Course Syllabus

A syllabus must be provided for each didactic and clinical course within the curriculum. This syllabus must be made available to students assigned to the course or clinic prior to or at the onset of the class or clinic via Canvas.   The syllabus should outline the course expectations, course procedures, and learning objectives as detailed below. Beginning May of 2025, faculty are required to use the Simple Syllabus template embedded within Canvas to ensure faculty are using the most updated syllabus language in compliance with UAB guidelines and the most current School of Optometry academic policies.

The following elements required for all course and clinic syllabi (unless otherwise designated below) and can be found in the Simple Syllabus School of Optometry Syllabus Template within Canvas.

- Course title, term and year
- Credit hours
- Course Description—the course description should provide students with a summary of what is covered in the course or clinic including basic topics, themes, and/or content. This description may be utilized for recruitment and/or accreditation and should therefore be current and accurate.
- Meeting days, times, and location of course
- Mode of delivery
- Instructor(s) name(s) including degree(s) and contact information
    - Course director and other course instructor(s) names and contact information (email and office phone number)
    - Office hours or preferred method of Contact

- Required and/or recommended textbooks/ materials/ electronics
- Learning objectives- The syllabus should list at least 3-5 learning objectives for the course or clinic. These should detail key concepts taught within this course. Learning objectives for each course is an ACOE Accreditation requirement.
- Attendance Policy—while the student handbook at the School of Optometry indicates attendance is mandatory, each course instructor is responsible for establishing policies concerning class attendance and make-up opportunities. Any such policies, including points for attendance and/or participation, penalties for absences, limits on excused absences, total allowable absences, etc., must be specified in the course syllabus provided to students at the beginning of the course term.
    - The University regards certain absences as excused and, in those instances, requires that instructors provide an accommodation for the student who misses assignments, presentations, examinations, or other academic work of a substantive nature by virtue of these excused absences. Examples include the following:
        - Absences due to jury or military duty provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
        - Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for "a reasonable number of disability-related absences" provided students give

their instructors notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.

- Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students. In these instances, instructors must devise a system for reasonable accommodation including, for example, policies allowing for dropped exams/quizzes, make-up exams, rescheduling of student classroom presentations or early or later submission of written assignments**.**

- Grading System—The syllabus should include an explanation of how the course grade is calculated. The syllabus must clearly state what is needed to pass the course. This should include assignments, tests, and quizzes associated with the course grade and an explanation of the weighting of each of these in the final course grade. If attendance is part of the course grade, this should be clearly stated in the syllabus. UAB School of Optometry Academic Policy states that the grading scale for all didactic courses should match the following:
    - A = 90-100%
    - B = 80-89%
    - C = 70-79%
    - F = below 70%
    - All elective courses are Pass/Fail
- If applicable, the instructor should provide information about rounding policies, late assignment policies, and student access to grades.
- Course Failures--The syllabus must include information regarding the course policies in the event of a course failure. The UAB School of Optometry Academic Polices allows the course director to recommend either a remediation or a repeat course for students who fail (see below). The course director must communicate the failure of his/her student by the date on which the grades are due for the term.
    - **Repeat Course:** If the course syllabus indicates that failures must be **repeated**, the student will be issued an F grade for the course and a new grade will be assigned for the repeat course. The repeat course may be done at the discretion of the course director, by either one of the following (possible syllabus language follows):

        1) Students earning a final course average <XX% (may/will) be required to enroll in the course when it is next offered at the discretion of the course director.
        or
        2) Students earning a final course grade <XX% may be allowed to complete a repeat course in place of the original course, which will be completed before the end of the next academic term at the discretion of the course director.

    Didactic Courses: The requirements of the repeat course may include, but are not limited to self-study, written assignments, periodic meetings, re-testing, and/or assignments designed to improve understanding of course content.

    Clinic Courses: In some cases, the course director may recommend a repeat course in place of a failed clinic course. If this is offered, the repeat course may include but is not limited to: patient care assignments with faculty observation/supervision of specific

techniques or conditions, care reviews, written assignments, periodic meetings and/or other activities designed to improve clinical performance.

- o **Remediation:** If the course director will allow course failures to be eligible for **remediation**, the guidelines for this eligibility must be stated in the syllabus. Course directors may choose to allow remediation for final course grades >65% (for example). Clear guidelines for remediation eligibility must be stated. Remediating students will be issued an incomplete for the course until remediation is concluded. The School of Optometry Academic Policy requires that the course remediation be complete before the second week of the subsequent semester. Possible syllabus language follows:

  Students failing the course with a final course grade >65% may be eligible for course remediation at the discretion of the course director. The remediation must be completed before the second week of the subsequent semester. Remediation may include...(choose below)

  Didactic Courses: Remediation may include, but is not limited to: Self-study, written assignments, periodic meetings, re-testing, and/or assignments designed to improve understanding of course content.

  Clinical Remediation: Remediation may include, but is not limited to patient care assignments, with faculty observation/supervision of specific techniques or conditions, clinical care reviews, written assignments, periodic meetings, and/or other activities designed to improve clinical performance.

- o Additional information about managing course failures can be found in the [UABSO Academic Policy for the Professional Degree Program](#).

- Course outline/ schedule—A "topical outline" is required for ACOE. The syllabus must provide students with a class schedule detailing the dates of lecture topics, tests, and assignment due dates. Faculty may provide statements within the syllabus explaining that the schedule is tentative and may be changed during the course at the instructor's discretion.
- UAB Policies and Resources—UAB provides language regarding campus Academic Integrity, Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct. These must be included in the syllabus. (See Syllabus Template for language.)
- UABSO Academic Misconduct Policy (required): "UABSO expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Academic dishonesty and misconduct include, but is not limited to, acts of abetting, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation. Any violations of this policy will be reported to the UABSO Honor Council for consideration and the student may be dismissed from the optometry program. Academic dishonesty and misconduct will not be tolerated and will result in failure of the course.
  - UABSO honor code https://www.uab.edu/optometry/home/images/documents/policies_and_forms/Honor_System.pdf"

- Disability Support Services statement (required): The most current language for DSS is provided by UAB and may be found on the UAB Syllabus Template at the following link: Syllabus - The Office of Learning Technologies. The most current language is also embedded within the Simple Syllabus Template.

- Title IX statement (required) The most current language for Title IX is provided by UAB and may be found on the UAB Syllabus Template at the following link: Syllabus - The Office of Learning Technologies. The most current language is also embedded within the Simple Syllabus Template.

- Privacy Screen Policy: UABSO students are expected to use a privacy screen for computer testing. The following statement must be included in the Technology section of each syllabus: "Students are required to use a privacy screen protector on their computers and/or tablets during in-class test administration. Failure to have a privacy screen on test day may result in dismissal from class and rescheduling or failure of the examination."

- Student Academic Support Services—The UAB Syllabus template provides language regarding services available to students. This may be included in the course syllabus.

- Student Evaluations of Teaching (required):
  - "At the end of the term, students will be given the opportunity to offer constructive feedback on content, delivery, organization, and other aspects of this course. Instructors only receive de-identified feedback. The intent of the SET is to improve the course for future students. The SET provides active student participation in the governance of UABSO and the improvement of the professional curriculum. Online submission is a requirement for successful completion of this course."

- NBEO disclaimer (required):
  - "This course is intended to prepare students in the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed of any entry-to-practice Doctor of Optometry. While this course should also help students prepare for licensing examinations such as those administered by the NBEO, nothing in this course should be believed or understood to utilize actual confidential examination items from licensing examinations. For example, throughout this course, the instructor may indicate points of emphasis for NBEO study and preparatory work. This instructional approach does not reflect knowledge of actual NBEO examination items, but represents a suggested area of focus based entirely upon the NBEO content outline/matrix. All materials in this course have been prepared in good faith to comply with the highest ethical standards of the profession."

Canvas (https://www.uab.edu/elearning/academic-technologies/canvas)

Canvas is UAB's electronic course management system. Each course is assigned a course shell. Students are automatically enrolled in the course and have access to the course shell. All faculty must make the course syllabus available on-line and are strongly encouraged to use Canvas for posting all course related materials. This may include (but is not limited to) handouts, presentations, homework assignments, quizzes/tests, and grades.

Course Materials

Any lecture material, labs, homework assignments, etc., may be distributed in paper format; however, faculty are strongly encouraged to make these available electronically via Canvas.

Many students prefer to view lecture materials electronically via Canvas rather than on paper. If lecture materials are provided on Canvas, faculty are encouraged to query the class to determine the number of paper copies requested. Faculty should make every effort to reduce paper consumption where possible.

Kaltura

UABSO will make every effort to provide Kaltura recordings of all lectures scheduled as part of the UABSO professional program curriculum and housed within the UABSO building. Kaltura is a digital recording of the audio and projected visuals provided during class. The system will automatically record during the assigned time and in the assigned room for each course. The instructor must use the lapel or podium microphone for audio recording. The recording may be discontinued at the instructor's discretion using the Crestron touch screen on each podium. The recording cannot be paused and restarted during the lecture.

Recordings will be linked to the Canvas webpage for each course for student access after class. Kaltura recordings must be published from "My Media" to the course "Media Gallery" for to students to view once the lecture is complete. Course instructors may edit the videos if desired (see link below). Instructors are strongly encouraged to utilize Kaltura technology.

Kaltura will only record during the course's scheduled time and location. Please contact UABSO technology support or the UAB eLearning administrative support personnel if changes need to be made to the lecture time, day, or location.

Editing of the class recording may be done by the course director. Additional information about the Kaltura system may be found at the following link: https://www.uab.edu/elearning/academic-technologies/kaltura

Examinations

- Electronic Examinations: Instructors are encouraged to provide examinations via Canvas using the Respondus lockdown browser. Lockdown browsers prevent test takers from leaving the Canvas testing site during the examination. Any attempt to leave the exam (to review notes, consult a web resource, or view emails, etc.) will end the student's examination and not allow them to return. The lockdown browser should be considered a requirement for any closed note examinations to protect the integrity of the examination and reduce opportunities for cheating. It is permissible to provide electronic testing without the lockdown browser for open note and unsecured examinations.
- Beginning Fall 2023, students will be required to use a privacy screen cover for their laptops and/or tablets for all in classroom testing. Students presenting for an exam without a privacy screen may be denied access to the exam or permitted to take the exam in a space away from other students if feasible. Every effort should be made to allow students to complete their exam during the designated exam time if possible.
  - Instructions for creating a quiz using Canvas may be found at the following link:
    - https://www.uab.edu/elearning/academic-technologies/canvas

- Instructions for importing questions via Respondus (Lockdown Browser) may be found at the following link:
  - https://web.respondus.com/tech-tip-importing-word-files-with-respondus-4-0/
  - https://www.uab.edu/elearning/academic-technologies/respondus
- Additional information regarding Respondus Lockdown Browser may be found here:
  - https://www.respondus.com/products/lockdown-browser/dashboard-Canvas.shtml
  - http://www.respondus.com/downloads/RLDB-QuickStartGuide-Instructor-Instructure.pdf
- Paper examinations are always allowed but must be graded by hand. UABSO does not provide automated grading for paper exams (such as Scantron).

Posting of Grades

Posting grades or any other display of grades must comply with the following conditions:
- Grades must never be posted in a format that would publicly reveal the identity of individual grade recipients. Grades may not be posted with identifying information including student names, social security numbers, student number, and/or student PIN.
- Lists of grades for any work in classes or course sections with fewer than eight students must neither be publicly posted nor in any other way be made publicly available.

For security, all faculty are encouraged to post grades electronically via Canvas. Posting of aggregate statistics which cannot be linked to individual students is permissible. There shall be no unauthorized disclosure of grades.
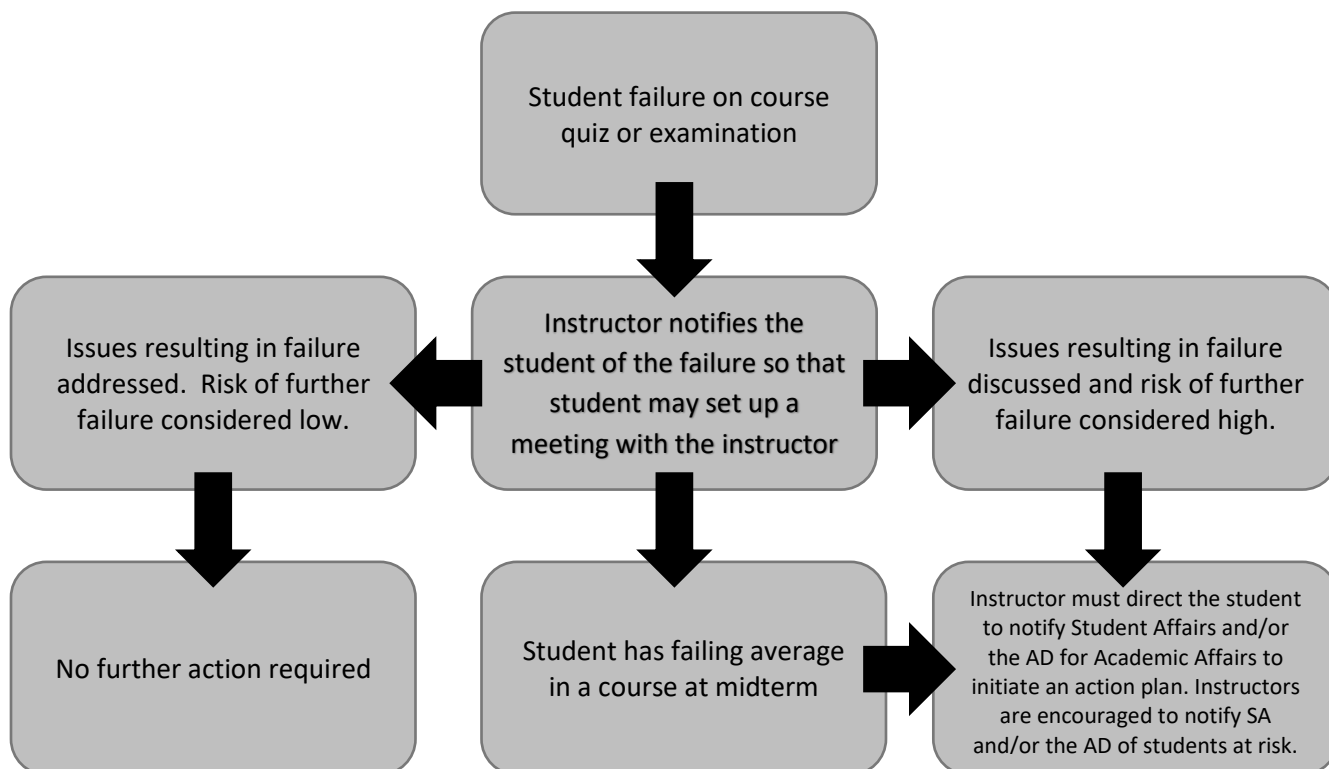
Students Auditing a Course- A student may be recommended to or required to audit a course. Students who are auditing a course will participate in the same activities and will have the same course requirements as students officially enrolled in the course, unless otherwise specified by the course master; however, he/she will not receive an official grade for the course.

Identification of students at risk –Students who fail a test or quiz may be considered "at risk" for failing the course. A test or quiz failure should prompt notification from the course instructor. This notification should prompt the student to contact the course instructor to review the material. If the instructor and student feel that the issues resulting in the failure have been addressed, and risk of subsequent test failure appears limited, no further action is required by the instructor. If the student and/or instructor are concerned that the student is at continued risk of failing the course, the instructor should direct the student to contact Student Affairs and/or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to initiate academic assistance for this student. The faculty member is also encouraged to notify Student Affairs and/or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of students at risk of failure.

Students with a failing average at the midterm of the semester should be considered at risk of failing the course. If the instructor has not met with the student, a meeting should be arranged to discuss the student's performance. The instructor should also notify Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to initiate assistance for this student.

Instructors are encouraged to provide students at risk with written notification of their status and recommendations for action items.

```
                              ┌─────────────────────────┐
                              │  Student failure on      │
                              │  course quiz or          │
                              │  examination             │
                              └───────────┬─────────────┘
                                          │
                                          ▼
┌──────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Issues resulting in   │ ◄── │ Instructor notifies the  │ ──► │ Issues resulting in   │
│ failure addressed.    │     │ student of the failure   │     │ failure discussed and │
│ Risk of further       │     │ so that student may set  │     │ risk of further       │
│ failure considered    │     │ up a meeting with the    │     │ failure considered    │
│ low.                  │     │ instructor               │     │ high.                 │
└───────────┬──────────┘     └───────────┬─────────────┘     └───────────┬──────────┘
            │                            │                                │
            ▼                            ▼                                ▼
┌──────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────────────┐
│                      │     │                          │     │ Instructor must direct    │
│ No further action    │     │ Student has failing      │ ──► │ the student to notify     │
│ required             │     │ average in a course at   │     │ Student Affairs and/or    │
│                      │     │ midterm                  │     │ the AD for Academic       │
│                      │     │                          │     │ Affairs to initiate an    │
│                      │     │                          │     │ action plan. Instructors  │
│                      │     │                          │     │ are encouraged to notify  │
│                      │     │                          │     │ SA and/or the AD of       │
│                      │     │                          │     │ students at risk.         │
└──────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────┘     └──────────────────────────┘
```

Once a student has been identified as "at risk" and the instructor has notified Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, an action plan to provide academic assistance for the student will be initiated through the student affairs office. This action plan will be developed under the advisement of the course director and may include arrangements for peer-to-peer tutoring, instructor tutoring, and/or provision of additional study resources. In some cases, adjustments to student schedules may be appropriate. Each action plan will be tailored to the needs of each student.

Guest Lecturers
Paid Lectures: Faculty may retain the services of guest lecturers with specific expertise on a particular topic. Guest lecturers may not work for or represent industry in the delivery of specific material without notifying the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Funds for payment for guest lecturers that come from departmental budgets must be requested and approved by the Director of Administration and Fiscal affairs prior to the term the course is taught.

Unpaid Lecturers: If a course director brings in a guest lecturer from outside UAB, the faculty are encouraged to notify the Dean and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. This will allow administration to have knowledge of the contributions of outside professionals.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) –FERPA is legislation that covers anyone who has access to student records in some form. It is crucial that this information is restricted to protect

student privacy. Educational records are considered the property of the student. Faculty have a responsibility to follow FERPA guidelines to protect student privacy. Detailed information regarding FERPA may be found on the UAB website at the following address: (https://www.uab.edu/registrar/ferpa/faculty-staff)

FERPA Information Regarding Storing of Student Data on Computers
Source: UAB FERPA guidelines
- Do not let the computer save your password - enter it every time.
- Do not write your password on a sticky note and leave it on your monitor/under your keyboard/in your desk drawer. If you must write your password down, keep it somewhere safe.
- Do not store sensitive data on portable devices such as laptops, PDAs, or USB sticks. Instead, have your support personnel instruct you on how to securely use remote access to your centralized file share.
- Use centralized file services rather than storing sensitive data on your local drive. Consult with your computer support personnel to ensure that shared areas are restricted to only authorized users.
- Do not leave portable devices (e.g. PDA, laptops) or media (e.g. USB drives, CDs, floppy disks) unattended.
- Do not email sensitive data in the course of business, *especially* SSNs.
- Never install any type of "peer to peer" file sharing software on your computer such as Kazaa, BitTorrent, or Limewire.
- Ensure your computer support personnel keep your computer software and antivirus up to date.
- Consult with your local computer support staff to ensure that the location where student data is stored is secure, and that access to that location is controlled and tracked.
- Ensure that your computer support personnel configures a firewall to protect your data.
- Some "free" software or screensavers actually can present security risks, particularly free entertainment or utility software. Check with your computer support personnel before installing any such software.

FERPA Considerations for Faculty
(SOURCE: https://www.uab.edu/registrar/ferpa/faculty-staff)
DO NOT:
- at any time, use the entire social security number of a student in a public posting of grades. In fact, it is preferable not to use any portion of the SSN or student number.
- publicly post or in any way make publicly available a list of grades for any work in classes with fewer than eight students.
- ever link the name of a student with that student's SSN in any public manner.
- leave graded tests in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the papers of all students, even if they're all in sealed envelopes.
- circulate a printed class list with student name and SSN or grades as an attendance roster.
- discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the written consent of the student unless that person's official responsibilities identify his/her legitimate educational interest in that information for that student.
- provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose, even if it might be of benefit to the students.

- provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than university employees in finding a student on campus.
- include confidential information (i.e. grades, GPA, number of credits) in a letter of recommendation without the written consent of the student.