

APPENDIX D – APPLICATION GUIDELINES [INSTITUTION] Course Redesign Initiative

[NAME], provost and vice president for academic affairs, invites participation in a new campuswide initiative to redesign large-enrollment, multisection undergraduate courses by using technology-supported active-learning strategies. The goals are to achieve improvements in learning outcomes and reductions in instructional costs. During the period 2015–18, the program expects to support [five] course redesign projects.

The goals of the program are to

- Adopt new ways to improve student-learning outcomes
- Demonstrate those improvements by way of rigorous assessment
- Reduce institutional costs
- Free up instructional resources for other purposes
- Develop the internal capacity of [INSTITUTION's] faculty and staff to continue the redesign process on an ongoing basis

[INSTITUTION] will build on the successful models and lessons learned from course redesign programs conducted by the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT).

It is important to remember what NCAT means by course redesign. Course redesign is the process of redesigning whole courses (rather than individual classes or sections) to achieve better learning outcomes at a lower cost by taking advantage of the capabilities of information technology. Course redesign is not just about putting courses online. It is about rethinking the way we deliver instruction, especially large-enrollment core courses, in light of the possibilities that new technology offers.

The high level of success achieved in NCAT's course redesign programs can be attributed to selecting participants who were ready to succeed, teaching them the planning methodology and actively supporting them as they developed their redesign plans. Faculty and administrators involved in NCAT's course redesign programs have repeatedly indicated that understanding the planning methodology is the key to the success of their redesigns. And once learned, the methodology is easily transferable to other courses and disciplines. In the [INSTITUTION] program, we will replicate that process by providing prospective participants with a variety of planning resources through a series of workshops and consultations.

Following an orientation workshop on November 15, 2015, described in the [Call to Participate](#), the program will follow a seven-stage application process.

Stage One: Establishing Course Redesign Teams

The first step in developing a redesign plan is to form a course redesign team. Successful course redesign is the product of a team effort. It is neither a faculty project nor an administrative project nor a professional staff project. It takes *all* of those people—because it is a team effort.

Those interested in participating in the program should establish redesign teams that include the following types of people.

- *Faculty Experts.* Course redesign requires that faculty experts explicitly identify a course's desired learning outcomes and agree on course content. Most courses appropriate for course redesign are typically taught by more than one faculty member. To ensure course consistency, faculty experts must work together on the redesign—resolving any differences in how the course will be offered—and must collaboratively plan the most effective way to accomplish the redesign goals.
- *Administrators.* Because redesigns affect multiple sections, large numbers of students, and academic policies and practices, it is important that the team involve academic administrators. The level of those administrators will depend on the organization of the institution and the institution's size. For some, it will be the provost or academic vice president or designee; for others, it will be a dean or department chair. Those team members play important roles when institutional issues arise such as changes in scheduling or the use of classroom space. If unexpected issues arise in the process of redesign implementation, administrators can help the team resolve them quickly and effectively across institutional offices.
- *Technology Professionals.* These team members provide expertise so that the redesign goals can get accomplished in ways that make the technology as easy as possible for students to use. Technology professionals contribute ideas about how to increase interaction with content as well as with other students. They also suggest design approaches that make sure the technology will not limit students' learning options.
- *Assessment Experts.* In Chapter VII of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology](#), NCAT sets forth straightforward methods whereby student learning in the redesigned course can be compared with student learning in the traditional course. But it's useful to include on the team a member who is knowledgeable about assessment and research design—especially if the institution seeks to measure additional facets of the redesign such as performance in downstream courses or student satisfaction. Such expertise may be found in a department of psychology or a department of education or in offices of institutional research.
- *Instructional Designers.* If your campus is fortunate enough to have instructional designers on staff, you may wish to add one to the team. An instructional designer can help guide the re-sequencing of instruction and provide insight into learning theory and modularization. Subject matter experts are not always learning experts, and such guidance can be crucial.

Stage Two: Identifying the Course

Some courses may be more ready than others to be the focus of a large-scale redesign effort. Because of prior experiences with technology-mediated teaching and learning and because of numerous attitudinal factors, some faculty members may be more ready to engage in large-scale redesign efforts to achieve the program's goals.

Those interested in participating in the redesign program will be asked to think carefully about which courses are good candidates for redesign and to respond to the following Course Readiness Criteria.

Completing the readiness criteria enables each team to assess collectively its strengths and weaknesses and thereby understand what it needs to do to address gaps in its preparation early in the process. No team perfectly meets all of the readiness criteria, especially at the beginning of the planning process. Every team will discover things it needs to work on in order to carry out a successful course redesign. The readiness criteria are designed to help teams select courses with the highest chances of success. Answering the following questions as honestly as possible—and providing data to support the answers—will lead to the most positive outcome for a team's project.

As noted earlier, this program requires the establishment of a redesign team because of the multiple dimensions involved in large-scale course redesign. The team's first activity is to respond to the following readiness criteria questions. In some cases, the team will be asked to read an article, discuss the reading as a team, and make a tentative decision, which may change as the team learns more about the redesign process.

1. Course Choice

Choosing the right course is the first step in a successful course redesign project. Courses that face academic or resource problems or both are the best targets. What impact will redesigning the course have on the curriculum, on students, and on the institution; that is, why do you want to redesign this course? Please be specific by providing data on pass rates, enrollment numbers, and so on.

Is there an academic problem in this course such as a high failure rate? Does the course face a resource problem such as how to meet increased enrollment demand with no commensurate increase in resources? Is the redesign linked to some larger institutional goal such as a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a campus strategic plan, or a reaccreditation process?

2. Redesign Model

When you develop your redesign plan, you will be asked to select a redesign model. Please read Chapter III of *How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology*, which describes six possible models. At this point in the planning process, which redesign model do you think would be most appropriate for your redesign? Why?

When you look at the models chosen by successful redesign projects, you will notice that certain disciplines select particular models. For instance, math uses the emporium model, foreign languages use the replacement model, and so on. What aspects of the model you are thinking about using fit your particular discipline and your particular students? Have other successful course redesign projects in your discipline used this model?

3. Assessment Plan

When you develop your redesign plan, you will be asked to select an assessment model. Please read Chapter VII of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology](#), which describes four possible models. At this point in the planning process, which assessment model do you think would be most appropriate for your redesign? Why?

Successful large-scale redesign efforts begin by identifying the intended learning outcomes and developing alternative methods other than lecture or presentation for achieving them. Have those responsible for the course identified the course's expected or intended learning outcomes in detail? Do you have baseline data for the course in its traditional format? If so, please describe. If not, how do you plan to collect baseline data and compare it with student learning outcomes after you have redesigned the course?

4. Cost Savings Plan

When you develop your redesign plan, you will be asked to select a cost reduction strategy. Please read Chapter V of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology](#), which describes a number of strategies for producing cost savings. At this point in the planning process, which cost savings strategy do you think would be most appropriate for your redesign? Why?

What does cost savings mean in practice? In the past, cost reduction in higher education has meant loss of jobs, but that's not the NCAT approach. In every NCAT course redesign project, the cost savings achieved through the redesigned courses remained in the department that generated them; and the savings achieved were used for instructional purposes. By reducing the costs of offering redesigned courses, institutions have been able to reallocate and do what they would like to do if they had additional resources.

5. Learning Materials

Successful course redesign that improves student learning while reducing instructional costs is heavily dependent on high-quality, interactive learning materials. Today's commercial marketplace offers many reasonably priced materials that meet that requirement. NCAT has worked with more than 200 redesign projects that have considered, used, and continue to rely on such materials. Are participating faculty members able and willing to incorporate existing curricular materials in order to focus work on redesign issues rather than materials creation? What learning materials are you thinking about using in your redesign?

Ideally, one wants the faculty to have a "head start" in the redesign process if possible. Is the discipline one with a comparatively large existing body of technology-based curricular materials and/or assessment instruments? Are the faculty willing to use these materials if they meet course objectives? Will they employ an appropriate blend of using these materials and created "home-grown" materials in a non-dogmatic fashion? Are they willing to partner with other content providers such as commercial software producers or other universities who have developed technology-based materials?

6. Active Learning

Greater student engagement with course content and with one another, supported by information technology, is essential to achieving student success. Do the course faculty members have an understanding of and some experience with integrating elements of computer-based instruction into existing courses to support active learning?

Sound pedagogy is the key to successful redesign projects. When sound pedagogy leads, technology becomes an enabler for good practice rather than the driver. Some faculty may have a great deal of enthusiasm for large-scale redesign but little prior experience in this area. It is difficult to complete a successful project by starting from scratch. Having some experience helps to prepare for large-scale redesign efforts. Have the faculty systematically thought about and investigated alternative methods for empowering students to learn? What evidence can you provide to demonstrate faculty experience with integrating computing into existing courses in order to support active learning?

7. Collective Commitment

A collective commitment is a key factor for the success and the sustainability of redesign projects. As part of the planning process, you have been asked to form a course redesign team. Please describe the members of your team, the skills they bring to the project and what their roles will be in both the planning and implementation phases of the project. Please read Chapter XIV of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology](#), which discusses how to achieve initial and ongoing consensus among faculty, campus offices, and senior administrators.

Are the faculty ready to collaborate? Have they engaged in joint conversations about the need for change? Are decisions about the course made collectively--in other words, beyond the individual faculty member level? Substantive changes cannot rely on faculty initiative alone because they are systemic and involve changes in such areas as policy (class meeting times, contact-hour requirements, governance approvals); budgeting (planning and processes that support innovation); systems (registration systems, classroom assignments); and, infrastructure (equipment purchase and deployment.) What is the level of support for the project beyond the departmental level?

Teams wishing to participate in the program should send a narrative addressing each of the course readiness criteria (about one page each) as the criteria apply to the selected course, *focusing on evidence that demonstrates the way the evidence meets each criterion.*

Please include with your proposal a cover page on which you:

- List all team members by name and include title, academic affiliation, phone number, and e-mail address for each one.
- Identify the person who is the primary contact for your team project, with the understanding that the primary contact will distribute communications appropriately with the rest of your team.

Team responses to the Course Readiness Criteria should be submitted electronically to [NAME], at [EMAIL ADDRESS].

Deadline for submission: January 15, 2016.

Stage Three: Planning for Redesign

Based on their responses to the Course Readiness Criteria, teams will be invited to participate in a second one-day workshop, “Developing the Proposal,” on February 28, 2016. This workshop will provide an in-depth understanding of the redesign process with emphasis on selecting an appropriate redesign model, determining how the redesign model will embody key pedagogical principles, planning for cost savings, assessing student learning outcomes, and developing a budget for the redesign project.

Workshop participants will be the core team members who will implement the redesign project. The workshop will also give participants an opportunity to share ideas, to obtain feedback from program staff, and to assess the quality of their proposal ideas in relation to others.

Prior to the workshop, teams will be asked to complete additional background reading about course redesign and to prepare a five-minute presentation about their tentative course redesign plans.

Stage Four: Developing Final Project Plans

Teams that participate in the February 28, 2016, workshop will be invited to submit final project plans according to a specified format, which includes both narrative and forms. The course redesign initiative team will provide individualized assistance as prospective participants prepare their plans. Teams will be encouraged to submit drafts of their plans for review and feedback before their final submissions.

Each final plan must include a project budget developed in consultation with [PROVOST/CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER]. Final proposals should be submitted electronically to [NAME] at [EMAIL ADDRESS].

Deadline for Submission of Final Plans: July 1, 2016.

[WHO] will review the final proposals and make final selections. In addition to selecting projects that are likely to succeed and to have the highest impact, the [INSTITUTION] program will give priority to working in a variety of academic disciplines.

Projects will be selected to participate in the program by July 15, 2016 so that teams can begin work in late summer.

Selection Criteria

- Large-enrollment courses may be courses with very large sections (e.g., traditional lecture courses) or courses that offer large numbers of smaller sections. In all cases, more than one person should be involved in teaching the course.
- The course selected for redesign should be facing an academic problem (e.g., low successful completion rates), a resource problem (e.g., inability to meet demand based on current resources), or a combination of both.
- The course selected for redesign must be at the undergraduate level.
- Participants must be fully committed to completely redesigning and delivering a large-enrollment course currently offered at [INSTITUTION].

Stage Five: Planning and Developing the Pilot

Participants must plan to conduct a pilot implementation during the spring 2017 term and collect data on comparative student-learning outcomes between traditional sections and redesigned sections. Pilot implementations should involve a substantial percentage of students enrolled in the course in order to test the efficacy of the redesign. Pilots do not have to involve all students and sections but should be designed such that they can scale to all sections if successful.

Project teams will be expected to engage in focused on-campus planning during the summer and fall of 2016. They will complete redesign preparations, finalize project teams, train faculty and staff, perform redesign activities, modify existing course materials when necessary, and incorporate additional content into course materials.

Stage Six: Piloting the Redesign

During spring 2017, project teams will conduct pilot implementations of their course redesigns. The teams will collect initial assessment data that compares student learning outcomes in the traditional course with those in the redesigned format. The teams will make adjustments in the course materials and organization, if needed, in preparation for a full implementation in the fall 2017 term.

Stage Seven: Implementing the Full Redesign

In fall 2017, project teams will fully implement their course redesigns and collect data on comparative student-learning outcomes and final instructional costs.

TIMELINE

October 1, 2015	Call to Participate Issued
November 15, 2015	Workshop #1: Orientation to Course Redesign
January 15, 2016	Responses to Course Readiness Instrument Due
February 28, 2016	Workshop #2: Developing the Proposal
March–May 2016	Course Teams Develop Final Plans
July 1, 2016	Course Teams Submit Final Proposals
July 15, 2016	Grants Awarded
Summer and Fall 2016	Project Planning and Development
Spring 2017	Course Redesign Pilots
June 2017	Interim Project Reports Due
June 2017	Workshop #3: Mid-Course Sharing

Summer 2017
Fall 2017
March 15, 2018
April 2018

Course Plan Revisions
Course Redesign Full Implementations
Final Project Reports Due
Workshop #4: Dissemination of Results

More information about the [INSTITUTION] program can be found at [WEBSITE URL].
You may also contact:

[NAME
PHONE
EMAIL ADDRESS]