The Official Course Outline provides the blueprint for the course that is agreed upon by the faculty, but it does not tell a specific instructor how to teach the course or what materials to use. The Official Course Outline gives the curriculum continuity without taking away the freedom of the instructor and students to learn in the way that best fits their needs – structure and continuity without control. This document shows the continuity between the outcome, supporting objectives, methods of evaluation and content. Before developing an official course outline, review the document 3 Steps and 7 Critical Questions When Developing Curriculum.

The Official Course Outline answers eight essential questions:
1. What prerequisite course(s) are needed to ensure that students will be successful in this course?
2. What will the student be able to do when they are finished with the course? (macro outcomes)
3. What are the steps that students must demonstrate to be able to meet the outcome? (micro outcomes/objectives)
4. What are the various methods of evaluation that can be used to measure student learning outcomes? (assessment tasks)
5. What is the content or body of knowledge (i.e. concepts), skills, issues that need to be covered and/or practiced to ensure that students have the foundational knowledge and skills to perform the outcomes/objectives? (concepts, skills, issues and/or topical outline)
6. What references are available to use in preparing to teach the course? (references)
7. What best describes this course so that students, employer, and transfer institutions will know what the course covers and what students will be able to do as a result of taking this course? (course description).
8. How much time will be needed to ensure that students have mastered the outcomes? (credit hours)

The five things that are most essential when writing a good Official Course Outline is
- having measurable outcomes/objectives,
- a comprehensive list of methods of evaluation
- accurately defined resources
- continuity between outcomes/objectives, the course content and course description
- detailed course content

Suggestion: Ask for feedback from someone who knows next to nothing about the content area.
   Have them tell you if the outcome/objective statements are clear to those outside your discipline.
   Does the course support the purpose of a Community College and the Mission of Tri-C? (see Purpose and Mission)

Before you begin, determine the following:

1. Will this be an honors course? (See Honors Course Checklist)
2. Will the course include any of the essential learning outcomes (see Essential Learning Outcomes)
3. Will the course be a 1000 level or 2000 level? (See 2000-level Course Checklist)
4. Will the course be crosslisted with a course in another discipline? (See Crosslisting Courses)
5. What instructional modes will be used? (See Course Instructional Modes for Awarding Credit – Summary)
6. Might the course be offered as a distance course in the future? (See using Blackboard in classroom and distance courses)
7. Should the course be modularized? (See Modularizing a Course)
8. Does this course need to transfer to a four year institution? (See the Technical Review: Academic Plan and Course Cover)