

Master Course and Syllabus Guide

The Offices of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs require university-wide use of master courses that integrate syllabi into Blackboard course sites. A master course contains a master syllabus integrated into a Blackboard course site (including course layout, navigation, and learning objects).

University faculty and staff members create individual course sections by copying the master course into course sections. Section instructors then update the Blackboard course with their personalized section information.

The goal of this initiative is to provide students with a quality-learning environment and faculty with a scalable and efficient process for creating and administering quality course sections.

Benefits of the integration include:

- Consistent quality and content across sections
- Reduced time spent updating syllabi
- Utilization of best practices in Blackboard course design
- Reduced faculty time spent on course section preparation

Terminology

Master Course

A master course contains a master course syllabus and its attendant master Blackboard course site (including course layout, navigation, and learning objects) that remains essentially the same across all sections of a course. University faculty and staff members create individual course sections by copying the master course into course sections. Department chairs and authorized faculty are responsible for writing and maintaining master courses.

Syllabus

A syllabus at CSP provides students with a map of the course. Rather than a legal document, the syllabus is a pedagogical tool to help shape and guide student learning.

Master Syllabus

The master syllabus contains course information that remains the same across all sections of a course. This standardized document is available as a PDF within the master course.

Master Course Syllabus Template

This Word document, available in two versions, serves as the template for the writing of master syllabi. The template is available on the website of the Office of Academic Affairs.

Blackboard Master Shell

This Blackboard shell, managed by the university's LMS (Learning Management System) Team, serves as the template for building master courses. The Blackboard master shell includes the required layout, navigation, and course components. The Blackboard course master will include both standardized course components and course information that requires customization by section instructors.

Guide to Creating Master Courses

Course Section Instructors

Course section instructors should check with their program/department chair to determine if a course writer has already created a master syllabus and/or course for their use.

Program and Department Chairs

Department chairs are responsible for providing oversight of the creation and updating of master courses and syllabi. They may delegate master course and syllabus writing to other appropriately qualified faculty. The writing of a master course requires the creation of a master syllabus and its attendant master Blackboard site. Templates are available for the writing of each of these master course components.

1. **Request Master Blackboard Course and Shell** The course writer requests the creation of a Master Blackboard Course, including the Master Blackboard Shell, from the Learning Management System (LMS) Team. This empty Blackboard shell will serve as the platform for creating the master course.
2. **Master Syllabus Creation** Use the appropriate Master Syllabus Template, currently available as Word documents on the VPAA website, to create or revise a master syllabus. The resulting syllabus includes only those course elements that do not change from section to section. The course writer converts the master syllabus into a PDF and posts it into the master course's Blackboard site.
3. **Write the Blackboard Master Course** There are multiple ways to convert existing Blackboard courses into Master Courses. Please contact the Learning Management System (LMS) Team for guidance on the optimal strategy for Blackboard Master Course creation. In general, course writers may choose to either:
 - a. Course copy an existing course into the master Blackboard course. Course writers then move learning objects as needed to meet Blackboard Master Shell requirements.
 - b. Build the courses learning objects (assignments, activities, discussion boards, etc...) into the Blackboard Master Shell from scratch or by referring to an existing course section as a guide.
4. **Section Course Creation** Faculty or staff use the Master Course (composed of the Master Syllabus and Blackboard Master course) to create required course sections. Program/department chairs may choose to either manage the course process themselves or opt-in to LMS Team copy management.

Available Resources

Master course conversion support – LMS Team (email: LMS@csp.edu)

Ordering course copies and guidance on master storage – LMS Team (email: LMS@csp.edu)

Master Syllabus Templates – Regular and General Education versions

Blackboard Master Shell – Available for copying into empty Blackboard courses by the LMS team or faculty/staff

Syllabi and Master Course Components

Course writers divide course information between the master syllabi and course Blackboard sites. The master syllabus contains information that does not change from section to section. Section specific course information, along with some general course information, is integrated into course Blackboard sites. University faculty and staff members create individual course sections by copying the master course into course sections. Section instructors then update the Blackboard course with their personalized section information. Templates and guides assist course writers in the integration of these learning components into a master course.

Master Syllabus Components

These items, included within the master syllabus, do not change from section to section. The document is prepared in Word and then converted to a PDF. The following components are those required within non-general education syllabi. Master syllabi templates are available through the VPAA's website.

Course Information

- Course Title
- Course Number
- Credit Hours
- Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites:

Course Content

- Catalog Description
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Syllabus Changes

Course Requirements

- Required Reading/Materials
- Course Assessments and Grading Criteria

Course Grading

- Grading Scale
- Grade Computation

About the Course

- Teaching Procedures
- Engaged Hours
- Supplemental Resources

Expectations and Policies

- Respectfulness
- Attendance and Participation
- Academic Integrity
- Privacy Statement
- Late Submissions
- Class Cancellation Contingency
- Extra Credit

Addenda

Blackboard Master Shell Components

Master course writers use the Blackboard Master Shell to develop their courses' blackboard sites. The Blackboard Master Shell contains core course information (e.g. title and course description) and course information that is section specific. Section specific information requires updating by section instructors. The Blackboard master shell also includes required layout, navigation, and course components.

- Course Number and Title
- Section Number
- CRN
- Credit Hours
- Dates of Course
- Meeting Times
- Instructor Bio and Information
- Professor Name
- Email
- Telephone
- Office Location
- Office Hours
- Instructor Welcome and Bio
- Course Description and Outcomes
- Required Reading/Materials
- Course Outline – Includes week dates/#, theme, preparation, and assignments due
- Course Assignments/Activities
- Grading Criteria – rubrics and other grading are typically included within assignment descriptions.