VI. CLASS GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

(<u>Distance Learning Guidelines and Procedures</u> are in Section VII.)

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

All members of the NWACC faculty are entitled to academic freedom as generally defined in the 1940 Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure formulated by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors. Relevant provisions of this statement are accepted by the College as follows:

- 1. A teacher is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of his other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the College.
- The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject being taught, but he/she should be careful not to introduce into the teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the subject and should not permit personal prejudice to interfere with his/her grading of the students on their performance in the class.
- 3. The College or university teacher is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When he/she speaks or writes as a citizen, he/she should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but the instructor's special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and an educational officer, the faculty member should remember that the public may judge his/her profession and institution by his/her utterances. Hence, he/she should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that he/she is not an institutional spokesman. The instructor shall not use the classroom to promote personal political views or theories at the expense of other established views and/or theories.

Academic freedom also extends to students who have the right to expect quality instruction in all of their classes. In addition, each student has the right to free exchange of ideas in the classroom and to fair evaluation from every instructor. The student has the right to a complete explanation of the evaluation procedure at the beginning of each course. Furthermore, she or he has the right to reasonable access to each instructor for such assistance as may be needed.

MAINTAINING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY AND STUDENTS

NorthWest Arkansas Community College strives to maintain its reputation as a high-caliber community of learners. To aid in this process, NWACC faculty and students have written the following Student/Faculty Statement of Rights and Responsibilities:

- 1. Students have the right to expect instructors to meet class regularly and to follow the college calendar.
- Faculty has the right to expect students to attend class regularly.
- 2. Students have the right to expect instructors to be prepared and organized for Class.
- Faculty has the right to expect students to be equally prepared and organized.
- 3. Students have the right to expect faculty to hold scheduled office hours.
- Faculty has the right to expect students to keep appointments made with the instructor and to use scheduled office hours as a time to discuss any concerns about the class with the instructor.
- 4. Students have the right to expect faculty to return graded assignments and tests within a reasonable time period.
- Faculty has the right to expect students to turn m assignments on time.
- 5. Students and faculty have the right to expect respect from one another and the responsibility to show respect.
- To maintain a positive learning environment, faculty require that students turn off cell phones in classrooms, laboratories, or studios.
- 6. Students have the responsibility of keeping an open mind so that they may learn the value of higher education.
- Faculty have the responsibility to model behavior which illustrates the value of higher education.

Observing these tenets should prevent problems from arising that disrupt this balance of rights and responsibilities. In the event, however, that a right is infringed or a responsibility abrogated in a manner serious enough to threaten the learning environment, a student judicial/due process system has been created. This process is described at length in the Student Handbook sections of the catalog.

FACULTY ABSENTEEISM

- 1) The expectation is that all faculty meet their designated classes as reflected in the class schedule.
- 2) Only under "special circumstances" should a class be cancelled. Subject Coordinators or Chairs should be notified. If the class is cancelled for any reason, the instructor is still required to cover the required curriculum for the course.
- 3) When at all possible full-time faculty should make arrangements with their peers to cover sections. This arrangement should be approved by the Dean, Department Chair, or Subject Coordinator.

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WORK LOAD

Full-time faculty teaches 15 load hours a semester. Associate faculty carry varying loads, but in no case may teach more than 20 load hours an academic year. For faculty offering private lessons, the student limit is 14 load hours a semester.

OVERLOADS

Overloads will be determined each semester for teaching faculty. Load hours in excess of 15 assigned hours for each fall or spring semester shall constitute an overload for full-time teaching faculty. Overload pay for full-time faculty will be based on the same salary scale and general procedures used to compensate associate instructors each semester. The maximum overload that will be allowed is nine (9) load hours per academic year (9 months) for full-time faculty.

RECORDKEEPING

Faculty will receive an email on the 1st day and census day of each class asking them to review their rosters in Eaglenet. Students not appearing on the roster should be sent to Student Records to rectify the discrepancy. Once the student has returned to class the faculty needs to again review the Eaglenet roster. The student has not solved the problem if he/she does not appear on the roster. Students not on the roster should not be allowed to attend class.

To enter final grades, faculty will access the grade roster in Eaglenet after receiving an email from Student Records stating that grades are open for that part of term. For questions regarding grade issues contact Student Records.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records, including the right to inspect their education records, request an amendment of the records that the student believes are inaccurate, and the right to control disclosures of their records without consent. This includes grades, social security numbers, ethnicity, ID number, academic progress, or any other non-directory information.

Guidelines for Release of Information

A. To the Student

In person; no signature required; if in the presence of 3rd parties, only release information specifically requested by the student.

B. To School Officials

No signature required if requester has "need to know" in order to carry out responsibilities.

C. Third Parties

Including parents, spouses, other students, references, other schools, basically anyone:

If releasing information OTHER THAN DIRECTORY INFORMATION, you must have a signature of release and may only release specific information designated by the student

Directory Information

One of the exceptions permitted by FERPA is the release of Directory Information to parties outside the institution. Directory Information is defined as information which would not generally be considered to be harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The following Directory Information may be released without student signature of approval.

- 1. Student's Name
- 2. Student's Address
- Electronic e-mail address
- 4. Telephone Number
- 5. Dates of Attendance6. Degrees Awarded
- 7. Photograph

NWACC requires that all faculty complete FERPA training each year. The online training module is located at http://www.nwacc.edu/professionaldevelopment/FERPA/facultytraining.htm

ATTENDANCE

The college attendance policy is this:

Students are expected to attend all classes. Some instructors may choose to use attendance as part of grading for a particular course. Instructors have the authority to lower a grade or fail a student based on attendance. If an instructor chooses to use attendance as part of grading, then the specific attendance policy will be distributed with other course information at the beginning of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to know the policy and to comply. Students unable to continue attending class should fill out the appropriate withdrawal forms with the registrar. Students who do not officially withdraw will likely receive a failing grade due to their absence.

Please adapt your own related class attendance policy, and include this policy in your syllabus, which is your contract with the students.

CLASSROOMS

The College relies upon the good will of faculty to assist with limited custodial services. Please help manage the cleanliness of the classroom and if you rearrange chairs, please put them back in their original order after you have finished. Please erase chalkboards and whiteboards, and please enforce our policy of no food or drink in the classrooms.

OFFICE HOURS

The listing of office hours will be posted on the instructor's office door for the benefit of the students. In addition, the members of each class should be informed of the instructor's 10 office hours per week at the beginning of each semester.

ADVISING

As research has repeatedly shown, faculty-student contact outside of class plays a major role in student retention. Therefore, full-time faculty members may serve as advisors to students in such areas as career goals, course information and selection, handling college, and study strategies.

EXAMINATIONS

A week-long examination period follows each spring and fall semester. The times of exams are published in the schedule of classes, in a special memorandum, or both. Any exceptions to the published examination schedule must be approved by the Vice President for Learning. Faculty is asked not to give exams during the last week of classes. Following federal policy, NWACC faculty does NOT post grades.

INCOMPLETE COURSEWORK POLICY

At the instructor's discretion, a grade of "I" may be assigned to a student who has not completed all course requirements but who has met the following conditions:

- a) The student (or his/her authorized representative) initiated the request
- b) The student was carrying at least a "C" in the course before the situation arose that prompted the request for the incomplete
- The student was in compliance with all course requirements, including attendance and percentage of material covered.

If the student and the instructor agree that the student is able to make up missed class work then they will fill out an Incomplete Contract which will:

- a) Stipulate the specific course requirements to be completed
- b) Stipulate the specific date by which the requirements must be completed, if different from college policy, which is the last class day of the semester immediately following the one in which a student received an "I" (summer terms count as one "semester")
- c) Be signed by the student, the instructor and the appropriate division or department head with copies given to the registrar.

If the student does not complete the course work by the date stipulated on the contract, then the "I" becomes an "F." Students who need to attend class to make up incomplete work will need to re-register for the class. It is against college policy for a student to sit in on a class section without being specifically registered for that section.

GRADING

The basic college grading scale is as follows:

..... A 90-100 B 80-89 C 70-79 9 60-69 F 59 or below

Some programs or individual faculty members set higher numerical criteria for their students' final grades, such as 93-100 = A or 78-84 = C. Please include your grading scale in your syllabus so that students will know your grading criteria from the first day.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The NWACC faculty and staff strive diligently to ensure all academic and programmatic services of the college are accessible for individuals with disabilities. The Director of Disability & Testing Services facilitates services for students with disabilities and acts as NWACC's ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance officer.

Academic accommodations are often made available to enrolled students who have documented disabilities. In order to procure accommodations, students must first be admitted to the college and submit a completed Intake Form to the Director of Disabilities Services located in the Life Development Center. Students must also supply appropriate medical, psychological, and/or educational documentation diagnosing the disability and detailing academic functional limitations associated with the disability. The final step is to meet with the Director of Disability Services to discuss eligibility and specific academic accommodations. Students should complete this process as soon as possible after admission to NWACC. For more information, see the Faculty FAQ below or call 619-4384 or email mkirk@nwacc.edu.

Faculty FAQs Concerning Students with Disabilities in the Classroom

How will I know if a student in my class has a disability?

At NWACC, enrolled students with disabilities have the responsibility of disclosing the existence of disabilities to the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students must complete an intake and evaluation process with the Director (currently Dean of Learner Development). This process includes the submission of documented medical, psychological, and/or educational evidence of the disabling conditions. Students completing this process and deemed eligible receive a personalized, laminated Accommodation Card (see example, bottom page 2) issued by ODS. Students are instructed to initiate a meeting with you to discuss the use of academic accommodations in your class.

What types of accommodations are appropriate for a student with a disability?

The back of the Accommodation Card will have the recommended accommodations or modifications for the classroom, testing, or assignment settings that have been determined by consultation between the Director and students.

What is my role in making sure students receive these accommodations?

Students should meet with you to discuss how best to implement accommodations in your class. Each student is instructed to initiate these meetings and should bring a personalized, laminated Accommodations Card, an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) form (see example, page 3), and a memorandum (see example, page 4) addressed to faculty about the purpose and procedure for completing the IAP form. You and the student discuss the appropriateness of recommended accommodations for your class, how best to implement these accommodations and complete the IAP form. Making yourself readily available is the most positive thing you can do for these students during the first two weeks of the semester. Another suggestion is to conduct these meeting in settings that allow as much privacy as possible, preferably during your office hours. Many students are very anxious about disclosing such intimate, personal details in a public setting such as the classroom. Please do all you can to help your students maintain confidentiality of these types of self-disclosures.

What is accomplished by meeting with students with disabilities concerning how best to use accommodations in my class and completing the IAP form?

Many students have not developed the skills or vocabulary required to discuss the nature of their disabilities or the types of accommodations that would help them achieve academic success. As students with disabilities progress to chosen careers paths, such skills are vital. Though federal mandates prohibit discrimination against those with disabilities in virtually all public and private domains, the disclosure of limitations imposed by disabling conditions and negotiation for appropriate accommodations in the workplace is an individual responsibility. To be successful in the workplace, individuals with disabilities often need well-developed self-advocacy skills. The Office of DisAbility Services feels the meeting with you is useful in teaching and enhancement of these skills.

Do I have to approve every accommodation listed on the Accommodation Card for my class?

No, not all accommodations are appropriate for all classes. Use your professional judgment and common sense. This is your classroom and accommodations are not intended to arbitrarily change the essential function, structure, focus, or manner of presentation of material in your classroom. But be aware that federal mandates state that reasonable accommodations must be made for students with legitimate documented disabilities. The intention of academic accommodations is to ensure equal access to the information presented in the classroom, laboratory, or studio and a fair evaluation process for students with disabilities. If you're uncertain about the appropriateness of a recommended accommodation for your class please feel free to contact me and I'd be glad to discuss it with you.

If a student has extended test time, does he/she have to test in the classroom?

The location for testing for a student with extended test time is one of the issues to work out when the student meets with you to complete the IAP form. If you and the student agree that the classroom, your office, or another location is sufficient, that is fine. Remember the Testing Center (1019 Burns Hall) is also a potential option to ensure students can take advantage of their allotted time and provide test security as well.

How does the notetaking accommodation work at NWACC?

Students seeking in-class notetaking as an accommodation are responsible for asking another student in the class to volunteer to take notes for them. Students utilizing the student volunteer notetaking accommodation are supplied lined NCR paper for taking notes. At the end of each class the notetaker keeps the top or original copy of notes and supplies the accommodated student with the "carbon copy" of notes composed during the class. One benefit to the notetaker is all paper needed for the class is supplied by the Office of Disability Services throughout the semester.

What part can I play in facilitating the notetaker accommodation?

You can be of support by announcing early in the class that fellow students may be asking them to take notes and their assistance is appreciated. Also, if you have strong students in your classes that you recognize as proficient notetakers, please encourage them to help out their fellow classmates by providing this service. Your facilitation in implementation of this accommodation in your class is greatly appreciated.

When a student uses the testing center, should I contact the Testing Center to set that up?

No. It is the responsibility of students to set up all testing arrangements. You just need to make sure you deliver test materials to the Testing Center in a timely manner.

Who can I talk to if questions or concerns arise concerning working with students with disabilities in my class?

Mike Kirk, Dean-Learner Development Center, is glad to meet with you and discuss any disability, academic accommodation or testing issues. Simply call 619-4384 or email mkirk@nwacc.edu with your questions, to set up an appointment, or if you prefer, drop by the Office of DisAbility Services in the Learner Development Center, CEF 1015 or visit our website at http://www.nwacc.edu/LSS/disabili.php

STANDARD COURSE OUTLINES (CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW)

A standard course outline documents and communicates the nature, purpose of and expectations for a particular course to faculty and staff rather than students. A number of different individuals may need to access a standard course outline. Administrators can use this information from the outline to answer questions about curriculum from those outside the college. Advisors can find the outline helpful because it provides information more specific than the catalog description. The assessment committee can use the outlines to inventory how the general education outcomes are being taught and assessed. Advisory boards and program coordinators may use the outlines in evaluating curriculum. Instructors (particularly new instructors) should use the outline as a guide in preparing their individual syllabi. The syllabus an instructor would prepare for his students as a first day handout is different form a standard course outline because includes such specifics as grading policy, attendance policy, number of tests, calendar, office hours, etc. The course outline identifies the general scope of a course and the minimum standards.

Each standard course outline is posted on the college website and kept on file in the division offices. New or updated standard course outlines may be posted on the web via the Learning Assessment Coordinator. Once a standard course outline has been filed, it need only be resubmitted when there has been a change in the course. The division chair will determine who will actually take responsibility for preparing the document.

The standard course outline should include these elements:

- 1. Course number and title, and the department that offers it.
- 2. Catalog description
- 3. **Prerequisite :** (if any). Most courses have prerequisites listed in the description. This section can provide expanded explanation of and/or exceptions to prerequisites.
- 4. **Credit/ contact/ load hours**: Credit hours are the hours of credit that will appear on a transcript. Contact hours are the amount of time designated for class (with 50 minutes rounded to an hour). Load hours are used to determine instructor remuneration. For example, the credit, contact and load hours for history courses are all the same, three. For lab science courses, the credit is 4, the contact is six (3 hours lecture and three hors lab) and the load is 5. For art studio courses, the credit is three, the contact hours are six (two hours lecture and 4 hours lab) and the load designation is 4 2/3. See the Administrative Procedures Manual 3-8-5 on load hour designation.
- 5. **Target Audience and Transfer**: Because catalog descriptions tend to be brief, the course outline includes a section expanding the rationale for the course by identifying the student groups who would take the course. A statement regarding the overall purpose of the course can be included in this section. A comment on how the course usually transfers is also being helpful to those who are both preparing to teach the course and advising students.
- 6. **General Course Objectives**: The key purpose of the standard course outline is to communicate how the course connects to and supports educational programs, general education, and the college mission. This connection and support is expressed in large part through the general course objectives. These general objectives are common to all sections of the course regardless of the instructor. The objectives provide consistency in content and purpose for NWACC courses. Most importantly, general course objectives serve as specific course level expressions of the program and institutional level learning outcomes.

The general course objectives are learning expectations agreed upon by the faculty that teach the course. They should be written in terms of what students should be able to know, think and do when they successfully complete the course. Objectives at this level tend to provide general guidelines to the instructor in communicating to students the goals of the course and expected level of performance. General course objectives should be written in such a way that they can be easily shown to support the institutional (general education) and program level outcomes and criteria. To do this, faculty should

consider objectives that would be course appropriate for areas of knowledge (transfer or work), higher order thinking, academic skills (reading, writing, computer literacy, math, speaking, and research) and cultural awareness. Most courses will probably have less than ten general objectives. Depending on the type of course and the desires of the department faculty, some standard outlines may contain a longer list of more specific objectives tied to the course content.

Should all the general education outcomes be addressed in each course?

While all general education outcomes are meant be taught across the curriculum, it is not reasonable for all courses to address every outcome in depth. For example, one of our general education outcomes is verbal communication. While most courses will provide students opportunities to communicate verbally in class discussions or small group work, not every course will require students to make a formal presentation. As a rule of thumb, only include objectives that support the general education outcomes if they will be specifically taught and assessed (counted as part of the grade). For example, faculty shouldn't include an objective on literature research unless faculty agrees that a research assignment will be included in every section of the course regardless of who teaches it. Depending on faculty preference, the outline may stipulate the type of assignment (a five page research paper for example) while others may not specify a type of research project. A nonspecific objective would require all faculty to include some form of research assignment that counts as part of the grade. The type of assignment and how it counts in grading is left to the instructor's discretion. In this example, some faculty may assign research papers while another may ask their students to prepare abstracts. The specificity the assignment should be addressed in the "required activities" or the "required form of assessment" section of the outline. For more guidance in crafting general course objectives, consult the assessment handbook or learning assessment coordinator.

7. Required Text(s) & optional (if any)

- 8. **Topics:** The topics to be covered may be simply listed or designated as chapters in the text. The course outline would be the logical document to make clear which topics are required and which are optional.
- 9. **Required Instructional Activities (if any):** Examples of required instructional activities might include:
- Laboratories: Courses with lab, clinical or a studio associated with them might describe the expectations for the amount of time spent and the types of activities expected. For example, general biology has a specific set of common labs that all instructors are strongly encouraged to use. Instructors who do not do the designated labs should discuss their plans for alternative labs with the science lead faculty. Art studio course may have requirements for the types and numbers of projects completed and a required display of art at the end of the semester. Computer science faculty may expect students to spend a certain amount of time working on projects in the open computer labs. The course may have a clinical requirement that is not listed as separate course.
- Assignments/projects: Course faculty may have agreed that all students who take this course may have to have to complete a particular project. In general biology, all students are required to complete a scientific lab report. In composition, students may be required to complete the certain number and type of writing assignments. In beginning basic programming, specific programming problems may be required by all students to take the course. An oral presentation may be a required component of all psychology courses.
- **Field trips**: The course may have required field experience that all sections are expected to participate in not matter who teaches the course. A day astronomy course may have night observation requirements.
- **Performances**: Performance courses may have specific type or number of performance required as part of the course involving time outside of scheduled class time for rehearsal and presentations.

- 10. **Required forms of assessment (if any)**: In some courses, faculty who teach the course have agreed to use certain measures as part of the assessment program. For example, composition faculty may submit samples of their students' first and final essays as part of assessing the composition requirement. Since critical thinking is a crucial aspect of social science and history courses, essay questions may be a required element of social science and history classroom assessment. A number of disciplines use common pre- and post-tests. Anatomy & physiology II students are required to take a national exam as part of the requirement for the course. Mathematics faculty are currently adopting a set of common questions that will be included as part of all instructors' final exams. Students' performance on these common questions will be analyzed across courses as a means of assessing math skills. A common scoring rubric may be used in evaluating student speeches.
- 11. **Resources (optional)**: Many new instructors would find it helpful if a list of videos, software, equipment, test banks and other teaching resources were available to them through the department, library and learning lab. These types of resources could be listed in this section.

Please contact the Learning Assessment Coordinator for samples and additional information about the document format.

FIRST DAY HANDOUT/COURSE SYLLABUS (CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW)

A standard format for FIRST-DAY HANDOUTS is to be followed by all faculty members. Each faculty member is requested to provide a current First-Day Handout on the first class meeting. First-Day Handouts are particularly important so students can receive the same kind of information needed about their classes, and so faculty can establish policies and objectives of the class. This handout represents a contract between the student and instructor regarding the course. If a student has a complaint about the content, requirements, grading, etc., the course outline is used to determine the validity of the student issue. Please see your supervisor about the process of filing your class syllabus with the department.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTING A SYLLABUS

The standard course outline serves a foundation for the content of a syllabus. The course outlines identify the general boundaries of a course and the minimum standards. Instructors will find that not every element of the outline need be a part of the student syllabus. For example, students do not need to know load hours. The instructor's syllabus does need to clearly state and address each of the objectives listed on the standard outline. A class syllabus will be much more detailed and very likely contain additional activities and objectives. The standard course outline is not meant to limit the instructor but provide a foundation for setting up a course. Each instructor can use his or her preferences and insights in how the general objectives will be taught, how particular topics will be presented, or how the student's performance will be evaluated.

The following elements are essential for a syllabus

- **♦ COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER**
- DATE OR SEMESTER
- ♦ INSTRUCTOR NAME
- CONTACT INFORMATION: This section should include as items such as phone, office/address, e-mail, fax, web site, and office hours.
- ◆ **CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION** of the course (including prerequisites)
- ◆ GENERAL OBJECTIVES. If an objective is in the general course outline it should also appear in the syllabus. The general course outlines identify minimums. Instructors may add objectives to their syllabus if they so choose. The additional objectives may include both those related to general education (reading, writing, speaking, cultural awareness, higher order thinking skills, math, and information research), and/or content specific. Many instructors provide specific chapter by chapter learning objectives in addition to the general objectives listed in the syllabus. If an objective supporting general education is included, it should have a class activity/assessment associated with it.
- ATTENDANCE POLICY. If and how attendance is part of course grades or class requirements
- **GRADING POLICY.** A description and number of exams, quizzes assignments, homework, etc. How each of the evaluations will be used to compute the grade. Students appreciate knowing the nature (essay, objective or both) of exams. Including policy on make-up work, grading scale and

extra credit would also be helpful. The more grading is "spelled out' in the syllabus early, the more difficult it becomes to challenge grades later.

- **REQUIRED ACTIVITIES** or related participation (particularly those listed in the standard course outlines).
- REQUIRED FORMS OF ASSESSMENT (if in the standard course outline)

The following elements are recommended in creating a document that "covers all the bases"

- Topics covered
- Cheating plagiarism policy
- Disability accommodations policy
- Withdrawal policy & dates
- Emergency procedures
- Calendar of class topics, exams, assignment due dates, holidays, final exam period, etc.
- Inclement weather and class cancellation policy (and phone numbers).

Comparison of the First day Handout and Standard Course Outline

Element	Standard Course Outline	First Day Handout
Course Title and Number	Yes	Yes
Date and Semester	No	Yes
Catalog description	Yes	Yes
Prerequisites	Yes	Recommended
Instructor name and contact information	No	Yes
Credit/contact/load hours	Yes	Credit and contact optional
Target audience and Transferability	Yes	Optional
General Objectives	Yes	Yes, with phrasing modifications or additions permitted
Texts	Yes	Yes
Topics covered	Yes	Recommended
Required instructional activities	Yes, if any	Yes, if any
Required forms of assessment	Yes, if any	Yes, if any
Attendance policy	No	Yes
Grading policy	No	Yes
Cheating/ plagiarism policy	No	Recommended
Disability accommodation policy	No	Recommended
Class Calendar	No	Recommended
Withdrawal dates	No	Recommended
Emergency / inclement weather procedures	No	Recommended
Resources for students and instructors	Optional	For students optional