

Process for Creating, Adopting and Revising Course Outlines

Amending College Policy 6Hx28:05-04

Introduction:

College Policy and Procedure 6Hx28:05-04 reads in part:

Policy:

Competencies and student outcomes shall be developed for each course and program.

Procedure:

Competencies and student outcomes for each credit course and program shall be developed by the appropriate collegewide discipline, approved by the Collegewide Curriculum Committee, and filed in the offices of each appropriate department chair and vice president for instructional affairs.

History of This Process:

Reading the excerpt from the current policy manual above makes it clear that this policy needs updating since the language used in the policy does not describe the current administrative structure of the College. (For example: there is no longer a vice president for instructional affairs. There is now a Chief Learning Officer.) Aside from language, there is an even more compelling need to revise the process for creating, adopting and revising course outlines. This need was underscored by the convergence of three factors.

First, during the last SACS accreditation review, it was apparent that the previous process for housing course outlines in the offices of deans and the Chief Learning Officer had resulted in an incomplete compendium of course outlines, making it apparent that a new method for housing these outlines was needed—one that was electronic and easily accessible. In addition, the SACS review revealed that many outlines were outdated, that many did not address current core competencies (Think, Value, Communicate, and Act), and that there was no systematic procedure for reviewing and updating course outlines. The Office of the Chief Learning Officer immediately began work on an electronic Course Outline Builder which would streamline the process of building course outlines that included the current core competencies, which would create an electronic database of course outlines that could be viewed from the College web site, and which would automate the process of updating and revising these outlines. This system is nearly ready for use.

Second, the Learning Evidence Team was formed to begin exploring the second of the two questions utilized by the College in planning and delivering courses and educational experiences: "How will this affect students?" and "How do we know?" Comprised of faculty, administrators, and professional staff, the Learning Evidence Team is focusing on the assessment of learning outcomes and the relationship of these outcomes to the core competencies. Discussions among

members of this group revealed that course outlines, developed by faculty members and containing the competencies and outcomes required for each course, will play a crucial role in identifying outcomes to be assessed, further underscoring the need to revise the process by which course outlines are created and adopted.

Third, faculty planners for Destinations, which focuses this year, and may in the future focus on learning outcomes, recognized that the current procedure for creating course outlines did not clearly identify a procedure to follow for ratifying agreed-upon outcomes—another reason to revisit the process used to draft and ratify outcomes agreed upon by faculty.

The convergence of these three factors led a group of concerned faculty, administrators, and professional staff to draft this document in order to: (1) provide for the electronic creation of course outlines through the Course Outline Builder; (2) spell out the process by which faculty would create course outcomes and course outlines; (3) assign the responsibility for the electronic database of course outlines to the Chief Learning Officer who will, in turn, make them accessible through the College web site; and (4) update existing College policy so that it accurately describes 1, 2 & 3 above; and provide an automated system for revising and updating course outlines.

This draft has been submitted to a number of college groups for review and input, including: the Valencia Faculty Association, the Learning Evidence Team, the Instructional Affairs Committee, and the Collegewide Curriculum Committee. The purpose of this review was to get multiple perspectives on this issue and to give all stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the revision of the procedure for creating course outcomes and course outlines. Input from these groups has been incorporated into the existing draft.

Description of This Proposal:

This proposal contains three parts: (A) Creating Course Outlines; (B) Adopting Course Outlines; and (C) Reviewing and Revising Course Outlines. The intention of this proposal is to maintain the current process of faculty-driven course outlines that are submitted to the Collegewide Curriculum Committee for approval. The intention is to spell out this process in greater detail, to tailor it to a multi-campus institution, and to update it for electronic media.

In summary, the process consists of faculty work teams drafting outlines containing course outcomes, conducting collegewide discussions of drafts, submitting drafts for approval to tenured and tenure-track faculty in a discipline or program, submitting faculty-approved outlines to the Collegewide Curriculum Committee for its approval, posting approved outlines on the College web site, and distributing approved outlines to the Instructional Affairs Committee.

A. Creating Course Outlines:

1. A full-time faculty member or a dean may convene a Course Outline Work Team and any among this group may lead the team.
2. The Course Outline Work Team will be composed of faculty and in some cases deans from different campuses, so that multiple perspectives are represented. When possible,

faculty who teach other courses in the respective course sequence should be members of the Course Outcome Work Team to assure the alignment of learning outcomes in the discipline. Principles have been identified for the selection of members for the authoring work team to be used to the extent possible and practical. They include:

- college wide representation
 - full-time faculty from the respective discipline, (tenured, tenure track, and 4 month), and deans if desired
 - adjunct faculty when an adequate number of full-time faculty do not teach the course
 - faculty from both disciplines or programs when a course is taught in two programs or a program other than the primary discipline
 - one faculty member from a discipline other than the discipline of the course undergoing the outline design/revision process. Best practice in curriculum development suggests that an out-of-discipline faculty member who has also participated in curriculum-related faculty development activities can provide valuable perspective on the process of developing the outline.
 - To qualify for a Course Outline Work Team, members will participate in an appropriate professional development activity focused upon course design and development that will facilitate an understanding of outcomes-based instruction. These activities will be offered on dates and at times when the majority of tenured and tenure-track faculty can be reasonably expected to be available to attend. (This process is intended to be similar to other training opportunities offered by the College; for example, those offered to members of ILP review panels.)
3. The Course Outline Work Team will solicit input collegewide from interested faculty in the discipline or program where the course is housed. In instances where a course is housed in one discipline but required in a program in another discipline, faculty members from both disciplines will be represented on the respective Course Outline Work Team. In all cases, input will be gathered through **at least one live, collegewide discussion**. This will occur on a date and at a time when a majority of tenured and tenure-track faculty can be reasonably expected to attend. Additional discussions may be held through a variety of means, including department-based discussions, online discussions, and other exchanges. The purpose of these discussions is to engage faculty in the revision of course outlines and to engage multiple perspectives in the creation of these outlines.
 4. The Course Outline Work Team will use the Course Outline Builder to facilitate its work. This tool allows for the electronic distribution and review of drafts. In addition, the team may distribute hard copies of material entered in the Course Outline Builder.

Adopting Course Outlines

1. The Course Outline Work Team will circulate its proposed course outline (including course outcomes) to all faculty on the approved voting list. Voting by in-discipline faculty only is not sufficient for courses which are housed in one discipline but serve a different discipline. In this case, eligible faculty from both disciplines would vote. Deans on each campus are charged with providing accurate voting lists. Two-thirds of the total of faculty voting either "yes" or "no" on the draft (abstentions do not count) are

needed to ratify the proposed course outline. If ratified, the course outline will be submitted to the Collegewide Curriculum Committee for approval. If the draft is not ratified, revisions may continue to be made until two-thirds of faculty approve.

2. A course outline is officially adopted when the Collegewide Curriculum Committee has given its approval.
3. After a course outline is approved, it will be available as a read-only document from the College web site.
4. A course outline will be in effect until it is revised or replaced following the procedures listed above.

C. Reviewing and Revising Course Outlines

1. Each course outline will be reviewed and/or revised either when faculty consider it necessary or every two years, whichever comes first. (The State of Florida considers course outlines current only if they are reviewed every two years.).
2. A Course Outline Work Team, formed in accordance with Section A above (Creating Course Outlines), will convene to revise the outcomes and/or outline of a course.
3. This team will circulate suggested revisions to all full-time faculty and solicit input from these faculty on the suggested revisions. In some instances it will be appropriate for adjunct faculty to provide input. If there is general agreement on the suggested revisions, the team may proceed directly to voting. If there is substantial disagreement, it should follow the procedure detailed in Section A above (Creating Course Outlines).
4. Two-thirds of full-time faculty voting (of the total of those voting "yes" or "no") must approve a revision. In some instances it will be appropriate for adjunct faculty to be voting faculty.
5. Revisions will be submitted to the Collegewide Curriculum Committee for its approval and will be posted as a read-only document on the College web site.

Next Steps:

After discussion and revision of the proposal above, revision to College Policy and Procedure 6Hx28:05-04 should be made so that the language of the Procedure is consistent with the language used above. (For example: vice president for instructional affairs is changed to Chief Learning Officer.) It is not intended that the process described above be given the status of either policy or procedure. It is intended to describe a process that will be used until a better one is found. The following suggestions are also put forward to help accomplish this work in a realistic and manageable way:

1. The job of creating, adopting and revising outlines is too large to be completed in any one year.
2. A phased-in process of creating and/or revising course outlines should begin with those courses identified by the Lumina Grant.
3. The Collegewide Curriculum Committee should determine a work plan for creating, adopting and/or revising course outlines for all general education courses and for any programs that do not have an externally mandated review cycle. This should be a multi-year plan.

4. It is suggested that this work begin with the courses listed below as they are currently those on which the College is focusing:

College Preparatory Courses

ENC 0010

ENC 0012

REA 0001

REA 0002

MAT 0012C

MAT 0020C

MAT 0024C

EAP Courses

EAP 1620

EAP 1640

Front Door Courses

ACG 2021

GEB 1011

ENC 1101

SPC 1600

HUM 1020

CGS 2100

MAC 1105

MAT 1033

BSC 1005

BSC 1010C

MCB 2010C

PSY 1012

SLS 1122

POS 2041

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STEP BY STEP: Process for Creating, Adopting and Revising College Wide Course Outlines

Creating Course Outlines

1. Course outline work team members participate in appropriate **faculty development**
2. A full-time faculty member or dean **convenes a course outline work team**-- any member may lead. (*See Principles for selection of members for course outline work teams below.*)
3. Outline work **team authors a draft in Outline Builder**, circulates the draft outline to faculty in departments and/or programs in which the course is taught for **input**. At least one live, **collegewide discussion**. Other discussions are held as needed.
4. Draft **outline is revised** to reflect input.
5. An accurate **voting list of eligible faculty is created** by Dean. (In some cases adjunct faculty will be appropriate for voting lists) Eligible faculty view draft, **vote "Yes" or "No" and submit comments** electronically.

Adopting Course Outlines

6. Two-thirds of voting **faculty vote "Yes"** and draft is **submitted to CCC** for approval. (If less than 2/3 approve, the draft goes back to the work team for revision)
7. **Curriculum Committee approves** and Outline becomes official (If CCC does not approve draft returns to the course outline work team)
8. **Official outline is placed on college website** in read-only format

Reviewing and Revising course Outlines

9. **Review/update** cycle is 2 years
10. **New outline work group is convened** to review and update if needed
11. Suggestions are circulated as in creating outline, voting and **approval by CCC** are the same as in creating the outline

Principles for selection of members for course outline work teams:

- *college wide representation*
- *full-time faculty from the respective discipline, (tenured, tenure track, and 4 month), and deans if desired*
- *adjunct faculty when an adequate number of full-time faculty do not teach the course*
- *faculty from both disciplines or programs when a course is taught in two programs or a program other than the primary discipline*
- *one faculty member from a discipline other than the discipline of the course undergoing the outline design/revision process. Best practice in curriculum development suggests that an out-of-discipline faculty member who has also participated in curriculum-related faculty development activities can provide valuable perspective on the process of developing the outline.*