

PUBLIC NOTICE AND AGENDA

**University Council Academic Policy Committee
Monday, April 22, 2019, 10 a.m.
Altgeld Hall 125
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 29, 2019 MINUTES – Pages 2-3

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Review Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit
[APPM Section III, Item 23](#) and [Approved Review Process](#) – Pages 4-6

Establish a plan for addressing topics/themes/considerations from survey data in our review of the current policy

Review guidelines for online courses carrying graduate credit offered by NIU
[APPM Section II, Item 22](#) – Page 7

Review policies from other institutions

Review [updated draft of combined policy](#) (including operational definitions of online and hybrid courses) and determine whether a periodic review stipulation should be added – such appears only in the undergraduate policy – Pages 8-9

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES

University Council Academic Policy Committee
Friday, March 29, 2019, 10 a.m.
Altgeld Hall 125
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Block, Burton, Chmaissem, Chen, Collins, Ghrayeb, Ledgerwood, Mershon, Newman, Penrod (for Staikidis), Zamora

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Staikidis, Stephen

I. CALL TO ORDER

UC-Academic Policy Committee chair, **V. Collins**, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was established.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

B. Penrod moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **V. Zamora**. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 18, 2019 MINUTES

J. Ledgerwood moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **B. Penrod**. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Review Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit
[APPM Section III, Item 23](#) and [Approved Review Process](#)

Establish a plan for addressing topics/themes/considerations from survey data in our review of the current policy

Review guidelines for online courses carrying graduate credit offered by NIU
[APPM Section II, Item 22](#)

Review policies from other institutions

Review [rough draft of combined policy](#) (walk-in)

V. Collins introduced the draft policy composed per March 18 meeting discussion. The committee reviewed it and made suggestions for edits.

V. Collins will refine the draft policy per today's discussion and bring it back for further review by the committee.

Next steps include:

- The committee will meet again in late April to review latest draft.
- **V. Collins** will present the draft policy to the Graduate Council on May 6.
- Several other stakeholders will be approached for feedback.
- The proposed policy will be presented to University Council in early fall 2019.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.



Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying Undergraduate Credit Offered by Northern Illinois University

Section III. Item 23.

In conformity with federal guidelines, the Higher Learning Commission defines distance learning or distance education as:

Education that delivers instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and that supports regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously using one or more of the following technologies: the Internet; one-way and two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed-circuit cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio-conferencing; or videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs used in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

The Higher Learning Commission further defines a distance education course as one in which 75% or more of the instruction is offered by distance education. Courses that include some distance education component, but less than 75%, are referred to as hybrid or blended courses.

Except for those aspects noted below, distance education courses and hybrid courses are expected to be treated as equal to face-to-face courses. To ensure that distance education courses are equivalent in student outcomes, the following considerations should be given particular attention.

Instructor Considerations

Distance education courses must be accessible to all NIU students and should include significant interaction (e.g., email, discussion boards, chat lines, etc.) between students and instructor, and among students, when such opportunities would normally be part of the course if offered in traditional on-campus mode.

Instructors should pay particular attention to and provide explicit plans for assessing the effectiveness of teaching the course online and communicate these plans and the results of their implementation when requested to do so.

Ownership and use of online material is governed by the university intellectual property policy.

Unit/College Considerations

Because the usual criterion of "contact hours" may not be germane, proposals for undergraduate-level courses intended to be offered via distance education should include a rationale as to how the number of credit hours for each proposed course has been determined. This rationale must comply with the credit hour policies articulated in APPM Section III, Item 2.

The course status of distance education courses will be clearly indicated in the **online course finder**. Any special requirements, including limitations regarding who may enroll in a course in a given term, should also be announced.

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The determination of the mode of delivery for a given course rests with the unit.

University Administrative Considerations

Persons receiving undergraduate academic credit for an online course must be admitted to NIU just as would be required for any other course for undergraduate credit.

All online courses carrying undergraduate credit must be assigned an official instructor of record.

HLC requires institutions to verify the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance education.

Undergraduate distance education courses need not conform to the standard calendar defined in the **Course Finder**. However, they will be assigned to an academic term for purposes of drop/add, withdrawal, refund policies, etc.

Periodic Review: These Policies shall be reviewed every five years by the Academic Policy Committee of the University Council.

Approved by the University Council April 30, 2014

Editorial Modification, October 16, 2017



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**Process for Reviewing Policies for Distance Education Courses Carrying
Undergraduate Credit Offered by Northern Illinois University**

1. Prepare questions to guide the review process.

- In what ways (if any) do the policies need to change?
- What is missing (if anything)?
- What no longer is relevant (if anything)?
- What is unclear (if anything)?
- Additional comments?

2. Establish a pertinent database to facilitate decision making.

- We'll need to decide who to gather data from.
- We'll need to determine our method for gathering data (e.g., survey)

3. Determine changes needed (if any) based on analysis of the data collected.

4. Share findings at University Council meeting.

Approved by the UC Academic Policy
Committee on October 4, 2018



Guidelines for Online Courses Carrying Graduate Credit Offered by Northern Illinois University

Section III. Item 22.

1. An online course carrying graduate credit must have an official instructor of record, just as any other course offered for graduate credit.
2. Persons receiving graduate academic credit for an online course must be admitted to the NIU Graduate School or to the status of student-at-large, just as would be required for any other course for graduate credit.
3. Limitations, regarding who may enroll in a course in a given term, should be published in the same fashion as the availability of that course is publicized. For example, the fact that the delivery system for a course is the World Wide Web/Internet should be indicated.
4. If a new graduate-level course is created that is intended to be offered primarily or exclusively online, its submission to the curricular-approved process must include providing the curricular committees a rationale as to how the number of credit hours has been determined. This may be done in a variety of ways and is necessary because "contact hours" may not be a germane criterion.
5. Online graduate courses should not be identified differently on NIU transcripts.
6. Acceptance of a graduate student's transfer of credit from online courses should be subject to the established limits on transfer of course credit. Similarly, there should be no special limitations on the amount of credit from online courses that maybe applied toward an NIU graduate degree.
7. Graduate courses and programs offered online should be subject to the same approval processes as for other graduate courses and programs. It should be left up to individual departments and colleges by what mechanism courses gain their approval for online delivery. There should not be any special curricular approval mechanism for an existing degree program to be offered entirely online. As nothing special is recommended for online course approval, then when there are sufficient courses online, there will be a degree program online.
8. Current rules regarding number of hours of credit that a graduate-level student can take in an academic term should apply to online courses as well. That is, these courses will count in the student's course load.
9. Online graduate courses should adhere to the same academic calendar and related rules (drop/add, withdrawal, refund policies, etc.) as traditional graduate courses. The use of the boundaries of the existing academic terms is sound both academically and administratively.
10. Delivery of graduate courses by remote electronic means can be important and appropriate but such courses ought not become the electronic equivalent of correspondence courses. Therefore, courses delivered by these means must include significant interaction between students and instructor, and among students, when such opportunities would normally be part of the course if offered in traditional on-campus mode.

Approved by the Graduate Council, October 5, 1998

Last Updated: October 5, 1998

Revisions approved by the Graduate Council December 1, 2014



Policies for Online and Hybrid Courses Offered by Northern Illinois University
 (2nd Draft of Combined Policy)

Below are general policies governing online and hybrid courses carrying undergraduate and/or graduate credit at Northern Illinois University (NIU). NIU defines online courses as those in which 100% of instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication, correspondence or equivalent mechanisms, with faculty and students physically separated from each other. NIU defines hybrid courses as those in which online activity is mixed with classroom meetings, replacing a significant percentage, but not all required face-to-face instructional activities.

General Policies:

1. Such courses must have an official instructor of record.
2. Such courses must be academically equivalent to face-to-face versions of the same course in terms of rigor, learning objectives, and material coverage.
3. Such courses must include significant interaction between students and instructor, and among students, when such opportunities would normally be part of the course if offered in traditional on-campus mode.
4. To ensure accessibility to students with disabilities, instruction in such courses is subject to requirements that may be imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended.
5. Such courses must be evaluated for quality on a regular basis using appropriate methods that include but are not limited to student course evaluations.
6. Ownership of such courses (faculty, university, shared) must comply with the stipulations of copyright described in APPM Section VI, Item 4.
7. The instructional delivery mode (online, hybrid, face-to-face) must be indicated in the NIU course finder.
8. Such courses must adhere to the same academic calendar and related rules (drop/add, withdrawal, refund policies, etc.) as traditional courses. Fall and spring courses must occur within the established start and end dates for the term, and summer courses must fall exclusively between the last day of spring and first day of fall to maintain federal financial aid eligibility under term rules. Within term boundaries, courses may vary in duration. For modest exceptions to this scheduling policy, contact Financial Aid.
9. Proposals for such courses must include a rationale as to how the number of credit hours per course was determined, in compliance with credit hour policies articulated in APPM Section III, Item 2.
10. Current rules regarding the number of credit hours students can take in an academic term apply to these courses.
11. Persons receiving academic credit for such courses must be admitted to NIU.
12. The identity of students participating in such courses must be verified by NIU to ensure that persons registered in the courses are the ones participating in them.
13. Professional development opportunities featuring best practices in designing, delivering, and maintaining quality online and hybrid courses must be made available by NIU to faculty on a regular basis.
14. Best practices in completing online and hybrid courses successfully must be made available to students on a regular basis.

Commented [VC1]: I used language from the Higher Learning Commission's definition of distance education to define online learning, replacing their 75% with our 100%.

I also like the Online Learning Consortium's definition of online courses: *All course activity is done online; there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course and no requirements for on-campus activity.*

I used language from the Online Learning Consortium's definition of blended/hybrid classroom course to define hybrid courses.

Commented [VC2]: I used "must" throughout so we could see what it looks like. See below for feedback from Amy Newman.

- Since "shall" is not used much (because of the lack of clarity in its expression) we've got a choice between "will" and 'must.' "Will" even as a modal does include the idea of the will, kind of an *implication of intention*, whereas "must" has more obligation to it.

- It kind of comes down to whether the policy wants to suggest that people are good at heart, or wants to make sure that actions are done—and usually with legal issues, I presume, one errs on the side of "must."

Commented [VC3]: I sent this policy statement to Katy Whitelaw (NIU's Information Technology Accessibility Officer) to review, but have not received a reply.

Commented [VC4]: Brad Bonds is ok with removal of language pertaining to delivery mode not appearing on transcripts.

Commented [VC5]: This portion is new and based on input from Rebecca Babel and Brad Bonds.

15. Technical support staff must be available to faculty and students on a regular basis, and must actively work to prevent and quickly resolve technology-related problems from occurring.