



## COURSE SYLLABUS DATA COLLECTION - FAQs

It is a long-standing requirement that a course syllabus must be developed by each instructional faculty and distributed to students at the start of the academic term. Students have a right to receive the information provided in the syllabus per university policy:

<https://louisville.edu/dos/students/studentrightsandresponsibilities>.

The posting of syllabi in Blackboard (BB) is an ongoing commitment that must be completed by faculty in preparation for each academic term. To address questions that have been raised about the process and concerns about the security of data stored in BB, the Office of the Provost has developed the following information.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

- 1. How do I post a syllabus?** Go to the following link (<http://louisville.edu/oapa/course-syllabus-collection/posting-syllabi-to-blackboard>) and choose "Posting Syllabi to Blackboard." It is critical the instructions are followed to ensure that each syllabus will be extracted properly and stored in the data base. If you have trouble posting contact the Delphi Center (852-8833).
- 2. What if my syllabus is already posted in Blackboard?** Verify the syllabus is named correctly and loaded correctly in Blackboard. Follow the instructions at <http://louisville.edu/oapa/course-syllabus-collection/posting-syllabi-to-blackboard>. There are four caveats for posting information on BB:
  - Do not post PowerPoint (PPT) files in the syllabus content folder in BB. The graphics contained in the PPT files may be too large for proper extraction.
  - Do not post links to websites with the syllabus information. It is not a substitute for the Blackboard posting.
  - Convert all documents to pdf's. This will help to ensure that all posted syllabi convert to other platforms (OnBase and/or SharePoint) correctly.
  - Follow the prescribed naming conventions for the file detailed in the linked document, which include:
    - i. The file name must contain the word "syllabus," as a distinct part of the file name.
    - ii. The file name must not use spaces or periods, and it can only include three dashes.
    - iii. The recommended format is course prefix-course number-section-term code-syllabus.pdf.
- 3. Does every section need a syllabus posted?** Yes, all sections of a course should be treated separately and a syllabus posted for each one. The syllabus could be the same for all sections, but you must create a separate pdf file for each course section that is named for the course number, specific section, and term. If you have had your course "merged" in Blackboard, all merged sections must have a separate syllabus posted that is named for the course number, specific section, and term in addition to the master course. **Posting course syllabi is an ongoing commitment that must be completed each term for all scheduled courses.**
- 4. Do independent study courses need a syllabus posted?** Yes, the syllabus or a "Plan of Work" should be posted. The Plan of Work must provide basic course information (e.g., course prefix, number & section, term & year, course objectives and evaluation methods). Any personal information such as student name, and

identification numbers (student/faculty) should be redacted from the plan of work form then scanned as a PDF and posted to BB.

5. **Are there any exceptions to the posting rule? Yes, there are a few exceptions** – Placeholder sections for Master's Thesis, Doctoral Dissertation, and Study Abroad will not require a syllabus. Courses that are considered "exceptions" or exempt and will not have a syllabus should be reported to the unit dean's office for review and approval by the SACSCOC liaison. See the following website for more information on exempted courses: <https://louisville.edu/oapa/course-syllabus-collection/exemptions-file-081418>.
6. **Who can post a syllabus?** Each faculty member is responsible for their course shell and is expected to post the syllabus. No one will access the course shell without faculty permission or clearance by the Delphi Center. Faculty can request users be added to their courses in a support role by completing the appropriate form from the Delphi Center at <http://louisville.edu/delphi/blackboard>.
7. **Who can access and view the syllabus documents?** Documents placed in a guest accessible area such as the syllabus area can be viewed and accessed by anyone.
8. **Could someone print, copy, download, or edit my syllabus?** Yes and No. A document in BB can be downloaded and printed. It is also possible to print the screen or take a digital image of a BB screen display. Users without the proper permission cannot edit or upload/post the syllabus or other documents to a BB course. Creating a pdf file of the syllabus also makes editing more difficult.
9. **Are there guidelines for developing a syllabus?** Yes, but the guidelines may vary in each academic unit. A good place to check for syllabus information is the Delphi Center for Teaching & Learning website at <http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus>, or for a general education course, <http://louisville.edu/provost/GER/GER-Syllabus.pdf> or <http://louisville.edu/provost/ger/faculty-1>

Please be aware of the following information:

- The course objectives should be clearly stated on the syllabus. The objectives should be consistent with the program's Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) and are expected to be an integral part of all syllabi.
- The University of Louisville (UofL) [Academic Calendar and Awarding of Course Credit Hours Policy](#) provides a reasonable approximation of the federal credit hour definition. To address the needs of its diverse student body, UofL has established an academic calendar policy based on a standard of fourteen (14) weeks (fall/spring terms). All courses at the University of Louisville follow uniform standards for determining the amount of credit awarded. The initial credit hour recommendation is made by the faculty in the discipline in the university's curriculum process in order to ensure consistency with the University of Louisville policy and the norms of the discipline.

A one credit hour of lecture, discussion, or seminar requires at least 50 contact minutes per week during a regular semester (as allowed by SACSCOC and consistent with the federal recognition of the Carnegie Unit definition). Courses offered entirely or partially through distance education or other alternate methods must offer opportunities for a comparable amount of contact with the instructor. In addition, each course syllabus must indicate an expectation of at least two-and-one-half hours of out-of-classroom activity per week for each hour of credit. See <http://louisville.edu/oapa/credit-hour-definition-and-policy>

University policy mandates that each syllabus contain the approved notification of Title IX and Clery Act reporting procedures and responsibilities, as well as a statement of accommodation of any disabilities verified by the Disability Resource Center. Each unit may have additional specific requirements for the information that must appear on a syllabus. See the listing of unit syllabi policies here: <http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus/schoolpolicies>

- 10. How will syllabi information be used?** The university is mainly collecting syllabi in preparation for the accreditation process. SACSCOC reviewers may examine syllabi while they are reviewing faculty credentials for teaching particular courses, or they may look at syllabi when they are reviewing program assessment plans to see how particular courses fit into the overall student learning outcomes of that program. Other institutional assessment processes may also utilize course syllabi in the evaluation of program or project objectives – e.g., general education, cultural diversity, and sustainability.
- 11. How will the syllabus documents once extracted from BB be stored?** The syllabus will be stored in a secure database. It will be accessible by SACSCOC reviewers upon request during the reaffirmation process.
- 12. Can the syllabus be considered “intellectual Property”?** Maybe, but the syllabus information that should be posted to BB is primarily procedural and to inform students of course requirements. Faculty can post an abbreviated syllabus that lists the topics and general assignments without the specific details. Any proprietary or sensitive information could be a supplement to the syllabus that can be distributed separately for enrolled students.
- 13. What if there are issues posting syllabi in Blackboard?** A troubleshooting document ([Adding a Syllabus to Blackboard](#)) can help correct some issues that may be experienced in posting to Blackboard. For those courses that are on the missing syllabi list, this document would be a great place to start (especially for courses that have the incorrect naming convention or syllabi that have been loaded incorrectly). Questions about the Blackboard syllabus process can also be directed to: [bbsupport@louisville.edu](mailto:bbsupport@louisville.edu) call 502-852-8833.

For more information, go to:

<http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus>

<http://louisville.edu/oapa/sacs-data-requirements>