

 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> Senate: June 14, 2021 Board of Governors: June 22, 2021

Related Policies: Grading Practices Policy, Student Accommodation Policy A. Classroom Recording Protocol

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. When an instructor creates and/or modifies a syllabus, it is expected that consideration be given to students’ diverse learning needs and that the differences students bring to the class be acknowledged, valued, and respected. 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 E4 of this policy and attached as Appendix “A” that includes three sections: Section A: Course Information; Section B: University Statements; and Section C: University Policies, Guidelines and Resources for Support
- 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 is created by instructors as an administrative requirement associated with teaching a course and that describes the administrative, academic, and assessment components associated with a Course, including Course Information, University Statements and University Policies, Guidelines and Resources for Support.

D. Policy

1. All courses must distribute a syllabus either in paper or electronic format, or both, on, or before, the first day of the course. At that time, the Instructor will also communicate to students their responsibility to familiarize themselves with the content of the Syllabus. Where a Learning Management System (LMS) is used the Syllabus shall be made available there 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 the required University Statements in accordance with Sections A and B of the Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A). Section C of the Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A) will be made available on the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) website, on the homepage of the Learning Management System (LMS) and on the Dalhousie Academic Support website. Instructors may choose to include Section C with their Syllabus or may instead refer to it, providing a link, in their Syllabus.
3. The Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A) will contain a checklist indicating any mandatory and many optional Syllabus elements (Appendix A – Section A), as well as required University Statements (Appendix A- Section B). The University Policies, Guidelines, and Resources for Support (Appendix A – Section C) provides a list of university policies, statements, and resources. The Centre for Learning and Teaching shall up-date the Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A) links at a minimum once per year (as per E4) to ensure the currency of its

contents. The Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A) will be accessible to Instructors via a single web link, with current versions maintained by the CLT on their website. The University Policies, Guides, and Resources for Support (Appendix A – Section C) will also be available on the homepage of the Learning Management System (LMS) and on the Dalhousie Academic Support website.

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 and core EDI values, 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. Syllabi for current programs will be filed for reference in the Academic Unit for a period of 10 years, or longer if program approved. Subsequently, syllabi will be transferred to the Dalhousie University Archives on a rolling basis where they will be held permanently in a closed repository. Faculty members' intellectual property rights for the syllabi they created will be respected in accordance with the University's and Canadian copyright policies and legislation.

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 F4. Changes affecting the relative weight or timing of assessment or examination components must be approved by Students as described in section F5.

8. As noted in the Academic Calendar, "In order to complete a course satisfactorily, a student must fulfill all the requirements as set down in the course outline [Syllabus]." (16.1) Instructors should draw students' attention to this regulation and encourage students 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 (Appendix A) 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, and inclusion of diversity and equity principles.

4. Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A) : The Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) will provide and maintain a web page for Instructors, containing the Syllabus Guide (Appendix A). Where possible, persistent URL links will be used so that information is updated automatically. CLT will provide non-substantive updates to the Course Syllabus Guide (Appendix A) at a minimum once per year to ensure the currency of its contents. 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 every five years or earlier if deemed necessary by the Board of Governors, Senate, or the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee. Any interim non-substantive changes (e.g. update of a website, addition of a website) will be made by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (See E4).

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 (Appendix A), and any applicable Syllabus elements specified by their Academic Unit, and ensure that all mandatory components are included in the Syllabus. In addition to required administrative, academic and assessment Course information (Course Syllabus Guide, Section A), all Syllabi should contain brief University Statements as outlined in Course Syllabus Guide, Section B). All Syllabi should also provide a link to University Policies, Guidelines and Resources for Learning (Course Syllabus Guide, Section C). Instructors may choose to include items from Course Syllabus Guide, Section C, in their Syllabus. (See D3)

2. On or before the first class, the Instructor will provide the Syllabus to all Students, either online (e.g. through the LMS), as a paper copy, or both. Important elements of the Syllabus should be reviewed during the first class (with explicit reference to academic integrity), including the requirement that Students must read and adhere to the Syllabus (see section D8).

3. Prior to the start of the Course, the Instructor will also send an electronic copy of their Syllabus to the Academic Unit Head. Academic Unit Heads shall be responsible for retaining electronic master copies of Syllabi each term in accordance with Dalhousie Records Management Policy in a Dalhousie approved electronic repository (See Electronic Information Storage Guidelines.) Academic units will transfer Syllabi in the format received from the instructor to the Dalhousie University Archives on a rolling basis, in accordance with records management procedures, after 10 years, once per year. The Dalhousie University Archives will be responsible for retaining a historical record of Dalhousie Syllabi in a closed repository. While in the permanent custody of the Archives, the release of Syllabi will be authorized through the Academic Unit, Faculty, or Registrar's Office. Copies of Syllabi held in this repository will be

accessible upon request to a student who has been confirmed to have taken a particular course, or at the request of the Instructor who taught the course, or the Academic Unit which offered the course. Syllabi transferred to the repository cannot be accessed or modified for future academic use.

4. 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. Revised Syllabi should be submitted to the Academic Unit in accordance with F3.

5. In accordance with the Academic Calendar (16.1), “Change to the outline [Syllabus] which affect assessment components, the weight of individual assessment components, or examination requirements with a value of 10 percent or more must have the approval of at least two-thirds of enrolled students in order to be valid.” Exceptions to the Course and/or Syllabus for individual student accommodation requirements will follow the Student Accommodation Policy.

Appendix A 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 and/or as a requirement by the Academic Unit. 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
- o Reflects information that is optional to include (unless otherwise required by the applicable Academic Unit)

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)
 - Any other information required by the applicable Academic Unit
- o Instructor profile(s) (e.g. website)
 - o Photos of instructor(s)
 - o Brief Teaching Philosophy Statement

Academic

- How the course is offered (face-to-face, online, blended) including minimal technical requirements for technology (laptop/computer/cell phone/tablet specifications including mic and webcam if students will be required to be heard or seen online)
- Course Learning Outcomes
- Rationale for Course
- Course Description and prerequisites (from the university calendar)
- Course Exclusions
- 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
- Any other information required by the applicable Academic Unit

- o Key foundational knowledge and skills expected prior to the course
- o Weekly optional reading assignments
- o Concept map or graphic of course themes
- o Overview of the history of and key approaches to the discipline
- o FAQ section
- o 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
- Any other information required by the applicable Academic Unit

- o Guiding questions for reading
- o Detailed description of work to be submitted and guidance for completion
- o Grading rubrics with detailed criteria for each type of assessment and grade level
- o Guidelines/requirements for citing sources (acceptable procedures, styles etc.)
- o Guidelines/requirements for formatting assignments
- o Guidelines/requirements for where and how to submit assignments
- o Guidelines/requirements for ethical considerations in student learning activities and assessments (i.e. clinical work, undergraduate research projects)
- o Guidelines/requirements for meeting EDI learning outcomes
- o 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
 - Notification to students whether or not the Student Absence Declaration is approved for use by students in the course
 - 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 (subject to change based on unexpected accommodations during the course)
 - Any other information required by the applicable Academic Unit
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- o Processes for submission and return of student work
 - o Netiquette guidelines (highly recommended for online courses)
 - o Professionalism
 - o Time frame for responding to student emails
 - o Ground rules for interactions between students and with instructor(s)
 - o Technology use in the classroom
 - o Student Information Requested (information to be completed by student and submitted to instructor), and how confidentiality will be protected
 - o Trigger warnings/ Content warnings
 - o How previous feedback from students has been used to improve the course

Online/Blended Courses

- Minimal technical requirements for technology (laptop/computer/cell phone/tablet specifications including mic and webcam if students will be required to be heard or seen online)
- Required software or online platforms that will be used in the class
- Modes of communication that will be used in the course beyond Dalhousie email and LMS
- How and when students can communicate with you, and how you plan to communicate with them. Set parameters and include a statement about expected response time for messages, emails, and voicemail. Include days of the week, or times of day, during which you will and will not respond
- Virtual office hour times and location (i.e. provide link and identify platform)
- Identify which aspects of the course will be synchronous and which will be asynchronous (NB: synchronous sessions must align to time frames noted for course by the Registrar's Office.)
- Notify students if online proctoring software will be used in the course*
- Specify exam/test time windows and whether the exam will be synchronous or asynchronous*
- Contingency plan for technical/power related issues during tests/exams*
- Clarify due dates and times with respect to time zone differences
- Notify students if you are using LMS data or other tracking devices to grade online participation
- Notify students that when connecting to online resources from outside Canada, they are

responsible for ensuring they are aware of and are observing any applicable laws of the country they are connecting from

- Any other information required by the applicable Academic Unit
- Notify students if class is being recorded and remind students about their rights and responsibilities with respect to lecture recordings and the recording of lectures as per the Classroom Recording Protocol. Identify alternative means of participation and asking questions for students who do not want to be recorded

*See the Online Exam Toolkit for more information.

- Include links to instructions or tutorials on the use of software platforms
- Netiquette guidelines
- Time Management supports (including subscribing to Brightspace notifications)
- Online participation guidelines (i.e. for discussions and other types of assessments), including tools used for participation and how to use them
- Online group work guidelines where required
- Outline of course modules
- Ergonomics and importance of physical and mental well-being in a fully online learning program

SECTION B: UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

NB: Ideally these statements should be integrated into the learning of the course, cultivating a culture of curiosity and helping to ensure a deeper understanding of their meaning.

Provide the following links and brief statements:

- Territorial Acknowledgement:

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.¹

NB: Instructors may wish to create a personalized acknowledgement of the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq nation in lieu of the Dalhousie statement.

Instructors are encouraged to discuss the purpose of the inclusion of the statement with their class making explicit the connection of their statement with the content of their course. Instructors can encourage students to use the Dalhousie statement in their presentations or create their personalized land acknowledgement in lieu of this statement.

¹ For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, or information about alternative territorial acknowledgements if your class is offered outside of Nova Scotia, please visit <https://native-land.ca/>.

- Internationalization

At Dalhousie, ‘thinking and acting globally’ enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is “interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders.” <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/internationalization.html>

NB: Instructors can identify global learning outcomes and intercultural competency outcomes for the teaching and learning, and assessment activities and observe the achievement of these outcomes through the formal, informal, and the hidden curriculum.

- Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. 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: http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

- Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact:

- the Student Accessibility Centre (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html) for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro.
- the Student Success Centre in Truro for courses offered by the Faculty of Agriculture (<https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre.html>)

Your classrooms may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in place, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

- Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class

members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

- 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>)

- 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/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html)

- Fair Dealing policy

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. (read more: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html)

- Originality Checking Software (Mandatory to include if being used)

The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy. Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work, and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method. (Read more: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/student-submission-of-assignments-and-use-of-originality-checking-software-policy-.html)

- Student Use of Course Materials

These course materials are designed for use as part of the [course code] course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

SECTION C: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

Dalhousie courses are 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 in the Academic Calendar.)

NB: For up-dated links please see:
Centre for Learning and Teaching
LMS Home Page
Dalhousie Academic Support Page

University Policies and Programs

Important student information, services and resources are available as follows:

Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
Classroom Recording Protocol
Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy
Student Absence Declaration

Grade Appeal Process
Sexualized Violence Policy
Scent-Free Program

Learning and Support Resources

General Academic Support – Advising (Halifax and Truro)
Student Health and Wellness
On Track (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond)
Indigenous Student Centre
Elders-in-Residence (The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student Centre or contact the program at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803).

Black Student Advising Centre
International Centre
South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre
LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative
Dalhousie Libraries
Copyright Office
Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services
Dalhousie Ombudsperson
Human Rights and Equity Services
Writing Centre
Study Skills/Tutoring
Faculty or Departmental Advising Support

Safety

Biosafety
Chemical Safety
Radiation Safety
Laser Safety