



NUSTEP High School Instructor Handbook 2026-2027

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BACKGROUND / HISTORY OF NUSTEP

Niagara University has offered concurrent enrollment courses since the mid 1980's. What started in one high school with one class has now expanded to over 40 schools in WNY and Rochester, and currently offers over 50 different course offerings. Approximately 1,800 students participate in NUSTEP annually.

NUSTEP is an opportunity for students in their Junior and Senior year of high school with an average of 80 or above (in their five core classes; English, Math, Science, History, and Language) and who are academically prepared for college-level course work to earn college credit while still attending high school. They do not leave the high school campus but are taught on their campus by University approved instructors. Students must be recommended for the course either by their school counselor, former instructors, or the current NUSTEP instructor.

THE PROGRAM

The NUSTEP program is recognized by colleges and universities across the country. It is accredited by the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Programs (NACEP).

- Once a student registers and pays for a course, the student is considered a part-time student for reporting purposes at the university. The cost is \$105 per credit hour.
- If a student is on a free or reduced lunch program, an instructor/counselor must verify that fact with high school administrators and must then provide NUSTEP with either a letter or email confirming this, (or provide the official documentation of acceptance to the F/R meal program). The student is then charged a reduced tuition rate of \$25/credit hour (\$75/3 credit hour course and \$100/4 credit hour course).
- FERPA: In order to allow for the free flow of communication between a student and their parents, their high school/teacher and Niagara University, students must sign a waiver which means they agree to waive their FERPA rights which will then allow the stated parties to discuss their dual enrollment course(s), grades, etc. Students have the following options: (as found on student NUSTEP application)
 - To agree to allow: (They check the "If you agree, please check this box")
 - *Parents/guardians access to dual enrollment course information including grades and any other information they may request
 - *High school to have access to their dual enrollment information for legitimate educational purposes
 - *Niagara University to disclose their educational records to the high school for legitimate educational purposes.
 - If they DO NOT agree, they check this box
 - *If students DO NOT agree, then FERPA law prevents you from discussing a student's progress with ANYONE (including parents). Instructors will be notified.
- The syllabus for a NUSTEP course replicates the on-campus syllabus. This is covered in detail in the section below called COURSE SYLLABUS.
- Students are evaluated based on their performance on tests, quizzes and assignments throughout the course. Grades are electronically transmitted to the University through its Self Service software program. You will be asked to discuss any assessments for your course with your faculty liaison.

- Students must also use Self Service to obtain their grades online. This process is included in the NUSTEP Student Handbook, and online on the NUSTEP web page (www.niagara.edu/nustep).
- Once student grades are received by the University, they are officially transcribed to the student's record. To transfer credits to another college or university, students must order an official transcript through Parchment for \$10 a copy. A transcript request link and transcript ordering details can be found on the NUSTEP website (www.niagara.edu/nustep).

THE PROCESS

Normally, high schools will contact the NUSTEP office and indicate what type of course(s) they are interested in offering. These courses must be currently offered at Niagara University. Sometimes a teacher will initiate the inquiry, and then report back to the High School administration. An initial meeting between the high school, the instructor, NUSTEP Director, and faculty liaison is typically arranged. When a course or courses are decided upon, the instructor(s) complete applications and provide post secondary transcripts, CV, references and certifications.

Upon instructor approval by the University (the department chair, the dean of the college and the university provost), the instructor will attend a new instructor orientation (usually in late summer). The general orientation includes administrative orientation regarding Self Service, online grading, Canvas, etc. Discipline specific orientation will be provided by the faculty liaison who will provide training and orientation to the course curriculum, assessment criteria, and course philosophy. Additionally, the NUSTEP program has a mandatory annual professional development program that teachers must attend each school year.

THE NUSTEP CLASSROOM VISIT

If requested, a NUSTEP or Admissions representative will visit your classroom, at any time you choose, to explain the NUSTEP program and promote the university. The representative will explain the program to the students and discuss the online registration process. The students will then be advised to discuss the program with their parents and/or guardians, view the NUSTEP website, and then if they decide to take the class for college credit, they will complete the online enrollment process. Otherwise, students should be directed to the NUSTEP web page for instructions on how to enroll.

Enrollment for all courses is through the NUSTEP online portal. Only one ID number is issued for a student, although they may take multiple courses and may take courses in succeeding years. Each student's ID number is listed on the instructor's course roster. The ID number is generated a few days after a student completes their registration. Students MUST obtain their NU ID number from their instructor's course roster. The instructor also receives an ID which will remain the same overtime and will be used as their identifier when submitting grades, etc. Instructors will receive their ID numbers and passwords when they are approved to join the NUSTEP program.

THE OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS

All NUSTEP students are held to the same standards of achievement as those expected of students in on-campus sections. A syllabus template is emailed to you once you have been approved to teach a course along with a copy of a current syllabus being used on campus. Any changes required to adapt the syllabus to the high school class must be approved by the faculty liaison before incorporation into the syllabus.

Your completed syllabus (using the template) must be submitted to your faculty liaison for approval prior to the course beginning. Your syllabus must be updated each year with current information. For classes starting in the fall, these should be submitted by August 1. For classes beginning in January, updated syllabi should be submitted by the end of November.

Textbooks required for the course are purchased by the high school. If a required text is changed by Niagara University, the high school may continue to use the former text, until the next purchasing cycle, and then the current book would be purchased. If a high school instructor wishes, they may obtain an instructor's copy of the new book, and make necessary adjustments so that the course requirements are met.

The midterm and final exams are often provided by Niagara University. If they are *not* provided and the instructor creates the test, then the instructor must secure approval from the faculty liaison prior to administering the exam/project

GRADING / EXAMINATIONS

Letter grades will be assigned to the students and methodology for arriving at a final grade must be included in your course syllabus. Your grading policy is expected to include graded assignments and their point value, percent value, or weight value; chart for assigning letter grades, and any make-up policy. You may want to develop a grading rubric in your syllabus to assist the students in understanding what is expected and required of your course. A grading chart is included in the syllabus template.

All grades are entered by the instructor electronically through the University's computerized Self Service system. Each instructor receives a username (their ID number) and password that allows them to securely enter this data, which will then be transcribed to a student's permanent record. Instructions for this process are provided at the new instructor orientation. The process to enter grades is available at the end of the instructor handbook and on the NUSTEP website.

The instructor will submit two copies of their *graded final exam* (with student personal information redacted) to the NUSTEP Manager at the University. Copies will then be forwarded to the faculty liaison.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

During the first year of teaching in NUSTEP, up to two classroom observations may be scheduled. However, if after your first classroom observation, should the liaison feel a second visit is not warranted, it will be noted. Otherwise, the second observation will be scheduled. Observations are required by our accreditation.

After the first year, the academic liaison will conduct a faculty site visit of the NUSTEP classroom at regular intervals, at least once every three years. The visit will focus on content delivery and verification of the use of approved syllabus, student interaction and involvement. A copy of the observation will be provided to the NUSTEP instructor upon completion. The observation form will be signed by both the HS instructor and the liaison, and maintained in the NUSTEP office. If there are any topics to be addressed, your liaison will note them on the Classroom Observation form, and you will need to follow up to ensure their completion.

Classroom observations will be tracked by the NUSTEP office. You will be notified by your liaison, if your class is due for an observation.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Course evaluations are required of every registered NUSTEP student, identical to the on-campus evaluations. Course evaluations are digital, and links for course evaluations will be sent to the Instructor. Instructors must share the course evaluation link with all registered students to complete before the end of the course. The completed evaluations will be sent to your faculty liaison for review.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The integrity of an academic community necessitates the full and correct attribution and citation of ideas, methodologies, and research findings to the appropriate source. This is necessary to protect the original work, whether it is found in reference material, other published matter, or unpublished communication from faculty, other scholars and fellow students. In addition, each student can promote academic honesty by protecting his or her work from inappropriate use. Academic honesty is essential to ensure the validity of the grading system and to maintain a high standard of academic excellence. The principal violations of academic honesty are *cheating* and *plagiarism*.

- ***Cheating*** includes the unauthorized use of certain materials, information, or devices in writing examinations, or in preparing papers or other assignments. Any student who aids another student in such dishonesty is also guilty of cheating. Other possible forms of cheating include submitting the same work in more than one class without permission, and fabricating or altering references or actual research results.
- ***Plagiarism*** is the presentation of ideas, words, and opinions of someone else as one's own words. The offense does not extend solely to directly quoted materials presented without documentation. Paraphrased material, even if rendered in the student's own words, must be attributed to the originator of the thought.

Students should be well informed of the policy on academic dishonesty prior to the start of the course, and it must be included on the syllabus.

An instructor who suspects academic dishonesty should present the allegation and any corresponding evidence to the student. The student will be given the opportunity to respond and the instructor may accept or reject the response. If the response is rejected, the instructor assigns a penalty.

Penalties for cases of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following, according to the severity of the offense:

- Resubmission of an essay or rewriting of an examination
- Assigning an “F” for the paper, project, or examination
- Assigning an “F” for the course (N.B. second offenders receive an automatic “F”).
- The high school may also impose penalties if it is deemed warranted.

The instructor will submit a report of the offense to the NUSTEP Coordinator and the faculty liaison during the semester in which it occurred. The complete policy on academic integrity and the appeal process may be found in the University Catalog.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL

If a student chooses to withdraw from a NUSTEP course, he/she must send an email to Niagara’s Registrar, Harry Gong, hgong@niagara.edu, indicating the course that they are dropping. Students will have from registration to midterms to bring the grade up, or withdraw with a “W”. If they withdraw before midterms, they will receive a “W”, and anytime after midterms, a “U” will be assigned. A “U” is not transferable and does/should not impact a student’s future GPA. If they withdraw before the payment period ends, their payment will be refunded. After the payment period ends, no refunds will be issued. Failure to comply with the policy will most likely result in the student receiving an “F” in the course.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Instructors teaching NUSTEP courses will be included in continuing collegial interaction, through annual professional development with University faculty and administration, and other NUSTEP instructors. Professional development occurs annually on campus and attendance is required per our accreditation with NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships). These interactions will address issues such as course content, course delivery, assessment, evaluation, and professional development in the field of study. Professional development seminars will include general University information sessions such as Self Service updates, general policy/procedural information, and discipline specific workshops.

CAMPUS VISITS BY NUSTEP CLASSES

Visits to Niagara’s campus by NUSTEP classes is an opportunity that is highly encouraged by Niagara University and the NUSTEP program. Instructors are welcome to submit a request form to the NUSTEP office at least four weeks in advance of their intended visit. A field trip form can be found at the end of this booklet and on the NUSTEP website. Campus tours, career and college awareness activities, study skills workshops, library/research presentations and individualized presentations are possible with advanced notification. If an event on campus would be of interest to NUSTEP students, the NUSTEP Manager will notify all high school instructors of the event for possible attendance by the high school students. NUSTEP will cover the cost of lunch for all attendees on campus field trips.

PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Once the “end of the year forms” have been received by the NUSTEP Office, all NUSTEP instructors who have at least 5 students registered for their course will be awarded a small stipend for their work. Instructors can choose either a \$1,000 Graduate Education Voucher or \$250 cash stipend. End of the year forms include an updated syllabus for the next school year, two graded copies of a final exam/project, course evaluations, and a Faculty Information Sheet used for the office to update instructors’ contact information.

Only one voucher/stipend is issued regardless of the number of times a day an instructor teaches the same course. For example, if an instructor is teaching ENG 110 during 2nd, 4th and 6th period, the instructor would only receive one voucher for the *course*. If the instructor chooses the graduate education voucher, the voucher may only be used by that individual or transferred to a direct dependent. Vouchers can be redeemed within two years of being issued.

Voucher/Stipend will not be issued if a current copy of any end of the year documents are missing.

GRADING SCALE:

The following is the grading scale that must be used for NUSTEP classes. The grading scale can be found in the Syllabus Template.

LETTER GRADE	NUMERIC VALUE	GPA
A+	97-100	4.00
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.00
D-	60-62	0.67
F	59 AND LOWER	0.00

INSTRUCTOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

NUSTEP instructors must be approved by Niagara University prior to teaching classes in the program. The quality of instruction, as well as rigor and assessment in NUSTEP courses must be equal to that of its counterpart on campus. As such, when a NUSTEP instructor is unable to teach due to illness or other event (maternity leave, surgery etc.), the following policy shall be in effect.

- If an instructor is absent for one (1) to five (5) consecutive school days, a substitute teacher is able to fill in without notification to the university.

- If an instructor is absent for six (6) to ten (10) consecutive school days, notification must be made to the NUSTEP coordinator at the university.
 - The liaison will be notified and all efforts will be made to have the liaison speak to the replacement / substitute instructor regarding the class.
- If an instructor is absent for longer than ten (10) consecutive school days:
 - The instructor (or principal) will provide an estimate of the length of time the instructor will be out of the classroom by mail or e-mail to the NUSTEP Director.
 - The name of the replacement instructor, his/her educational credentials and resume will be mailed or emailed to the NUSTEP Director to be forwarded to the liaison for review.
 - The interim instructor must follow the course syllabus and should be in contact with the liaison regarding any concerns.
- In all instances, the NUSTEP course syllabus/course outline, assessments, and other tools utilized by the original instructor must be used.
- Student teachers are allowed to teach the class so long as they follow the course syllabus. They are observed by their cooperating teacher and the NUSTEP office is notified.

INSTRUCTOR ATTENDANCE AT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

In accordance with NACEP standard F(3): the University provides annual discipline specific professional development activities and ongoing collegial interaction to address course content, course delivery, assessment, evaluation, and/or research and development in the field and ensures instructor participation, as well as standard F(4): NUSTEP addresses instructor non-compliance with these expectations. In the event that an instructor is unable to attend the annual Professional Development Day, the following policy shall be in effect:

- The NUSTEP office will maintain a sign in list for each Professional Development Day (PDD), and provide each liaison with a list of those instructors who were unable to attend the PDD.
- The NUSTEP office will e-mail the instructors immediately following the PDD that it is the responsibility of the instructor to contact the faculty liaison in order to discuss the course or courses being taught, with a view to the issues stated above, prior to the end of the University's spring semester.
 - If an instructor fails to meet with the liaison prior to the start of the new school year, the NUSTEP course will be removed from the online registration system, until such meeting occurs. If such a meeting does not occur, the course will be canceled for the following semester.
- Upon completion of the discussion/meeting of the instructor and liaison, the liaison will complete the *Discipline Specific PDD Report* form (form follows policy) providing details of the discussion/meeting as outlined on the form. Follow-up actions must be noted on the form and sent to the NUSTEP office for follow-up and filing.
- Instructor attendance at the next annual Professional Development Day will be mandatory for those who missed the previous year.
- Should an instructor miss a second consecutive annual Professional Development Day, the instructor will be required to personally meet with the NUSTEP Coordinator and the

liaison prior to the end of the University's spring semester, and a letter will be sent to the instructor's high school principal notifying him/her of the situation, and that continued violations may result in the NUSTEP course being dropped from the high school's NUSTEP course offerings.

NUSTEP MIDTERM POLICY

NUSTEP instructors will notify any students in a NUSTEP class who have a D or an F at the midterm date.

- This will allow the student the opportunity to discuss, with the instructor, the possibility of improving their grade to passing prior to making a decision to withdraw from the course.
- You will have from registration to midterms to bring the grade up or withdraw with a "W". If you withdraw before midterms, you will receive a W, and anytime after midterms, a "U" will be assigned. A "U" is not transferable and does/should not impact a student's future GPA.

TRANSCRIPTS:

Go to www.niagara.edu/records and select "Request a Transcript". It will then take you to the Parchment Ordering Page, where you are given further information and the option to "order transcript" at the end of the page. Each transcript is \$10.

Official transcripts will not be processed if the student has an outstanding financial obligation to Niagara University.

Electronic/PDF transcript orders are fulfilled immediately (including weekends and holidays) if there are no holds on the student's record.

Normal transcript processing time for mail or pick-up copies is 3-5 business days. No paper transcripts are processed or mailed on days the University is closed.

NUSTEP STUDENTS: Please do not use After Degree option when ordering your transcript. Check your grades on myNU through Self Service to make sure they are posted before you order.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS ACCESSING GRADES:

In order for students to access grades, they must have their myNU username and password.

- User ID (or username)

This will always be a lower case "s" followed by the seven-digit NU student ID number. This number is on the instructor's roster.

Password is obtained by:

- Going to www.niagara.edu/purplepass
- Click the button: “Get started online” to activate Purple Pass
- Enter username (ID number) and your date of birth
- Answer the following prompts, including entering a valid email address
- A random password will be emailed to you. You should change it as soon as possible. The instructions are online at Purplepass.
- Once you have your password, go to <https://mynu.niagara.edu/> Click on “Self Service.”
- Enter your ID and password again.
- Click on “Grades.” Pick the correct semester.
- Your grades for that semester should pop up.

Your username and password gets you into all of NU’s student systems.

NUSTEP 2026-2027 Field Trip Request Form

*Must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the requested visit date

*A high school chaperone must accompany students during all of their activities (except when students break into small groups for college classes).

*NUSTEP/Admissions will cover the cost of lunch for students and chaperones. High school is responsible for covering the cost of transportation.

Instructor Name(s) _____

Instructor(s) Cell Phone Number(s) _____

High School _____

Course(s) _____

Requested date(s) of field trip _____

Arrival Time _____

Departure Time _____

Total number of students expected to attend _____

Number of students attending who are enrolled in NUSTEP

Number of students attending who are not enrolled in NUSTEP

Field Trip Request Form Continued

Of the following activities, please circle or highlight a few that you would be interested in having your students experience. It is not guaranteed that the class will be able to cover everything circled/highlighted in one field trip, but we will try our best to fit in as much as possible. Bear in mind that typically 10 to 15 minutes is planned between each activity to move students from one building to another.

- 1.) Attend college class
- 2.) Lunch in Russell J. Salvatore Dining Commons
- 3.) College Q & A, talk with a few students about their experience and hear their advice for the future
- 4.) Campus tour
- 5.) Research in the library. Teachers must submit a specific research project that they are having students work on to the Niagara University librarian so she can prepare her presentation to show students how to navigate Niagara University's databases. This will only be approved if a specific project is submitted.
- 6.) A specific project or experiment done with a college professor just for NUSTEP students, this can include doing a science experiment, practice using the film studio equipment, etc.
- 7.) NUSTEP presentation where students are shown how to access Purplepass, log into MyNU, request a transcript, etc.
- 8.) Study Abroad presentation
- 9.) Guided tour of the Castellani Art Museum

Other, please specify:

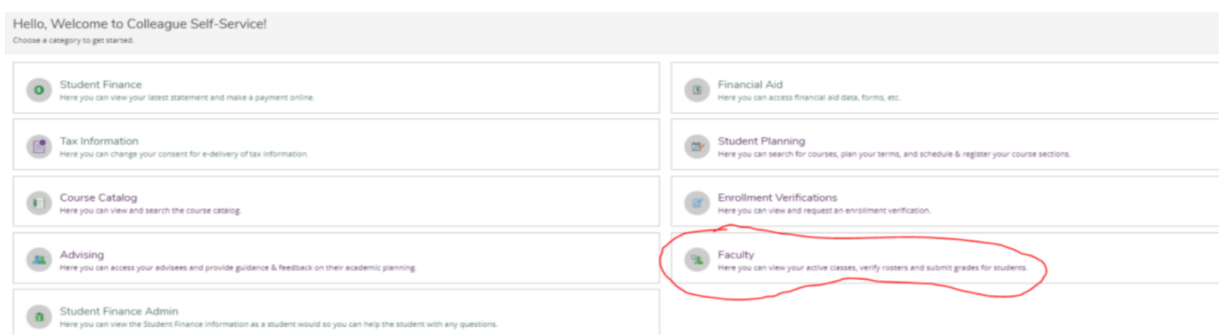
Please keep in mind that by submitting this form, you are only requesting a field trip, and that completing and submitting this form does not guarantee you a field trip on the date specified. After review, you will be contacted by the NUSTEP Office to confirm your date(s) or to make other arrangements. For additional information, please contact Ashley Gruhalla in the NUSTEP Office at agruhalla@niagara.edu or 716-286-8185.

GRADING INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF SERVICE

Enter Self-Service through directly at <https://ssp.niagara.edu/student>.

You will log in with the credentials provided to you by the NUSTEP Office. If you have trouble logging in or have not set up your account you should e-mail ITSupport@niagara.edu or call 716-286-8040 for assistance.

If this is your first time using Self-Service it may take a bit to load the first time or two as the cache fills. You may see a variety of modules depending on your roles, and whether or not you were ever a student at Niagara but you will want to select FACULTY from the welcome screen.

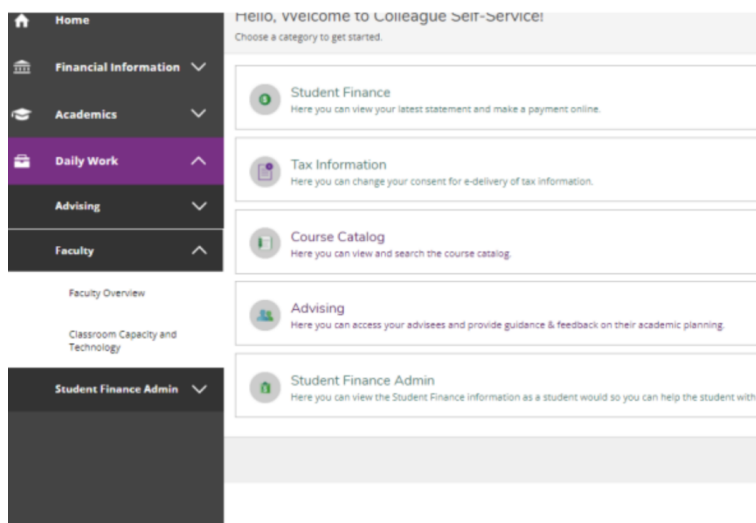


FACULTY OVERVIEW SCREEN

Once in the faculty module you should see a list of your courses from the current and at least previous semesters.

Manage your courses by selecting a section below					
Spring 2022					
Section	Times	Locations	Availability ⓘ	Books	Census Dates
ENV*110-K: Lit Pers: Environment in Lit	T/Th 3:00 PM - 4:20 PM 1/18/2022 - 5/19/2022	Dunleavy Hall, 230 Lecture	1 / 17 / 0		2/4/2022 Census - Certification Opens On 1/31/2022
Fall 2021					
Section	Times	Locations	Availability ⓘ	Books	Census Dates
POL*101-NEHF: American Govt	TBD	TBD	0 / 30 / 0		9/17/2021 Census
Spring 2021					
Section	Times	Locations	Availability ⓘ	Books	Census Dates
MKG*325-A: International Marketing	M/W 3:00 PM - 4:20 PM 1/28/2021 - 5/18/2021	Gallagher Center, 112 Lecture	3 / 40 / 0		
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From the overview screen, you can see all the pertinent information about the course, Time, Date, Location, Instructional Method, and Census Dates. Availability is displayed as **Seats Available/Cap/Waitlist**. Therefore a **zero on the first number indicates a full course**, and a **negative number would indicate over that was forced over the submitted set capacity**. Please note that caps aren't set for NUSTEP courses, so these figures may be negative or zero, and for your purposes shouldn't concern you as the university bulk registers all the students provided through the portal; NUSTEP students – therefore – aren't really selecting their own classes.



It also indicates the window on which Roster Certification will occur – the week of Census. Roster Verification and census are features unique to Undergraduate and Graduate enrollment at Niagara and thus this feature is not required of NUSTEP instructors.

Clicking into a course brings up access to these the standard features: Roster, Grading and Roster Verification Email All/Print and Export

Section Details
[← Back to Courses](#)

ECO*370-A: Labor Economics
 Spring 2022
 Main Campus
 M/W 1:30 PM - 2:50 PM
 1/18/2022 - 5/19/2022
 TBD

Seats Available 28 of 30

[Deadline Dates](#)

Roster Roster Verification Grading

Print Email All Export

Student Name	Student ID	Class Level	Preferred Email
Gongkowski, Harris	0894399	Freshman	harcbearz@yahoo.com
Test, Superfly	0888636	Sophomore, Graduate Student	

To the Right and just above the Roster you will see some controls. From here you can:

- Display a print friendly roster in your browser.
- Export your Roster into a csv/spreadsheet
- Email all – since NU uses Google and it isn't integrated with Self Service, pushing this allows you to load all the emails onto the clipboard. You can then open google and compose an email to the class by pasting the emails into the BCC field.

GRADING YOUR CLASSES IN SELF SERVICE

The grading function for both MidTerm and Final Grading is available. By selecting the Grading tab. You would select the Tab below – Overview (non-editable) and shows all the grades and notations submitted. Final Grade and Midterm 1 will open the screens where you can enter the grades.

Midterm & Final Grading

ECO*370-A: Labor Economics

Spring 2022
Main Campus

M/W 1:30 PM - 2:50 PM
1/18/2022 - 5/10/2022
TBD

Seats Available 27 of 30

[Deadline Dates](#)

[Roster](#) [Roster Verification](#) [Grading](#)

Overview

Final Grade

Midterm 1

Midterm Grading Complete

Student Name	Student ID	Never Attended	Last Date of Attendance	Midterm Grade	Class Level	Credits
Gongkowsk, Harris	0894399	☒	Mid/yyyy	Select Grade	Freshman	3
Test, John	0310562	☐	1/20/2022	Select Grade	Freshman	3
Test, Superfly	0888636	☐	Mid/yyyy	Select Grade	Sophomore, Graduate Student	3

Midterm grading (not required of NUSTEP instructors) **provides you a way to identify students that still haven't attended or haven't attended in a while** (this notification can accompany a grade); this information is used to help identify students in crisis/at risk for outreach.

You will notice that you cannot mark students as never attending in the **Final Grade** form as by this point there should be no student in your class that wasn't marked as not attending either at the mandatory Roster Verification or Mid Term grading. All students require a grade at this point, please put an **"F"** or an **"I"** grade for any student that is failing due to attendance/non-attendance issues. Incomplete grades require a mutually arranged expiration date between you and the student, but should not initially exceed six weeks into the next marking period (Fall/Spring). The **"I"** grade will revert to an **"F"** grade after that date.

Self Service saves your entries as you enter, thus it lets you resume grading at a later time. The Records Office verifies and validates grades on a more frequent schedule closer to the end of term, once a grade is validated: you cannot change the grade without a grade change form or approved correspondence with the Records Office, however any ungraded student can continue to be graded