



UNC  
COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE  
CURRICULA

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TO: Chairs, Directors of Undergraduate Study, and Scheduling Officers  
FROM: James Thompson, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Curricula  
RE: Learning Contracts; Course Syllabus; Course and Curriculum Submission Deadline  
DATE: Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Welcome to the beginning of a new academic year. This memo contains several reminders and due dates for the fall semester. *Please forward the relevant information to your faculty.*

### **Monday, August 24: Independent Study Learning Contracts**

After the learning contract has been approved, registration for an independent study course must be completed **no later than the last day of “late registration.”** In fall 2015 the deadline is **Monday, August 24, 2015.**

Procedures governing independent study/research, directed readings, internships, and other such courses are available on the Office of the University Registrar’s website under the title “UPM #30 Independent Study Policy” at <http://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/policies-procedures/university-policy-memorandums/independent-study-policy>. At the bottom of the UPM is a link to the College of Arts and Sciences Learning Contract. Units are free to adapt the template to their own needs so long as the required information and space for approval signatures are retained. Approved independent study learning contracts should be archived in the unit for a minimum of four years.

Among other regulations, the policy restricts the number of students that an instructor may supervise in an independent study course to two students per semester plus two additional students who are working on an honors thesis (but see the section “Limits and Exclusions” for exceptions). Units should create sections of a course for each instructor supervising an independent study.

### **Primary Instructor of Record**

By census date (10 days after the start of classes), the primary instructor of record must be listed on your department’s official course listing in ConnectCarolina. “Staff,” “No Primary Instructor,” or blanks are not permitted; the actual instructor name must be listed.

### **Course Syllabi**

Please remind instructors that a syllabus must be provided to students no later than the first meeting of class. It should be archived by the department or curriculum for at least four years.

**New Online Syllabus Management (OSM) Tool:** The Office of Arts and Sciences Information Services (OASIS) has developed an Online Syllabus Management (OSM) tool to upload and retain course syllabi. Instructors will have the ability to upload course syllabi for courses where they are the primary instructor of record. Approved department administrators will have the ability to download

syllabi from current and past terms. College administrators will have the ability to review syllabi that have been randomly selected by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The OSM tool will be tested in a two-phase pilot program. The first phase involved 5 academic departments during Summer Session II 2015; student services managers uploaded the course syllabi. The second phase will involve several departments during Fall 2015; instructors will upload course syllabi and student services managers (or another department administrator) will monitor the completion rate. The goal is to go-live for all academic units in the College by Spring 2016.

**Course Syllabus Review:** Every semester the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Office of Undergraduate Education reviews randomly selected syllabi. This review provides assessments on how well each syllabus adheres to University policy and ensures that we improve performance. You can find more information about the University's guidelines here:

<http://curricula.unc.edu/faculty/syllabus>.

### **October 15: Course and Curriculum Submission Deadline**

The submission deadline for courses requests and curriculum proposals is Thursday, October 15, 2015. **Please note that Fall Break begins at 5pm on Wednesday, October 14.** This deadline applies to any course requests or curriculum proposals that you wish to implement with a fall 2016 effective date and see included in the 2016-2017 *Undergraduate Bulletin*. Requests to revise the requirements for majors and minors must include the current *Bulletin* text as well as the revised text reflecting the changes you wish to implement; consequently, you will be receiving a Word file of your section of the current 2015-2016 *Undergraduate Bulletin* in early September.

#### Course Requests

If you wish to add, revise, or inactivate courses, please submit your requests through ConnectCarolina's Course Request Approval System (CRAS) by October 15. Every unit has at least one designated "submitter" and one "approver" with access to CRAS. Please make sure that these individuals have completed the [relevant training](#) so that courses can move smoothly through the system.

#### Curriculum Proposals

Program changes, including revisions to course lists that satisfy requirements for majors, concentrations, and minors, should be submitted in the form of a letter signed by the chair and addressed to the Administrative Boards of the College of Arts and Sciences and the General College. If a revision is proposed, the letter should be accompanied by an attachment that presents the current 2015-2016 *Undergraduate Bulletin* text as well as a track-changes revision reflecting the requested changes. All proposals for new majors or minors should include an attachment that presents the requirements as they would appear, if approved, in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*. The materials should be sent by email to [nick\\_siedentop@unc.edu](mailto:nick_siedentop@unc.edu). You will be notified by letter when the Administrative Boards have acted on your proposal. For more information about the submission and approval process, please see <http://curricula.unc.edu/faculty/curriculum-proposals>.

#### Undergraduate Bulletin Revisions

The Offices of Undergraduate Curricula and the University Registrar are researching several Catalog Management Systems to create, update, and publish the *Undergraduate Bulletin*. Our goal is to select and implement a new system by the end of the fall term. We will keep you informed on this project because it will affect how you update your section of the *Undergraduate Bulletin*. Please stay tuned for additional information.

### **Final Exams**

All undergraduate courses require a final assessment. For most courses, a traditional final examination must be given during the University-assigned exam period. The only exceptions to this are composition courses (ENGL 105/105I), courses approved with a non-traditional final, and first-year seminars. All other undergraduate courses are expected to incorporate a traditional examination. This requirement is predicated on the exam period counting toward the minimum contact hours for a course at the university and allows us to keep a 15-week semester.

You can find the final exam schedule here: <http://registrar.unc.edu/academic-calendar/final-examination-schedule-fall/>. Instructors are not permitted to change their final exam window without special approval from the department chair, college dean, and University provost. Such exceptions are only granted in highly unusual circumstances.

### **Requirement for Written Assignments in General Education Courses**

Please remember that courses meeting general education requirements must require at least 10 pages total of academic writing, not counting any in-class examinations. Syllabi should include length requirements for written assignments to demonstrate that courses meet this requirement.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel welcome to email Nick Siedentop ([nick\\_siedentop@unc.edu](mailto:nick_siedentop@unc.edu)) or James Thompson ([uthomp@email.unc.edu](mailto:uthomp@email.unc.edu)). Our best wishes for a successful semester.