LAMAR UNIVERSITY
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION:	Academic Affairs	**MAPP 02.04.17**
AREA:	Academic Courses, Programs & Curriculum	

Course Syllabus Requirements

I.   POLICY

A. All Lamar University (LU) courses must provide a course syllabus no later than the first day of classes for the term in which the course is offered. All syllabi must adhere to this policy to ensure consistency across University courses and to comply with federal and State of Texas law, accreditation standards, and University requirements.

II.   PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A. This policy covers all LU courses offered for credit in any term, in any modality, and at any location.

B. This policy complies with the Accrediting Standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and with the Texas Education Code § 51.974 and §51.96851 and Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, § 4.104 and §§ 4.225-4.228. This policy also falls under the authority of all applicable federal, state, and Texas State University System (TSUS) statutes, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to, the TSUS *Rules & Regulations*; Texas Education Code, Title 3, Higher Education; and Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Education.

III.   SYLLABUS CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

A. The following information must be included in syllabi for all LU courses offered for credit:

- Course title, course number, and section number;
- Catalog description of course;
- Course Meeting Time;
- Prerequisites for the course, if applicable;
- Name of instructor of record;
- Instructor's LU office location, office hours, LU phone number, and LU email address (if not on campus, use department information; do not use personal email or phone/cell number);
- Required or recommended readings and course materials (software, equipment, etc.);
- Brief description of each major course requirement, including each major assignment and examination;

- General description of the subject matter of each lecture or discussion (outline can be by day, week, or unit; stating "*See Blackboard*" is not acceptable);
- Measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the course; an SLO is a detailed description of what a student will be able to do at the conclusion of a course ("*After completing this course, a student will be able to . . .*");
- Grading policy and grading scale, including methods of evaluation and assignment of course grades; syllabus should avoid vague or ambiguous grading criteria so that students can clearly understand how they will be evaluated.
- Attendance requirements, including make-up policy; syllabus should clearly indicate if attendance and participation will be included in course grade and how these scores will be calculated.
- Accreditation status, if applicable (include only if department, college, or program is accredited; do not include reference to SACSCOC accreditation);
- All required University policies (automatically provided in Concourse).

IV.   ACCESSIBILITY

A. When designing course syllabi, faculty should avoid using color, font, and other design elements that hinder accessibility for all students, including those with disabilities such as color blindness or dyslexia. Using color as the sole method to convey information can create barriers for many individuals. Students with color blindness or low vision may not distinguish color variations, and screen readers cannot convey color to visually impaired users. For assistance in creating accessible syllabi, faculty should contact LU's Accessibility Resource Center (ARC).

V.   FACULTY INFORMATION

A. As instructor of record, a faculty member assigned to a course has ultimate responsibility for the course, its delivery, and the assignment of grades. Faculty who are assigned teaching assistants (TAs), graders, and/or similar academic support must identify themselves on their syllabi as the primary instructor of a course and remain open to communication from students.

B. Faculty must list their LU email address and LU phone number on course syllabi and use these accounts to communicate with students. Using an LU email address and phone number protects faculty and student privacy, provides a complete record of course communications, and assists in resolving grade and other disputes between faculty and students. (Note. Faculty who do not have a campus phone number should list their department's phone number on syllabi.)

C. Faculty should not list their personal email address, phone number, website, or social media accounts on syllabi and should avoid using personal accounts to communicate with students.

D. Faculty should indicate on their syllabi the timeframes for replying to student emails, returning phone calls, and returning graded work. Faculty must respond to students via any LU-approved system (e.g., LU email, LU phone, Teams, Blackboard, etc.) within two working days. If a student concern requires more than two days to resolve, faculty should send an acknowledgment email with a projected time to resolution.

VI. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

A. State of Texas law and accrediting agencies require that measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) be listed on syllabi for all courses, with the exception of courses with highly variable content (e.g., independent study, directed reading) or laboratory, practicum, and discussion sections that are an intrinsic and required component of another course.

B. Faculty teaching a core curriculum course must use the SLOs that the University, the State of Texas, and/or accrediting agencies have mandated for that core curriculum course.

C. Faculty may use learning outcomes for a course that are the same as, or based on, those identified for that course by the course's recognized accrediting agency. Courses aligned with specific degree programs should use the SLOs reported to SACSCOC and/or the program's recognized accrediting agency.

D. Faculty should not conflate course objectives with learning outcomes. A course objective describes what an instructor will cover in a course. A learning outcome or SLO describes what a student will know or be able to do after completing a course.

E. Faculty who would like more information about or assistance with SLOs should contact LU's Center for Teaching and Learning Enhancement (CTLE) or visit CTLE's website, which offers guidance on developing, using, and measuring SLOs.

VII. **SYLLABUS LANGUAGE AND TONE**

A. Faculty should use positive, supportive language in their syllabi and avoid punitive or negative language or threats. A syllabus may list consequences, but the tone should be professional and supportive.

B. Course syllabi should avoid excessive jargon or overly academic language so that syllabi are easily understood by all students.

C. Faculty should avoid overly rigid or inflexible language and policies. While structure is important, some flexibility allows for unforeseen circumstances.

D. Syllabi should not make promises that cannot be kept and should avoid guarantees about course outcomes or future opportunities.

E. Syllabi should not include personal opinions on controversial topics unless directly relevant to course content.

VIII. **ONLINE SYLLABUS TEMPLATE**

A. Faculty are required to use LU's online syllabus template to build their course syllabi each term. The template guides faculty in creating their syllabi, indicates which fields are required, and automatically populates the University's required policies into each syllabus.

B. When entering information into LU's online syllabus template, faculty should check carefully that information is entered into the correct field for each item. Checking entries will assist the University in reporting correct course information to the State of Texas and accrediting agencies.

C. Faculty who would like assistance using the online syllabus template may contact LU's instructional support staff at blackboard@lamar.edu.

IX. **SYLLABUS REVIEW AND ALIGNMENT**

A. Faculty should review their syllabus each time they teach a course to ensure that course information is correct, up to date, and aligned with University requirements. Information that should be checked includes, but is not limited to, course descriptions, contact information, office hours, course materials, due dates and times, web links, and University policies.

B. Departments, Colleges, or Schools may have additional requirements for syllabi specific to these units. Faculty should contact their department, College, or School to find out if these units have additional content or format requirements for syllabi.

C. Syllabi must be aligned with the beginning and ending dates of a term and with University holidays published in the University's Academic Calendar. If a syllabus conflicts with the University's Academic Calendar, the Academic Calendar takes precedence.

D. Syllabi must align with federal and State of Texas law, TSUS rules and regulations, and University policies. Inconsistencies with these broader government or institutional guidelines must be avoided.

   1. Under *no circumstances* may a syllabus include discriminatory language or policies that could be perceived as biased against groups protected under federal or State of Texas law.

E. Required University Policies

   1. All syllabi must include policies required by federal and State of Texas law, TSUS, and the University. These "University policies" assist students in understanding issues that include, but are not limited to, academic continuity, emergency procedures, academic honesty, disability resources, use of LU's internet and digital systems, and privacy.

   2. These required policies are subject to change as federal and State of Texas law, TSUS rules and regulations, and University policies change. Faculty are expected to remain aware of these requirements and align their syllabi with any changes.

   3. LU's online syllabus template automatically populates a faculty member's syllabus with the required University policies.

X. **SYLLABUS POSTING AND REPORTING**

A. The University is required by State of Texas law to post course syllabi online and by accrediting agencies to submit syllabi for accreditation reviews. The University uses the Concourse system to

post course syllabi online, in compliance with the Texas Education Code § 51.974 (HB 2504) and Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, §§ 4.225-4.228.

1. LU's learning management system, Blackboard, allows faculty to create "child" courses attached to a master or "parent" course. Child courses in Blackboard must have copies of the parent course syllabus posted in Concourse.

B. To facilitate reporting to the State of Texas and accrediting agencies, faculty are required to use a single syllabus for each course. Thus, when posting syllabi to multiple locations (e.g., Blackboard, Concourse) or distributing syllabi to students, faculty must use an identical syllabus in each location and for each situation. Faculty may not post or distribute a shorter syllabus that directs students to a longer syllabus in another location. In addition, faculty may not use Blackboard in lieu of a syllabus.

XI.   COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

A. Syllabi that do not align with the requirements listed in this policy will be removed from LU's online systems (e.g., Concourse, Blackboard) and returned to the instructor for revision. Refusal or failure to align a syllabus with the University's requirements may result in a reduction in or loss of teaching privileges.

XII.   REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Academic Policy Advisory Council

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before the date the policy was last revised and/or approved.

XIII.   APPROVAL

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs   Date

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Lamar University President   Date

POLICY LOG

Version	Date	Description of Changes
1	10/07/2024	Policy draft completed.
	11/20/2024	Reviews by constituency groups completed.
		Review by campus community completed.
		Policy approved by President.