



## Course Outline Guidance Notes Huron University College

At Huron and Western, course outlines are required by [Senate](#). These guidance notes are intended as a resource to support faculty, particularly new faculty members, in navigating how to build an effective course outline. The Huron course outline template can be found at the end of this document.

### 1. What is a course outline?

There are different ways of thinking about the purpose of a course outline. The outline provides information about the course, it serves as an agreement between a course instructor and students, it offers a way of shaping and supporting the academic success of students and operates as a tool for faculty planning and development.

At a minimum, the course outline provides information for students deciding on, or taking, the course. Huron course outlines are posted on the public university website. The course outline provides students with information about course requirements, and about campus support services available to support academic and personal success. When reviewing a course outline with your class at the start of the course, it is good practice to provide them with an overview of the support services available both within the course (e.g., course office hours, tutorials, etc.) and outside of the course (e.g., Student Support Services, Mental Health Counselling, Technical Services, etc.).

The course outline should also be understood as an agreement between the course instructor (representing the University), and students. A course outline identifies how the course is structured, both pedagogically and administratively. The pedagogical objectives of the course must be clearly stated, usually in the form of course learning outcomes (discussed below). The course outline identifies the criteria used for grading and clearly identifies what is expected from students in terms of course work, preparation, assignment due dates and in-class behaviour. Penalties or sanctions must also be clearly indicated and explained.

A course outline can be an opportunity to shape the academic experience of students and facilitate their academic success.<sup>1</sup> The course outline may also be used as a planning tool for faculty in designing, identifying and communicating the pedagogical objectives of a course. Through the development of a syllabus, instructors can set course goals, develop student learning objectives, and create and align assessment plans. Numerous resources to support course

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<sup>1</sup> <http://cue-equitytools.usc.edu/>

development exist through the [Centre for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\) at Western](#). Finally, the course outline can serve as a valuable reference for colleagues to learn about your course and your pedagogical practice.

## **2. What information goes on a course outline?**

The bolded headers below are sections required by Western Senate policy. The discussion below covers both the required information that must be provided on the course outline, as well as a brief discussion of additional information that might be relevant and useful to include but is not required. It is also important to note that information about the specifics of course assignments (e.g., assignment instructions, course notes, lectures, or other course material created by the faculty instructor) can be simply itemized on the course outline for student reference and the full guidelines or documents posted to the course OWL site.

### **Course Information**

Course Name and Number, Instructor: [If the course is taught by more than one instructor, the name of the person responsible for the course (course coordinator).], Contact Information, Class Location, Scheduled Class Times (including lab or tutorial hours), Prerequisites/ Antirequisites.

You could also consider adding office hours (ask Chair for departmental standards).

For information on essay courses and course suffixes, please review the Senate policy [here](#). For more information on Senate Policies, review the [Western Academic Calendar](#), reach out to your FASS Assistant, or review the FASS Faculty Guide.<sup>2</sup>

### **Course Description**

At a minimum, the [Western Academic Calendar description](#) for the course should be included here. This section could also include an expanded course description detailing specific knowledge or skills students should have before beginning the course (e.g., specific computer skills). If appropriate, explain what the course is not about, or what topics will not be covered.

If this course has an Experiential Learning component this should also be stated and a brief description of the Experiential Learning opportunity and/or requirements included.<sup>3</sup>

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

All courses at Huron and Western must include a clear statement of the knowledge, competencies, or skills students are expected to achieve by the end of the course. Course

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<sup>2</sup> The FASS Faculty Guide is available on the Huron Teaching & Learning OWL site. <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/directtool/48aebaee-4083-451e-b760-288c41c7ffec/>

<sup>3</sup> See Huron Teaching & Learning OWL site for documents, resources, and policies relating to Experiential Learning, including research ethics, placement agreements, and travel waivers. <https://owl.uwo.ca/x/tmm2wD>

activities and assessments should be aligned with course learning outcomes. If applicable, clearly state any learning outcomes related to [Experiential Learning](#) in the course.

The [Western CTL](#) offers numerous resources and workshops on developing effective learning outcomes.

### **Textbooks and Course Materials**

This section must include a list of any specific textbooks, manuals, or additional course materials required for the course. The course outline must include a clear statement to students of the full cost of additional materials required in the course.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly state use of any third-party online platforms essential to the course beyond standard Western platforms such as OWL (e.g., statistical software packages, citation software, language learning platforms, etc.). If there are specific technology requirements (e.g., computer specifications or other hardware requirements) these should be stated in this section. Clearly state to students, the costs associated with any third-party platforms or applications.

If this course has an Experiential Learning component, consider any costs to the student to participate in the experience (e.g., transportation and accommodation fees, fees for police check, admissions fees, poster printing, specific materials or equipment costs, etc.). Clearly list these additional costs to the student. Discuss with your Department Chair any Experiential Learning components in the course and the associated costs to students.

Questions regarding textbook or custom textbook orders should be directed to the FASS Program Assistants or to the [Western Bookstore](#). [Copyright at Western](#) provides resources relating to copyright for posting materials on the course OWL site.

### **Methods of Evaluation**

This section should provide explicit information about the format and timing of assignments and assessments (e.g., term papers, exams, quizzes, participation, discussion facilitation, etc.). Provide a clear indication of the weight of each assignment on the final course grade. The course outline should also indicate to students the expectations around due dates and completion of assessments and include an explanation of any sanctions or penalties if these expectations are not met.

The weight of the various elements that make up the final grade is at the discretion of the course instructor, but there is a [Western Senate Policy](#) regarding the weighting of written work in Essay courses. Once the course has started, the grading scale and weighting of assessments should not be changed without either the unanimous consent of the students (with reasonable effort made to contact all students) in the course, or approval from the Department Chair/Director or Faculty Dean.

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<sup>4</sup> Policy not yet posted (March 2021). For Open Educational Resources see: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/scholarship/oer.html>

Note that by Senate Policy, guided learning reflection is a required form of assessment for any Experiential Learning components that are included in courses at Huron.<sup>5</sup>

[Senate Policy](#) on the Evaluation of Academic Performance also states that students can expect feedback on their performance in a course before the drop date. At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a 1000 or 2000-level course without academic penalty, students should receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. Please consider this policy when planning your evaluations.

There are many assessment strategies. The selection of an assessment and grading process depends on many factors (e.g., course learning objectives, number of students in the course, assessment weighting, student workload, etc.). Assessments should be aligned with activities and learning outcomes in the course. For more information on assessment strategies, and the principles of aligned assessment, consult the resources available through [Western CTL](#).

### **Tentative Class Schedule/ Syllabus**

This section must include a class schedule with a list of topics/content to be covered and the associated date of that topic. If there are any off-campus components or course elements taking place out of regularly-scheduled class time (e.g., for Experiential Learning components), these dates must be clearly noted in the schedule. If you are incorporating such requirements into your course, consider accessibility concerns for students (e.g., transportation, timing, associated costs, etc.) and consider offering alternate means of meeting the course learning objective or completing an associated assessment.<sup>6</sup>

Term beginning and end dates, with holidays and term breaks should also be clearly noted in the schedule. Review the [Academic Calendar Sessional Dates](#) for a list of all important terms dates.

Any changes to due dates, tests/quizzes must be communicated to the class in advance and via OWL as soon as possible and updated in the posted course outline.

### **Additional Statements (covered in the FASS Appendix)**

- Prerequisite checking – the student’s responsibility
- Statement on Use of Electronic Devices
- Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)
- Statement on Academic Offences
- Support Services

These required statements will be at the end of your course outline as a FASS Appendix, and will be added to your outline by the FASS Program Assistants.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://experience.uwo.ca/about/Western-University-EL-Typology-.pdf>. For resources on reflection, see: [http://experience.uwo.ca/faculty\\_and\\_staff/tools\\_examples/index.html](http://experience.uwo.ca/faculty_and_staff/tools_examples/index.html)

<sup>6</sup> <https://accessiblecampus.ca/tools-resources/educators-tool-kit/introduction-accessible-education/>

### 3. Additional Resources

- Western Academic Calendar: <https://westerncalendar.uwo.ca>
- University Secretariat: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/>
- Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>
- Western Centre for Teaching and Learning: <https://teaching.uwo.ca/>
- Western Bookstore (course adoptions): <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/course-adoptions>
- Copyright at Western: <https://copyright.uwo.ca/>
- Western Experiential Learning: <http://experience.uwo.ca/>
- Huron Teaching & Learning: <https://huronatwestern.ca/about/faculty/teaching-learning/>
- Huron Faculty of Arts and Social Science: <https://huronatwestern.ca/programs/arts-social-science/>
- Huron Student Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

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### 4. Course Outline Template (see next page)



## Course Subject and Code – Course Name Term/Session Offered

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### 1. Course Information

Course Name, Number, Section:

Instructor(s):

Contact Information:

Office:

Office Hours:

Class Location:

Scheduled Class Times (including lab or tutorial hours):

Prerequisites/ Antirequisites:

### 2. Course Description

### 3. Course Learning Outcomes

### 4. Textbooks and Course Materials

### 5. Methods of Evaluation

### 6. Tentative Class Schedule/ Syllabus

### 7. FASS Appendix (to be added by FASS Program Assistants)

Includes the required statements as per Senate Policy:

- Prerequisite checking – the student's responsibility
- Statement on Use of Electronic Devices
- Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")
- Statement on Academic Offences
- Support Services