

**Syllabus Template 2.0 Guidance**

August 9, 2019

**Rationale**

Implement current higher education pedagogical best practices to meet campus and accreditation requirements.

**Implementation Plan**

All faculty are encouraged to:

* Use the Gillings Syllabus Template 2.0 for their course delivery.
  + Delete blue highlighted [Instructions] after using them.
  + Delete yellow highlighted [Examples] and edit/delete example text as it applies to your course.
* On the first day of class:
  + review the syllabus and appendix to clearly show students where they can find details such as course identifiers, expectations, policies, and resources.
  + tell students where session-by-session details will be located, e.g. [in Sakai] you will find:
    - Course Schedule (more detailed than the “Course at a Glance” in the front of the syllabus)
    - Assignment Descriptions
    - Assignment Grading Rubrics
  + tell students how they will be notified of changes, e.g. any changes to the following will be [posted in Sakai]
    - required readings
    - assignments
    - due dates
* **Effective January 2020**, the following courses are required to be in the Gillings Syllabus Template 2.0:
  + MPH Core and MPH Concentration
  + DrPH Core
  + SPHG 600
  + BSPH: BIOS 500H, BIOS 600, BIOS 664, BIOS 691, ENVR 698, EPID 600, HPM 697, SPHG 351, SPHG 352
  + All **new** courses
  + All courses undergoing **changes** in course number, course title, credit hours, content (substantive enough to warrant a change in course description or competencies).
* **Effective Academic Year 2021-2022**, all Gillings School courses are required to be in the Gillings Syllabus Template 2.0.

**Summary of changes in Gillings Syllabus Template to 2.0:**

* Removed the Table of Contents
* Reordered front matter of the Syllabus:
  + Course identifiers
  + Course at a Glance
  + Assignment list with percentage of final course grade
  + Competency Map
* Moved the following sections to the Syllabus Appendix
  + Grading scales
  + Faculty Expectations (with some edits in sample language\*)
  + Student Expectations (with some edits in sample language\*)
  + School and campus Resources and Policies (with some additions and minor edits in language)

\*such as moving specific inclusive excellence and honor code language to Faculty and Student Expectations sections.

* Removed the following sections, with encouragement for faculty to have them readily available for students in a separate document or on Sakai:
  + Course Schedule (session by session details)
  + Assignment Descriptions
  + Assignment Grading Rubrics
* Faculty have the discretion to insert the following sections in the Syllabus Appendix:
  + Course Schedule (session by session details)
  + Assignment Descriptions
  + Assignment Grading Rubrics

**References**

* **The Office of Undergraduate Curricula** [**Syllabus Guidelines**](https://curricula.unc.edu/curriculum-proposals/cim/syllabus/)

Syllabi are intended primarily as information for students, though sometimes colleagues and administrators also consult them for evidence of the instructor’s expertise. A comprehensive syllabus can be a useful teaching tool. At a minimum, it should tell students

* why learning this material might be important (course goals)
* what students will be learning (course content)
* when the material will be taught (schedule)
* how it will be taught (instructional procedures)
* when students will be required to demonstrate their learning (assignments and examination dates)
* how students’ learning will be assessed (evaluation) and the final grade determined
* **The Administrative Board of The Graduate School’s** [**Statement on Graduate Course Syllabi**](https://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/GraduateSchoolCourseSyllabi-20190320.pdf)**,** per Faculty Council Resolution 2012-11. Approved 11/2014. Revised 03/2019.

“The teaching–learning process develops from clearly communicated expectations. A course syllabus serves as a concise vehicle for providing course scope, defining course parameters, establishing course goals, and setting expectations. It is the blueprint from which faculty establish course structure and students build their experiences. Key syllabus components provide students with the framework to move through the course predictably and systematically.”

Best practices indicate the syllabus should contain:

1. course identifying information, such as course number, class meeting times, and prerequisite courses or knowledge
2. instructor and teaching assistant (if appropriate) identifying information, such as contact information and office hours
3. course goals and key learning objectives specific to the level at which the course is taught, including outcomes and **competencies students will develop in the course** and the variety of pedagogical approaches that may be used
4. course requirements and dates, including a class calendar, assignments and readings, exams, or other activities outside class time
5. course resources, such as text books, reserved readings, software, and online sites and tools
6. policies about conduct in class, including attendance, use of technology/electronic devices, class sessions being recorded (if relevant), and preparation/participation expectations
7. grading policies and expectations
8. statement on the University’s Honor Code, including any instructions specific to the course and its assignments
9. statements articulating the availability of accessibility resources, writing and learning center assistance, counseling and psychological services, and campus health services
10. statements valuing diversity and inclusion that acknowledge students’ varied backgrounds (e.g., gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, parent/family status), provide expectations for classroom culture and discourse, and offer assessment practices and any relevant flexibility
11. syllabus change clause, if desired (see sample language in the Resolution)

In addition to these best practices, individual units may have their own policies to follow to address discipline-specific and **accreditation-related syllabus expectations**.

**Accreditation-related syllabus expectations**

Higher education accrediting agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools ([SACS](http://www.sacs.org/)) and the Council on Education for Public Health ([CEPH](https://ceph.org/)) strongly recommend a common syllabus format for consistent presentation of information to students to maximize clarity of expectations and minimize ambiguity.

In the October 2017 Accreditation Site Visit Report, CEPH cited the Gillings School for having numerous syllabus formats and for not consistently publishing competencies.

“Site visitors’ review indicated that not all course syllabi have listed competencies that students are expected to demonstrate with completion for both core and degree-specific courses. [S]yllabi without listed competencies were present throughout a variety of degree programs.”

The lack of consistency contributes to ambiguous teaching methods and assessment practices, and contributes to student confusion regarding expectations.

CEPH required the Gillings School to submit an interim report in January 2019 documenting “evidence that the school has implemented practices to ensure consistent communication and presentation of competencies to students (e.g., presenting competencies on all syllabi).”

**Connecting the dots in the curriculum approval process**

* Syllabus template: provides pertinent information for reviewers to validate course content, required readings, assignments, expectations, and faculty contact hours are appropriate for the program of study and degree level, and to substantiate the [federal definition of a credit hour](https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/policies-procedures/university-policy-memorandums/upm-29-definition-of-a-credit-hour/).
* [CIM](https://registrar.unc.edu/courses/curriculum-inventory-management-cim/) input: **CourseLeaf Curriculum Information Management (CIM)** takes the entire curriculum process online, integrates, and builds on the CourseLeaf Catalog software (CAT) to provide a comprehensive Curriculum and Catalog product. CIM Course Approval is tightly integrated with the [**University Catalog**](http://catalog.unc.edu/) and [**ConnectCarolina**](http://connectcarolina.unc.edu/).