



Information to Include on Every Syllabus

More information including a syllabus template: <https://teachlearn.provost.wisc.edu/course-syllabi/>

Why are we talking about the syllabus now?

Federal regulations specify a definition of the credit hour (2010). Accrediting agencies have the responsibility to review compliance. In March 2019, UW-Madison will undergo a review of the credit hour policy in conjunction with our 2019 Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation review. Demonstration of compliance is important – it confirms to the public that we deliver a high-quality learning experience with attention to students.

Syllabi from spring 2018, summer 2018, fall 2018 will be scrutinized during 2019 HLC accreditation review for learning outcomes and information on credits and the credit hour. In February 2019, we will be asked to provide a specified sample of syllabi with about a 36-hour response time.

What is changing?

For most instructors, the changes will be minor. Make sure your syllabus includes:

1. Course learning outcomes
<https://assessment.provost.wisc.edu/student-learning-outcomes/>
Contact: Mo Bischof, Associate Vice Provost, mo.bischof@wisc.edu
2. Number of credits
3. Information about how the course meets the credit hour policy definitions. Recommended text:
<https://teachlearn.provost.wisc.edu/course-syllabi/course-credit-information-required-for-syllabi/>
Credit Hour Policy: <https://kb.wisc.edu/vesta/page.php?id=24558>
Contact: Jocelyn Milner, Vice Provost, jocelyn.milner@wisc.edu

Why have a syllabus?

The syllabus is a student-centered document that serves as a durable and portable record of the student learning experience in group instruction. Inclusion of learning outcomes and credit hours are key pieces of information that need to be documented, along with other information about the learning experience such as general course content, grading, information about textbooks and learning resources, and information about how to contact the instructor.

The syllabus travels with the student and may be referred to when seeking employment, graduate or professional education, and transfer of credit.

Every group instruction course must have a syllabus.

More consistent adherence to accepted practices will help us “catch up” with common higher education expectations.

Timeline

- **2016-17** – Development and approval of the UW-Madison Credit Hour Policy
- **June-December 2017** – Faculty Working Group on the Syllabus, chair: Steve Cramer, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning
- **June 2017 and ongoing** – Work on technology solution and communication. Syllabus template will be supported in Canvas.
- **October 2017 and ongoing** – Communication to schools/colleges and department chairs, and instructors. Spring 2018 – include learning outcomes, credit information on every group-instruction course syllabus.

HLC and Federal Credit Hour

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assignment-of-credits.html>

Assignment of Credit Hours

The institution's assignment and award of credit hours shall conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education. Those institutions seeking, or participating in, Title IV federal financial aid, shall demonstrate that they have policies determining the credit hours awarded to courses and programs in keeping with commonly-accepted practices and with the federal definition of the credit hour, as reproduced herein for reference only, and that institutions also have procedures that result in an appropriate awarding of institutional credit in conformity with the policies established by the institution.

Federal Credit Hour Definition: A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours. 34CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)

Why? The federal government provides financial aid for for-credit instruction - \$28B in Pell Grants in 2015-16. Credits are the higher education currency they are funding.

UW-Madison and the Credit Hour

<https://kb.wisc.edu/vesta/page.php?id=24558>

UW-Madison Definition of Credit Hour – Policy Statement

Generally, UW-Madison will follow the federal credit hour definition: one hour (i.e. 50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty/qualified instructor instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks, or the equivalent engagement over a different time-period.

Alternatively, a credit hour will be defined as the learning that takes place in at least 45 hours of learning activities, which include time in lectures or class meetings, in-person or online, laboratories, examinations, presentations, tutorials, preparation, reading, studying, hands-on experiences, and other learning activities; or a demonstration by the student of learning equivalent to that established as the expected product of such a period of study.

In all cases, learning in for-credit courses is guided by a qualified instructor and includes regular and substantive student-instructor interaction.

Approved by UAPC, June 2017; accepted by Faculty Senate, October 2017

Faculty Working Group on the Syllabus

- Met June to October 2017
- Chaired by Steve Cramer, Vice Provost for Teaching & Learning
- Advised on standard components of a UW-Madison syllabus
- Advised on development of a technology solution, expected to be in Canvas. Syllabus format: <https://teachlearn.provost.wisc.edu/course-syllabi/>

Data we Have to Submit to HLC Reviewers

- For spring 2018, summer 2018, fall 2018 and maybe spring 2019
- A summary table that gives the number of meeting hours for all courses by credit level in the two most recent fall/spring semesters, by course format (F2F, blended, online, independent study, etc.) (known as Suppl A1)
- A list of any courses not captured in Suppl A1 and a description of how credit is determined
- The institution's policy on assignment of the credit hour, and any school/college, department, or program-specific policy (known as Suppl A2)
- A copy of the catalog or other document that provides course descriptions for all for-credit courses, including their credit hour assignments (known as Suppl B1)
- A catalog or other document that marks or highlights any course offered in non-standard terms or compressed formats; if provided as a separate list indicate how to find them in the course catalog (known as Suppl B2)
- The course schedule for the most recently completed fall/spring terms including times and meeting dates for all classes in all delivery formats; usually provided in a tabular format.
- In February 2019, a few weeks before the visit, the peer reviewers will ask for sample syllabi, especially for compressed courses or high credit or courses delivered in multiple formats. They can ask for any syllabus and we have to provide what they ask for within two days.
- The peer reviews may ask for any additional data they deem necessary to the support the review.

They will examine the syllabi for evidence that we comply with federal credit hour policy. Negative findings result in mandatory monitoring report in one year. A negative finding on federal compliance may result in an investigation and possible fines.

Originals of the HLC reviewer worksheets are posted at <http://hlcommission.org/Policies/federal-compliance-program.html>

UW-Madison 2019 HLC Accreditation Project: <https://hlcaccreditation.wisc.edu/>