FACULTY HANDBOOK

Revised November 2021

Message from the Provost

John Caron, EdD

Dear Faculty:

The Faculty Handbook is a guide for faculty and presents information about Excelsior College that is relevant to the faculty experience. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of policies and practices affecting Excelsior faculty. Although the Faculty Handbook is updated periodically, the responsibility remains with the faculty member to refer to the most recent policies to ensure that they have the most current version of the information.

The creation of this Faculty Handbook and its distribution by the Office of the Provost does not in any way change the legal rights or obligations of faculty members at Excelsior College. Further, as a guide, it is not a legally binding document. The policies, practices, procedures, guidelines, and standards referred to in this Faculty Handbook form a basic part of the essential employment understandings between members of the faculty and the college. The handbook does not constitute a contract between the individual and Excelsior College.

In addition to the policies of the College, schools and units have additional policies and practices that apply to faculty, some of which supplement the policies in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty members are advised to be familiar with all of these policies and practices.

Information about suggestions, corrections, additions, or deletions is welcome. Please contact **ECprovost@excelsior.edu**.

Sincerely,

John Caron, EdD
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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ABOUT EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

Excelsior College was founded in 1971 as the external degree program of the New York State Board of Regents. In 1998, the Board of Regents granted the College (then known as Regents College) an absolute charter to operate as a private, not-for-profit, independent college. As are all accredited colleges in the state, Excelsior College is a member of The University of the State of New York. Today, the College is governed by a board of trustees composed of individuals from across the United States who are prominent in the fields of business, education, government, and the professions.

Excelsior College awards associate and baccalaureate degrees in business, health sciences, liberal arts, nursing, public service, and technology, and master's degrees in business, health sciences, nursing, public service, and technology. More than 187,000 persons have earned degrees from Excelsior College.

Excelsior's student body represents a diverse group of adult learners.

▶ The average age of an Excelsior student is 36; about 47 percent are female, 53 percent are male.

▶ More than one-third of our enrolled students are from groups historically underrepresented in higher education.

▶ Thirty-six percent of our students are active-duty or reserve military personnel, and 15 percent are military veterans.

▶ Twenty percent of our students come from New York state; the remaining are from the rest of the United States and other nations.

The faculty of Excelsior College, both full-time and adjunct, are drawn from many colleges and universities as well as from industry and the professions. They teach our courses, establish and monitor academic policies and standards, determine degree requirements and the means by which credit may be earned, develop the content for all examinations, and recommend degree conferral to the Excelsior College Board of Trustees.

THE MISSION

Excelsior College provides educational opportunity to adult learners with an emphasis on those historically underrepresented in higher education. The College meets students where they are — academically and geographically — offering quality instruction and the assessment of learning.

EXCELSIOR CARES: WE ALL OWN THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The following guiding principles, collectively known as **Excelsior CARES,** *shape the environment in which we work and set the standard to which we hold ourselves. Each Excelsior employee is Compassionate, Agile, Respectful, and committed to Excellence and Service.*

Excelsior Is Compassionate: We go above and beyond to listen to and understand our students' and our colleagues' needs. We embrace and celebrate the diversity and unique talents of our students, staff, and faculty. We assume positive intent and are open to listening to all perspectives. We ask questions, seeking first to understand and to work toward common goals.

We create and foster a safe environment to make mistakes and speak up. We provide the support our students need to develop and succeed. We exhibit the behaviors we expect to see in others. We believe in leadership from the heart and strive to create an environment of collaboration, teamwork, and empowerment. We are empathetic, student-centered, and motivated by a people-first approach.

Excelsior Is Agile: As an institution, we embrace change as a necessary part of our growth. We design programs and services with students' needs and career goals in mind, meeting them where they are academically and geographically. We create an environment that promotes innovation to improve the student experience. We are committed to continuous quality improvement in everything we do. We believe in reaching across the College and working collaboratively to fulfill our shared goals. We proactively consider the implications of our actions on all stakeholders. We are flexible and responsive to our students and to each other.

Excelsior Is Respectful: We act respectfully toward all with whom we interact. We honor our past and acknowledge our challenges, seeing them as opportunities to work together to create a better future. We believe in our staff and faculty, and we invest in their capabilities. We empower them to be collaborative problem solvers, to create a foundation of trust, and to ensure an excellent student experience. We model honesty, integrity, and consideration for differences in all our interactions with colleagues, students, and the broader community.

Excelsior Is Excellence: We are committed to excellence in our programs, services, and operations. We achieve excellence when we meet and exceed the expectations and goals of our stakeholders as well as when we enable our students to be successful in their pursuits. We believe in the transformative power of education. We create a high-quality, individualized experience that enriches the lives of students in their personal and professional journeys.

Excelsior Is Service: Service to students is at the core of everything we do. We are empowered with the resources and training necessary to provide an excellent student experience. We are accountable to each other and to the student, and readily share information to enhance our capabilities. Each student's opportunity and challenge becomes our own. We take action and follow through to ensure that student needs are met. We serve our students with joy, enthusiasm, and dedication. Their success is our success.

FACULTY AT EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

Faculty positions at Excelsior College are filled by individuals who may serve the institution through various employee and/or contractual relationships with the College.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

The responsibilities and rights of faculty members at Excelsior College derive from their membership in a learned profession whose members, within a faculty, perform the dual function of cultivating areas of knowledge as coherently structured intellectual disciplines, and of educating students in these areas. Refer to the **Statement of Faculty Rights and Responsibilities** for a complete overview.

Statement of Academic Freedom

(Adopted from the American Association of University Professors, **www.aaup.org***.)*

1. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding and prior agreement with the home institution.

2. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the exercise of their various instructional responsibilities that contribute to the academic and professional success of students, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject or scholarship. Excelsior College does not endorse the introduction of personal opinions unsupported by experience and scholarship or controversial views that have no relation to the subject at hand.

3. College faculty are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances.

Excelsior College Teaching Philosophy

To teach at Excelsior College is to engage students individually and collectively, guide their learning, and assess their achievements. Excelsior students should expect instructional faculty to set clear academic standards, provide constructive feedback throughout the course, and provoke critical thinking. Because adult students best succeed when applying course content to build upon their prior experience, our instructional faculty help them to challenge their own thinking and to form connections between theory and practice, across disparate areas of knowledge, in diverse settings, and among divergent points of view.

A large investment of time from both students and instructional faculty is required to sustain a vibrant and effective online learning community. Excelsior College helps to provide instructional faculty with this time by supplying fully developed online courses, with materials and activities already designed and organized to support effective teaching and learning. A successful teaching experience at Excelsior College consists of a frequent and meaningful online/email presence in the course, attention to the diversity of the Excelsior student population, prompt and substantive responses to student needs, timely formative feedback on student work, and constructive involvement with student discussions and other learning activities.

FACULTY CATEGORIES AND ROLES

Faculty at Excelsior College are grouped into one of two categories, each with a distinct status:

1. **Member of the Faculty**
2. **Adjunct Faculty**

The dean of a particular school determines to which category an individual belongs based on established criteria common across the College. An individual may perform more than one faculty role and belong to more than one faculty category. These categories may be filled by full- or part-time faculty who are on site or off site.

Member of the Faculty

The category of Member of the Faculty is reserved for faculty who assume roles in school and collegewide decision-making processes. Individuals appointed as faculty committee members, program directors, and full-time faculty perform a role as members of the faculty at Excelsior College.

FACULTY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Each school at Excelsior College has a school curriculum committee that reviews curricular changes, approves new offerings, reviews assessment data, and makes recommendations for programmatic changes. Additionally, these committees are advisory to the dean on current issues within their fields or disciplines. Membership varies by school, but typically includes faculty program directors and school leadership.

The School of Undergraduate Studies has additional faculty curriculum committees by program. These committees may include external faculty and/or industry experts. The committees approve curricular changes and new programs.

Additionally, the schools have advisory committees. These committees in the Schools of Nursing, Undergraduate Studies (SUS), and Graduate Studies (SGS) provide essential advice, leadership, and support for the continuing development of high-quality education programs. The committees provide insight into trends affecting education, employment, and professional practice when appropriate. The advisory committees also provide guidance and assistance in program evaluation, offer recommendations on existing and future curricula, and implement strategic priorities within the schools. The advisory committees are program advocates and support public relations. The School of Nursing has just one nursing advisory committee. The SUS and SGS have program advisory groups by program. The undergraduate and graduate business programs have a shared advisory group.

FACULTY PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Faculty program directors (FPDs) are essential to the governance and academic success of Excelsior College. As academic leaders, FPDs are responsible for the creation of degree programs and the development, oversight, and evaluation of the curricula. They are also responsible for all aspects of managing faculty, including recruitment, supervision, mentoring, evaluation, and professional development.

Faculty program directors work closely with the deans, other academic leaders, and staff across the College. They ensure that programs and teaching are of the highest quality, current with trends in the discipline, and student-centered. Ongoing professional development, scholarship, and service to the College are also expectations of this position.

The primary responsibilities of faculty program directors include the following:

▶ Curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation

▶ Faculty management and development

▶ Facilitation of learning and student support

▶ Coordination and administration of courses, assessments, and guided learning activities

▶ Project management

▶ Communication and collaboration within the College community

▶ Professional development and community involvement

FULL-TIME FACULTY

The full-time faculty position is a non-tenured teaching role with responsibility for the development and revision of curricula in the faculty member's subject area. In addition, full-time faculty participate in the analysis of student learning outcomes and program reviews. Full-time faculty work closely with deans and other academic leaders, and staff across the College.

The primary responsibilities of full-time faculty include the following:

▶ Instruction of courses as designated by their position/contract

▶ Curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation

▶ Facilitation of learning and student support

▶ Coordination and administration of courses, assessments, and guided learning activities

▶ Project management

▶ Communication and collaboration within the College community

▶ Professional development and community involvement

Adjunct Faculty

The category of Adjunct Faculty is reserved for faculty who have a contingent relationship with the College and who do not meet the criteria for collegewide or school decision-making roles. The following sections describe the adjunct faculty roles and the related expectations and responsibilities.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY FOR ONLINE COURSES

The following list outlines the expectations for faculty who agree to serve as instructors and facilitators for an online course for Excelsior College.

1. Adhere to the **Excelsior Credo** in all interactions with members of the Excelsior College community, including students, staff, and other faculty members.

2. Fulfill all requirements and adhere to all College policies identified in this handbook. Most notably, instructional faculty must be aware of and adhere to the College policies that most directly impact instruction (see **Academic Policies and Procedures**).

3. Prepare to teach:

   a. Review the syllabus, textbooks, and related learning resources and course materials prior to the start of the term.

   b. Post a welcome message and introduction in the course discussion area prior to or within the first 24 hours of the course, including information about office hours. Encourage students to post introductions and welcome statements to each other.

   c. Conduct a minimum of one regularly scheduled office hour per week using the learning management system or other College-supported synchronous tools. The requirement to schedule office hours can also be met by letting students know that they can be prearranged by appointment. Office hours are intended to provide students with the ability to communicate with instructors in a real-time, synchronous environment. In the event that the office hours must be cancelled, students should be given advance notice and provided with information concerning alternative office hours.

   d. Demonstrate clear understanding of the **Course Participation Policy.** Review the weekly attendance report, verify their accuracy, handle student requests for excused absences and, if approved, note "Exception" in the learning management system (LMS).

   e. Contact students who appear in Early Alert reports to follow up on individual issues around participation or performance and recommend support services as appropriate.

4. Teach and facilitate the course:

   a. Respond to all student communications within two calendar days. If a request or concern requires additional time to resolve, please acknowledge receipt of the message within two calendar days.

   b. Post relevant announcements periodically to address upcoming activities, encourage use of resources and support services, clarify expectations, respond to student concerns, etc.

c. Ideally, log into the course daily. At a minimum, log into the course and engage with students at least 3 different days per week for 15-week courses and 4 different days per week for 8-week courses, including at least once during each weekend. Engagement includes posting discussion topics and responses, posting announcements, sending messages within the LMS, grading assignments, and posting assignment feedback. Promote discussion board participation by posting substantial responses to selected student postings at least three different days per week. *If these minimum engagement requirements cannot be met at any point during the course, please notify the member of the faculty overseeing the course and the students in advance.*

Substantial responses should include critical feedback or suggestions from the instructor that promote further student engagement, and not be simple agreement or a simple statement of encouragement.

5. Assess student learning:
    a. Assess student submissions and interactions promptly and substantively, and intervene as needed.
    b. When rubrics are provided, adhere to all rubrics to assess student learning.
    c. Provide each student with timely, substantial feedback on assignments that contribute to the final grade.
    d. Provide feedback to the class after team summaries have been posted for each discussion assignment.
    e. Provide formative feedback to each student midway through the course if not sooner. This evaluation should take the form of an email with comments based upon the components of all relevant scoring rubrics and work completed to date.
    f. Grade all formative assignments within seven calendar days of each assignment due date in 15-week courses and within four calendar days of each assignment due date in 8-week courses, and grade summative work by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the fifth calendar day after the end of the term.
    g. Submit grades in the LMS online grade book and keep the grade book current.

6. Course Wrap-Up and Completion:
    a. Grade all final, summative projects and submit final course grades by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the fifth day after the end of the term.
    b. Encourage students to complete the Excelsior College online course evaluation, which is available in all courses 10 days before the end of the term.
    c. Complete a faculty course evaluation within one week of the completion of the course term.
    d. Stay engaged in the course with any students who have been granted course extensions (incompletes). Be sure to adhere to policy guidelines and timelines.

7. Communicate with school faculty and staff:

The following list provides directions on how to contact the College regarding student or academic issues.

▶ *School of Undergraduate Studies*
Email **ugcourseissues@excelsior.edu** or contact the member of the faculty responsible for the course.

▶ *School of Graduate Studies*
Email **grad@excelsior.edu** or contact the member of the faculty responsible for the course.

▶ *Nursing*
Email **son-courses@excelsior.edu** or contact the member of the faculty responsible for the course.

▶ *Ombudsperson*
The Ombudsperson Office is responsible for serving students and staff who have questions or concerns pertaining to fee-related matters, College policies, and customer service issues. The associate ombudsperson is part of the ombudsperson team and reviews student refund appeals for Excelsior College courses and appeals for military deployment extensions and withdrawals. The associate ombudsperson can be contacted at: **ombudsperson@excelsior.edu**.

▶ *Troubleshooting*
The technical support team is available to help with any questions or problems related to the Excelsior College website, MyExcelsior accounts, the Excelsior College Library, online practice exams, or online courses. This includes questions or problems related to creating or signing into your MyExcelsior account, accessing online publications, participating in an online chat, or uploading assignments to an online course.

▶ Information on the resolution of technical problems can be found at **help.excelsior.edu.**

▶ *Faculty Connects* (**home.excelsior.edu/faculty**) is a portal to courses, college policies, the human resources management system, and general information about the schools and the College. Faculty Connects is intended to promote stronger engagement between instructional faculty, clinical faculty, course developers and the College; the use of developmental resources and information; peer-to-peer exchange of ideas; and sharing of information about the learning management system and other technologies.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY FOR HYBRID COURSES

The following list outlines the expectations for faculty who agree to serve as instructors and facilitators for a hybrid course for Excelsior College.

1. Adhere to the **Excelsior Credo** in all interactions with members of the Excelsior College community, including students, staff, and other faculty members.

2. Fulfill all requirements and adhere to all College policies identified in this handbook. Most notably, instructional faculty must be aware of and adhere to the College policies that most directly impact instruction (see **Academic Policies and Procedures**).

Some courses may be offered on sites approved through College's partnerships (e.g., the alliance with the federal government). Specific faculty guidelines for that eventuality will be provided.

3. Prepare to teach:

    a. Review the syllabus, textbooks, and related learning resources and course materials prior to the start of the term.

    b. Confer with appropriate staff if there are questions or concerns about course content or requirements.

    c. Develop syllabus for classroom portion of the course, as necessary, based upon online course outline, textbooks, and materials as available.

    d. Faculty who are new to Excelsior College are required to successfully complete the orientation for new course instructors prior to facilitating their first course. Exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the provost.

    e. Faculty who do not have experience using the learning management system (LMS) must complete the orientation for the current LMS.

    f. Faculty must agree to facilitate the course as it is designed, making no changes to content or implementation guidelines.

4. Manage the course:

    a. in the classroom:

        ▶ Teach the course with your classroom presence for each scheduled day for the entire time period scheduled. Should you be unable to meet any class session, contact the on-site program coordinator and schedule your substitute.

        ▶ Submit grades using the online gradebook.

        ▶ Submit the students' participation or absence through the LMS.

    b. online:

        ▶ Post a welcome message and introduction in the course discussion area prior to or within the first 24 hours of the course, including information about office hours. Encourage students to post welcome statements to each other.

▶ Conduct a minimum of one regularly scheduled office hour per week using the learning management system or other College-supported synchronic tools. The requirement to schedule office hours can also be met by letting students know that office hours can be arranged by appointment. Office hours are intended to provide students with the ability to communicate with instructors in a real-time, synchronous environment. In the event that the office hours must be cancelled, students should be given advance notice and provided with information concerning alternative office hours.

▶ Conduct all online course-related communication within the LMS communication tools.

▶ Demonstrate clear understanding of the **Course Participation Policy**. Review the weekly attendance report, verify their accuracy, handle student requests for excused absences and, if approved, note "Exception" in the LMS.

▶ Contact students who appear in Early Alert reports to follow up on individual issues around participation or performance and recommend support services as appropriate.

5. Teach and facilitate the course:

   a. Respond to all student communications within two calendar days. If a student concern requires additional time to resolve, please send an acknowledgment to the student to indicate receipt of the message within two calendar days.

   b. Post relevant announcements periodically to address upcoming activities, encourage use of resources and support services, clarify expectations, respond to student concerns, etc.

   c. Log into the course and engage with students at least:

      ▶ Three different days each week for 15-week courses.

      ▶ Four different days each week for 8-week courses.

      ▶ Engagement includes posting discussion topics and responses, posting announcements, sending messages within the LMS, grading assignments, and posting assignment feedback. *If these minimum engagement requirements cannot be met at any point during the course, please notify the member of the faculty overseeing the course and the students in advance.*

      ▶ Promote discussion board participation by posting substantial responses to selected student postings at least three different days per week.

Substantial responses should include critical feedback or suggestions from the instructor that promote further student engagement, and not be simple agreement or a simple statement of encouragement.

6. Assess student learning:

   a. Assess student submissions and interactions promptly and substantively, and intervene as needed.

b. When rubrics are provided, adhere to all rubrics to assess student learning.

c. Provide each student with timely, substantial feedback on assignments that contribute to the final grade.

d. Provide feedback to the class after team summaries have been posted for each discussion assignment.

e. Provide formative feedback to each student midway through the course if not sooner. This evaluation should take the form of an email with comments based upon the components of all relevant scoring rubrics and work completed to date.

f. Grade all formative assignments within seven calendar days of each assignment due date in 15-week courses and within four calendar days of each assignment due date in 8-week courses, and grade summative work by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the fifth calendar day after the end of the term.

g. Submit grades in the LMS online grade book and keep the grade book current.

7. Course Wrap-Up and Completion:

a. Grade all final, summative projects and submit final course grades by 5:00 PM Eastern time on the fifth day after the end of the term.

b. Encourage students to complete the Excelsior College online course evaluation, which is available in all courses 10 days before the end of the term.

c. Complete a faculty course evaluation within one week of the completion of the course term.

d. Stay engaged in the course with any students who have been granted course extensions (incompletes). Be sure to adhere to policy guidelines and timelines.

8. Communicate with school faculty and staff:

a. On-site portion of the course:

▶ Contact the program coordinator or program director responsible for the course or the assistant or associate dean via email or telephone.

b. Online portion of the course:

▶ *School of Undergraduate Studies*
Email **ugcourseissues@excelsior.edu** or contact the member of the faculty responsible for the course.

▶ *School of Graduate Studies*
Email **grad@excelsior.edu** or contact the member of the faculty responsible for the course.

▶ *Nursing*
Email **son-courses@excelsior.edu** or contact the member of the faculty responsible for the course.

▶ *Ombudsperson*
The Ombudsperson Office is responsible for serving students and staff who have questions or concerns pertaining to fee-related matters, College policies, and customer service issues. The associate ombudsperson is part of the ombudsperson team and reviews student

refund appeals for Excelsior College courses and appeals for military deployment extensions and withdrawals. The associate ombudsperson can be contacted at: **ombudsperson@excelsior.edu**.

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▶ Information on the resolution of technical problems can be found at **help.excelsior.edu.**

▶ *Faculty Connects* (**home.excelsior.edu/faculty**) is a portal to courses, college policies, human resources management system, and general information about the schools and the College. Faculty Connects is intended to promote stronger engagement between instructional faculty, clinical faculty, course developers and the College; the use of developmental resources and information; peer-to-peer exchange of ideas; and sharing of information about the learning management system and other technologies.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY FOR FACE-TO-FACE COURSES

The following list outlines the expectations for faculty who agree to serve as instructors and facilitators for a face-to-face course for Excelsior College.

1. Adhere to the **Excelsior Credo** in all interactions with members of the Excelsior College community, including students, staff, and other faculty members.

2. Fulfill all requirements and adhere to all College policies identified in this handbook. Most notably, instructional faculty must be aware of and adhere to the College policies that most directly impact instruction (see **Academic Policies and Procedures**).

Some courses may be offered on sites approved through College's partnerships (e.g., the alliance with the federal government). Specific faculty guidelines for that eventuality will be provided.

3. Prepare to teach:
   a. Review the syllabus, textbooks, and related learning resources and course materials prior to the start of the term.
   b. Confer with appropriate staff if there are questions or concerns about course content or requirements.
   c. Develop syllabus for classroom course, as necessary, based upon online course outline, textbooks, and materials as available.

4. Manage the course:
   a. Teach the course with your classroom presence for each scheduled day for the entire time period scheduled. Should you be unable to meet any class session, please consult with the program coordinator on site.
   b. Submit grades using the online gradebook.
   c. Submit the students' participation or absence through the learning management system (LMS).

5. Teach and facilitate the course:
   a. Respond to all student communications within two calendar days. If a student concern requires additional time to resolve, please send an acknowledgment to the student to indicate receipt of the message within two calendar days.
   b. Post relevant announcements periodically to address upcoming activities, encourage use of resources and support services, clarify expectations, respond to student concerns, etc.

6. Assess student learning:
   a. Assess student submissions and interactions promptly and substantively, and intervene as needed.
   b. When rubrics are provided, adhere to all rubrics to assess student learning.

7. Communicate with school faculty and staff:
   The following list provides directions on how to contact the College regarding student or academic issues.

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▶ *School Personnel*
Contact the program coordinator or program director responsible for the course or the assistant or associate dean via email or telephone.

▶ *Ombudsperson*
The Ombudsperson Office is responsible for serving students and staff who have questions or concerns pertaining to fee-related matters, College policies, and customer service issues. The associate ombudsperson is part of the ombudsperson team and reviews student refund appeals for Excelsior College courses and appeals for military deployment extensions and withdrawals. The associate ombudsperson can be contacted at: **ombudsperson@excelsior.edu**.

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SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT AND COURSE DEVELOPER

The following list outlines the expectations for faculty who agree to serve as a subject matter expert and course developer:

1. Complete the orientation course before engaging in the course development process.

2. Be available throughout the agreed-upon course development timeline and able to meet project deadlines throughout the development process. This includes but is not limited to identifying learning resources and content; creating engaging assignments; and creating valid assessments of learning.

3. Respond to questions or requests from faculty program directors and learning experience designers within 48 hours.

4. Prepare to develop the course:

   a. Become familiar with SharePoint Online, which is used to share documents and manage the development process.

   b. Review all resources provided by the faculty program director or learning experience designer (e.g., textbook, OER, virtual machines, V-sims).

   c. Engage in a kick-off meeting hosted by the faculty program director and learning experience designer.

   d. Collaborate with the faculty program director and learning experience designer to create a timeline with milestones and deliverables for the course development project.

   e. Identify how course outcomes align to program outcomes.

   f. Create measurable module-level outcomes that align with course-level outcomes.

   g. Develop a course content organizer in collaboration with the learning experience designer that addresses the major elements of the course, including outcomes, assignments, and activities, prior to developing specific course content.

5. Develop the course:

   a. Collaborate with the learning experience designer throughout the design process and share information, content, and documents via SharePoint Online.

   b. Regularly attend meetings with the learning experience designer throughout the course design process. At a minimum, meetings will occur biweekly.

   c. Use the Excelsior College course shell as the framework for the course.

   d. Meet predetermined deadlines for milestones and deliverables.

   e. Create innovative learning activities that promote critical thinking and provide multiple ways to achieve learning outcomes.

   f. Curate course content that is current and relevant, well written, and that is either original or appropriately sourced and cited.

   g. Develop learning activities and assignments that relate to the course outcomes, are appropriate to the content area and level of the course,

meet disciplinary standards, reflect diversity, and align with the College's General Education Career Competencies or Graduate Career Competencies as applicable.

h. Develop assessments of student learning aligned with course outcomes, including the associated evaluative tools (e.g., rubrics, grading criteria, quiz and test items with keys, distractors, and rationales).

i. Use the Excelsior College syllabus template to develop the final syllabus.

j. Provide all originally created content in an editable format (no PDFs or images of documents).

k. Provide high-quality multimedia content with transcripts for any audio or video created (e.g., voiceover, PowerPoint, podcasts).

l. Collaborate with the learning experience designer to ensure the course meets current accessibility guidelines in accordance with the College's Accessibility Policy.

m. If a lab is required, work with the faculty program director to fulfill all school obligations for the creation and distribution of lab materials (e.g., virtual machines, V-sims).

6. Quality review:

a. Respond promptly to requests for revisions during the quality review process as the course is being finalized.

b. Compose a table of all course work per module for inclusion in the syllabus, including week, module title, required materials, assignments, online discussions, and course outcomes related to the module.

c. Participate as requested in the video conference review of the course with the faculty program director and the learning experience designer.

THESIS READER

A thesis reader guides the student through the thesis process and offers advice on both content and style. Excelsior College Thesis Readers (TR) possess terminal degrees from regionally accredited institutions and/or recognized special competence in required fields.

NURSING CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR

The clinical instructors responsible for teaching in the nursing clinical practicum courses include the clinical instructor lead and the clinical instructor assistant. The clinical practicum courses include a weekend of direct, hands-on care with patients across the life span in a hospital.

1. Clinical Instructor Lead Responsibilities:

   a. Preparation for Students:

      ▶ Plan and coordinate patient assignments for each student in the clinical group, consistent with the course and clinical objectives.

      ▶ Demonstrate competency with nursing skills and associated technology (EHR, automated medication dispensing system, smart intravenous pumps, etc.).

      ▶ Demonstrate familiarity with assigned clinical unit(s) and with facility policies and procedures.

      ▶ Complete all facility-required training.

   b. Engagement with Students:

      ▶ Participate in pre-clinical briefs and post-clinical debriefs with students within Canvas

      ▶ Provide supervision of students in providing safe, quality patient care.

      ▶ Assist students to accomplish the clinical objectives of the course.

      ▶ Exhibit content and skill-based expertise when engaging with students; provide relevant evidence based professional examples pertinent to the topic.

      ▶ Guide students to deeper engagement using probing questions and tie conversation to own nursing experience (ask students how nursing competencies relate to them, share own experience).

      ▶ Cultivate a caring environment that supports open dialogue, collaboration, and opportunities for scholarly growth.

   c. Evaluation of Students:

      ▶ Respond to all messages from students and the College within 48 hours.

      ▶ Provide students with individualized feedback summarizing strengths and areas in need of improvement. Substantiate feedback with examples from student work.

      ▶ Complete individual clinical evaluation rubric in Canvas for each student by the end of the term.

2. Clinical Instructor Assistant Responsibilities:

   a. Preparation for Students:

      ▶ Demonstrate competency with nursing skills and associated technology (EHR, automated medication dispensing systems, smart intravenous pumps, etc.).

- ▶ Familiarity with assigned clinical unit(s) and with facility policies and procedures.
- ▶ Complete all facility required training.

b. Engagement with Students

- ▶ Provide supervision of students in providing safe, quality patient care.
- ▶ Assist clinical instructor lead(s) in guiding students in meeting the clinical objectives of the course.
- ▶ Guide students to deeper engagement using probing questions and tying conversation to own nursing experience (ask students how nursing competencies relate to them, share own experience).
- ▶ Cultivate a caring environment that supports open dialogue, collaboration, and opportunities for scholarly growth.

c. Evaluation of Students:

- ▶ Provide real-time feedback during clinical experience, including recommendations to improve work; offer examples of recommendations.
- ▶ Provide specific and contextual evidence to clinical instructor lead(s) for input of individual clinical evaluation of students.

3. Qualifications for Clinical Instructors:

- ▶ A master's degree in nursing from a regionally accredited institution.
- ▶ Active, unencumbered RN license.
- ▶ Minimum of five years of RN experience in varied clinical areas, caring for patients across the life span.
- ▶ Current clinical experience within an acute care hospital setting.
- ▶ Experience supervising nursing students and/or new graduate RNs.
- ▶ Strong verbal and written communication skills, with ability to present information clearly, concisely, and accurately; friendly, persuasive speaking and writing style.
- ▶ Experience in the implementation of curriculum in pre-licensure nursing degree programs.
- ▶ Experience with various modes of educational technology, including video conferencing software.
- ▶ Current CPR certification.

NURSING CLINICAL FACULTY

The clinical faculty responsible for administration of the Clinical Performance in Nursing Examination® (CPNE®) include the clinical associate and the clinical examiner. The CPNE is a criterion-referenced performance examination administered over a weekend in a hospital.

1. Clinical Associate Responsibilities:

   a. Coordinate and supervise the administration of the CPNE.

   b. Ensure that the examination is conducted in a manner consistent with the established protocols.

   c. Orient students to the test site hospital and nursing skills laboratory.

   d. Act as a student advocate, providing support and addressing concerns

   e. Maintain the security and integrity of the examination materials.

   f. Provide students with information necessary to progress with their degree plans as appropriate (i.e., state board information, CPNE® appeal process).

   g. Record descriptive information in the clinical associate weekend report that completely and accurately documents pertinent test process information (i.e., failure situations, student comments related to testing, unusual events).

   h. Serve as mentor to new clinical associates.

   i. Evaluate clinical examiner performance according to College policy.

2. Clinical Examiner Responsibilities:

   a. Evaluate student performance in patient care and simulated settings.

   b. Orient students to patient care unit.

   c. Observe student performance at all times.

   d. Document student performance using prescribed tools.

   e. Coordinate student assignment with hospital staff.

   f. Protect patients from physical jeopardy.

   g. Consult, as needed, with the clinical associate on site during the examination.

   h. Create a student testing assignment according to examination protocols.

   i. Assure that the student has the equipment and supplies needed for the examination.

   j. Collaborate with nursing staff assigned to selected patients.

   k. Demonstrate professional nursing behaviors to facility staff and Excelsior College students.

   l. Serve as mentor for new clinical examiners.

   m. Provide feedback regarding clinical associate performance according to College policy.

3. Qualifications for Clinical Faculty:

   a. Master's degree in nursing is required.

   b. Experience in teaching and evaluating generic nursing students in a school of nursing for three out of the past five years or experience orienting first-day graduate RNs to clinical practice is required.

   c. Experience in evaluating students during a clinical performance test preferred.

   d. Successfully complete an Excelsior College-sponsored training workshop.

   e. Must be able to work weekends (from 3 PM Friday to 5 PM Sunday Eastern Time) every four to six weeks.

4. Clinical Faculty Recruitment and Hiring Process:

   a. Clinical faculty are recruited from campus-based schools of nursing or an appropriate clinical agency. They are hired as contract faculty to administer the CPNE®.

Other Academic Staff

Other professionals involved in designing, delivering, and/or assessing student learning are not considered to be faculty. These professionals include:

▶ **Outcomes Assessment (OA) Personnel**—staff who facilitate student learning assessment and collaborate with FPDs, SMEs, and learning experience designers to help ensure that course embedded assessment techniques are aligned with student learning outcomes and appropriately assess student learning.

▶ **Learning Experience Designers (LEDs)**—trained and experienced instructional designers who collaborate with FPDs, SMEs, and OA personnel in the creation of Excelsior courses.

▶ **Test Development Staff**—psychometricians and other staff involved in the development of Excelsior's credit-bearing exams.

▶ **Prior Learning Assessment Staff**—staff who work with FPDs, SMEs, and school leadership to oversee the College's assessment of prior learning for credit.

▶ **Transcript Analysis Center (TAC) Staff**—staff who work with faculty, school leadership, and College leadership to develop and implement policies and procedures for the acceptance of transfer credit.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, SCHOLARLY INQUIRY, AND INNOVATION

Overview

The College is committed to supporting professional development, scholarly inquiry, and the innovative pursuits of its faculty in ways that align to its mission. Highly qualified and engaged faculty who are passionate about curriculum development and innovations in teaching and learning are central to providing an outstanding student experience. The College's approach to faculty development is multifaceted and evolving and is implemented in multiple ways.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Resources and support for faculty development, including scholarly inquiry and innovative and creative pursuits, are available through the Provost's Office as well as other areas within and outside the College. A central resource for faculty development is the executive director for curriculum and faculty development who provides leadership and supports excellence in academic programs and student service through faculty development and curriculum design. Adult student-centered principles embedded in the Excelsior College mission, strategic plan, and the student experience credo (**Excelsior Cares**) underpin faculty development and curricular initiatives. The person in this position is ultimately responsible for ensuring that faculty members have the tools and capabilities to create, deliver, and continually evaluate student learning and curricula.

Resources and support are available from:

▶ The Office of Human Resources, which provides mandatory education, as well as education and training in areas such as leadership, management, diversity and inclusion, and ethics.

▶ The Center for Educational Measurement, which provides education and training on examination development, item writing, and psychometric principles.

▶ The School of Nursing faculty, which provides education and training for clinical performance evaluators to optimize accuracy and consistency in scoring the Clinical Performance in Nursing Examination.

▶ Partners and consultants who provide professional development workshops and programs in areas of interest to the faculty, such as accessibility and accommodation, outcomes assessment, and best practices in online teaching and learning.

The College also provides professional development opportunities for all faculty members via its learning management systems, Canvas and Brainier. Each school has established an online Faculty Community within the learning management system, which provides a community for teaching and learning for faculty members. The **Faculty Connects** page is another web-based platform for faculty to access professional development resources and information and peer-to-peer exchange of ideas and sharing of information. These platforms allow for asynchronous access to professional development opportunities.

SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

All faculty are encouraged to engage in scholarship; scholarship is an expectation for faculty program directors. Faculty program directors are eligible for research time; they may request time for engaging in scholarly research activity by consulting with their dean. The Excelsior College Library librarians are available to faculty members engaged in various domains of scholarship.

INNOVATIONS AND CREATIVE PURSUITS

The College supports innovations in teaching and learning in a variety of ways. The College engages with vendors and consultants to support faculty interested in seeking and employing innovations in the design and development of online courses.

FACULTY COMMUNICATION

Because Excelsior College faculty are dispersed all over the globe, we have implemented various communication tools and strategies to foster frequent and open communication between the faculty and the staff and administrators in Albany. Those tools, processes, and bodies are described in the section that follows.

These are collegewide efforts and do not include the many and varied communication strategies utilized within the different schools.

It should also be noted that we will continue to explore different communication strategies with our faculty, as emerging technologies and social networking facilitate more opportunities for communication and engagement.

Faculty Email

In an effort to improve communication with faculty and to promote the Excelsior College name to students, the College has provided all Excelsior faculty with an option of using Excelsior College email address. In response to suggestions by many College faculty, Excelsior has arrived at a set of policies regarding the use of Excelsior College email and messaging systems:

1. Non-instructional faculty may choose to use either their own personal or professional email addresses in correspondence with Excelsior College, or they may opt to use their Excelsior College email address.

2. All online instructional faculty are expected to correspond with their students within their course via the learning management system. Student messages may be copied to the instructor's home email address, but the reply from instructor to student must be within the learning management system.

3. The "forwarding" function for Excelsior College email facilitates the use of a faculty member's **@excelsior.edu** address. Email correspondence can automatically be forwarded on to whatever existing email account the faculty designates.

My Faculty Desk

The My Faculty Desk allows faculty to manage their personal information, documents, assignments, and payment information. In My Faculty Desk, faculty can modify their profile, upload new documents to replace expired documents, update their professional experience, review teaching assignments, and monitor their teaching payment information.

To access My Faculty Desk, go to the **MyExcelsior** page and log in. Click on "MyExcelsior Login" and enter your faculty username and password.

FACULTY SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Faculty Training for Course Instructors and Developers

One of the goals at Excelsior College is to update our faculty in best practices, academic policies, and instructional technologies. To fulfill this goal, faculty are required to attend periodic training sections. In addition, completion of **FAC 100** is considered a condition of employment and is provided without cost or compensation.

Faculty are expected to complete faculty orientation before teaching.

FAC 100 New Faculty Orientation

This training has been developed for instructors to ensure that they:

▶ Know the expectations of Excelsior College with regard to teaching their courses,

▶ Understand the College's philosophy and perspectives on effective instruction, and

▶ Are equipped with the techniques and strategies for managing their online courses.

Library Support for Faculty

The Excelsior College Library (ECL) provides services to support the needs of the faculty and students.

1. Identification of Resources in ECL Databases:
The ECL research databases contain the full text for thousands of articles and books. ECL librarians can help identify which resources are suitable for use in courses.

2. Course-Integrated Information Literacy Assignments:
The ECL librarian will work with faculty to create assignments that will help students become competent selectors, users, and evaluators of information in all formats. The librarians can also help to create assignments to achieve the following outcomes in courses:

   ▶ understanding the difference between scholarly and non-scholarly resources

   ▶ avoiding plagiarism

   ▶ evaluating print and internet resources

   ▶ learning database search skills

3. Research Assistance for Faculty and Students:
The ECL librarians can assist with faculty research. Requests can be made by phone or email for help with search strategies and the identification of suggested resources. In addition, faculty may identify students that they feel could benefit from one-on-one research assistance.

4. Specialized Chat Sessions:

The ECL librarians create chat sessions focused on the needs of students. For example, a librarian will run a chat session for students a couple of weeks before a paper is due. Alternatively, faculty may want the ECL librarians to orient students to ECL resources. They will work with faculty to better understand the needs of students to create a tailored session. Another option would be for one of the librarians to join faculty in a chat session that has already been planned.

5. Library Reserve Readings:

Library reserve readings consist of reading materials that directly relate to class content. Library reserve readings are designed to supplement the textbooks and course packs for courses but are not meant to replace them. The ECL content can be used for your reserves and librarians can help you identify other resources when needed.

Contact Information

Email: library@excelsior.edu
Phone: 877-247-3097
Form: Course Development/Resource Request available in online course templates.

ACADEMIC DECISION MAKING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Academic Governance

The Office of the Provost at Excelsior College is responsible for the overall academic quality of the College's programs, courses, examinations, advising, and student support services. The Office of the Provost has implemented a shared governance structure to support inclusive participation on planning and decision-making processes. The following is the list of academic affairs governance councils.

NAME	MAIN PURPOSE
Academic Affairs Council	The Academic Affairs Council (AAC) ensures high academic quality, integrity, and rigor in relation to all sources of academic credit. The Council provides a forum for consideration of academic policies, including policy development, implementation, and review. In addition, the Council serves to enhance and support inter-school and -unit collaboration and communication on current and emerging academic issues impacting students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. The AAC reports directly to the vice provost for academic and faculty support.
College Curriculum Council	The College Curriculum Council (CCC) oversees the general education curriculum as well as college-wide mandatory credit-bearing activities and makes recommendations to the provost on related issues. In addition, it serves as a resource for school deans and faculty to consider issues related to general education, course consistency, curriculum development, revision, and evaluation. The Council provides a forum for consideration of curriculum-related policies, including policy development, implementation, and review.
Deans' Council	The Deans' Council provides visionary leadership to ensure the highest quality academic programs and services. The Council considers matters related to academic programs, curriculum, and outcomes assessment and makes data-driven recommendations for improvements. It carries out its responsibilities in collaboration with other councils, committees, and leadership throughout the College. The Deans' Council reports directly to the provost.

NAME	MAIN PURPOSE
Faculty Steering Council	The purpose of the Faculty Steering Council (FSC) is to foster communication between Excelsior College administration and faculty on critical issues and developments. The FSC reports directly to the provost and is composed of representatives who serve Excelsior College in the capacity of instructional faculty and faculty program directors.
Provost's Council	The Provost's Council (PC) is responsible for development and ongoing review of the academic affairs operational plan, including creating and monitoring metrics around strategic initiatives. It plays an operational function by making recommendations for actions to enhance academic programs, processes, and the student experience. The PC reports directly to the provost and provides input into the work of the Academic Affairs Council and the College Curriculum Council.
Student Advisory Council	The Student Advisory Council (SAC) provides a forum for students to review (or provide feedback on) the full range of student services at Excelsior College. The Council promotes an integrated approach to student success through attention to all aspects of students' interactions with College staff, services, and processes. It provides a forum for students to have input into strategic decisions and initiatives, to inform the College of emerging issues impacting students, and to discuss and provide feedback around areas of satisfaction or concern with their experience at the College. The SAC reports directly to the provost.
Student Appeals Council	The Student Appeals Council (STAC) provides a neutral forum for the consideration of student appeals. The Council provides students with a fair and equitable process to have their appeals considered and their grievances on academic issues addressed in accordance with **Academic Programs Student Appeals** and related College policies.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is the faculty member's responsibility to be familiar with all the policies related to their activity as a faculty member at Excelsior College. Complete information on these policies can be found by clicking on the links for each policy (below) as well as by going to the Excelsior website at **www.excelsior.edu/policies**.

Those policies that apply only to a specific degree program may also be listed in the catalog for that program. Each title below links to the full policy on the College's website. Please take a few minutes to review this valuable information.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY
	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Excelsior College complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This Act affords students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights, with respect to their education records.
001	**Program Evaluation** Each academic program at Excelsior College shall undergo reviews once every five to seven years. The nature of this review is twofold: to provide the school and the administration a clear assessment of the program's strengths and weaknesses; and to provide the school with an opportunity for periodic self-examination.
003	**Student Appeals** The College's student appeals policy provides students with a fair process to address their grievances on academic issues or their complaints alleging biased, arbitrary, or capricious decisions and/or unprofessional actions by Excelsior College faculty or staff.
004	**Academic Integrity** Students are expected to uphold the principles of academic honesty during enrollment and/or while taking Excelsior College sources of credit, professional training, and continuing education courses, as well as after separation from the College through withdrawal or graduation. Students also have an ethical obligation to report academic honesty violations.

continued on next page

NO.	NAME OF POLICY

007   **Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid**

Excelsior College has established institutional requirements for minimum Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for undergraduate and graduate students. These requirements, developed in accordance with Excelsior College academic standards and federal financial aid statutes and regulations governing student eligibility, are designed to ensure that all students make timely progress toward their educational goals. Students who achieve these standards are considered to be in good academic standing at Excelsior College.

011   **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

All Excelsior College students have the responsibility to understand and to conduct themselves in accordance with the Excelsior College policies and specifically the rights and responsibilities set forth in this document. The term "students" includes: applicants, admitted learners, enrolled learners currently matriculated at Excelsior College taking examinations and/or courses, formerly enrolled learners currently in withdrawn status, graduates, non-matriculated students taking examinations and/or courses and individuals using One Transcript.

034   **Time Limitations on Transfer Credit**

Generally, there is no time limit on the use of credit from proficiency examinations, college courses, or other approved sources of credit to satisfy the requirements of Excelsior College liberal arts degree programs or the general education component of our business, health sciences, nursing, and technology degree programs. There are, however, time restrictions on the acceptability of courses or examinations used to satisfy the professional component of our business, health sciences, nursing, and technology degree programs. More information is available in the description of each degree program or from an Excelsior College academic advisor.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY

037 — **Credit Hour Policy**

Excelsior assigns credit for its own courses and exams, and for prior learning it evaluates, based on two standards: assessed learning outcomes comparable to those generally acknowledged in the field as appropriate, and a reasonable approximation of hours of time required by a student with a typical level or prior knowledge to meet these outcomes under conditions typical for traditional institutions of higher education.

One credit hour should take approximately 45 hours of student work for a traditional student. Three credit hours should approximate 135 hours of student work. This is based on the federal standard of three hours per week over a 15-week term or an equivalent amount of work in another format. The actual number of hours an individual student will take to complete the work will vary based on a variety of factors, including academic preparedness and prior knowledge.

059 — **Grades Awarded and Accepted by Excelsior College**

The Excelsior College grading policies apply to all Excelsior College schools and programs. There are some variations in grading policies between Excelsior College sources of credit, and Excelsior's acceptance of transfer credits; thus, these issues are addressed individually in terms of the undergraduate and graduate degree requirements.

107 — **Withdrawal from a Course**

Prior to and during the first 15 calendar days of the beginning of the term, students may withdraw or cancel from a course with no record of the course appearing on their status report or transcript.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY

110 **ADA Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Excelsior College is committed to the principle that every individual should have an equal opportunity to enroll in an Excelsior College degree program, to register for courses or examinations in order to demonstrate their knowledge and skills under appropriate conditions, and to complete a degree. The College seeks to assure access by providing accommodations to individuals with a disability as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). Accommodation is the provision of aids, or modification to testing, services or a program of study, that allows access by individuals with disabilities.

119 **Student Complaint Policy**

Students may file a formal complaint in writing with the academic dean (or designee) who will be responsible for investigating the complaint and taking action. Complaints are defined as any student concern regarding College programs, services, or staff other than those addressed by institutional appeal policies.

| 120 | **Administrative Withdrawal and Academic Dismissal** |

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL

Administrative withdrawal from the College may result for the following reasons:

- ▶ by student request.
- ▶ failure to pay required fees.
- ▶ administrative withdrawal for violation of College policies, or
- ▶ emergency administrative withdrawal.

Students administratively withdrawn from the College for reasons 1 and 2 are eligible to reapply and/or reenroll if they meet the admission criteria in place.

In the case of reasons 3 and 4, students will have the opportunity to appeal these decisions as described in the **Student Appeals policy.**

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

Students can be academically dismissed for the following reasons:

- ▶ failure to maintain good academic standing.
- ▶ failure to meet credit accumulation.
- ▶ failure to achieve the minimum grade requirement in any nursing component requirement of a nursing program within three attempts. The nursing component requirements include nursing online courses, the Focused Clinical Competencies Assessment (FCCA), and the Clinical Performance in Nursing Examination (CPNE).
- ▶ Earning a total of 6 "D" and/or "F" grades in the nursing theory series.
- ▶ Exceeding program time limits.
- ▶ Failure to participate in courses. Student accumulated six "AW" grades.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY

130

Course Participation Policy

Participation in course activities is essential to student success at Excelsior College. Excelsior College is not required to take attendance as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. However, a student is expected to be in contact with the instructor at the beginning of the course and to remain an active participant in the course until its completion. Participation in courses will be monitored on a weekly basis.

132

Military Deployment/Training Extension and Withdrawal Policy

Excelsior College recognizes the hardships faced by military service members (active-duty, guard, and reserves). The College acknowledges that military students who are deployed away from their homes or permanent duty stations may experience difficulties with completing their degree requirements and/or courses.

133

Extensions Policy

Excelsior College recognizes that the student populations we serve may have competing priorities and responsibilities. In order to support students in this situation, Excelsior College offers extensions when appropriate.

135

Intellectual Property Policy

Excelsior College recognizes that materials placed in the hands of students, prospective students, and the general public through the resources and communications capabilities of the College fall into three categories.

139

Add/Drop Policy

Excelsior College offers the opportunity for students who are registered for a course to drop a course and add a new course up until 12:00 PM Eastern Time on Friday of the first week of the term.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY
141	**Leave of Absence** Excelsior College will grant a leave of absence of up to a one-year maximum to an enrolled undergraduate or graduate student who has a medical or personal reason that prohibits the student from progressing in their degree program.
147	**Faculty Orientation for Online Teaching** Excelsior College requires that instructional faculty successfully complete the **FAC 100 New Faculty Orientation** prior to teaching online courses.
148	**Research Involving Human Subjects** Human subjects research must be reviewed if it is conducted by any faculty, staff, students, or any other person under the auspices of the College.
150	**End of Course Grade Appeals** The End of Course Grade Appeals Policy applies only to students taking Excelsior College courses. A formal grade appeal will be pursued only if the student presents evidence of error, bias, or capriciousness on the part of the instructor in determining the student's final grade for the course.
153	**Assistance to Students in Disaster and Emergency Areas** In the event of a major disaster or emergency that is natural or human-made, Excelsior College will use reasonable and humane judgment to waive late registration fees and provide extensions for courses and, if applicable, the related Academic Services Fee and Technology Fee, for any impacted student.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY
154	**Adjunct Faculty Workload Policy** Excelsior College places a premium on recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified instructional faculty to serve its students. Crucial to the College's mission is the need to appoint faculty who are dedicated to student success, who are knowledgeable and current in their fields, and who have the skills and talent to engage students in learning. To fulfill this mission, Excelsior depends on hundreds of adjunct faculty to deliver a large number of graduate and undergraduate courses per year. Excelsior places a limit on the number of hours an adjunct faculty member may teach for the College within a calendar year. ▶ To ensure the academic quality of its courses, Excelsior must set reasonable limitations on the number of courses an adjunct faculty member may teach in a given term or year. ▶ The College must demonstrate to outside accrediting bodies that its policy on adjunct course limitations is both reasonable and strictly enforced.
200	**Anti Discrimination Policy and Procedure for the Resolution of Student Discrimination Complaints** Excelsior College is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from illegal discrimination based upon an an individual's race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, marital status, familial status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or military or veteran status. Illegal discrimination in any form will not be tolerated by the College.
204	**Guide to Bias-Free Language** The elimination of potentially biased language in our written and oral communications is an essential component of this commitment to access, excellence, and diversity. The use of bias-free language is in accordance with these values and policy. Excelsior College is committed to the goal of using inclusive, sensitive, and affirming language in all forms of communications.

NO.	NAME OF POLICY
305	**Electronic Use Policy**

Excelsior College supports and encourages the use of the Internet as a means of enriching and enhancing learning (See **Baseline Technology Skills and Resources**). Electronic activities assist students in achieving specific learning outcomes and to provide an opportunity for collaboration and interaction among students and content specialists. Students in Excelsior College electronic activities must agree to act within the framework of this Electronic Use Policy.

Excelsior College Whistleblower Policy

Excelsior College ("the College") is committed to high standards of ethical, moral, and legal business conduct. Consistent with this commitment, and the College's commitment to open communication, this policy aims to provide an avenue for trustees, officers, employees, and volunteers ("Protected Person/s") to raise concerns and provides reassurances that they will be protected from retaliation or victimization for whistleblowing.

This whistleblowing policy is intended to protect Protected Persons if they raise concerns regarding the College, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Incorrect financial reporting,
- ▶ Unlawful activity,
- ▶ Activities that are not in line with the College's policies, and
- ▶ Activities which otherwise amount to serious improper conduct.

Late Course Work

This policy governs the acceptance and grading of late work (including assignments, quizzes and exams, and discussion posts) in Excelsior College courses. The intention of the policy is to promote consistency and academic rigor in Excelsior College courses, while also providing faculty with the flexibility to respond to students experiencing extenuating circumstances.

1. Students are expected to submit work for Excelsior College courses by the due date stipulated in the course.

2. Students who are unable to submit course work by the due date because of an extenuating circumstance should contact their instructor prior to the due date to request an extension for the work. If it is not possible to contact the instructor prior to the due date, they should do so as soon after the due date as possible.

   Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:

   ▶ an illness or injury
   ▶ a death of a family member or significant other
   ▶ a significant change in employment or military status
   ▶ a trauma in the student's life
   ▶ technical issues
   ▶ a natural disaster (see **Assistance to Students in Disaster and Emergency Areas**)
   ▶ other significant unplanned events

3. Instructors have the discretion to offer an extension or to accept late course work without penalty based on their assessment of a student's circumstances. Documentation of extenuating circumstances may be required.

4. Unless otherwise stipulated in the instructions or grading rubric, the following penalties will apply to late course work that has not been granted an extension by the instructor:

   ▶ Course work submitted less than a week (seven calendar days) after the due date will be subject to a 10% penalty (10 points out of 100);
   ▶ Course work submitted more than a week after the due date will receive a zero.

5. Discussion posts will receive a zero after the due date for the discussion without prior permission from the instructor.

6. Course work submitted after the final day of the term will receive a zero unless an official course extension has been granted. (See **Course and Examination Extensions**).

7. At the discretion of the provost, the College may waive the requirements in this policy for students experiencing a disaster or emergency. See **Assistance to Students in Disaster and Emergency Areas**.

8. Students may appeal the decision of their instructor by contacting the school offering the course. Contact information for each of the schools is located below.

   ▶ School of Undergraduate Studies: **ugappeal@excelsior.edu**
   ▶ School of Graduate Studies: **grstudent@excelsior.edu**
   ▶ School of Nursing: **SON-courses@excelsior.edu**

Guidance for Instructional Faculty

The ultimate goal of the late course work policy is to support student success, and this should be the guiding principle when making decisions about how to apply it in practice. The policy empowers instructional faculty with broad authority to accept late course work when they believe it is warranted by a student's circumstances.

The College expects students to make a good faith effort to submit course work on time and to promptly notify their instructor if they are unable to meet a deadline. Submitting course work late is disruptive to the student learning experience and places an additional bookkeeping burden on faculty.

At the same time, the College recognizes that students face multiple competing priorities—balancing school with work, family, and other considerations—and that there are legitimate reasons why students may fall behind on their course work. For example, a student may experience a medical emergency, a personal or family crisis, a significant change in their work schedule or responsibilities (such as an unplanned military assignment), or be impacted by a natural disaster. Faculty are encouraged to exhibit empathy, compassion, and flexibility, working with students to help them succeed in the course. Instructors should contact their FPD if they have questions about whether a specific circumstance merits an extension or the acceptance of late course work.

It is important to recognize that students experiencing extenuating circumstances may be too overwhelmed by their circumstances to initiate outreach to their instructor. If a student does not submit a major assignment by the due date or appears to be falling behind in a course, instructors should reach out to the student to find out what is causing the delay. Instructors may also request that the student's academic advisor initiate outreach.

If a student does not contact an instructor about late course work, the instructor should enter a provisional zero in the gradebook, rather than leaving the cell blank, along with a note to the student encouraging them to contact the instructor with an explanation of their circumstances.

When penalizing late course work, instructors should be sure to note any deductions and the reasons for them in their feedback to students. In addition, the notes function in the Canvas gradebook can be used to easily track late course work without having to pull up individual student grade feedback.

APPLICATION, HIRING, AND RECRUITMENT

Excelsior College faculty candidates must generally hold a terminal degree from a regionally accredited institution.

If the academic work was done outside the United States, the candidate must present confirmation from a credential evaluator that his/her degree is recognized by the evaluating agency as comparable to a degree from an accredited institution in the United States.

The Provost's Office may grant exceptions to candidates with foreign academic credentials from highly recognized institutions. Excelsior College is committed to hiring qualified individuals who reflect the society in which we live and the students we serve.

To this end, all areas of the College will use equitable employment measures and affirmative actions to employ protected group members in all job categories, in accordance with applicable state and federal law. This affirmative action will include specific activities in recruitment, hiring, upgrading, and other areas designed and taken for the purpose of eliminating the present effect of past discrimination, or to prevent discrimination.

School Faculty Committee Member

The dean of each school or their designee is responsible for the initial recruitment effort of school faculty committee members.

All nominations shall be accompanied by a vita that includes information about the individual's education, professional academic preparation and experience, key community service interests, and honors and awards. Beyond these basic criteria, an effort is made to achieve diverse faculty membership in terms of the types of institutions represented—both those where faculty have taught and those where they received their advanced degrees. Special efforts have been made to recruit both men and women, and to invite members of populations historically underrepresented in higher education to serve as school faculty committee members.

1. Recruitment Strategies:
   The following recruitment strategies are used in identifying school faculty committee members::

   a. Consider faculty who are currently serving on examination or course development committees or who are thesis readers.

   b. Ask all current faculty, including those on examination or course development committees or who are thesis readers, to recommend faculty.

   c. Contact national academic associations for recommendations.

   d. Contact a broad array of relevant national academic associations.

2. Selection Criteria:
   The following selection criteria are used in identifying school faculty committee members at Excelsior College (not in rank order):

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a. Appropriate academic degree from a regionally accredited institution or, for international applicants, from an officially recognized institution.

b. Status and recognition in the discipline as shown through academic presentations and publications.

c. Official transcripts from a regionally accredited institution for the highest degree.

d. Expert knowledge in the member's given academic discipline.

e. Understanding and support of the Excelsior College mission.

f. Understanding and support of the appropriate school's stated learning outcomes statements.

g. Ability and willingness to attend committee meetings, serve on at least one subcommittee, and be available via email or phone to assist with student issues at least three times a year, or on an as-needed basis.

School faculty committee members are selected for their discipline-specific expertise and their stature within their discipline.

3. Selection Process:
   a. The dean or their designee will interview a potential faculty member remotely or in person using stated selection criteria as noted in Part 2.
   b. The dean or their designee will check references of viable candidates.
   c. If the dean or their designee approves the applicant, the person will be given an advisory or consultancy assignment in the school.

Only the deans may make exceptions to the hiring process for school faculty committee members.

Instructional Faculty

The Office of Human Resources, in collaboration with the dean of each school or their designee, is responsible for the initial recruitment effort of instructional faculty. The Office of Human Resources will coordinate staff interviews, check references, verify required credentials from regionally accredited institutions, and then forward to the appropriate school designee.

1. Recruitment Strategies:
   The following recruitment strategies are used in identifying instructional faculty:

   a. Consult with faculty who are currently teaching or facilitating a course and serving on examination committees and ask for recommendations.

   b. Contact national academic associations for recommendations.

   c. Contact a broad array of relevant national academic associations, including those especially likely to have members from historically underrepresented groups, for recommendations.

   d. Advertise in relevant newsletters, newspapers, and websites.

   e. Use **SmarterFaculty.com**.

   f. Post on the Excelsior College website.

Excelsior's instructional faculty members are recruited from the ranks of faculty of traditional and non-traditional colleges and universities or relevant businesses, industries, and professions. They are selected for their discipline-specific expertise and their stature within their discipline and for their familiarity with distance education.

When resumes, vitae, or applications enter the schools, the application and recruitment process outlined below will be followed.

2. Application and Hiring Process:

   a. Application materials
   All applicants for instructional faculty positions must submit the following documents before a final hiring decision is made:

   ▶ Completed online application form.

   ▶ Current resume or curriculum vitae.

   ▶ Official transcripts (and professional licenses if appropriate) sent to the attention of the Office of Human Resources.

   ▶ I-9 form with appropriate identification required.

   ▶ Relevant tax forms.

   ▶ Areas of teaching interest.

   b. Selection criteria
   The following criteria will be used to select instructional faculty positions:

   ▶ An appropriate academic degree—to be accepted to teach courses at the undergraduate level, the applicant must have at least a master's degree in an appropriate discipline. To be accepted to teach courses at the graduate level, the applicant must have a terminal degree from regionally accredited institutions in an appropriate discipline. Any exceptions must be approved by the provost.

   ▶ Relevant teaching experience online and/or in traditional settings.

   ▶ Knowledge of and/or experience in the field.

   c. Receipt of application materials

   ▶ Application material may be uploaded through the online application or received through the Office of Human Resources faculty recruitment email box. An auto-response is sent acknowledging receipt of the material.

   ▶ Applications may be received by fax, postal mail, or Excelsior College personal email. An email is sent acknowledging receipt of the material.

3. Selection:
   If selected to teach a course, the faculty member will receive a Teaching Faculty Contract from the provost and chief academic officer. The contract will identify the course and term dates, provide information on salary scheduling and processing, and will identify guidelines with which faculty are expected to comply.

4. Instructional Faculty Teaching Limits:
   The maximum teaching load, based on 45 hours per course credit, for adjunct faculty is dependent on the course length and is as follows:

- 1950 hours or approximately fourteen (14) 3-credit course sections per calendar year.
- No more than three course sections may be taught by any faculty member at one time.

These may vary at the discretion of the dean for sections with low enrollment and independent studies with lower workloads. In addition, time spent on course development and revisions as a subject matter expert (SME) will count toward the 1950 pool of hours. Excelsior College staff who also teach on an adjunct basis for the College must abide by the current policies for employees, available through the Office of Human Resources.

Excelsior College Employees

All full-time and half-time (50 percent or more) permanent faculty recruitment is coordinated between the Office of Human Resources and the chair of the search committee.

1. Statement of Policy:
   At all phases of the recruitment process, the Office of Human Resources interacts with the applicants. Human Resources also works as a partner to the search committee in assisting with the process and recommending recruitment strategies. The steps are as follows:
   - Submit a position description and completed Personnel Requisition Form to the Office of Human Resources with approvals. Approval by the dean is required.
   - Position description and Personnel Requisition Form are reviewed by Human Resources.
   - Search chair and committee are appointed for all positions.
   - Search committee chair will consult with the appointed Human Resources representative to discuss recruiting and interviewing plans and affirmative action procedures.
   - In support of the Affirmative Action Plan, search committee members are required to attend training on "Interviewing for Inclusion—The Cultural and Legal Implications."
   - Human Resources writes the advertisement in consultation with the hiring officer and search committee chair and places the ad in appropriate locations, including publications that will help achieve affirmative action.

2. Selection process:
   a. Receipt of resume/vitae/applications:
      - All resumes or vitae received by mail, email, or fax will be sent a demographic postcard acknowledging receipt of the material, while also requesting the applicant to identify demographic information, in order to track the success with the recruitment of minority candidates.

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b. Review of resume/vitae/applications:

   ▶ All resumes are reviewed by the Office of Human Resources to screen for minimum qualifications; candidates who meet the minimum qualifications are referred to the search committee for evaluation.

   ▶ Search committee selects pool of candidates to interview; interviews are coordinated by the Office of Human Resources in consultation with the chair of the search committee.

   ▶ Search committee makes selection recommendation to the hiring officer.

   ▶ Hiring officer or search committee chair notifies Human Resources of final decision; search committee submits a written summary of its decision to the Office of Human Resources for search file.

   ▶ The Office of Human Resources will check the references of the selected final candidates.

c. Procedure—extending an offer:

   ▶ The Office of Human Resources confirms hiring rate in consultation with appropriate staff; makes offer to candidate, establishes start date; issues offer letter, which includes position, start date, salary, and salary level.

   ▶ The Office of Human Resources notifies the hiring officer and search committee chair that the offer has been accepted.

d. Procedure for declining other applicants:

   ▶ The Office of Human Resources notifies all other applicants that another candidate has accepted the position.

Course Developer Faculty

Frequently, course developers are already affiliated with Excelsior College as full-time faculty, instructional faculty, and/or members of faculty committees. However, at times, it will be necessary to recruit a subject matter expert to develop a course. In those cases, similar recruitment strategies as those described for instructional faculty are followed.

The application process requires that the faculty submit a current vita. Selection criteria are also similar to those that apply to instructional faculty.

The decision to select an individual to develop a course is made by the dean or dean's designee. If selected, a course developer will be sent a Course Developer Contract that will identify the course to be developed, the term by which the course must be completed as well as an Intellectual Property Agreement. In addition, the course developer will be required to sign a set of expectations, based upon the expectations explained starting on **page 18** of this handbook.

EVALUATION PRACTICES

School Faculty Committee Member Evaluation Process

1. Timeline:
   School faculty committee members are evaluated every three years.
   However, each school may implement its own process of evaluation based
   on the specific needs of its programs and the specific requirements of the
   accrediting agency that oversees a degree program.

2. Minimum Criteria:
   Each school has a faculty evaluation process in place for school faculty com-
   mittee members that relies on two main sources of information:

   a. School Faculty Committee Member Evaluation Form:
      The performance of each faculty member is evaluated by determining the
      degree to which the faculty member performs their duties as specified on
      this form.

   b. Compliance with collegewide and schoolwide policies and procedures:
      All faculty members are evaluated on the degree to which they comply
      with specific policies and procedures as set forth in this handbook and by
      the schools.

      In addition to these minimum criteria, each school may set additional
      evaluation criteria based on the specific needs of the program.

3. Evaluators:
   Deans or designees in each school have the responsibility for evaluating
   school faculty committee members.

Instructional Faculty Evaluation Process

1. Timeline:
   Newly hired faculty members are evaluated at the end of their first term
   teaching at Excelsior. A second evaluation will be conducted at the end of
   their first year. If a faculty member teaches only one course during their first
   year at Excelsior College, the second evaluation will be conducted at the end
   of the second term they teach at Excelsior. All evaluations, subsequent to the
   second evaluation, will be conducted every three years. Additional evalua-
   tions can be conducted at the discretion of the dean or designee. All "active"
   instructional faculty will go through the evaluation process. By definition,
   an active instructional faculty member is one who is currently teaching, or
   who has taught during the 365 days leading up to the evaluation date.

   All active faculty will be evaluated every three years after the end of first
   year evaluation was completed.

2. Minimum Criteria:
   Each school has a faculty evaluation process in place that relies on three
   main sources of information:

a. Student course evaluations:
   Student course evaluations are completed at the end of each course and stored in the course evaluation database. Information from these evaluations is used as part of the faculty member's overall performance evaluation.

b. Instructional Faculty Evaluation Form:
   The performance of each faculty member is evaluated by determining the degree to which the faculty member performs their duties according to the instructional faculty expectations (see **Instructional Faculty for Online Courses**).

   In addition to these minimum criteria, each school may set additional evaluation criteria based on the specific needs of the program.

3. Evaluators:
   The school deans or designees are responsible for evaluating instructional faculty members.

Nursing Clinical Instructor Evaluation Process

Clinical instructional faculty are evaluated on the same schedule as instructional faculty (see **Instructional Faculty Evaluation Process** above). Clinical instructional faculty are also evaluated on their performance in the clinical setting, including their preparedness for the clinical practicum, engagement with students in the clinical setting, and evaluation of student clinical performance.

Nursing Clinical Faculty Evaluation Process

Clinical associates and clinical examiners are evaluated annually. Clinical faculty are evaluated on several points, including their preparedness for the examination, ability to apply and score critical elements accurately, maintaining the position of a neutral observer, and role as patient advocate during the examination.

Course Developer Faculty Evaluation Processes

Course developers will be evaluated after each course that they develop by the dean or dean's designee and will be evaluated based on the quality of their work as determined by the degree to which they meet the expectations and responsibilities of course developers.

Excelsior College Employee Evaluation Process

For faculty who are Excelsior College employees, performance reviews are a formal occasion for feedback and documentation about job performance at Excelsior College. The purpose of the performance management system is to review an employee's overall performance and to develop a culture of performance management that provides feedback about individual performance regarding specific

work-related competencies such as job knowledge, work quality and productivity communication, teamwork, initiative and accountability, flexibility, and adaptability.

Direct supervisors are responsible for writing performance reviews for each staff member. The Office of Human Resources notifies all parties one month prior to the date performance reviews are due.

Once evaluations are completed and the supervisor and staff member have met to discuss the results, they are then reviewed by the next level of management. The final official copy is submitted to the Office of Human Resources.

For more specific information regarding the performance review process, contact the Office of Human Resources at 518-464-8532.

COMPENSATION

Consulting Fees

1. School committee members are compensated as consultants with an honorarium for their services to the College on a per diem basis.

2. Clinical instructional faculty are compensated based on lead, assistant, or on-call assignment.

3. Clinical nursing faculty (clinical associates and clinical examiners) are part-time employees of the College and are paid on a per diem basis.

4. Instructional faculty are compensated based on the number of students enrolled in the class as of the first Friday of the new term.

5. Current rates of compensation are available from the dean's office in each academic unit.

Travel Expenses

1. Meals, lodging, transportation costs, and miscellaneous expenses will be reimbursed to faculty members according to College guidelines, which are available from the Fiscal Office.

2. Expense report forms with instructions and specific information about use of receipts and rates of reimbursement are available from the dean's office in each academic unit.

EXCELSIOR COLLEGE WEBSITE AND RESOURCES

Through the College's website, students and faculty have access to a wealth of information designed to help them succeed. Each personal, secure MyExcelsior account serves as the gateway to a variety of support services and other information tailored to each user's specific needs as well as for general announcements from the College.

A variety of website shortcuts are available so students and faculty can directly access many resources and support services. Keep in mind that because the MyExcelsior section of the website is customized to each individual's status, not all links are available to all users. The following are some of the most commonly accessed areas.

Personalized MyExcelsior Account

my.excelsior.edu

Faculty Resources

my.excelsior.edu

▶ Choose the *Resources* option in the sidebar navigation menu.

Faculty Connects

home.excelsior.edu/faculty

Student and Faculty Policies

www.excelsior.edu/policies

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