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Guidelines for Course Instructors

Faculty of Engineering, McGill University

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Purpose

This document is intended to provide high-level guidelines for any person of any rank or appointment who is responsible for the delivery of a course (hereafter referred to as "Course Instructors") in the Faculty of Engineering. It is not designed to be a comprehensive or detailed summary of all obligations, policies and standards, but is intended to provide a means for instructors to rapidly familiarize themselves with expectations with respect to the teaching of courses at McGill University and in the Faculty of Engineering

Teaching at McGill and in the Faculty of Engineering

Teaching is at the heart of the mission of McGill University (https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/mission). Our goal is to advance learning by offering the best possible education and to fulfill this by embracing the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness.

In the Faculty of Engineering, it is also our obligation to form students who are qualified to practice in their respective professions of engineering, architecture or urban planning. As such, it is essential that our programs, and the courses that make up these programs, be designed and delivered at the highest possible standard and consistent with the norms of accrediting bodies in Canada. These include the *Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board* (CEAB) for undergraduate engineering programs, the *Canadian Architecture Certification Board* (CACB) for the professional program in architecture, or the *Professional Standards Board/Ordre des urbanistes du Québec* (OUQ) for the professional program in urban planning.

For additional information, Course Instructors should consult the resources linked below and/or contact their respective Chair/Director, whose responsibilities include the assignment of academic duties.

Policies & Guidelines

McGill University has established numerous policies and guidelines pertaining to teaching. The Faculty expects that Course Instructors will familiarize themselves with these and ensure that courses are delivered in a manner consistent with them. Such policies and guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Academic Integrity
- Charter of Student Rights
- Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures
- Conflict of Interest
- Copyright
- Course Evaluations
- Course Outlines
- Assessment of Student Learning
- E-Mail Communications with Students
- Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law

- Sexual Violence
- Mobile Computing & Communications Devices in Classes

Policies and guidelines pertaining to teaching, both directly and indirectly, at McGill are available at https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/policies. Other policies may apply depending on course circumstances. Course Instructors are encouraged to contact McGill's Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) if they have any specific questions.

Note that all members of the McGill community, students, staff, and faculty, are required to Complete the "It Takes All of Us: Creating a Campus Community Free of Sexual Violence" online course (on MyCourses). Should you have any questions after completing the on-line course, please contact the Sexual Violence Education Program.

General

General expectations of Course Instructors in terms of the advance preparations, the delivery, and the follow up at the conclusion of a course are described below. Should you have any questions about these expectations or for further details, , please consult with your Chair/Director.

Before teaching:

Course Instructors are expected to familiarize themselves with the policies linked above and to prepare themselves to design and deliver courses in a manner that is consistent with those policies.

Beyond this, Course Instructors should:

- Familiarize themselves with the University Student Assessment Policy to ensure that course assessment is undertaken in a manner that protects students from excessive workloads and ensures that all students are treated equitably and fairly;

- Familiarize themselves with the McGill Charter of Student Rights and the Student Rights and Responsibilities Inside and Outside the Classroom;

- Ensure that all activities associated with a course (e.g., labs, projects, field trips) are conducted in a safe manner, as reflected by McGill's Internal Responsibility System;

- Learn how to use McGill's online teaching platform, myCourses (Note: if training is required, Course Instructors should inform the unit Chair/Director so that a training can be arranged);

- Develop a course outline for dissemination to students that is consistent with the requirements of the University and any additional requirements of the Faculty and the Department/School;

- Familiarize themselves with accreditation requirements and resources for courses offered as part of accredited programs (e.g., for undergraduate engineering programs, see https://www.mcgill.ca/engineering/faculty-staff/accreditation/accreditation-resources);

- Adjust the design and delivery of courses, where appropriate, considering feedback previously received through final course evaluations and other means (e.g., optional mid-course evaluations, mentoring, guidance from the Faculty's Pedagogical Coordinator – see below);

- Become familiar with the classroom assigned before the beginning of each term and, in cases where an Active Learning Classroom is assigned, consult with TLS for guidance on the features available in these classrooms and on how to use them effectively;

- Consult https://www.mcgill.ca/polling/ for information on how Student Response Systems can be used in courses and for details about the McGill recommended system and policies surrounding their use.

Course Instructors may also choose to avail themselves of instructional support through;

- McGill's Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) who provide support for course design, teaching and assessment (see https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors) and who have prepared a comprehensive Teaching Checklist that provides a timeline for preparing, delivering and completing courses;

- The Faculty of Engineering's Enhancing Learning and Teaching in Engineering (ELATE) initiative, which has established a community of instructors who are committed to promoting excellence in the teaching and learning;

- Mentoring or guidance offered by one or more experienced Course Instructors or the Faculty's Pedagogical Coordinator (https://www.mcgill.ca/engineering/initiatives/elate/contacts).

While teaching:

All Course Instructors have full responsibility for the preparation and delivery of courses as well as for the supervision of staff members including teaching assistants, laboratory instructors, graders and/or technicians as far as their duties are associated with their courses. Some of the main responsibilities include the following:

- Demonstrate competence and high-quality teaching at all times;

- Create and maintain a collegial and inclusive environment that promotes student learning and engagement;

- Maintain professional demeanor and high ethical standards with students and staff and serve as a representative of the Department/School and Faculty;

- Consistent with the course calendar description and the broader needs of the program and accreditation (where appropriate), ensure that the course is designed and delivered to satisfy all course objectives and achieve the prescribed learning outcomes;

- Comply with the class schedule including the class time and the room location (Note: Classes should not be released early or cancelled except in emergency situations; if such a situation does occur, the instructor must contact the unit Chair/Director as soon as feasible and inform relevant parties such as students, teaching assistants, security, etc. immediately);

- Notify the Department/School as soon as possible in the event of absence or late arrival;

- Consult https://www.mcgill.ca/hr/employee-relations/assocs-unions to familiarize yourself with the collective agreements applicable to staff members implicated in course-related work and ensure that all contract terms and workload are in accordance with the collective agreements. (For further information, consult with the Administrative Assistant of the Department/School or Human Resources personnel in the Office of the Dean);

- Use the assigned McGill email as the only mode of communication with students and staff;

- Assess the performance of all students in the course and ensure that all assessments are conducted in a fair, equitable and transparent manner and consistent with course subject matter and expected learning outcomes, and using the approaches specified in the course outline;

- Submit final exams on or before the prescribed deadline for the course, while adhering to the Final Exam Schedule and ensuring instructor availability and accessibility during the entirety of

the scheduled exam time (Note: if a Course Instructor can provide reasonable and exceptional justification for their absence during the exam, it is their responsibility to ensure that a qualified and well-informed replacement is available);

- Return grades and graded materials (e.g., assignments, tests, lab reports) to students in a timely manner and in a way that does not compromise student privacy or personal information (e.g., do not post grades or leave materials to be picked up in a public place);

- Ensure that all marks (i.e., assignments, lab reports, quizzes, mid-terms, final exams, etc.) are recorded online (myCourses) on a regular basis, and in a manner that is required to satisfy accreditation requirements (e.g., CEAB Graduate Attribute tracking for undergraduate engineering courses);

- In the event of any suspected plagiarism or cheating or other potential disciplinary infraction, respond according to University policies with respect to academic misconduct and consult with the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) to ensure that the investigation and disciplinary process unfolds in a manner that protects the rights of all concerned.

After teaching:

After the conclusion of the course, Course Instructors are expected to:

- Submit final grades to the Faculty in a timely manner, especially taking note when earlier-than-usual grades submissions may be required for graduating students;

- Be available for consultation with students who have the right to review graded materials and enquire about the basis for the determination of their final grades;

- Retain grades and supporting details of how the grades were determined (Note: Course Lecturers are asked to submit this information for retention by the Department/School);

- Retain samples of exams and course materials needed for accreditation purposes (Note: consult with the unit Chair/Director for details on what should be retained and for how long);

- Retain final exams for a minimum one-year period or submit them to the Department/School for retention;

- Secure permission from students whose work may be retained and used in future offerings of courses (e.g., example project reports, designs, lab reports);

- When no longer required, properly dispose of any course materials such as assignments, tests, lab reports in a manner that protects student privacy and personal information (e.g., names, grades and student numbers).

Performance Evaluation

The unit's Chair/Director or their delegate are expected to review the performance of all Course Instructors and other teaching staff in the Department/School at least once every semester.

Course Instructors are expected to access and review their teaching evaluations and all feedback from students. Where appropriate, issues raised in student comments are expected to be addressed. Remedies to any issues raised might require an action plan that should be presented to the Chair/Director before implementation.