



Center for Online and Extended Education

Concurrent Credit Instructor Handbook

2025-26

Concurrent Credit Instructor Handbook Overview

This document is an additional resource to the Northwest University (NU) Undergraduate Academic Catalog and the NU Faculty, Staff, and Employee Manuals. It is written to clarify policies and practices as they relate to the Center for Online and Extended Education (COEE), Concurrent Credit (CC) program.

The [Academic Catalog](#) – Northwest Perspective (*select the Northwest Perspective section from the left column menu to navigate to the applicable portion of the online catalog*) contains important information. Of special note are the University's Accreditation, Mission, Values, Core Themes, Community Covenant, Vision, History, Educational Philosophy, Educational Goals, and Community Affirmation Statement. These are statements with which all instructors are expected to be familiar.

We make every effort to maintain updated information in this Handbook. However, the University reserves the right to change policies and practices as needed.

Since CC instructors are facilitating approved NU courses, they have direct responsibility to NU and are required to adhere to NU standards. CC instructors must satisfy the same academic and professional standards as undergraduate adjunct instructors. Being approved as a CC instructor does not mean automatic instructor approval for other NU programs.

Role of COEE within the University

The Center for Online and Extended Education (COEE) takes pride in developing and teaching approved curricula online. It also partners with like-mission Christian high schools through the Concurrent Credit program. COEE is the University's primary avenue to serve students who do not attend Kirkland-based classroom courses during the traditional class schedule times.

Faith Integration

For over 80 years, Northwest University's faculty have explored various methods to help students integrate their faith with their chosen academic discipline. COEE maintains this heritage through several methods, even though students do not sign a statement of faith during their university admissions. (See [Academic Catalog](#) – Campus Life – Spiritual Formation.)

Each Northwest University course offered through COEE includes an assignment or activity that leads students to confront the material from a **faith or spiritual perspective**. Dependent upon course topics, this activity may range from direct spiritual application to ethical implications inherent within our Christ-centered approach. It also considers that students bring a wide range of spiritual development to their education, including other religions or no previous spiritual engagement. Our approach respects students' positions while making our position clear and challenging students as appropriate to understand a Christ-centered worldview in the discipline.

Some students may approach the topic from a non-Christian, or even an anti-Christian, viewpoint. As an instructor, you are encouraged to use these opportunities to share your own faith journey and how you integrate Christ into your life and discipline – your own personal faith integration. This should be done as appropriate to the course topic and assignment, and as opportunities arise.

Empowered Engagement with Human Need is also an institutional core value that has expression in each course. Although it may take a variety of forms, each course has at least one specific assignment that challenges students to consider methods to apply the material to real-life needs.

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) has excellent resources on this topic. These articles provide a wide range of information: [Overview of Faith-Learning Integration](#).

Role of CC Instructors

CC instructors have a dual responsibility to their home high school and to NU. As part of the initial CC partner verification process, both the University and the high school ensure that this dual responsibility will ensure a

higher level of academic quality to each approved course. If at any point an instructor feels that his/her personal or professional standards are being compromised, it is the instructor's responsibility to bring it to the attention of NU and the high school. Discussion will follow in an attempt to address the concerns to the satisfaction of the instructor, NU, and the high school.

NU instructors, including CC instructors, are expected to be professional in interactions with students, staff, administrators, and other instructors. When correcting students' errors and misconceptions, instructors must be thoughtful and courteous.

CC Instruction. By its nature, this academic delivery process relies heavily on the instructional standards of the host high school. This partnership ensures the high standards of the University AND the high school support course outcomes.

The following are expectations when instructing CC courses.

Instructor Engagement

- **Respond** to student and CC emails and messages **within 48 hours**.
- **Share** important classroom information (instructor illness/delay in grading, changes to links or course resources) with your students. Any changes in assigned instructors must be reported to NU immediately to determine whether the course will remain approved.
- **Relay** course/student concerns and feedback to your high school administration and to NU.
- **Update** your information with NU.

Practice Consistency

- **Communicate** assignment late work policy clearly in the course syllabus.
- **Remind** students of their responsibility to communicate with you regarding late submissions and/or accommodations.
- **Follow through** on stated policies and arrangements made with students.
- **Refrain** from making revisions to the curriculum, course syllabus, or material(s) without approval from the host high school and NU.

Provide Quality

- **Provide** thorough, relevant, and constructive feedback using the guidelines found in Appendix A.
- **Post** grades within 72 hours of the assignment due date.
- Submit final grades by the set deadline and retain a gradebook for your records for a period of five (5) years. These records may be retained by the host high school but must be available to NU upon request.
- **Avoid** grade inflation. All students benefit from accurate grading. This provides important opportunities for learning and growth.
- **Encourage** students with specifics. Expand feedback beyond "good job;" share with your students exactly what they did well, and/or areas for improvement.
- Perhaps most importantly, **share your expertise and enthusiasm!**

Professional Conduct

The [Academic Catalog](#) (especially the Northwest Perspective: Community Covenant, Community Affirmation Statement, Precision of Language, and Reconciliation Statement) defines, clarifies, and guides all interactions among faculty, staff, and students. As a distinctly Christian University, Northwest requires that all students and instructors adhere to their respective handbooks when engaging in assignments and activities connected with the University. Communication, including but not limited to class discussions and emails, must adhere to the guidelines. Please remember:

- Inappropriate comments or jokes regarding age, culture, ethnicity, gender, political views, race, religion, or other potentially offensive topics are unacceptable.
- All communications in all formats should follow academic and professional writing standards.

- Remain polite and professional in all communications with students and Northwest University staff.

Corrective Steps

The Center for Online and Extended Education is committed to the growth of our CC instructors. At times, it may be necessary to provide coaching and corrective measures. The following process will be followed:

- **Communication.** Faculty will be contacted regarding the identified concern and provided with the opportunity to discuss this with COEE staff.
- **Warning.** If identified and communicated concern continues, faculty will receive a warning, and their faculty liaison will be notified.
- **Termination.** COEE reserves the right to terminate CC instructors who do not show a commitment to improvement.

Professional Development

Northwest University onboards all CC instructors through the Center for Online and Extended Education. CC instructors have access to our existing training materials, which include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Onboarding administrative training course offered through NU Online
- Onboarding college-specific training offered through Faculty Liaison
- Regularly scheduled check-ins with Faculty Liaison
- Access to the Instructor Resources Group in NU Online
- Resources on a variety of topics including best practices, communication, ethical use of Artificial Intelligence, and more
- Professional development webinars (NU Teaching Cafe and outside resources)
- Annual live professional development trainings specific to COEE instructors
- Access to the College-Specific Instructor Group in NU Online

Additionally, CC instructors complete the following trainings through Northwest University's Human Resources Department:

- Title IX for Higher Education
- Discrimination-Free Workplace
- Promoting a Substance-Free Workplace
- FERPA Guidelines

Faculty Liaisons

Upon onboarding of new CC instructors, faculty liaisons or their designated representatives will deliver course-specific training materials and content in the form of electronic materials, face-to-face meetings (in-person or remote), and/or college-specific training delivered via Northwest University's Learning Management System, NU Online. Providing onboarding by our faculty liaisons or their designated representatives will ensure that all onboarded partner teachers have access to the resources necessary for success in their roles.

Additionally, faculty liaisons or their designated representatives will be available to partner teachers to offer ongoing guidance, mentorship, and support throughout their teaching experience. This partnership ensures that teachers receive the expertise and resources they need to uphold the academic standards and integrity of the university.

Course Details and Information

Grading Rubrics

Grading rubrics are an essential part of university courses. They save time by enabling instructors to quickly categorize student performance with standard comments and the associated grade. Instructors can override the defined grade weight when appropriate and make additional grade adjustments with specific comments. Instructors then can focus more clearly on helping students through individual feedback.

The following videos help instructors understand the importance and use of grading rubrics:

- [The Theory Behind Rubrics](#) (10:05 minutes)
- [The Application of Rubrics](#) (7:56 minutes)
- [Student View of General Rubrics](#) (*this is the information students see within their LMS*)

For all concurrent credit courses, final assignments must be evaluated using the NU-provided rubric, with modifications only approved by Faculty Liaisons or their designated representatives. This ensures that grading remains consistent with NU's academic standards and expectations. CC instructors must incorporate this rubric into their final assignment assessment to maintain uniformity in grading and feedback across both high school and college environments. The faculty liaison will assist in providing the necessary rubrics and supporting high school instructors in applying them effectively.

Textbooks

Required textbooks are approved as part of the initial CC Course Approval process. Changes in textbooks must be reviewed by the host high school and by NU.

Access to the University Library

CC students have access to NU's Hurst Library. However, the host high school has the primary responsibility to provide learning material services to its students. Periodically CC courses also provide access to NU's Hurst Library. These arrangements are coordinated through the University's CC and Library staff.

Schedules

CC courses have two primary schedules, either semester-based (i.e., fall or spring, beginning in early September and ending in early January or beginning in late January and ending in early June), or full-year (i.e., fall and spring, beginning in early September and ending in early June).

Late Work

Northwest University expects students to meet all deadlines for all class assignments. However, unexpected situations may arise that affect students' abilities to meet assignment deadlines. In these unanticipated or emergency situations, instructors can opt to accept some assignments after the due date, following the host high school's late work policy. It is strongly recommended that the following restrictions be included in awarding extra time to complete assignments:

1. Students must request in writing the reason for late submission prior to the due date and time.
2. If you agree to late submission of assignments, it is suggested you follow these grade reductions:
 - a. Up to 24 hours late: the assignment's earned grade is reduced by 10 percent.
 - b. More than 24 hours up to a week late: the assignment's earned grade is reduced by 20 percent.
3. *Emergency Situations*: Instructors can accept late assignments when students communicate in writing their emergency. These often require a doctor's note or some documentation. Instructors then determine if a grade reduction is appropriate.
4. Instructors must balance their late work decisions between helping students through their challenges and allowing students to place themselves into impossible academic situations. Depending on students' other grades, even failing an assignment rarely causes them to fail the whole course. While we always want to help students through their challenges, more time to work on an assignment often impacts their other assignments.

Academic Honesty

Northwest University has intentionally developed a learning community that includes Academic Honesty as a foundational value and expects honesty from faculty and students in all areas, including academic lives. The Academic Catalog includes several examples that would violate this policy (see [Northwest Catalog](#) – Academic Information and Policies – Academic Policies and Procedures, Academic Honesty) Instructors who suspect a violation should clarify the situation with the student and take appropriate action for the assignment, following the host high school's policies. Consequences may include accepting another assignment attempt to failing the assignment.

CC's approach to honesty violations is redemptive yet firm, with recognition that choices have consequences, that proper source citation may be challenging at times, and that honesty is a hallmark of a Christian worldview.

- Faculty are responsible for clarifying to students their citation errors. NU and all other libraries provide detailed instructions for all writing styles.
- When necessary, as determined by CC and the host high school, NU personnel may have a personal conversation with the student to ensure clarity regarding the impact of plagiarism.
- Continual plagiarism may result in dismissal from the University.

Students disciplined by faculty members for alleged academic dishonesty have the right to appeal disciplinary action. Students should initiate their appeal according to procedures outlined in the Northwest University Student Academic Appeals Policy, which is available in the Provost's Office or the Student Development Office.

End of Term Grades

One week after the completion of the course, instructors report final grades to their host high school. These grades are communicated to NU via the host high school's administration or by CC instructors themselves. The grade assigned by the CC instructor and reported to the high school's administration is the same grade reported to NU.

Incomplete Grades

(See [Academic Catalog](#) - Academic Services - Grading and Grade Point Averages - Incomplete Grades)

1. All approved incompletes must be communicated to NU. Instructors can provide an incomplete grade for reasons of emergency or severe illness. Incomplete grades are not given due to lack of student planning or insufficient self-discipline. They also are not given when little or no work has been completed for the course. NU will follow up with the instructor when the course is completed and evaluated.
2. Students must submit incomplete grade requests before the course's end date.

Course and Teacher Evaluations

At the conclusion of each course, all students will have the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors through our dedicated evaluation system, CampusLabs. A link to the evaluation will be provided to students, teachers, and partner administrators. All responses will be completely anonymous, allowing students to express their thoughts candidly. The aggregated results of these evaluations will be shared with instructors, partner administrators, and Faculty Liaisons to support continuous improvement and enhance the learning experience.

Appendix A: Grading and Feedback Expectations

Regular CC instructor and course audits play a vital role in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the learning experience. Conducting audits allows us to gain valuable insights into the teaching practices and assessment methods employed by our CC instructors, enabling us to identify areas of strength and areas that may require additional support or coaching.

The audits also enable us to identify potential gaps or discrepancies in grading standards, instructional strategies, or feedback mechanisms. Through constructive feedback and guidance, we can help our CC instructors refine their teaching methods, enhance student engagement, and optimize the overall learning experience for our students.

Furthermore, conducting audits demonstrates our commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement. By regularly evaluating the grading practices, we ensure the integrity of the assessment process and uphold the university's academic standards. This practice not only enhances transparency but also fosters a culture of accountability and excellence.

Audit Rating Scale

COEE utilizes the following rating scale when conducting audits on grading feedback:

5. Excellent – Meets all the below criteria:
Length: 100+ words, 3+ sentences
Critique/Challenge/Question Offered: Y
Affirmation/Reinforcement of Strengths: Y
Specific Engagement with Content: Y
4. Good: Meets at least 3 of the below criteria:
Length: 75 words, 2-3 sentences
Critique/Challenge/Question Offered: Y
Affirmation/Reinforcement of Strengths: Y
Specific Engagement with Content: Y
3. Acceptable: Meets only 2 of below criteria:
Length: 50 words, 1-2 sentences
Critique/Challenge/Question Offered: N
Affirmation/Reinforcement of Strengths: Y
Specific Engagement with Content: Y
2. Poor:
Uses only generic phrases “Good job, excellent, well done.”
1. Unacceptable:
No feedback given
Sporadic, inconsistent feedback that varies between students

Appendix B: Course Structure Information in the Syllabus

Course syllabi govern the content and processes of university courses. Although host high schools and individual instructors have flexibility to shape their courses, the University expects at a minimum the following information to be presented to students before, or at least at the beginning of, each course.

Topic	Notes
Course Title and Code	NU assigned a course title and code to each course. These may or may not be the same as used by the host high school. However, NU's title and code will appear on students' transcripts.
Course Description	The description provides an overall concept of the course. It is usually relied on for universities to determine transferability into their academic programs.
Course Overview	This is optional. One or two paragraphs that explain the basic purpose and structure of the course
Statement of Course Outcomes	Limited in number; carefully developed; best expressed in measurable terms following Bloom's Taxonomy ¹
Required Learning Sources	Assigned reading and media
Optional Learning Sources	Supplementary reading and multimedia
Academic Events	Academic events (i.e., Quizzes, Discussions, Applied Learning Activities), with assessment linked to the course outcomes
Summative Course Project	Optional: Prepared in the final week(s) of the course showing students' application of the course theory and material
Assessments	Clearly identified by date and final grade impact
Course Schedule	Showing on a weekly basis course topics and assessments