Approving New Courses

The steps below outline the process for obtaining approval to teach a new course at Davidson College. The Educational Policy Committee guides this process because the committee holds the responsibility of “establishing curricula, curriculum requirements, and academic standards; and regulating and changing academic departments” (Faculty Handbook, 2013-14, p.21). By evaluating and approving new course proposals, the committee ensures that syllabi provide sufficient clarity for students when choosing courses and planning work over the semester.

Step 1: The instructor develops a draft syllabus, and then completes and submits the EPC New Course Form (available on the Faculty Services tab in Banner Self-Service – Note: VPN needed if off campus). The instructor’s department or program chair approves the submission, which then goes electronically to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC). The chair may also work with the instructor to revise the submission before sending it on.

Step 2: The EPC evaluates the draft syllabus using the following criteria:

1. Required Learning Outcomes: Detail the specific skills, knowledge, or other benefits that students derive from the course. The learning outcomes should be clearly delineated in a distinct portion of the syllabus.\(^1\)
2. Course requirements: Provide a brief but informative description of each course requirement that students must complete.
3. Composition of overall grade: Detail the portion or percentage of the overall grade that each component provides, and make sure that the grading framework is consistent with Davidson College’s grading system (e.g., no A+’s, no D-’s, etc.).\(^2\)
4. Tentative list of assigned readings: Provide a list of the books, articles, etc. that students will read in the course.
5. Timeline of topics covered during the semester: Provide an initial list of the material (topics, ideas, questions, skills, etc.) that the course will cover. This list should organize the material at least week by week; the instructor can also provide daily topics, although this level of detail is not necessary for the draft syllabus.
6. Due dates: State the due date for all major assignments, reviews, and exams.
7. Required Disability Statement:

   The college welcomes requests for accommodations related to disability and will grant those that are determined to be reasonable and maintain the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact the Office of Academic Access and Disability Resources, which is located in the Center for Teaching and Learning in the E.H. Little Library: Beth Bleil, Director, bebleil@davidson.edu, 704-894-2129; or Alysen Beaty, Assistant Director, albeaty@davidson.edu, 704-894-2939. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.

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\(^1\) For help understanding how to create learning outcomes, see these articles on creating learning outcomes.

\(^2\) For the details of that system, see the Faculty Handbook, Section III (Academic Policies), 3.3 (Academic Regulations), VI (Scholarship), A (Grades and Grade Reports).
The committee also reviews the completed course proposal form, paying close attention to the following components:

1. **Course description:** Explain clearly the content of the course, particularly in the one-sentence description for the College Catalog. Also, list any prerequisite(s) for the course.

2. **Curricular requirements satisfied:** Detail the requirements that the proposed course will satisfy. These requirements include those for majors, minors, and concentrations (interdisciplinary minors), as well as graduation requirements (distribution and cultural diversity).

3. **Ceiling:** Set the ceiling of the proposed course at a level consistent with College policy on ceilings (which the EPC will examine and clarify this spring).

**Step 3:** If the proposal meets all the criteria, the EPC recommends to the faculty to approve the course. If the proposal does not meet all the criteria, the EPC works with the instructor to resolve any issues or problems.

**Step 4:** The faculty vote on whether to approve the course.