



ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

To: Department Chairs, Academic Deans and Associate Deans

From: Erin Finzer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Date: 18 July 2018

SUBJECT: New Syllabus Policy

Attachment: Copy of approved UA Little Rock Faculty Senate Legislation on Policy 404.8

Please ensure that all faculty members, especially part-time lecturers, are aware of this policy for the coming semester.

On January 19, 2018, the UA Little Rock Faculty Senate approved the Syllabus, Office Hours, and Regular and Substantive Contact Policy (Policy 404.8; <https://ualr.edu/facultysenate/files/2013/12/FS-2018-1.pdf>), which states that courses must have a statement or syllabus that outlines the main points of study and procedures used in the course. This statement or syllabus must include the following list. Feel free to copy and paste the policies that have been hyperlinked in the list below.

1. The university-approved course prefix, number, course description and prerequisites
2. The university-approved disability statement*
3. The university-approved inclement weather policy ([215.1](#))
4. An academic integrity statement (See [Academic Integrity and Grievance Policy](#), [Academic Offences](#))
5. Course-level learning objectives/student learning outcomes
6. Any deviations from the Standard Credit Hour (See Credit Hour Policy, [404.11](#))
7. Required materials (e.g., textbook, specific technologies)
8. Instructor's attendance policy (See Attendance and Withdrawal Policy, [404.4](#))
9. Instructor's grading policy, which must describe how the final grade will be determined and what learning activities (e.g., exams, homework, artifacts, projects) will be required
10. Instructor's late/make-up policy



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11. Instructor's statement on **Regular and Substantive Contact**[†], which is a clear statement explaining the following:
 - a. Office Hours: the modalities (e.g., virtual office hour meetings, message/email, phone call, face-to-face meeting, etc.) and scheduled time(s) the instructor will be available for student-initiated contact during business hours, as well as an expectation for method of contact outside of business hours (i.e., weekends and holidays).
 - b. Instructor Presence: the expected regularity of instructor-initiated interaction with students and how it is distributed throughout the term, insofar as this will vary by type of course, modality, length of term and specific learning activities.

In order to update its syllabus repository, the Provost's Office will again be collecting all syllabi for every graduate and undergraduate course taught during this semester. Thank you for your cooperation.

* On 23 September 2011, the UA Little Rock Faculty Senate approved the current statement on academic adjustment for students with disabilities:

Students with Disabilities: Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to document a disability) and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-



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3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability. (UA Little Rock Policy 404.9)

[†] The Department of Education and the Department of Education’s Inspector General Office have been monitoring what is routinely called “regular and substantive” interaction in distance education courses to make sure that universities are meeting their obligations and that federal financial aid is being properly applied (i.e., that distance education courses are comparable to face-to-face courses). You can read more about the history of this phrase (“regular and substantive” contact or interaction, which is a requirement for distance education to qualify for federal aid) at <https://wcetfrontiers.org/2016/09/30/interpreting-regular-and-substantive-interaction/>.

UA Little Rock affirms its commitment to regular, substantive contact and interaction with enrolled students in face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses (synchronous and asynchronous). It is the responsibility of the instructor to initiate interaction with enrolled students. Students in all courses should have frequent opportunities to have their questions answered and to have meaningful interactions with the instructor of record. In distance education courses extra steps are needed to communicate to students how this interaction will occur.

In their statements on Regular and Substantive Contact, faculty might indicate that the frequency and type of interaction will vary, but students should know that the instructor is aware of class progress and is responsive to it. They also might indicate that interaction shall be distributed in a manner that is appropriate for the course throughout the term (this will vary based on type of course, length of course term, and specific course activities).

Some examples of ways that faculty can provide meaningful interaction with students in a distance education environment may include, but are not limited to:

- Orientation materials (including guidance on how to access features)
- Clear course schedule
- Weekly announcements
- Discussion boards within the course management system or through listserv or other feature with appropriate instructor participation/feedback
- Use of virtual meeting space (chat room, video conference, etc.); regular office hours open to students in online classes
- Email contact within or outside course management system
- Phone or text contact
- Timely feedback for student work (establish a standard turnaround time for assignments and/or assessments or announce expected feedback time for each assignment/assessment as course progresses)
- Faculty-provided supplemental notes or lectures or discussion posts or videos, etc., in response to general student progress in course (e.g., analysis/synthesis of recent course content, or summary of class progress, or an explanation of common errors on a recent assessment, etc.).



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