

**Fort Hays State University
Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee
Course Approval Guidelines/Checklist**

1. Objective of the course approval process

The Academic Affairs Committee seeks to ensure that each course submitted for approval satisfies the following broad goals:

Goal 1: The course serves the FHSU mission and is compatible with FHSU policies and plans.

Goal 2: The course makes efficient use of University resources.

Goal 3: The course is of quality compatible with being offered by a university

Goal 4: The course is described in a way so that students and faculty will understand all aspects of the course.

2. Elements of a course and sources of information

The Committee evaluates each of the seven elements of a course (as defined by Stark and Lattuca, 1997) against the above goals.

| Course element | Source of information for course approval |
|---|--|
| The purpose | Course proposal form |
| The course content | Course syllabus |
| The sequencing of the course (how it fits into existing curriculum) | Course proposal form |
| The learners the course is intended to reach | Course proposal form |
| The instructional methods used in the course | Course syllabus |
| The instructional resources required for the course | Course proposal form |
| The methods for evaluating student performance in the course | Course syllabus |

3. Purpose of this checklist

This checklist/list of guidelines is intended to assist faculty in preparing course proposals. The Academic Affairs Committee has approved these guidelines in order to (1) point out particularly important items the Committee examines in course proposals and (2) indicate common mistakes made in course proposals. The guidelines were derived by applying each of the four main goals above to each of the seven course elements. The Committee will use the checklist as part of its procedure in reviewing course proposals, so it is recommended that faculty members proposing courses go through each item carefully to promote efficient passage through the approval process. The checklist should not be submitted as part of the course approval package.

4. Guidelines/checklist for the course proposal form

4.1 General

- All spaces on the course proposal form must be filled in, including all signatures. A course proposal will not be considered without all signatures complete.

4.2 Date of first offering

- The proposed date of first offering should be compatible with program needs and time to complete the approval process.

4.3 Course number

- The number should reflect the level of content of the course.
- The number should be consistent with FHSU policy.
- The number must not duplicate the number of any course that has been taught in the past 10 years. Call the registrar's office to confirm this.
- For double-numbered courses, the last two digits of both courses must be identical.

4.4 Course title

- The title should be concise.
- The title of the course adequately reflects course content.

4.5 Catalog description

- The description is concise.
- The description reflects the intent and content of the course.
- If the course can be repeated for credit, include this in the description, as well as the number of times the course can be repeated for credit.
- The course description should list all prerequisites and/or corequisites.
- If the course is cross-listed, the descriptions for all courses should be identical and include mention of the fact that the course is cross-listed.

4.6 Purpose

- Describe why the course is being proposed. Is it a new course? Does it replace a topics course? Does it replace a course currently taught by the department?

4.7 Sequencing

- Describe how the course fits into the existing departmental/program curriculum.
- Include a copy of the revised curriculum, if the introduction of the course changes it.
- Prerequisites should be established so that students in the course have appropriate preparation (upper division courses will normally have prerequisites).

4.8 Learners

- Describe the group of students the course is intended to reach.
- Provide evidence that enough student demand exists to support offering the course with enough students to meet FHSU minimum enrollment for a course of that type at least once every two years.
- If the course has been offered as a topics course, give enrollment data.

4.9 Instructional resources

- Identify any other FHSU courses that cover similar material.
- Information presented to support a difference from a similar course should include reading lists, topics to be covered, and disciplinary perspectives on the material.
- Identify the requirements for faculty to teach the course. Are sufficient faculty available?
- Identify the type of classroom in which the course will be offered (standard, mediated, laboratory, etc.). Provide documentation indicating that the required space is available.

5. Guidelines/checklist for the course master syllabus

A sample syllabus is required to establish that the course is well-thought out and that proper information has been collected. It is anticipated that the syllabi used when the course is offered may change – the syllabus submitted as part of the course approval package should be considered as a master syllabus.

5.1 General information required

- The syllabus contains the course number and title.
- The course description is compatible with catalog description.
- The syllabus contains space for the instructor's name and contact information (phone, email, office location, and office hours).
- The syllabus contains space to list the meeting times and places.

5.2 Content

- The syllabus outlines course content (topics to be covered, research to be performed, etc.). A specific schedule is not required.

5.3 Instructional methods

- The syllabus lists all required course materials (including textbooks). If materials other than textbooks are required, indicate where the students will obtain them. Faculty are requested to consider the expense to students of textbooks and course materials.
- The syllabus describes how the course will be taught (i.e., lectures, independent research, reading, etc.).
- The syllabus describes the differences between the graduate and undergraduate versions of double-numbered courses.

5.4 Grading

- Grading information is present and clear (note that FHSU uses “U” for a non-passing grade).

5.5 Other

- The syllabus is free of errors in spelling and grammar.
- The syllabus contains a statement about course for students with special needs (for example, by reference to the University policy as stated in the catalog).
- The syllabus contains an academic honesty policy (for example, by reference to the University policy as stated in the catalog).