Frequently Asked Questions

What is the role of the Faculty Core Committees (FCCs) in the syllabus approval process?

Faculty elected to the FCCs evaluate syllabi for their particular Core areas. They either approve a syllabus, sometimes with suggestions for improvement, or request revision and resubmission necessary for approval. Occasionally an FCC recommends that the syllabus be submitted to a different area of the Core.

Are Pathway submission processes different?

Faculty interested in developing a new Pathway should consult with the Core Director or Chair of the Pathways FCC. Further information about development and submission of a new Pathway is available [where?]. Faculty who want a particular course or courses to be considered for a Pathway should send the syllabi with their requests to the Pathway Facilitator(s). The names are posted on the Pathways website.

What are the goals of Santa Clara’s Core Curriculum?

Santa Clara’s Core Curriculum cultivates the knowledge, the habits of mind and heart, and the practices of engagement with the world needed by citizens of our 21st century world. In close association with learning in students’ majors, learning in the Core prepares students for professional excellence, responsible citizenship, and service to society, especially on behalf of those in greatest need. See [link] and the Core Curriculum Guide for more information.

Why must we include learning objectives for the Core area on syllabi?

The primary goal is to help students learn and to help them see the way that individual courses fit into the curriculum as a whole, i.e., to promote an integrated education. Here’s the vision:

- We know that student learning improves when faculty are clear about goals and expectations. We want to support student learning.
- We want students to understand that their courses are part of a larger vision of knowledge, habits, and engagement characterizing a Santa Clara education.

What are the “best practices” in Core syllabus design?

- Content is appropriate for Core area
- Learning objectives for Core, program/department, and course are clearly articulated
- Mapping of course assignments to Core learning objectives is clear
- All elements expected by department and school/college are included
  - Grading criteria
  - Expectations for student achievement
  - Information on how students receive feedback and have opportunities to improve their performance
- Academic integrity policy and disabilities accommodation policy.

Please see the syllabus approval guidelines for more information.

**If I submit my syllabus for Core approval, do I lose control over who can use it?**

Any faculty member who prefers that only he or she teach a course based on a particular approved syllabus he or she submitted for approval should inform the department chair and the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

**How does the syllabus submission process contribute to assessment, program review, and reaccreditation processes?**

Including Core learning objectives on the syllabus with explicit statements indicating which assignments map to which Core learning objectives helps the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Assessment Office gather authentic evidence of student learning.

The WASC guidelines for teaching & learning include the following:

2.3. The institution’s student learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the course, program and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and expectations are reflected in academic programs and policies; curriculum; advisement; library and information resources; and the wider learning environment.

2.4. The institution’s expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members (including faculty, students, staff, and where appropriate, external stakeholders). The institution’s faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating the attainment of these expectations.

2.5. The institution’s academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to meet high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback about their performance and how it can be improved.

2.6. The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment and ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.

Many thanks for your support of our Core Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact the Core Director or the Office of Undergraduate Studies if you have questions this document does not answer.