

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify and operationalize course structure and management expectations, including those related to course syllabi, Learning Management System use, final exams, office hours, communication, and scheduled class meetings in accordance with *Texas State University System Rules and Regulations*, Chapter V, subsections 4.32, 4.82, and 7, and *Texas Education Code* Section 51.974. This policy applies to all courses regardless of instructional method or modality. Colleges, departments, and programs may establish additional requirements above and beyond the minimum requirements stated in this policy.

2. COURSE SYLLABI

2.01 The following requirements apply to all course syllabi, including, but not limited to, lecture, laboratory, private lesson, independent study, internship, practicum, thesis, and dissertation courses.

2.02 Course syllabi shall contain the following general information:

- a. Course name
- b. Course number and credit hours
- c. Semester and year
- d. Department
- e. Class location
- f. Instructor name
- g. Instructor's SHSU contact information
- h. Instructor's weekly office hours
- i. Course description
- j. Learning outcomes
- k. Grading policy
- l. Late work and make-up policies
- m. Student-provided technological devices policy
- n. Use of artificial intelligence policy
- o. Tentative course outline with assessment due dates (exemption for thesis and dissertation courses)
- p. Notification of course evaluation process
- q. Final exam date

2.03 Course syllabi shall contain the following additional information in accordance with academic policy and/or *Texas Education Code* Section 51.974:

- a. Required and optional textbooks and other resources
- b. Attendance policy (APS 800401, *Class Attendance*)
- c. Brief description of or link to each major course requirement, major assignment, and examination
- d. General description of each lecture or discussion, such as topic or corresponding textbook chapter number

2.04 In accordance with academic policy, reference shall be made to the following in the course syllabus (in lieu of referencing items a through c, instructors may opt to include a link to <https://intranet.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/faculty-handbook/syllabus-guidelines>):

- a. The university's policy on academic honesty (APS 810213, *Academic Honesty*)
- b. The university's policy on student absences for religious holy days (APS 861001, *Student Absences on Religious Holy Days*)
- c. The university's policy on students with disabilities (APS 811006, *Students with Disabilities*)

(1) Course syllabi shall also contain the following (or similar) statement: "Any student with a disability that affects their academic performance should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to request accommodations."

2.05 *Texas State University System Rules and Regulations*, Chapter III, subsection 5.1(10), requires that each course syllabus be reviewed at least once per year by the appropriate department chair. Department chairs may delegate this responsibility as appropriate.

3. LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) USE

3.01 The course syllabus shall be posted to the LMS course page no later than the first class day of the term for all face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses.

3.02 The instructor's name and SHSU contact information shall be prominently displayed on the LMS course page no later than the first class day of the term.

- 3.03 Early and frequent documented feedback, such as graded assignments, to students regarding their progression in the course is encouraged when possible.
- 3.04 Departments shall establish expected timelines for faculty to submit assignment and exam grades to the LMS gradebook. Established timelines may vary due to length of term and academic discipline, as well as course level and content. Timelines shall be communicated to departmental faculty prior to the start of each term by the department chair. Exceptions to the required use of the LMS gradebook require chair approval.

The following suggested timelines for posting of assignment and exam grades are provided for reference:

- No later than ten (10) working days following the due date of the assignment or date of the exam for 15-week courses;
 - No later than seven (7) working days following the due date of the assignment or date of the exam for 10-week courses;
 - No later than five (5) working days following the due date of the assignment or date of the exam for 7-week courses; and
 - No later than four (4) working days following the due date of the assignment or date of the exam for 5-week courses.
- a. Whenever possible, LMS gradebook weighting should be used such that a student's current course average is visible to the student. SHSU Online instructional designers can configure the LMS gradebook for the instructor upon request. Faculty may also use other posted documents or tools to communicate a student's current course average.
- b. To inform students of their academic standing in the course prior to the Q-drop deadline, grades for at least 25% of all course assessments should be posted in the LMS gradebook by the term midpoint. For self-paced courses, including independent study courses, grades for at least 25% of course assessments should be posted if the student has completed at least 25% of course assessments; in general, students are encouraged to complete work earlier in the semester so early feedback can be provided. Alternative means of written communication regarding a student's academic standing in the course are acceptable with chair approval.

- 3.05 Assessments may be due on weekends, holidays, and reading days, provided students can reasonably submit the assessment prior to such days.

4. FINAL EXAMS

- 4.01 If the course curriculum includes a final exam, the final exam shall be administered according to the final exam schedule published by the Office of the Registrar.
- a. Deviations from the Office of the Registrar's final exam schedule must be approved in writing by the department chair.
 - b. The College of Osteopathic Medicine shall adhere to its own final exam schedule in lieu of the Office of the Registrar's final exam schedule.
 - c. The final exam shall be designed to be completed within the length of time of the Office of the Registrar's scheduled final exam time.
 - d. Final exams shall be administered online for online courses.
 - e. Final exams for face-to-face and hybrid courses may be administered face-to-face or online at the instructor's discretion. For face-to-face courses, students without reliable personal technology or internet access must be provided with an opportunity to complete the final exam in person.
 - f. For final exams administered online, the exam completion window may be longer than the Office of the Registrar's scheduled final exam time, provided the Office of the Registrar's scheduled final exam time falls within the exam completion window.
 - g. For online on-demand (asynchronous) courses, the final exam must be available to students during the final exam week.

5. OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNICATION

- 5.01 A minimum of two dedicated office hours shall be held per week, and students shall be notified of these hours in the course syllabus. Instructors teaching only one semester credit hour may reduce this minimum requirement to one hour per week. Colleges may establish minimums above the minimum number of office hours required by this policy.

- a. Office hours for face-to-face and hybrid courses may be held in any modality, including in person and via video conferencing.
 - b. The above minimum number of office hours shall be held via video conferencing for online courses.
- 5.02 Additional office hours above the required minimum may be held in any modality at the discretion of the course instructor.
- 5.03 Students should be able to schedule appointments outside of regularly-scheduled office hours as mutually agreed upon by the student and instructor.
- 5.04 Instructors are expected to respond to student emails and messages in a timely and substantive manner; as a general rule, instructors should respond within 48 hours, excluding holidays and weekends.

6. SCHEDULED CLASS MEETINGS

- 6.01 The instructor of record shall be present for and facilitate all class meetings as indicated on the course schedule. Teaching and graduate assistants may facilitate class meetings in lieu of the instructor of record if the teaching or graduate assistant has been specifically hired by the university to assist with the course.
- 6.02 Exceptions to the above requirements due to extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to illness and university-sponsored travel and activities, require notification to the department chair.
- a. Scheduled instructor absences should be communicated electronically to students at the earliest possible date and at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled class meeting for which the instructor will be absent.
- 6.03 For face-to-face and hybrid courses, all scheduled face-to-face class meetings as indicated on the official schedule of courses shall be held face-to-face.
- 6.04 For online-live and online-blended courses, all synchronous (live) class meetings as indicated on the official schedule of courses shall be held synchronously (live).
- 6.05 Exceptions to requirements of 6.03 and 6.04 for pedagogical reasons are permitted, provided the course meets requirements of APS 021120, *Face-to-Face, Online, and Hybrid Education*.

- 6.06 Collectively, exceptions may not exceed more than 20% of scheduled class meeting times. Exceptions totaling more than 20% require written approval of the chair and dean, with notification to the Office of the Provost.

APPROVED: <signed>
Alisa White, Ph.D., President

DATE: 1/28/2025

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This academic policy statement (APS) has been approved by the reviewer listed below and represents SHSU's Division of Academic Affairs' policy from the date of this document until superseded.

Original: January 9, 2025
Reviewer: Academic Affairs Council

Review Cycle: Five years*
Review Date: Spring 2030

Approved: <signed>
Michael T. Stephenson, Ph.D.,
Provost and Sr. Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Date: 1/15/2025

*Effective January 2018, Academic Policy Statements will be reviewed on a rotating 5-year schedule. To transition to a distributed review load, some policies may be reviewed prior to the 5-year timeframe, with subsequent reviews transitioning to the 5-year schedule.