



AOP 13.03: RESPONSIBILITIES IN INSTRUCTION, CURRICULUM, AND ATTENDANCE AT CLASSES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to help promote an understanding of instructor of record responsibilities in instruction, curriculum, and attendance at classes.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

A. Instructional Responsibilities:

An instructor of record has the following obligations to their students:

1. Develop a syllabus for each class to serve as an academic contract with the students in their classes. The syllabus should clearly state the learning outcomes for the course, assignments and exams, standards of achievement, methods of evaluation (including the relative importance to be assigned to various factors), and the date of the final examination. The course syllabus should be presented at the first class meeting to all students, and there should be no variation from the syllabus. The syllabus must contain a reference to the Mississippi State University Syllabus, which contains the required references for the Honor Code, Title IX, disabilities accessibility, and the university's class absence policy. This syllabus is available at <https://www.provost.msstate.edu/faculty-student-resources/university-syllabus>.

All courses should be reviewed on a scheduled basis by the department or college on a cycle of five years or less. If the content of the course varies by more than 25% compared to the version approved by the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC), a proposal to modify the course must be submitted to the UCCC for approval. If the content of the course varies by more than 50% compared to the version approved by the UCCC, a proposal to delete the course and a proposal to add a new course must be submitted to the UCCC for approval.

2. Meet all assigned classes, unless hindered by reason beyond one's control. When instructors of record cannot meet occasional or individual classes, they, or a departmental representative, will make timely announcements of their absence and will arrange equivalent and/or alternate instruction. In cases where the instructor is absent and has not been able to notify class ahead of time, students are expected to remain in the classroom ten minutes after the beginning of the period, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor of record.
3. Present a reasonable range of opinions on controversial issues within the scope of the

course. An instructor of record's own views on such issues should always be identified as such and should respect that all individuals within a course come from various backgrounds which include values, beliefs, and ideologies. Wherever values, judgments, or speculative opinions constitute part of the subject matter whether by faculty or student, they should be identified as such and should not be offered as fact.

4. Evaluate fairly and impartially the student's performance. Such evaluation should be consistent with recognized standards and must not be influenced by irrelevancies such as religion, race, gender, political views, or be based on the student's agreement or disagreement with the instructor of record's opinion on controversial issues in the discipline.
5. Protect the student's freedom to learn, especially when that freedom is threatened by repressive or disruptive action.
6. Serve as an intellectual guide to students; be available for private conferences; provide accurate information; assist students in achieving their academic goals.
7. Demonstrate respect for the student. and treat the faculty-student relationship in a professional manner.
8. Avoid any exploitation of students for personal advantage or for any other purpose by maintaining professional boundaries.
9. Engage in those scholarly activities that contribute to the upgrading of knowledge, skills, and pedagogy; only by so doing can the faculty member adequately teach students. Beyond the obvious requirement of staying current with the literature in one's field, the faculty member may find it necessary or useful to conduct research and/or participate in research conferences, workshops, institutes, consulting, and other forms of post-graduate training or experience. It is the faculty member's responsibility to seek out such activities and the University's responsibility to encourage such endeavors.
10. Follow university procedures concerning examinations, the Student Honor Code, accommodating students with disabilities, grade submission, and other regulations related to instruction.
11. Establish office hours each week during the semesters they are involved in course delivery.

B. Modification of Teaching Responsibilities

In cases where an instructor of record or a faculty member is prevented from meeting some or all of their instructional responsibilities for class delivery in any part of term for any number of reasons (personal or medical, etc.), faculty should work with their Department Head or equivalent (henceforth referenced as Department Head) to arrange a temporary reduced or modified teaching load as appropriate.

Should a Department Head believe that a faculty member is failing to meet their instructional

responsibilities, it is the Department Head's responsibility to notify the faculty member of the perceived failure and to work with the faculty member to remedy the failure. If the faculty member and the Department Head are unable to remedy the failure, the Dean should be notified and should work with the Department Head and faculty member to resolve this issue. In extraordinary situations, the Department Head and Dean, with the approval of the Provost and Executive Vice President, may immediately remove a faculty member from their instructional responsibilities for the remainder of the semester and may develop an alternate delivery method without prior notice to the faculty member.

For guidance on workload policies and procedures, faculty and Department Heads should refer to AOP 13.23 Faculty Workload. Department Heads should refer to the "Guideline for Department Heads on Faculty Parental Leaves of Absence" for guidance regarding means for modifying faculty workload, adjusting appointments, and/or other accommodations. Regardless of the reason or approach utilized, a faculty member's workload distribution for any semester in which his/her teaching obligations are reduced must continue to equal 100%. Where leave issues may be applicable, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and existing university policies may apply.

In each proposed case of a modification to a faculty member's teaching responsibilities, the Dean of the College will be notified for concurrence with said modifications. In cases of disagreement between the faculty member and Department Head, the Dean's Office should be notified. If not resolved by the Dean, the matter should be referred to the Provost and Executive Vice President for a resolution.

C. Curriculum Responsibilities:

The university depends on its faculty to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its curricula. The faculty will work with the academic department heads in the development, coordination, implementation, and periodic review of academic programs and course offerings.

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years, or whenever circumstances require an earlier review, by the Executive Vice Provost with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

REVIEWED:

<u>/s/ Peter Ryan</u> Executive Vice Provost	<u>08/23/2024</u> Date
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<u>/s/ David Shaw</u> Provost and Executive Vice President	<u>09/09/2024</u> Date
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<u>/s/ Robert Banik</u> President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate	<u>01/17/2025</u> Date
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<u>/s/ Tracey N. Baham</u> Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness	<u>01/28/2025</u> Date
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<u>/s/ Joan Lucas</u> General Counsel	<u>02/13/2025</u> Date
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APPROVED:

<u>/s/ Mark E. Keenum</u> President	<u>04/28/2025</u> Date
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