

Faculty/IDs can use the syllabus at the end of a course as a review tool to ensure that all necessary material has been presented.

Learners can use the syllabus at the end of a course as a review tool to ensure they understand the objectives of the course.

Important Components of a Syllabus

According to a study conducted by Doolittle and Siudzinski (2010), learning professionals believe that a syllabus should include a minimum of four categories of information. These categories are listed in the table below.

Course Information	Details about the course, resource information, meeting times, and a breakdown of the material to be presented and assignments due for each class meeting
Instructor Information	The name of the teacher/facilitator, and how the learner can contact the teacher/facilitator.
Grading Information	The value of assignments and assessments
Policy Information	May include the institution, the program, and/or classroom policies such as cheating or turning in assignments after the due date (Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010)

In addition to these minimum categories, faculty/IDs should consider additional categories that might help with learner motivation or engagement. These categories might include:

Welcome Statements/Teaching Philosophy	Information that provides learners with the facilitator's educational background and/or work history may help learners feel more comfortable asking questions or sharing information with the professor
Rationale for Course or Teaching Style	The why, what, and how the course is being presented encourages buy-in from the learner
Rubrics	Explanations that provide grading context and reasoning help learner success. Rubrics start the process of feedback for assignments. Grading expectations are outlined so that students better understand what is needed to effectively complete assignments
Accommodation Information	With the implementation of the American with Disabilities Act, it is important to provide learners with any information that can help them better navigate learning materials

Additional Resources	This can include websites, additional textbooks or reading materials, lab and lab materials, expected field trips, guest speakers, etc.
Tips for Success	Professors/facilitators/IDs may decide to include additional information that will provide the learner with any information they deem necessary to successfully complete the course. (Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010).

Some institutions may require certain information—especially those that fall under the policy category. If an institution or program aligns itself to external accreditation standards such as Quality Matters, a board of governors specific to a program (e.g., nursing board of standards, teacher board of standards), or certification guidelines (e.g., CPA, PMP), specific information that pertain to these standards and boards may be required to be included in the syllabus to help the institution or students achieve specific benchmarks.

Syllabus Layout

If a course blueprint is used to plan the program/course, then creating the information for the syllabus can be easier. The blueprint will include material that is needed for the syllabus and, if syllabus formatting decisions have been made, then syllabus information can be simple to populate.

The format and layout of a syllabus will vary from institution to institution, professor to professor, and course to course. If the institution's LMS generates a syllabus based on fields and contents used during the design of the course, learners will typically see a consistent syllabus across the institution. Learners may also see consistency between courses if the same instructor/facilitator teaches the course.

Most syllabi list the course number and name first. The course description and objectives are listed early in the document. Many syllabi use a table to create a calendar breakdown of the delivery and due dates of the material, assignments, and assessments. The remaining components and materials are presented in varying locations throughout the document.

A syllabus for an academic program may look slightly different than the syllabus/agenda for a training course in a business. Take the time to compare your syllabus for this course, IDT 5200, and the sample syllabus for the Sandwich Deli Training Course. Typically, a training agenda is not as detailed as an academic agenda.

Summary

Although syllabi may look different by including varying motivational information, including the four key components of course information, instructor information, grading information, and policy information will provide students with a basic course structure that can help students reduce the stress and anxiety that may occur before the start of a course. A syllabus may also help faculty/instructional designers plan each class meeting to ensure course objectives can be achieved. The syllabus and Gagne's nine events of instruction can be paired together to help motivate and engage students from the onset of the class or course.

References

Doolittle, P. E., & Siudzinski, R. A. (2010). Recommended syllabus components: What do higher education faculty include in their syllabi? *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 20(3), 29–61.