course and also made available to others.

B. Application

This Policy applies to all credit-bearing undergraduate courses at the University. Some credit-bearing graduate courses (e.g., Special Topics, Modules and Directed Studies) are dynamic and may require several changes in a term and also frequently change from offering to offering. This may make compliance to some elements of this Policy difficult. Otherwise, this Policy applies to graduate courses.

C. Definitions

1. In this Policy:
 - a. "Academic Unit" means the Department, School, College or, in Faculties those units, the Faculty, and "Academic Unit Head" means a Chair, Director, or Dean of the respective Academic Unit;

- b. "Course" means a structured series of classes or a sustained period of instruction [traditional (face-to-face), online or blended] that is offered for credit in a particular term, as part of an undergraduate or graduate program at the University;
- c. "Course Syllabus Guide" means the guide described in section D3 and E5 of this policy and attached as Appendix "A";
- d. "Instructor" means any faculty member (including part-time and sessional), instructor, or teaching assistant who takes on substantial responsibility for teaching a course, as determined by the Academic Unit Head;
- e. "Program" means a series of Courses leading to an undergraduate or graduate degree at the University;
- f. "Student" means an individual registered in a Course;
- g. "Syllabus/Syllabi" means a course outline that describes the administrative, academic, and assessment components associated with a Course, including Course and University policies and guidelines.

D. Policy

1. All Courses must have a written Syllabus that is normally distributed to Students on or before the first day of the Course. The Syllabus may be provided to enrolled Students either as a paper or electronic document, but if a Learning Management System (LMS) is used, the Syllabus shall be made available to Students for the duration of the Course.
2. The Syllabus must contain the required administrative, academic, and assessment information for the Course, as well as any University policies, guidelines and statements mandated by this Policy and in accordance with the Course Syllabus Guide.
3. The Course Syllabus Guide will contain a checklist indicating any mandatory and many optional Syllabus elements, as well as a menu of mandatory and relevant optional university policies, statements, and resources. The Senate Learning and Teaching Committee shall update the Course Syllabus Guide as necessary to ensure the currency of its contents. The Course Syllabus Guide will be accessible to Instructors via a single web link, with current versions maintained by the Library.
4. Recognizing that a Syllabus may be a creative and personal statement of teaching philosophy and style, this Policy does not impose a specific template or organizational framework, although Academic Units responsible for specific educational programs may choose to do so. In addition, this Policy only makes comment on the mandatory elements of a Syllabus. It does not address the many ways Syllabi can be used in the educational context.
5. Academic Units may also specify the inclusion of additional or modified policies or statements in their Syllabi, provided these do not conflict with University policies and regulations, which shall take precedence. Any requirements or altered timelines for pre-approval of Syllabi (e.g. for accredited programs) will also reside within the Academic Unit.

6. A current electronic copy of each Syllabus will be held in the Academic Unit of the Course.
7. Any changes made within a Course after Syllabus submission must not conflict with the calendar description of the approved Course, and must be clearly communicated to all Students in accordance with section F5. Changes affecting the relative weight or timing of assessment or examination components must be approved by Students as described in section F6.
8. By enrolling in a Course, Students agree to familiarize themselves with the Syllabus and to abide by the policies and requirements described therein.

E. Administrative Structure

1. Authority: This Policy falls under the authority of Senate.
2. Syllabus Creation and Revision: Course instructors will be responsible for creating or revising their Syllabus prior to each term in which the Course is offered, within the requirements and guidelines specified by the Course Syllabus Guide and any requirements of the relevant Academic Unit.
3. Assistance and Support: The Centre for Learning and Teaching is available to provide assistance to Instructors in preparing Syllabi, and more broadly to provide support for course design, creation of student learning outcomes, and alignment of course outcomes, activities, and assessment.
4. Course Syllabus Guide: The Library will provide and maintain a website for course Instructors, containing the Syllabus Guide “checklist” and links to all relevant University policies, statements and resources. Where possible, persistent URL links will be used so that information is updated automatically. The Course Syllabus Guide will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.
5. Academic Unit Head: The Academic Unit Head is responsible for ensuring that all Instructors within their Academic Unit are in compliance with the Policy.
6. Policy Review and Modification: This Policy will be reviewed no later than by the end of the third year of its operation. Any interim modifications (e.g. requirement for any new or altered University statements or policies) shall be approved in advance by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

F. Procedures

1. Prior to the creation or revision of a Syllabus for an upcoming Course, the Instructor shall consult with the Course Syllabus Guide and any applicable Syllabus elements specified by their Academic Unit, and ensure that all mandatory components are included in the Syllabus.
2. In addition to required administrative, academic and assessment Course information (Course Syllabus Guide, section A), all Syllabi should contain brief statements highlighting the mandatory University policies and resources specified under this Policy (Course Syllabus Guide, section B), with separate links to each of these.

3. On or before the first class, the Instructor will provide the Syllabus to all Students, either online (e.g. through the LMS), as a hard copy, or both. Important elements of the Syllabus should be reviewed during the first class, including the requirement that Students must read and adhere to the Syllabus (see section D8).
4. At the start of the Course, the Instructor will also send an electronic copy of their Syllabus to the Academic Unit Head. The Academic Unit is required to maintain a repository of the syllabi for courses it offers that is current and dates back a minimum of ten years.
5. If Instructors need to make alterations to a Course in progress for pedagogical or practical reasons (e.g. changes in topics, schedule, reading lists, etc.), these must be clearly communicated to all Students. The nature of any changes must be compatible with the calendar description of the approved Course, and should not alter the Student learning outcomes.
6. If Course variations conflict with the posted Syllabus by (i) altering the type or relative weighting of assessment components, or (ii) changing examination requirements with a total value of ten per cent or greater, at least two-thirds of Students must approve the variations for them to be valid. Exceptions to the Course and/or Syllabus for individual student accommodation requirements will follow the Student Accommodation Policy.

Course Syllabus Guide

Dalhousie Syllabi are an extension of the University's contract with the student. As such, all Dalhousie Syllabi should contain specific information necessary for Students to participate successfully in the Course, while other information may pertain only to specific disciplines or be included at the preference of the Instructor. These requirements and options pertain equally to undergraduate and graduate courses and to online, blended and face-to-face courses.

- Reflects information that ***must*** be included, if applicable to the course
- Reflects information that is ***optional*** to include

SECTION A: COURSE INFORMATION

Administrative

- Course name, number, type (e.g. lecture, online) and credit hours (note when course is cross-listed)
 - Course lecture, lab and/or tutorial meeting times and locations (as available)
 - Instructor name(s), building/room number, office phone, email address, preferred method of contact and availability
 - Learning Management System site information, if applicable
 - Identity and contact information for Teaching Assistants (when known at the time of Syllabus release and if directly involved in student support)
- Instructor profile(s) (e.g. website)
 - Photos of instructor(s)
 - Brief Teaching Philosophy Statement

Academic

- How the course is offered (face-to-face, online, blended)
- Student Learning outcomes for the Course
- Rationale for Course
- Course Description and prerequisites (from the university calendar)
- Tentative list and schedule of topics to be covered, if possible (remember to note university holidays)
- Required (and suggested) textbooks, readings, and other materials including electronic resources (e.g. Web, Library, LibGuide), software, equipment
- Description of class format (e.g. use of student response systems in large lectures, problem-based learning, discussion-focused)
- Any language requirements (if other than English)
- Any additional costs to be incurred by students taking the course
- Where to seek support for tutoring and academic support

- Key foundational knowledge and skills expected prior to the course
- Weekly optional reading assignments
- Concept map or graphic of course themes
- Overview of the history of and key approaches to the discipline
- FAQ section
- Study guides

Assessment Components

- Short description of work to be submitted which will count towards the final grade
 - Schedule, duration and format of term assignments, tests, and final exams
 - Weight of components contributing to final grade
 - Other work not assessable but required (e.g. attendance at an event, class attendance, online academic integrity modules, online safety modules/quizzes, participation)
 - Any compulsory attendance/participation requirements
 - Assessment scale and level that indicates a pass (including any components that must be individually passed); include rubrics where possible
 - Performance requirements including clearly delineated differences for undergraduate and graduate students in the same course
 - Description of (or link to) conversion of numeric to letter grades and university scale descriptors
 - Any experiential learning components, how they will be graded and by whom
 - Where collaboration is required (e.g. group assignments or projects), a clear statement of the degree of collaboration permitted in the preparation and submission of assignments
- Guiding questions for reading
 - Detailed description of work to be submitted and guidance for completion
 - Grading rubrics with detailed criteria for each type of assessment and grade level
 - Guidelines/requirements for citing sources (acceptable procedures, styles etc.)
 - Guidelines/requirements for formatting assignments
 - Guidelines/requirements for where and how to submit assignments
 - Guidelines/requirements for ethical considerations in student learning activities and assessments (i.e. clinical work, undergraduate research projects)
 - Link to GPA calculator

Course-specific policies (established by Instructor or by class consensus)

- Course policies on missed or late assignments, labs, tests, mid-term and final exams (*N.B. exact wording will be informed by the new Student Declaration of Absence policy as it develops*)
 - Notification to students if and how plagiarism detection software is being used by the instructor in the course
 - Notification of whether lectures are being recorded and whether or not students may record lectures
- Processes for submission and return of student work
 - Netiquette guidelines (highly recommended for online courses)
 - Professionalism

- Time frame for responding to student emails
- Ground rules for interactions between students and with instructor(s)
- Technology use in the classroom
- Student Information Requested (information to be completed by student and submitted to instructor), and how confidentiality will be protected
- Trigger warnings/ Content warnings
- How previous feedback from students has been used to improve the course

SECTION B: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

- This section of all Syllabi should begin with the statement: “This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate”; this statement should provide the link to the current University Regulations (Academic Calendars).

University Statements

Provide links and brief statements as provided:

- Academic Integrity http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

(read more:

[https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/Syllabus_Statement_\(Aug%202015\).pdf](https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/Syllabus_Statement_(Aug%202015).pdf)

- Accessibility

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). (read more:

https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html

- Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. (read more:

https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html

- Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2).
(read more: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

- Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

University Policies and Programs

Provide links to:

- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html
- University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures
https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html
- Scent-Free Program <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>
- Certificate of Illness Policy (under development)

Learning and Support Resources

Provide links to:

- General Academic Support – Advising
- https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html (Halifax)
- <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre/academic-support.html> (Truro)
- Fair Dealing Guidelines <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/guidelines/fair-dealing-guidelines.html>
- Dalhousie University Library <http://libraries.dal.ca>
- Indigenous Students https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html;
- Black Students https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html;
- International Students https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre.html
- Student Health Services https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html
- Counselling https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/frequently-asked-questions-august-2017.html
- Copyright Office <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>
- E-Learning website <http://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html>

- Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services <http://dsu.ca/dsas>
- Dalhousie Ombudsperson https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html
- Writing Centre https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html
- Faculty or Departmental Advising Support: Studying for Success Program http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html

Safety (excerpts emphasized as appropriate to discipline/course)

- Biosafety (<http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/biosafety.html>)
- Research Laboratory Safety Policy Manual (<http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/documents-policies-procedures.html>)
- Laboratory Chemical Safety Manual <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/chemical-safety.html>
- Radiation Safety Manual <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety.html>