

ESS Syllabus, Grading, and Course Guidelines

Syllabi

- A syllabus is required as part of the UW course approval process. As importantly, syllabi communicate course expectations to students, highlight the main learning goals for each course, identify policies that students will be expected to follow, and outline how students will be evaluated. Syllabi also play a critical role in the resolution of academic misconduct or grading disputes. The College of the Environment will typically ask faculty to provide a copy of their syllabus in order to review the information that was given to students at the beginning of the course and to propose resolutions which align with university policy and the course syllabus. Finally, syllabi that include all of the components below provide students with key information they will need to determine whether they should contact Disability Resources for Student (DRS) to arrange accommodations.
- All classes, including special topics courses, should have up-to-date syllabi.
- To align with University and College of the Environment curriculum guidelines and review processes, all syllabi must include:
 - An [access and accommodations statement](#).
 - A [religious accommodations statement](#) (exact language required by state law).
 - An [academic integrity statement](#).
 - If the course will be recorded, instructors should include a statement in the syllabus informing students that the course will be recorded, noting whether students will be included in the recordings, and explaining who will have access to the recordings and for how long. (See the [sample statement](#) on the College of the Environment Online Teaching Resources page.)
 - Learning goals.
 - Instructor office hours. If there will not be regularly scheduled office hours, we strongly recommend including a statement that students can arrange to meet with the instructor(s) by appointment.
 - Evaluation details and grading policies, including a link to the course [grading scale](#) and a percentage breakdown outlining how course assignments will be weighted in the final grade.
 - Dates for all major in-class assignments, such as exams and final project presentations.
 - For courses with field trips, the syllabus should state the field trip locations, dates, means of transportation, information regarding toilet stops, objective information regarding the field trip conditions and demands (e.g., “involves hiking 2 miles on steep trails with regular stops/breaks over the course of 2 hours”; “includes standing for extended periods of time”), and whether the field trip is required or optional.
- Faculty may also include a number of optional statements in their syllabi, such as:

- A land acknowledgment (see [example on the UW Native Live and Tribal Relations website](#))
- A diversity statement, for example: “The College of the Environment supports an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength. In this course, I/we strive to create welcoming spaces where everyone feels included and engaged regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds.”
- A statement regarding UW mental health resources, for example: “Your well-being is also important to me. The [UW Counseling Center](#) offers free counseling appointments for current students. In addition to being available for appointments, they have a [counselor who can take drop-ins](#) for students who need to see someone right away. [Hall Health Mental Health](#) also offers mental health services which are covered by many health insurance plans. If you need to speak to someone outside of regular business hours, you can also call the 24 hour [crisis clinic](#) at 866-427-4747. See a [list of additional campus resources for students](#).”
- A safety statement, for example: “It is one of our top priorities to ensure access to a safe educational space for our students. All students should feel empowered to decline to participate in field or lab activities which they feel are dangerous. The ESS Department encourages students to speak up if you feel uncomfortable participating in a field or lab activity that may jeopardize your safety. Please also feel free to report such activities to ESS Student Services. The ESS Department has a zero tolerance policy for harassment of any type, in accordance with the [Student Conduct Code](#). All students have agreed to abide by the Student Conduct Code upon enrollment at UW. Please note that the Student Conduct Code applies not only to on-campus interactions with all UW affiliated students, but is also in effect for any field trips or travel associated with UW courses or department activities. If you experience or witness harassment of any sort, please report it to ESS Student Services. The UW also provides a [Bias Incident Report Form](#) which you can use to report incidents of suspected bias and request university review.”
- Additional information regarding the required components that must be included in syllabi can be found in the [ESS Curriculum Guidelines for Faculty](#). See here for a [sample syllabus](#).
- Syllabi including all of the required components above should be distributed to students no later than the first week of the quarter.
- If a class has a single instructor, it is a best practice to split the office hours among different days/times (for example, rather than holding office hours on TTh 10-11, consider offering office hours on M 9-10 and Th 10-11). If a class has multiple instructors or TAs, avoid overlapping all of the office hours so that students who cannot make one time may be able to attend at another time.
- Instructors are strongly encouraged to make the syllabus page on their course website publicly visible and to add that link to the [list of ESS Course Webpages](#) on the ESS Department website. This is an important resource for both students and faculty. Contact

ESS Student Services if you need to add/update the URL for your course.

Grading

- Grading on attendance is not allowed; however, participation may be graded. If participation is more than 15% of the grade, the UW Curriculum Office requires “information in the syllabus listing the objective measures by which participation will be evaluated.”
- Grades should be made available online through Canvas so that students are able to assess their progress throughout the quarter.
- Grades cannot be shared over email or any platform that is not [FERPA-compliant](#) and should not be shared with anyone but the student.
- When grading assignments, instructors are strongly encouraged to use rubrics and provide students with specific, constructive feedback so that they can determine how their grades were assigned and make improvements moving forward.
- Instructors are strongly encouraged to touch base with students who may be struggling prior to the 7th week of the quarter. After this date, students are unable to change to Satisfactory/Non-Satisfactory grading or use their Annual Drop.
- Grades are due at 5PM on the Tuesday following finals week each quarter. (See the [UW Academic Calendar](#).)
- The grades submitted for a course must match the course grading system as listed in the Time Schedule - i.e., courses listed as credit/no credit grading in the Time Schedule must be assigned a grade of either “CR” or “NCR.” Courses that are not listed as credit/no credit grading in the Time Schedule must be assigned a standard (numeric) grade. ESS 600, 700, and 800 must all be graded on a CR/NCR basis.

Course Evaluations

- Online course evaluations are ordered for all ESS classes, excluding ESS 490, 590, 595, 599, or independent study/research/thesis/capstone course numbers. Any instructors who do not wish to order course evaluations for their classes must obtain approval from the ESS Department Chair.
- While end of quarter course evaluations can provide useful feedback, this feedback comes too late in the quarter to impact the class as it is being taught. Therefore, offering a mechanism for anonymous mid-quarter course feedback is strongly recommended as a best practice.
- ESS instructors must evaluate all teaching assistants for their courses at the end of each quarter using the [ESS TA Evaluation Form](#).

Additional Course Considerations

- Any videos used for instructional purposes must include captioning. Please contact our computing specialists (esscomp@uw.edu) if you need assistance captioning your class videos. UW-IT also offers a [free captioning service](#) for “highly-visible, high-impact, multiple use, and/or strategic videos.”

- Per the [Faculty Council on Academic Standards \(FCAS\) Syllabus Guidelines](#), “Instructors are strongly discouraged from requiring medical or legal documentation from a student for any absences.”
- Information regarding field trips should be available to students in the courses’ Time Schedule notes prior to registration for that quarter . Guidelines on what information should be included can be found in the [ESS Department Field Trip FAQs](#).
- All ESS instructors are responsible for placing their own textbook orders via the [University Bookstore website](#) or via tools on MyUW.

Resources

- [ESS Curriculum Guidelines for Faculty](#)
- Sample syllabus
- [Faculty Council on Academic Standards \(FCAS\) syllabus guidelines/policies](#)
- [UW Registrar syllabi guidelines and resources](#)
- [CoEnv syllabi attendance and participation policies](#)
- [UW Grading System](#)
- [College of the Environment academic misconduct policy and process](#)