

Cluster Chair

Quick Start Guidebook



Eastern Florida
STATE COLLEGE

*Created Fall 2017
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Approved by AAC
April 21, 2017*

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to assist the College's Cluster Chairs with their roles. This guide should be thought of more of as a quick start guide, and not an all-encompassing document. It is not intended to duplicate or replace other EFSC documents, but rather to provide guidance and explanations of the roles and responsibilities where it will be helpful for you. In that vein, this guide seeks to give a broad overview of information a Cluster Chair should know, and then direct you to various resources for specific information.

Cluster Chair Responsibilities (Overview)

At the most basic level, the Cluster Chair is responsible for overseeing and guiding a specific Academic Cluster. This typically entails guiding/overseeing the:

- Cluster Meetings (at least two per academic year)
- Curriculum Revision/Creation Process
- Elections for Cluster 'Officers' (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Academic Affairs Committee Cluster Representative and Alternative Representative)
- Creation of Subcommittees (as determined by the Cluster)
- Cluster Learning Management System Course Shell

The Cluster Chair also serves as a liaison to many different groups including the College Administration, Academic Affairs Committee, Community, and Faculty.

Cluster Meetings

Cluster meetings should be called at least twice a year (or more if the Cluster decides additional meetings are needed/appropriate). These meetings are usually held in either the first or second week faculty report back in the fall and spring term, and typically follow Robert's Rules of Order, or some modification thereof. The Cluster Chair is responsible for creating an agenda (which can include issues raised by Cluster Members, the Administration, etc.), which they then oversee. The Cluster Chair should make sure that attendance and minutes are taken, typically by a Cluster Secretary, and posted within the Cluster LMS (or some other repository), as well as on the Cluster Disciplines subpage of the Academic Affairs Council website. These minutes should be reviewed and approved by the Cluster at large before they are posted.

Cluster Chairs typically attend a meeting with the Administration prior to the Cluster meetings so that upcoming issues or new information can be discussed, and then passed on to each individual cluster by their respective chair. It is expected that a Cluster Chair, or their designee/alternate, should attend this meeting and add relevant items to the meeting agenda.

Curriculum Revision/Creation Process

Per the “Curriculum Design” [guidelines](#): “the standard for curriculum design at Eastern Florida State College is Performance-Based Learning. As its name implies, a performance-based learning experience is deemed successful when students are able to demonstrate what they have learned in a measurable performance of discrete skills. The purpose of Performance-Based Learning is to establish clear and measurable criteria that can be understood by all faculty teaching a course, and more importantly, by all students enrolled in that course.” This is particularly important for Cluster Chairs because Cluster Chairs serve as a contact point in the curriculum revision process for the Administration, and as such help oversee any curriculum the Cluster revises. This means that the Cluster Chair will need to have a firm grasp on Performance-Based Learning because they are responsible for helping organize Cluster curriculum revision/creation efforts, and tracking the curriculum revision/creation process.

The Cluster Chair will want to oversee the creation of a Cluster curriculum review cycle that follows the protocols outlined by the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC). These protocols can be found on the CDC website [here](http://www.easternflorida.edu/faculty-staff/academic-affairs-council/curriculum-forms-instructions.cfm) (<http://www.easternflorida.edu/faculty-staff/academic-affairs-council/curriculum-forms-instructions.cfm>). Another helpful document is the “Curriculum of Study Checklist.” This checklist addresses the CDC’s expectations regarding specific information a Cluster should address before submitting curriculum and can be accessed [here](http://www.easternflorida.edu/faculty-staff/academic-affairs-council/documents/curriculum-of-study-cos-checklist.pdf) (<http://www.easternflorida.edu/faculty-staff/academic-affairs-council/documents/curriculum-of-study-cos-checklist.pdf>). Depending on the curriculum workload, it can be helpful to create curriculum teams for individual courses, or for specific subjects. It is up to the Cluster to decide what process for internal curriculum revision/creation is best. That said, once a course has been written, it must be approved by the entire Cluster with a documented vote before it can be submitted to the CDC via the Curriculum Approval Tracking System (CATS). There is a step by step tutorial for the Curriculum Approval Tracking System (CATS), which can be found [here](http://www.easternflorida.edu/faculty-staff/academic-affairs-council/documents/cats-technical-assistance-guide.pdf) (<http://www.easternflorida.edu/faculty-staff/academic-affairs-council/documents/cats-technical-assistance-guide.pdf>).

Once a course has been submitted via CATS, the Cluster Chair, or a representative from the Cluster, must attend any CDC or Academic Affairs Council (AAC) meetings where the submitted curriculum is being reviewed.

Elections for Cluster ‘Officers’

Cluster Chairs should oversee elections for Cluster ‘Officers’ – this means that the current Cluster Chair should help the Cluster adopt a nomination and election process that is equitable, documentable, and approved by the Cluster. The following positions are typically elected by the Cluster:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) Cluster Representative

- AAC Cluster Alternative Representative

The Cluster should decide and vote on ‘Officer’ responsibilities (outside of the Cluster Chair role as those responsibilities are determined via the Collective Bargaining Agreement) as well. Whatever process the Cluster decides to follow, the decision to follow this process must be documented, as must each phase of the election process.

Creation of Subcommittees

It is important that a Cluster Chair keep track of any Cluster subcommittee that is created. These subcommittees are created by the Cluster to investigate or perform some task determined by the Cluster. The subcommittees can cover topics like curriculum revision, course substitutions, textbook adoptions, among many other topics. The Cluster Chair should keep record of these subcommittees and have them report back at regular intervals. This includes allotting time for the subcommittees in a Cluster Meeting Agenda. Once a subcommittee has served its purpose, the Cluster Chair should ask the Cluster to consider voting to dissolve that subcommittee. The Cluster should determine whether subcommittee meeting minutes are necessary, though if they are, the Cluster Chair should make sure that those minutes are uploaded to the Cluster LMS (or repository). If any action/decision by the Cluster comes out of a subcommittee, make sure that the process is documentable, and that there is documentation for that action/decision.

Cluster LMS Course Shell

It is up to the Cluster to decide the best way to organize and maintain documentation for any decision made. No matter what repository the Cluster ultimately decides to use, the Cluster Chair is responsible for maintaining documentation (meeting minutes, votes, curriculum review decisions, etc.) in that repository. Many Clusters opt to create a Cluster page within the College’s Learning Management System (LMS) and upload all documentation to this page. Discussion Boards can also be created to facilitate Cluster discussion when face to face meetings aren’t possible. The voting tools can be used to track and document Cluster votes when face to face meetings aren’t possible. It is the Cluster Chair’s responsibility to maintain this page and provide access to Cluster members. If a designee will be maintaining the repository, this designee, and the process the designee follows, must be approved by the Cluster.

Liaison Roles

The Cluster Chair will act as a liaison to many different groups including the College Administration, Academic Affairs Committee, Community, and Faculty.

The Cluster Chair acts as a liaison to the Administration in a variety of ways. They typically are the first point of contact whenever there is a discipline specific question, such as course substitutions, waivers, or transferability of coursework. They also assist with credentialing

questions and with data reporting, like the data now required by the Textbook Affordability Act and explained in [Rule 6a-14.092](#) Textbook Affordability. Cluster Chairs are often asked to disseminate information throughout the semester to their respective Clusters. They are also expected to attend any Cluster Chair Meetings, provided such meeting is not in conflict with the CBA, so that they can relay that information back to their Clusters.

A Cluster Chair acts a liaison for the Cluster to the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) and Community Organizations when additional information or expertise is required. For the AAC, this typically occurs when clarification is needed regarding a discipline specific question, or when Cluster submitted curriculum is on the AAC agenda for review.

Community Organizations or Institutions, like Community Advisor Boards for specific programs often use the Cluster Chair as their point of contact and as such, a Cluster Chair should be available to these partner organizations/groups. It is up to the Cluster to decide how to facilitate this relationship, but ultimately it is usually the Cluster Chair who is responsible for maintaining that relationship.

The interaction a Cluster Chair has with faculty has been noted throughout this quick start guide, but it is worth repeating that a Cluster Chair serves as a liaison to faculty, both within and outside of the Cluster. A Cluster Chair should be available to help faculty navigate the College's systems and procedures, and act as a resource that helps connect faculty to other resources. A Cluster Chair should aim to facilitate a cross culture environment for faculty to work together within their discipline, and with other disciplines. They are responsible to providing information to the Cluster that they have received from the Administration, AAC, Community Organizations, etc., but they are also responsible for providing Cluster decisions to those other groups as well. They ultimately represent their Cluster and the decisions it makes.