

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The following are questions and answers that arose at a recent NHCNE/NEXus orientation:

What if you have a strong DNP program but you are interested in joining for the purposes of starting a PhD program is that considered one or two programs?

CONs/SONs can join with only one program. If the question is whether an institution can join with the PhD program, even if there's a strong DNP program in place, the answer is yes. That would be considered one program when joining NEXus. Schools are not required to include both programs, even if both are in place. If on the other hand, the question relates to joining with a strong DNP and a start-up PhD that would be one program until you open your PhD program. Once the PhD program is open, you would pay the additional fee. Some schools start with the DNP program, and then add the PhD program later. In those instances, they do not have to pay the joining fee. Incidentally, we have had schools with a brand new program join NEXus and have their students take NEXus course until they can grow their faculty. They join as affiliates.

Does the NEXUS catalogue include courses at transitional graduate levels that would be applicable to BS-to-DNP or BS-to-PhD program plans?

Yes, but so far MN students are not taking NEXus classes. PhD and DNP students can take NEXus courses listed at the MS or "graduate" level with approval of their advisor. Students in post-BS DNP or PhD programs, of course, can take these classes. But students enrolled for the MS degree or other grad degrees, such as CNL, would not be eligible to take NEXus courses at this time.

Can you also address membership in the context of a "pilot" that is trying to see if membership and participation in the course structure (tuition payment structure) is even possible? Joining before we know it's going to even be feasible doesn't seem to be the best sequence of events. Ideas are welcome.

There isn't a mechanism for non-members to participate. If you go through the process to join NEXus and offer courses, it takes more than one year for the schools to start reaping the benefits. This is an opportunity to "pilot" the program. Under the grant RFA we are looking for schools that are committed to the program. Schools that join and have been most successful are those that have really promoted the NEXus catalogue. OHSU has been a member since NEXus' inception. It has reduced the number of independent studies faculty has had to provide.

Can doctoral students in other programs (i.e., health policy and research) enroll in NEXUS courses?

Based on our Guiding Principles, not at this time. Doctoral students in other programs can take courses from their “home school” that are offered in NEXus, but not by enrolling through NEXus. Rather they would enroll through their home institution, or if it is another institution’s course, they would have to enroll as a non-degree student. However, several NEXus courses are now co-listed as interdisciplinary courses so NEXus students may be in the course with students from other disciplines.

Can the gerontology courses offered from a collaborating institution be from college/discipline outside of nursing?

NEXus has approved non-nursing courses provided they are co-listed in nursing or listed on the approved courses for nursing students. For example, the University of Northern Colorado lists a computer course on the NEXus catalogue. The University Of Utah College Of Nursing houses gerontology for the entire university, so courses are interdisciplinary. The highest degree offered is a masters, but DNP and PhD nursing students enroll in courses towards their program plan of study.

How much time is typically given to a school's campus faculty coordinator and campus staff coordinator?

It varies by campus; at the University of Colorado, it’s about 5% for the Campus Staff Coordinator (CSC). The Campus Faculty Coordinator (CFC) is usually a program director or associate dean, and it’s part of the job anyway. The tuition split of 75% to the teaching institution also covers the time for the CSC and CFC; and NEXus gives 10% of the common tuition back to the home school in recognition of the staff support. Some schools choose to use their 10% for the CSC support, and others use the 10% to scholarship their students who are taking courses. Staff coordinators may be in the continuing education area of the CON/SON.

Does the teaching institution use a teaching platform (e.g. Black board, Moodle) at their home institution to teach courses? Or is the teaching platform on the NEXus website?

The teaching platform is at the home institution. Some platforms are Blackboard, Canvas, Sakai or other. The home institution provides an orientation to their teaching platforms. One advantage to the student (and the CON/SON) is that, when they are hired to teach, they are familiar with a variety of teaching platforms.

Does NEXus draw students away from home institution classes due to the cheaper tuition? And I’m concerned about attitudes between students within the same class regarding high and low tuition payers.

Some institutions have established policies that require core courses to be taken at the home school to avoid having students take cheaper courses from another institution through NEXus. It is very important that a student’s faculty advisor work with him/her on their course of study, identifying which courses should be taken through NEXus. This also reduces “shopping.” In most universities not everyone is paying the same fees (like the airlines). In most cases the faculty has no idea how much a student paying for a class.

What is the benefit if a student is paying much more?

One of the main benefits is the availability of courses a student wouldn't be able to access otherwise. NEXus offers a wider variety of coursework, the opportunity to network with other students, and to take courses from expert faculty. Student surveys indicate that the students value the opportunity to study with experts whose work they have read. Students have also identified members of their dissertation committees if the CON/SON allows an individual outside of their own faculty to serve.

What strategies have high tuition school used to get administrative buy-in for the lower tuition rate; especially if it's interdisciplinary?

Enrollment of NEXus students needs to be seen as income that the school would not have had otherwise. It is unlikely that students from schools/colleges of nursing would take the course on their own. And, there is evidence that courses have been taught, rather than cancelled, as a result of NEXus enrollees. For example, in a PhD program you might offer a course that had only 6-8 students, with NEXus you might be able to fill that course's enrollment to capacity.

I'm not sure how our students in the California state system would pay for the courses since they pay tuition vs. pay per class. Are there other universities that you have worked with that have this arrangement?

Virginia Commonwealth is going to implement a transcript model. The institution will pay the common fee for each student from their "pot of money." The value of NEXus membership is that it fills out the course offerings for the home schools and gives students a wider variety of courses than any one CON/SON can offer. There is a range of revenue generation for the CONs/SONs. Some schools use their revenue to scholarship students to take courses when the NEXus Common Price tuition is more than the home school's tuition. We're glad to offer resource people for CON/SON administrative team members to consult with.

We charge a separate per course technology fee (\$110); did I understand that the common tuition fee does not allow for any additional fee such as this?

Yes, the common price is inclusive of all fees.

If more than 10 schools apply, is the 10K signing bonus first-come, first served?

Yes.

Are the MOU, bylaws, guiding principles, financial aid consortium agreements available?

Yes, we can send those out. Some of these documents are available on the NEXus website <http://www.winnexus.org/> (scroll to the bottom of the Home Page).

How many schools are NEXus members at the present time?

Sixteen.