Church Partnership Program

This year Northwest University celebrates 80 years of preparing men and women to serve their world through the power and love of Christ. Although centered on a home campus, for nearly a quarter of its history Northwest has provided a vibrant and effective series of nontraditional programs focused to those who desire to deepen and broaden their knowledge and skills, but cannot relocate to the Kirkland site. The Church Partnership Program (CPP) is birthed out of NU’s deep respect for the influence and power of the local church to effect change on a local, regional, national, and world-wide stage. Both the church and university are far more effective when coordinating their efforts as a team than individually. Their distinct strengths are magnified and amplified exponentially when working as partners in fulfilling Christ’s mandate to be change-makers.

The Church Partnership Program recognizes that individuals each have unique callings and leadings that must be encouraged and guided. As such its degree programs must have a broad range of applicability to professional and ministry vocations, but sufficient structure and support to keep students progressing towards their educational goals. The programs provided by the CPP are uniquely designed with a balance of academic rigor, learning support, and personal flexibility. Blending with Northwest’s courses are the many ministry opportunities provided by the local site. These too are specifically designed with a mixture of sensitivity to individual callings and sound pragmatic instruction. Both Northwest and the local site coordinate efforts to support individuals as they develop in their ministry preparation domains.
Church Partnership Program
Consideration Points

What is the Basis of the Partnership?

The Mission, Vision, and Goals of the training site and university must be mutually compatible and complementary. The University’s knowledge and resource expertise must harmonize with the training site’s spiritual and community outreach vision.

Both the institution and the site bring their unique skills and strengths to the partnership, but in a well-functioning extension site it is usually difficult to clearly identify when the “academics” end and the “practical” begins because both are integrated. The theoretical footing provided by many of Northwest’s courses is critical to students’ applied ministry in the same way that a house cannot exist without its foundation.

How is a Site Approved?

There are multiple levels of approvals for the local site and the University requiring varying amounts of lead time and involving differing consideration processes. Approvals require specific approaches over many months of interaction.

a. The University must satisfy the concerns of several approval agencies on the local, state, federal, and accreditation levels – all of which are outside the University’s ability to control the schedule and documentation requirements.

b. The church or training site must satisfy the questions and obtain approval from its leadership and oversight board.

c. Specifically challenging is approval for admitting international students (who require an F-1 visa to reside in the U.S.), offering federal financial aid, and providing veteran’s educational benefits. Final approval from the agencies involved for these benefits may require several weeks or months, with some only considered once an extension site has operated for a period of time.

d. Northwest’s accrediting association has specific expectations and standards regarding the institution’s educational programs, regardless of where and how the academic programs are delivered and the number of students involved. This includes library and learning resources, facility and equipment support, assignment evaluations, course and program assessment processes, faculty qualifications, and record keeping. Quality control monitoring processes must clearly describe and demonstrate the University’s responsible for the academic integrity of the learning process to satisfy Northwest’s accrediting association.
How is the Program Promoted?

Northwest University must specifically approve all promotional materials describing the inter-institutional agreement and program of study to ensure that all applicable regulations are followed. Accurate description of accreditation coverage is of particular importance. This includes promotional materials designed for written and electronic mediums.

The University works closely with local sites for initial and ongoing promotional material and equipment designs. Initially, Northwest produces a brochure and cost sheet in coordination with the site. Additional materials, promotional displays, and other supplies are designed in coordination with the University, but produced by the site.

What does the Program Look Like?

The Church Partnership Program provides many of the benefits available to all Northwest students, although they are concurrently engage in the training program provided through the local training program and are distant to the main campus.

a. Students must be approved and enrolled in the training center’s program as full-time students to receive the CPP reduced tuition described under Costs.

b. Extension sites use the online versions of courses to ensure a consistent academic experience throughout all of Northwest’s programs. Courses are structured on the seven-week session schedule. For instance, students enrolled for 12 credits (four, 3-credit courses) would take two of their courses during the first 7-week session, and two courses during the second 7-week session.

c. Courses are supported through Northwest’s Discovery course management system that includes course learning materials (with the exception of textbooks), reference links, assignments, discussion forums, and other support features needed by students.

d. Only specific degrees and majors are offered through extension sites. Northwest offers Certificate, Associate, and Bachelor programs of one, two, and four year lengths, covering several majors. Northwest also offers master’s level programs in addition to those available through the CPP.

e. The site offers student study opportunities at regularly scheduled times during their training and provides general academic support for more challenging courses, such as writing and math.
How Are Courses Taught?

Although Northwest’s online curriculum provides the instructional backbone for all its extension sites, many courses are taught by local qualified faculty in face-to-face classroom settings. This unique feature greatly enhances the learning experience for extension students while ensuring the local training site is integrally involved in the academic development of its students.

a. The University hires qualified adjunct instructors following established guidelines who are remunerated by the University at current adjunct faculty rates.

b. Prospective faculty official transcripts and teaching vita are submitted and faculty background checks are conducted. Formal academic preparation for undergraduate courses usually include an accredited master’s degree in the course discipline or a master’s degree in another field and sufficient graduate credits in the course discipline to ensure effectiveness.

c. Because they teach face-to-face classes, local instructors arrange their classroom teaching schedules with the Site Coordinator.

d. When Northwest online courses are used, at times and for certain courses, a visit to the campus is arranged during the session to help connect extension site students to the instructor and to the University and to give needed learning support.

e. When online courses are used, sites arrange for Facilitators to augment course instruction for several strategic courses, such as Composition and Math subjects. The Facilitator works closely between the Site Coordinator, course instructor, and students to ensure a good learning environment and to promote student success. Although no specific qualifications are required for facilitators, it is expected that they have special student and subject abilities that support them in this important support responsibility.

f. The selection of the Facilitator is important to ensure agreement between the course instructor and Facilitator’s support. The Facilitator is not the instructor, but works under the instructor’s guidance to explain and clarify course materials. The cooperative relationships between facilitators and instructors are individually established and must be determined prior to the beginning of class. Any alternate course materials must be approved by the instructor. Facilitator pay, if any, is the responsibility of the site.

g. Student learning support, including facilitators, must be established in cooperation with the University prior to the semester.
Northwest University is pleased to partner with local churches and training sites to serve their students who desire to develop or refine their ministry and/or professional skills through a Christ-centered training program, but are unable to attend Northwest’s main campus.

a. Because extension site students are fully-engaged with the local training program, they are not able to obtain sufficient employment income to enable them to afford Northwest’s regular tuition and fee costs.

b. Northwest designed the Church Partnership Program to be sensitive to extension students’ dedication to professional preparation and time commitments to their training program, while also being sustainable for the University.

c. The CPP tuition is $275 per credit for the 2014-2015 academic year for students who are enrolled in full-time local training programs. This significant decrease in cost is further enhanced by the waiver of an Admission Fee, a Confirmation Deposit, and the semester General Fee.

d. In some situations, extension sites charge a Standard Site Fee to students to help offset the costs of providing the additional training opportunities and activities associated with the program. These types of costs include classroom maintenance and custodial expenses, security, admissions and advising staffing, office support, and other student-centered services necessary to operate the educational and training program. Because these are viable educational expenses, they can be included as a charge to the student, and thus be included in their cost of attendance for their financial aid calculations. The University approves the Standard Site Fee on a yearly basis for all sites. The University returns the Site Fee to the site following a defined schedule.

e. Some academic courses incur related costs, such as travel or equipment, which should be paid by the student. The Course Fee is an approved educational expense that might cover the cost of air transportation for a travel course, housing and meals while on the trip, and other expenses associated with the learning experience. Science laboratory equipment also is included under a Course Fee. The University returns the Course Fee associated to site services to the site following a defined schedule.

f. The University cannot include other related expenses, such as housing fees or activity fees, in students financial aid calculations unless they are directly connected to individual courses.
A successful and sustainable extension site is based on a strong and continuing relationship between the local site and Northwest University. This connection begins with, but is deeper than, even the current institutional leader. Thus, leadership at the site and university consider the benefits and costs involved with initiating an extension program and jointly sign a Memorandum of Understanding, following this general outline.

1. Contact is made with the potential extension site program’s leadership.

2. Representatives from the prospective site and Northwest University meet or exchange information to ensure a match between both institutions’ mission, vision, purposes, and objectives. A basic and realistic timeline is established. Extension sites begin once a year for the fall semester.

3. When sufficient progress has occurred, university extension education leadership conduct the Site Visit to review the assigned personnel, facility, and systems that will support the extension site program and students.

4. The Site Visit Report is submitted to the University leadership for consideration.

5. The Northwest University leadership approves the site.

6. The University and Site leadership sign the MOU.


8. The Site Coordinator is selected and approved by the University; site support staff are identified.

9. The Site Coordinator and support staff attend the annual Extension Coordinator training on the Northwest campus (held each spring).

10. Marketing and Promotion materials and plans are established.

11. Response thresholds and progress dates are established.

12. Student applications are processed by the site and university support staff.

13. Students apply for financial aid.

14. Students register for classes and begin their progress towards their educational goals.

15. The University and site review the MOU and program evaluations on a yearly basis.