

## SYLLABUS TIP SHEET FOR DISTRIBUTED LEARNING (DL) COURSES

### Course Approval Required

In order to teach any course online, it must first be approved through the appropriate channels.

- If your undergraduate course hasn't already been approved to be taught online, you'll need to submit a Distributed Education Delivery (DED) form through the online [Academic Programs Proposal System](#) (APPS). The Faculty Senate's Instructional Development Committee (INDEV) grants final approval.
- Graduate-level courses are submitted through the [Graduate Council Proposal Submission](#) process, and then through the online [Academic Programs Proposal System](#) (APPS).

In either case, your proposal includes a complete syllabus which has been reviewed by your department/unit and your college or school. Bear in mind that this is not always a speedy process. See [Policy ACAF 2.03](#) for more details, but remember that the DED process is online.

The team of instructional designers at the [Center for Teaching Excellence](#) is ready to help prepare you to submit your Distributed Learning (DL) course proposal through the approval process.

### Elements of a Distributed Learning Syllabus

#### I. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are your compass in developing your course. They point the way in determining the content, activities, and assessments you provide in the syllabus.

Outcomes describe the measurable skills and knowledge your students should master by the end of the course. Some courses have department-mandated course outcomes that cannot be modified. If that is the case, be sure to note that fact on the syllabus. This will alert INDEV in case they have questions about the outcomes, and helps get your course approved more smoothly.

All sections of Carolina Core courses must use essentially the same pre-determined learning outcomes. Visit the Provost's webpage on "[Learning Outcomes and Syllabus Guides](#)" for details. There are also specific required elements of Core course syllabi, discussed below.

#### II. Standard Sections

The pdf document, "[Syllabus Elements for Faculty Teaching Carolina Core Courses](#)," serves as a starting point for all courses. You can also visit the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment webpage for a handy "[Guide to Syllabus Construction](#)." In addition, the Committee on Instructional Development (INDEV) has developed a "[Syllabus Checklist for DED Approval](#)" for faculty to use in developing online course syllabi that you are urged to download. The CTE developed a "[Syllabus Best Practices](#)" document and an "[Online Course Syllabus Template](#)" guide that will be useful to you.

Students should know up-front what skills and knowledge they should gain from the course, by what means they will learn it, and how they will be expected to demonstrate that they have mastered the course content.

- First, a syllabus must include **general information**, including the course designator, number and

title and Carolina Core designation (if applicable). Instructor name and contact information is also required. Office hours and location, and the course meetings location and time (if applicable) should also be provided. INDEV also requires the exact language of the Academic Bulletin description, plus whether any pre-requisite courses are required.

- Next, a syllabus must provide an itemized list of the course's **Learning Outcomes**, under a heading labeled "Learning Outcomes". Core courses should include the pre-determined objectives. To gain INDEV approval, all learning outcomes must be measurable, and stated as observable learner behaviors, using action verbs like "explain, articulate, and evaluate". For courses in the 500- and 600- series, INDEV requires that you include at least one additional learning outcome for graduate- level students who might take the course. If the online course is also approved for traditional face- to-face delivery, the online syllabus must include a statement verifying that the learning outcomes are equivalent to those of the face-to-face version of the course.
- A syllabus must include any **required textbook** or readings. INDEV also expects to see a citation for each required reading or material, plus a notation verifying that that all materials used comply with copyright and fair use policies.
- Core courses must provide a list of **assignments and exams**, with a brief description of the expectations. However, for distributed learning courses, INDEV also requires a full description of the major assignments, rubric information, and how tests/quizzes will be secured. In 500- and 600-level courses, INDEV expects to see at least one additional, distinct assignment required of graduate students. This aligns with the Core Course requirement that the syllabus has clearly distinguished requirements for undergraduate credit and graduate credit.
- Core courses are required only to provide an overall **grading scheme and weights**, but online course syllabi must also provide weights of each graded assignment, and an explanation of how grades will be assigned. You should know that INDEV also requires the instructor to provide an estimate on communication, grading, and feedback turnaround time. For 500- and 600-level courses, your syllabus must show two distinct grading scales – one for undergraduate students, and the other for master's students.
- Syllabi for all distributed learning courses must explain the **delivery method** to be used, whether live streaming video, asynchronous online, or hybrid with 50% or more delivery occurring online. Any specific **technologies**, software, or programs to be used in the course must be included, and Core courses should provide an estimate of how much time the student will spend using those technologies. INDEV also requires you to provide a statement to students regarding the minimal technical skills required.
- The distributed learning course approval process requires course syllabi to include a statement with the university's **academic integrity policy** and consequences for violating the policy, and also a statement that identifies provisions and resources for students with disabilities. CTE suggests adding a Diversity Statement in this section of the syllabus, as well.
- Syllabi for Core courses must explain course provisions for **Student-to-Instructor, Student-to-Student, and Student-to-Content interactions**. INDEV requires the same information as part of the online APPS process.

### III. Module Schedule

Core courses must include a timeline of topics and assignments. To be approved by INDEV, however, any online course syllabus must show a schedule of (preferably) 14 content-based modules of learning.

- For courses that are primarily **asynchronous** – submit through the APPS system a syllabus that includes a tally showing the total number of student “**learning minutes**” per activity within each module, for a total of at least 2100 “learning minutes” per credit hour. Generally, that will be 6300 learning minutes for a 3-credit hour course. There is no flexibility on that number. The final exam period does not count toward “learning minutes.”
- For courses that are primarily **synchronous** – the submitted syllabus will include a tally showing a total of 700 synchronous “student-to-instructor” **contact minutes** per credit hour, or 2100 minutes for a 3-credit hour.