



Teaching Guidelines

Alfaisal University College of Business Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Teaching Guidelines

Preamble:

Academia is a universal culture with certain attributes that all faculty members know or should have known and students after their first semester or year become familiar with most of these attributes, at least those pertaining to teaching, exams, assignments, projects and College “culture”. Here at Alfaisal College of Business (CoB), we should strive to build a culture that values, rewards, and promotes excellence in everything we do: teaching, research and service.

The quality of the learning environment depends on three critical factors: students, professors, and curriculum. All these factors are equally important and their impact on the quality of the learning environment is highly correlated. Any weakness in one of these factors may adversely affect the quality of the learning outcomes. This affects the quality and reputation of the program/s and the college.

To create an excellent, innovative learning environment, our pedagogical approach should reflect three core concepts. First, students learn the most in a positive learning environment in which diversity of opinion is promoted and respected. Second, students take their education seriously when they are encouraged to take responsibility for their educational endeavors. Third, students learn the most when they are challenged to leave their comfort zone, push the envelope and challenge themselves, i.e., when they work at the higher level of their capabilities. To put it succinctly, students gain new skills, knowledge and expertise when they struggle, stumble, summon their strengths and keep pushing forward. However, the opposite is also true.

In order to help our students grow, obtain new knowledge, and develop a new set of skills, our curricula, assignments, examinations, projects, field trips, and other coursework and related materials should be designed to keep our students working at a higher level. This means setting a high standard, demanding coursework, challenging examinations, and guarding against cheating or plagiarism.

Although we should recognize and promote intellectual freedom and diversity, at the same time we should challenge our students to reach their potential by holding them to a uniformly high standard and by being rigorous and demanding, yet fair. By doing so, we help our students succeed not only in our classes, but also in their lives. We help them become independent, self-reliant thinkers, and future business leaders. In short, the quality of our education must be the overriding factor that triumphs any other considerations.

In the following sections we touch on key teaching guidelines that help CoB students achieve their potential and form a unifying guide for CoB faculty. While some of these guidelines are common knowledge to faculty members and we bring them to the students’ attention in the orientation programs, we choose to list them as our experience in the last few years shows the need to list and insist on the implementation of these guidelines.

1. Course Lectures and Syllabus:

Lecture time and preparation: Faculty members are expected to be well prepared for their classes and use the **lecture time effectively without cutting the lecture time for any reason**. In case of courses with two lectures per week: The time of each lecture must be no less than 75 minutes; and in case of three lectures per week, the time per lecture is no less than 50 minutes. Three hours lecture must have no less than 150 minutes of lecturing.

Teaching standards should be consistent between courses and faculty. The lecture should involve new material, supporting illustrative examples and/or cases, **relevance to the local economy/business and environment where applicable**, current issues, use of computer software and library resources, and followed by relevant homework and/or quizzes. Activities that involve guest speakers, video tapes, field trips, or student presentations must be well planned in advance and reflected in the course syllabus, serve the subject matters, and should not constitute more than a **reasonable percentage of the class time (less than 15%)**. Field trips should be well prepared for with a prior written permission from the dean's office and a statement signed by the student guardian if required.

Missing lecture/s: If the professor is to miss a lecture due to other activities, such as attending a conference, then a written request should be submitted to the chair's and dean's offices ahead of time explaining the activity, and the arrangements made for the make-up of missed lecture/s.

Pedagogy: The College of Business in its attempt to stay at the forefront of advanced pedagogical practices, encourages a student-centered teaching methodology. At the CoB, we adopt the Outcome-Based Educational approach in which all teaching, learning and assessment activities are based around helping students to achieve pre-specified learning outcomes. Active learning strategies are used in classrooms to encourage maximum student involvement and plenty of assignments, projects and learning experiences require students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Course syllabus: The course syllabus should be prepared using the recommended NCAAA template. It should be completed and posted for the students on Moodle ahead of time. The **syllabus must include CoB and program missions** and specify the course learning outcomes, and connect them to MOE learning domains on one side, and the course content (outline) on the other side. More can be written on the content of the syllabus; but the template specifies what is required. Two sample syllabi that can be emulated are deposited on Moodle (to access, please login to Moodle using elearning.alfaisal.edu, then under courses select **CoB_Admin_Pot**). Main content of the syllabus (learning outcomes, course requirements, grading policy, attendance policy, exams dates/times, and course outline (over the 15 weeks of the semester) should **not** be changed after it is posted and explained to the students in the first or second lecture.

Course material: Lecture notes containing at least the power points of the lecture, illustrative examples, cases, homework, and any reading material should be posted on Moodle ahead of the lecture time. Lectures should reflect the learning outcomes (rubrics)

outlined in the course syllabi; and should be at a level that challenges students and encourages them to reach their potential.

Multi-Section courses: Professors teaching sections of the same course must coordinate with each other. The coordination should lead to at least using the **same syllabus and textbook, and give joint midterms and final exam at the same time and same place. Each of the participating faculty should grade a given question to all of the students (not only his/hers) in the course.** This eliminates the bias and discrepancy in the grading.

Textbook/s: The syllabus must specify the textbook/s used and the various ways of obtaining (hard or electronic) copy. Required textbook/s information should also be provided to the Shagry Bookstore several weeks in advance. It is strongly recommended that a hard and/or a soft copy be deposited in the Alfaisal University library (Reserve Shelf) where students can use it for few hours at a time. This should not prohibit students from buying the textbook/s, but it helps those who may not be able to buy the textbook/s, or does not wish to carry it around while on campus.

Office hours: Office hours to accommodate the male and female students' separation are required (Per AU policy). These should be assigned at convenient times for the students to benefit from them. In case of the Undergraduates, **female office hours have to be between 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM;** and for males they are between **1:10-5:00 PM.** For the **MBA students, female office hours are between 5:00-6:00 PM and for males after 9:00 PM.** Office hours should be posted in the syllabus of the course and on the door of the professor's office, and reported to the respective Program Office (Office of Undergraduate Business Administration program or MBA program).

2. Undergraduate Teaching:

Course Load per Semester: Ministry of Education requires the student to enroll in at least 12 credit hours to be considered a full time student. It also states that the normal load for the full time student is 15-16 credit hours. However, a student with excellent GPA can be allowed to enroll **in 18 credit hours per semester, which is the maximum allowed and authorized by petition.** Furthermore, a student is not allowed to enroll in a course in another university while the course is offered at Alfaisal University in the same semester. Also if a student has a grade of "F" in a course, then he/she cannot complete this course in another university, then transfer the grade to AU. Finally, a student is allowed to repeat a maximum of four courses within the duration of the BBA degree.

Class behavior and participation: Students are expected to come to their classes on time and fully prepared for learning. They are expected to be attentive, participating, and **take notes.** Class disruptions are not tolerated; **all electronic devices that can be used for emails or social chats (such as cell phones) must be turned off at all times,** and side chats are limited to the absolute necessity. None conforming students will be asked to leave the class. Use of the computer or iPads are limited to the lecture purposes and must have the approval of the professor first. No electronics, other than a simple calculator approved by the professor are allowed in quizzes and exams. Cheating or attempted cheating in projects, quizzes, or

exams may lead to an “F” grade in the course; and if repeated may lead to suspension from the semester or university.

Prerequisites of a course: It is a requirement that the student must complete before enrolling into the course. Alfaisal University registration system does not allow registration in a course unless its pre-requisites are completed. If this does not happen, then the student will be required to drop the course until its pre-requisites are successfully completed. Only in extreme cases a pre-requisite can be waived and by written approval by the Chair and the related Program Office.

Directed Study: It is an optional study arrangement that allows graduating students to complete a required course for graduation outside the usual classroom format. The graduating students who have time conflict (i.e. two required classes scheduled at the same time) in the courses required for completing graduation requirements are entitled to use the directed study arrangement under the following terms:

1. The student agree to take one of the two conflicting required courses without attending its lectures due to the time conflict.
2. The student should undertake exams and do homework/quizzes/projects as requested by the instructor of the course.
3. It is the student responsibility to get class material/notes and prepare for coursework requirements, and follow the course progress on Moodle and in the lectures.
4. Student must sign the Directed Study form and obtain the signature of the professor teaching the course.

Attendance: To create a college culture that promotes punctuality, commitment, and responsibility, class attendance is more than physical appearance and signing the attendance sheet. Coming late, leaving early, walking in and out of classes for whatever reason, engaging in disruptive behavior, dogging under the desk, or using an electronic device for other than the lecture purposes are prohibitive activities can be labeled as “No Attendance”. These activities should be observed by the professor; such students need to be notified, and if necessary disciplined. According to Alfaisal University policy a student with absence exceeding 15% should withdraw from the course, or risk having an “F” grade in the course. Absences amounting to less than 15% are intended to accommodate medical emergencies and cases of bereavement of an immediate family member. Only in these cases will the student be allowed to make up missed class work, homework or missed exams. For any other absences, the student will not be allowed to make up missed class work nor to take the missed exams. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of his/her absences, study the impact on his/her grade, and avoid obtaining a bad grade due to absence/s. Good attendance is always correlated with high student performance.

As the DN grade cannot be replaced with R when the course is retaken and can only attain a maximum grade of C, the college developed new scheme to mitigate the impact of a DN grade on the students’ achievement. In this scheme, the college will give every student one chance to surpass the DN based on the following:

1. A student with “DN” grade can sign a pledge not to have DN in any future course; otherwise the “DN” will be assigned if its conditions apply.
2. If the student refuses to sign the pledge, then he/she will be assigned an “F” grade in that course.
3. If the student refuses both of the above, then “DN” will stand.

The pledge will be provided by the college and signed only once in the college life of the student. Thereafter if the DN conditions happen in any course, then DN is a must.

The attendance policy should be well stated in course syllabi and implemented.

Assignments: As well, the undergraduate courses should have meaningful weekly or biweekly assignments. Whether it is graded or ungraded assignment, students should have feedback on their assignment performance within a week, such as posting the solutions on Moodle. Advanced undergraduate courses may have a case analysis, and term project in addition to the assignments, quizzes and exams. In case of graded homework or out of class projects and case analysis, the professors need to check if the work was outsourced by the student.

Exams: Exams should be designed to reflect the course learning outcomes and hence the course material. Exams should be challenging to effectively measure students’ creativity, performance and reward the students who take the learning process seriously; and be designed and conducted to prevent cheating.

Exam Grading: Students should have the results of the first midterm exam before the end of the **8th week** of the semester (before the deadline to withdraw from the course), and students with poor performance (expected grade lower than C) should be notified and a list of their names should be reported to Student Affairs. Graded exams (not just the grade) should be returned to the students within a week after they were conducted. The first midterm must be completed before the end of the **6th week** of the semester. Final exam should be conducted as scheduled by SA and cannot be optional or cancelled without a written permission from the dean.

One exam grade should **not** be duplicated or extended to another exam or to a missed exam.

Exam Preparation and Announcement: Exams should be ready at least 3 days before the exam date. This will give adequate time for the HoD/Colleagues to review and approve the exam. In classes with relatively large number of students, help in proctoring the exam must be requested from the related Program Office ahead of time.

Exam Administration: Starting from Spring 2019-2020, the university will not accept paper based examinations. All exams at the College of Business will mandatorily be conducted using the ExamSoft platform.

Exam Questions: Exams should **not** be a replica of older exams or cut and paste from the publisher test bank. If any of these is to be used, then only a small portion of the exam comes from such sources after they are heavily altered. It is expected that at least 30% of the exam to be open-ended questions, MCQs should not exceed 70%. If other assessment methods are used, e.g. T/F or filling the blanks, they must not exceed 20% and must be within the 70% allocated to the MCQ portion. Further, the exam contents should be contemporary and culturally aligned. The exam level of difficulty should be appropriate to the exam duration.

Exam Weight: Undergraduate courses must have at least **two midterm exams and a final**. Share of the course grade assigned to work done out of the classroom should be reduced to the minimum necessary and monitored for outsourcing. The final exam should have more weight than that assigned to either of the two midterms and it should count for at least 30% of the total course grade.

Exams in the common or concentration core courses of level 300 or less have more weight assigned to exams than in the advanced elective courses. For example, at least 70% of the overall grade in these core courses must be assigned to (individualized) exams. This percentage may be reduced in advanced courses such as the Strategy course or 400 level courses. In advanced courses the weight of the exams in the overall grade should not be less than 60% assuming such courses use projects and cases. This is necessary to distinguish the student individual performance and reduce sand bagging behavior. **Exams also, as lectures, should reflect the learning outcomes (rubrics) stated in the syllabus and reflect the required level of challenge.**

The practice of dropping the lowest grade exam is not allowed at the CoB. All midterm and final exams must count in the calculation of the course grade.

Make up exam policy:

- Make up exam should be made within short time from the main exam; and before the time of the next exam.
- Student is given one chance to complete the make-up exam.
- Make up exam should not be a duplicate of the original exam.

Dishonesty, Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are expected to maintain complete academic honesty in all course activities. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain academic integrity at all times and to seek assistance from the instructor when uncertain. Students who engage in activities which misrepresent their academic work through plagiarism or cheating will be subject to serious punitive measures that will be determined by

the College Administration (based on AU laws). Use of any form of electronics, other than a simple calculator checked by the professor, is prohibited in all exams, and quizzes. It is the responsibility of the professor to implement the integrity rules at all times.

Grade Changes and Appeal: Students are not allowed to pressure or bully their professors to extract high, undeserved grades. Students engaged in this behavior can be subject to penalties. Student who is unhappy with his/her grade can approach his/her professor in good faith until the issue is resolved. If not resolved, then the student can file a grade appeal within the allowable time limit, which is one month from the start of the succeeding semester. In any case, nagging the professors or the administrators on this issue is not allowed. Faculty, especially new faculty, should be aware of some students trying to pressure them to change the grade using all kinds of justifications. **Grade appeals are handled by the CoB Appeal Committee; grades are adjusted accordingly: a grade can go up, stay as is, or go down.**

Course GPA: As discussed and approved by CoB faculty in its August 27, 2014 meeting, the course GPA for all common core courses should be between 2.00 - 3.00 out of 4.00. While the course GPA for all others (concentration core and electives) should be between 2:00 - 3.25 out of 4.00. A course with a **GPA out of these ranges must be discussed by the Undergraduate Business Administration Program Committee, and approved by the dean before submitting/posting the grades to the Registrar.** Below is the guide for the letter grade and.

Grades must be submitted as letters only, use this table to convert your numeric grades to letters.

Grade	Numeric Equivalent	Cut-off Value
A	100	95
A-	94	90
B+	89	86
B	85	83
B-	82	80
C+	79	76
C	75	73
C-	72	70
D+	69	66
D	65	60
F	59	0

See: Student Affairs Deanship Policies and Procedures:
http://www.alfaisal.edu/sa_rules_regulations_ug_exam) and
Student Handbook For Policy And Procedures:
http://www.alfaisal.edu/sa_student_handbook

Summer Courses: Students are allowed to complete a maximum of 9 credit hours during the summer break, either internally (within the AU university) or externally (national or international universities). In case of external summer courses, please note:

- (a). The selected course(s) must not be BCC or CCC.
- (b). A formal pre-approval is required from the college before enrollment to an external course.

Internships: Starting Fall 2020, the internship will be equivalent to 9 credit hours instead of the current 12 credits. Only those admitted to CoB prior to January 2017 will be allowed to continue with the old internship system of 12 credit hours.

3. **Graduate Teaching:** *(Most policies in the Undergraduate are applicable to the Graduate)*

Lectures: The teaching of graduate courses should be rigorous and consistent across courses and faculty, and challenging to the MBA students who come in with at least one year of working experience. Students should be challenged to excel and reach their potential. All graduate courses should have meaningful weekly or biweekly assignments, quizzes and an activity (such as a term project) that requires students to research, collect data/information, and perform some types of analysis and technical writing. In case of out of class activities, professor should guard for the possibility of outsourcing the work. Students should have feedback on their assignments, quizzes, exams and/or projects within a week. As stated earlier, the lecture should have some real world relevance, especially as it relates to the Saudi economy and business. An MBA course should be taught at a higher and more managerial level than its Undergraduate counterpart, and must require a higher thinking level for the exam activities.

Exams: All graduate core courses are expected to have at least two individualized midterm/s and a final. Elective courses where they may have more cases and projects may have one midterm and a final. **The final is conducted in its scheduled time, not optional, and cannot be cancelled without a written approval from the dean.** For the final exam to have more value, it should have more weight than that assigned to any of the midterms. Individualized activity (such as exams) must form no less than 60% of each of the core courses grade, and no less than 50% of the elective course grade. This is vital to help differentiate students' performance as they often work in groups and end obtaining the same grade. Cheating or attempted cheating and outsourcing the work are dealt with the same way as in the Undergraduate section above. Exams should be prepared in a manner to reflect the course learning objectives, and should be challenging to capture students' creativity and seriousness.

Attendance: I am happy to state that MBA students present a great sense of responsibility. I hope they continue to feel that attendance is more than physical appearance and signing the attendance sheet (if there is any in the first place). In any case professors are encouraged to create a school culture that promotes punctuality, commitment, and responsibility and entice student to attend. The professor should specify a clear policy on attendance and class participation. According to the University policy, absence should not exceed 15%. Good

attendance is always correlated with high student performance. The attendance policy should be stated in course syllabi.

Course GPA for MBA courses: GPA for all MBA core courses should be between 3.00 and 3.45 out of 4.00; and for elective courses it should be between 3.00 and 3.60 out of 4.00. **A course with a GPA out of these ranges must be discussed by the MBA Program committee and approved by the dean before submitting/posting the grades to the Registrar.**

Grade Appeal: As stated for the Undergraduate program.

Letter Grades: Letter grades for graduate courses is like those of the undergraduate with the exception of no C-, D+ or D grades; if the grade is expected to be lower than C, then it should be assigned "F". So, the letter grade for all MBA courses has to be C or above or F.

4. Procedure for the Establishment or revision of Courses or Programs:

Faculty and departments are encouraged to keep the undergraduate Business Administration and Graduate programs curriculum current and serving the needs of the students and the business community. Based on our experiences, there is a need to formalize the approval of these evolutions/improvements, especially the time line.

For new or revised courses, course specification and syllabus should be presented to the department/concentration first. Once it is approved by the department it will move to the respective programs committee for review and elimination of possible overlap or duplication with other courses (especially courses in other departments), then to the College approval before it leaves the college for campus approval. The case must clear the college approval process before the end of March of the spring semester; otherwise it will wait for the next round.

Similarly for revising or initiating new programs. The complete proposal of the program (including its justification) needs to be studied and approved by the department before it goes to the respective programs committee for study and approval. The proposal should include the vision, mission and objectives of the proposed program; course requirements and courses executive summary; duration; expected demand; faculty expertise and requirements; benchmarking; and letters from external evaluators. Once the college approves of the proposal it will move to the campus wide approval process. Again the last date for the proposal to leave the college is end of March of the spring semester.