



Instructor Communication Policy

NVU Online courses rely on timely and meaningful communication. Through technical resources, our instructors are expected to:

- Explain information and facilitate understanding
- Interact with students in the class
- Encourage students to develop and share ideas
- Pose questions and guide discussions
- Give formative and summative feedback
- Share insight and alternative perspectives

In order for the communication to be effective, interesting, and useful, it is important that students understand what is expected from them as well as what to expect from their instructor.

Response Time

Either NVU email or Canvas mail is the preferred method of communication for private messages between students and their instructors. While instructors are certainly not expected to be available to respond to messages 24 hours a day, students should always receive a response within 48 hours. Standard time for feedback and grades on assignments should be 1 week unless otherwise indicated.

In order to stay engaged in the class and meet the course requirements, students are expected to login to the online course room at least once every 3-4 days. Instructors are expected to login, check the status, and engage in the online course room at least once every 2-3 days. Login frequency should always be increased prior to an assignment due date.

Discussion Forums

Instructors are not expected to respond to every post from every student every week, but they need to be visible and engaged in every discussion forum every week. Some strategies for doing that:

- Start off the discussion with a "Weekly Summary" of the prior discussion and tie it to the current week – this scaffolds the contents so students can see how everything ties together while demonstrating that the instructor has read the posts from the previous week
- Answer student questions – this is especially important if the student addresses the instructor directly
- Share supplemental resources where relevant – students can get off topic but sometimes that isn't a bad thing so if it's relevant, give them more information
- Ask probing questions to move students along in the thought process – sometimes students miss the mark and need guidance
- Tie in course materials to references students make in their posts

Code of Conduct

The classroom is a professional environment where academic discussions and learning take place. Students expect that you will make every effort to maintain this environment as a safe place for them to share opinions, ideas, and beliefs.

Students have the right and privilege to learn in a class free from harassment and disruption. Instructors should contact the NVU Online Office if they believe a student is demonstrating disruptive or harassing behavior. Students found to be guilty of violating this code of conduct are subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

FERPA

"The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. The law applies to all schools which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education."

The following guidelines should be followed to ensure the protection of students:

- All papers or lab reports containing student names and grades should be secured. Students should not have access to the scores and grades of others in the class.
- All computer files and records in Canvas or other online components are considered educational records protected by the act and cannot be shared without explicit written permission from the student.
- Students have the right to expect that any material they submit in a course, as well as their names and other identifying information, will not be viewable by guests or other individuals permitted access to the course. The exception to this is cases in which students have given written, signed consent. (Verbal consent is insufficient.)
- Instructor may not allow other University personnel access to any data in a course that contains personally identifiable information unless the individual has a legitimate educational interest in the course.
- Instructor may not discuss any details regarding a specific student with any unauthorized person.
 - Student details cannot be discussed with spouses, parents, employers, et.al. without the student's written permission.
 - Because the ownership of non-NVU email cannot be verified, no student specific information should be communicated via email unless it is the student's own @NVU.edu email account.

Social Media

While the use of social media in a course should be limited, FERPA does not forbid instructors from using social media in the classroom, but guidelines should be followed to ensure the protection of students.

- When students are assigned to post information to public or social media platforms outside of Canvas, they should be informed that their material may be viewed by others.
- Students should not be required to release personal information on a public site.
- Instructor comments or grades on student material should not be made public.
- While not clearly required by law, students under the age of 18 should get their parent's consent to post public work.
- Instructors should avoid using social media as a substitute for tools available in Canvas. For example, Facebook should NOT be used as a substitute for Canvas's discussion forums.

Other Communication Requirements

- Follow the established course start and end dates as indicated in the course bulletin.
- If modules are on timed release, they should be scheduled to open at least 24 hours before the week begins.
- Monitor assignment submissions and use announcements to remind students of upcoming deadlines.
- Early in the course, establish a regular schedule for when you will be logging into the course and communicate this to students.
- Give prior notice to your students and to the NVU Online Office in the event that you will be unable to log into the course for several days or more.
- Provide meaningful feedback on student work using clear and concise language.
- Make sure you have immediate and predictable access to the same technology that is required for students in your course.
- Post final course grades within 48 hours of the course end date.
- If an instructor and student negotiate an extension of any kind including an incomplete grade, specific details need to be clearly documented via email with time stamps. If an incomplete is approved, the instructor is expected to adhere to the above communication policy (specifically the 48 hour response time) for the duration of the extension.
- NVU Online does **NOT** have professors. Professors and Associate Professors are exclusively campus-based tenure-track faculty while NVU Online has remote instructors. There has been some confusion about this, notably from students searching for instructors in the directory, so please modify signatures, syllabi, etc. as needed. NVU Online instructors are asked to use the standard titles Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.