



## **AOP 13.03: RESPONSIBILITIES IN INSTRUCTION AND 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 and curriculum.

### **REVIEW**

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

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Instructional Responsibilities:**

An instructor of record has the following obligations to his/her students:

1. Develop a syllabus for each class to serve as an academic contract with the students in his/her classes. (Note that example syllabi may be found on the website of the Center for Teaching and Learning (<http://www.ctl.msstate.edu>.)
  - i. The syllabus should clearly state the learning objectives 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.
  - ii. The course syllabus should be presented at the first class meeting to all students, and variation from the syllabus should only occur under rare circumstances following clear communication with the students. In such cases, an addendum to the existing syllabus should be created, and the new version with the addendum must be provided to all students.
  - iii. The course syllabus (with any addenda added during the semester) should be available electronically to students throughout their time in the course. The syllabus must contain a statement that makes reference to the MSU Honor Code (see AOP 12.07 Honor Code), Title IX (see OP 03.04 Sexual Misconduct) and Student Disability Services at <https://www.sss.msstate.edu/disabilities/>
  - iv. The syllabus must describe the instructor's attendance and class participation policy as prescribed in AOP 12.09 Class Attendance and Reporting of Absences.
  - v. It is recommended that that the syllabus draw attention to campus safety and refer the students to the Campus Safety Information website

All syllabi should be reviewed on a scheduled basis by the department or college on a cycle of four years or less. If the content of the course varies by more than 25% compared to the version approved by the 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 a 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. Wherever values, judgments, or speculative opinions constitute part of the subject matter, 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 and counselor 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.
9. Engage in those scholarly activities that contribute to the upgrading of knowledge and skills; 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, academic dishonesty, 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.
12. Instructors of record are expected to provide undergraduate students with significant evidence or assessment of their class performance within the first 30 class days of the semester (see also AOP 12.01 Academic Add-Drop).

#### B. Modification of Teaching Responsibilities

In cases where a tenured, or tenure-track faculty member finds themselves prevented from meeting some or all of instructional responsibilities for class delivery in Fall or Spring semesters for any number of reasons (personal or medical, etc.), faculty should work with their Department Head/School Director to arrange a temporary reduced or modified teaching load as appropriate.

Department Heads/School Directors should refer to the “Guidelines 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%. For guidance on workload policies and procedures, faculty and Department Heads/School Directors should refer to AOP 13.23 Faculty Workload. 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 tenured or tenure-track faculty member’s teaching responsibilities, the Dean of the College will be notified for concurrence with said modifications. In cases of disagreement between faculty member and Head/Director, 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.

## **REVIEWED**

/s/ Peter Ryan  
Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

1/25/2021  
Date

/s/ David Shaw  
Provost and Executive Vice President

1/25/2021  
Date

/s/ Rebecca Robichaux-Davis  
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate

1/25/2021  
Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham  
Director, Institutional Research and Effectiveness

1/25/2021  
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas  
General Counsel

1/25/2021  
Date

## **APPROVED**

/s/ Mark Keenum  
President

1/25/2021  
Date

This policy has been superseded.