

# 50-STATE COMPARISON

## SYLLABUS TRANSPARENCY

In an era of the internet, AI, and constant information overload, most public colleges and universities in the United States still don't consistently make syllabi and course information publicly available.

Syllabus transparency means giving the public access to syllabi—course materials, required and recommended readings, grading criteria, and course objectives. Full transparency goes further: it includes course descriptions, weekly topics, required materials, assignments, and a clear grading breakdown.

Without syllabus transparency, everyone loses. Students can't make informed decisions when choosing courses. Parents don't know what they're paying for. Taxpayers have little visibility into how their hard-earned dollars are spent at public universities. And instructors, without publicly available syllabi, are more exposed to misrepresentation, grade disputes, and complaints.

Syllabus transparency laws and regulations—whether passed by legislatures or adopted by university system boards—exist in only seven states.

In this report, we first examine which states require syllabus transparency and how they got there—whether through legislation or action by university system boards. We also lay out a set of practical policy recommendations that state lawmakers and trustees can adopt.

### Key Takeaways:

1. Most states require public universities to make basic course information available online, such as course titles and descriptions.
2. Seven states, at either the legislative or board level, require public universities to disclose their syllabi publicly.
3. Publicly disclosing syllabi benefits everyone: parents, students, taxpayers, and faculty.

## States that Require Syllabus Transparency

- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Texas
- Utah

**Florida (Legislative):** All Florida College System institutions are required to post syllabi and required course materials for every class at least 45 days before the semester begins.

**Georgia (Board):** The University System of Georgia requires all its institutions to post course syllabi, including required readings, learning objectives, and grading policies.

**Indiana (Legislative):** Starting July 1, 2025, all public colleges and universities in Indiana must post syllabi online—accessible without a login, searchable, and updated each term—so students and taxpayers can see exactly what’s being taught.

**North Carolina (Board):** Effective January 15, 2025, the University of North Carolina System requires all campuses to post course syllabi in a public, searchable online database.

**Ohio (Legislative):** Starting in June 2026, all public colleges and universities in Ohio must publish undergraduate course syllabi online. They have to be accessible without a login, searchable within three clicks of the homepage, and include faculty information, key dates and deadlines, and required materials.

**Texas (Legislative):** Since 2009, state law has required public colleges and universities to make course syllabi, faculty CVs, and, in some cases, student evaluations publicly available.

**Utah (Legislative):** State law requires public colleges and universities to provide public access to course syllabi, including the instructor’s name, course materials and readings, and a clear outline of lecture and discussion topics.

## Syllabus Transparency Requirements by State

Alabama	No
Alaska	No
Arizona	No
Arkansas	No
California	No
Colorado	No
Connecticut	No
Delaware	No
<b>Florida</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Hawaii	No
Idaho	No
Illinois	No
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Iowa	No
Kansas	No
Kentucky	No
Louisiana	No
Maine	No
Maryland	No
Massachusetts	No
Michigan	No
Minnesota	No
Mississippi	No
Missouri	No

Montana	No
Nebraska	No
Nevada	No
New Hampshire	No
New Jersey	No
New Mexico	No
New York	No
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>Yes</b>
North Dakota	No
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Oklahoma	No
Oregon	No
Pennsylvania	No
Rhode Island	No
South Carolina	No
South Dakota	No
Tennessee	No
<b>Texas</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Utah</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Vermont	No
Virginia	No
Washington	No
West Virginia	No
Wisconsin	No
Wyoming	No

## Policy Recommendations

Improving syllabus transparency is essential to the health of public colleges and universities—and to rebuilding public trust in higher education. Students and parents need access to course materials to make informed, financially sound decisions. There are practical ways to close the transparency gap. Cost-effective, evidence-based recommendations include:

- **Public Access:** Public colleges and universities should make syllabi, course materials, and instructors' CVs publicly available. Syllabi should be posted in a centralized online database at least 45 days before the semester begins. The information needs to be easy to find, accessible without a login, and searchable within three clicks of the homepage.
- **Course Content:** Instructors at public colleges and universities should publicly share a clear course outline: weekly topics, course requirements, required and recommended readings, and a full list of materials, including books and learning tools.
- **Academic Standards and Grading:** To set clear expectations around workload and performance evaluation, instructors should publicly share grading criteria, assignment descriptions, and key deadlines.
- **Compliance:** Syllabi should be posted at least 45 days before the semester begins. Course materials should be available no later than the seventh class day. Any changes to the syllabus or course topics should be updated regularly.
- **Scope and Applicability:** Syllabus transparency should apply across all public institutions, covering every course and every instructor—graduate student, adjunct, and full-time alike.
- **Recordkeeping:** Instructors should use a standardized syllabus template and upload it to a centralized, publicly accessible database, where it remains available for at least two years from the date it is posted.

For centuries, university education has been seen as a stepping stone into adulthood. The mission of higher education is to prepare students to become responsible citizens. However, without syllabus transparency, these goals become harder to achieve. Publicly disclosing syllabi promotes transparency by allowing parents to see what they are paying for, empowering students to make informed decisions about their education, and enabling the public to understand how taxpayer dollars are spent.

Syllabus transparency laws also benefit adjunct instructors and full-time faculty by clarifying expectations, protecting academic integrity through openness, and reducing disputes with students. These factors show that syllabus transparency is not just about disclosing course materials—it creates a broader framework that addresses access, content, academic rigor, accountability, and institutional practices.

## **For More Information**

Want to learn more? The Martin Center is happy to provide supplemental data, model policies, or additional research on this topic. You can reach us at 919-828-1400 or [info@jamesgmartin.center](mailto:info@jamesgmartin.center).

## **About the Martin Center**

The James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal is a private nonprofit institute dedicated to improving higher education policy. Our mission is to renew and fulfill the promise of higher education in North Carolina and across the country. We advocate responsible governance, viewpoint diversity, academic quality, cost-effective education solutions, and innovative market-based reform. We do that by studying and reporting on critical issues in higher education and recommending policies that can create change— especially at the state and local level.

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