

# Winter Session Faculty Handbook

2025 - 2026



Winter Session  
Division of Continuing Education

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**Winter Session** provides an opportunity for CU students to earn credit toward their degree during Winter Break with a three-week, **online** intensive learning experience. The Division of Continuing Education (CE) works in partnership with faculty and departments to deliver a mix of course offerings to meet the needs of a variety of students and community members. We are particularly interested in offering students a unique online experience that offers elements of peer engagement and experiential learning.

**Winter Session is treated as an accelerated term within the Spring semester. Courses will run from Monday, December 15, 2025 to Monday, January 5, 2026.**

## Course Proposal Procedure

CE invites CU faculty to submit a course proposal for Winter Session 2025-2026. Faculty interested in submitting a proposal should draw from their department's existing inventory of 1-, 2-, or 3-credit courses that may lend themselves to an accelerated 3-week schedule, delivered online. We are particularly interested in courses that are typically oversubscribed, upper division core and elective courses, and "topics" courses. In addition, courses that incorporate significant elements of student-to-student engagement and experiential learning activities are afforded high priority.

Completed course proposals include these basic components:

- Instructor information
- Course information (title, number, description, etc.)
- Three to seven clear, measurable course-level objectives
- A clear statement of how students will be assessed
- Description of any activities that may promote experiential learning or peer-engagement

Before submitting a proposal, faculty should reach out to their department chair to discuss this opportunity.

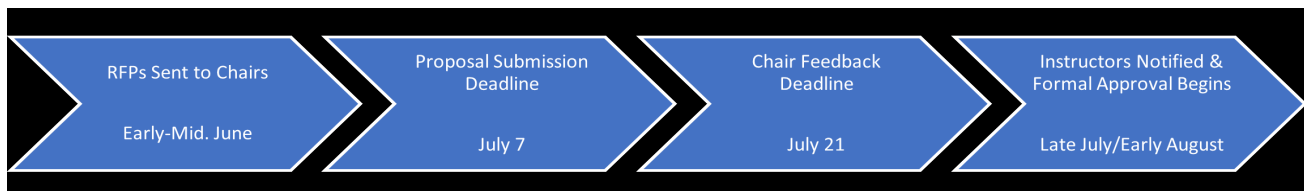
To submit a course proposal, please use the online [Winter Session Course Proposal form](#). For questions about Winter Session and course proposals, contact Alex Parsons ([wintersession@colorado.edu](mailto:wintersession@colorado.edu)).

By **July 16**, the Winter Session team at CE will share with each chair the complete list of proposals submitted by faculty within their department, including a list of CE's suggested course offerings based on several factors:

- number of proposals received,
- how well the courses lend themselves to an accelerated online schedule (e.g., incorporation of project-based, experiential learning),
- feedback from academic advising.

Department chairs will then have the opportunity to compare the recommendations against the full list of proposals submitted by department faculty and to provide feedback to the Winter Session team **by July 21**. To ensure that we have the capacity to provide adequate support to instructors and students, typically only 30 or so courses in total are offered from across campus during this special session. With these parameters in mind, we are typically able to support only one or two courses from the same department.

Course proposals that have been identified as a good fit for Winter Session will then go through the formal departmental approval request process in order to officially offer the course. Departmental approval forms are sent via DocuSign for the faculty member, department chair, and school administrator signatures.



### Proposal & Development Timeline\*

- Deadline for proposal submission – July 7
- New faculty connect with Instructional Designers – week of September 15
- [Essential documents](#) completed – October 13
- Initial course development completed – November 24
- New course completion review – December 5
- Final revisions completed and courses published – December 12

*\*These dates may be subject to change.*

## Course Design Process

### Continuing Ed's Approach to Quality

We strive to ensure a positive and meaningful learning experience for online learners while affording faculty flexibility in the design of their online course. The approach to quality adopted by CE is aimed at creating a partnership among CE, departments, faculty, and students.

### Getting Started

The [Learning Design Group](#) at CE is staffed with Instructional Designers (IDs) who are multi-skilled in instructional design, online pedagogy, educational technology, and project management. Instructional Designers work with the Winter Session instructors throughout the course design process, especially in ensuring course and module learning objectives are aligned with course assessments. At the beginning of the course design process, faculty will be paired with an ID who will be their primary support contact as faculty design and develop their course.

Developing an online course takes careful, deliberate development and implementation. Content for online courses is developed before students have access to the course so the faculty can focus on facilitating and teaching when the course is live. Online courses differ from remote courses in that they typically do not include a synchronous component.

## Overview of Course Development Cycle - New Course

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Completion Review	Course Ready	Course Access	Course Begins
Wk of Sept. 15	Oct. 13	Oct. 27	Nov. 24	Dec. 5	Dec. 12	Dec. 13	Dec. 15
<b>Course design begins; initial meeting w/ID</b>	<b>Essential Documents complete</b>	<b>Course 50% developed</b>	<b>Course fully drafted</b>	<b>Course completion checklist review</b>	<b>Course finalized</b>	<b>Course opens/students have access to course</b>	<b>First day of Winter Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Connect with ID</li> <li>-Begin syllabus work</li> <li>-Draft learning objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Online syllabus ready</li> <li>-First week of content drafted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Half of the course modules have content (quizzes, discussions, lectures, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Course draft is complete &amp; instructor has reviewed using guidelines checklist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Course reviewed and completion confirmed by Winter Session program staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> new courses that are deemed incomplete by this date may not receive new course development funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course is finalized with revisions implemented &amp; is published in Canvas</li> </ul>		

### Essential Documents

The Essential Documents phase of course design is the most important milestone of the process. It's during this initial phase that faculty draft a syllabus, write measurable learning outcomes, begin designing course activities, and start to assemble course content. This will serve as the "blueprint" for the course building in Canvas.

### Additional Course Development Resources

For resources, ideas, and guidance related to online course design and development, visit the following CU support pages: [Learning Design Group resources](#) and [CTL Teaching Resources](#).

### ID and Other Tech Support

Instructional Designers are available to support Winter Session faculty **during normal business hours, which excludes weekends and university holidays**.

In the event that instructors experience technical issues while their course is running during the session, instructors should send an email to the main email address for the LDG team and an ID on will follow-up with you: [ldg@colorado.edu](mailto:ldg@colorado.edu). For [IT Service Center support](#), please check the support hours during Winter Session as they tend to be more limited during Winter break. As a back-up, instructors can also utilize the [Help menu](#) within Canvas to submit a ticket or chat with Canvas Support.

### Returning Instructor Course Design Cycle

Wk of Oct. 6	Dec. 1	Dec. 8	Dec. 12	Dec. 13	Dec. 15
<b>Initial course design outreach</b>	<b>ID assistance request</b>	<b>Course finalization</b>	<b>Course published</b>	<b>Course access</b>	<b>Course begins</b>
Your Instructional Designer (ID) will connect offering support & assistance if desired.	<b>Deadline</b> to let your ID know that you will/do need design assistance for your course.	<b>Deadline</b> to have your course finalized & updated.  (including, but not limited to: new/current due dates, cleaned up announcements, validation of course links, etc).	<b>Deadline</b> to have course revisions implemented & course published in Canvas	Course opens/students have access to course.	First day of Winter Session.

## Course Information

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### Course Materials

Because of the accelerated schedule for Winter Session, it can be challenging for students who register late to obtain required course materials and not fall behind. Therefore, we highly encourage instructors to use course materials that are quickly and easily accessible (i.e., online text/readings, downloadable eBooks, [OER](#), etc.).

CU requires faculty to inform the [CU Book Store](#) of all their course materials requirements including OER and “no requirement” by the following approximate due date:

- Spring Term (which includes Winter Session) – Due by October 1<sup>st</sup>

### Enrollment Eligibility

All current CU students, faculty, and staff are welcome to enroll in Winter Session courses. Students currently enrolled at other colleges/universities may enroll in a Winter Session course by submitting the New Non-Degree Spring 2026 Continuing Education Application when available on the [Student Information | Apply & Enroll](#) page.

Newly admitted undergraduate students for the Spring 2026 semester, whether transfer or first-year, are not eligible to enroll in a Winter Session course as their first course at CU.

Given the condensed nature of these courses, students may enroll in no more than four credits, and it's recommended they be in good academic standing. For questions about credit overload petitions, students are directed to contact their college.

### Course Restrictions

CE provides access to CU classes serving a broad audience, including community members/non-degree students and visiting students from other institutions. To provide an easy online registration experience for these groups, CE typically removes the listed course restrictions (i.e., *class level*, *major*, *prerequisites*) unless the department or faculty requests that those restrictions stay in place for the CE term.

If it's requested that CE enforce the registration restrictions, we ask that the department provide written approval for our enrollment team to override the restriction for any visiting/non-degree student.

### Course Cancellations

Courses with fewer than eight (8) enrollments may be cancelled.

### Course Enrollment Capacity

CE sets online class capacity for Winter Session courses at 25. Faculty who would like to make minor adjustments to the enrollment cap can work with the program manager.

### Course Waitlists

Waitlists for Winter Session courses are typically not capped, allowing as many students who are interested in the course to add themselves to the waitlist.

[CE Enrollment Services](#) does not override students into a full class with an existing waitlist. For students requesting special approval from instructors to be added to a full class, instructors should direct those students to remain on the waitlist for the next available seat. It should be noted that the waitlist order for Winter Session courses is honored, and students are not approved to move ahead of others on the waitlist for



any reason. That being said, enrollment for Winter Session courses tend to fluctuate a lot at the start of term, resulting in open seats for waitlisted students. Instructors may also consult with the program coordinator about the possibility of increasing the class enrollment cap.

After December 15, 2025, students on the waitlist no longer move into a class automatically and must fill out a [CE Course Request](#) with attached instructor approval to be added to a course if eligible. The deadline for students to submit a completed Course Request form with instructor approval is December 16, 2025 at 4:30 pm Mountain Time. ***Instructor approval for a late add is up to the discretion of the instructor.***

CE Records will run the waitlist purge process on December 16, 2025. This process drops the remaining students from the waitlist, and they lose access to the class in Canvas within 48 hours of being dropped.

### [Administrative Drops](#)

We do not offer instructors the option to administratively drop a student who has not participated by a certain date. Instructors are strongly encouraged to reach out to students who have not logged into Canvas or participated within the first few days of the course. Winter Session program staff may also try to connect with inactive students to encourage students to participate or drop the course ASAP.

For students who enrolled in the course but never attended, instructors should assign an “F” grade and select the “Never Attended” option when entering the last day of attendance. Students with questions about [petitioning](#) should connect with a [CE Academic Advisor](#) to discuss further.

### [Course Work During the Holidays](#)

Due to the accelerated nature of Winter Session, we expect and understand that work and class assignments will carry over into the weekends. However, **we ask that instructors avoid scheduling** assignment/exam/quiz **due dates** on 12/24 (Christmas Eve), 12/25 (Christmas Day) and 1/1 (New Year’s Day).

### [Grade Submissions](#)

Grades for Winter Session are due 96 hours after the class ends.

### [Breadth, Depth and Rigor](#)

Faculty often ask how much time students should engage with course content and learning activities in an accelerated, online course. We recommend that faculty maintain the depth, breadth, and rigor of a full-term course.

When faculty team up with an Instructional Designer (ID), one of the first steps they will take is to identify the course-level and module-level learning objectives for their course. Once the outcomes are clear, specific, and measurable, they can work with their ID to align the course content and learning activities with those outcomes. During this process, faculty may find opportunities that allow them to streamline content and activities while at the same time supporting the cognitive and behavioral development that’s expected of their full-term, in-person course.

That’s not to say it isn’t important to still be mindful of how much time students are spending in their online course. Accreditors still rely on the Carnegie Unit when evaluating academic courses and programs.

### [Additional Information](#)

To help faculty visualize how the credit unit approximation might translate to Winter Session’s three-week time frame, please refer to the table below:

Winter Session (3-week schedule)			
Credit Hours	Instructional Contact Hours	Homework/Outside Work Hours	Total Work hours <i>per Course</i>
1	12.5 (4.5 hrs/week)	25 (8.5 hrs/week)	37.5
2	25 (8.5 hrs/week)	50 (16.5 hrs/week)	75
3	37.5 (12.5 hrs/week)	75 (25 hrs/week)	112.5

### Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

RSI between instructors and students is a central element that applies to both asynchronous and synchronous education, and Winter Session faculty are required to ensure RSI in their courses. RSI consists of the following:

#### Regular Interaction: (*all apply*)

- Interactions that are initiated by the instructor
- Interactions that are scheduled and predictable
- Prompt and proactive engagement with the students by the instructor

#### Substantive Interaction: (*Instructors must be able to show evidence of at least TWO of the following elements in each online course.*)

- Direct instruction (consistent discussion participation, frequent and substantive instructor feedback and/or synchronous lectures)
- Coursework assessment or feedback on all qualitative assignments
- Instructor communication with students via one-on-one conversations, office hours, email, chats, feedback on assignments, etc. Established office hours to provide information or to respond to questions about the course content.
- Active and ongoing facilitation of group discussion of course content

#### **The following activities are examples of homework in the online environment:**

- Reading materials – physical, electronic, or interactive textbooks, PDF articles, etc.
- Writing assignments – essays, written reports in Assignments or on external sites (Blogs, Wikis, etc.)
- Assessing learning – demonstration of knowledge through quizzes, exams, projects, reports, etc.
- Participating in virtual labs or simulations – accessing commercial or in-house produced material
- Experiential activities – going to museums, interviewing people, etc.

### Compensation

Compensation levels for instruction are referenced in the table below:

Winter Session Teaching Compensation				
	1 Credit	2 Credits	3 Credits	4 Credits
Level A	\$1,957	\$3,914	\$5,739	\$7,459
Level B			\$6,085	\$8,034
Level C		\$5,165	\$7,293	\$8,724

**Level A** – AAH, ALC, CLAS, EDUC, ENGL, FILM, FRIT, GSLL, HIST, PHIL, PWR, RLST, SPAN, THDN, CMCI

**Level B** – ANTH, ENVS (SS courses), ETHN, SOCY, WGST

**Level C** – APPM, APS, ATOC, CHEM, EBIO, ECON, ENVS (NS courses), GEOG, GEOL, IAFS, IPHY, LING, MATH, MCDB, PHYS, PSCI, PSYC, SLHS

For departments/schools not listed above, please inquire regarding compensation level.

Compensation will be disbursed in monthly payments beginning December 31, 2025, and ending January 31, 2026. This is a non-renewable, non-tenure track appointment subject to approval by the Dean of the Division of Continuing Education.



### Course Development Compensation

Course development compensation is available for faculty members the first time they create their course as a 3-week, online offering for winter. Please see development compensation levels below:

- 1-credit course, \$750
- 2-credit course, \$1,200
- 3-credit course, \$1,500

The course development compensation will be disbursed in a single installment using an Additional Pay Form (APF) once the course is finalized and confirmed by program staff. Course development contracts are all processed through CE.

### Graders/TAs

Under normal circumstances, Graders are not used or supported during Winter Session.

### Note for Returning Winter Session Faculty

Development stipends are not available for returning Winter Session faculty who are teaching the same course. Instructional design support will be available to returning faculty.

### Faculty Overload Policies

The faculty member must certify that this additional teaching appointment does not exceed the limit on overload teaching, which allows no more than one additional course per semester over and above the equivalent of a full-time appointment. The overload limit includes all courses taught at the University of Colorado, including Continuing Education and other CU campuses. For more information pertaining to this campus policy, please visit the [Office of Faculty Affairs website](#).

### Department Revenue Share

Winter Session classes return a revenue share of \$50 per credit, per student, to the host department offering the class. Revenue shares are processed after the Spring semester bill payments are due.

### Continuous Program Improvement

Following the session, we may ask faculty to share their experience and recommendations on how the Winter Session program can be improved for future iterations. Faculty are encouraged to provide feedback, either informally via an email to our program staff or we may administer a brief survey to collect feedback once their Winter Session class commences. Participation in providing feedback, either through surveys or otherwise, is completely voluntary but greatly appreciated.

## Appendix A: Copy of Course Proposal Form

### Instructor Information

1. Faculty name (first, last), email address, department
2. Instructor type and title (Tenured/Tenure-Track, Instructor, Lecturer, GPTI, Other)

## Course Information

3. Course number, title and credits
4. Course description
5. Have you taught a Winter Session Course before?
6. Have you taught this particular course online before?
7. Is this course typically cross-listed with another department?
8. Does this course require a necessary prerequisite?
9. Who is the target audience for this course?
10. Are all of the course materials required for your class available electronically (with immediate access) -- eBook, online articles, publishers' tools?
11. Please describe any external features that would need to be incorporated into your Canvas course. (i.e., special technology, software, third party/publishers' tools)

## Course Structure

12. Please list three to seven clear, measurable course- level objectives.
13. Please describe how students will be assessed.
14. Why would this course be a good fit for a 3-week, online format?

## Learning Design Support

Instructional Designers (IDs) are available to support Winter Session faculty during normal business hours, which excludes weekends and university holidays.

Winter Session instructors are expected to have their courses fully developed and updated **BEFORE** students have access in Canvas (December 13, 12:01 am MT). Once the session begins, support from the Learning Design Group is limited. We ask that instructors kindly respect our ID's time and assistance, and have courses finalized and published by the outlined deadline.

15. Please check that you have read and understood the parameters outlined above with regard to instructional design support and the critical need to have courses fully developed/updated before student access starts on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

## Experiential and Interactive Activities

Instructors are encouraged to integrate experiential activities into their courses as a way of engaging students more fully in the online learning environment. For example, courses can integrate project-based, experiential learning activities where students interview experts, engage in community activities, and/or work on multimedia projects. Instructors of Winter Session courses might also leverage the fact that many students are home for the holidays, so students might be asked to collect family & friends' oral histories around a particular theme or to research local places of interest relevant to the course topic (architecture, museums, historical points of interest, etc.). Instructors might even consider integrating interactions that combine both social and educational elements, like "social hour" group projects, small group, student-led discussions, group course-related scavenger hunts, etc.

16. Please highlight any project-based or experiential learning activities that are (or could be) integrated into your course:

17. Winter Session enrollment capacity for classes is typically set at a maximum of 25 students. Please indicate the preferred capacity for your course, and if less than 25, why the decreased capacity is appropriate for your course:

18. This year, the ability for students to add a course or autoenroll off of a waitlist for Winter Session will end Monday, Dec. 15th at 11:59pm (classes start Dec. 15th at 12:01am). Continuing Education offers a late add process for students if permission is granted from the instructor and all steps are completed by the student. This late add process will be open Dec. 16th until 4:30 pm. It is completely up to the instructor's discretion whether they approve of late adds or not. This year, we plan to keep track of which instructors are open to approving late add requests to best advise/assist students who reach out.

If there are open spots in your course on Dec. 16th, will you approve late adds to your course?

### Additional Jobs and Departmental Approvals

A teaching assignment in Winter Session is considered an additional job as defined by the [Office of Faculty Affairs](#). Faculty should work with their departments and schools to understand if or how teaching a Winter Session course might impact their Spring schedule.

After the CE program team reviews all proposals, solicits feedback from chairs and courses have been identified, Departmental Approval Forms will be routed for signatures in order to officially offer the class in Winter. To that end, please provide the following information.

19. Department chair's name and email address. Dean of division/college's name and email address:

20. If there's anything else you would like to share with us, please feel free to do so in the comment box below.

### Thank you!

We sincerely thank you for taking the time to complete a course proposal for Winter Session. We look forward to reviewing it. The deadline for submitting proposals is **July 7th**. Faculty should hear back on the status of their proposal by early August.

Best,  
Winter Session Program Team

