

Senate Council Meeting November 4, 2019
Syllabus Initiative

Background

- The “syllabus initiative” began as a result of concerns, primarily raised by the Undergraduate Council (UC) and the Ombud’s office. The *SRs* do not contain enough guidance regarding syllabi and this causes problems for both students and faculty.
 - There were times when the UC asked proposers to modify a syllabus and the proposer refused to do so on the grounds that the *SRs* did not explicitly require the requested additions, such as student learning outcomes, assignments to be graded, etc. The lack of syllabi-related information in the *SRs* sometimes made it difficult for the UC to comply with the *SR* mandate that the UC to review courses.
 - The Ombud’s office expressed concerns that inadequate syllabi were at the root of many student complaints. When faculty asked for guidance about what had to be included in a syllabus, the Ombud’s office could only make recommendations based on logic and reason but could not refer to an official list of requirements.
- A small group met in summer 2018 to start putting ideas on paper. The original plan was that the initiative include: a revised version of the *SRs* with more detail about what to include in a syllabus; language about “Standard Academic Policies” to post online that faculty would have to either link to or copy and paste into their syllabi; and a sentence in the *SRs* requiring faculty to provide/link to language about non-academic resources available to students, such as the Office of LGBTQ*.
 - The group discussed what guidance should be proposed for addition to the *SRs*. The group also identified the information that is currently required to be in a syllabus (per existing *SRs*), although the requirement is buried somewhere within the *SRs* but not explicitly referred to in *SR 6.1.1* (“Information about Course Content”).
 - The purpose of posting Standard Academic Policies online is to make things easier for faculty, specifically to help shorten syllabi and provide students with current, up-to-date information. (For example, the UC regularly sees syllabi referencing Jake Karnes in the Disability Resource Center and the DRC’s old address in Alumni Gym. Jake has been retired for years and it’s also been years since the DRC moved to a “new” location.)

Recent Activity:

- After a meeting in summer 2019, information about resources available to students was separated from the initiative, due to a concern that individual faculty members might have strong sentiments regarding some of the resources.
 - Now there is a Senate webpage with the [resources](#) listed. The proposed *SR* changes do include that URL and suggest that instructors link to these resources. Faculty can include the info as a copy and paste, or put the URL in the syllabus, or ignore it altogether.
 - Currently the syllabus initiative is limited to two files – proposed changes to the *SRs* and Standard Academic Policy language. (*SR* edits will be incorporated into a full version of *SRs* prior to soliciting any formal votes.)
 - For the existing *SR* language in *Section 5* related to syllabi but not referenced in *6.1.1*, references have been added that refer back and forth between the two sections.

6.1.1 ~~Information about Course Content~~ The Course Syllabus

Students have the right to ~~expect the course to correspond generally to the description in the official *Bulletin* of the University of Kentucky and the right to~~ be informed in writing (in the course syllabus) at the first class meeting about the nature of the course~~-, including such as--~~ the content, the activities to be evaluated, and the grading practice(s) to be followed. The course syllabus shall provide information to students ~~shall be informed Whenever~~ regarding any factors such as absences or late papers used will be weighed in determining grades (e.g., absences, required interactions, and late assignments), ~~a student shall be informed~~. All students must be informed in writing of the course content and other matters listed in this rule at no cost to the student. Syllabi may be posted electronically but must be shared with students ~~; this must be done~~ by the first class meeting of the semester. Electronically posted syllabi ~~and the syllabus~~ must remain available ~~there~~ to students for the entire semester. All students officially enrolled in a course shall, upon request, be provided a copy of the course syllabus free of charge. [US: 2/11/80; SREC: 11/20/87]

Except for programs and courses that have rules that supersede the requirements here (such as courses in professional programs), course syllabi must address a series of required components (listed below) and include Academic Policy Statements (see SR 9.1.7).

The following sections of the *Senate Rules* describe required components of a syllabus: SR 3.1.4 (expectations of graduate students and differentiation from undergraduate students); SR 5.2.4.1 (policy on return of assignments, if applicable); SR 5.2.4.2 (submission of late assignments and late policies); SR 5.2.4.2 (acceptable documentation for excused absences); SR 5.2.4.2.D (policy for absences due to major religious holidays, if applicable); and SR 5.2.4.3 (Dead Week policies).

A. Required syllabi components for courses that are not subject to rules that supersede these requirements.

1. Full and accurate title of course, corresponding to the title in the official *Bulletin* of the University.
2. Course prefix, course number, and course section number.
3. Instructor name, office location, office phone number including area code, and campus email address.
4. Office hours (days, times, location) or how to make appointment. For distance-learning courses, provide virtual office hours, preferred method of communications, and maximum timeframe for responding to student communications.
5. Course description corresponding generally to the description in the official *Bulletin* of the University.
6. Required materials for the course, e.g. textbooks, required readings/films, etc.
7. Associated expenses other than “required materials,” such as the cost of a field trip, proctoring fees, or polling software devices, if applicable.
8. Skill/Technology requirements, if applicable. If specific technical/digital literacy skills or software are required, the syllabus must describe these.
9. Student learning outcomes.
10. Descriptive list of activities, exams, and grading scheme. The syllabus must include language that describes to students how their grades will be calculated. As applicable, include the following: a list of activities with enough description for students to understand the course requirements; the factors used in determining grades (e.g.,

- absences, required interactions, or late assignments); and due dates (if applicable, include a caveat that due dates can be changed and explain under what circumstances they can be changed).
11. Mechanics of submissions, if applicable. The syllabus must explain if assignments must be submitted via a certain method (e.g., via email or a specific software program or file type).
 12. Policy on return of assignments, if applicable. See SR 5.2.4.1.
 13. Grading scale (undergraduate, graduate, etc.).
 14. For 400G- and 500-level courses, expectations of graduate students and differentiation from undergraduate students. See SR 3.1.4.
 15. Midterm grades, if undergraduate students are enrolled in the course. See SR 6.1.3.A and the University Calendar.
 16. Submission of late assignments and late policies. The syllabus should explain if late assignments are accepted for unexcused absences and if there are penalties or time limits regarding work submitted after the due date. (Per SR 5.2.4.2, within some guidelines, late assignments must always be accepted for excused absences.) See SR 5.2.4.2.
 17. Tentative course schedule. At a minimum include due dates of major assignments and exams. More detailed information must also be provided, either within the syllabus or located on another platform, such as a Learning Management System (e.g., Canvas).
 18. Course activities outside of regularly scheduled class-required interactions, if applicable. These include special events, field trips, and required synchronous meetings for distance learning courses.
 19. URL/hyperlink or copy and paste of Academic Policy Statements. See SR 6.1.1.B.
 20. Attendance policy for course, if applicable. (Per SR 5.2.4.2, unless an attendance policy is described in the syllabus, students cannot be penalized for lack of attendance.) See SR 5.2.4.2.
 21. Acceptable documentation for excused absences (e.g., a letter from an institution or medical provider, or published information). See SR 5.2.4.2.
 22. Policy for absences due to major religious holidays, if applicable. See SR 5.2.4.2.D.
 23. Resources. If applicable, the syllabus should describe special resources that may be useful to students, such as UK's distance learning library services, the Hub, proctoring information, etc.

The Senate Council must approve substantive changes to the list of required syllabi components above and report any such approval, with justification, to the University Senate at its next meeting.

B. Academic Policy Statements for all courses. Instructors may either insert the full narrative of the Academic Policy Statements (See SR 9.17) into a syllabus or include the URL/hyperlink to the Academic Policy Statements web page: <INSERT URL HERE>.

The Senate Council must approve substantive changes to Academic Policy Statements and must report any such approval, with justification, to the Senate at its next meeting.

C. Resources available to students. Instructors are encouraged to provide students with a list of available resources, available here.

D. Optional information for syllabi. As part of non-required information that instructors may opt to include in a course, the following items may also be included: course goals or objectives, if required by an accrediting agency; classroom behavior policies; and course

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material copyright statement (“Materials distributed or made available to students in connection with the course may be copyright protected. The materials are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in the course and only for the instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. The materials may not be converted to or retained in another medium or disseminated further.”).

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Academic Policy Statements
(also available at: <INSERT URL>)

Excused Absences (*Senate Rules 5.2.4.2*)

Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) significant illness, (b) death of a member of the student's household (permanent or campus) or immediate family, (c) trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an educational unit, trips for University classes, and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, (d) major religious holidays, (e) interviews for graduate/professional school or full-time employment post-graduation, and (f) other circumstances the instructor of record finds "reasonable cause for absence." Students should notify the instructor of record of absences prior to the absence when possible. Instructors of Record have the right to request appropriate verification for certain types of excused absences. (*Senate Rules 5.2.4.2. A-F*)

If a course syllabus requires specific interactions (e.g., with the instructor or other students), in situations where a student's total EXCUSED absences exceed 1/5 (or 20%) of the required interactions for the course, the student shall have the right to request and receive a "W," or the Instructor of Record may award an "I" for the course if the student declines a "W." (*Senate Rules 5.2.4.2.1*)

(If an attendance/interaction policy is not stated in the course syllabus or the policy does not include a penalty to the student, the Instructor cannot penalize the student for unexcused absences.)

Verification of Absences (*Senate Rules 5.2.4.2.A, B, C, and E*)

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. *Senate Rule 5.2.4.2* states that faculty have the right to request appropriate verification when students claim an excused absence due to: significant illness; death in the household, trips for classes, trips sponsored by an educational unit and trips for participation related to intercollegiate athletic events; and interviews for full-time job opportunities after graduation and interviews for graduate and professional school. (Appropriate notification of absences due to University-related trips is required prior to the absence when feasible and in no case more than one week after the absence.)

Religious Observances (*Senate Rules 5.2.4.2.D*)

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays. Please check the course syllabus for the notification requirement. If no requirement is specified, two weeks prior to the absence is reasonable and should not be given any later.

Make-Up Work (*Senate Rule 5.2.4.2*)

Students missing any graded work due to an excused absence are responsible: for informing the Instructor of Record about their excused absence within one week following the period of the excused absence (except where prior notification is required); and for making up the missed work. The instructor must give the student an opportunity to make up the work and/or the exams missed due to the excused absence, and shall do so, if feasible, during the semester in which the absence occurred. The instructor shall provide the student with an opportunity to make up the graded work and may not simply calculate the student's grade on the basis of the other course requirements, unless the student agrees in writing.



Academic Policy Statements
(also available at: <INSERT URL>)

Dead Week (*Senate Rules 4.2.4.6*)

The Dead Week rule applies to ALL courses taught in the fall semester, spring semester, and summer session, including those taught in a format that has been compressed into less than one semester or session. The rule does not apply to courses in professional programs in colleges that have University Senate approval to follow a nonstandard calendar, as authorized in SR 2.1.1(I).

1) The last week of instruction of a regular semester is termed "Dead Week." This phrase also refers to the last three days of instruction of the summer session and winter intersession. 2) In cases of "Take Home" final examinations, students shall not be required to return the completed examination before the regularly scheduled examination period for that course. 3) No written examinations, including final examinations, may be scheduled during the Dead Week. 4) No quizzes may be given during Dead Week. 5) No project/lab practicals/paper/presentation deadlines or oral/listening examinations may be scheduled to fall during the Dead Week unless it was scheduled in the syllabus AND the course has no final examination (or assignment that acts as a final examination) scheduled during finals week. A course with a lab component may schedule the lab practical of the course during Dead Week if the lab portion does not also require a Final Examination during finals week. 6) Make-up exams and quizzes are allowed during Dead Week; these are exempt from the restrictions stated in 1, 2, and 3. 7) Class participation and attendance grades are permitted during Dead Week.

The Dead Week rule language does not prohibit continuing into Dead Week regularly assigned graded homework that was announced in the class syllabus.

Accommodations Due to Disability

For students who have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see the instructor or course director as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, students must provide a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC coordinates campus disability services available to students with disabilities. Visit the [DRC website](#), [email the DRC](#), contact them by phone at (859) 257-2754, or visit their office on the corner of Rose Street and Huguelet Drive in the Multidisciplinary Science Building, Suite 407. Please note that DRC accommodations are not retroactive and should therefore be established with the DRC as early in the semester as is feasible.

Non-Discrimination /Title IX

UK is committed to providing a safe learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community. The University maintains a comprehensive program which protects all members from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. For complete information about UK's prohibition on discrimination and harassment on aspects such as race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, and sexual orientation, please see [the electronic version of UK's Administrative Regulation 6:1 \("Policy on Discrimination and Harassment"\)](#). In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex in academics, employment, and all of its programs and activities. Sexual misconduct is a form of sexual harassment in which one act is severe enough to create a hostile environment based



Academic Policy Statements
(also available at: <INSERT URL>)

on sex and is prohibited between members of the University community and shall not be tolerated. For more details, please see [the electronic version of *Administrative Regulations 6:2* \("Policy and Procedures for Addressing and Resolving Allegations of Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Exploitation"\)](#). Complaints regarding violations of University policies on discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct are handled by the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity (IEEO), which is located in 13 Main Building and can be reached by phone at (859) 257-8927. You can also visit [the IEEO's website](#).

Faculty members are obligated to forward any report made by a student related to IEEO matters to the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity. Students can *confidentially* report alleged incidences through the Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, Counseling Center, or University Health Services.

Title IV/Class Attendance

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Academic Integrity – Prohibition on Plagiarism (*Senate Rules 6.3.1*)

Per University policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, including expulsion from the University, may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). More information on these issues can be found on the [Academic Ombud webpage](#). A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Senate Rule 6.3.1 states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or content from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work (including, but not limited to a published article, a book, a website, computer code, or a paper from a friend) without clear attribution. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be, except under specific circumstances



Academic Policy Statements
(also available at: <INSERT URL>)

(e.g. Writing Center review, peer review) allowed by the Instructor of Record or that person's designee. Plagiarism may also include double submission, self-plagiarism, or unauthorized resubmission of one's own work, as defined by the instructor.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, except where prohibited by the Instructor of Record (e.g. individual take-home exams). However, the actual work must be done by the student, and the student alone, unless collaboration is allowed by the Instructor of Record (e.g. group projects). When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

Please note: Any assignment may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

Academic Integrity – Prohibition on Cheating (*Senate Rules 6.3.2*)

Cheating is defined by its general usage. It includes, but is not limited to, the wrongfully giving, taking, or presenting any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding himself/herself or another on any academic work which is considered in any way in the determination of the final grade. The fact that a student could not have benefited from an action is not by itself proof that the action does not constitute cheating. Any question of definition shall be referred to the University Appeals Board.

Academic Integrity – Prohibition on Falsification or Misuse of Academic Records (*Senate Rules 6.3.3*)

Maintaining the integrity, accuracy, and appropriate privacy of student academic records is an essential administrative function of the University and a basic protection of all students. Accordingly, the actual or attempted falsification, theft, misrepresentation or other alteration or misuse of any official academic record of the University, specifically including knowingly having unauthorized access to such records or the unauthorized disclosure of information contained in such records, is a serious academic offense. As used in this context, "academic record" includes all paper and electronic versions of the partial or complete permanent academic record, all official and unofficial academic transcripts, application documents and admission credentials, and all academic record transaction documents. The minimum sanction for falsification, including the omission of information, or attempted falsification or other misuse of academic records as described in this section is suspension for one semester.