

College of Veterinary Medicine

Course Coordinator Guide

Responsibilities and Best Practices

Most UTCVM courses have been developed in an integrated fashion, requiring the coordinated input of multiple faculty members, often from different departments. The success of such courses relies on organization and management of the course by the Course Coordinator, collaboration and communication among instructors, and ongoing oversight by the college Curriculum Committee. The following guidelines describe the responsibilities and policies governing course coordination.

I. Course Coordinator Assignments

Course Coordinators are nominated by the Department Head in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the faculty member. Appointments are generally for 3-year, renewable terms.

II. Course Coordinator Checklist

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Item	Due Date	
		Fall Semester Courses	Spring Semester Courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Send Course Scheduling Request	Feb. 15	Jul. 15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide Copy of Syllabus	First day of semester	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide Course Notes to VBOT	Jul. 15	Dec. 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete Attendance Tracking	~ 4 weeks after semester start	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete Final Grade Entry	~ 7 days after students' last final exam	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage Students to Complete Evaluations	2 weeks before students' first final exam	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare & Submit Course Report	Mar. 1 of following semester	Aug. 1 of following semester

III. Course Design and Revision

The coordinator is responsible for overall course content and designated learning outcomes, and for ensuring that there are specific learning outcomes and instructional objectives for each topic covered in the course. More information on writing learning outcomes and instructional objectives is posted on the [Curriculum and Assessment Website](#).

IV. The Teaching Team

The Course Coordinator, in consultation with the appropriate Department Heads and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, is responsible for putting together the appropriate teaching team to deliver the course.

All instructors with 4 or more contact hours will be included in the student evaluation of teaching process. To ensure that evaluation occurs, please be sure that all instructors in your

course are listed in the syllabus for the course and that a copy of your syllabus is e-mailed to the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator by the first day of each semester. See below for additional important information about course syllabi. If there is a specific need for evaluation of an instructor who does not meet this minimum teaching assignment, or if you have other special needs or concerns regarding course evaluation, please contact the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator (Misty Bailey, 974-7446; mmcginn2@utk.edu).

V. Course Scheduling Requests

After preparing a draft course schedule, the Course Coordinator must submit a Course Scheduling Request Form to Student Services (POSITION NOT FILLED).

A [course request worksheet](#) is available and includes a list of lecture, laboratory, examination, and room requests in chronological order. The request will be used to create the schedule of classes for the entire semester. The Course Coordinator must be sure to communicate with instructors in **the course regarding these requests, especially special circumstances** (e.g. the timing of a specific laboratory or room) or room needs (e.g. the computer classroom, microscope room, multiple rooms if the class is divided into sections, etc.)

Course requests also include information about faculty availability and conflicts during the upcoming semester. **Although instructors must recognize that their primary professional responsibility is to the university**, most conflicts due to professional and personal travel or other needs can be accommodated if included in the course request.

Course requests are generally due on **February 15** (for fall semester) and **July 15** (for spring semester). Detailed class schedules are prepared by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to the start of the semester and posted on VetNet. Changes are often made to this schedule, so be aware **the most current schedule is always the version available on VetNet**. Coordinators will be notified of changes in advance.

VI. Preparing the Course Syllabus

The syllabus should provide all the pertinent information for the course, set the tone for student and instructor performance, and serve as a “contract” between students and the course coordinator. A UTCVM course syllabus template is available here:

https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/academics/Pages/Curriculum_Assessment.aspx. This template includes suggested categories of information, a place for the course schedule, and information about UT and UTCVM policies.

The UTK Honor Statement, and other UTK academic policies can be found at <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>. A useful Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center resource regarding plagiarism can be found at <https://writingcenter.utk.edu/preventingdetectingplagiarism/>.

Syllabus Submission

If your syllabus is submitted to VBOT (Veterinary Bookstore of Tennessee) with the course notes, it will be printed with course schedules for students. If not, you are responsible for ensuring that a syllabus is prepared, photocopied for students, or made available electronically (e-mail and/or Canvas) for all students and instructors by the first day of class.

An electronic copy of the course syllabus must be e-mailed to the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator by the first official day of class each semester.

VII. Preparing Course Materials

Recommended and/or required books are requested by VBOT several months prior to the start of any semester so VBOT staff can gauge inventory needs.

Notes to be printed for student use must be submitted to VBOT by July 15 for fall semester and by December 1 for spring semester. The Course Coordinator should collect and assemble notes from instructors, place the notes in order of the lectures, and package them as one combined pdf file for VBOT delivery. VBOT will also print a copy of the notes for the Coordinator and other instructors upon request.

Reserving Materials in the Ag-VetMed Library can be done at any time during the semester.

See <https://www.lib.utk.edu/agvet/instruction-support/> or Ms. Jeanine Williamson for more information.

VIII. Delivering the Course

During the first course meeting, the Course Coordinator should briefly introduce the course, review the syllabus and advise the students of key course learning outcomes and policies.

The Coordinator should ensure that all instructors receive the course syllabus and are aware of their scheduled lectures, laboratory responsibilities, exam dates, etc.

The Course Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the content of the course. Ideally, the Coordinator attends as many of the course sessions as possible, or becomes familiar with the entire course by reviewing course materials and instructional methods.

The Course Coordinator should be available to assist individual students or the entire class with issues that arise. If an issue cannot be resolved by the Course Coordinator, the Department Head or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs should be contacted for assistance.

The Course Coordinator is responsible for and must approve all changes that deviate from the published course syllabus and course schedule. Minor changes during regularly scheduled lecture or laboratory periods can be made by the instructor. However, the students and the Student Services coordinator (POSITION NOT FILLED) must be notified of any changes in the schedule. Major schedule changes, review sessions, changes in examinations, or rescheduled class meetings that fall outside the regularly scheduled lecture or lab periods should be arranged in consultation with the class academic representative and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Course Coordinators and instructors are expected to work with students of all religious faiths to accommodate conflicts with religious holidays.

The Course Coordinator and appropriate instructor should be notified of students that miss required laboratories or examinations for medical or other reasons (usually these notifications flow through the Student Services office). If a student contacts you individually, please forward the information to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

The Course Coordinator and instructors have the right to establish guidelines for classroom behavior. Instructors have the right to impose reasonable standards of conduct for the classroom and to enforce the university standards of conduct published in *Hilltopics*, <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>. A disruptive student may be asked to leave the classroom, laboratory, or clinic setting. Removal from the setting, however, must not immediately impair the student's ability to complete the course (see [Academic Dishonesty, section XII](#)). A number of options exist for referral of students to professional counseling ([Veterinary Social Work](#), [Student Counseling Center](#)) or to a department head or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

IX. Instructional and Classroom Technology

Please contact Royal Paschall (865-755-7667; rpascha3@utk.edu) for help with instructional and classroom technology. Canvas should be used to post course materials, slide presentations, podcasts, links, and grades. Canvas enables instructors to post most material on their own. A brief [how-to sheet](#) provides instruction on most basic Canvas tasks. Royal Paschall may also be consulted for information on lecture capture, personal response systems (clickers), and ExamSoft.

X. Preparing Examinations

The Course Coordinator is ultimately responsible for the preparation, delivery, grading, and quality of examinations or other assessment methods.

The Coordinator should determine grading method and point distribution for the course and for examinations. Point distribution is generally based on contact time or course emphases and should reflect the outcomes and objectives of the course.

The Coordinator should review examination questions for quality, clarity, and linkage to course learning outcomes or instructor objectives. The Coordinator should also review the

overall examination for length and degree of difficulty. Midterm examinations should be approximately 1 hour in length, although the students have 2 hours for most midterm examinations. Final examinations are 2 hours in length, although students are allowed 3 hours to complete the examination.

XI. Examination Policies and Best Practices

The Course Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all scheduled examinations are given at the designated times and administered properly, with appropriate oversight in accordance with the [UTCVM Exam Policy](#). Course Coordinators should clearly explain to students the expectations for each examination, including format, time limits, equipment or calculators needed, etc.

The examination room and examination process should help minimize opportunities for contact between students, thus discouraging academic dishonesty. If needed, multiple rooms may be scheduled for each examination to provide extra spacing for students. The rooms will be set up prior to the examination. Single classrooms may be used if multiple forms of the exams are issued and/or if ExamSoft is used. The Course Coordinator is responsible for providing adequate examination materials and proctoring of examinations. Student Services can help facilitate examination procedures.

Methods for ensuring integrity of examinations include creating multiple versions of the same test (reordering questions/answers), spreading students out in existing classrooms, ensuring that students start on different portions of an examination, etc.

Backpacks, cell phones, laptops, tablets, complex calculators, and other extraneous items must be placed in lockers or at the front of the examination room unless expressly allowed by the instructor. Cell phones needed for potential emergency contact during an examination (e.g. day care, family emergencies) should be left with the examination proctor.

The Course Coordinator will be notified by the student and the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS, 974-6987) if a student requires special examination accommodations. The Course Coordinator should advise other instructors in the course about accommodations that impact examination preparation and also facilitate electronic exam delivery to SDS.

If a student misses an examination for unavoidable reasons, he or she should first contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. It is the student's responsibility to then contact the Course Coordinator, who will arrange an appropriate, timely makeup examination. Student Services (POSITION NOT FILLED) and Mr. Royal Paschall should also be notified of the makeup examination. The Coordinator will advise the rest of the class to refrain from discussing or reviewing the examination until all makeup examinations are complete.

ExamSoft technology is available for students in years 1, 2, and 3. At the beginning of each semester, the Course Coordinator should request access rights for others who will need to use ExamSoft to enter questions and create tests. **Canvas** quizzes and assignment submission are available for students in all years. Instructors should avoid activating time devices for electronic exams. Electronic exam timing can disadvantage students by escalating test anxiety and breaking concentration.

Please see Royal Paschall (865-755-7667; rpascha3@utk.edu) for examination technology information and assistance in examination item analysis.

XII. Dealing with Academic Dishonesty

Recognition of academic dishonesty first lies with instructors and course coordinators. Faculty (and students) should be aware that allegations of academic misconduct are a serious matter and take care to proceed in a professional, careful manner and with UTMOST CONFIDENTIALITY. While the burden of proof may seem daunting, professors and universities are not held to a legal standard of evidence, but instead are held to the level that evidence supports academic or professional misconduct was "more likely than not" to have occurred.

Examination Settings

Instructors should structure the exam environment as much as possible to protect students

from seeing or hearing any other students' work (see [Examination Policies and Best Practices](#) above). Instructors with concerns about a student's examination behavior should carefully record his or her observations and attempt to find additional faculty to witness the behavior. For this reason, staff members are not ideal proctors for UTCVM examinations.

Students exhibiting questionable behaviors may be moved during an examination; however, the instructor should avoid disrupting the examination environment for other students. Student removal from the examination or prevention from completing the examination or assignment should be avoided.

The instructor should maintain the examination and any other evidence, along with a written description of his or her observations, for a meeting with the student to discuss the observations and determine if an academic penalty (up to and including a failing grade) is warranted. The appropriate academic officers, including the Course Coordinator and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, should be advised of the situation and brought into the process as soon as possible. From this point, student hearings and appeals proceed according to university guidelines. For complete information, see <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>.

Plagiarism

Instructors should gather evidence of plagiarism and proceed as above.

Unethical professional conduct

Note that students are also bound by university, college, and state of Tennessee rules of professional behavior (includes "furnishing false information in an intent to deceive.") Breaches of professional behavior are also grounds for academic penalty (up to failing a course or dismissal from the program). Again, instructors with concerns should gather evidence as feasible, meet with the student, and engage the Associate Dean's office early in the process.

XIII. Grading Policy

Although assessment and grading of students is left to the discretion of the instructors, the Course Coordinator should help ensure that the grading policy is clearly outlined at the beginning of the course, accurately reflects course learning outcomes/objectives and expectations, provides a reasonable estimate of student performance, and is applied fairly and consistently. Although rigor of grading policies is at the discretion of the instructor, the **UTCVM Grading scale** is as follows:

90-100%	A
88-89%	B+
80-87%	B
78-79%	C+
70-77%	C
60-69%	D
< 60%	F

The **UT Graduate School** specifies **valid grades for UTCVM** as those above, along with grades of I (Incomplete), NC (no credit), and S (satisfactory). Interpretations of points toward graduate grade point averages at UT are as follows:

GRADE	PERFORMANCE LEVEL	QUALITY POINTS/CREDIT HOUR
A	Superior	4.0
B+	Better than satisfactory	3.5
B	Satisfactory	3.0
C+	Less than satisfactory	2.5
C	Well below standard	2.0
D	Clearly unsatisfactory	1.0
F	Extremely unsatisfactory	0.0

The UTCVM [Academic Standards Policy](#) document also states that “Courses and their evaluation should be structured so that the median course grade is no less than 80%. If the median grade falls below 80, the scale *may* be adjusted so that the median grade is 80%, with other grades adjusted accordingly. The scale may not be adjusted if the median grade is greater than 80%.”

Note that this policy was developed by the founding faculty of the college and is based on the expected performance ability of professional students admitted to our program. **The policy as stated neither REQUIRES instructors to modify grades to meet a specific class mean nor does it specify a desired class mean or median.**

Distribution of Grades to Students

Grades may be posted on Canvas or distributed individually to students by email or in sealed envelopes.

To comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), do not leave graded tests or papers in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through stacks of papers. Avoid placing grades or scores on the top page of a test or paper to be returned to the student. Do not leave grades or graded materials in students’ boxes in a manner such that the grade can be detected by any individual other than the student who earned the grade. Acceptable methods of grade concealment for a paper exam are placing the exam in a sealed envelope, or fully folding and stapling the exam to prevent others from easily viewing the grade. Disclosure by any other method requires that the student sign a release that is on file with the instructor.

The confidentiality of educational records is governed by **FERPA and the Tennessee Public Records Act**. Guidelines also include the following:

- Without the student’s written consent, instructors must not disclose educational records to “1) any person or organization outside the university or 2) to any office or individual within the university community unless that office or individual has been determined by the university to have a legitimate educational interest.”
- Do not provide anyone outside the university with student lists, schedules, etc. or help anyone other than a university employee find a student on campus.
- Student records must be properly safeguarded and kept “in such a way that they cannot be accessed by unauthorized persons.”
- Destroy (shred) grade records and exams in a timely and confidential fashion, no sooner than one calendar year following the end of the course.

After each major examination, the Course Coordinator should forward the names of students with scores falling below 70% to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Course Coordinator should contact students in academic difficulty to discuss their performance and suggest methods for improvement. Students may be referred to the Associate Dean, Veteran Social Work, or other campus resources for assistance. Unless “exigent circumstances” exist (i.e., concern for a student’s safety or safety of others), **DO NOT discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student without the direct consent of the student.**

XIV. Attendance Tracking

The university is required to verify that students receiving federal financial aid are attending the classes for which they have registered. If the university cannot verify that a student has attended his or her classes, that student will lose his or her financial aid. Therefore, Course Coordinators are required to track student attendance to verify that the student has attended class at least once during the term. Attendance tracking is usually due during the first FULL month of the semester, and a reminder e-mail is sent from the University Registrar to each instructor of record. For instructions and more information: <https://registrar.utk.edu/banner-general-information-for-faculty/banner-attendance-tracking-instruction-guide/>.

XV. Submission of Final Grades

All FINAL grades must now be submitted using the university-wide online process. The system can be accessed at myUTK (<https://myutk.utk.edu/Home.aspx>). Instructions are provided here: <https://registrar.utk.edu/banner-general-information-for-faculty/grade-entry/>. You must NOT allow anyone else to access the system or enter grades for you and must directly monitor the account when open.

Title IV requirements do not apply to veterinary students. You may ignore references to Title IV or attendance records.

The gradebook or other file containing students' complete numeric scores during the course should be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs as soon as possible following submission of final grades. Students failing to achieve a C level grade in any course will undergo review by the Academic Progress Committee.

Be sure to keep a printed record of grade submissions for your files, as well as a hard copy or back-up files of the complete gradebook.

An Incomplete (I) grade is administered when a student has satisfactorily completed a substantial portion of the course but cannot complete the course work for reasons beyond their control, such as illness. The instructor sets the measures and timeframe for removal of the I grade; however, students in years 1, 2, and 3 must complete course work for the satisfactory removal of an incomplete from the student's record by the end of the first 5 academic days of the following semester. Otherwise, a grade of "F" may be given. If an "I" grade is not resolved within 1 calendar year, it is automatically changed to an F by the university registrar.

Grade appeals

Students should contact instructors and the Course Coordinator first to verify accuracy of grades; disputes are usually settled in this framework. Appeals beyond this level proceed as designated in the Teaching Guide and the UT Graduate Catalog. Students may appeal grades for one or more of the following reasons: a clearly unfair decision, unacceptable instruction/evaluation procedures (including deviation from stated policies on grading criteria), inability of instructor to deal with course responsibilities, or an exam setting that makes concentration extremely difficult.

XVI. Student Assessment of Instruction at UTCVM (Course Evaluations)

Course and instructor evaluations are completed by 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-year students before final exams begin. Course Coordinators should encourage students to complete the evaluations, as is expected as part of the students' professional responsibility to help improve the curriculum.

Once the UTK grade deadline has passed for that semester, condensed reports are prepared for each course and each instructor, with comparative means of all others evaluated by the same student cohort. These condensed reports provide faculty and department heads with an internal context of their results, relative to their peers. Instructor evaluations are accessed via one45, and course evaluations are e-mailed.

Each semester, summary reports on all courses and instructors with 4 or more contact hours are automatically provided to department heads and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Evaluations for faculty with fewer than 4 hours may be requested by a department head.

If additional assessments of the course are desired (focused course or topical evaluation,

assessments of course assignments or products, student focus group), the Course Coordinator should contact the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator for assistance.

Supplementary assessments are generally considered formative in nature; results are distributed to the faculty member only.

Support for interpretation of student evaluations is available at <https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/academics/Documents/Interpret%20Eval%20Reports%20Updated%2012318.pdf>. Confidential individual support is available from the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator and the UT Teaching and Learning Innovation Center.

XVII. Course Review and Revision

Following completion of the semester, and using available course evaluations, the Course Coordinator should convene a meeting of all course instructors for the purpose of evaluating and determining

- the success of the course in meeting course goals/outcomes
- the effectiveness of delivery of the course
- revisions to course method or content
- the course schedule for the next year

Information from the meeting can be used to prepare the [Course Report](#), which is submitted to the Curriculum Committee by March 1 (fall courses) or August 1 (spring courses). Course Coordinators will receive e-mail reminders regarding the deadlines for the reports. The Course Report is useful both for the committee in maintaining oversight of the curriculum and for preparation of annual reports to the AVMA Council on Education, which requires regular review and updates to the curriculum to meet accreditation standards.

Please contact the Curriculum Committee Chair for more information.

XVIII. Quick Reference Numbers and Links

UTCVM Contacts

- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. India Lane, 974-7263, ilane@utk.edu
- Coordinator of Student Services, POSITION NOT FILLED
- Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator, Ms. Misty Bailey, 974-7446, mmcginn2@utk.edu
- Instructional Technology, Mr. Royal Paschall, 755-7667, rpascha3@utk.edu
- Veterinary Social Work Hotline, Dr. Elizabeth Strand, 755-8839, estrand@utk.edu
- Veterinary Bookstore of Tennessee (VBOT), ybot@utk.edu

Useful Web links

- UTCVM Curriculum & Assessment: https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/academics/Pages/Curriculum_Assessment.aspx
- Graduate Council: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council/>
- Student Disability Services: <https://sds.utk.edu/>
- UTK Teaching Guide: <https://teaching.utk.edu/ut-teachingguide/>
- UT Teaching and Learning Innovation: <https://teaching.utk.edu/>

Useful UTK Resources

- Student Counseling Center 974-2196
- Student Disability Services 974-6987
- Writing Center 974-2611

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