

Subject: Academic Standards for Course Outlines, Syllabi, and General Education Assessment

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the college’s academic standards for course outlines, syllabi, and general education assessment, and to assign responsibility and procedures for compliance.

2. Policy

Faculty shall ensure that curricula adhere to the college’s academic standards and complies with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Policy Manual Sections 2.0.4, 5.0.2 and 5.1, the standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning.

This policy applies to all teaching faculty at Tidewater Community College.

3. Responsibilities

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Chief Academic Officer (“Vice President”) shall be responsible for developing and maintaining procedures that are consistent with this policy and that comply with the policies and principles of the VCCS, SACSCOC, and SCHEV.

4. Procedures

The procedures outlined in this policy are to be followed as well as the procedures provided in the General Education Assessment (GEA) Plan and the TCC Curriculum Procedures Handbook:

4.1. Course Outlines

Course outlines shall be developed by faculty and implemented in accordance with procedures recommended for approval by the Instruction Committee, and subsequently approved by the Vice President. Outlines must include all required components and support at least one General Education Core Competency as provided in the Official Course Outline template, published in i-INCURR.

4.2. Course Syllabi

An opportunity for review of the syllabus must be provided to students in a course section and the college is required to maintain copies of all syllabi. Faculty are responsible for creating a syllabus for each course section they are assigned to teach and provide an electronic or printed copy to their division office and their students no later than the first day of class. Any policies listed or implied in course syllabi must be consistent with the policies of the college. If there is a conflict between a course syllabus and published college policies, the college policies supersede those listed in the syllabus. Course syllabi must include all required components as provided in the Official Course Syllabus template, published in i-INCURR. Academic deans/directors may specify additional required information to be included.

Prior to the start of each semester, faculty will review the course syllabus template in i-INCURR to ensure any changes to the template are included in their syllabi. Academic deans/directors are responsible for directing the design and development of syllabi consistent with college policies and procedures, and assuring that appropriate course syllabi are developed by each faculty member. Academic deans/directors will also collect and maintain copies of syllabi for three years after the end of the semester.

4.3. General Education Assessment

All teaching faculty are responsible for implementing the General Education Assessment (GEA) Plan, published in i-INCURR.

4.3.1 General Education Courses

Per the cycle outlined in the GEA Plan, general education courses will be selected to determine whether assignment design supports student

learning in the designated competency. Student learning in the designated competency will also be assessed. Faculty who teach selected courses will submit completed student assignments and documentation of activities or assignments required for their students by the established deadline.

In accordance with the cycle outlined in the GEA Plan, faculty whose courses are selected for assessment will convene to review assessment findings and recommend changes to the curriculum and/or college practices and policies to foster student learning in the competency. Changes will be implemented in accordance with the GEA Plan as recommended by faculty and the appropriate governance committees, and reviewed and approved by the Vice President.

4.3.2 All Other Courses (Non-General Education)

Per the cycle outlined in the GEA Plan, courses other than general education will be selected to determine whether assignment design supports student learning in the designated competency. Student learning in the designated competency will not be assessed; however, faculty will submit a brief narrative of how their course supports student learning in the competency under study. Selected faculty who teach courses will submit documentation of activities or assignments required of their students by the established deadline.

In accordance with the cycle as outlined in the GEA Plan, faculty whose courses are selected for assessment will convene to review assessment findings and recommend changes to the curriculum (e.g., general education core competencies, measurable learning outcomes, and program outcomes) and/or college practices and policies to foster student learning in the competency. Changes will be implemented in accordance with the GEA Plan as recommended by faculty and reviewed and approved by the Vice President.

4.4 Role of Academic Deans/Directors

Academic deans/directors will provide the support necessary to faculty in order to ensure compliance with academic standards and requirements in the faculty evaluation plan relative to course outlines and course syllabi.

4.5 Role of Instruction Committee

4.5.1 The Instruction Committee will review annually the General Education Assessment Plan and recommend changes to the Vice President for approval.

4.5.2 The Instruction Committee will review annually the Course Outline Procedure, located in the TCC Curriculum Procedures Handbook, and recommend changes to the Vice President for approval.

4.5.3 In collaboration with the Office of Academic Affairs, the Instruction Committee will review annually the college-wide procedures for the annual review of course outlines and syllabi and recommend changes to the Vice President for approval.

4.5.4 The Instruction Committee will recommend annually procedures for general education course selection and recommend changes to the Vice President for approval.

4.6 Role of Curriculum Committee

4.6.1 The Curriculum Committee will ensure new and revised curricula (e.g., changes to general education core competencies, measurable learning outcomes, and program outcomes) comply with the procedures delineated in the TCC Curriculum Procedures Handbook.

4.6.2 The Curriculum Committee will monitor and select general education courses based on procedures delineated in the TCC Curriculum Procedures Handbook, for inclusion in a program of study, assessment, and related purposes.

4.7 Role of the Academic Affairs Office

4.7.1 The Academic Affairs Office will ensure updates to all templates, curriculum documents, handbooks, and plans are kept current in i-INCURR.

4.7.2 The Academic Affairs Office will liaise with the Office for Information Systems to ensure the proper functioning of i-INCURR, and that upgrades are designed and implemented based on college needs.

5. Definitions

Course Outline. The course outline is a concise, general purpose document used by all faculty teaching a given course as a common basis for describing the major elements of the course regardless of who teaches the course (i.e., full-time or part-time faculty member), where the course is taught (e.g., a campus, center, military base), or delivery modality (i.e., traditional, hybrid, online/virtual). The course content summary is designed by the faculty within a discipline and reviewed annually. The course outline is used to create a course syllabus and for various administrative purposes, including description of course content to external parties and students who are seeking advanced standing. There is only one official course outline for each credit course offered by the college. Course outlines must include all required components as identified in the Official Course Outline template published in i-INCURR. The course outline is the official document that contains what a faculty member is hired to teach at TCC.

Syllabus. A syllabus is an outline of a specific plan for conducting instruction in a course developed by the faculty member teaching the course. A course syllabus must include all required components as identified in the most current version of the Official Course Syllabus template published in i-INCURR. The course syllabus will inform the

student about the core competencies and learning outcomes to be achieved, the topics that will be covered, delivery modality, student responsibilities, attendance, assignments, how grades will be determined, as well as relevant college policies and procedures. The syllabus is an official document that serves as an agreement between a faculty member and her/his students.

General Education Assessment Plan. The General Education Assessment (GEA) Plan is the college's working plan for general education assessment including context, methods, results, and use of results based on findings. The GEA Plan is published in i-INCURR.

6. References

[Virginia Community College System Policy Manual Sections 2 and 5](#), Policies 2.0.4, 5.0.2, and 5.1

Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges [Principles of Accreditation: Foundations of Quality Enhancement](#), Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, [Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning](#)

Library of Virginia, [Records Retention and Disposition Schedule \(General Schedule No. GS-111\)](#)

7. Review Periodicity and Responsibility

The Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer shall review this policy at the anniversary of its approval and, if necessary, recommend revisions.

8. Effective Date and Approval

This policy is effective upon its approval by the College President on April 23, 2015.

Policy Approved:

Procedure Developed:

Edna V. Baehre-Kolovani, Ph.D.
President

Daniel T. DeMarte, Ed.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs &
Chief Academic Officer

9. Review and Revision History

This is the first version of this policy.