

VOLUME 6 — Professional Studies Policies

6.1 About Professional Studies

6.1.1 History

In the early 1990's, the beginnings of Professional Studies (an initiative to provide degree-completion programs for working adult learners) were being considered by the college. In 1994, the first “center” was established in downtown Winfield. From those early beginnings, Professional Studies has grown to include locations in East Wichita, KS (established in 1996), West Wichita, KS (1998), McConnell AFB, KS (2003), Oklahoma City/Midwest City, OK (2005), and Fort Riley, KS (2006). Some of these locations offer classes during the day, evening and on the weekends in six-week sessions (some education classes are offered in 12-week sessions).

In addition to expanding its “center” operations, Southwestern College received approval by its regional accrediting body (The Higher Learning Commission) to offer courses, programs and degrees online in 2001. A handful of undergraduate programs were moved online in the beginning with a gradual expansion to meet learner needs and demands. In 2002, Southwestern College was tapped to provide online coursework to soldier-students through the innovative eArmyU initiative. Participating in eArmyU launched the college into an active program of serving the voluntary education needs of military personnel.

In addition to offering undergraduate degree-completion programs to adult learners, the college has expanded its operations to include graduate education at the master's and doctoral level. Graduate programs are offered both in the classroom and online.

More information about Southwestern College Professional Studies may be found at www.SouthwesternCollege.org.

6.1.2 Locations

A complete listing of Professional Studies locations, contact information and maps is available on the website at: <http://www.southwesterncollege.org/contact-us/locations>.

6.1.3 Personnel/Organizational Structure

The associate vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education reports to the vice president for academic affairs, dean of the college and directs the college's Professional Studies academic operations under the college academic vision and mission.

The director of enrollment services and marketing, in consort with the executive vice president creates marketing plans and creates and manages enrollment strategies and staff to successfully market academic programs to meet learner needs.

6.1.4 Governance

6.1.4.1 Professional Studies Curriculum Council

The Professional Studies Curriculum Council reviews all Professional Studies curricular proposals, including addition and deletion of courses, changes in course numbering, credit hours, and course descriptions. The Council reviews the establishment of proposed new Professional Studies majors, certificates, and all new degree programs to ensure that they are consistent with the mission, vision, and expectations of the college. The Council is chaired by the vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education and its membership will include two

academic program directors or lead faculty members, two affiliate faculty members, and two Professional Studies administrators. Members will be appointed annually by the president in consultation with the associate vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education. The president, academic vice president and dean of the college, library director, and registrar serve ex-officio. All actions of the Professional Studies Curriculum Council are subject to review and final approval by the president.

6.1.4.2 Professional Studies Academic Affairs Council

The Professional Studies Academic Affairs Council reviews proposals concerning academic policies and procedures for undergraduate or graduate programs in Professional Studies, including, but not limited to, admission requirements, scholastic standards, student conduct issues, and other academic policy issues. The Council is chaired by the associate vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education and its membership will include two academic program directors or lead faculty members, two affiliate faculty members, and two Professional Studies administrators. Members will be appointed annually by the president in consultation with the vice president for academic affair, dean of the college and the associate vice president for professional studies/online education. The president, academic vice president, dean of the college, library director, and registrar serve ex-officio. All actions of the Professional Studies Academic Affairs Council are subject to review and final approval by the president.

6.2 Learner Information

6.2.1 Admission, Enrollment and Coaching

6.2.1.1 Undergraduate Learners

Additional information about admission into the undergraduate degree-completion program, the application and enrollment procedures, as well as current tuition and fees is available on the Professional Studies website – www.SouthwesternCollege.org.

The college will work with each learner concerning payment options. A variety of payment options may be available including company reimbursement plans, military tuition assistance, and self-pay (full payment or partial payment). Financial aid is available for those who qualify.

An academic success coach will be assigned to each learner to provide academic assistance.

6.2.1.2 Graduate Learners

Additional information about admission into the graduate programs, the application and enrollment procedures, as well as current tuition and fees is available on the Professional Studies website – www.SouthwesternCollege.org.

The college will work with each graduate learner concerning payment options. A variety of payment options may be available including company reimbursement plans, military tuition assistance, and self-pay (full payment or partial payment). Financial aid is available for those who qualify.

A graduate academic success coach will be assigned to each learner to provide academic assistance.

6.2.2 Academic Information and Policies

Learners will meet graduation requirements stated in the catalog under which they first enter Southwestern College. Current catalogs may be found at [https://www.sckans.edu/student-services/registrars-office/course-catalogs/Policies Governing Affiliate Faculty](https://www.sckans.edu/student-services/registrars-office/course-catalogs/Policies%20Governing%20Affiliate%20Faculty)

This section pertains to all affiliate faculty members who teach in the classroom or online for Professional Studies.

An affiliate instructor is a part-time employee of the college who:

- A. Always receives a term contract (a sample contract may be obtained from the office of human resources).
- B. Receives no fringe benefits or tuition remissions.
- C. Does not accrue time towards tenure, promotion, or sabbaticals.
- D. Is appointed after a review of credentials and experience and the conduct of an interview by the executive director for faculty affairs.
- E. Completes the Introduction to Online Teaching course and other requirements prior to consideration for online teaching assignments.

6.2.2.1 Standards for Appointment

A person assigned the title of affiliate faculty member shall meet the standards provided by the Higher Learning Commission for faculty appointments as adopted by Southwestern College.

6.2.2.2 Affiliate Member by Rank

An instructor who teaches on a part-time per course basis for the college, and who is a full-time ranked faculty member of another institution of post-secondary education or has other full-time employment, will be assigned “affiliate” rank at the college that is equivalent to the instructor’s rank at the other institution.

6.2.2.3 Lead Affiliate Faculty Members

The lead affiliate faculty members act as a liaison within the specific majors/programs offered by Professional Studies with the affiliate faculty members in their major areas. Specifically, they:

- 1. Review and revise curriculum (texts, syllabi) and participate actively in major/program reviews.
- 2. Mentor new affiliate faculty members.
- 3. Participate in college assessment activities.

They are selected by the associate vice president for professional studies online/education and the executive director for faculty affairs based upon experience with the programs, expertise and willingness to serve.

6.2.2.4 Type of Contract

Term contracts at the college are given to affiliate faculty members, and are limited to the term of employment outlined in the applicable contract. Term contracts do not confer upon an instructor’s entitlement to continued employment after the term specified in the employment contract expires. Course teaching assignments are provided in advance of each session start.

6.2.2.5 Affiliate Faculty Member Evaluation

Evaluation is a dynamic and continuous process. Classes are held every six weeks (some teacher education classes are 12 weeks) throughout the year. Eight different class sessions per year are conducted. Affiliate faculty members are evaluated every session through the use of end-of-course evaluations.

The information gleaned from the evaluation is helpful for the affiliate faculty member's continued professional development and is shared with the faculty member after grades are posted. Highlights concerning the course content and textbooks are reviewed each session and summarized for use in major/program reviews. All written comments and scores are documented and filed in the executive director for faculty affairs office.

6.2.2.6 Academic Freedom for Affiliate Faculty Members

Affiliate faculty members are fully protected for classroom academic freedom as follows:

Academic communities traditionally have been the guardians of freedom in all its forms. Controversy and dissent have been basic to the expansion of knowledge and spiritual growth.

The instructor shall be free to discuss, debate, or dissent on all subjects, but should not introduce into the classroom controversial matter which has no relationship to the subject matter of the course.

The intent of this statement is not to discourage what is "controversial." Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry which the entire statement is designed to foster. The statement serves to underscore the need for the instructor to avoid persistently intruding material that has no relationship to the subject.

The instructor shall be entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other duties.

6.2.2.7 Grievance Procedure for Affiliate Faculty Members

The college recognizes the right of affiliate faculty members to express their grievances and to seek a solution concerning disagreements arising from working relationships, working conditions, employment practices, or differences of interpretation of policy that might arise between the institution and its employees.

The procedures for processing a grievance are as follows:

- Step 1. An instructor brings a grievance to the associate vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education. A disposition of the grievance shall be made by within two (2) working days.
- Step 2. If the grievance is not settled in the previous step, or if the affiliate faculty member does not wish to take up the grievance with the associate vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education, it must be submitted in writing to the vice president for academic affairs, dean of the college. The vice president shall establish and chair an ad hoc committee of no less than two (2) additional administrative or staff personnel not directly involved in the grievance who will conduct a complete review of the grievance. An advisory opinion regarding the grievance will be forwarded to the parties by the vice president for academic affairs, dean of the college in writing within then (10) working days after its presentation.

Step 3. If the grievance is not settled as a result of step 2, the affiliate faculty member may appeal to the president. Within seven (7) working days of receipt of the disposition from the vice president for academic affairs professional studies/online education, the affiliate faculty member must notify the vice president for academic affairs, dean of the college in writing that the affiliate faculty member wishes to appeal to the president. The president shall review the facts and make a decision. This decision is final and will be recorded in the grievance file.

There is no further appeal within the college beyond the president unless the president in the first instance was the charged party in the grievance. In that case the procedure in volume IV subsection 4.13.5 may be followed if the grievant wishes to appeal to the executive committee of the Board of Trustees.

6.2.2.8 Affiliate Faculty Development and Resources

Throughout the year, a series of faculty development workshops are offered for affiliate faculty. For practicing professionals for whom teaching is a part-time responsibility, special attention is given to adult learning theories and learning styles in all training and ongoing faculty development. Additionally, an affiliate faculty development resources have been established to support affiliate faculty.

6.3 Academic Quality Control

Expectations to ensure high academic standards and high quality classes:

1. Classes reflect current workplace issues, bridge theory with practice, and allow opportunities for learners to utilize their knowledge, from and in, their respective careers.
2. A variety of meaningful learning activities are utilized in classes.
3. Faculty members adhere to high standards in their class preparation.
4. Syllabi, course learning modules, and detailed class activities/instructional techniques are developed and utilized.
5. Learners have assignments each week and are made accountable for them.
6. Learner grades reflect actual work completed.
7. Classes are not cancelled without the executive director's approval, nor are classes dismissed early.
8. Learners are encouraged to take only one class and spend 8-12 hours per week studying outside of class.

6.4 Outcomes Assessment

Southwestern College is committed to high academic quality and student experiences. The outcomes assessment program at Southwestern exists to evaluate the effectiveness of the college experience in assisting students' movement toward the outcomes identified as flowing from the mission of the college. To that end, aggregate data are collected from learners and reported. The process and product of student assessment focuses on the centrality of the teaching mission of higher education, and on the institution's ability to self-correct in ways meaningful to the educational experience of learners.