The University of the West Indies, Mona
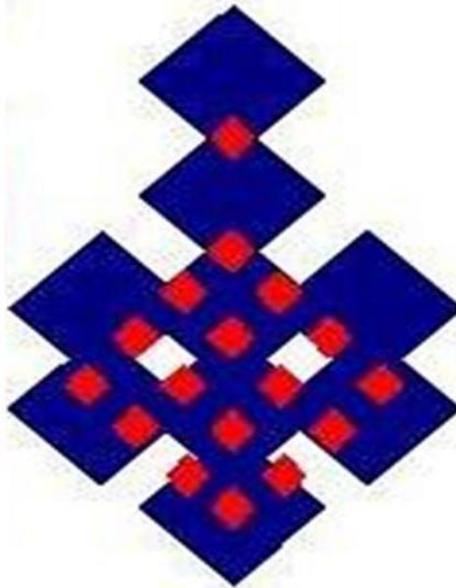
Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

COURSE OUTLINE GUIDELINES

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Prepared for AQAC
by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, The UWI, Mona

Guidelines for format of Courses submitted for approval

It is useful to have an in-house style for the format in which to present course outlines. The format should offer the user (particularly the student) an informative walk through the intended study. The elements of that format should identify the points of attention for both the learner and the facilitator of the intended learning. The following elements are presented as guidelines in providing that format:

The NAME or TITLE of the Course which should capture very quickly what the student should expect the study to be about.

The CODE will be a numerical identification which reflects the level, the discipline or area identification and the specific identification of the Course: [many courses in a discipline will share the first two digits on the left, but only one course in that discipline will have the digit at the right].

CREDITS will identify the credit value for which the Course counts.
Delivery time and duration will identify whether it is a Semester 1 or Semester 2 course and how much time will be needed to complete the study. Duration may not always be needed.

The name of the Lecturer is optional.

Programme Structure

Usually each course will fall within a programme. Accordingly the following will apply:

1. The programme structure should inform the course schedule.
2. Careful attention to programme structure should inform the course schedule.

The Structure of the Course

Rationale: This provides the reasoning behind the decision to offer a course, the choice of the content to be taught; and indicates the link to other courses. [Note its potential for providing the integrating point of the various studies a student may be asked to take].

Course Description: This provides a broad description of the specific learning opportunity and environment which take off from the rationale. For example the Issues, Understandings, Skills etc. essential to the significant aspects of the content of the course will be outlined here.

Learning Outcomes:

1. This provides answers to the questions about what is the explicit purpose of the exposure afforded by the Course. <u>That is they should state what the learner will be able to do as an outcome of the course</u>.
2. Learning outcomes provide the basis and the direction for subdividing a Course into smaller chunks or units.
3. Learning outcomes identify for learners what they are to expect and in a measure define personal responsibility.
4. Learning outcomes point the direction in which instruction is aimed.
5. Strategies, tasks and materials take their frame of reference from the chosen learning objective.
6. Learning outcomes may be about several different kinds of behaviour (e.g. performance, mental, attitudinal...).

Sample Learning Outcomes:

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

a) Design experiments using molecular tools to detect and analyze novel organisms.
b) Explain how cultural beliefs inform and impact art forms.

Content (Subject Matter Content)

This refers to the:
1. specific facts,
2. ways of thinking
3. patterns of organization

(These specific facts, ways of thinking and patterns of organization are usually typical of, and dominant in, though not exclusive to the discipline).

Teaching Methods/Approaches

1. This presents the selection of strategies through which the learners will be engaged.
2. In selecting strategies, it is wise to be guided by the principle that the strategy is the best way of presenting the message to be delivered.

Assessment Procedures/Methods

1. Say how the achievement of a learning outcome will be recognized.
2. Say what to look for in an assignment/task.
3. Say what value (percentage or points) is to be assigned to the assignment. N.B. value should reflect importance.

Materials/Bibliography/Reading List

1. Materials refer to all those things to be used as vehicles in delivering the content and meeting the learning outcomes identified above. They will need to provide opportunity for users to engage with them and update their knowledge store.
2. Materials should present content that is accurate and up to date, reflecting input from the experts and practitioners alike and drawn from international, regional and local sources.
3. At the same time there should be opportunity for inclusion of quality material researched by the students.
4. For the purposes of the acquisition of books or electronic content by the library, where there are several books, they should be grouped with reference to priorities as follows:
    i. Prescribed Text
    ii. Highly Recommended
    iii. Recommended

Inclusion of a Review Schedule

This is optional but gives opportunity for student input for course revision to protect the sustainability of programmes of study to keep the programme current/relevant.

Source: Extracted in part from:

Bogle, M. (2003). *Explorations in curriculum concerns- Applications to development of*

literacy (Unpublished document).

An Additional Note

N.B. In cases where an entirely new course is being introduced or modified, additional resources/ equipment/material/personnel/ might be necessary and should be accounted for and a statement should be included indicating how these will be procured or financed.