

VIP Case Competition: Gaining Elective Course Credit



The guide below was written and submitted by Jaqueline Pereira and Michael Schaefer, PharmD Candidates, Class of 2022 at the University of Florida. Thank you to these IPhO student leaders for sharing their successful experience.

If you are interested in making the VIP Case Competition an elective credit course at your school, these are the steps that these student leaders took at the University of Florida to get the VIP Case Competition approved for elective credit at their school.

Introduction

The Value of Industry Pharmacists (VIP) Case Competition is an annual professional development competition presented by the Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) and the National Fellows Council (NFC) that highlights the key roles and contributions of industry pharmacists within the drug development process, as well as provides student pharmacists with the opportunity to improve analytical, project management, and written and oral presentation skills. The goal of this competition is to provide chapter team contributors with a professional development competition which results in participants increased knowledge of key industry functional areas required to bring a new product to market and the vital role in which pharmacists play within these functions. By the end of the competition, teams will have created a cohesive drug development plan along with a presentation showcasing the drug profile. The VIP Case Competition is now nationally recognized by pharmacy school stakeholders, experienced industry pharmacists, fellows, and IPhO Student Leadership as a significant professional development competition that increases knowledge and application of industry functional areas in which pharmacists play an instrumental role in the commercialization of pharmaceuticals.

TIMELINE

Where to begin?

Start at least 3 months before the elective class approval:

- Identify a core group of student leaders in your IPhO student chapter who are eager to participate in the VIP Case Competition and gain elective course credit through the university. One of the very first tasks is to identify and recruit a faculty advisor for the course. Next, is the development of a course syllabus using the VIP Case Competition as the primary educational design method from which to meet course objectives. Based upon the difficulty in writing a course syllabus, we recommend assigning each major section to different team members.
- Once the syllabus work is assigned, we recommend holding an advisor start meeting to establish project objectives and timelines working back from the syllabus submission due date for final university curriculum review and approval, allowing ample time for feedback and revisions.
- Example Project Objectives include:
 - Announcing to the student body this initiative in development
 - Reviewing elective credit courses currently approved to gain familiarity with the format, style, and language
 - Establish a project timeline and reinforce each member's responsibilities
 - Gain insight from the course advisor/coordinator on best practices at your school for successfully accomplishing the project goal
 - Set deadlines for next 30 days

The first 30 days:

- During the first meeting, we set up individual responsibilities, gathered resources, and made an outline of the steps to take to get the course accredited.
- The second meeting consisted of checkpoints to ensure everyone was completing their parts of the syllabus and conversing about any issues they were having. By the next meeting, a rough draft was ready for the faculty advisors to look over.
- The third meeting consisted of double checking the syllabus we had created and going over other sections that were done by others to ensure accuracy and consistency. This meeting happened the day before the faculty advisor meeting to make sure all students were on the same page and we had questions for the faculty advisor on how else we could improve the development, submission, and approval process.

Know due dates:

- Make sure you are aware of all your school due dates regarding the establishment of an elective credit course. Work backwards from each key due date to ensure outcomes are accomplished in a timely fashion. One such due date is knowing the latest date of approval for an elective credit course in the summer.
- We started building our team in late April and started meeting and planning in early May. Our faculty advisor told us we had to have the syllabus ready by early July so that they could make final revisions to submit to the elective credit committee.
- Our student body always made the day before a faculty advisor meeting an important due date. This way, we were more than prepared when we met with the faculty advisor.

Set weekly objectives

TEAM AND ADVISOR RESOURCES

Faculty:

- If possible, it is very helpful to get early feedback from a faculty advisor on the elective credit committee board. This will make a tremendous impact as they will have the most experience with what has worked previously and where other similar initiatives may have failed. For example, courses typically have school specific codes to ensure learning objectives are met. Knowing what these codes are early in the syllabus development process will increase the quality and decrease the timeline for completion.
- Having a motivated faculty advisor helped us stay ahead of our deadlines to make this elective course a reality.

Student Leadership Team:

- The IPHO e-board played a significant role in this team. We created a group chat to communicate frequently to keep updates flowing seamlessly.
- If your college of pharmacy has multiple campuses, choose representatives from each campus to ensure broad representation, review, and even possible different course syllabus submission deadlines.
- In order to spread the responsibilities around, you may want to have 5-10 students on your project team.
- Dividing the syllabus up was very beneficial as different student team members were able to review others' work. Separating the review and editing of sections is a way to optimize the quality of the outcome before submitting the syllabus to our advisor.
- We had success with having one dedicated liaison between the project team and the faculty advisors so as to make communications as efficient as possible. This student project team liaison is responsible for sending all communications back and forth from team to advisors and vice versa. Our faculty liaison also compiled deadlines, meeting minutes, and scheduled meetings. We had a folder for meeting minutes, a document for our objectives and a working rough draft syllabus for submission to the faculty advisors the day before we met with them. All project documents were stored and organized in a Google drive so that we could easily access and share materials.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Timeline and deliverables list:

The more time you invest in the proper and professional planning of your project and outcome, the higher the chance you will achieve it. There is no substitute for good project management. Determine each of your primary and secondary tasks, match them up to your overall due dates and assign tasks accordingly. Gain feedback from your course advisor(s) to ensure that you have their support. This will result in everyone involved understanding what the expectations are at each step of the project.

Group chat for students:

A group chat for students is not needed but is preferred. The liaison can keep the group updated, documents can be easily shared and messages are typically noticed faster than emails.

Email with cc of all faculty:

Emails are very important between students and faculty and many will be sent to keep things on track. Remember to maintain professionalism and always elaborate on what you are trying to convey to the professors.

Frequent and appropriate reviews and revisions produce quality outcomes:

Revisions the day before meetings with course advisor(s) help ensure materials are professional and the advisor's time is respected and valued. Be aware that laying out a course schedule is time intensive. While not always part of the final course syllabus, this helps to keep students and advisors(s) on the same track regarding how the class will flow from week to week.

Be ready to make multiple rough drafts:

Constant revisions and constant rough drafts will happen! We made at least four rough drafts. Patience is key!

Use other elective credit course syllabi as an example to make your own:

One of the most important development strategies is to review other school course elective syllabi. The more you become familiar with expected final outcomes, the more efficient your team will be in customizing your course syllabus.

Use the VIP Case Competition schedule to create the course calendar:

Knowing the elective course start and end date is critical as early on in the process as possible and how that matches up with the actual IPhO VIP Case Competition. While they don't have to be exact matches, the closer they line up the better. Since this project runs from August to December, an elective credit course has to find a way to exist during this time.

Link to sample syllabus: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LKxq67drue99Dl1M3y7z5IRNe0axtSAV/edit>

GOOD LUCK!