

Advice for Preparing Course Syllabi at UTM (Spring & Summer 2024)

This list is not exhaustive, but it does include specific advice for course syllabi, in consideration of both policy and good pedagogical practice.

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Introduction

The course syllabus is a contract. Changes to the syllabus after it has been approved are subject to a process that involves approval of the students and the Chair or Director. Instructors must follow the procedures for voting on changes and then ensure an approved amended syllabus is uploaded to the Course Information Submission System (CISS).

Approval

Please note that syllabi may not be distributed by any method (including Quercus) prior to approval by your Chair through the Course Information Submission System (CISS). **No later than the first day of classes, a syllabus for your course should be accessible to students via the Timetable.**

Items of Note for Spring & Summer 2024

- **Generative AI:** If you are planning to use generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) as part of your assignments, please consider privacy concerns involved with asking students to sign up for generative AI accounts. Please note that generative AI tools (like any external tool) cannot be made mandatory for student use; instructors should consult the [UofT Guidelines for Tools Beyond Quercus](#) before integrating them in a course. For academic integrity purposes, it is important that each instructor insert language into their syllabus to explicitly inform students whether generative AI tools are permitted aids (or not). [Here](#) are some sample syllabus statements and FAQs about generative AI in the classroom.
- **ACORN Absence Declaration Tool:** Use of this online declaration does not require supporting documentation and should be used in addition to the missed term work policy outlined in the course syllabus. Students can use this absence declaration tool only once per term. When using this tool, students should expect to receive reasonable academic consideration from their instructor without the need to present additional supporting documentation. In addition, Instructors may **exclude** one test or quiz from the one-time absence declaration, in which case the student would be required to provide supporting documentation. Such exclusions, and the need for documentation, must be clearly stated in the course syllabus.
- **Modifying the syllabus:** A reminder: Once approved, to change your grading scheme, you must do so in accordance with provision 1.3 of Part B: Grading Practices, in the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy. The revisions must be submitted to CISS for approval by the Chair/Director of the Academic Unit only after obtaining consent from the class.
- **Academic Policy Handbook:** This advice sheet is not comprehensive. For more information on the academic policies that guide teaching at UTM, please see the [Academic Policy Handbook](#).
- **Updating links:** Please be sure to check that hyperlinks in your syllabus are active and accurate – especially when basing your syllabus on a prior year’s course syllabus.

Contact Hours, Schedule, Dates

- **Office hours:** Office hour times, format, and contact information must be listed for the professor. Include TA emails if responding to student emails is part of their TA contract and responsibilities. Professors and TAs must only use their @utoronto.ca email addresses.
- **Email policy:** Consider including a policy for communication via email (e.g., include course code in the subject line, expect a response within 48 weekday hours, students must use @mail.utoronto.ca addresses).
- **Assessment dates:**
 - Make sure due dates for tests and assignments in the “Course Schedule” section match the dates listed in the “Evaluation” section and dates listed online. Check the [Important Dates](#) page from the Office of the Registrar, and please avoid scheduling tests and assignments at times that conflict with vacations / university closures / [religious observances](#).
 - Term tests must normally be held during scheduled course times (see the Assessment section), exams are restricted to the scheduled exam period, and assignments may not be due after classes end. Term tests may not be held during reading week, though make-up tests may be scheduled then if mutually agreed upon by the instructor and students.
- **Contact hours:**
 - Scheduled LECTURES and TUTORIALS / PRACTICALS must meet for the designated number of hours as denoted in the 2023-24 Academic Calendar. These could be in-person, online, or both, depending on the approved course mode of delivery. Clearly indicate when tutorials/practicals start. (For example, if tutorials do not meet in the first week you need to check the impact on total contact hours.)

- **Start times:** Please keep to the assigned UTM schedule for your course (as denoted in the Timetable Builder). All lectures/tutorials/practicals should only start 10 min-past-the-hour, whether in-person or online, as students need time to transition between buildings and/or classrooms.

Learning Outcomes

- **Your syllabus should include student learning outcomes.** These outcomes may reference the disciplinary content and skills that students will learn through the course but might also address broader skills or topics (e.g., research methodology) that may contribute to, or draw on, other courses or fields of study.
- Remember that your learning outcomes and pedagogical approach should drive your choice of technology and not vice versa.
- The RGASC's Educational Developers can support the development of student learning outcomes. Please visit [UTM's Instructional Support Portal](#) and submit an Instructional Support ticket or email Dianne Ashbourne (eddev.utm@utoronto.ca) to schedule a consultation.

Assessments

Assessment Scheduling

- Make sure that you've planned for sufficient material (15% for H courses and 25% for Y courses) to be marked and returned by the last class before the drop deadline. (**Please note:** it is crucial that instructors keep their grading documentation up to date, including the 15%/25%, to maintain course resiliency).
- **In the last two weeks of classes instructors may not schedule term tests that are worth more than 25% of the final mark.** This includes "take home" tests and assignments where topics or questions are both assigned and due within the last two weeks of class. This 25% value does not include final exams that are written during the final exam period.
- Term tests should be scheduled during your normally scheduled class hours to prevent conflicts with students' other obligations and colleagues' courses. If necessity requires you to schedule your test outside of normally scheduled class hours, you must consult with your Departmental Academic Administrator **and seek approval with the Office of the Dean prior to approval of your syllabus;** these requests are only rarely approved, as the extra contact hours must normally go through curriculum governance. UTM has a number of rules for scheduling term tests outside your normally scheduled class hours:
 - o Saturdays are the primary option for scheduling such tests that are outside of class time.
 - o The original syllabus must include dates of tests scheduled outside the normal class time in the Timetable.
 - o Any conflicts of such tests with other courses operating in their normally scheduled time result in the other course taking priority (the normally scheduled, in-class academic obligation has precedence). Students in these situations must be offered a make-up test; rolling the missed test mark into another form of assessment (like the final exam) is **not** an acceptable option for these cases.

Exam Weight and Format

- A final examination, common to all sections of the course, and counting for between one-third (33%) and two-thirds (66%) of the final mark, must be held in each undergraduate course, unless an exemption has been granted. Department Chairs may grant exemptions to instructors from holding final examinations in 200-, 300- and 400-level courses. For first-year courses, there must be a final exam worth at least 33% and at most 66%. Exemptions may be granted by the Office of the Dean on occasion.
- Typically, the format of the exam **must** match the mode of the course: in-person courses must include an in-person exam and online courses must include an online exam. Rare exceptions,

like an in-person exam for an online course, must be approved by the Office of the Dean prior to approval of your syllabus.

- For final exams, in-person courses may submit a request to the Office of the Dean to hold an in-person computer-based exam, which will be conducted in a computer lab on campus. Requests for these types of exams must be indicated through CISS, with a formal request form submitted to the Dean's Office. An academic rationale for requiring a computer-based exam is required, and the request is subject to availability of appropriate computing resources. Computer lab-based exams are reserved for courses which use a computer lab for PRACTICALS and TUTORIALS during the normal course of the term. Please consult Sara da Silva (src.dasilva@utoronto.ca) in the Office of the Dean prior to submitting your syllabus, should you wish to include a computer lab-based exam in your course.
- The guidance for online exams is to treat them the same as an in-person exam, although the instructor will be responsible for operation of both the regular and deferred exams. Be mindful of the minimum 2-hour/maximum 3-hour time limit on all exams (including "take-homes").
- **Please note: Exams for in-person courses must be held in person.**

Term Work

- Instructors may not require that students bring personal devices to campus to complete an in-person, computer-based graded assessment during class, a term test, or an exam.
- You may wish to clearly articulate how generative AI, such as ChatGPT, fits into the assessments planned in your course. If you are contemplating integrating such tools into your assessments, their use should follow the [UofT Tools Beyond Quercus Guidelines](#), including providing an alternative should students choose not to use the external tool.
- Please keep in mind that grades assigned for term work are for demonstration of mastery and skills in reference to the course learning outcomes. Also, note that transparency is crucial when assigning marks for participation/engagement. Clearly outline what the marks are for and how they are earned.

Alternate Arrangements and Special Consideration

- All classes with exams must include the Registrar's policy on missed exams in the syllabus. The policy is automatically available on the CISS website when you check "Final Exam". The Registrar's Office will be scheduling all exams (as well as any deferred exams). Online exams must be self-administered by instructors.
- The syllabus for all classes with tests must include an explanation of: 1) how missed tests will be made up; 2) the documentation required to allow a make-up (for absences beyond illness); and 3) how, when, and to whom the notice of absence and any supporting documentation must be submitted. Please note that documentation from faith leaders to support requests for absences relating to religious observances should not be requested.
- Absence Declaration: In the case of an absence where students will miss a term test or assignment deadline, they may declare their absence through ACORN without submitting supporting documentation. Students can use this absence declaration tool **only once** per term. Note, an instructor can exempt **one** term test or assignment from this process. This exemption needs to be outlined clearly on the syllabus.
- The syllabus for all classes with assignments must note: 1) the final deadline for acceptance of the assignment submission, 2) the method by which assignments will be submitted, and 3) the penalty for lateness.
- When a student misses a term test or assignment and requests special consideration, the instructor *may*, based on the language in the syllabus, choose to grant a makeup or

redistribute the weighting to other graded work. We strongly recommend that the instructor provide the student with a choice of considerations and that, if marks are redistributed, they be distributed to similar assessments rather than entirely to the final exam. The weight of the final exam **may not** exceed 66%.

Plagiarism & Unauthorized Aid Detection and Proctoring

- The University is partnering with *Original* for its plagiarism & unauthorized aid detection platform. If you are using this detection platform in your course, the syllabus must include this [syllabus statement](#). You also must include an opt-out option. The opt-out statement must include the following: 1) how the student notifies the instructor regarding their decision to opt out; 2) the deadline for the student to notify the instructor of their decision to opt out; and 3) a submission alternative that is available for students who opt out.
- The University does not accept the use of generative AI detection platforms to determine whether a student made unauthorized use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. Instructors are advised not to employ them since the results these detection platforms produce are not considered reliable.
- Remote proctoring of tests or exams must be approved by the Dean's Office prior to syllabus approval and use an approved tool in the approved way. For example, Zoom may be used to support communication with students during a test, **but it is not an approved tool for remote proctoring or surveillance**.

Accessibility, Accommodations, and Inclusion

- The final page of this guide provides a suggested statement for your syllabus and Quercus course shell about U of T's commitment to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity.
- Your syllabus will be one of the first contact points that students have with your class. Providing the document in an accessible format — one that can be read easily and used by an assistive technology such as a screen reader — will demonstrate that your course is inclusive. Note that PDFs are often not accessible to students using a screen reader; when possible, choose Word documents or tagged PDFs, which may be read by assistive technology. [Please review this resource that outlines how to create an accessible PDF in Word](#).
- Include relevant [university policy statements](#) on issues such as academic integrity, student code of conduct, religious accommodation, and accessibility accommodations for people with disabilities. View a [sample course accessibility statement](#).
- More information about the University of Toronto's policy on religious accommodations and multi-faith e-calendar, with holy days and significant observances to help with planning, is available at: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/edio/additional-resources/multifaith-e-calendar>
- The RGASC's Educational Developers can support accessible and inclusive course design. Please visit [UTM's Instructional Support Portal](#) and submit an Instructional Support ticket or email Dianne Ashbourne (eddev.utm@utoronto.ca) to schedule a consultation.

Student Tech Requirements and Connection Tools

- If including online materials in your class, remind students about the University of Toronto [recommended tech requirements for online learning](#) and the [UTM Library Learn Anywhere resource website](#).
- If you are using Zoom for office hours or other aspects of your class, ask students to register for a UTM Zoom account using their UTORid and password. (Web Portal Login: <https://utoronto.zoom.us>) When you set up your Zoom sessions, you can limit access to registered users by enabling "Only authenticated users can join meetings." Also, enable the "waiting room."

Privacy and Use of Course Materials Notifications

- Recordings of meetings with students can be considered a collection of users' personal information, which has privacy implications regulated by FIPPA. It is reasonable to use video and/or audio to interact with students in a manner that approximates in-person communication for academic purposes; however, the capture/recording of the video or audio could constitute unauthorized collection of the personal information of students who appear in the video/audio. If an instructor reasonably determines that it is necessary for pedagogical reasons to video/audio record during an online course meeting, students must be informed of this possibility in writing before the course begins.

To fulfill this notification requirement, one of the two following FIPPA statements is **strongly recommended** for inclusion in all syllabi and is **required** for courses planning to use any form of video or audio recording of the course meetings, even if the video/audio is only live-streamed and not stored. This wording may not be altered, although you may provide additional information of the type suggested below. This language has two objectives: (a) to notify students that their participation will be recorded and (b) to provide options for faculty to inform students of appropriate use of course materials.

- **Option 1: Notice of video recording and sharing (Download and re-use prohibited)**
This course, including your participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your instructor.
- **Option 2: Notice of video recording and sharing (Download permissible; re-use prohibited)**
This course, including your participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other source depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. In this course, you are permitted to download session videos and materials for your own academic use, but you should not copy, share, or use them for any other purpose without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your instructor.
- Additional information provided to students might include:
 - which online tools, apps, etc. you are employing,
 - what information about the students will be transmitted or used, and
 - the key pedagogical purposes for the information being captured.
- If audio and/or video are to be captured, they need to be kept on official, secure University systems and accessed securely. They may **not** be posted to publicly accessible sites.

Academic Integrity

- All faculty are required to include a section regarding academic integrity within their course syllabus. The UTM Academic Integrity Unit has provided language that you can include on your syllabus. See page 8 of this guide for this statement or refer to the [Academic Integrity tool kit](#) for instructors.
- In addition to this statement, you should clearly articulate whether generative AI tools are allowed aids when completing assessments in the course. If you choose to have students engage with Generative AI platforms for any part of the course work either in or out of class, you must be explicit as to when use is permitted and when it will be considered an unauthorized aid. Some sample syllabus statements can be found on [this website](#). Since Generative AI use will be different for every course, it is essential to communicate its role in your course to students as explicitly as possible, rather than merely through mentioning it in your syllabus.
- You and your students will find further useful resources and information related to academic integrity on [this website](#).

Student Support Resources

- Consider including information about academic and personal support services that students can turn to for help (e.g., UTM Accessibility Services, UTM Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Office, Health & Counselling Centre, UTM Indigenous Centre, UTM Library, Office of the Registrar, and the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre). See the final page of this guide for informational statements from the RGASC and the UTM Library.

Content & Copyright

- It is your responsibility as the instructor to ensure that assigned materials respect the U of T's license agreements, Canadian copyright laws, and the [University's Fair Dealing Guidelines](#) (e.g., no posting of multiple chapters from the same book). Make sure to consult the UTM Library in case of any questions or for assistance; the [Syllabus Service](#) can check your syllabus for copyright compliance and use the Library Reading List application to organize library resources for your course in Quercus. It is recommended to submit your reading lists at least one month prior to the start of classes.
- Here is an example of a statement indicating that course postings are the intellectual property of the instructor of the course:
 - "Please be advised that the intellectual property rights in the material referred to on this syllabus [and posted on the course site] may belong to the course instructor or other persons. You are not authorized to reproduce or distribute such material, in any form or medium, without the prior consent of the intellectual property owner. Violation of intellectual property rights may be a violation of the law and University of Toronto policies and may entail significant repercussions for the person found to have engaged in such act. If you have any questions regarding your right to use the material in a manner other than as set forth in the syllabus, please speak to your instructor."

Digital Learning Resources

- Given the likelihood that students will miss course meetings due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control, you may wish to consider what digital resources are available to students who have missed class. For example, you may wish to post resources from past terms, slides, or a recording of your class meeting. The [I&ITSHelp Desk ticket](#) link may be used to consult about classroom recording using the in-classroom cameras.
- Please be cautious about using free software. Remember that students should not be entering their UTORids on external software. Instructors should be prepared to have a back-up strategy in case the free software disappears or is converted to a fee-for-service model mid-term. Instructors are strongly advised to use the many software resources vetted and endorsed by the University of Toronto. The [I&ITSHelp Desk ticket](#) link can be used for software advice.
- Third party digital learning resources, including classroom response systems, cannot be made mandatory and an opt-out option must be made available to students. The only exception to this is iClicker Cloud, which is the only U of T approved classroom response system. (Instructors are increasingly using TeamUp!, which was developed at U. of T.)
- If students are required to purchase textbooks bundled with software, codes to access on-line resources, or other digital components for assessment purposes, students must have the option to purchase the digital components separately or be provided with another option for the assessment. Students cannot be required to purchase e-texts to obtain the assessment component of the materials.
- If the total cost of the digital learning resource(s) by which assessments are derived exceeds \$65 per half-credit (0.5 full course equivalent), then an opt-out must be provided to the student. The opt-out statement must include the following: 1) how the student should notify the instructor regarding their wish to opt out; and 2) the deadline for the student to notify the instructor.

Additional Resource Links

[UTM Teaching and Learning Collaboration Webinars & Help Sessions](#)

[UTM Library Instructor Support](#)

[UTM Library & Instructional Technologies Website](#)

[UTM Library Teach Anywhere Website](#)

[UTM Library Course Reserves & Requests](#)

[UTM Academic Policies Handbook](#)

[Ed-Tech at U of T](#)

[ChatGPT and Generative AI in the Classroom](#)

[Generative AI in the Classroom \(CTSI Resource\); Teaching with Generative AI at U of T](#)

Optional Statements for Syllabi

U of T statement on commitment to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity:

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

UTM statement on academic integrity

UTM wishes to remind students that they are expected to adhere to [the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) regardless of the course delivery method. UTM expects that students will maintain the same academic honesty and integrity both in a classroom setting and online. Potential academic offences related to digital contexts include, but are not limited to:

- Accessing unauthorized resources (search engines, chat rooms, Reddit, etc.) for assessments.
- Using technological aids (e.g., software) beyond what is listed as permitted in an assessment.
- Posting test, essay, or exam questions to message boards or social media.
- Creating, accessing, and sharing assessment questions and answers in virtual "course groups."
- Working collaboratively, in-person or online, with others on assessments that are expected to be completed individually.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined [in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other [institutional resources](#).

Statement on use of generative AI on assignments

The Office of the Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education has created a recommended statement; it is located on their [ChatGPT and Generative AI in the Classroom](#) page.

RGASC syllabus statement

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) is located in Room 3251 on the third floor of the Maanjiwe nendamowinan Building. The RGASC offers individual consultations, workshops (many CCR-accredited), and a wide range of programs to help students identify and develop the academic skills they need for success in their studies. Programming will include both in-person and online options. Visit the [RGASC website](#) to explore their online resources, book an in-person or online appointment, or learn about other programming such as Writing Retreats, the Program for Accessing Research Training (PART), Mathematics and Numeracy Support, and dedicated resources for English Language Learners.

UTM Library's syllabus statement

The University of Toronto Libraries connect students with the world-class collections needed to successfully conduct research and complete assignments. At the [UTM Library](#), located within the Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre, students will find dedicated support for their courses:

- [Reference and Research Help](#) via in-person drop-in and the [Ask a Librarian](#) virtual chat service
- [Research guides](#) developed by subject expert [liaison librarians](#), plus individual consultations on request
- [Workshops](#) on navigating databases, finding relevant articles, using software, citing correctly, and more