

DISTANCE LEARNING FACULTY HANDBOOK 2005-2006

Whether you are a full-time faculty member or an adjunct, this handbook is designed to help you design and teach NHMCCD distance learning courses. It should be used as a supplement, not a replacement, for the NHMCCD Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Handbooks.

The NHMCCD Catalog, which contains the approved academic calendar, student policies, program information and course descriptions, is an invaluable reference for all faculty. Copies may be obtained at any NHMCCD college or center. It is also available online at the NHMCCD website (www.nhmccd.edu). NHMCCD's Distance Learning Plan is another valuable resource. Excerpts are included throughout this Handbook; it is available in its entirety online at the eCampus website (ecampus.nhmccd.edu).

Lastly, it is important to remember that policies and procedures do change from time to time and this Handbook may not reflect these changes immediately. Send questions to distance.learning@nhmccd.edu.

DISTANCE LEARNING & FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE DEFINITIONS

Flexible schedule (Flex) classes are those that utilize distance or technology for 50 percent or more of the instruction.

Students enrolled in **Distance Learning** (DL) classes are not required to travel to a NHMCCD college or center. However, faculty may require proctored testing, orientations, or other necessary learning activities. When such is the case, students may choose to travel to an NHMCCD site or make arrangements for an alternative that is approved by the instructor. For example, faculty who require participation in an orientation session must be prepared to make the information available in alternate formats such as web pages, files on CD-ROM, or videotape for those who miss the face-to-face session.

Additionally, faculty may require proctored testing for their distance learning classes. Most students will opt to take their exams at NHMCCD testing centers. When that is not feasible, students are responsible for arranging an alternative that is approved by the instructor. Approval is on an instructor-by-instructor basis. Instructors are not required to accept an arrangement simply because it was approved by another instructor for another class.

All distance learning classes are expected to use the Internet and are to be coded in Colleague as web-based classes (DW). All flexible schedule classes using the Internet are also expected to be coded in Colleague as web-based classes (FW).

NHMCCD DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS

During the Fall 2004 semester, 7,279 students enrolled in at least one DL or Flex class (20% of all NHMCCD students). Of those students, most (71%) were also enrolled in at least one traditionally delivered class.

COURSE SCHEDULING

NHMCCD's Center for Teaching & Distance Learning (CTDL) oversees the Distance Learning and Flexible Schedule portions of the printed and online course schedules. The CTDL works collaboratively with each college to verify the courses and information to be included in the printed schedules and to assure the continuity of certificate and degree programs that have been advertised as being available online.

Class information listed in the printed schedule and on the web site includes college, subject or program, and individual faculty. The Council for Educational & Student Development (CESD) is responsible for consistency, coordination, and cooperation among the colleges. In case of disagreements, CESD makes scheduling decisions.

FACULTY SELECTION

Faculty assignments for distance learning and flexible schedule classes are the responsibility of the colleges based on criteria approved by CESD and the Executive Council (EC).

Faculty Workload Guidelines

As a general guideline, no more than 50% of a faculty member's normal teaching load should be devoted to teaching distance learning courses. This means that faculty with a five class load could teach three DL/Flex classes in the Fall, but would then teach two in the following spring. The total sections offered would be ten, and only five of those could be DL/Flex.

Each College has the discretion to make exceptions to this guideline, however, when required to meet the goals of the college. The Vice President of Instruction has the authority to approve exceptions with the understanding that work week policy guidelines are met, including office hours, committee assignments, and four days per week on campus, and that the decisions are in accordance with the NHMCCD Distance Learning Plan.

Summer Distance Learning/Flex workload assignment will not exceed one class each term.

Certification

Effective Spring 2004, all instructors assigned to teach web-based distance learning or web-based flexible schedule courses must have Level I of NHMCCD's Distance Learning Certification prior to teaching the class.

Certification may be acquired through portfolio assessment of existing courses or by participating in workshops sponsored by CTDL. The determination of certification by portfolio is based on previously completed work and is based on compliance and adherence with the NHMCCD Distance Learning Plan. NHMCCD faculty who taught web-based classes prior to Spring 2004 are eligible for certification by portfolio. Also, instructors who are new to NHMCCD may acquire certification by portfolio.

Professional Development

Beginning with the 2003/2004 academic year, faculty teaching web-based distance learning or web-based flexible schedule classes must actively participate in 4 hours of CTDL sponsored workshops (offered at the colleges, at CTDL or online) each academic year to stay abreast of local policies, procedures and best practices.

For information about upcoming workshops, go to the eCampus website (<http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>). Then, using the menus at the left, click Faculty & Staff, MyWorkshops.

Additional Criteria

In addition to the NHMCCD Distance Learning Certification and ongoing professional development, it is expected that the following criteria are also considered when making faculty assignments for web-based distance learning or flexible schedule classes:

- Instructional Dean or Department Chair evaluation of prior distance learning instruction;
- student surveys of prior DL courses;
- student surveys of on-campus courses;
- participation in developing a course;
- past experience in distance learning, technology integration, or distributed learning methods.

FACULTY SUPERVISION

NHMCCD's Distance Learning Plan assigns instructional responsibility for Distance Learning courses and activities to Deans and Vice Presidents of Instruction. To fulfill this responsibility, Deans will be provided online access privileges equivalent to a student as described below.

Start of Each Semester

Beginning 1 week prior to the first day of classes in each semester or minimester, and continuing until the conclusion of the second week of classes, Deans will automatically be provided student access privileges in all online course areas.

During the startup of classes, Deans will be reviewing the same items that would normally be

reviewed for other traditional courses, such as the syllabus, outcomes, etc. Deans will not conduct formal class assessment or evaluation activities during this access period.

This responsibility may be assigned to the Department Chair upon approval of the Dean and the Vice-President.

During Each Semester

Subsequent access(es) during a semester will be by permission of the faculty, following the procedure listed below:

- The Dean will provide a minimum of three work days' advance notice to faculty when requesting to be scheduled for access to an online course.
- Faculty will grant the access to the course by adding the Dean as a "student" in the course.
- The period of access provided to the Dean will be negotiated between the faculty and the Dean.

This responsibility may be assigned to the Department Chair upon approval of the Dean and the Vice-President.

Extraordinary Circumstances

For extraordinary circumstances, such as sickness, death, or other situations that prevent a Dean from obtaining prior permission from a faculty member to access a course, the Dean may request approval to access a course from the Vice President of Instruction. Access will be provided following the procedure listed below:

- Dean requests approval from the Vice President
- If the Vice President approves, the Vice President will send a written request (email) to the eCampus Helpdesk. Except for the three-week period described above, eCampus staff will NOT add a Dean to any online course during the remainder of a semester unless a request is received by the Vice President.
- eCampus staff will add the Dean to the requested class and will send an email confirmation to the faculty, the Dean, and the Vice President.

This responsibility may be assigned to the Department Chair upon approval of the Dean and the Vice-President.

WEB-BASED CLASSES & FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Technology

All Internet (Web) classes must reside on NHMCCD's distance learning course management system (CMS). NHMCCD's current CMS is WebCT. Only limited, supplemental materials may reside on servers outside of the distance learning CMS. Exceptions may be granted by the instructional vice-presidents following discussions with the District Director of Distance Learning.

WebCT Course Request Form

As soon as sections are assigned for an upcoming semester, instructors are encouraged to complete the WebCT Course Request Form. Go to the eCampus website (<http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>). Then, using the menus at the left, click Faculty & Staff, WebCT, Course Request.

Completing this form in a timely manner will help assure your eClassroom (WebCT class) is available at the beginning of the new semester! Feel free to request development courses at any time using this same form.

WebCT e-Packs

WebCT e-packs are publisher produced content for “jump-starting” an eClassroom (WebCT course). Once determining a particular textbook has an accompanying e-pack:

- the accompanying textbook must be adopted every semester that the e-pack is to be used,
- these texts have specific ISBN numbers that indicate an e-pack is to be used
- students buy texts that include access codes that “prove” to the publisher the textbook has been purchased (there may be an additional charge for students.)

Working closely with WebCT, publishers produce e-packs that faculty may adopt for use in an eClassroom (WebCT course). The list of WebCT e-packs is continually growing. To determine if your textbook has an accompanying e-pack, go to:

- <http://www.webct.com>
- click WebCT Ready Content
- click Search for e-packs
- A search window appears

You may search by Discipline, Title or keyword, Author, or Publisher (don’t use too many of these fields for one search). If you are satisfied with the currently adopted text, begin by searching for it. If you are exploring possible new adoptions, consider searching by discipline or publisher.

When you find the e-pack you want, select the Request a Review Copy to download and install the e-pack on your institution's WebCT server. You will be presented with a form. The form will ask you for the name and email of NHMCCD’s WebCT system administrator.

Contact information is:

Name: Chris Duffy

Phone: 832-813-6756

Email: distance.learning@nhmccd.edu

You must also fill out the eCampus Course Request Form. Go to the eCampus website (<http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>). Then, using the menus at the left, click Faculty & Staff, WebCT, Course Request. The CTDL staff will acquire the e-Pack file(s) and upload them into an eClassroom (WebCT class).

Faculty are encouraged to work closely with textbook representatives to assure the correct text (ISBN) is ordered and available in the bookstores.

Creating a Course Backup

Faculty are strongly encouraged to create backups of their eClassrooms (WebCT courses) before making significant changes and occasionally throughout the semester. Backing up a course creates a zipped file that can be used to restore the course to its original state if something goes awry!

The WebCT server only permits faculty to have two backups of a course at any given time. However, backups can be downloaded for safe keeping or deleted to make room for more current backup files.

CTDL performs daily backups of the entire server in case of system failure or catastrophes like flood or fire. Please **do not** rely on CTDL to perform a course restoration. Because of the huge amounts of data on the WebCT server, stopping the backup process to do a single course restoration jeopardizes the viability of the system.

Getting Students Started

A “Faculty Office” is available for any NHMCCD employee who wishes to publish information on a CTDL web server. Information published in your Faculty Office must be limited to your NHMCCD related activities. To get started creating your Faculty Office, go to the eCampus website (<http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>). Then, using the menus at the left, click Faculty & Staff, Tools, Edit Your Office.

Ways Faculty Offices can be used to communicate with students:

- Because the online schedule is linked to Faculty Offices, creating and updating your Faculty Office is a great way to provide information to students who are considering enrolling in your class or who have enrolled.
- Listing the URL to your Faculty Office in the comments section of the printed schedule is another way to communicate preliminary information.
- Lastly, if you keep an updated Faculty Office, it is simple to create an autoreply in Outlook (email) and/or a voice message for your office telephone that points students to these webpages for further information.

Adding Students

Faculty have the option of adding students to their WebCT classes or may request CTDL do so. Adding students to a WebCT class is the equivalent of unlocking a door – it gives students access to the class. ***Students must be added to the WebCT class by 10:00 a.m. of the first day of class.***

By 10:00 a.m. of the first day of class, an instructor should be able to at least provide instructor contact and textbook information. This can easily be accomplished by adding a single HTML page, posting an introductory message on the discussion board, or sending an email message.

Portions of the course that are incomplete and/or incorrect can easily be hidden from view until the instructor has them completed.

If an instructor needs assistance to meet the 10:00 a.m. deadline, CTDL will gladly assist.

Username & Passwords

Everyone affiliated with NHMCCD has an eCampus username and password (Passkey system). This username is automatically assigned by the District's central database system. While there is a standard syntax for usernames, problems arise when faculty and students simply guess at their usernames. Tools are available at the eCampus website to determine correct usernames. Please encourage students to use these tools and not guess.

Student Rosters in Your WebCT Class

If a student has formally withdrawn from your course or never appeared on your official roster, use the "Inactivate Student" feature to exclude the student from the course. To temporarily disable students' access to a course, use the "Deny Access". This is the best way to handle students who have not formally withdrawn from the course.

Results produced when Deny Access is applied:

- The course still displays in the student's MyWebCT page, but when the student clicks on the course a message appears telling them they have been denied access and to contact their instructor.
- Students who are "denied access" appear with an asterisk next to their name in the WebCT roster.
- Students who are "denied access" can be hidden from the instructor's view in the WebCT roster.
- The student's course record still shows up when the gradebook is downloaded to csv.
- The student's grades are still a part of the course statistics
- The student still appears in the email list.
- The instructor can "Allow Access" to the student at any time.

Safeguarding Students' Grades

Mistakes happen! However, instructors can protect themselves from a mistake by downloading their WebCT gradebooks to their hard drives or other storage media for safekeeping. When you download your WebCT gradebook, it is saved in a format that works with Excel or other common spreadsheets. It is also possible to upload an Excel file into your WebCT gradebook.

While CTDL performs daily backups of the entire WebCT server in case of system failure or catastrophes like flood or fire, it is not feasible for CTDL to perform a single course restoration. Please **do not** rely on CTDL for backup of your eClassrooms (WebCT courses). Because of the huge amounts of data on the WebCT server, stopping the backup process to do a single course restoration jeopardizes the viability of the system.

Security

Faculty have a key role in maintaining the security of eCampus systems. To increase ease of use, all eCampus tools use the same usernames and passwords (Passkey system). Consequently,

it is imperative you guard your password. For example, if you give a student worker your username and password to work on your Faculty Office, you have also given him/her your username and password for all of your WebCT classes.

To help support the security of eCampus systems:

- It is critical you change your password from the default and then change it often. Please also remember to change the password of your test_student account.
- Demand that your students change their passwords – remind them early and often.
- Lastly, inactivate or deny access to all students who are not participating to prohibit other students from using these accounts to cheat in your class.

Academic Calendars

All NHMCCD faculty, including those who teach distance learning and flexible schedule classes, are expected to adhere to the published academic calendar. Faculty teaching web-based classes are to administer final exams during final exam week with the semester ending on the date published.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Browser Tune-up

The WebCT Browser Zone contains many resources to prepare your computer for WebCT. This browser tune-up will help to ensure your browser settings are optimized for running a WebCT course. To access the Browser Tune-up, go to the eCampus website. Then, using the menus at the left, click Helpdesk, Browser Tune-up.

WebCT 101

WebCT 101 is CTDL's Introduction to Distance Learning. To access WebCT 101, go to the eCampus website (<http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>). Then, using the menus at the left, click Helpdesk, WebCT 101. In addition to numerous informational links, WebCT 101 gives individuals access to a "live" WebCT class providing opportunities to learn about the various tools in WebCT. Anyone can gain access to this trial class – a current eCampus login is not required.

Lockers

eCampus Lockers provide **temporary** storage space that can be accessed from the web. This storage space is available to you and/or your students under the conditions stated below.

By using the Lockers, you understand and accept:

- The District's acceptable computer use policy,
- The district will not be responsible for loss of any data or virus infections,
- Lockers will be emptied at the end of each semester,
- Virus Scanning is used on the Lockers server. Documents with a virus will be cleaned or deleted on upload or after nightly scans, and
- This is a service the district provides and can be removed for any reason.

More information is available at the eCampus website. Go to <http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>. Then, using the menus at the left, click Faculty & Staff, Tools.

Distance Learning Helpdesk

Anyone with a question related to NHMCCD's Distance Learning Program or eCampus tools is encouraged to contact the Distance Learning HelpDesk. The staff will gladly assist NHMCCD faculty, staff or students who are having technical difficulties associated with their use of any eCampus tool, including WebCT. The helpdesk's hours of operation are:

- Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.,
- Friday & Saturday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
- Sunday, 1:00 – 5:00 (electronic resources only – email, LiveChat)

There are a variety of ways to contact the Distance Learning Helpdesk including live chat, email or telephone. Contact information is available at <http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu> and click the Helpdesk link or call 832.813.6700.

Library Services

A wide variety of NHMCCD Library services are available online. Go to <http://library.nhmccd.edu> to get started. From there, your students can secure a library card, chat with a reference librarian, or search electronic databases.

Tutoring & Academic Resources

All NHMCCD students are eligible to access the services offered at the colleges' and centers' learning resource centers. In addition to face-to-face services, students enrolled in DL classes have access to online tutoring provided by SMARTHINKING. This service is not available for students enrolled in flexible schedule classes.

Since the online tutoring is accessed through WebCT from the MyWebCT homepage, students enrolled in DL classes have ready access to this online tutoring service.

Workshops

Each semester, a variety of face-to-face workshops are offered by CTDL at numerous locations. Other professional development options are available online including the Online Teaching Certification Program, tutorials that have been developed by the eCampus staff, and Internet broadcasts from differing agencies and organizations. All NHMCCD employees—full-time or part-time—are eligible to participate in any CTDL workshop free of charge.

To view upcoming workshops, login to MyWorkshops by going to <http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>, click Faculty & Staff, then MyWorkshops. If you have a question about CTDL's professional development calendar, want help registering, or have an idea for a workshop or tutorial, email distance.learning@nhmccd.edu.

Assessment/Testing Centers

Faculty teaching distance learning classes may require students to take quizzes/exams in proctored settings. Most students will choose to take their exams at NHMCCD testing centers. When that is not possible, students are responsible for making alternative arrangements that are

approved by the instructor. Approval is on an instructor-by-instructor basis. Instructors are not required to accept an arrangement simply because it was approved by another instructor for another class.

Online forms are available for requesting testing services and/or providing feedback to NHMCCD testing centers. Access to both forms is password protected using your Passkey username and password (WebCT username and password). To view the forms, go to <http://ecampus.nhmccd.edu>. Then, using the menus at the left, click Faculty & Staff, Tools, Testing Resources.

Textbooks

Students may order their textbooks online at <http://www.efollett.com> or by calling 888.677.1005. Books will be shipped to their homes or to the nearest NHMCCD bookstore for pickup. Follett bookstores accept MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Discover cards; and will also process orders upon receipt of a money order or a cashier's check.

Faculty are encouraged to check the website to confirm the accuracy of the information displayed for their classes.

CTDL PROCESSES

In addition to the processes and resources described earlier, there are numerous other CTDL procedures that may affect faculty teaching web-based classes.

System Maintenance

In an effort to better serve you and our students by proactively addressing technical concerns, the eCampus website and all accompanying resources (including WebCT) will be unavailable the **1st of every month from 4:00 am to 8:00 am** to accommodate regular maintenance. If you ordinarily use eCampus resources in the early morning, please consider adding a monthly reminder in Outlook for the 1st of each month.

Technical Problems

Unfortunately, technical glitches sometimes occur. Whenever possible, work needed for eCampus resources will be performed during the planned maintenance period (1st of the month, 4:00 – 8:00 a.m.). When that is not possible, CTDL will use email and web postings to notify faculty and students of the impending outage. In the event of unplanned outages, faculty will receive email notification confirming the date/time of the outage.

CTDL Staff as Students

As a general rule, CTDL does not hire NHMCCD students. However, educational assistance is a valued benefit offered to NHMCCD's full-time and qualifying part-time employees. Occasionally, a CTDL staff member will enroll in a NHMCCD DL or Flex classes. When this situation arises, the instructor is immediately notified of the staff member's enrollment. All Helpdesk contacts received by the enrolled student related to his/her class are immediately transferred to another CTDL staff member. During the semester, the enrolled student will provide no support to the instructor nor other students in that class.

Student Concerns

From time-to-time, students communicate with CTDL about problems they are having with their web-based classes. If the feedback is related to the technology or eCampus procedures, the information is acknowledged and compiled for further action.

If the feedback is related directly to the instructional process, the student is urged to communicate with the instructor directly. If the student persists in voicing concern, he/she is assisted in contacting the division's Dean or Department Chair depending upon the status of the instructor (full-time or adjunct).

Online Tests

Dealing with situations related to testing issues is one of the most challenging aspects of the Distance Learning Helpdesk. Anytime a question arises concerning a quiz/test, the instructor will receive an email notification detailing the problem. Some common situations are described below.

Scenario A: A student (or testing center staff member) calls to report that the student is being "thrown out" of WebCT while taking the test.

Helpdesk response: 1) The student (or staff member) will be told to log back into the course and continue with the exam. Exiting the course (intentionally or unintentionally) does not "stop the clock" on timed exams. 2) The instructor will be sent an email notification with pertinent information (student's name, day & time, details of the problem).

Scenario B: A testing center staff member calls to report that a student has arrived at the center to take an online exam. When the student logs in, the test is available but the testing center does not have any information about the test (does not have the password).

Helpdesk response: 1) The CTDL staff member taking the call will look at the telephone display to verify the caller is a testing center employee. If the display does not indicate "Testing Center" and/or the caller's voice is not familiar, the CTDL staff member will hang-up, lookup the center's "official telephone number", and call back. 2) Once the caller's identity has been confirmed (step 1), the CTDL staff member checks the Distance Learning mailbox in email for information related to the particular test. A copy of all online testing request forms is sent to distance.learning@nhmccd.edu for emergency use. If the password for the specific test is available, it is provided. 3) The instructor will be sent an email notification with pertinent information (student's name, day & time, details of the problem).

*Scenario C: A testing center staff member calls to report that a student has arrived at the center to take an online exam. When the student logs in, the test is **unavailable** but the testing center has information (via the testing request form) that says the exam is supposed to be available and they have the correct password.*

Helpdesk response: 1) The CTDL staff member taking the call will look at the telephone display to verify the caller is a testing center employee. If the display does not indicate "Testing Center" and/or the caller's voice is not familiar, the CTDL staff member will hangup, lookup the center's "official telephone number", and call back. 2) Once the caller's identity has been confirmed (step 1), the CTDL staff member checks the Distance Learning mailbox in email for information related to the particular test. A copy of all online testing request forms is sent to

distance.learning@nhmccd.edu for emergency use. If the CTDL staff member confirms that the test is supposed to be available, the CTDL staff member will login to the course and correct the day/time availability to match the testing request information. 3) The instructor will be sent an email notification with pertinent information (student's name, day & time, details of the problem).

Student Evaluations

The DSTC IT department is responsible for the online form used to collect student evaluations. Before students can access the forms, they must login to MyRecords (StarGazer). CTDL places a "Course Evaluations – Student Feedback" link in the Announcements section of MyWebCT. Clicking the link takes students to the Students page of MyRecords.