

Policy on the Continuing & Professional Education (CPE) Appointment Process

Department of Communication University of Massachusetts Amherst

Note: the following policy governs the instructor appointment process for online Communication courses offered through Continuing & Professional Education (CPE) during the summer. It does not refer to online or blended Communication courses offered during the fall and spring semesters as a part of the department's regular schedule of courses.

1. All courses offered through CPE that carry a Communication designation (e.g., COMM 118, COMM 121) and are intended to fulfill Communication academic requirements on either the undergraduate or graduate level must be approved by the department Chair.
2. Every fall, the Chair will circulate a list of proposed Communication courses to be offered the following summer through CPE and will solicit applications to teach them. The Chair will base this course list on a number of factors, including the department's programmatic needs, the courses that were offered in previous summers and their enrollments, and the courses that were proposed in previous summers but did not "make" or were canceled for other reasons.
3. Each summer teaching appointment will be made by the Chair in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (if the course is to be offered at the undergraduate level) and the Director of Graduate Studies (if the potential appointee is a Communication graduate student, or if the course is to be offered at the graduate level). The Chair will follow the priorities listed below when making CPE course assignments:
 - A. Communication faculty (tenure-stream, full-time contract, and adjunct)
 - B. Communication graduate students
 - C. All others

In other words, Communication faculty will have first choice. If no faculty member wishes to teach a given class, the Chair will then proceed to the pool of Communication graduate students who have applied to teach it. If no Communication graduate students have applied to teach the class, the Chair may proceed to "outsider" applicants, if any. The department reserves the right to cancel the course if no qualified persons have applied or for budgetary reasons.

4. Candidates from pools B and C (i.e., Communication grad students and all others) must include the following items in their applications:
 - a. A one-page letter of interest and ability
 - b. An up-to-date c.v.
 - c. A one-page letter of support from the person's advisor or immediate supervisor, as appropriate

d. A statement of support from a faculty member (if different from the advisor or supervisor noted in c., above) who has taught the course during the fall or spring

N.b.: Communication graduate students must have received an “In Good Standing” rating at the most recent graduate faculty meeting in order to receive consideration.

5. Any applicant from pool B or C who wishes to apply for two or more teaching opportunities need not complete a separate application for each class; a single cover letter and c.v. will suffice. However, the applicant should separately address his/her interests and expertise for each class in the cover letter and should secure a note of recommendation from a faculty member for each class.

6. The Chair will consider a variety of factors within each of the three pools noted above. The factors, listed in no particular order, include each applicant’s subject-area expertise and prior teaching experience; the number of times, if any, that the applicant has taught the course; course evaluations, if the applicant has already taught the course in an online format; and any training that the applicant may have received through the SBS Online Fellows Program or similar program. In the case of graduate student applicants, the Chair will also consider their years in the program, current standing, other online teaching opportunities they may have already had, and the endorsements/ recommendations from faculty. In the interest of broadening the department’s online teaching opportunities, and mindful of the constraints of the SBS Online Fellows Program, the Chair will make a good-faith effort to rotate the assignments among qualified applicants.

7. The Chair will make the assignments as expeditiously as possible but no later than the CPE summer appointments deadline, typically the first week in February.

8. Appointees are expected to abide by all CPE policies and procedures, available at this address: <http://www.umasslearn.net/instructors>

9. While recognizing that online courses inevitably differ from their face-to-face counterparts, the department believes they should closely approximate the in-person versions. Appointees are strongly encouraged to consult with the faculty who typically teach the courses during the academic year and align their courses’ content, learning outcomes, readings, and requirements with those of the face-to-face versions to the fullest extent possible.

10. The department also strongly recommends that appointees schedule their own training sessions in online teaching through CPE (which are free of cost) and use any available templates for the courses that have been developed by previous online instructors.

11. Though CPE administers the course evaluation process for summer classes, appointees are expected to do their part to maximize the response rates by encouraging their students to complete the evaluations in a timely way.