

FAQs Re On-line Courses

1. How many CUs are given to teach an on-line course?

Answer: To be clear on the reference, the commonly used term “on-line” course refers in what follows to courses coded at Eastern as “technology delivered.” In particular, our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) provides that a faculty member assigned to teach a course on-line will receive an additional CU allocation. Specifically, an additional .5 CUs are provided for a typical 3 credit course with a 3 CU allocation. The additional CU allocation is 1 CU for a course with a CU allocation greater than 3 CUs. These increments are provided automatically by the School of Continuing Education when it processes the paperwork for the on-line course.

In addition, the CBA specifies that the first time a faculty member is assigned to teach a course on-line, additional reassigned time equal to at least one half of the CUs for the course will be granted for preparation. These allocations are handled at the department level because that is where knowledge that the assignment is a new preparation resides.

2. Do faculty earn their monthly salary to teach on-line or the overload rate?

Answer: This question has a multi-part answer. First, established administrative procedures have all on-line courses handled logistically by the School of Continuing Education. However, the academic responsibility for scheduling and staffing on-line courses is the responsibility of the academic departments.

For on-line courses offered during the regular academic year, the following arrangements may apply:

- The faculty member may have an on-line course included in his/her regular assignment of duties (part of his/her 18/24 CU assignment). In such an instance, the funding comes from the department’s personnel budget because this is where regular salaries are budgeted. Such an assignment is simply an “in load” assignment, and there is no additional salary for the faculty member.
- If the assignment of an on-line course results in an overload as specified by the CBA, it is paid at the overload rate from the School of Continuing Education budget.

For on-line courses offered during the summer, the following are the possible arrangements:

- If the on-line course is scheduled as part of a “regular” summer session offering, it is paid as specified in the CBA at the overload rate and from the School of Continuing Education budget. An exception pertains when the on-line course is scheduled and conducted in direct support of one of the University’s approved on-line degree programs (currently the Nursing, General Studies, and Organizational and Professional

Development baccalaureate programs). In these instances, the on-line course may be paid pro-rata from a department's summer budget.

- If the on-line course is scheduled using the tuition recovery model (TRM), the cost of instruction is paid from School of Continuing Education local funds. Also as specified in the CBA, the minimum salary for a TRM section is the overload rate, which may be augmented based on course enrollment up to a maximum of the faculty member's pro rata pay level.

3. What training do faculty who teach on-line receive?

Answer: By action of the Council on Academic Affairs and the Council on Graduate Studies, instructors assigned to teach an on-line course must provide "proof of having completed the On-line Learning Modules created by CATS, the on-line Course Development Institute, or another documented, equivalent training activity." Chairs are not to assign a faculty member an on-line course who has not met the CAA/CGS expectation, and the Office of the Provost conducts post hoc monitoring. Once having completed the training materials, a faculty member is not expected to repeat the process in the event he/she is assigned a different on-line course.

In addition, the CBA provides that a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach a course on-line using technology with which she/he is unfamiliar without the opportunity to be trained in the effective use of those technologies, and that such an assignment will be made at least 105 days prior to the first class session.

While not a part of this question, it also is worth noting that a brief self-assessment survey for students contemplating an on-line course or program is available on the School of Continuing Education's website. The website also provides an extensive set of links to various on-line resources for students taking on-line courses or programs.

4. Should EIU students taking classes on campus be required to attend on-campus classes and be restricted from taking their on-line versions?

Answer: This has both philosophical and practical dimensions. Certainly, at the philosophical level, there are several different views held by different members of the Eastern community. Reasonable people can and do have different views.

In general and in keeping with our practice of leaving many such decisions to the academic departments, the imposition of registration restrictions through our registration system is left to the department chairs. Moreover, while the Banner system allows for some programmed restrictions, it does not have as much flexibility as some would like. Therefore, there are two additional ways to manage the enrollment of campus-based students in on-line courses. One is to include clear messages in the course schedule (that in Banner and that maintained on SCE's website) regarding the intended student population to be served. These, too, are subject to chairperson discretion. Department chairpersons also may have students (usually campus-based students) dis-enrolled from an on-line course to ensure the intended target population remains in the on-line course. Finally, some

department chairpersons set on-line course enrollment to zero and manually add students they deem to be in the target group of students.

To date, Eastern's primary target populations for on-line coursework have been non-traditional students and those who are not able to attend a campus-based course. Non-traditional students pursuing one of our three on-line degree programs often need courses that we might also be offering to campus-based students. It is in these situations where the potential for campus-based students to seek enrollment in an on-line course is most apparent. In such instances, enrollment restrictions in the on-line section help ensure the objective of the on-line offering. Another group of students to whom on-line offerings have been made available are campus-based students who have left Charleston for the summer. The intent here is simply to have them take an Eastern course rather than a course at an institution closer to them. Finally, some programs--particularly some "professional" programs at the graduate level--are facing increased competition for students from other institutions which are offering on-line courses to students Eastern has previously served. These programs perceive that this competition should not go unchallenged.

It has been useful to give department chairpersons some flexibility in managing on-line enrollments. In some instances, an on-line section has provided some "relief" to campus-based students when an insufficient number of seats have been available on campus. There also are a few instances when a department has designed an on-line course expressly for campus-based students who are involved in an internship, practice teaching experiences, and the like. Doing so allows faculty to stay in touch with the students and has been a useful management tool.

5. What are Eastern's future plans for on-line delivered courses/programs?

Answer: To date, on-line courses and programs have developed as an extension of our extant courses and programs based on campus. They have arisen from departmental initiatives to deliver coursework to students unable to meet on campus (e.g., non-traditional students in our distance delivered programs, students who are usually campus-based but are away from Charleston, etc.). To look further at possible next steps, a committee is being assembled with recommendations from CAA, CGS, COTE, the Faculty Senate, and suggestions from the college deans. The Faculty Senate also has agreed to solicit additional recommendations/nominations and will recommend those to be named during the first months of the fall semester.