



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SENATE POLICY: V-130

VANCOUVER SENATE
c/o Enrolment Services
2016 - 1874 East Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

Number & Title

V-130: *Content and Distribution of Course Syllabi*

Effective Date:

August 2019

Approval Date:

January 2019

Review Date:

This policy shall be reviewed two (2) years after approval and thereafter as deemed necessary by the *responsible committee*.

Responsible Committee:

Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee

Authority:

University Act, S. 37(1)

“The academic governance of the university is vested in the senate and it has the following powers:

(f) to consider, approve and recommend to the board the revision of courses of study, instruction and education in all faculties and departments of the university.”

Purpose and Goals:

This policy is designed to:

- 1) Ensure consistent practices of the distribution of course syllabi and the content areas therein across the University; and
- 2) Establish the method by which information on the course syllabus can be changed.

Applicability:

All credit-bearing courses offered by the University of British Columbia including directed studies, special topics, fieldwork, and practicum courses.

Exclusions:

Graduate-level theses and dissertation courses are exempt.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy:

- *Academic unit* shall mean a faculty, college, school, department, institute or centre.
- *Course* shall mean course of instruction, namely, a structured series of classes or a sustained period of instruction that corresponds with a course description set out in the Academic Calendar.
- *Course instructor* shall mean the member of the University's teaching staff who has primary responsibility for the organization and operation of the *course*.
- *Course section* shall mean the particular scheduled offering of a particular *course* into which a student is registered.
- *Syllabus* shall mean the document provided by the *course instructor* which communicates the *course instructor's* course design to students including organization, policies, expectations, and requirements.

Policy:

- 1) *Course instructors* are required to provide a *syllabus* to students registered in their *course section*.
- 2) 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. This policy only pertains to the mandatory elements of a *syllabus* and does not address the many ways *syllabi* can be used in the educational context.
- 3) The *syllabus* shall inform students about the requirements and expectations of a *course* or *course section*.
- 4) Course instructors must provide the syllabus within the first week of class unless the *syllabus* will be created in consultation with the student(s) at the beginning of a *course section*, in which case the

syllabus must be finalized prior to the last date by which students are permitted to drop the course without receiving a “W” on their transcript.

- 5) The requirements of a *syllabus* (below) can be met in one or more dated digital documents or websites, as appropriate. A paper copy will be provided to any student who requests one.
- 6) *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.
- 7) A *syllabus* includes, at a minimum, the following content areas:
 - a. The *course* title and description (as in the Academic Calendar or, for *courses* without a published description, a brief representative one) and any prerequisites or co-requisites;
 - b. The name of the *course instructor* and details of when and by what means students may contact them; at the discretion of the *course instructor* the names of any other student-facing members of teaching staff such as teaching assistants involved in the offering of the course (if not available on the Student Service Centre), and details of when and by what means students may contact them;
 - c. A description of the *course* structure (e.g., lecture, lab, tutorial, flipped classroom, mixed mode; contact hours per week; day, time, and location of classes or other activities (if not available on the Student Service Centre));
 - d. A proposed *course* schedule including a list of topics;
 - e. *Course*-level learning outcomes or objectives, i.e., what is to be achieved and assessed in the *course* (more details of module, week, or class learning outcomes or objectives may be provided during the *course*);
 - f. A description of the learning activities the students will engage in, in order to achieve the stated learning outcomes or objectives (e.g., participation in class, written analysis of case studies, required readings, participation in on-line discussions, term papers, presentations, lab and field activities);
 - g. List of required learning materials including, among others, textbooks, reading packages, on-line assessment tools, lab and field trip manuals; and an estimate of associated costs for materials and activities;

- h. Methods used to assess achievement of stated learning outcomes or objectives, including the weighting of each component in the final grade; the class policies on re-grading of marked work and on both late submission and missed in-class assessments (in accordance with the [Academic Calendar language on Grading Practices](#)); and the schedule of assessments;
- i. Information on any resources to support student learning that are supported by the academic unit responsible for the *course*;
- j. The following statement about the University's values and policies with a link to the website (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-guide-students-success>) where details are provided:

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available [here](#) (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-guide-students-success>)

- 8) Nothing in the *syllabus* can contravene any Academic Calendar regulation or University policy. In resolving any discrepancy, Academic Calendar regulations and University policies take precedence.
- 9)
 - a. Should the *course instructor* wish to make a material change to the *syllabus* after the last day by which students are permitted to drop the *course* without receiving a 'W' on the transcript, the *course instructor* must explain the rationale to the class. The *course instructor* must ensure that registered students have access to the changed details in a revised and dated version of the *syllabus* and should send electronic communication to students to alert them that a change has been made.
 - b. Any student who sees the change to the *syllabus* as detrimental to their academic progress is entitled to discuss the case with the *course instructor* and seek a resolution. Where student and instructor cannot agree, students are encouraged to take their protest to the head of the

department concerned and then to the dean of the faculty responsible for the *course* in accordance with the [Academic Calendar regulations on protests for academic standings](#).

Calendar Statement:

As above.

Consultations

The following groups were provided with a draft version of this policy and asked to provide comment:

Office of the University Counsel; Office of the Ombudsperson for Students; the AMS; the GSS; Office of the Vice-President Academic; Deans; Enrolment Services; Centre for Teaching, Learning & Technology; Office of the Vice-President Students; Student Development & Services, Centre for Accessibility, Student Health Service, Counselling Services.

History:

This is the first version of this policy.

Related Policies:

The following are links to related Academic Policies as set out in the Academic Calendar. Links to Associated Board of Governors' Policies are set out in the webpage referred to in Section 7 (j) above.

[Academic Concession](#)

[Academic Honesty and Standards](#)

[Attendance](#)

[Grading Practices](#)

[Student Conduct and Discipline](#)

[Use of the Formal Examination Periods](#)

[Viewing Marked Work](#)

Appendix:

A template for the construction of a *syllabus* is provided but only as an aid.*

*Note: This template was developed in consultation with the CTLT and UBC IT and is housed on the UBC LT Hub web site.

Procedures:

1. The webpage referred to in Section 7 (j) above shall be maintained by the Senate Secretariat, on the Vancouver Senate website.
2. Any requests for additions or edits to changes to the webpage referred to in Section 7 (j) above shall be subject to the review and consideration of the

Senate Academic Policy Committee and shall require the approval of the Committee for implementation.