

# Request for Partnership Proposals

## Purpose

UCCS Online seeks proposals for new or expanded asynchronous fully online academic programs that are poised for enrollment growth. Our mission is to continuously pursue and implement high-quality online programs that give students greater access to effective, flexible post-secondary learning opportunities.

## Support Provided

### Partnership Opportunity

Our department will provide funding and support through:

- Project management and oversight
- Financial assessments to ensure sustainability
- Marketing, recruitment, and enrollment support
- Program and course design collaboration and support
- Faculty training and consultations in digital pedagogy

### Required Commitments

Programs that are accepted into partnership must:

- Be approved by the Dean of the School or College
- Ensure internal and external scalability of the program by 200 + in the next three years
- Complete faculty training related to online course delivery
- Collaborate with Instructional Designers on course development and utilize agreed upon templates
- Follow OSCQR rubric to adhere to best practices
- Adhere to agreed-upon timelines and offer all courses required in the program for student completion

Faculty will receive a stipend for course development

Contact us for more information and support with the RFP process

#### Executive Director:

Dr. Nathan Bullock  
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#### Senior Instructional Designer:

Dr. Melinda Lien  
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## Department Next Steps

Complete the following steps:

- Review required program information
- Ensure department and faculty willingness to participate
- Submit an application by **March 1, 2024**

## Request for Partnership Proposals (RFP) January 2024

### Purpose

UCCS Online seeks proposals for new or expanded online academic programs that are poised for enrollment growth. [Our mission is to continuously pursue and implement high-quality online programs that give students greater access to effective, flexible post-secondary learning opportunities.](#)

UCCS Online is using a Request for Partnership Proposals (RFP) process to form online program development and marketing partnerships with schools and colleges. The RFP will allow us to identify programs for collaboration and support for growth in the online degree program arena. Priority will be given to those programs that demonstrate responsiveness to high national, regional, and local demand aligned with workforce and market demand.

UCCS schools and colleges can apply for this partnership if they meet one of the three following conditions:

- An existing academic undergraduate or graduate program delivered with some, or all classes taught face-to-face that they wish to convert for delivery fully online *OR*
- An existing fully online program that they wish to adapt to integrate new innovations in digital pedagogy (e.g., incorporate learner-centered design, etc.) and target for enrollment growth *OR*
- A new academic undergraduate or graduate degree program they wish to develop in a fully online format

Those selected for partnership will develop memoranda of understanding with UCCS Online to outline the shared expectations for the partnership.

[For more detailed information on components of this RFP, click the hyperlinks within the document.](#)

### Key Dates

- Posted date: **January 29, 2024**
- Submission deadline: **March 1, 2024**
- Merit review: **March 2<sup>nd</sup> through April 19<sup>th</sup>**
- Program selection announced, development begins: **May 1, 2024**

Please submit a completed proposal, via the fillable pdf link that will be emailed to you, by close of business on **March 1, 2024**. Note that the proposal will require signature by the Academic Program Director and your Dean.

## Partnership Opportunity

Partnering with UCCS Online will offer funding and partnership with dedicated staff to design, develop, and deliver online academic programs of exceptional quality, centered in the student experience, and tailored toward the unique learning needs of online learners. The services and resources UCCS Online will provide in partnership with partnered programs include:

- [Overall project management and oversight to ensure the program and UCCS Online are meeting agreed upon targets and deliverables;](#)
- Modeling of anticipated costs and revenues for the program along with ongoing financial assessments to ensure sustainability;
- [Marketing, recruitment, and student enrollment support;](#)
- [Instructional course design in collaboration with program leadership and faculty;](#)
- Support compliance with Colorado Laws for People with Disabilities ([HB21-1110](#));
- Faculty training and consultations in digital pedagogy and academic technology; and
- [Faculty stipends to support high quality course development.](#)

## Required Commitments

**All proposals must be approved by the Dean of the School or College submitting the proposal.**

Programs in this partnership are intended to be targeted for significant enrollment growth. To this end, the School/College/Department should:

- Ensure internal scalability for the program, including the ability to accommodate around 200-300 additional students within three years of program launch.
- Ensure external scalability for the program, including data supporting enrollment potential based on market research on demand and labor opportunities.

To ensure highest quality instruction and course delivery, Schools/Colleges/Departments will:

- Have new faculty participate in training related to online course delivery;
- [Follow the OSCQR rubric when developing courses;](#)
- Work with an Instructional Designer on course development; and
- Utilize course templates designed to streamline and simplify student experience of the course.
- Adhere to agreed-upon timelines and offer all courses required in the major, and sufficient electives, on a schedule that would permit a student to complete an undergraduate degree within 5 years and a graduate degree within 3 years.

**Proposal Submission**

Please submit a completed application via e-mail by close of business on **March 1, 2024**, via the link to the fillable pdf that is linked [here](#).

Please download the form to complete the information. You will need to open the form from your computer using Adobe to add your signature. When you've completed the form, please have all stakeholders listed sign and electronically send back to **Dr. Melinda Lien**, [mlien@uccs.edu](mailto:mlien@uccs.edu).

Please contact Nathan Bullock, Executive Director for UCCS Online with any questions:

**J. Nathan Bullock, Ed.D.** (he/him/his)

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## Appendix

### Marketing, Recruitment, and Enrollment

UCCS Online acts as the in-house marketing agency for planning, development, and implementation of strategic marketing initiatives focused on driving enrollment growth for fully online undergraduate and graduate programs. Services offered include (but are not limited to):

- Market Research
- Advertising Content and Design
- Media planning and buying
- Paid search results (Google, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Search engine optimization (SEO) for websites and digital marketing material
- Prospective student e-mail communication plans

Every online program is unique and will require a marketing discovery discussion to determine the go-to market strategy based-off program specific goals.

Prospective students interested in your fully online academic program will have direct outreach and support from an enrollment navigator, who will help them answer questions about the program (e.g., financial aid, admissions, student life). Enrollment navigators will facilitate the student application process.

Program marketing funds will be determined based on the market demand of the program and the projected number of enrollments; these funds will be managed internally by UCCS Online in consultation with the school/college/department.

### Instructional Design

A UCCS Online instructional designer (ID) will work directly with your designated academic online program director. This ID will go through an extensive design process alongside the program director and a representative group of faculty to design your fully online curriculum, in partnership with the Faculty Resource Center (FRC).

This process begins with the creation of curriculum design maps through program outcomes development, alignment to accreditation criteria and program outcomes, course identification, and course sequencing into the early, middle, and late curriculum phases of the student lifecycle. Following all appropriate approvals of the new or revised curriculum by faculty, program, and/or university curriculum committees, the lead ID will collaborate with the program director to create a development schedule for the design, development, and delivery of each course. Table 1, below, provides an example program design process for both existing academic programs and new academic programs:

**Table 1: Academic Program Design Process**

Step	Existing Program Task	New Program Task	Estimated Time to Complete
1	Evaluation of current program outcomes through facilitated alignment process	Development of new program outcomes/facilitated alignment process	1 month duration (4-6 meetings)
2	Alignment analysis to target instructional changes in outcomes/courses	Alignment analysis to finalize outcomes	2 weeks duration (2 meetings)
3	Redesign program outcomes based on information from alignment process	Share program outcomes for Faculty feedback/input; finalize program outcomes	1 month duration (4-6 meetings)
4	Sequence courses in early, middle, late curriculum framework	Sequence courses in early, middle, late curriculum framework	2 weeks duration (2 meetings)
5	Realign accreditation standards, new program outcomes, and sequenced courses	Realign accreditation standards, new program outcomes, and sequenced courses	2 weeks to 1 month duration (2-4 meetings)
6	Disseminate results to Faculty body and curriculum committee(s)	Disseminate results to Faculty body and curriculum committee(s)	1 week
7	Faculty motion & vote for program approval	Faculty motion & vote for program approval	Department-dependent
8	Finalize quality norms, unique tech needs, and training needs	Finalize quality norms, unique tech needs, and training needs	Department-dependent
9	Create development schedule & project timeline for creating courses; transition to course level design process	Create development schedule & project timeline for creating courses; transition to course level design process	Dependent on number of courses
10	Create evaluation plan/infrastructure	Create evaluation plan/infrastructure	Concurrent with design & development of courses

Once the development schedule is complete, each faculty member will meet one-on-one with an instructional designer to design their course.

Both the program and course design processes will be scheduled to take place over a 12 to 24-month duration, and you can anticipate that the first courses in your program will be available online within or before 12 months following initial meetings with the ID (the Faculty Resource Center will provide course-level ID support). This timeline will be tailored to program needs accounting for UCCS Online staff availability and will vary depending on the academic level of the

program, size of the program, and pace of approval milestones (see Table 1 above).

To be eligible to receive the first half of an individual faculty stipend, those faculty who are teaching in the program will be required to meet with the ID and participate in training to design and develop their fully online course. Upon completion of these activities, they will receive the second half of the stipend for course development.

### **Competency-Based Models**

Competency-based education (CBE) allows students to advance based on their ability to master a skill or competency at their own pace regardless of environment. This method is tailored to meet different learning abilities and can lead to more efficient student outcomes.

CBE has expanded dramatically in recent years, and particularly in programs targeted to online and adult audiences. With an interest in advancing this new approach at UCCS, proposals that incorporate CBE will be given special consideration in evaluation.

Educause has resources that describe this approach:

<https://library.educause.edu/topics/teaching-and-learning/competency-based-education-cbe>

### **Program Kick-Off and Progress Update Meetings**

Upon initiation of this partnership, the faculty, program director, and administrators from your school/college/department will have a kick-off meeting with UCCS Online. During this meeting, we will outline the major phases of program development, including program design, course design, training, student services, marketing, and other elements.

Throughout the duration of the program design and development, UCCS Online will hold regular progress update meetings with all major stakeholders and partners. This is to ensure transparency, open communication, and to solve challenges through collaboration and shared decision-making. The frequency and type of these meetings will be determined through consultation and input from the faculty, program director, and administrators from your school/college/department.

## Streamlined Online Course Standards

The purpose of this rubric is to articulate minimum standards for rating online course development. Gaps found by the rubric will help to quickly identify course development needs. The criteria below are derived from [OSCQR 4.0](#), which provides a much more detailed and thorough assessment of optimal course components.

<b>Section I: Alignment of Learning Objectives, Assessments, and Course Content</b>				
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1. Course and module objectives are worded to define measurement of student mastery and listed on the syllabus and in Canvas.				
2. Materials and activities support course objectives.				
3. Assignments offer a clear and measurable method of assessing student learning.				
<b>Section II: Syllabus</b>				
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1. All information in syllabus is up-to-date and uses a template consistent with other program syllabi and accessibility standards.				
2. Syllabus includes instructor/student interaction requirements, expectations, and communication preferences as well as contact information for the instructor, department, and program.				
3. Syllabus clearly states course grading policies, including consequences of late submissions.				
4. Resources for student success (e.g., institutional support, course-specific strategies) are readily available.				
<b>Section III: Course Content</b>				
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1. Course is divided into modules which state the link between learning objectives, content, and assessments.				
2. Course organization is logical and consistent throughout; modules separate content into distinct learning units, broken up by topic or by week.				



3. All activities and assessments include clear instructions, due dates, and submission guidelines (i.e., what is to be submitted, acceptable file formats, where to submit).				
4. Course offers access to a variety of learning material types (e.g., text, video, hyperdocs) that facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and provide options for engagement.				
5. Course offers learners options for demonstrating learning and achievement of learning objectives through both formative and summative assessments.				
6. Course technology used by students has a clear purpose.				
7. All learning materials adhere to copyright laws and offer attribution where appropriate.				
<b>Section IV: Learner Engagement/Application of Learning Theory</b>				
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1. Course contains varied types of activities and options for learners to engage with the instructor, their peers, and the content (i.e., individual reflection, one-on-one, small group, whole class).				
2. Course contains activities intended to build a sense of community, support communication, and establish trust (e.g., class introductions, course questions, discussion).				
3. Course activities help learners develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, such as critical reflection and analysis.				
4. Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline and connect the learning experience with personal context.				
5. Course activities include clear evaluation standards (e.g., rubrics, exemplars).				
<b>Section V: Accessibility, Appearance &amp; Functionality</b>				
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1. An approved Canvas course template is used.				
2. Course navigation menu is aligned with how learners progress through the course (i.e., extraneous tools and links are removed from course navigation).				

3. Content pages have appropriate titles, group related learning materials together, and use consistent iconography and color.				
4. Contrast between text and background colors in pages/images is sufficient; document text is correct font and size. <i>Note: Canvas does this automatically.</i>				
5. Hyperlinks use descriptive text instead of raw URLs or phrases such as “click here.”				
6. Text and images provide the same information when viewed with or without color and color is not used to convey meaning.				
7. All images have appropriate, descriptive alt text (or summaries); decorative images are labeled as decorative.				
8. Large blocks of information on pages are divided into sections using appropriate tools/strategies.				
9. Content is properly formatted using styles (e.g., Title, Normal, H2, Paragraph), including PDFs, slideshow presentations, Word documents, & HTML pages.				
10. All video content includes accurate closed-captioning, and all audio content is accompanied by a transcript.				
11. Videos are brief (<10 min) and are just one of a variety of ways learners engage with content.				
12. Video production is high-quality (e.g., smooth intros, use of scripts, minimal “ums” or other glitches, optimal and consistent lighting & audio levels, etc.)				

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