

# Non-Credit Courses & Certificates

University Operations – Administrative

**EWU Policy 205-01**

**Effective: [Date]**

**Authority: Board of Trustees**

**Proponent: Provost**

**Summary:** This policy establishes procedures for developing, establishing, implementing, managing and reviewing Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) non-credit courses and/or programs at Eastern Washington University (EWU).

**History:** This policy is new. It was approved by the Board of Trustees on [INSERT].

## 1. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

### 1-1. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to non-credit courses, programs, and certificates offered through the Office of Professional and Continuing Education (PCE). For such non-credit courses, programs, and certificates, EWU's academic policies do not apply. In particular, non-credit course, program, or certificate programs and learners enrolled in such programs are not subject to the following policies:

- Academic Policy 303-21: Undergraduate Students
- Academic Policy 303-22: Graduate Students
- Academic Policy 303-23: Classroom Attendance
- Academic Policy 303-24: Grading, Grade Changes, and Grade Appeals
- Academic Policy 303-30: Registration
- Academic Policy 303-35: Program and Course Management
- Academic Policy 303-40: Program Review

All other university policies apply to such programs. The scope and duties of PCE are set forth in EWU Policy 301-01 (Academic Organization).

Learners in a PCE program do not pay student fees and are ineligible to participate in university programs and activities supported by student fees.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Certificate of completion:** a certificate awarded to learners who successfully complete a PCE course or series of courses that has been approved as an institutional certificate/offering.

**Certification:** process by which a learner's skills, knowledge, and ability to perform a specific job are assessed. This involves meeting specific requirements, such as the completion of specific educational coursework or the passing of an examination. Certification requirements are typically set by state or federal governments, associations, or councils.

**Clock hour:** contact hour in an approved continuing education course is equivalent to one clock hour.

**Contact hour:** 60 minutes of instructional time that may include time for reasonable breaks that do not include routine staff meetings, business meetings, social hours, or meal time.

**Continuing education:** an array of course and programmatic offerings to further skills and knowledge.

**Continuing education course:** a single course, lecture, webinar, or workshop that offers a guided study of a particular subject or skill.

**Continuing education program:** a pathway of continuing education courses where learning objectives are assessed for a particular subject. Continuing education programs result in a certificate of completion.

**Continuing education learner:** a learner who is participating in continuing education courses and/or programs. These learners are exempt from conventional institutional admissions processes and the academic policies identified in section 1-1.

**Continuing education unit (CEU):** 10 Contact hours in a non-credit bearing course is equivalent to one CEU.

**Learner:** a person who registers for and participates in a non-credit bearing course, program, or certificate.

**Non-credit:** A course or program offered that does not provide academic credit from the institution.

**Professional education:** courses and programs that improve the knowledge and skills or behaviors of those who are considered professionals or certified in a particular discipline or industry.

## 3. APPROVAL PROCESS

All non-credit courses, programs, and certificates must be approved in advance through the process set forth in this section. Such courses and programs may be offered through any generally accepted instructional method. This includes, but is not limited to, on campus, off campus, online, hybrid, or other forms of distance education.

Before beginning the approval process, departments wishing to offer non-credit courses and programs will need to determine the type of non-credit (e.g. clock hours, CEU, or contact hours) learners will receive by aligning with generally accepted norms, institutional mission and policy, the objectives of the course or program, and learner achievement of identified learning outcomes.

### 3-1. Criteria for Evaluation

Proposed offerings will be vetted based on the following non-exclusive criteria:

a. Industry Demand: offerings must have industry demand validated by local, state, or national employment data.

b. Proforma: a proforma must be completed clearly articulating goals, objectives, cost model, and business/industry partners.

c. Industry Credential: if programming leads to a recognized industry credential and EWU must be approved by the licensing body, this work is completed by the proposing entity.

d. Credit: identify the number of credits, clock hours, CEU, or contact hours, if any, that may be applied to the completion of a certificate program.

Departments or individuals who wish to submit a proposal are responsible for gathering or completing the information above prior to submitting a proposal to PCE.

### 3-2. Review Process

Departments submitting a proposal for a PCE offering must have the proposal approved by their respective dean or associate vice president prior to formally submitting the proposal to PCE.

PCE will review the proposal. If questions remain, PCE may work with the submitter to gather additional information. The Vice Provost, in conjunction with PCE, is responsible for determining whether or not a course will be approved.

### 3-2. Annual Review

All non-credit courses, programs, and certificates will be evaluated on an annual basis to determine if such activities should continue or be discontinued.

## 4. REGISTRATION & ATTENDANCE

### 4-1. Registration

Learners taking non-credit courses, programs, and certificates are exempt from the university's regular admissions process. Learners must register through PCE and there is not a limit on how many courses may be taken. However, the university may place limitations on regularly admitted students ability to participate in such programs.

### 4-2. Prerequisites

Some courses, programs, and certificates may require learners to have previous education or work experience. Learners shall ensure they meet all prerequisites and/or corequisites in which they register. Learners may or may not be required to verify such prerequisites. Failure to meet prerequisites or corequisites may result in disenrollment. If a learner proceeds without having verified they meet such standards, the learner assumes the risk of any adverse outcomes.

### 4-3. Attendance

Learners are expected to attend all class sessions and participate in class by keeping up on important dates and deadlines. Individual courses may have specific attendance policies, which the learner must adhere to. If a learner has questions about the attendance policy, they should contact the instructor. Learners are responsible for contacting the instructor if they are unable to attend class. Learners who register for a course, but do not attend, are responsible for dropping the course officially as set forth below in section 5-2.

## 5. FEES, WITHDRAWAL & REFUNDS

### 5-1. Fees

Financial aid is not available for non-credit courses, programs, and certificates. Costs for the programs must be paid up front. In some cases, an additional fee may be imposed to cover the use of facilities or supplies and materials. Such fees are subject to the approval process contained in EWU Policy 202-04 (University Fee Approval).

### 5-2. Withdrawals and Refunds

The date for dropping/withdrawing for a course will be published with each course. Learners must email [pce@ewu.edu](mailto:pce@ewu.edu) and specifically request to be dropped/withdrawn from a course in order to receive a refund.

If EWU cancels a course, learners will be refunded 100% of the cost. If a learner contacts PCE a minimum of three business days prior to the start of the course, they will receive a 95% refund. If a learner requests to be dropped/withdrawn less than three business days prior to the start of a course or after a course has already started, no refund will be issued.

Business days are Monday through Friday, excluding state holidays.

In cases where a course or certificate is offered through a third-party vendor, refund eligibility, deadlines, and processing fees are governed by the specific vendor's policies, which will be posted with the course. In these cases, learners must seek a refund directly from the third-party vendor.

### 5-3. Payments

a. Third Party Invoicing: in many cases, PCE can invoice a third party, such as an employer, for payment. EWU must receive such payment by the third party prior to the start of the course or the student will be dropped from the course for non-payment. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval from PCE.

b. Limitations: noncredit programs are not currently eligible for state or federal financial aid, including grants.

c. Account balance: Fees must be paid in advance of a course. In some cases, EWU may offer a payment plan. If a student has not paid for a course or has an account balance, and has not set up a payment plan, they will be restricted from enrolling in additional courses.

## 6. GRADES AND GRADE APPEALS

### 6-1. Grades

Instructors for noncredit courses may issue a letter grade or a pass/fail.

### 6-2. Grade Appeals

Learners may submit a grade appeal only if the student can demonstrate, with supporting evidence, that the grade was awarded under one of the following conditions:

a. Syllabus/course criteria deviation: the instructor failed to follow the grading criteria or evaluation method stated in the course syllabus or program criteria.

b. Arbitrary or capricious grading:

- **Arbitrariness**: The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise professional judgment.
- **Prejudice**: The grade awarded was based on unequal application of grading standards or by applying grading criteria to one student or some students in a manner that treats them differently.

Note: Disagreement with an instructor's professional judgment or the academic rigor of the course does not constitute a valid basis for appeal.

### 6-3. Grade Appeal Process

Grade appeals will follow the following two-step process:

#### Step One: Informal Resolution

Before filing a formal appeal, the learner must contact the instructor in writing within five business days of the grade being posted. The goal of this meeting is to clarify the rationale for the grade and check for clerical errors. If the

learner is not satisfied with the outcome and has evidence that one of the basis for a grade appeal exists as identified in section 6-2, they can proceed to step two.

#### Step Two: Formal Written Appeal

Students must submit a written Non-Credit Grade Appeal Form to PCE. The appeal must specify the basis for appeal, explain how the criteria for appeal is met, and include supporting document (such as the syllabus, graded assignments, correspondence, etc.).

PCE will then convene the Non-Credit Grade Appeal Committee within 20 business days of receiving the formal appeal. The committee will review the evidence submitted, request a written response from the instructor, and deliberate in a closed session.

The committee may:

- Deny the appeal and uphold the grade
- Adjust the grade
- In rare circumstances, the committee can suggest an alternative remedy to the situation, which must be agreed upon by all parties. This may include allowing the learner to retake the course

The learner and instructor will be notified of the committee's decision within five business days of the committee's vote. The decision of the committee is final and cannot be appealed.

### 6-4. Non-Credit Grade Appeal Committee

To ensure a balanced perspective between academic standards and administrative feasibility, the committee shall consist of at least:

- **One Faculty Member**: appointed by the relevant department's Program Director, Chair, or Dean.
- **One Professional Staff Member**: must be a full-time staff member at EWU.
- **One Committee Chair**: Professional & Continuing Education staff member serves as a neutral administrator who votes only in the case of a tie.

### 6-5. Grade Appeals for Third-Party Vendors and Partnerships

Because the instructors of these courses are employees or contractors of the third-party vendor, EWU does not have direct supervisory authority over their grading decisions. Therefore, the process identified in sections 6-2 and 6-3 do not apply.

In these situations, learners must first exhaust the vendor's internal grade dispute or "re-evaluation" process. The learner must submit a formal dispute directly to the vendor's support or academic team within the vendor's specified timeframe. If no timeframe is specified, this must be completed within 7 business days of the grade being posted. The student must save all correspondence until a

resolution has been reached in the event that it will be needed for a subsequent review.

If the vendor denies the appeal and the student believes the decision was arbitrary or a violation of the syllabus or course criteria, the student may petition the EWU Non-Credit Grade Appeal Committee. The committee's review in these cases is limited to:

- Verifying the vendor followed its own dispute policy.
- Ensuring the student was treated equitably compared to other EWU students.
- Determining if a "Certificate of Completion" can and should be issued by EWU despite the vendor's grade, based on documented technical or procedural errors on the vendor's platform.

EWU will only intervene if the vendor fails to provide a resolution process or if the vendor's decision violates the terms of the EWU partnership agreement.

## **7. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Learners are subject to the standards of conduct established in university policy for students including, but not limited to, WAC 172-90 (Student Academic Integrity), WAC 172-121 (Student Conduct Code), and WAC 172-125 (Title IX & Discrimination Violations by Students).