Virginia Commonwealth University’s syllabus policy requires that all instructors include specific information in their syllabus related to student success. This policy guides faculty and chairs on how to create syllabi that will be useful to students in their academic success. Please note that this tool is not exhaustive, however it provides a foundation for constructing an effective, cooperative syllabus.

Why use a resource tool? Faculty have various roles and responsibilities that require their time. With this tool, we are aiming to not only alleviate some of the demands on faculty time, but also to provide ideas on which elements to include in order to create consistency across university syllabi. More consistency in syllabi can help students know what to expect in their courses, no matter the area of study. By bringing together points from the VCU policy and other resources in one place, faculty won’t have to search for resources while working on syllabi.

Who uses a syllabus resource tool? This resource tool is for members of the VCU community who are involved in, or responsible for, the creation, dissemination, or implementation of course syllabi.

- **How leadership/academic units can use this tool:** Those in leadership roles overseeing teaching faculty can share this tool and encourage faculty to implement the guidance and use the resources found here when creating course syllabi. Please note that according to the VCU Syllabus Policy, academic units must review syllabi within its respective degree program(s) and courses at least once per academic year.

- **How those creating syllabi can use this tool:** Faculty are encouraged to take what is helpful from this tool and use it across all course syllabi they are creating moving forward.

**VCU Syllabus Policy points**

Syllabi must be made available to students no later than the first date classes begin for the applicable academic term and must remain available on the Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, as long as the course remains in the LMS.

All syllabi must contain the following components:

- Course prefix and number, section number, and title

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1 Acknowledgements: This resource has been developed from earlier work through VCU’s CTLE. We are grateful for the work of Drs. Kim Case and Katherine Maynard.

Additional guidance
Writing a syllabus offers faculty a chance to think more deeply about their vision for the course, and it gives them a chance to communicate their expectations and goals to students. Before beginning, think about the function of the syllabus for the course and how to ensure that it fulfills that function. To assist in this process, faculty should be able to articulate clearly how their outcomes and objectives are staged to meet their goals - a measurable end result. In this guide to writing your syllabus, faculty can find an assignment checklist, as well as other various tips, including:

- How to make syllabi inclusive
- How to make syllabi learner-centered
- Addressing attendance and participation
- Communication plans
- How to format syllabi
- How to get students to read and engage with syllabi

For even more about creating inclusive syllabi, faculty can refer to the Syllabus and Protocols section of this best practices tool from Purdue University. A great tip mentioned is to personalize policy language rather than utilize standard organizational terminology, paying attention to the varying needs of students taking the course. Faculty will also find a guide for designing an inclusive syllabus starting on page 121 of this working paper series, which includes an extensive checklist to work from.

References
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bOp9OViRCtfX3y0DW2LoN5pteZAfH-DfWPIFqHWayYc/edit?usp=sharing


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