

PROCEDURE: 300.13.01

SECTION: RESEARCH and ACADEMIC AFFAIRS	
TOPIC: Undergraduate Course Management	
EFFECTIVE DATE: January 2016	REPLACES: N/A
LATEST APPROVAL DATE: Academic Council – March 30, 2016 Cabinet – May 9, 2016	
NEXT REVIEW: March 30, 2019	ACCOUNTABILITY: A.V.P.R.A.A.
APPROVING AUTHORITY: 	
Original signed by President + CEO	

INTENT:

In a post-secondary institutional setting, learning is a shared enterprise in which faculty and students come together in an environment influenced by their disciplines, academic programs, the College, broader intellectual traditions, and the values and priorities of the community at large. An academic course represents a discrete learning endeavour in which an intensive sharing of knowledge, expertise, experience, and perspective may occur. An academic course exists within a framework of a program of studies defined by the College.

The central purpose of this course management procedure is to provide guidelines for students, faculty, and staff concerning the setting of learner expectations, the articulation of student assessment, and the plan for teaching and learning as they pertain to College approved undergraduate courses. Alberta College of Art and Design, and its faculty members recognize outstanding student achievement is a result of engaging learning experiences, which in part are enhanced by providing students with fair and accurate assessments of learning. As educators, College instructors plan for learning that helps students to achieve curricular outcomes while providing sufficient and timely feedback to improve student performance. Students are responsible for soliciting additional feedback about their performance if they wish to have more information.

Central to the course management procedure is clear communication between instructors and students, regarding the course of study, learner expectations and outcomes, learning assessments, and the safety and well-being of participants. The *Course Syllabus* is intended as an instructional

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tool to aid instructors in their dissemination of important information in a manner in which students can rely on. The instructor of record develops the course syllabus.

The Course Management Procedure recognizes the importance of diversity in learning and teaching styles and different instructional methodologies while:

- a) Defining the types of information that both students and faculty need in order to optimize the learning value of any given course, and
- b) Making clear to students and faculty alike the principles and procedures that have been adopted by the College that bear upon the operation of academic courses.

Schools and their instructors may adopt additional practices for any program, understanding that this procedure and any additional practices are interpreted in a humane and sensitive manner regarding the needs, interests, and rights of students, and the intent, integrity, and quality of the program. Student may identify differences in their interpretation of this procedure with the instructor in a timely manner and work collaboratively to resolve them. If no resolution is forthcoming, the student may appeal the matter (see Procedure Student Appeals)

The Course Management Procedure addresses the:

1. Provision of an instructor delineated course syllabus
2. Course syllabus
3. Assessment and Feedback on Student Performance in a Course
4. Changes to Declared Evaluation Schedule
5. Recordkeeping, Confidentiality, Ownership and Posting of Grades
6. Learning Management System
7. School and Program Guidelines and Practices
8. College Procedures and Course Practices

DEFINITIONS:

Course Syllabus: A document constructed by a course instructor that works in conjunction with the Academic Calendar, that conveys fundamental, specific course-level information to the student about the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices they will experience in their pursuit of achieving declared learning outcomes related to the program of studies.

Course Outline: A course framework document intended for program designing, program approval or review processes and for program articulation and transfer.

Instructor of Record: The faculty member actively engaged in delivering a course or a section of a course and assessing students for a grade.

Secure and Confidential Transfer of Student Work: A process in which all reasonable care to secure and protect the identity of individuals, as in accordance with FOIP (Government of Alberta, 2013), is taken by both instructors and students with regards to submission of student work for assessment, and the return of assessed works, comments, or grades

Assessment: A process in which an instructor provides informal or formal feedback regarding a student's attainment of an outcome. Formative assessment provides a student with information (instructor feedback) that they could use to enhance or improve their performance in meeting the course outcomes. Informal formative assessment is not graded, thus is not to be included in cumulative scores for a course of study. Formal formative assessment may be graded and while it can be used in developing the cumulative scores of a course, the option remains open to the instructor as to how to use or weight such grades. However, summative assessment refers to a terminal event after which the student or instructor has no opportunity to revisit the content, skills, knowledge or understandings in the course of study. Summative assessments indicate to the student, the instructor's determination of their progress in relation to the specific learning outcomes of the course. Typically, a course of study will involve countless opportunities for informal formative assessment, numerous opportunities for formal formative assessment, and a fixed number of summative assessments.

Midterm: A period of time between the fifth and eighth week of a regular semester course that precedes the academic calendar "drop-date" by no less than one week. In compressed or condensed courses, "midterm" refers to the 50% of course completion time period. Midterm assessment(s) may be a single assessment event, as in the case of a summative assessment, but are most often the cumulative results of multiple formal and informal formative assessments that collectively can inform both the instructor and the student about a student's progress in attaining the course's learning outcomes.

Final Examination: A summative assessment that can take many forms included, but not limited to a project, panel critique, written examination, defense, or performance.

PROCEDURE:

1. Provision of Course Syllabi

- 1.1. Instructors will provide a course syllabus to their students, either electronically, on the College's Course Management System (Moodle), by ACAD email or in hard copy, by or at the first meeting the course, and to all students who subsequently join the class. The course syllabus will include no less than the information on the items specified in Section 2.0. The information in the course syllabus should be discussed at the first class. Syllabi may be supplemented by more detailed topical or project information that is provided periodically through a course. Should an instructor desire student input in the course design, the instructor must provide a finalized course syllabus by the next meeting of the class.
- 1.2. Course syllabi must be submitted to the Office of Research and Academic Affairs (ORAA) in the format requested 15 days after the commencement of the semester. Revised course syllabi must be submitted when changes are made during the semester.

2. Course Syllabus

- 2.1. College Course Syllabi will include the following elements:

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- 2.1.1. The course title, course number, section, course prerequisites or exemptions, along with the program and School with which the course is associated, the semester and year offered.
- 2.1.2. The dates, times, and location(s) of the classes / events to which students are expected to attend. Instructors are to respect the instructional block of time that has been allocated for their course and may not exceed the instructional block of time. Instructors cannot hold students accountable for attending events outside the allocated instructional time block.
- 2.1.3. Instructor's name; office location, and scheduled student consultation hours; office telephone number, e-mail address; course web site(s) if applicable. If any of these factors are unknown when the course outline is prepared, the information will be provided in writing at the beginning of the course.
- 2.1.4. The academic calendar course description
- 2.1.5. The course's academic focus and list of learner outcomes defined by the program and School
- 2.1.6. The list of required supplies, materials, reading materials, and expenses for events outside of regular classes. In instances in which these cannot be determined at the commencement of the course, an explicit statement to that effect will be included.
- 2.1.7. A reading list, including required readings, supplemental readings, and digital resources should be cited.
- 2.1.8. The description of the teaching method(s) that the instructor will employ to facilitate learning (e.g., lecture, studio, critiques, problem-based learning, seminar, fieldwork, oral presentations, sketchbooks, or combinations of these).
- 2.1.9. Assignments and projects should be outlined so as to inform the student as to expected due dates and time frames. It should not be an expectation that students engage in assignments, including readings prior to the commencement of the course except in instances in which the course is designated as a 'compressed course' by the registrar. The "Credit Contact Hour Rubric and Matrix" provides guidelines regarding the maximum student work load.
- 2.1.10. The Schedule of Evaluation that details student learning assessments and the relative weight assessments of student work to be used to determine the final grade and shall include the following:
 - 2.1.10.1. The Schedule will clearly identify student learning assessments and the related due dates, approximate due dates, or the frequency of assessment of student work is expected.
 - 2.1.10.2. Where attendance or other forms of class participation are required, the criteria for these measures are explicitly stated.
 - 2.1.10.3. A clear description of the method in which students will be notified of their performance regarding assessments that reflects the principle of confidentiality between instructor and student. The posting on office, classroom, or hallway walls of grades beside student numbers is not an acceptable practice (See Section 5.0).
 - 2.1.10.4. How the final letter grade for the course will be determined if percentages are used. (See Procedure 500.07.01)
 - 2.1.10.5. The credit hours and a description of expected student workload.
 - 2.1.10.6. A clear description of the consequences and penalties for late or missing work.

- 2.1.11. The approved statements regarding the student discipline policy regarding academic and non-academic offenses.
 - 2.1.12. A declaration of the instructors intended use of a College-approved plagiarism detection service or practices to determine originality of work.
 - 2.1.13. The approved statement regarding the accommodation of students with accommodations.
 - 2.1.14. The College's general statement, and program's and/or School's approved statement regarding Health and Safety unique to the course.
 - 2.1.15. The approved statements for research, and for counseling.
 - 2.2. The elements of the course described in the distributed course syllabus shall not be altered after the College declared Add/Drop date. However, to ensure teaching and learning excellence proceeds, the course syllabus may require changes to be responsive to students' needs and emergent circumstances in which case the "Changes to the Evaluation Schedule" Section 4, is invoked.
3. Assessment and Feedback on Student Performance in a Course
- 3.1. Timely and constructive feedback in response to student work is an essential element in the learning process. Constructive feedback refers to any type of instructor response that serves to inform, guide, encourage, and/or instruct the student in respect to relevant course work, learning outcomes, or related aspects of her/his learning endeavour. Students should also be able to assess their progress as early as possible. Instructors are responsible for providing students with feedback on their progress in the course no less than two instructional days prior the course withdrawal deadline as published in the academic schedule so that students may, on the basis of instructor feedback, make an informed decision to continue or to withdraw from the course without failure.
 - 3.1.1. Each course must have at least two, independent assessments per semester in the evaluation scheme. Where appropriate, these should be of different types. A single assessment may not be worth more than 70% of a student's final grade with the exception of those instanced described in 3.1.2
 - 3.1.2. In 400-level courses designed as a culminating learning experience, a capstone project, portfolio, juried critique, or other similar assessment protocol may be used to assess student learning. In such instances, a final grade and the assessment protocol may be one and the same meaning that the assessment protocol is weighted as 100% of the course grade. Where this approach to assessment is employed by an instructor, it is incumbent on the instructor to provide regular, timely, informal and formal formative assessment feedback to the student as outlined in 3.2.4.
 - 3.1.3. All tests, assignments, or date related assessments are due on or before the last day of classes except those in which the instructor has identified within the course syllabus or a summative assessment (i.e. final examine, studio critique) or equivalent.
 - 3.1.4. Extraordinary circumstances, such as bereavement, illness, or injury, may arise in which a student may be unable to meet declared due dates. Students may be accommodated with respect to due dates, tests, critiques, or examinations. Instructors may request documentation to support the student's request for an accommodation. Where substantial time is lost from the course's program of study, the student may be advised by the instructor, and in consultation with Student Advisement, to apply for an incomplete or course withdrawal.
 - 3.1.5. Unless otherwise stated in the course syllabus, students not submitting term work or

- not participating in the assessments as prescribed by the Schedule of Evaluation without valid reasons will be assessed as having provided no evidence of learning and receive a zero for that part of the course grade.
- 3.1.6. Students who add a class after there has been an assessment must be given the opportunity to make up that assessment.
 - 3.1.7. To ensure security and confidentiality of students and their work, the instructor will collect all assessments during the designated class time. In instances in which students might be permitted to submit their work at times outside of the scheduled class time, instructors will be available during their declared office hours to receive the work and shall inform students accordingly. In the extraordinary instance in which a student is unable to submit their work within these guidelines, then instructors and students must arrange for the secure and confidential transfer of the work from one to the other.
 - 3.1.8. It is important that all student term work be assessed and returned with reasonable promptness. In the case of tests for which the faculty member will retain the question paper, students should receive feedback on the content of the test, in addition to a grade.
 - 3.1.9. Where an assignment or test requires students to build directly on the proficiencies developed through an earlier assignment/test, they must have the benefit of feedback on the earlier work before the subsequent due date. However, students may expect to apply what has been taught in the course in new situations, to analyze different examples, or to synthesis original responses to questions that remain within the realm of fairness.
 - 3.1.10. To enable students to assess their progress in a course, assignments completed to date should be assessed and returned to the student no less than two instructional days prior to the final deadline for dropping courses without academic penalty. The course syllabus will provide an indication of approximately when the first graded project(s) will be returned to students. In instances in which student progress toward learning outcomes is assessed holistically and anecdotally, the instructor will inform the student in writing of their progress. Terminology to describe the progress should parallel the College' Grading System (See Procedure 500.07.01)
 - 3.1.11. All grades, on assignments or tests must be posted or made available to students through the return of their work. Grades on summative exams must be conveyed appropriately (See Section 5). However, as there may be other considerations in the determination of final grades, students will receive their official final grade in the course only from the Registrar administered student self-serve system.
 - 3.1.12. In-class tests and examinations may not exceed the allocated class time. Exceptions may be made for students with Academic Accommodations.
 - 3.1.13. Final examinations must be held on the date set by the Registrar. In extraordinary circumstances in which a student must write the examination at an alternative time, the examination may be opened on or after the first day of the scheduled examination period, but no earlier than the day of the scheduled examination, nor later than the last day of the examination period. An instructor may provide an alternative examination in an attempt to maintain examination security.
 - 3.1.14. No student shall be expected to participate in three or more consecutive final examinations in a 24-hour period in the scheduled final examination period. If such an incident arises, it is the student's responsibility to request an accommodation from the Chair of the School of the second examination, which would be rescheduled.

3.2. Mid-Term Grading and Assessment

- 3.2.1. Mid-term grading is intended to provide the student with a formative assessment as to their progress to meet the course declared learning outcomes. As such, mid-term grades will not appear on a student's transcript but are a matter of instructors' course records. As an indicator of achievement, mid-term grades may be composed of a single assessment that provides a student with a feedback in a timely manner. Most often, mid-term grades will be composed of a series of assessments for which the student has previously received timely feedback from the instructor.
- 3.2.2. Mid-term grades may contribute to a student's summative or final grade so long as the student is informed of the grading and weighting process in the course outline.
- 3.2.3. Mid-term grading assessments may take many forms including but not limited to a compilation of assignments, quizzes, written reports, projects, observational check-lists, anecdotal comments, rubrics, or critiques that are administered by the instructor, for which records are maintained by the instructor.
- 3.2.4. Mid-term grades are provided to the students in writing and clearly indicate if the student performance is satisfactory or unsatisfactory in regards to progressing to meeting the course outcomes. In the case of interviews, the instructor is responsible for providing the student with written notes regarding their areas of strength, and areas for improvement.
- 3.2.5. Mid-term grading processes are completed by instructors and students by the end of the eighth-week and results are provided by the instructor to students no less than 7 days later. Students must be given their assessment results two instructional days prior to the College's course withdrawal date.
- 3.2.6. Mid-term grades will be communicated directly to the student by the instructor so as to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the process (See Section 5). Instructors may use the LMS-Moodle to communicate mid-term grades.

4. Changes to a Declared Evaluation Scheme

- 4.1. During the semester, it is sometimes necessary or desirable for a faculty member to revise the plan of student assessment contained in the course outline. When this is the case, the faculty member will:
 - 4.1.1. Discuss the changes with the class;
 - 4.1.2. Make such revisions as early as possible in the course, and before the drop/add date;
 - 4.1.3. Confirm the changes both orally and in writing (i.e., handout, ACAD-email or posting to course web site); and
 - 4.1.4. Forward a copy of the revised outline to the Chair and ORAA.
- 4.2. When a change involves only the extension of a deadline, a minimum of one week's notice is normally required. In the case of other changes (e.g., in the number, mix, and/or weighting of methods of evaluation) students will be given as much notice as possible in order to reasonably adjust their course work plans.
- 4.3. Once students have begun work on a particular component of the evaluation scheme, changes will be made to that component only under extraordinary circumstances. When such changes must be made, students will, if at all possible, be given the opportunity to complete the assessment requirements as initially set out and with the same course weight, if they so wish.
- 4.4. When changes are made to the schedule of evaluation or to the nature of a particular

assignment/test to accommodate the needs of an individual student or of a group within the class, the nature of the accommodation will be outlined in writing, normally by email, with a copy retained by the student(s) and the faculty member(s).

- 4.5. In the case of emergencies such as faculty illness, the Chair of the School (or a designated course co-ordinator) is responsible for restructuring of the evaluation scheme, if required, in such a way as to maintain course integrity while not creating undue disadvantage for students. Normal periods of notification may be waived in such circumstances.
5. Record Keeping, Confidentiality, Ownership and Posting of Grades
 - 5.1. All judicious actions shall be taken to ensure the confidentiality of instructor's assessment in regards to student's works. Under no circumstances shall any form of graded work, grade sheets, or grade books be left in a public or unsupervised place.
 - 5.2. Protecting student identity and their related grades is required. Instructors may not post grades unless all precautions are taken to ensure confidentiality. Neither names, student identification numbers, nor coded lists which retain the alphabetical ordering of student names may be used for the posting of grades.
 - 5.3. When graded work is submitted on-line or when the work cannot be returned to the student in person, related grades and comments may be posted on-line using the College's approved learning management system (Moodle). When such practice is not possible, grades and comments can be communicated by the instructor to the student using approved College email addresses.
 - 5.4. Final course grades are communicated to the student used the College's approved registration and tracking system through the registrar.
 - 5.5. Faculty members are required to:
 - 5.5.1. Only assess the work of officially registered students (i.e., the work of non-registered students is not to be assessed);
 - 5.5.2. Maintain a record of student assessments (i.e. grade calculation sheet) for each class they teach;
 - 5.5.3. Forward a copy of all grade calculation sheets to the Office of Research and Academic Affairs or Continuing Education at the end of the term, to be retained for at least one year;
 - 5.5.4. Enter the final grades into the automated system
 - 5.5.5. Retain all final examinations for a period of one year after the end of the term); and forward all final exams to the Chair of the School or Continuing Education (or make them otherwise accessible) if they are not returning the following term, or if they will be away for an extended period of time.
 - 5.6. Students:
 - 5.6.1. Retain the right to obtain and keep all graded work at the end of a grading period or semester.
 - 5.6.2. Retain ownership of original works (arts, craft, design, research) submitted for assessment purposes. Thus, students are responsible for the collection of their property at the conclusion of the semester. Unclaimed materials will be maintained only until the end of the immediate 30-day grade-appeal period, after which all unclaimed materials will be destroyed, unless consent has been obtained to retain a student's work for the purpose of research, private study, or other scholarly activity.
6. Learning Management System

- 6.1. Instructors may utilize the College's approved learning management system (LMS) to convey instruction, materials, assignments, and grades to students beyond the scope of the course syllabus.
 - 6.2. When indicated in the course syllabus that the LMS is used as a course instructional tool, students are responsible for gaining access to and monitoring the course shell.
 - 6.3. Course shells on the LMS may be accessed by the Chair of the School in extraordinary instances of emergency, as in the need to re-assign the course to another instructor.
7. School and Program Guidelines and Practices
- 7.1. The College's Schools and their programs may establish additional guidelines and practices. It is the responsibility of the Schools and programs to clearly inform instructors and students of these articles.
 - 7.2. School and program guidelines and practices cannot contravene College procedures.
 - 7.3. Schools must ensure that the information in course syllabi is in keeping with the College procedures.
8. College Procedures and Course Practices
- 8.1. The College will ensure that all information pertaining to course management is available through handbooks, academic calendars and / or websites.
 - 8.2. The College will provide and keep current college approved statements for inclusion in course syllabi regarding:
 - 8.2.1. Student academic misconduct and non-academic misconduct;
 - 8.2.2. Accommodation of Students with Disabilities;
 - 8.2.3. Research involving human subjects, participants, and/or animals;
 - 8.2.4. Health and Safety in general;
 - 8.2.5. Academic advising and personal counseling.
 - 8.3. Programs will provide the Chairs of Schools with statements for inclusion in course syllabi regarding:
 - 8.3.1. Specific health and safety guidelines.

REFERENCES:

Government of Alberta. (2013). *Freedom of information and protection of privacy act*. Edmonton: Queen's Printer Retrieved from http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=F25.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779762071.

