
Course Development Policy

Policy Sponsor:	Vice-President, Academic
Policy Contact:	Office of the Vice-President, Academic
Policy Number:	N/A
Effective Date:	June 13, 2014
Approval Group:	Governors of Athabasca University
Approval Date:	June 13, 2014, Motion # 190-06
Review Date:	Annually
Procedure:	Course Development Procedures

Purpose

This policy, in conjunction with the principles outlined in [Appendix 1](#), provides a framework for the development of Athabasca University (AU) credit courses.

Definitions

Course Development	the process of considering, creating, producing and getting a course ready for students; also includes the process of evaluating and revising a course
Course Design	the identification of learning outcomes, conceptualization of activities, collection of resources and construction of assessments that support effective and engaging learning in AU courses
Course Production	the final stages of course development before a course is opened, which includes editing, copyright approval and final compilation of the course components in the learning management system
Course Team/ Course Development Team	the group of academic, professional and support staff who work together to develop courses



Revision an update to a course. Revisions range from straightforward live updates and corrections, through minor adjustments due to changing learning resources including textbooks, to complete rewrites. Changes to method of evaluation require a formal revision.

Syllabus a description of the course that students, institutions and others can consult to determine the pre-requisites, course content, learning outcomes, assessment strategies and resources included

Policy Statements

1. AU courses will be developed and revised in alignment with university strategic, academic and operational plans and budgets, subject to the availability of resources as allocated by the Vice-President Academic.
2. Each Faculty, in consultation with the Vice-President Academic, determines the course development process that will be followed within its courses and programs.
3. The development of AU courses is led by the Course Coordinator, who meets with a community of specialists in content, design, online teaching and learning strategies, multimedia, editing, production and evaluation in ways co-determined by the Course Coordinator and the development team as described in the Course Development Procedures.
4. A syllabus for each AU course will be readily available to current and prospective students, other institutions and the general public. It is the responsibility of the Course Coordinator to ensure currency and accuracy in the syllabus, and to ensure its online availability.
5. Course development is not a singular process but an iterative one, recurring over time within a cycle of constant renewal. AU courses feature regular review and revision to allow for changes to design and content.
6. Assessment of learning outcomes in courses shall conform to examination policies.
7. Courses will meet AU quality standards and copyright policies.
8. The process of AU course development adheres fully to Canadian Intellectual Property and Copyright law.
9. AU will retain ownership of its courses in perpetuity.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Canadian Intellectual property laws](#)
[Alberta Post-secondary Learning Act](#)
[Copyright law](#)



Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[Course Development Procedures](#)

Academic integrity principles and policies

Syllabus policies and procedures

Examination policies including [Examination Currency Policy](#)

[Undergraduate Challenge for Credit Policy](#)

AU Intellectual property policy

AU accessibility guidelines

History

Governors of Athabasca University, June 13, 2014, Motion # 190-06 (approved)



APPENDIX 1

Athabasca University course development is based on the following principles:

Learning

Athabasca University courses are designed to support student learning through a wide variety of instructional methods and theoretical approaches, contextualized to the needs of students, course enrolments, and academic practices. More than collections of materials, they represent flexible and adaptive learning environments that engage and motivate students to be successful.

Quality

Quality assurance is an outcome of relevance, currency, academic integrity, accessibility and adherence to design and production standards. Athabasca University courses are responsive to changes in subject matter and student expectations. Systematic, consultative and formative evaluations of the course and student performance help identify changes that ensure courses are relevant, current, and effective.

Timeliness

New course development and course revisions are timely and responsive to changes as identified in the evaluation process.

Flexibility

Course development is flexible to accommodate the needs of courses differentiated by discipline, level, pedagogy and technology.

Accountability

The Course Coordinator, supported by colleagues and staff with expertise in the design and production of online learning, and by relevant evaluation data, leads the development process.

Appropriate use of technology

Course development makes effective use of the affordances of learning technologies and the digital environment in order to assist students to meet learning outcomes.

Design

Course design uses a collaborative approach that leverages the expertise of AU employees.