Guidelines for CARS Submitters and Reviewers

This guide is intended to help faculty members, academic units, and members of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and Graduate and Professional Committee (GPC) in the creation and review of academic programs and courses in conjunction with other resources, especially the [Minimum Syllabus Requirements](#). This document was drafted by a task force with membership from UCC and GPC and approved by the Faculty Senate.

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Curricular Review and Approval Roles

The TAMU SAP for Curricular Processes, including responsibilities of each level of review and approval, may be found here: https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/11.99.99.M0.01.pdf. The information below is a brief summary.

Reviewer Roles
- Curricular Services reviews all curricular items for accreditation, state, and university compliance and for accuracy and completeness.
- Provost office representatives review program proposals to ensure overall strength of the proposal, including its contribution to the university's mission, persuasiveness of the proposal, and compliance with external standards pertaining specifically to academic programs (e.g., Texas A&M System Board of Regents, THECB, SACSCOC requirements).

Reviewer /Approver Roles
- Department curriculum committees have primary responsibility for ensuring that all curricular items meet university standards.

- College curriculum committees review curricular items for completeness and alignment with college level guidelines and university compliance. In addition, this committee approves the curricular item to advance to the next level of review.
- The Dean (or designee) ensures that the college curriculum committee reviews the proposal and approves the curricular item to advance to the next level of review.
- The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate and Professional Committee (UCC/GPC) review curricular items for completeness; compliance with applicable state, accreditation, and university policies; appropriateness (aligns with the university's mission and scope, does not duplicate content across units, etc.); and overall quality. In addition, these committees approve curricular items to advance to the next level of review.
- The Faculty Senate represents the entire faculty and ensures the content, quality, and effectiveness of all curricular items. In addition, they approve curricular items to advance to the next level of review.

Approver Roles
- The Provost ensures all curricular items meet standards of quality and excellence and recommends curricular items to the President for final institutional approval.
- The President attests that curricular items meet the university's standards for quality and excellence and have received appropriate review. Once approved, external entities are notified on behalf of the president of curricular proposals and changes, as applicable.
- External approval as required by the Texas A&M System Board of Regents, SACSCOC, and/or THECB.

Program Proposals

All Program Proposals

Units proposing any program (new or revisions to existing programs) should:

☐ Determine if the proposed change could or does affect other academic units (i.e., review catalog). An academic unit may be affected in the case of:
  ☐ Similar/Duplicate Content
    ☐ Program subject matter is taught by another academic unit or content overlaps the domain of another academic unit. Consider any restrictions on enrollment when identifying duplicate content.
  ☐ Course Dependency
    ☐ Program subject matter involves one or more courses from another academic unit as a required or elective course in the program.
    ☐ Curriculum includes one or more courses from another academic unit as prerequisite(s).

☐ Include documented communication with affected academic unit(s) by the time the proposal is ready for UCC/GPC review
    ☐ Documentation must be in the form of formal letters of support attached in CARS, or comments stating support by an appropriate department head or designee in CARS.

New Program Proposals

Units proposing a new academic program should:

☐ Consult Provost's office to begin discussion and to secure a signed Planning Memo.

- ☐ Comply with relevant university policy/language and academic standards, including curricular requirements for all undergraduate or graduate degrees.
- ☐ Include all required TAMU forms:
    - ☐ Planning Memo (signed)
    - ☐ Proposal
    - ☐ Required supporting documents:
        - ☐ Degree evaluation [Curricular Services, with UCC/GPC double checking]
        - ☐ CARS Form (catalog copy)
        - ☐ Letters of support for all affected academic units, if applicable
        - ☐ **Note**: Other supporting documents may be required as specified by THECB, but they do not all need to be finalized prior to UCC/GPC review
- ☐ Demonstrate financial soundness [Provost team review]

Nontraditional Format Program Proposals

Units proposing distance education or other non-traditional format (NTF) programs must include all applicable information from the following:

- ☐ Justification for NTF format (CARS form)
- ☐ Mode of delivery (asynchronous, synchronous)
- ☐ Program type
    - ☐ Hybrid - more than 50% but less than 100% delivered electronically.
    - ☐ Online - 100% delivered electronically.
- ☐ Detail instructional activities and student-faculty engagement justifying assigned contact hours.
- ☐ Describe how enrolled students progress through curriculum (cohorts, off-semester required coursework, etc.)
- ☐ Planned assessment strategies.

Inactivating a Program

Units inactivating existing programs should include:

- ☐ Program ending dates:
    - ☐ Date students will no longer be admitted to the program
    - ☐ Anticipated date of the last student graduating
- ☐ An appropriate teachout plan, including timeline and the number of students affected.
- ☐ Details about how currently enrolled students were notified of plans to inactivate the program and how students will be supported to complete the program.
- ☐ **NOTE**: The department justification for inactivating programs as submitted in CARS is submitted verbatim to SACSCOC. Careful editing is advised.

Course Proposals

Proposals that Require a Syllabus Attachment

Units are required to include a syllabus in CARS when proposing any of the following:
- ☐ New course

- ☐ Change in course number (course prefix and/or number)
- ☐ Change in course hours (lecture/lab/other contact hours or semester credit hours).
    - ☐ Excludes courses (in most cases) only adding variable zero credit to fixed credit (e.g., 3 SCH change to 0-3 SCH).
    - ☐ For graduate courses, please reference the Degree Requirements Limitations on using zero credit.
- ☐ Proposals for non-traditional course delivery.

Helpful Links for Creating a Syllabus

- • Syllabus Template
- • Academic Calendar

- • Center for Teaching Excellence
- • Checklist of C Course Requirements
- • Checklist of W Course Requirements
- • Faculty E-Handbook

- • Final Exam Schedule

- • Learning Management System
- • Responding to Generative AI (CTE)
- • Online Course Catalog
- • Religious Observances
- • Student Rules
- • Definition of a Credit Hour 11.03.99.M1
- • Zoom

Course Proposals and Syllabi

- ☐ Must be approved by the appropriate departmental and school/college curricular committees
- ☐ The information in CARS must match the syllabus:
    - ☐ Course number
    - ☐ Course title
    - ☐ Credit hours
    - ☐ Contact hours
    - ☐ Course description (should closely match, but the syllabus description is not required to use catalog style guide)
    - ☐ Prerequisites (should closely match)
- ☐ Course level justification:
    - ☐ Verify course level aligns with the college course level policy.
    - ☐ Verify rigor of student course expectations for the proposed course level.
- ☐ Determine if the proposed change could or does affect other academic units. (Catalog) An academic unit may be affected in the case of:
    - ☐ Similar/Duplicate Content
        - ☐ The course subject matter is taught by another academic unit or content overlaps the domain of another academic unit.
        - ☐ Consider any restrictions on enrollment when considering duplicate content.
    - ☐ Course Dependency
        - ☐ The course subject matter involves one or more courses from another academic unit as a required or elective course in the program.
        - ☐ The course includes one or more courses from another academic unit as prerequisite(s).
    - ☐ Include documented communication with affected academic unit(s) by the time the proposal is ready for UCC/GPC review

- ☐ Documentation may be in the form of formal letters of support attached in CARS, or comments stating support by an appropriate department head or designee in CARS.
- ☐ Course proposal areas specifically reviewed by UCC/GPC:
  - ☐ Adherence to the TAMU minimum syllabus requirements.
    - ☐ All additions to the syllabus beyond the minimum syllabus requirements must be compliant with university policies (e.g., Student Rule 7, late work, makeup work, excused absences, etc.)
  - ☐ Course Learning Outcomes:
    - ☐ No less than 3 measurable course learning outcomes.
    - ☐ Student performance expectations validate the course level justification.
    - ☐ Resources to develop course learning outcomes include, but are not limited to:
      - ☐ TAMU Center for Teaching Excellence Drafting Meaningful Learning Outcomes on demand course.
      - ☐ Bloom's taxonomy
      - ☐ Heick Learning Taxonomy
      - ☐ Marzano & Kendall Taxonomy
  - ☐ Course content related to course purpose.
  - ☐ Grading Policy
    - ☐ Clearly defined the grading scale.
    - ☐ Criteria for assigning S/U grades if appropriate.
    - ☐ Description of the graded items
    - ☐ Assign grade weights for graded items.
    - ☐ If class participation constitutes more than 10% of grade, the syllabus should explicitly define and outline how the participation grade is determined based on a well-defined rubric (see Student Rule 10).
    - ☐ If the course is a stacked course that uses a single, combined syllabus for the undergraduate and graduate courses, the syllabus must clearly specify additional, appropriately rigorous work required for graduate students.
  - ☐ Approval for NonTraditional Format Courses
    - ☐ The learning outcome equivalency statement must indicate the academic unit's faculty members reviewed the learning outcomes and determined they are equivalent to a face-to-face course.
    - ☐ The contact hours equivalency statement must indicate the academic unit's faculty members reviewed the contact hours and determined they are equivalent to a face-to-face course.
    - ☐ If NTFD (Duration), for shortened or part-of-term courses:
      - ☐ Include a course calendar detailing number of class sessions, span of course by weeks and total contact hours (faculty-student engagement) of the course.
    - ☐ If NTFO (Online), for Distance Education (DE)/Online Courses:
      - ☐ Verify a distance education course will not inadvertently cause the program to exceed the 50% mark, reclassifying the program as distance education.
      - ☐ Verify that no more than 50% of the course is delivered through distance education, unless it is designated as a DE course
      - ☐ Provide mode of delivery (asynchronous, synchronous)

☐ Detail instructional activities and student-faculty engagement justifying assigned contact hours.

☐ Explain how course assignment and assessment will be completed for online students

☐ Courses submitted for [Writing or Communication (W/C)](#) , [Core Curriculum, or ICD/CD](#) designations require additional information submitted in CARS in addition to satisfying the requirements above.

Inactivating a Course

☐ Provide justification for inactivating the course.

☐ The proposing unit has a duty to consult with any affected academic units (see list of "Programs Referencing this Course" in CARS). Documentation may be in the form of formal letters of support attached in CARS, or comments stating support by an appropriate department head or designee in the CARS system.