

Advice for Preparing Online Course Syllabi at UTM (Summer 2020)

This list is not exhaustive, but it does include specific advice for online course syllabi, in consideration of both policy and good pedagogical practice. All instructors are encouraged to join the UTM Quercus Teach Anywhere course. Please email simone.laughton@utoronto.ca or fiona.rawle@utoronto.ca if you need access.

Please note that syllabi may not be distributed by any methods (including Quercus), prior to approval by your Chair through the Course Information Submission System (CISS).

Contact Hours, Schedule, Dates

- Virtual office hour times and contact information must be listed for the professor and TAs. Note, professors and TAs must use only their @utoronto.ca email addresses.
- Consider including a policy for communication via email (e.g., include the course code in the subject line; expect a response within 48 hrs, only @mail.utoronto.ca addresses, etc).
- Make sure the due dates for tests and assignments in the "Course Schedule" section match the dates listed in the "Evaluation" section and dates listed online. Please check for conflicts with vacations/Holy Days/university closed dates/[religious observances](#) to avoid scheduling tests and assignments at those times. Also check the [Important Dates](#) page from the Office of the Registrar.
- **Contact Hours:** Scheduled LECTURES and TUTORIALS/PRACTICALS must meet for the designated number of hours. These could be asynchronous, synchronous, or both. Note that a mixture of both asynchronous and synchronous instruction is beneficial for student learning. Be clear as to when tutorials/practicals start. (For example, do tutorials meet in the first week, and if not, determine the impact on total contact hours.) Please keep to the assigned UTM schedule and 10-past start time for any synchronous classes, as students need time to virtually move from other classes and break between them.
- The university is still working out official policy on how UTM Calendar contact hours relate to different modes for online courses. At minimum, however, there must be some quality synchronous contact time between faculty and students within a course. If lectures are all asynchronous, there should be weekly synchronous office hours which should be detailed on the course syllabus. It is strongly recommended that the first class meeting be at least partially synchronous.

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.
- For the online context, remember that your learning outcomes and pedagogical approach should drive your choice of technology and not vice versa.

Assessment

- 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.
- Do not schedule tests worth more than 25% in the last two weeks of class. 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.
- Usually, for first-year courses, there must be a final EXAM worth at least 33% and at most 66%. Please note that, FOR SUMMER ONLY, as is the case for upper level courses, Chairs can decide whether or not 100-level courses should have exams, and what weight those exams should have. Please discuss with your Chair as

soon as possible, and well before submission of your syllabus, whether or not the 33% rule should be maintained for your course.

- 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". For online courses starting in May 2020, the Registrar's Office will be scheduling exams (and deferred exams), but instructors will be self-administering them. Instructors will need to upload an exam attendance list no later than 11:00 pm on the day of the exam to the Registrar's Office using this [link](#).
- 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; and 3) how, when, and to whom that documentation must be submitted.
- All classes with assignments must note: 1) the final deadline for acceptance; 2) the method by which assignments will be submitted; and 3) the penalty for lateness.
- If using Turnitin, you must include the most recent [U of T Turnitin Conditions of Use 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 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.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- 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 and save an accessible PDF in Word](#).
- **Inclusive Course Design:** Please consider inclusive course design and delivery for your assessments and your course content. Having inclusive assessments and course content supports all students and not only those registered with Accessibility. Take into account timing and technology requirements, and build in choice for assessments where possible. If you wish to discuss accessible and inclusive course design, please contact Ann Gagné, Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre, ann.gagne@utoronto.ca.
- Include relevant university policy statements on issues, such as academic integrity, student code of conduct, religious accommodation, and accessibility for people with disabilities. See this [link](#) for a sample course accessibility statement.
- Instructors are also encouraged to include this statement on their syllabus and Quercus course shell:
 - 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.

Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, and Student WebCams

- Remind students about the [tech requirements for online learning](#).
- Remind your students about the [UTM Library Learn Anywhere resource website](#).
- If you are using Zoom for UTM lectures or office hours, ask the 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." This will decrease the chances of Zoom bombing.
- If you are using Bb Collaborate, do not allow phone-in access, as long distance charges may be incurred. It is recommended that you minimize use of the "guest link" access so that only University of Toronto registered users can access the session, and to ensure students do not accrue long-distance charges.

- Cameras used for small group sessions or seminars with students can be considered a collection of users' personal information. These activities have privacy implications and are regulated by FIPPA. Of course, 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. To summarize, if an instructor reasonably determines that it is necessary to see and/or hear students during an online seminar or meeting, then seeing and/or hearing the students is something that can be required, but students need to be told if this will be recorded and how it will be distributed if at all.
- If audio and/or video are to be captured, they need to be kept on official, secure University systems and accessed securely. Students should be notified, in writing, about the use of novel electronic methods for interacting with them, or for capturing their personal information (including video, images, audio, and so forth). This notification should advise students of the following:
 - which online tools, apps, etc. you are employing,
 - what information about the students will be transmitted or used,
 - confirmation that the video and/or audio will EITHER not be recorded (i.e., will only be used "in real time") OR will be captured or stored, and for how long,
 - the key purposes for the information being captured,
 - clear instructions stating that students are not to record and/or distribute any video and/or audio captures, and
 - contact information for a University official if they have questions or concerns.

Academic Integrity

- The UTM Academic Integrity Unit has provided the following language; you may cut and paste all or part of [this statement](#) into your syllabus regarding academic integrity in an online context:

With regard to remote learning and online courses, 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. By offering students the opportunity to learn remotely, UTM expects that students will maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting. Potential academic offences in a digital context 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](#).

Student Support Resources

- Consider including information about academic and personal support services that students can turn to for help (e.g., Accessibility Services; Equity & Diversity Office; Health & Counselling Centre; Indigenous Centre; UTM Library; Office of the Registrar; and the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre).
- Many services have boilerplate statements they have crafted for course syllabi. Below is the RGASC's preferred 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. Visit the [RGASC website](#) to explore their online resources, book a face-to-face or online appointment, or learn about other programming such as Writing Retreats, the Program for Accessing Research Training (PART), drop-in hours for Mathematics, Writing, and Study Skills, and dedicated resources for English Language Learners.

Content & Copyright

- It is your responsibility as the instructor to ensure there is no excess use of assigned material beyond copyright (e.g., no posting of multiple chapters from books). Your Chair/Designate may spot check for obvious problems only. Make sure to consult the UTM Library in case of any questions or for assistance. ([Link to Course Reserves & Requests](#))

Digital Learning Resources

- Please be cautious about using free software, and remember that students should not be entering their UTORids on external software. Also, instructors should be prepared to have a back-up strategy in case the software disappears or if it is converted to a fee-for-service model mid-term. The [I&ITS Help Desk ticket](#) link can be used for software advice.
- Third party digital learning resources, including online classroom response systems, cannot be made mandatory and an opt-out option must be made available to students. (The only exception to this is iClickers, which are the only U of T approved classroom response system; however, iClickers are not appropriate for an online context.) For online learning, it is possible to use the polling function within Zoom. You can later access the Zoom polling report which shows student participation, if students access the Zoom meeting through their U of T Zoom account.
- If students are required to purchase textbooks bundled with software, codes to access on-line resources, or other digital components for assessment purposes, they must have the option to purchase the digital components separately. Students cannot be required to purchase e-textbooks 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 Resources

UTM Quercus Teach Anywhere Course

[UTM Teach Anywhere Website](#)

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

[UTM Academic Handbook](#)

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