

COCI Checklist for Syllabus Development

Every proposal for a new course submitted for COCI approval must include a syllabus that includes the following elements. Syllabi submitted to COCI missing these components will be returned with a request for clarification or revision.

In *italics*, you will find explanations of the kind of information COCI expects to see related to each element on the checklist. We also provide suggestions about best practices to guide instructors as they develop syllabi. The goal of these best practices is to provide helpful guidance. Best practices items are not required for approval.

This checklist is intended to support faculty in syllabus development. COCI reserves the right to ask for clarification or revision during its review process, even if a syllabus includes every element on this checklist.

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- ☐ Course Title and Number
 - ☐ Course Modality (in person, online, or both, synchronous, asynchronous)
 - ☐ Expectation of recorded lectures/course capture
 - ☐ Credit hours ([COCI Handbook 2.3.1 Designation of Unit Value](#))

Explanation: A syllabus should state if a course will be held in-person, online, or a combination of both modalities. Courses with online components (such as online lecture or online discussions) should clarify if these online components are synchronous or asynchronous. For both online and in-person lectures, provide information about recorded lectures/course capture if you intend to record lectures.

Please note that an online course syllabus should not simply be an in-person syllabus format with lectures switched to Zoom. For online courses, COCI looks for information regarding how students are expected to engage with online teaching materials and the instructor, as well as their fellow students, whether this be in a synchronous or asynchronous setting.

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- ☐ Instructor Contact Information
 - ☐ Office hours info (number of hours/week, frequency, will GSIs offer office hours?...)
- Explanation:*** Many instructors do not have office hours scheduled when submitting a syllabus to COCI. Please include a “TBD” space where you will put up-to-date information about office hours. Additionally, the syllabus should include information about how to contact the instructor and GSIs (i.e. email, bcourses, or slack).

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- ☐ Prerequisites (courses, etc.)
 - ☐ Expected software competency/access

Explanation: In addition to required prerequisites and courses that are recommended to prepare students for the course, please clarify any software competencies/access that are required for the proposed course. If a software license is required, please provide guidance

about how students who cannot afford the software will be supported. If your course has a course materials fee, please follow the guidance found [here](#).

☐ Course Description

Explanation: *While the Course Management System restricts course descriptions to a maximum of 750 characters (including spaces), the course description on the syllabus may be longer.*

Best practices: *Include course objectives. For ideas about how to define learning objectives for a course, see [this guide](#) from the Center for Teaching and Learning.*

☐ Required texts/readings

☐ All required texts or readings included with titles and authors

☐ Location of course materials (bCourses, individual instructor website, course reader, textbook, etc...)

Best practices: *List the authors and titles of all required texts near the top of the syllabus, then include specific required readings in the weekly schedule.*

☐ List of Course Requirements - Grading Rubric

Explanation: *It should be clear to students how they will be assessed in the course. You should include information about all required work for the course, relative weights of assignments and exams, and any other specific expectations related to grading. At a minimum, the syllabus must include:*

☐ The relative weight of each requirement in calculating the final grade (e.g., two ten-page papers, 20% each; two quizzes, 10% each; final exam, 40%).

☐ Ensure rubric adds up to 100%

☐ Information about how participation will be assessed if more than 20% of the final grade is based on participation.

Explanation: *COCI recommends separating attendance from participation in a grading rubric. If the participation component of a grade is more than 20% it should be clear to students how participation will be assessed. Research indicates that grading for participation that is not grounded in concrete activities and expectations may be subject to implicit bias and therefore unfair to some students.*

☐ Attendance policy

☐ Instructors cannot require a doctor's note to excuse absences.

<https://evcp.berkeley.edu/illness-accommodations-instructor-guidance>

☐ In scheduling exams and other required activities, instructors must make accommodations for observances and practices associated with religious creed. For more information, see the campus's [Religious Creed Policy](#).

Explanation: *If students will be penalized for missing more than a certain number of class meetings, or if the course grade is otherwise linked to attendance, you must*

include a clearly stated attendance policy.

☐ Disability Accommodations

- ☐ COCI requires explicitly acknowledging disability accommodations in the text of the syllabus.
- ☐ Instructors' policies may not include any blanket denials of accommodations, whether explicit or implicit.

Explanation: *Additional information and CTL's suggestions for DSP language can be found here: <https://teaching.berkeley.edu/addressing-dsp-accommodations-your-syllabus>*

☐ Assignment descriptions

Best practice: *Include grading rubrics for specific assignments.*

☐ Weekly Schedule

- ☐ Includes topics, assigned materials, and student work
- ☐ Assignment due dates (General due dates, such as the week an assignment is due, are acceptable.)
- ☐ If the course proposal includes a request for non-standard term lengths (e.g., a three-week term) please include an explanation of how the schedule will be adjusted to accommodate such a schedule.
- ☐ Final Exam Information: format, place, time, etc.

The course must include a comprehensive final examination, unless an alternative method of final assessment has been noted in the proposal and explained in the syllabus. [Academic Senate Regulation 772](#) dictates that a written examination, not to exceed three hours, is required in all undergraduate courses.

- ☐ Final exams for undergraduates may not be held before the start of the final examination period, nor may final papers be required to be completed or turned in during the regular semester's period of formal instruction nor during the reading/review/recitation (RRR) period. See the COCI's [Reading, Review, and Recitation \(RRR\) Week Guidelines](#) (PDF) and the Office of the Registrar's [Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Campus Policies and Guidelines Concerning the Academic Calendar, RRR Week, Exams, and Commencement](#).

Explanation: *You may not have information about the exact date or time of the final exam when submitting a syllabus for COCI review. Please provide space in a dedicated section and a placeholder (TBD) where this information will be provided to students once it becomes available. If you intend to offer online exams, please clarify if you intend to proctor those exams.*

Other Best Practices

- Student Code of Conduct (<https://conduct.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct>)
- A grade-based or extra-points incentive for individual student completion of course evaluations is not allowed. Instructors may offer a grade-based or extra-points incentive to all students if a set response rate is achieved.
- Late assignment policy

Explanation: *Campus does not have a standard late assignment policy. Students should know if you are willing to accept late assignments. If you are willing to accept assignments submitted after the due date, clarify how grades will be affected by late submission.*