

Northwestern Oklahoma State University Online Education Policy

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Academic Policies

Standards established by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association concerning distance education will guide the development of online courses and programs. Additionally, disciplines that have standards or guidelines for best practices in distance education will follow those standards or guidelines when possible.

The offering of online courses will remain consistent with the school calendar for Northwestern Oklahoma State University. The beginning of the semester, university holiday breaks, final exam schedules, and end of semester deadlines for face-to-face courses and online courses will be the same. It will be the responsibility of the institution and faculty to inform online students of these dates via the NWOSU web site (<http://www.nwosu.edu>).

Faculty members who are planning on teaching an online course for the first time must complete a faculty development program designed to enhance online teaching pedagogy and course design. Please contact Jake Boedecker, Coordinator of Online Learning at 580-327-8180 for information.

Online course approval must be granted before an instructor offers an online course. First, the faculty member must submit a completed Online Course Request Form and syllabus to the appropriate department/division head. After his or her approval, the department/division head should present the form to the appropriate dean. The dean will then submit the form to the Coordinator of Online Learning for presentation to the Online Learning Committee. The Online Learning Committee is comprised of members of the faculty and administration. The Online Learning Committee will not approve courses that require students to view taped or digitized lectures unless the lectures are specifically developed for the online environment. Other lectures, such as those recorded during a face-to-face or ITV course may be used as supplemental material. Any such materials must be available in a format that does not require downloading of the material.

After approval by the Online Learning Committee, the course may be listed in the course schedule for the semester proposed in the Online Course Request Form. The faculty member must complete course development on Blackboard by the established deadlines. Any extensions of the deadlines must be approved by administration and the Coordinator of Online Learning. Courses must be complete and approved by the Online Committee prior to being offered. The faculty member may be asked to present a brief overview of the course to the Online Learning Committee. Once a course is approved, the course will remain substantially

the same unless it is resubmitted to the committee. Decisions concerning changes requiring resubmission will be made by the course instructor and the department/division chair with suggestions from the Online Learning Committee. All online courses will be subject to review every 5 years, but the Online Learning Committee may initiate a review of any online course at any time.

Policies concerning minimum enrollment numbers for the continuation of an online course and a traditional course will be consistent and will be the decision of the faculty member, the department/division chair, and the appropriate dean. Online courses will be evaluated every semester by the faculty member and the online students with regard to issues of quality, assessment, interaction, feedback, immediacy, and technical support.

Fiscal Policies

Students enrolled in online courses will pay an additional online fee of Fifty dollars (\$50) per credit hour. This additional fee will be used to pay for the online learning platform, additional technical training, and any other technical support fees deemed necessary by NWOSU administration for the improvement of the online learning environment.

Faculty Policies

Faculty who teach online courses have the same rights and responsibilities as faculty who teach in the face-to-face traditional setting (see NWOSU Faculty Handbook). Faculty members have the same responsibility for selecting and presenting materials in online courses that they do in the face-to-face traditional educational setting.

Faculty members are required to understand and adhere to federal copyright regulations, as well as NWOSU copyright policies, which are consistent with federal regulations. New copyright law for Distance Education was enacted on October 3, 2002 in the form of the "Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization" (TEACH) Act. Information related to the TEACH Act is available from the Coordinator of Distance Learning.

Faculty developing an online course will be compensated at summer pay rates for the development of the course. Faculty will receive their compensation immediately following the initial semester the course is offered. The course developer must still be employed by Northwestern Oklahoma State University through the initial semester the course is offered to be eligible to receive compensation for developing the course. These rates (per credit hour) are as follows:

	Undergraduate Courses	Graduate Courses
Instructor	\$450	\$565
Assistant Professor	\$525	\$600
Associate Professor	\$600	\$675
Professor	\$675	\$750

Faculty members are required to maintain interaction with students during the entire semester

via e-mail, asynchronous message boards, chat rooms, or other available technical means. This is necessary for financial aid and attendance. Faculty may be required to provide proof of student attendance and should maintain weekly records of faculty/student interaction.

Online faculty members will be required to maintain the same number of office hours as the face-to-face traditional faculty members. In an effort to accommodate the needs of online students, some office hours may be held online utilizing technology for student consultation.

Legal Policies

Course materials developed by faculty members will be the property of Northwestern Oklahoma State University and may not be marketed to other entities unless the faculty member receives prior approval in writing from the NWOSU administration and unless special arrangements are made with the NWOSU administration.

Course materials may be reviewed by NWOSU administration and/or legal counsel to insure adherence to copyright regulations.

Student Policies

Students participating in online courses are expected to abide by the same code of conduct as students in a traditional classroom setting. A failure to comply with appropriate standards of conduct may result in the student's removal from the online course. This code of conduct will include, but is not limited to, disrespectful or disparaging comments (written or verbal) to faculty or students, failure to abide by guidelines set forth in course syllabus, invasion of privacy or spamming of students or faculty, or other disruptive actions which may hinder the online learning environment.

Students must have access to the required technology for the online course. This will include, but may not be limited to, internet access, computer, e-mail address, and software required for the course (see Section VI for minimal requirements). Each individual student holds responsibility to locate the required technology for use in the course if the student will be participating off-campus.

Students are required to participate each week in online courses in which they are enrolled and to maintain contact with the instructor via technology. Failure to do so may result in the student's removal from the course, a loss of financial aid, or failure of the course.

While participating in an online course, students may be required to take their exams at one of the NWOSU campuses or at an approved location where those exams will be proctored. Students are expected to arrive on time and take exams at the required time as instructed by the instructor. (Testing sites require an appointment for make-up exams).

Students will not be required to view taped or digitized lectures except for those specifically recorded for the online course. Other media may be made available to students as supplemental material. Those materials will be made available in formats that do not require downloading of the information.

Technical Policies

NWOSU is firmly committed to the maintenance and upgrading of technology in an effort to improve the learning environment for students and the teaching environment for faculty. Because technology continually changes, the minimum required standard for technology will be the standard maintained in the NWOSU computer labs.

Technology Standards:

- Pentium IV or higher
- 256 MB RAM
- 1.3 GHz
- 20 GB Hard Drive
- Windows XP or higher
- Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher
- Office 2003 Suite or higher

Students may be required to have a higher version software products, operating system, or hardware standards in various courses.

Training will be provided by the NWOSU Coordinator of Online Learning and the NWOSU Information Technology Staff, depending on the areas where additional training and support are needed. The faculty member will be the primary source of technology support for students enrolled in online courses.