

NCTA DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe how distance learning is offered at NCTA. Distance learning refers to dual credit courses and courses delivered via online methods of instruction. Online presentation of course material is the only form of instruction addressed in this policy. Hybrid courses follow course requirements for face-to-face courses and have the same student learning outcomes and assessment procedures as the comparable face-to-face course. Courses taught via real-time video instruction follow normal NCTA classroom policies.

Distance learning courses for degree seeking students have a section code of 700, dual credit and concurrent courses have a section code of 800 or 900, and online courses for non-degree seeking students have a section code of 500. For the purposes of this policy, dual credit courses are college courses taken by high school students which are designed to provide the opportunity for the student to earn simultaneous high school credit and college credit. Concurrent courses are college courses taken by high school students which allow the students the opportunity to earn college credit without regard to high school credit considerations.

This NCTA distance learning policy was developed with consideration of the best practices recommendations made in the *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (2011), *Quality Matters*, and the Online Learning Consortium quality scorecard (<http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/>).

Online course requirements:

- **Student Learning:** Distance learning courses are college-level and are of the same high quality, cover the same content, and have the same rigor as other college-credit courses offered by NCTA. Faculty may consider inclusion of an online education orientation session to assist first time students in achieving success with online education.
- **Course Consistency:** Online courses have the same student learning outcomes and assessment protocol as face-to-face courses. Online courses are generally delivered with the Blackboard web-based learning management system.
- **Quality Faculty:** Online courses will be offered through NCTA by instructors who meet NCTA accreditation requirements (found here: <https://www.hlcommission.org/Document-Library/determining-qualified-faculty.html>).
- **Regular and substantive interaction:** All online courses will involve regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor. Faculty will document the method of creating this involvement prior to offering the course. Examples of regular and substantive interaction include regular participation in discussion boards, regular email communication, or regular communication via video phone technology such as Skype or Adobe Connect.
- **Due dates for assignments:** All online courses will have set due dates for assignments.
- **Regular semester scheduling:** Online courses will generally follow semester scheduling. Courses will start at the beginning of the semester and end at the end of the semester.
- **Student identity verification:** All faculty teaching online courses will document a robust method of identifying students during assessment activities. Generally, student identity is verified through high school teacher or public library librarian proctors. In all cases, students will be required to use a secure login and passcode (i.e through the myNCTA system). Password recovery is required via secure technology such as the use of a secret question or a two factor authentication protocol such as texting to a cell phone or sending a separate recovery email. Alternate methods of student identity verification must be documented by the faculty member. Additional methods may include video confirmation of identity using technology such as Skype or Adobe connect.

Support Services:

The following services and centers are available to support quality online academic experiences for NCTA faculty, staff and students:

- **Computer Help Center.** The Information Technology Services Computer Help Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln provides NCTA students with 24 hour access to help with issues such as accessing E-mail and Blackboard and dealing with computer problems. (Web site: <http://its.unl.edu/helpcenter>, E-mail: mysupport@unl.edu, Phone: toll-free (866) 472-3970)
- **Writing Center and Math Tutoring Services Center.** The NCTA Writing Center and Math Tutoring Services provides writing assistance for resumes, cover-letters, classroom assignments and other documents. The Math Tutoring Services Center provides real-time and asynchronous assistance with math problems. Students receive a reply from a credentialed faculty member within 24 hours of making an inquiry. (Writing Center: Eric Reed at ereed2@unl.edu or 308-367-5276. Math Tutoring Services Center: Tee Bush at tbush@unl.edu or 308-367-5203)
- **University of Nebraska Love Library Access.** University of Nebraska libraries provides interlibrary loan services as well as access to over 250 on-line sources, among them numerous databases containing thousands of professional and peer-reviewed scholarly journals. (Website: <http://libraries.unl.edu/love-library>, Email: askus@unl.edu, Phone: 402-472-9568)
- **Student Services Center.** NCTA is committed to equal access in education. The Disability Services Center assists online students with questions regarding eligibility and applying for accommodations, testing for learning disabilities, and development of Individualized Education Program (IEP) agreements. Financial aid counseling and assistance is also available online through telephone, email, Skype or Adobe connect. Contact Kevin Martin: 308-367-5217, or email: Kmartin4@UNL.edu.
- **Graduation Services.** Students who graduate from NCTA's on-line programs have the option of coming to campus and participating in the May graduation ceremony. Contact Kevin Martin: 308-367-5217, or email: Kmartin4@UNL.edu.
- **Instructional Design Services.** Assistance with planning, organizing and offering online courses is available to faculty. Professional designers at the University of Nebraska are available to help faculty members create instructional experiences that maximize student online learning experiences. Contact Tina Smith at 308-367-5267, or email: Tsmith24@UNL.edu.
- **NCTA Computer Technology Assistance.** The NCTA director of instructional technology and telecom is available to assist with hardware, software and peripheral acquisition, set up and troubleshooting. Contact Justin Baugher at 308-367-5210, or email: justin.baugher@unl.edu.
- **Anti-virus software** for UNL students, faculty, and staff, even for personal computers: <http://antivirus.unl.edu/>
- **Box** account with unlimited cloud storage: <http://box.unl.edu/>.
- **TechSmith Lecture and Video Capture** software for faculty: <http://its.unl.edu/t3/lecture-capture-camtasia-relay-will-become-techsmith-relay>. (This technology allows a faculty member to capture anything on a computer screen, video, audio, etc. and then to create and store a video for streaming and download).
- A library of **Blackboard tutorial YouTube videos** developed by UNL is available to faculty and may be found here: <http://its.unl.edu/myunl/myunl-blackboard-help-resources>
- **Anti-plagiarism software** is available to faculty and students within every course in Blackboard: <http://its.unl.edu/service-catalog/anti-plagiarism-blackboard-safeassign>
- **Instructional Technology** training for faculty: <http://its.unl.edu/itskills>
- Access to over a thousand **instructional training** and software video tutorials for NCTA faculty may be found here: <http://its.unl.edu/itskills/online-tutorials>.

Faculty Remuneration for Developing Distance Learning Courses

- Instructors may request compensation for the development of new courses to be offered as online courses. Modification of existing courses will not be considered for compensation unless more than 60% of the course needs to be changed for this application.
- If approved, faculty will receive \$400 per credit hour for course development (example: 3 credits x \$400 = \$1,200)
- Payment for course development must be authorized by the Dean in writing prior to the development of the course. Final electronic and print course materials must be submitted to the Assistant Dean prior to course development compensation being issued. Compensation for course development will be made in the month following the approval of the completed course materials by the Assistant Dean and Academic Council.
- To request approval for compensation, complete this form prior to developing the course: *Form to Request Approval for Compensation to Develop a Distance Learning Course*
- After all approvals have been secured, The Division Chair will forward the updated/signed final agreement to the Business Manager for payment.
- NCTA and the Instructor will jointly own all intellectual property rights of the work provided under this agreement. In the event that the instructor separates employment, both the instructor and NCTA may continue to use and modify the course materials as needed.

Faculty Remuneration for Teaching Distance Learning Courses

Distance learning courses are considered a normal part of a faculty member's workload and are treated the same as face-to-face courses when considering faculty workload. For additional details on faculty workload consult the Faculty Workload Policy (<http://ncta.unl.edu/about-ncta/Human-Resources/FacultyWorkloadPolicy.pdf>). Online courses delivered to high school students are treated as dual credit courses. Faculty compensation details for dual credit courses are available in the Dual Credit Policy (<http://ncta.unl.edu/about-ncta/Human-Resources/DualCreditPolicy-final%202-26-2016.pdf>).

Steps in the Process for Approval of Compensation for Teaching a Distance Learning Course

1. To receive compensation for teaching 500 and 800/900 courses, faculty submits the completed Faculty Workload form to the departmental administrative support Assistant at the beginning of each semester.
2. At end of the semester, payments are made for semester credit hours after final grades are posted to PeopleSoft. Payment is only made for students in the dual credit (800/900) classes and non-degree seeking on-line (500) courses.
3. Compensation is not made for students who receive a grade of incomplete.
4. The departmental administrative support Assistant will prepare payment request spreadsheet for the Business Office and send faculty member an email notification of proposed payment.
5. Faculty compensation when an incomplete is resolved
 - a. Upon completion of course requirements, faculty must submit a grade change form to receive compensation.
 - b. Registration/Records will receive the grade change forms from instructors and submit copy to Admin Support Assistant.
 - c. The Administrative Support Assistant will verify the grade change and submit payment request spreadsheet to the Business Office and send email to faculty member notifying them of their proposed payment.

Distance Learning Course Approval Process

The following distance learning course approval process is for dual credit courses and courses delivered via online methods of instruction. Courses that have regular face-to-face interaction between the instructor of record and the student follow normal course approval policies.

All distance learning courses must be evaluated and approved in accordance to the standards outlined in the “Distance Learning Course Approval Form” prior to inclusion in the Schedule of Classes published each session. NCTA’s Academic Council will serve as the approval board for distance learning courses. Any distance learning course developed prior to the adoption of this policy must be reviewed and approved according these new standards by January 1, 2017.

Course Syllabus

The syllabus for a distance learning course must comply with all requirements for normal course offerings. Appropriate revisions that reflect the distance nature of the course compared to normal face-to-face instruction must be made. Instructors should also note the requirements outlined in the “Distance Learning Course Approval Form” and develop syllabi that reflect the details required for course approval.

Steps to course approval

- 1) Instructor fully develops the course to ensure all the standards described in the “Distance Learning Course Approval Form” are met. This includes.....
 - Fully developed syllabus
 - Fully developed Blackboard section
- 2) Instructor submits the course to their Division Chair for Approval.
- 3) Division Chair submits the course to Academic Council for Approval.
- 4) Academic Council reviews the course according to the standards outlined in the “Distance Learning Course Approval Form.”
 - Includes verification that instructor has met required training in online/distance learning education.
- 5) Academic Council either approve/rejects the course based on the standards.
 - Approved courses may be offered for the next available academic session.
 - Rejected courses may be revised and resubmitted for approval.

Annual Review

To ensure instructional quality is maintained, all distance learning courses will be reviewed annually following a comparable procedure to normal courses offered on-campus. This annual review will include the following:

- 1) Peer review utilizing the same standards outlined in the Distance Learning Course Approval Form.
- 2) Student evaluations of the course and instruction.
- 3) Completed SLO reports for the course.

Faculty Compensation/Remuneration

Documented course approval is required in order to receive any compensation or remuneration for the course in addition to the procedures outlined in the Distance Learning Policy.

Distance Learning Course Approval Form

All of the following standards must be determined as acceptable by Academic Council for full course approval. These standards are based on established NCTA policies and the *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (2011), *Quality Matters*, and the Online Learning Consortium quality scorecard (<http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/>).

<u>Instructor Qualifications</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
Instructor meets NCTA requirements described in the Faculty Qualifications Policy.	
Instructor has met required training in online/distance learning education.	
<u>Course Overview and Introduction</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
Instructions make clear how to get started and find course components.	
Students are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	
Course and/or institutional policies with which the student is expected to comply are clearly stated or linked.	
Prerequisite knowledge and minimum technical skills expected of the student are clearly stated.	
<u>Student Learning Outcomes</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
SLO's are clearly stated and are equivalent to regular offerings of the course.	
SLO statements in the syllabus follow NCTA guidelines.	
<u>Assessment and Measurement</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
The types of assessments selected are consistent to regular offerings of the course.	
The course grading policy is clearly stated.	
Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of student's work and participation and are tied to the course grading policy.	
Documented methods of student identity verification.	

<u>Instructional Materials</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes for the course.	
The purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.	
<u>Learner Interaction and Engagement</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
Clearly states how regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor will be achieved.	
The requirements for student interaction are clearly articulated.	
Established due dates for assignments and exams.	
<u>Course Technology</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
Students can readily access the technologies required in the course.	
The tools and media support the course's student learning outcomes.	
<u>Learner Support</u>	Acceptable/Nonacceptable
The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to access it.	
The course instructions articulate or link academic resources and/or support that are available to the student.	

Approval Signatures

Division Chair

Date

Academic Council Chairperson

Date

Training Requirements for Distance Learning Teaching

To ensure that NCTA maintains a high level of academic quality in courses offered via distance learning, all distance learning instructors must comply with the requirements documented in this policy prior to offering the course. Instructors that are already offering distance learning courses prior to development of this policy must comply by May 1, 2017.

Requirement 1 – Proficiency in utilizing the Blackboard learning management system.

- Instructors can meet this requirement by documenting a minimum of 3-years of using the Blackboard system for course instruction or by completing the self-study checklist.

Title	Source of Training
UNL Blackboard Training	Contact UNL Online Teaching

Requirement 2 - instructors are required to complete at least one course from the options listed below.

- Training that is comparable to the options listed below may be used as a substitute if approved by Academic Council.
- Instructors are reminded that funds are available to assist in professional development activities such as the required training options below ([Professional Development Funding](#)).

Options for instructors with little to no online teaching experience:

Course	Prerequisite	Duration
Quality Matters (QM): Designing Your Online Course	None	2 weeks (Online)
QM: Designing Your Blended Course	None	2 weeks (Online)
QM - Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery	None	2 weeks (Online)
UNL Summer Institute for Online Teaching	None	5 weeks (Hybrid)

Options for instructors who have several years of online teaching experience:

Course	Prerequisite	Duration
Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Teaching Certificate	Online teaching experience or completed OLC preliminary course: “New to Online: The Essentials”	10 weeks for foundation course, plus 3 electives (Online)
Quality Matters: Improving Your Online Course	An online course to improve	2 weeks (Online)
UNL Summer Institute for Online Teaching	None	5 weeks (Hybrid)

Documentation of Training for Distance Learning Teaching (attach appropriate evidence)

Requirement 1 – Blackboard Proficiency (Check one below)

Minimum 3-years of Blackboard Experience Dates _____
 UNL Blackboard Training Dates _____

Requirement 2 – Online Teaching Training (Check one below)

UNL Summer Institute for Online Teaching Dates _____
 Quality Matters: Designing Your Online Course Dates _____
 Quality Matters: Designing Your Blended Course Dates _____
 Quality Matters: Teaching Online – An Introduction to Online Delivery Dates _____
 Quality Matters: Improving Your Online Course Dates _____
 Online Learning Consortium Teaching Certificate Dates _____
 Other Dates _____

If other, provide detailed description of training below.

Approval Signatures

Division Chair Date

Academic Council Chair Date

Blackboard Resources

Instructors for distance learning should have a complete understanding of utilizing the Blackboard learning management system. The University of Nebraska – Lincoln provides a series of short youtube videos to explain the many resources and capabilities of Blackboard. The items linked below are resources to assist instructors in preparation for utilizing the Blackboard system.

[UNL Blackboard Resources for Faculty](#)

Users and Groups

- [Viewing course roster](#)
- [Enrolling a student/T.A. into your course](#)
- [Students that were enrolled then dropped](#)
- [Sponsoring a guest Blackboard account](#)

Communication Tools

- [Sending an Email](#)
- [Discussion Board Basics](#)
- [Discussion Board - Viewing and managing](#)

Course Management & Course Settings

- [Logging in](#)
- [Planning the Course](#)
- [Making a course available/unavailable](#)
- [Setting the Course Entry Point](#)
- [Basic navigation and course theme](#)

Managing Courses

- [Copying a Course](#)
- [Archive/Export Course](#)
- [Customizing the Course Look](#)
- [Editing the Course Menu](#)
- [Adding a Module/Home Page](#)
- [Course Calendars](#)
- [Creating a Course Banner](#)

Adding Content

- [Adding Items and Files](#)
- [Set course entry page](#)
- [The Content/Textbox Editor](#)
- [Editing posted items](#)
- [Adding Internal and External course links](#)
- [SafeAssignment](#)
- [Glossary Terms](#)
- [Lesson Plans](#)
- [Managing course size](#)

Testing Tools

- [Creating and deploying tests](#)
- [Test questions](#)
- [Build a Pool of questions](#)
- [Create random block of questions](#)
- [Uploading Excel test questions](#)
- [Surveys](#)
- [Managing the release of test answers](#)
- [Creating a Rubric](#)
- [Grading with Rubrics](#)

Grade Center

- [Grade Center Basics](#)
- [Creating categories](#)
- [Creating a subtotal column](#)
- [Weighted subtotal column](#)
- [Downloading Grades](#)
- [Hiding Grades from students or from view](#)
- [Changing Letter Grade Display](#)