

College Now

School and Teacher Handbook

Teacher Handbook

### Welcome - Overview of the Program

Southwest Minnesota State University partners with over 120 school districts and more than 5,000 students in the College Now program. We offer over 30 different courses and work with more than 300 different teachers around the state.

### Summer Workshop/Professional Development

SMSU offers an annual summer workshop for College Now teachers, liaisons, and administration. This workshop occurs on the first Tuesday in August and is held on the Southwest Minnesota State University campus in Marshall. It is an opportunity for teachers to learn about the expectations of the program, discuss ideas that are covered within the courses, and to network with other teachers and mentoring professors within the program.

Attendance is mandatory for all first year teachers to the program. If life-circumstances prevent you from attending the workshop, approval must be obtained. Please communicate this with the College Now office as soon as possible. If approved, we will arrange other pathways for the information to be shared.

Continuing teachers within the program are also expected to attend the workshop on at least a three year rotation. Although this is the requirement, it is highly recommended that teachers plan to attend every year for updates on policies, procedures, program expectations, networking opportunities, and professional development. Non-compliance with the workshop attendance policy can result in a teacher no longer teaching in the College Now program.

Mentor Assignments

Mentors are assigned to high school teachers over the summer. As a program, we attempt to pair previous teachers with their same mentors whenever possible; however due to load issues and locations of high schools there may be some variation from year-to-year.

Mentors will contact high school teachers prior to the start of their course to discuss the required syllabus and any supporting materials the teacher may need throughout the class.

### Course Requests

Course requests are submitted during the month of April by the high school liaison. Courses must be requested each year that you plan to offer the course as this is how they get into our system for the school year. Courses should not be requested without an approved high school instructor. Should an instructor be approved after April, a “Late Course Request” form can be submitted and we will add the course to our system at that time.

When completing course requests, please indicate if the course will be offered as a discrete class or a mixed class. A discrete class means that only students who are taking the course for college credit will be present in the classroom. A mixed course means that students only taking the class for high school credit will be in the same classroom as those taking it for college credit. SMSU does allow for a mixed classroom setting as long as 51% of the class is taking it for college credit. This is to ensure that the course rigor will remain at a collegiate level.

### Books for College Now Courses

Some disciplines are very specific in the books they require for their courses, while others are more willing to work with what a school already has for the course. Please feel free to contact the College Now Office or the department chair directly and we would be happy to help in determining what is best for your situation.

### Syllabi for College Now Courses

All syllabi for College Now classes must be approved by the SMSU faculty mentor for the course. Sometimes syllabi are provided by the faculty and other times teachers are allowed to use their own materials with approval from the mentor. The syllabi should include the course information, the required textbook, a schedule of the course, and outline of grading procedures. Although additional items can be added to a syllabi for high school purposes, SMSU does have specific materials that are expected and required to be covered in each of the College Now courses. You will want to review your syllabi with the mentoring professor prior to the start of your course. A final copy should be sent to the mentoring professor as SMSU will keep a record of syllabi for each College Now course being offered.

StarID Information

StarIDs are a username assigned to individuals for the purpose of logging into system-based programs. It is unique across the MN State College and University system (MinnState), so individuals should only have one StarID. Both high school teachers and students are assigned a StarID upon applying. As a teacher, instructions of how to activate a StarID were included in the approval notice from SMSU. The StarID and password created during the activation process will be used when logging into university systems for roster verifications and for library access.

Teachers and students can use the [StarID Self Service](https://starid.minnstate.edu/) page if they should forget either their StarID or the password. To use this site, both students and teachers will complete the following steps:

1. Go to the [StarID Self Service](https://starid.minnstate.edu/) page (<https://starid.minnstate.edu/> and choose StarID Self Service)
2. Choose the appropriate option for the situation
3. Select the “Personal Email Address” option under Students
4. Enter a valid email address that can be accessed immediately and hit “Continue”
5. Retrieve that email and copy the verification code from the email and paste it into the Verification code box, then type in the last name in the last name/email box.
6. At this point, individuals will be able to reset their StarID password. The passwords are case sensitive, must be at least eight characters long, and requires the use of three of the following four items: upper case letters, lower case letters, numbers, and special characters. Please also choose a preferred email address, and check the acknowledgement check box. Then click “Continue”.
7. The password has been reset and the StarID will appear on the screen.

### Eligibility Requirements for College Now Students

**Seniors -** need to have a 3.0 GPA or above AND be in the top half of their graduating class\*

**Juniors -** need to have a 3.0 GPA or above AND be in the top third of their graduating class\*

**Sophomores -** need to be in the top 10% of their graduating class AND have scored over the 90th percentile on a nationally standardized test. Transcripts and test scores must be sent to the College Now Office to verify sophomore eligibility.

*\*Note:  Test scores from a nationally standardized test can be used to replace class rank if needed.  Students will still be required to meet the 3.0 GPA to go along with their test scores.  Seniors need to score over the 50th percentile and juniors need to score over the 70th percentile.*

### Appeal Process

We do have an appeal process in place for students who are interested in taking a course through College Now but do not meet the set requirements for eligibility.  Our process has moved completely online. Below are the items we will need to receive in order to complete the Student Appeal Process:

1. A completed, online Student Appeal Form (link found on [Student Appeal](https://www.smsu.edu/academics/collegenow/studentresources/student-appeal.html) site)   
2. A personal letter from the student  
3. A [Student Appeal Reference Form](https://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/academics/collegenow/college-now-appeal-reference-form.pdf) completed by a teacher and/or administrator  
4. High school transcripts (must include grades for the semester/trimester/quarter immediately prior to the requested College Now course.)

\**NOTE*: Students will need to complete the application process prior to submitting their appeal paperwork. This will connect them to our SMSU system and allow them access to the online appeal form.

Application Process

Students are encouraged to complete the application process the semester prior to the start of the course or as soon as they plan to enroll in a College Now course. This will help make the actual registration process go a little smoother for both the students and the teachers.

A Step-by-Step Guide to the E-Application Process can be found online at: [E-Application Process](https://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/academics/collegenow/step-by-step-guide-to-e-application1.doc). This guide will also be sent out to the high school liaison at the start of each new semester.

If a student already has a StarID from another MinnState institution, they should use this to log into their application account instead of creating a new StarID. Failure to do so will result in complications later in the process. Students who have already applied to the SMSU College Now program, do not need to complete a new application. One application is all that is needed during a student’s time as a high school student.

Registration Process

Registration for a course takes place within the first 10 days of the class. Registration is our term for enrolling in the College Now course in order to receive college credit. Students will need to be admitted to the SMSU College Now program before they attempt to register for a course. Students will not be able to e-apply and then immediately attempt to register, as it does take up to two business days for an application to be processed on our end.

Teachers should plan to set aside class time to go through the registration process as students will register themselves using E-Services. A Step-by-Step Guide to the Registration Process can be found online at: [Registration Process](https://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/academics/collegenow/stepbystepguidetocourseregistration.doc). This guide will also be sent out to the high school liaison at the start of each new semester.

It is the student’s responsibility to verify that they have successfully registered for their course(s). Teachers will verify their rosters prior to billing, but students should double check to ensure that the course appears on their schedule for the correct semester.

Trouble Shooting

The College Now Office has put together a listing of the most common questions or issues that arise during the application and registration process. This list is available online on the [Troubleshooting Resource page](http://www.smsu.edu/academics/collegenow/?id=6250) and is meant to act as a reference for students and teachers as they work through each of these processes.

However, please feel free to contact us at any time with questions or issues that come up. We are here to make things go smooth for everyone involved. When contacting the College Now Office, please include as much information as possible so we have documentation of the issue and we can quickly find a solution.

Drop/Withdrawal

There is a significant difference between the drop and withdrawal of a College Now course. It is important that students are aware of this difference when making a decision regarding courses.

A drop happens within the first 10 days of the course and it will not be recorded on a college transcript for the student. The high school will also not be charged for that student when billings are sent out. Students can process the drop directly through E-services using the following steps:

1. Log into [E-Services](https://eservices.minnstate.edu/esession/authentication.do?campusId=075&postAuthUrl=http%3A%2F%2Feservices.minnstate.edu%2Fstudent-portal%2Fsecure%2Fdashboard.do%3Fcampusid%3D075)
2. Select “Courses and Registration”
3. Select “View/Modify Schedule”
4. Click on the “x” button to the left of the course title that will be dropped
5. Enter the student’s password
6. Hit the “Drop/Withdraw” button
7. Select “View/Modify Schedule” tab again and verify the course is no longer listed on the schedule

A withdrawal happens after the initial 10-day registration window, but before the withdrawal deadline for the course. Students have the first 80% of the class to withdraw from the course. A “W” will appear on the student’s transcript, but it does not count towards their college GPA. The high school will still be responsible for the tuition of this student when billings are sent.

Withdrawals will need to be processed by the College Now office at SMSU. We request an email be sent directly from the teacher or the liaison at the high school and it should include the student’s name, the course they are withdrawing from, and their last date of attendance. This email will serve as documentation for their request and will be entered into their student file.

Roster Verification

Teachers are expected to complete a roster verification for each of their College Now courses after students have completed the registration process. To do this, teachers will need to log into their E-Services account. Below are the steps teachers will need to follow in order to complete their verification:

1. Go to our main university website at: [www.smsu.edu](http://www.smsu.edu)
2. Click on “Menu” and drop to “E-services.”
3. Log in using activated StarID and password
4. Once logged in, click on “Switch to Employee e-Services” link in top right corner
5. Click on “Faculty”
6. Choose “Class Lists”
7. Select the blue link under the “Course ID” column
8. Roster should appear

Only teachers can see the rosters for a course. It is not something that high school liaison will have access to view. It is good practice for teachers to print off a copy of their course roster and submit it to their liaison/guidance counselor to verify the roster matches with who is eligible for the course. If changes need to be made, please inform the College Now Office prior to billing.

Billing Procedures

Once the verification process is complete, SMSU will send out billings for the College Now courses. Typically, this will happen towards the end of October for all fall semester and full year courses, and then the first part of March for spring semester classes. Along with the invoice for the course, our Business Office will send a copy of the course roster at the time of billing. Schools should review the enclosed roster to make sure it is correct.

If there are changes that need to be made, the school should contact the College Now Office immediately. If a student does not appear on the roster after billings are sent out, the student may be able to still be added to the roster, but there will be a $25 late fee charged to the high school for the addition of that student. Generally, students are only allowed to register within the registration period. Late additions would depend upon the individual circumstances and reason for why they did not get registered. Students cannot be added to classes after the semester is complete.

Here is a link to our current tuition rates: [College Now Tuition Rates](https://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/academics/collegenow/tuition-rates.doc).

Reimbursement funding is available for concurrent enrollment courses through the MN Department of Education (MDE). Districts should check with MDE to learn more about this process.

College Now ID Cards

As part of our College Now program, we want students to recognize that they are SMSU students. For this reason, we provide all students with a College Now student ID card. This ID card will provide free admittance for students into many Southwest Minnesota State University events including general athletic events, band and choir concerts, and theatre productions.

The ID cards are provided to students during their first semester as a College Now student and will remain valid through their senior year. The back of the card provides information on how to transfer SMSU credits to other institutions. The process of officially sending a transcript from SMSU to another school is done online. The back of their card, along with the Mustang ID on the front, should make this a smooth and easy process.

Grading

College Now does allow for grades to vary from high school to college. Although most schools find it easier to have one grade for both levels, some choose to offer a separate grading scale to allow for an alternate grade at the high school level. This information should be shared with the mentoring professor for the course, needs to be addressed with the students at the start of the class, and should be documented on the course syllabi.

Final grades need to be submitted to the mentoring professor within three days of the course ending at the high school. The mentoring professor will then have an additional two weeks to review the grades and enter them into the system. Once entered, the grades should be visible using E-Services. Teachers and students are expected to double-check submitted grades to ensure they have been entered correctly.

It is important for students to be aware that final grades are permanent and will remain on their official transcript.

### Transferability of Credits

The transferability of credits is ultimately up to the receiving institution. However, many of the College Now courses we offer fall under what is called the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. This is an agreed upon set of general courses that are required at all Minnesota State Colleges and University institutions. Here is a link for additional information about the general requirements: [MN Transfer Curriculum.](https://www.smsu.edu/catalog/index.html?catalogYear=79&categoryId=926)

Students going outside of the MN State Colleges and Universities system may find the [Transferology](https://www.transferology.com/) website helpful to determine how their credits will transfer to other institutions. Although this site does not have a complete listing of all colleges and universities, it does have several to choose from in the region.

### Surveys

For accreditation purposes, the College Now program is required to conduct several surveys of the different individuals involved with our concurrent enrollment program. Links to all of our surveys can be found online on the [SMSU College Now Survey](http://www.smsu.edu/academics/collegenow/?id=7306) site.

The Student Satisfaction survey is completed at the end of each college course. If possible, we encourage teachers to take five minutes out of a class period to have the students run through the survey. This seems to work the best in getting the results and information that we need. The survey is not an evaluation of the high school teacher itself, it is merely used as a tool to ensure that we are offering a strong program that meets the needs of the students. Results from the survey will be shared with both the high school teacher and the SMSU mentoring professor for the course.

For those teaching either our COMM 110 or English 151 courses, there is another discipline-specific survey that we ask students to complete in addition to the Student Satisfaction survey at the end of the course.

At the end of the school year, we also ask all teachers, counselors, and principals to complete a survey on their experience with the College Now program at their school. The results from the survey are used to determine what things we do well within the program and also what areas we may need to improve upon in the future.

Two additional surveys that we conduct include both a one-year and four-year out alumni survey of past participants in the College Now program. From these surveys we look to gain an understanding of how our credits transferred to other institutions and what our past students experienced in their post high school education. Although teachers do not see these students first hand at the time of the survey, we ask that they inform the students of these survey opportunities while they are still in the classroom.

### Teacher Expectations of the College Now Program

The expectations of our program fall under three main categories –

1. Relationships: High school teachers are expected to build and maintain a strong relationship with their SMSU mentor, the high school liaison, and the College Now office. The success of our program depends upon an open flow of communication amongst all groups involved.
2. Operations: Teachers are expected to ensure successful and timely registration of their students. Rosters should be verified by the end of the 10-day registration window. Teachers should clearly communicate drop and withdrawal policies to their students.
3. Instruction: It is our expectations that teachers will be responsible for inventing the college classroom/setting within their high school environment. This will ensure that the standard and rigor of the course remain at a collegiate level.

### Teacher/Mentor Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Mentoring Professor:

* 1. Will visit the teacher at least once during the offering of the course.
  2. Will be available via phone, email, fax, Zoom, or other form of communication for their teachers
  3. Will provide curriculum, materials, tests, and supplements upon request
  4. Will have final authority on the university transcript grade

Responsibilities of the High School Teacher:

1. Will initiate request for an earlier visit date if necessary or additional visit if needed
2. Will contact mentoring professors with any question that arises regarding the course
3. Will request additional supplemental course materials if needed
4. Will have the final authority on the high school transcript grade

### Non-Compliance with SMSU Expectations for College Now

If a faculty mentor is not satisfied with a teacher’s performance or has issues with the course, the first step is an open dialogue with the teacher about expectations and needs. Our goal is always to have open communication and clear expectations and goals. In the rare occurrence that concerns continue, the faculty mentor brings the College Now Director into the communication process. A meeting is set up with the high school teacher, SMSU faculty mentor, College Now Director, and High School Principal. During this meeting all concerns are expressed and a professional improvement plan is put into place with a date for follow up. The teacher and their work on the professional improvement plan is reviewed following that date.

### Campus Resources

College Now students have access to the numerous resources that are available through SMSU. The library, Writing Center, and tutoring services are all available online for students to use throughout the year.

SMSU does provide services for students with disabilities and IEPs at the high school. However, accommodations may vary from what is available at the high school. At the university level, a 504 plan or IEP are tools to assist the Office of Disability Services and student in determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations. If a student taking a College Now course in their high school would like consideration of accommodations from their plan, a copy of the plan needs to be submitted to the College Now Office along with a letter from the diagnostician (Doctor, Therapist, Social Worker, Psychiatrist, etc.) as to what assessments (WAIS, Woodcock Johnson, Interview, DSM … ) were done to come to the conclusion that this individual has a disability and what major life activity is substantially limited. Please contact the College Now Office regarding the process for determining the appropriate accommodations for a student.

### Student Rights and Responsibilities and Conduct

SMSU College Now students will receive the same rights and are held to the same expectations as are traditional on-campus students. A full listing of these rights and expectations is available in our [SMSU Student Handbook](http://www.smsu.edu/administration/studenthandbook/).

Below is information regarding our Academic Honesty policy and our Plagiarism policy. These two policies should be included on any SMSU syllabi for College Now courses. A full listing of the policy can be found at: <http://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/nca/policies/A-032.pdf>.

**Academic Honesty Policy:**

The aim of the academic honesty policy is to maintain the academic integrity of Southwest

Minnesota State University and promote an intellectual climate of honesty and integrity. To maintain an environment of academic integrity all students are required to accept personal responsibility for their work at Southwest Minnesota State University. Any offense against the academic honesty policy compromises the educational integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and will be considered a grave offense. Offenses against academic honesty are acts which unjustly advance one’s academic standing at Southwest Minnesota State University and include knowingly permitting or knowingly aiding a person in an offense against the academic policy.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own. Plagiarism will include, but not be limited to:

1. Submitting someone else’s work or ideas as your own, including but not limited to homework assignments, term papers, research reports, lab reports, group projects, artistic works, tests, or class presentations.

2. Submitting someone else’s electronic work as your own, including but not limited to video clips, audio clips, electronic files, electronic programs, and any other copied electronic page, document, article, review, etc.

3. Submitting someone else’s work as your own with minor alterations. Paraphrasing without proper citation is also plagiarism.

4. Submitting someone else’s work without appropriate use of quotations, paraphrases, footnotes, or references.

Violations of either policy should first be brought to the attention of the mentoring faculty. As the faculty of record, it is their decision if the situation should be handled officially or unofficially. If handled unofficially, the mentoring faculty and the high school teacher will work together to determine an appropriate course-related sanction that will be imposed.

If handled officially, the mentor will complete paperwork documenting the incident that is filed and recorded with the Dean. The Dean will review the documentation and determine if the sanction is justified or if additional sanctions are deemed necessary. This documentation is then kept on file for three years. Students will have an opportunity to appeal the faculty decision of documented cases to a faculty appeal committee if they so choose.

Another policy for College Now students to be aware of is our SMSU Grievance/Complaint policy. Additional information about this policy can be found at: [www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/nca/policies/G-011.pdf](http://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/nca/policies/G-011.pdf)

**SMSU Grievance/Complaint Policy and Procedure:** No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participating, or refusing to participate, in a grievance. Retaliation may be subject to action under appropriate student or employee policies.

1. Students shall first attempt to resolve complaints informally at the point of the dispute.
2. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, students shall submit, in writing, their grievance/complaint to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.
3. The Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs may refer a grievance/complaint to an appropriate staff member ("designee") for investigation and/or disposition of the grievance/complaint.
4. The Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs or her/his designee will meet with the student within ten (10) class days to discuss the student's grievance/complaint.
5. The grievance/complaint will be investigated and resolved in a timely manner.  Only in exceptional circumstances will this take more than thirty (30) class days.  All documentation regarding the grievance/complaint shall be kept in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.
6. Once an inquiry into a grievance/complaint has reached a conclusion, the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs or her/his designee will meet with the student and inform him/her of the outcome of the grievance/complaint.
7. If a student wishes to file an appeal of a grievance/complaint, that student will have to do so within five (5) class days of the closing meeting. Appeals from this grievance procedure shall be routed to the Office of the President for consideration.
8. Following the determination by the university President, a student wishing to further pursue an appeal may do so by contacting the System Director for Policy and Procedure at [Gary.Hunter@minnstate.edu](mailto:Gary.Hunter@minnstate.edu) or by contacting the Higher Learning Commission at [www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html](http://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html)

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

According to the US Department of Education, the FERPA policy regarding concurrent enrollment students states:

“If a student is attending a postsecondary institution - at any age - the rights under FERPA have transferred to the student.  However, in a situation where a student is enrolled in both a high school and a postsecondary institution, the two schools may exchange information on that student.  If the student is under 18, the parents still retain the rights under FERPA at the high school and may inspect and review any records sent by the postsecondary institution to the high school.  Additionally, the postsecondary institution may disclose personally identifiable information from the student’s education records to the parents, without the consent of the eligible student, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes under the IRS rules.”

SMSU’s practice regarding FERPA is to exercise caution and we may request additional information from the student before talking with or releasing specific information to anyone other than the student themselves.

For additional information please see the US Department of Education website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

### Students Continuing at SMSU

Although College Now students are considered SMSU students already, they are not officially admitted as an undergraduate student should they be looking to continue their education at SMSU after high school. For these students, we will require them to go through the official admission process. For more information about this process, please direct students to our admission website at: [SMSU Admission](https://www.smsu.edu/admission/index.html).

Since College Now students are some of the best and brightest students at the high school level, we have developed a special scholarship specifically for our College Now participants. College Now students can earn an additional $2,000-$4,000 in scholarships should they choose to continue at SMSU as a freshman. More information about this scholarship can be found online at: [Mustang Scholarship Packages](https://www.smsu.edu/scholarships/index.html).

Below are additional links students may find useful as they learn more about SMSU and all that we have to offer:

[Academic Catalog](https://www.smsu.edu/catalog/index.html)

[Campus Map](http://www.smsu.edu/maps/map.pdf)

[Financial Aid](http://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/financialaid/)

[Residence Life](https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/residencelife/index.html)

### Contact Information

For issues related to concerns with mentors, academic misconduct, student appeals, and any general issues or concerns with the SMSU College Now program, contact:

Jessica Mensink - Interim Director of Concurrent Enrollment

507-537-6390

[Jessica.Mensink@smsu.edu](mailto:Jessica.Mensink@smsu.edu)

For issues on registration including e-applications, course registration, roster verifications, New Teacher Applications, and course requests, contact:

Ellie Ahmann - Interim Assistant Director of College Now

507-537-6138

[Ellie.Ahmann@smsu.edu](mailto:Ellie.Ahmann@smsu.edu)

For issues regarding anything with the course itself including: content, rigor, expectations, testing, grading, and issues related to academic misconduct, contact the individual College Now faculty mentor.