
Undergraduate Course Outlines Policy

Effective Date

December 1996
Reviewed and approved November 1997
Reviewed and approved April 1998
Reviewed and approved December 2000

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that accurate and up-dated outlines are available to current and prospective students, other institutions, and to the general public.

Definitions

Course *outlines* (also known as syllabi) are summary statements of the main themes and study areas of the course.

Course *descriptions* are brief outlines of the content. Course descriptions are the legal description of the course published in the Athabasca University Calendar.

Policy

All Athabasca University courses will have a course outline that is readily available to current and prospective students, other institutions, and the general public.

Course outlines will be maintained and distributed by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic.

Regulation

N/A



Procedure

For Individualized Study Courses

1. The content of individualized study course outlines must provide information that would help a student or prospective student to choose an appropriate course or that would help a receiving institution assess the course content and rigor for awarding transfer credit.
2. The Office of the Registrar will be responsible for archiving past versions of individualized study course outlines. Copies of all versions of the individualized study course outlines will be kept for ten years then transferred to the Archives. Current and past course descriptions are readily available in current and past calendars.
3. Each individualized study course outline will include the statement: The University reserves the right to amend course outlines from time to time without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.
4. Distribution: Students, and others, may request a course outline through the Information Centre, in person at the Learning Centres or from the Athabasca University World Wide Web site.
5. The academic assigned as course coordinator is responsible for submitting new and amended individualized study course outlines to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic in a standard format and length, and for recommending to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic permanently closed courses. Where substantial changes to course outlines have been made that may impact on the course's transferability or on its status within a program, these will be forwarded to USB and GSB as appropriate for approval.
6. The Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic is responsible for the collection and distribution of current individualized study course outlines. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for responding to requests for archived individualized study course outlines, and for following up on transferability issues.
7. Current individualized study course outlines will be kept in an electronic format containing:
 - the course number and title
 - number of credits
 - area of study (humanities, social sciences, etc.)
 - pre-requisites
 - precluded courses
 - overview of the course, and of each unit



- course objectives
 - outline (names of units or modules)
 - student evaluation (format, type of exam, length of papers, weighting of assignments and grade minimums, etc.)
 - list of textbooks and other course materials and format
 - special course features (lab and workshop components, requirements for Internet access, computer equipment, software, video equipment access, etc.)
 - date of last course outline update
 - alternate formats for course materials for students with disabilities.
8. Distribution List for new and revised individualized study course outlines: (Distribution may be electronic or paper as appropriate)
- Calendar Coordinator
 - Course Coordinator
 - Assigned Academic Support Secretary
 - Office of the Registrar
 - Learning Centres - Edmonton, Calgary
 - EMD Coordinator
9. A yearly confirmation of individualized study course outlines that are on file will be undertaken. A copy of each outline would be sent to the appropriate course coordinator for sign-off.

For Group Study Courses

1. Group study course tutors are responsible for submitting a draft course outline to the supervising course coordinator at least three weeks in advance of the start date of the course. The approved course outline is expected to be provided to students on or before the date of the first session. It should contain, at a minimum, the following information:
- the course number and title
 - number of credits
 - overview of the course
 - meeting dates, times, and methods (e.g., videoconference seminars)
 - course objectives and a general description of the topics to be covered at each session
 - student evaluation criteria (weighting of assignments, grade minimums, and final grade calculation)
 - due dates for assignments and penalties for late submissions, if any
 - examination date(s), if any
 - list of textbooks and other course materials (if individualized study package is not used)



- special course features (for example, lab and workshop components, practicums, etc.)
2. A copy of each group study course outline is sent to the appropriate course coordinator for sign-off.
 3. Final/approved versions of group study course outlines are returned to Learning Services Outreach with work assignment notification forms. Learning Services Outreach forwards originals to the appropriate Academic Support Unit course secretary and Office of the Registrar, and keeps a file copy. Learning Services Outreach does any follow-up required.
 4. The Office of the Registrar will be responsible for archiving past versions of group study course outlines. Copies of all versions of the group study course outlines will be kept for ten years then transferred to the Archives. Current and past course descriptions are readily available in current and past calendars.
 5. Students receive a copy of the group study course outline (normally at the first session). Copies are available from the Academic Support Unit course secretary.

Approved By

Council of Centre Chairs
Student Services Group
Academic Council, June 17, 1998

Amended Date/Motion No.

Approved by AUAC: Motion 160-7, December 6, 2000
Approved by AUAC: Motion 166-8, October 31, 2001

Related References, Policies and Procedures

AU Records Management Policy
Role Description: Academic
Role Description: Centre Chair

Applicable Legislation/Regulation

N/A

Responsible Position/Department

Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic