

Policy Title:	COURSE OUTLINE REQUIREMENTS AND APPROVAL PROCESS	Area of Responsibility: PRESIDENT
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9.5 COURSE OUTLINE REQUIREMENTS AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to recognize and confirm the fundamental and vital importance of the document called the “Course Outline” in the development and consistent delivery of curriculum and in the processes of teaching and learning at St. Clair College.

Outcome-based education in Ontario Colleges

2. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service mandates that in the building of curriculum, the Ontario Colleges employ principles of outcome-based education a globally-recognized standard. The focus of outcome-based education is the learner and it emphasizes the description and measurement of learning on the part of students.
3. In outcome-based education, there are relational links between program-level vocational learning outcomes (VLOs) and course-level learning outcomes (CLOs) as well as between the course-level learning outcomes and learning activities and the assessment of learning. These relationships or links can be traced or mapped throughout the entire learning structure and processes.

Provincial Program Standards, Goals and Accreditation Standards

4. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities issues college program standards for some programs which are developed through consultation with many different stakeholders including the Ontario Colleges and employers. The provincial program standards are written as outcomes, namely those skills, knowledge, attributes, and expertise that the graduates will possess when they have successfully completed the entire academic program and graduated.

5. An academic program at St. Clair College which has provincial program standards must meet, or exceed, these provincial program standards. Each course should be prepared and delivered with those standards in mind. Ultimately program-level standards must be achieved through the course-level learning outcomes being achieved. There must be direct links between the course outcomes and the program outcomes which can be traced and documented through the mapping of those outcomes.
6. For St. Clair College programs with provincial program standards, the Academic Program Quality Assurance Review Policy (1.6.2) requires that the academic program team will review the standards, as necessary, and, at least once every five years as part of the College's Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of Program Curriculum.
7. Other academic programs may have program goals rather than provincially developed standards. For St. Clair College programs with goals, the Academic Program Quality Assurance Review Policy (1.6.2) requires that the academic program team will develop appropriate program vocational learning outcomes (VLOs) and will review these vocational learning outcomes as necessary and, at least once every five years as part of the College's Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of Program Curriculum.
8. In some cases, academic programs at St. Clair College are accredited by provincially approved professional accreditation agencies which establish accreditation standards for the programs. It is expected that the academic program team will review and update the course outlines as necessary to meet these standards as required by the accrediting agency and , at least once every five years as part of the College's Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of Program Curriculum. All necessary updates will follow the College update process.

Development of Course Outlines

9. Outcome-based education is the foundation of all St. Clair College outlines and related curriculum processes and documentation. The Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the principles of outcome-based education and appropriate ministry program standards and other requirements are reflected in all documentation and processes relating to the development and approval of course outlines, program curriculum charts, quality assurance reviews of academic programs and any other related activities.
10. Course outlines and supporting syllabuses and the information those documents contain are crucial to the students who are enrolled in St. Clair College courses, since these documents allow students:
 - to know what learning, knowledge, attributes, or skills they will acquire by taking the course, (Course Outline – Learning Outcomes and Essential Employability Skills (EESs))
 - to know the content or subject matter of the course. (Course Outline – Embedded Knowledge and Skills)
 - to know the Assessment Plan which sets out the methods by which they will be assessed during the course as well as the inter-relationship and relative weighting of each form and numbers of assessments. (Course Outline)

- to know the teaching and learning activities which sets out the methods by which they will be engage with the course material in alignment with course learning outcomes and assessment plan. (Course Outline)
- to understand the specifics of what is being asked of them in the course and the guidelines or rules that govern the situation, (Syllabus)
- to know what their responsibilities are with respect to participating in the learning plan set out in the syllabus, (Syllabus)
- to be informed of the timelines within which assignments or other measures of learning must be submitted and the required methods of submission, and, (Syllabus)
- to understand and anticipate what to expect from the course itself and the faculty who is delivering the course. (Course Outline and Syllabus)

Course Learning Outcomes and Embedded Knowledge and Skill Statements

11. Based on principles of outcome-based education, a course outline's most important component is the section that defines and identifies the learning outcomes that a student will be able to perform on the successful completion of the course. Careful thought must be given to the development of course-level learning outcomes (CLOs) and how they assist in the attainment of the program-level vocational learning outcomes (VLOs).
12. The embedded knowledge and skills (EKSs) are statements for each course learning outcome that classify, clarify and explain the various components of learning that together compose and identify the learning, knowledge and skills that are involved in the attainment of each of the course learning outcomes.
13. Not only must there be a link between program-level vocational learning outcomes and course-level learning outcomes but also within a course, there must be links between the learning outcomes and the learning activities as well as the assessment of student learning. The achievement of the course learning outcomes should be facilitated by choosing the most appropriate learning activities and learning assessment techniques and tools.

Ministry Directives and College Policies and Procedures

14. Course outlines must be prepared and completed in accordance with applicable program level vocational learning outcomes as well as the curriculum guidelines established by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities as defined at the time of preparation and in accordance with applicable St. Clair College policies or directives.
15. In the development of curriculum at St. Clair College and in the writing of course outlines, it is expected that faculty members and program Chairs should be familiar with the principles of outcome-based education and its incorporation in the building of curriculum and the writing of course outlines.

The Development of Curriculum

16. The faculty are generally responsible for curriculum development and the consequent documentation of the curriculum through the writing of course outlines.
17. In the development of course outlines, content is not the driver of curriculum development or the writing of course outlines. Rather curriculum development and the writing of course outlines is driven by outcomes at both course level and program level.
18. The starting point for all curriculum development must always be the program level vocational learning outcomes. These drive and determine the course level learning outcomes. The program vocational learning outcomes will determine the components of the program and its curriculum including the credential type and level, admission requirements, courses, course learning outcomes, planned learning activities and assessments of student learning.

Course Outline Authorization

19. Given the importance and academic significance of the course outline in the teaching and learning processes, St. Clair College has established a system for the approval and authorization of course outlines by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance after their development by the faculty and finalized by the Chair of the School.
20. A course outline provided to students in a post-secondary program at St. Clair College must have gone through the required approval and authorization process before it is disseminated to students as the act of dissemination represents to the students that the document has been properly authorized by the academic administration and the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance for use at the College. The approved course outline must be used for all students registered at St. Clair College, across campuses, including third party partners delivering the curriculum to ensure consistency. All faculty are expected to follow the approved course outline.
21. If there is a need to modify or change the curriculum, the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance will ensure that faculty offering curriculum at other campuses or through partnerships are consulted of the change.
22. A St. Clair College course outline will be valid for a single academic year and is identified by the academic year in which it was authorized for use.
23. All St. Clair College course outlines will be reviewed by the faculty on an annual basis and if changes are recommended those changes should be put forward within appropriate timelines to facilitate the approval of those changes for the next academic year.
24. Only current and fully authorized course outlines may be provided to students and the current and fully authorized course outline is the only valid and genuine course outline.
25. Any person who knowingly, or without verifying the authenticity of a course outline, distributes a course outline to students that is not an authentic, current and properly authorized course outline breaches this policy and will be subject to the normal disciplinary processes for failing to comply with

College policy.

Changes to Current Course Outlines

26. A course outline is a very important and official College document and, therefore, the various components of a course outline should not be changed once it has been approved. However, there are circumstances where temporary adjustments or modifications to the Assessment Plan may be made during the time period when it is being used as the basis for the delivery of a course.
- Modifications to the Assessment Plan must be accomplished in accordance with the requirements and the processes set out in the Academic Assessment Policy 1.4.6.
27. Under no circumstances shall temporary changes to the course learning outcomes in the course outline be authorized by the School Chair.

Student Access to Course Outlines

28. Students must have access to authorized course outlines for each course in which they are enrolled, and this is generally provided electronically through the College's self-help section of the website or student portal.
29. Each faculty is obligated to discuss and explain the components of the appropriate course outline to the students enrolled in the faculty's class and to answer any questions the students might have regarding the course and its approved outline.
30. Faculty may also provide access to current and authorized course outlines by means of posting these outlines on the course Learning Management System, Blackboard.

Syllabus – A Plan for Learning

31. A syllabus is not a part of the approved course outline but rather a document that the faculty member develops and uses in conjunction with the approved course outline to communicate additional information to the students registered in a particular course section.
32. The syllabus should contain a clear statement that it is a plan of learning and that it is subject to change based on operational requirements as determined by the faculty.
33. Faculty must provide a well-planned and current syllabus to each student registered in their course to demonstrate good teaching practice and support student success.
34. Each faculty is obligated to discuss and explain the components of the appropriate course syllabus to the students enrolled in the faculty's class and to answer any questions the students might have regarding the course and its syllabus.
35. Faculty must provide access to the current course syllabus by means of posting it on the course management software, Blackboard.

Components of St. Clair College Course Outlines and Syllabus

36. The format, components and other requirements relating to St. Clair College course outlines will be established and operated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance, reporting to the President, in conjunction with the VPA Office who approves all aspects of format and components of the course outline.
37. In addition to other required components as determined by the administration of the College, each St. Clair College post-secondary course outline must contain the following elements:
- A brief description of the nature and content of the course
 - The number of course hours per semester
 - Course pre-requisites or co-requisites
 - Required tools, equipment and learning resources including textbooks
 - Course learning outcomes that map to the program learning outcomes
 - Embedded knowledge and skills related to each course learning outcomes that identify the course content that must be learned in order to achieve the course learning outcomes
 - Essential Employability Skills that are taught and assessed in a particular course and that map to the Essential Employability Skills that are required for each program.
 - Learning activities that are appropriate to the course learning outcomes of the course
 - An identified Assessment plan for the assessment of student learning in the course in accordance with the requirements of the Academic Assessment Policy 1.4.6 and Use of Digital Learning Resources for Instructional and Assessment Purposes Policy 1.1.19.
 - Mapping of assessment to course learning outcomes and Essential Employability Skills.
38. The course outline shall not contain references or descriptions of School or Program rules, guidelines or penalty statements relating to the course except those that have generic application to all St. Clair College students and these will be authorized by the administration. All other information should be communicated through the Course Syllabus, Program Brochure, Fact Sheet or other means of communication.
39. The minimum requirements relating to any St. Clair College course syllabus are established and operated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance, reporting to the President, in conjunction with the VPA Office who approves these components. Each faculty can add additional information related to Program rules, guidelines or penalty statements relating to the course.
40. Each St. Clair College course syllabus must contain at a minimum the following elements:
- A clear statement that it is a plan of learning and that it is subject to change.
 - A proposed learning plan built on a weekly or class basis of the topics that will be covered over the semester.
 - Planned assessments with identified due dates.
41. St. Clair College expects that each section of this policy should be understood and implemented by every faculty member and Chair.