Northwestern State University

Electronic and Continuing Education

Departmental Guidelines

March 2022

Contents

Introduction

Institutional development, delivery, and evaluation of electronically delivered courses and programs take place in the context of the policies and procedures of all existing academic programs. It is not the intent of the Electronic and Continuing Education Departmental Guidelines to supplant any existing policies set forth by the University, but where necessary, to define new or to expand existing practices to ensure the most effective implementation and support of electronic courses and programs.

The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education at Northwestern State University primarily organizes and facilitates technology as a vehicle for course delivery. The office seeks to provide a high quality student learning experience through comprehensive user training, by expanding the times and places of instructional offerings, and by integrating technological innovation. In addition, the office facilitates partnerships with other educational institutions, business and industry, and community and public agencies, in order to provide electronic learning opportunities.

The Goals of the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education

- Encourage the technology use that is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the academic programs.

- Expand educational opportunities in a financially responsible manner through synchronous and asynchronous electronic learning.

- Provide access to college courses through alternate delivery methods in order to offer educational opportunities to students unable to accommodate a traditional class schedule.

- Provide technical professional development in the use of e-learning instructional techniques and in the use of associated technologies.

All electronic academic courses at Northwestern State University are considered comparable to traditional courses, are taught by regular and approved adjunct faculty, and adhere to all the same standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses.

Northwestern State University utilizes two electronic delivery modes for instruction:

Video Conferencing: Occurs in real time and allows the instructor to communicate with remote site sections of the class via two-way video and two-way audio. Instructors and students hear and see each other live from each site.

Online: Courses offered via the World Wide Web.

Definitions

- **Online-** 100% online; a program or course where most or all of the content is delivered online. No on campus meeting requirements.

- **Hybrid-** 50-99% online; a program course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings.

Responsibilities Related to Electronic Course Delivery

Academic Division

- Identifies courses to be offered

- Coordinates information with partnering institution(s), if applicable

- Supervises faculty production and delivery of courses

- Manages budget for purchase and lease of related course material

- Evaluates electronic learning classes, faculty, and programs

- Arranges or provides guidance for test supervision as necessary

- Notifies the Chief Academic Officer when a program's offerings reach 50% online, so that SACSCOC and the Board of Regents can be notified.

Student Services

- Manages admissions, registration, counseling, advising, and financial aid for electronic classes

- Administers placement testing as required

Electronic and Continuing Education

- Provides professional development to faculty to facilitate the production and delivery of classes

- Provides instructional design and media development services to facilitate the production of online courses

- Provides course reviews relative to online course standards

- Orders, installs, and maintains equipment and software necessary for support of video conferencing

- Orients faculty to the use of video conferencing equipment

- Actively participates in the selection of equipment and software used for video conferencing delivery

- Provides technical support to faculty

A set of Guidelines for Online Programs has been developed. The guidelines can be viewed https://www.nsula.edu/wp-content/uploads/GuidelinesforOnlinePrograms-as-of-March-2022.pdf. Additional guidelines for use by ECE are outlined below.

- A program may not be delivered electronically without prior approval from the Board of Regents and/or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission of College (SACSCOC). Approval will be solicited through the Chief Academic Officer.

- All Internet/Web based courses must use the course management/gateway software package(s) approved by the University.

- All Internet courses will be hosted on designated secure university servers, which are managed and supported by Information Technology Services in accordance with approved electronic data processing policies and procedures.

- Electronic courses should be designed and evaluated according to those standards utilized for regular courses and identified by SACSCOC, and/or Quality Matters.

- Courses developed under contract with Electronic and Continuing Education will meet expectations of the approved standards rubric.

- The university will submit annually, as required, a request for participation in NC-SARA.

Adjunct Faculty Approval Process

- A prospective faculty member sends a copy of the transcript, vita, and letter requesting employment.

- If approved, the approving agent confirms that the individual is credentialed to teach and the record is maintained in an electronic database.

- Once the need for an additional section is identified, the department assigns the course and section number to an individual or solicits adjuncts from the ECE database.

- Pending adjunct faculty members are contacted.

  - Pending adjunct faculty members are contacted to discuss contract details. If both parties are in agreement with the terms of the contract, a contract is generated and sent to the individual by the applicable academic department. When received, the contract and all associated documentation is signed by the Department Head and sent to the Chief Academic Officer.

  - The Chief Academic Officer will approve the contract if enrollment criteria are met and forward to HRS.

  - HRS will process the contract.

- All new adjunct faculty members are encouraged to complete the Online Teaching Boot Camp.

The online application for adjunct can be found at http://www.nsula.edu/adjunct.

- Logistics

  - The department forwards a copy of the syllabus, course materials as appropriate, and textbooks to the individual. The department provides course development support and mentoring, and facilitates the course evaluation. The department also completes all required documentation as needed by the Institution in accordance with University policy. ECE provides technical assistance as requested.

Course Content

- At a minimum, all work required for a course offered by video conferencing or online must meet the same standards as the traditional course offered on main campus.

- All electronic courses, as required, must adhere to the standards set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the Louisiana Board of Regents, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, program-specific accreditation, and Northwestern State University.

Copyright Permission

Faculty members are responsible for securing advance written copyright clearances on any copyright-protected materials they may use in their video conferencing or online course. These should be maintained and kept on file with their course materials.

Disability Accommodations

Faculty members are responsible for providing approved accommodations as specified by the Office of Disability Support.

Use of Course Content

When a request is made for a copy of an instructor's course content to be placed into another instructor's course shell, the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education requires that the request be made in writing (email). The approval must come from the instructor whose content is being copied. In lieu of the instructor's approval, a dean/department head can submit a request. (Approval by the Chief Academic Officer may be required.)

Exam Policies

Students enrolled in electronic courses may be required to take proctored exams. The instructor is responsible for providing the details of the exam process to the students.

Instructors should provide test dates and proctor requirements to the students in the course syllabus. Instructors must accommodate students who are in a separate geographic location for proctor requirements.

The proctoring policy can be found at https://www.nsula.edu/wp-content/uploads/Proctoring-Policy.pdf.

Faculty and Course Evaluation

Course evaluations by students are conducted each semester using an online evaluation. It is the responsibility of Information Technology Services to ensure that the online mechanism by which the evaluation is conducted is in place. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness coordinates all other components of the evaluation including dissemination of results.

Faculty will be evaluated in accordance with standards and procedures set forth in the Faculty Handbook for the University.

Online Programs

A document has been developed and provides a set of guidelines for online programs and can be referenced https://www.nsula.edu/wp-content/uploads/GuidelinesforOnlinePrograms-as-of-March-2022.pdf.

Course Identification/Selection

- The selection of method of course delivery will be made by the Dean of the College/Department Head/Instructor, and when requested, upon the recommendation of the Electronic and Continuing Education Staff, who will identify the equipment, software, and support necessary.

- The selection of a course to be leased or purchased from outside of the University will be made by the Dean of the College, and/or Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development. It is not the instructor's prerogative to develop a course that has not been approved for electronic delivery.

Development and Delivery of Locally Produced Electronic Courses

- When the faculty member and the Dean of the College, and when required, in consultation with the Vice President for Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development agree on a course for development, the Dean of the College will determine if faculty will be given any form of compensation in order to produce the course.

- If a course is developed as part of a grant funded program, compensation will be in accordance with the grant funding guidelines.

- The size of a class should be considered carefully by the appropriate Dean and Department Head as it relates to instruction and course content. The use of creativity to maximize capacity without impacting quality is encouraged.

- Northwestern State University Policy will determine ownership and copyright in accordance with policies set forth by the State Board of Supervisors and the Louisiana Board of Regents.

- The design and development of electronic learning credit and non-credit modules, courses, certificates, and programs should follow priorities established by the college as informed by educational requirements, market studies, societal demand, community and business needs, and the competitive advantage of Northwestern State University. Offerings may include instruction for undergraduates, those in professional and

graduate degree programs, other advanced degree programs, practitioner-oriented programs, specialized professional development and K-12 outreach efforts.

- Electronic courses should be designed according to those academic standards utilized for regular courses and the standards identified by SACSCOC.

- Once the course has met approval by the department, the course must then be submitted to the Registrar's office for inclusion into the class schedules.

- All electronic courses should have an instructor identified for the course when submitted for approval. If the instructor listed is "staff," valid contact information should be provided for prospective students, and the department should amend the instructor information once an instructor has been assigned to the course. Course sections will be identified by the academic department and are subject to change.

Development and Delivery of Locally Produced Professional Development

- When soliciting support from the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education, the department requests for course shells are directed to the e-Learning Support Specialist.

- The eLearning Support Specialist reviews requests and conducts follow-up to gain any additional pertinent information related to the request. (i.e. audience, availability, timeline for implementation, etc.)

- Upon receipt of requested information, a request for approval to create the course shell will be sent to the Vice President of Technology, Innovation, and Economic Development

- Once approved, the shell will be created and developers notified of availability.

- The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education staff will provide assistance with course development as needed.

- Completed courses will be reviewed, as appropriate, by the Course Review Team (CRT) and revisions completed in consult with the course developer(s).
  - Course Review Team Members include:
    - eLearning Support Specialist
    - Instructional Design Specialist
    - Media Development Specialist
    - Electronic Applications Support Specialist

- Upon review by the CRT and revisions completed, notification of approval will be sent to developers/instructors and department head.

- Approved developed content will then be moved into the official course shell.

<u>Syllabus</u>

In addition to the course related information, at a minimum, an E-Syllabus should include the following:

- ✓ Email Address

- ✓ ISBN of textbook, if any

- ✓ Information regarding any required proctored testing

- ✓ Special Software Requirements

- ✓ Special Hardware Requirements

- ✓ Etiquette Expectations (Netiquette)

- ✓ Instructor response time for emails and checking assignments

- ✓ Minimum technology skills expected of the student

- ✓ Student participation/interaction requirements

- ✓ Others as required or recommended by Quality Matters (QM)

Professional Development

Any instructor interested in teaching an electronic course should attend an orientation/training session associated with the selected course delivery mode, which will be conducted by the Electronic and Continuing Education staff. Northwestern's Office of Electronic and Continuing Education will provide technical and instructional design assistance to faculty as needed during the development and delivery of any electronic course.

Administration of Courses

- All Internet/Web-based courses must use the course management/gateway software packages(s) approved by the University.

- All Internet courses will be hosted on designated secure university servers, which are managed and supported by Information Technology Services in accordance with approved electronic data processing policies and procedures.

Internet Courses

Administration

- Upon submission and approval of an online course, the Registar's Office will enter the course into the Banner System, and Information Technology Services will upload the course into the Course Management System.

- All face-to-face courses being supplemented electronically will be hosted on the Northwestern server.

- Information Technology Services ensures that online course data is backed up daily and at the end of each semester. The online database is archived.

- Faculty accounts are issued by Information Technology Services. Student accounts are automatically generated by Information Technology Services through the student portal and accounts are activated by students. Instructions for student login are posted on the website. Students can contact the Student Help Desk for assistance.

Video Conferencing Courses

<u>Enrollment Quotas</u>

- The on-campus video conferencing section should have a minimum of 10 undergraduate students or 5 graduate students in order to be offered as a class. The combined enrollment of students in the off-campus sections for any particular offering should also meet the minimum of 10 undergraduate students or 5 graduate students.

- Video Conferencing classes should not exceed a maximum of 45 students per site. Off-campus sites are limited by the number of seats available at the receiving site.

- The Office of Electronic and Continuing Education in consultation with the academic department may cancel a course with an off-campus enrollment falling below the minimum. In the event that the on-campus section does make when the off-campus sections do not, the Electronic and Continuing Education Staff will notify the academic department. The department should then plan to move the on-campus section to a regular classroom if requested. Departments should consider total enrollment in a course prior to making decisions regarding the cancellation of sections of a compressed video course.

<u>Course Administration</u>

Attendance

Students officially enrolled in one section **may not** attend another section. Students must attend at the site for which they are registered.

Testing

Instructors will make arrangements with off-campus sites for test administration. Tests should be received by site facilitators at least 48 hours in advance of the test.

Make-up Tests

Instructors are responsible for making arrangements for make-up tests. Instructors should contact site facilitators to make the necessary arrangements.

Handouts

The use of electronic materials is highly encouraged. If handouts are required, they should be received by site facilitators at least 48 hours in advance of the date the handouts are to be given to students. Any materials sent to off-campus sites should state the course information to

include the course name, course number, meeting times, the number of copies and any special directions.

Recording

If scheduled, classes will be recorded. Individual instructors may record their classes for their own review or to provide a record of the class to students who may have missed a session. Digital recordings may be distributed to students if guidelines have been adhered to, and at the discretion of the instructor.

Recording Guidelines:

- ✓ Neither the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education nor any other agent or employee of the University nor any individual at any remote site may record an instructor's class session without the consent of the instructor.

- ✓ Digital recordings of video conferencing classes may not be used for any purpose by the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education nor by any other agent or employee of the University nor by any individual at any remote site without the consent of the instructor.

- ✓ Digital recordings made with Northwestern State University equipment or made in connection with any video-related event may not be edited, advertised, marketed, packaged with other materials, or sold without first obtaining written permissions from the instructor, Dean, and the Chief Academic Officer.

Scheduling Priority

Priority I:

- ✓ The course is part of an approved electronic degree program rotation.

Priority II:

- ✓ The course is an approved electronic course.

- ✓ The course offering is the result of an established partnership with another educational agency.

Priority III:

- ✓ Conduct administrative, educational, or organizational meetings as a part of University business.

- ✓ Use by other state educational agencies.

- ✓ Use for community or other non-University business.

External Use of Video Conference Equipment

Guidelines

Northwestern will follow the procedures as established by the Board of Regents regarding cross-institution collaborative programs. Interested parties should coordinate with the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education for details.

Costs

A video conference can entail additional costs when the institution is the host or receive site using video conferencing. Costs may include proctor's fees, utility fees, technical support, coordination fees, etc. For the purpose of covering costs associated with courses delivered or received from outside of the Northwestern network, the university will follow the model as set forth previously by the Board of Regents for instructional coursework. For all other usage, to include special meetings, institutes, and so forth, the department or requesting institution shall make arrangements and work through the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education when in the planning phases of programs that would require use of video conferencing labs, equipment, and personnel.

Video Conferencing Classroom Use Etiquette

- Smoking and smokeless tobacco are not permitted in the video conferencing classrooms.

- Only persons who are enrolled may attend the class.

- Food and drinks are not allowed in the video conferencing classrooms due to potential damage to the equipment.

- Technical problems should be reported to the classroom facilitator and/or the Electronic and Continuing Education staff.

Faculty Support Services

Media Preparation

The Electronic and Continuing Education staff will assist faculty with graphics, special recordings, or videotaping. However, it is the responsibility of the instructor to upload and maintain all course material as needed to satisfy the requirements for the course. For instructors teaching online courses, the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education will provide assistance but preparation of instructional materials and maintenance of the course are the responsibility of the instructor.

Procedure for Requesting Media Preparation Services

To request assistance with the creation of graphics or videos, email the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education at ece@nsula.edu. Turnaround time will depend largely upon current volume of work being completed and the scope of the project. An estimate will be provided at the time the request is made.

Multimedia Support for Events

ECE provides support for special events that require computers, laptops, microphones, DVD players, and other related media equipment.

To request event support, fill out the form located on the Office of Electronic and Continuing Education's web page: https://www.nsula.edu/ece/media-services-request/. Advance notice is highly recommended due to limited availability of staff and technical resources.

Library Support

Faculty will determine the needs of their students and can receive assistance from the Watson Library staff in determining availability of online resources. Computers with internet access are available at the Watson Library.

E-mail Support

All faculty must use a Northwestern State University email account to receive email support.

Course Materials

Faculty textbook orders will be handled through the usual departmental channels. Instructors are responsible for ensuring that any required supplementary materials are available to all students.