Northwestern State University

Electronic Learning & Global Engagement Departmental Guidelines

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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 Learning & Global Engagement 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 Learning & Global Engagement 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 Learning & Global Engagement

- 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 and delivered via the University Learning Management System.

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

Student Services

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

- Administers placement testing as required

Electronic Learning & Global Engagement

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

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

- Provides course reviews relative to online course standards

Instructional Technology & Student Support

- 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://documentproviderviewer.nsula.edu/?id=10156. Additional guidelines for use by Electronic Learning & Global Engagement 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 within the University LMS (Learning Management System), which is managed and supported by both the LMS provider and the Office of Electronic Learning & Global Engagement as needed.

- 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 Learning & Global Engagement will meet expectations of the approved standards rubric.

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

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 courses. 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 Accessibility and 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 Learning & Global Engagement 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/pdf/Proctoring-Policy.pdf.

Faculty and Course Evaluation

Course evaluations by students are conducted each semester using an online evaluation. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness coordinates all components of the evaluation including dissemination of results with assistance of the Office of Electronic Learning & Global Engagement as needed.

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://documentproviderviewer.nsula.edu/?id=10156.

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 Learning & Global Engagement 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 the Executive Vice President & Provost. 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 Executive Vice President & Provost, 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 Electronic Learning & Global Engagement, departmental requests for course shells are directed to the Instructional Support Specialist.

- The Instructional 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.)

- Once the shell has been created, the developers will be notified of availability.

- Electronic Learning & Global Engagement 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:
    - Instructional Support Specialist
    - Instructional Design 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.

Syllabus

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 has the option to attend orientation/training sessions which will be conducted by Electronic Learning & Global Engagement staff. Northwestern's Office of Electronic Learning & Global Engagement 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 within the University LMS (Learning Management System), which is managed and supported by both the LMS provider and the Office of Electronic Learning & Global Engagement as needed.

Internet Courses

Administration

- Upon submission and approval of an online course, the Registrar's Office will enter the course into the Banner System and Information Technology Services will provide the necessary information to the LMS hosting service.

- All face-to-face courses being supplemented electronically will be hosted on the official University Learning Management System.

- 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.

Faculty Support Services

Media Preparation

The Electronic Learning & Global Engagement staff will assist faculty with graphics or special recordings. 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 Learning & Global Engagement will assist, but preparation of instructional materials and maintenance of the course are the responsibility of the instructor.

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 student