
5.74 NDU Course Approval Policy

DATE LAST UPDATED: 21 September 2009

1. This policy establishes the process for the review, approval, and certification of new courses at the National Defense University. The responsible officer for approving courses within a component is the commandant or director, on the recommendation of the academic dean. Approved courses are certified by the University Provost for inclusion in the University's online catalog and for the award of credit on official university transcripts (when applicable). The policy outlines procedures for courses which are awarded official credit on an NDU transcript and those not for credit on an NDU transcript.

a. For courses awarded credit on an NDU transcript. Course quality is evaluated through a peer review process. The review is conducted within a component using the guidelines in Attachment 1 and, at a minimum, should include the course plan, materials, and methodology. Cross-component composition of review committees is highly encouraged. The size and composition of committees approving courses vary according to the component's needs and resources. Courses, such as electives, with more than one component involved in oversight, will require the component where the faculty member of record is assigned has course approving authority (refer to the University Electives program for additional information). When courses are offered across components, it's recommended the review committee include faculty members from the respective components. The committee generally makes a recommendation to the academic dean; who in turn, will recommend approval to the commandant or director. The provost, upon course approval, will certify the courses for entry on official transcripts and the University Registrar's Office will award an appropriate course number and annotate the credits. The office of the registrar will also maintain the historical records of certified courses.

b. For courses which do not award credit on an NDU transcript. Non-credit awarding NDU courses merit the same rigorous process that credit-bearing courses go through. The peer review process establishes a guide to measure the need, effectiveness, resources, and rigor of each course. Once this is complete, the University Registrar's Office will award an appropriate course number and note the course earns no credit. Courses not appearing on the transcript do not require certification by the Office of the Provost. However, components must maintain course review records for those courses offered at NDU. Non-credit bearing courses can be included in the University catalog.

2. Components may submit approved courses for certification to the Office of the Provost at any time throughout the year, while recognizing internal time constraints for publication of the university catalog. The catalog is published every two years; and is updated as necessary before the start of each term. When submitting approved courses for certification, commandants and directors or academic deans will certify to the University Provost that all four standards were met. Documents for certification will include the name

of the course, faculty member of record, and a brief description of the course for the university catalog.

3. This policy replaces National Defense University new course approval policy dated 8 July 2005.

Attachment 1 to the NDU Course Approval Policy

1. **Standards.** Courses approved for credit must meet the following four minimum standards. These standards recognize that to achieve academic rigor and integrity, no department or component operates in a vacuum and so, the impact on total programs must be protected by ensuring courses meet appropriate standards.

a. **Academic/Intellectual Rigor.** Before awarding graduate credit, academic rigor must be ascertained using the guidelines below. Courses should have a foundation based on scholarship and research and include diversity among the concepts and ideas. Readings and class materials should be reviewed for appropriateness. Required assignments are also reviewed for appropriateness for graduate credit.

1. The review for academic rigor may include the following considerations:

Does the course encourage an analysis or synthesis of material, maximize the students' potential, and demand the use of higher-level thinking, building on previous knowledge?

Is the course challenging and does it engage the student's exploration of the topic through an active learning environment that respects the academic freedom of the students and faculty?

Are students fully engaged in the learning environment early and throughout the course?

Does the course clearly illustrate the basis of content in theory, philosophy, research, and application?

2. The second element of academic rigor is that the component must ensure the faculty member has the expertise and qualifications to teach the proposed course at the graduate level.