

NKU's Accelerated Online Programs Initiative
Frequently Asked Questions
(updated 12/6/17)

Q: What is the difference between accelerated online programs and our other online programs?

A: *The term "accelerated online programs" refers to the degree programs being offered fully online in 7-week sessions in partnership with Academic Partnerships, which is responsible for the marketing, recruiting, registration and retention of the students. The accelerated concept means that the students can complete the degree program more quickly than a traditional student by taking courses year-round in six 7-week sessions. While many of our current online programs will migrate to the accelerated online format, some will not and will remain offered in sessions of 7-week or semester length.*

Q: Can a program have both face to face, accelerated online and PACE offerings?

A: *Yes, as long as the program has the faculty capacity to deliver all of those programs.*

Q: Will the university be implementing any new course codes to manage registration/seat availability, or will we continue to have the three statuses of web-based, online programs, and online programs restricted in the system? This would be a great time to clarify the differences and ensure departments are following a standard process for these three codes (and maybe eliminate web-based or online programs, since they are essentially the same and just confuse students).

A: *We will continue to use the ONL and ONLR designators in order to manage our regular, non-accelerated online programs. For the accelerated online programs, we will use a designator of ONLA. Accelerated online sections can have enrollment caps like any other section, however we are committed to creating sufficient seats to meet the demand by accelerated online students each term, either by enlarging sections or creating additional sections. Non-accelerated online courses will continue to have seat restrictions.*

Q: Is the definition of an Accelerated Online Student: 1) a student with an ONLA flag for either their major, minor, or area of focus or 2) a student with an ONLA flag for their major (Module Group Category = MAJ or GMAJ)

A: *#2 – only majors are counted in the revenue split.*

Q: What happens to students that are currently enrolled in a 16-week or 8-week online program? Will be they be grandfathered?

A: *If that program is moving to an accelerated online format, then yes. A transition plan will be developed for each student who is in a program that is changing from online to accelerated online.*

Q: Has anyone modeled revenue sharing with departments who are offering these courses or faculty who are teaching these courses?

A: *Yes, AP provided a tool for us to use in modeling the revenues and expenses associated with each program. This tool has been shared with the deans.*

Q: Why could we not just hire faculty, staff, invest in marketing and increase enrollment ourselves – then we would not have to revenue share?

A: *If we had the resources to do those things, we would have done them. WE sought out a partner who would invest the resources we don't have in marketing and recruitment to bring in students who we wouldn't have otherwise captured. Note: AP does not provide faculty; we hire all faculty delivering course content for NKU programs.*

Q: Are colleges forming online leadership groups?

A: *The College of Arts and Sciences is forming an online education committee. Other colleges may be doing so as well. Please check with your dean for additional information.*

Q: How this will impact Summer teaching: will it be off contract or a part of our annual course load?

A: *At this point, NKU is not changing the workload policy as detailed in the faculty handbook. The current Summer/Winter Compensation Policy remains unchanged, although the Faculty Senate Budget Committee has submitted recommendations for changes to that policy.*

Q: How can budget committee assess/comment (if that was possible) on financial implication if contract is not well defined?

A: *Greater detail on the revenue sharing scenarios is available on the Provost's online website.*

Q: Can we force faculty to teach courses online?

A: *Workload is assigned by the chair following consultation with the faculty. Faculty can choose the format in which they teach, providing the needs of the department and its students are being met.*

Q: The current faculty handbook says that a faculty member cannot have a summer research grant (from Faculty Senate) and teach. Will this be waived for the accelerated online programs?

A: *As per the faculty handbook, any faculty member receiving a summer fellowship from the Faculty Senate must devote 100% of their time to their research during the summer months. This policy does allow for a faculty member to teach a course during the May term.*

- Q: Should courses in accelerated programs be paid at the same rate as regular semester courses or paid at summer school rate?
- A: *The current Summer/Winter Compensation Policy does not differentiate between length of courses or format in which they are taught.*
- Q: What is the policy for online student course load?
- A: *Same as for face to face students. The course load policy does not differentiate based on delivery mode.*
- Q: If a NKU student is taking an accelerated class, is tuition due on the accelerated or NKU due date?
- A: *Tuition for all NKU students is due on the same date.*
- Q: What will happen with on-campus advisors for online programs once AP steps in?
- A: *Academic Partnerships does not employ advisors or provide advising to our students. They do employ retention specialists that assist students in registering for courses, accessing online platforms, etc. The responsibilities of campus advisors will not change.*
- Q: What will we do about mid-term grades in the accelerated format?
- A: *The reporting of mid-term grades will follow the current NKU policy.*
- Q: How will we handle course evaluations for TAs/academic coaches?
- A: *We have proposed adding a series of academic coach evaluation questions to the end of the faculty surveys, and allow faculty to add specific questions for individual coaches. A set of common questions for academic coach evaluation has been sent to the Faculty Senate for review and approval.*
- Q: How will we ensure quality of accelerated online offerings?
- A: *We are using Quality Matters to evaluate course quality as they are developed. The Academic Programs online implementation committee is developing a policy to ensure on-going quality.*
- Q: What is the timeline for course development?
- A: *First Faculty contact with AP course development specialist: 16 weeks prior to course "go live" date*
Course map developed: 14 weeks prior to go live
First Touch point, course 25% complete: 12 weeks prior to go live
Second touchpoint, course 50% complete: 8 weeks prior to go live
Third touchpoint, course 100% complete: 5 weeks prior to go live
Quality Review: 4 weeks prior to go live

Q: Does every assignment need an SLO?

A: *No, but a well-aligned course will have all the assessments aligned to the Student Learning Outcomes (Course Learning Objectives). Each assessment doesn't have to be aligned to all the SLOs, however all SLOs need to be measured via one or more assessment(s). For example in a course with four SLOs:*

- *modules 1 and module 3 assessments align with and measure SLO # 1;*
- *modules 2 and module 4 assessments align with and measure SLO # 2 and #3*
- *module 5, 6, and 7 assessments align with and measure SLO # 2 and #4*

Q: What will our policy be on opening course sites early?

A: *All course sites will open on the Friday before the Monday start date. Faculty may choose to open course sites earlier. Faculty should articulate that they will not respond to emails prior to the official course start date, if that is their intention.*

Q: How will we determine the role for the faculty lead versus the roles for the academic coaches/TAs in situations with multiple sections? Should this be standardized?

A: *This will be determined on a course by course basis. General guidelines:*

- *Orient part time faculty/academic coaches to course, paperwork expectations via an introductory call at least one week prior to the first week of class*
- *Monitor grading conducted by coaches periodically, requesting input from academic coaches about students at risk.*
- *Regularly assess quality of feedback given to students by academic coaches*
- *Communicate course/assignment/program changes to academic coaches*
- *Regular meetings/ communications with academic coaches during the term*
- *Communicate with Instructional Connections about performance of academic coaches*

Colleges may develop more comprehensive guidelines.

Q: How are coaches evaluated?

A: *Coaches are evaluated by the faculty of record at the end of the semester. The faculty senate is discussing how to revise our current evaluation process such that student may evaluate academic coaches.*

Q: What is the process for identifying coaches?

A: *Faculty members teaching large section courses may, upon approval of their department chair, request in academic coach from Instructional Connections (IC). To do so the faculty members fills out this form in detail and submits to IC. IC will send a list of coaches that meet the qualifications requested by the faculty member. The faculty member then ranks orders the list in terms of preference and returns to IC. Prior to the beginning of the course, IC will arrange a conference call between the faculty member and coach to discuss the course details, arrange for access to the course LMS, etc. If at any point*

during the course the coach is not performing up to expectations, the faculty member may contact IC who will promptly remove and replace the coach. At the end of the term the faculty member will be asked to complete a short survey regarding the coach's performance.

Q: How will the revenue share for the accelerated online programs be managed in the new budget model?

A: *100% of the tuition will be treated as direct revenue and go to the college where the course resides. The agreement with Academic Partnerships calls for a 50% revenue share (defined as all tuition charged to students meeting the definition of an accelerated online student, after any promotional scholarships or discounts). This 50% will then be charged to that college as a direct expense.*

Q: For students actively enrolled in a face-to-face program who seek to switch to an accelerated online program at NKU, will there be a unique process to change the student to the accelerated online specialization, or will we just submit the program declaration through SAP to make this change per current processes?

A: *The current process used to declare a program through SAP will continue to be used.*

Q: Will those students who switch to an accelerated online program be coded as an AP students?

A: *Yes, those students will be coded as accelerated online students.*

Q: What defines an accelerated online student?

A: *Any student who is majoring in one of our accelerated online programs, and is recruited after the official accelerated online start date is an accelerated online student.*

Q: For students enrolled in an online program at NKU who have stopped out for two years, will they follow the university's normal readmission application process (apply.nku.edu) to become re-matriculated?

A: *Yes, undergraduates need to reapply after a two year step out and graduate students after a four year step out, following existing NKU procedures. NKU's website will direct them to the appropriate page in order to reapply for admission.*

Q: How will placement testing work with this expanded online population? Will there be sufficient online seats of developmental courses for those required to take them?

A: *The placement testing process will not change. Students who are not local will be referred to a testing site in their area.*

Q: What happens to NKU online faculty not affiliated with the partner?

A: *Faculty teaching online in courses or programs not affiliated with Academic Partnerships will continue to be supported as per current processes and systems.*

- Q: If enrollments grow as much as the case studies on the website indicate, how will current faculty accommodate those?
- A: *Additional sections will be created to accommodate increasing enrollment and the department will hire additional faculty (full time or part time), and/or use academic coaches available through Instructional Connections. Instructional Connections is a provider of high quality instructional support services to colleges and universities that offer online courses and degree programs. Academic coaches hired through Instructional Connections are vetted and hired by the department only if their credentials and experience are acceptable to the department.*
- Q: Could it be re-clarified what kind of company the partner is? In an email sent out to my department this week, it was referred to as an "online university" that NKU is subcontracting with.
- A: *This description is not accurate. Academic Partnerships' mission is to help universities increase enrollment and revenue through the delivery of high-quality accelerated online degree programs. Their services include recruiting qualified students into these programs, assisting with retention of online students through to graduation, and marketing the online programs. The relationship between NKU and Academic Partnerships is a partnership, not a subcontracted teaching unit. See this website for more information: <http://www.academicpartnerships.com/>*
- Q: Will the students in the affiliated programs be NKU students?
- A: *Yes, they will be NKU students, counted in our enrollment numbers, and their degrees will be NKU degrees.*
- Q: Will NKU's academic calendar be changing?
- A: *Yes. Based on the recommendation of the working groups and the requirements of our enrollment and financial systems, beginning in Fall 2018 NKU will no longer offer 8-week courses in online or face to face format. All courses will be offered either as 7-week or full semester courses. This does not affect summer or winter sessions. For the Spring 2018 semester, faculty teaching current 8-week online or face to face courses may choose to continue with the 8-week format or, in consultation with their department chairs and deans, migrate to the 7-week format. Any general education online courses that will be offered in support of the new accelerated online programs will be offered as 7-week courses beginning in Spring 2018.*
- Q: If so, is this move being driven by the partner?
- A: *No, in addition to the reasons cited above, the 7-week format allows faculty and students participating in two sessions in the same semester to have a one week break between sessions.*

- Q: I know the company that supplies academic coaches is an outside vendor to AP and works with AP closely, but has NKU signed on and/or approved their use?
- A: *Yes, NKU has signed an MOU with Instructional Connections to provide academic coaches as needed. The decision of whether to use these academic coaches will reside with the faculty, department and college.*
- Q: At what point will Adult Learner Programs and Services (ALPS) stop communicating with prospective students about current online majors moving to the accelerated online format?
- A: *AP will begin marketing the new accelerated online programs on October 1. Until then, each ALPS will continue to assist departments and colleges with the marketing of these programs.*
- Q: What analysis has been done on the impact of these accelerated online programs to the PACE program?
- A: *The PACE program will continue as is and PACE students can take any of these online courses while remaining PACE students.*
- Q: What happens if a student in an accelerated online program decides to change to an in-person major? How are they counted?
- A: *They will be recoded as a ground student for NKU and are no longer counted in the partner program and no longer revenue shared.*
- Q: Will we receive some type of report on how AP is spending our marketing dollars, what the marketing efforts are, etc.?
- A: *Yes, as part of our ongoing partnership, the AP Managing Director will communicate all efforts to grow enrollments. Further, AP will conduct semiannual business updates, which will review marketing channels, successes and opportunities. As a clarification, AP is spending their own marketing dollars, not NKU funds.*
- Q: When will we know if courses like ENG 101, ENG 291W, or STA 205 need to be offered and in how many sections?
- A: *Recommendations for numbers of sections will be made after AP begins marketing and recruiting on October 1.*
- Q: What is the minimum number of students needed for a course to run?
- A: *This is determined by the program and college.*
- Q: What compensation will we offer to faculty who are revamping their courses to be offered online in the 7-week format?
- A: *Faculty participating in CITE training will be compensated per the current CITE guidelines. Faculty working with an academic coach for the first time will receive one*

reassigned course. Program leads will receive a course reassignment during the semester that their program moves into the accelerated online format.

Q: How is faculty load and the pay managed for those teaching in an accelerated program/course?

A: *Faculty load and pay are the same as for face to face teaching, and are determined by the department chair, in consultation with the faculty member.*

Q: When will we know enrollment projections?

A: *Not until October 1 for programs launching in January, which we recognize is a challenge. Course reassignments for faculty members who are using a coach for the first time don't need to be in semester that the course is taught.*

Q: What about compensation for part-time faculty who will be teaching an accelerated online course and using an academic coach?

A: *Department chairs can make case for hire at higher rate for the first semester a part time faculty is working with an academic coach. There is no central policy, but will be worked out with department chairs and deans.*

Q: What about service courses that need to be taught in an accelerated online format (eg. Math, English, Communications& Economics)?

A: *We will figure out way to manage enrollment in those courses.*

Q: Will there be enrollment restrictions on courses?

A: *Yes, for sections, but not for courses; as sections fill then we will open more sections.*

Q: What about advising holds?

A: *There will be no advising holds on accelerated online students. We will revisit this decision 1 year from now and see how it is working. As a reminder, 2 years ago we didn't have advising holds.*

Q: What about minor carousels?

A: *Not every minor will be available to accelerated online students. Those available will have a carousel. Accelerated online students can only choose an accelerated online minor.*

Q: Will we be creating a roster of minors that can be pursued by accelerated online students?

A: *Emily Detmer-Goebel, CAS Associate Dean has created this.*

Q: How much will students pay?

A: *All accelerated online students pay the same rate, regardless of location.*

- Q: At the undergraduate level – how can we call these accelerated if it will take students 6 years to finish if they take one course/term?
A: *Accelerated – describes what a student can do, not what they might.*
- Q: Course carousels – once we sign off we are we contractually obligated to run those courses?
A: *Yes, as long as enrollments are sufficient.*
- Q: Who signs off on course carousels?
A: *The Chair and the Dean for every course offered in the carousel need to sign off.*
- Q: What is the plan for adding 7-week courses to the registration website for Spring?
A: *Accelerated online courses will be added to the schedule up to the Nov.2 registration start date.*
- Q: Transfer affairs – need to figure out better system for expediting transfer credits, especially with transferring undergraduate credits for grad students.
A: *Kim Scranage has been charged with studying this.*
- Q: Will we still have May and Winter terms?
A: *Yes*
- Q: Will the carousels contain 120 credits?
A: *Yes*
- Q: How can staff at AP access Canvas?
A: *On a course by course and person by person request.*
- Q: What is the revenue sharing?
A: *The agreement with Academic Partnerships calls for a 50% revenue share (defined as all tuition charged to students meeting the definition of an accelerated online student, after any promotional scholarships or discounts).*
- Q: What are the revenue share scenarios?
A: *These are available on the Provost's website under Faculty Resources. <https://academicaffairs.nku.edu/faculty-resources/AOP.html>*
- Q: What happens if existing students are taking an accelerated course?
A: *They are not included in the revenue share.*

- Q: Is there a minimum number of students required for an accelerated online course?
A: *Same as now, managed by department chair and dean.*
- Q: What about developmental courses?
A: *Yes, students may need these and we are in the process of developing.*
- Q: Is there an impact on the current summer/winter compensation policy?
A: *At this point, no. That policy is under discussion by the Faculty Senate Budget Committee but is not part of the planning for the accelerated online programs.*
- Q: Are we moving to shorter semesters?
A: *The Registrar is chairing a work group on the length of the semester. More information will come regarding this question.*
- Q: If we grow, what about number of faculty required to teach these courses?
A: *New revenues will stay with the colleges, allowing the hiring of new faculty.*
- Q: What about teach out plans?
A: *Current online students in programs that are moving to the accelerated format will be able to take the 7-week courses and complete their course of study. Departments may also continue to offer online classes in the semester-long format if faculty resources allow.*
- Q: ONLA – open to everyone?
A: *Yes. Seats must be available for accelerated online program students, but anyone can populate open seats. AP's enrollment specialists attempt to get students registered early. Our system allows students to register up to first day of class.*
- Q: What are we doing about General Education?
A: *We are working with departments to provide enough general education and other courses to cover the requirements for gen ed, minors, and focus areas.*
- Q: What kind of enrollment numbers do you need to use an academic coach?
A: *This decision is up to the department.*
- Q: How will we ensure academic quality?
A: *Assessment for online programs is the same as face-to-face in terms of student learning outcomes, course evaluations, etc.*
- Q: Are admission requirements the same?
A: *Yes.*

- Q: Will AP retention specialists be able to see grades?
A: Yes.
- Q: Do students have to take a test to prove that they can be a successful online learner?
A: No.
- Q: Can a faculty member teach all 4 courses during first 7 weeks?
A: Yes. *As always, teaching assignments and workload are worked out between the faculty member and department chair.*
- Q: What about equivalence of experience with respect to requiring events outside of class?
A: *Adaptations will need to be made. In general, we need to be more mindful of designing equivalent experiences for all students.*
- Q: What is our initial contract with AP?
A: *8 years. However, the contract is to be reviewed annually by both partners and continued or modified by mutual agreement.*
- Q: Will new revenues be reinvested?
A: Yes.
- Q: Did we check AP references?
A: Yes.
- Q: Did AP just prematurely end a 20-year contract with Ohio University?
A: No.
- Q: Will revenue be shared on tuition waivers?
A: *No. Employees of NKU and their spouses, legal dependents, and employees of other Kentucky postsecondary public institutions who are utilizing tuition waivers will be excluded from the revenue share.*
- Q: Security concerns with online courses – cheating on exams, etc.
A: *This is an area of concern, with our current online programs as well. CITE can provide assistance as new security tools are integrated into Canvas. ITAC is also working on these issues this semester.*
- Q: Accessibility?
A: *As a university, we are behind on accessibility and are working to catch up. AP will work individually with faculty on this and the Provost's Office will look into providing support through faculty development workshops. We are looking to the new Center for Teaching and Learning for accessibility training as well.*

- Q: Partnerships with local libraries to help with access for students?
A: *Steely Library is well integrated with the state library system. We will continue to explore partnerships with schools, education centers, and other resource units.*
- Q: Where does AP focus marketing?
A: *Starts with 50-mile radius, then 100-mile, then radiates out.*
- Q: *What type of marketing does AP conduct, and does NKU have input?*
A: *AP has a comprehensive marketing plan that includes a mix of digital venues (paid search, organic content, social media, etc.). Their field personnel promote the degrees to regional employers, as well as attend conferences to promote the portfolio of programs. They also have a dedicated Enrollment Services personnel to recruit students. NKU is added to AP's employer portal with large national employers. NKU MarComm and program leads review and approve all marketing materials.*
- Q: How can you state these are students we would not otherwise enroll, if recruiting within 50, 100-mile radius?
A: *Because we do not currently offer accelerated online programs that these students are seeking. These are not traditional students.*
- Q: Should Academic Coaches from Instructional Connections have NKU email addresses?
A: *No*
- Q: What type of faculty development will there be for programs beginning in spring and beyond?
A: *The Provost has requested a list of workshops that faculty are interested in for spring. Her office will coordinate the faculty development opportunities until the Center for Teaching and Learning is launched.*
- Q: When can advisors begin advising the students in the programs that are part of the partnership?
A: *As of November 1, 2017, the marketing is launched for all Phase 1 programs, and advisors may advise students into the programs.*
- Q: How were programs chosen for the partnership, why are some programs not eligible, and do programs (new and existing) have a choice?
A: *Programs were nominated by the deans, and chosen in consultation with AP based on market analyses and market demands.*

Q: Where and what is the information on break-even for the programs in the partnership?

A: *The spreadsheets provided to the deans/departments can be used to run these scenarios, but it's important to remember that all revenue from these programs is new revenue.*

Q: What does 50% revenue shared mean, is this part of budget model, and is central keeping 15%, which means the college is only receiving 35% of the 50% net?

A: *The 50% revenue share is incorporated into the model (see prior response to question on how revenue share will be managed in the budget model. The question of the 15% participation rate is still being discussed.*

Q: How much do we pay for coaches and do colleges have to pay for that out of their 35%?

A: *Yes, the colleges are responsible for paying the academic coaches. Cost for coaches varies based on expertise, but is approximately \$30/student.*