School of Communication & Information (SC&I) Policies, Procedures, and Assignment of Credit Hours

The School of Communication & Information offers academic programs at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels. All programs are overseen by faculty curriculum committees that must approve new courses and course revisions before they are put forward for approval at the school level.

Course content and methods of instruction have three levels of oversight at SC&I. After departmental or program level committees approve new or substantially revised courses, completed course templates and course syllabi are submitted to and examined by the school's curriculum committee that meets monthly. This group, which includes all department chairs and program directors in the school, reviews all credit courses including classroom-based, hybrid, and online courses, internships, and experiential learning such as learning communities. Full syllabi and the course template documents are delivered ahead of time to this committee in order to allow the detailed examination of course objectives, course assessments, (ensuring that they're aligned with objectives), learning activities and modalities, reading lists, and study topics. If the information is incomplete or if the course is not approved, it is sent back to the appropriate curriculum committee. If the course is approved and credit hours meet University, state and federal standards, the course is submitted to the faculty as a whole for approval at the next school-wide faculty meeting. The faculty as a whole meet twice each semester. Course proposals are sent to faculty prior to the SC&I-wide faculty meetings to give them time to scrutinize the course materials. These responsibilities are explicated in the School of Communication & Information By-Laws.

 SC&I has been an institutional leader in organizing and implementing online programs.   Graduate credit non-degree programs have been offered since 1996. The Library and Information Science master's degree that has been offered fully online since 2005 is accredited and consistently highly ranked among programs in North America. The Master's in Communication and Information Studies has been offering one track of their program online for a year. Our faculty and staff have been participants in associations dedicated to quality online instruction including the Sloan Consortium and Quality Matters.

Many of our courses are offered in multiple formats: in a classroom and/or as a hybrid and/or online. Some are offered only in one format. A guiding principle and policy of the school has been that we hold every course to the same standards for teaching and learning regardless of format. And a course offered in multiple modalities must have the same course description and learning outcomes in each of those formats, although the pedagogy of how it is taught may vary somewhat in recognition of the different needs of each modality.   For classroom courses we use the general guideline of that three hours of classroom instruction and six to nine hours of out-of-class work are expected. For hybrid and online classes we do not distinguish between the two types of work, but expect the same total workload for

faculty and for students.   In recognition that teaching hybrid and online may require more work per student for faculty, and to promote a high level of engagement between peers and mentors, we limit the size and/or instructor/student ratio in hybrid and online classes more than we do for classroom courses. Unlike a campus course where discussions are limited to the time the course is held in the classroom, a SC&I online course encourages and promotes frequent in-depth discussions on which students are evaluated by the faculty teaching the course. In order to ensure that instructors understand engagement with students via an online course platform, two SC&I instructional designers work with faculty to help them adapt learning activities and discussions for online or hybrid courses. Before any instructor teaches an online course, the department chair refers that person to the instructional designers so that they can work with the novice online instructors. Coaching is provided to ensure that best practices are employed in teaching students remotely and that the usual high standards of SC&I courses are applied to online instruction.

The Masters of Library and Information Science degree offered online and on-campus is accredited by the American Library Association (ALA). The entire MLIS academic program was fully and unconditionally re-accredited in January, 2012 through the examination and report of the six reviewers who visited the Rutgers campus and reviewed the extensive self-study prepared by the SC&I Library and Information Science faculty. ALA has active engagement with the accrediting community through recognition by the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)](#) and volunteer service with the [Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA)](#). In their report, the ALA accreditors acknowledged that the SC&I online program was equal in rigor and quality with the on-campus program.

The School of Communication & Information participates in the Rutgers Core Curriculum with 21 courses certified to meet specific learning goals in the Core Curriculum. SC&I program directors who nominate courses for approval and acceptance into the Core Curriculum complete an application that includes full syllabi which are then scrutinized by the Core Requirements Committee. This committee makes sure that courses approved for the Core are consistent in meeting the norms for high quality including appropriate work and credit hours for undergraduate students' academic work. The application process for the core is outlined at the following website: http://sas.rutgers.edu/office-of-the-dean/2-office-of-the-dean/office-of-the-dean/537-sas-office-of-undergraduate-education .

Prepared by Claire McInerney, May 24, 2013