



National University Virtual High School

2010/2011

Frequently Asked Questions

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**Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting
Commission for Schools (WASC-ACS)**

**Accredited by the Commission on International and Trans-Regional
Accreditation (CITA)**

Advanced Placement Course approved by the College Board

NCAA Course approval

UC "a-g" Online Provider Approval Status

CONFIDENTIAL

Intended for addressee only



1. What agencies do you hold accreditation with and for how long? Do you have any other affiliations?

National University Virtual High School is an independent, nonprofit, online secondary school committed to meeting the needs of high school students seeking alternative classroom opportunities. NUVHS operates under the Division of Pre-College Programs with the National University System (NUS), which is an alliance of educational institutions, including National University, Spectrum Pacific Learning Company, National University International, National Polytechnic College of Science, and the WestMed College, committed to providing educational opportunities to a diverse population of students, as well as other educationally affiliated organizations.

- National University Virtual High School (NUVHS) is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) for the maximum term length of six years through 2013.
- NUVHS is also accredited by the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA).
- The College Board has reviewed and approved all NUVHS Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- NUVHS core courses and diplomas have been reviewed and approved by the NCAA.
- NUVHS has been approved as an online provider by UC “a-g”

NUVHS is also affiliated with a number of professional and educational organizations that provide additional guidance in educational trends, online learning, as well as serve as a source for current educational research in the fast evolving arena of online education. Some of these organizational affiliations include:

- North American Council on Online Learning (NACOL)
- United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)
- Association of Distance Education and Computing (ADEC)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
- California Charter School Association
- California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP)
- College Opportunity
- National Educational Computing Conference
- Computer Users in Education (CUE)
- The College Board
- National Staff Development Council
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Officers
- Association of California School Administrators
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- National Association of College Admissions Counselors
- The Higher Education User Group (all use PeopleSoft/Oracle products)

2. What would you describe as your educational philosophy? How does it guide your course writing process, instruction and assessment?

National University Virtual High School has developed its mission statement as follows:

Mission Statement
<p>National University Virtual High School is committed to providing interactive, media-rich educational opportunities in a flexible, student-centered learning environment to a diverse population of learners.</p>

NUVHS also has adopted a set of core values that further underline the school's beliefs and philosophy. Together, these core values complement each other and work simultaneously to improve the student learning experience at NUVHS and are in alignment with the school's mission. The core values are shown below.

NUVHS Core Values				
Innovation	Opportunity	Achievement	Collaboration	Flexibility

As the NUVHS mission states, the school strives to provide “*interactive, media-rich educational opportunities*” through the construct of its online learning environment and learning management system which includes various communication tools and instructional resources that engage students in the learning process. Students increase information literacy through both “high touch and high tech” techniques employed by NUVHS. The faculty and staff are readily available to provide assistance to students as they navigate and complete the requirements of their courses.

The school's philosophy is evident in the mission statement by providing a “*flexible student-centered learning environment*” to “*a diverse population of learners.*” From the school's inception, the student has been the center and focus of the development of various services, curriculum, procedures and communication tools, all geared toward enhancing the student learning experience. Through outreach initiatives with partnering schools and districts throughout California, NUVHS offers a private, rigorous educational opportunity to a geographically and ethnically diverse student body. As the community profile illustrates, the range and caliber of students taking courses through NUVHS continues to grow as the format of the school eliminates socio-economic and geographical barriers. It also eliminates social barriers such as school “cliques” and other social obstructions common to high school age students that could normally impede a student's ability to perform to their maximum potential.

3. Do you have e-teacher training or a similar professional development program for your instructors? What are your minimum requirements for teaching?

All NUVHS teachers are considered NCLB Highly Qualified Teachers as outlined by federal legislation. All NUVHS teachers hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree and possess a valid California State teaching credential. Fifty-eight percent, the majority of NUVHS also hold a master's degree in either specific subject areas or education and five percent hold a terminal degree. NUVHS also runs background checks on all teachers and all current teachers have been fingerprinted. New teacher applicants must submit Livescan finger prints prior to teaching their first course. NUVHS teachers have demonstrated core academic subject matter competence in the areas of English, mathematics, science, foreign language, social sciences or visual and performing arts.



The teaching staff for the school is recruited centrally, with recruitment procedures taking into account such elements as academic credentials, teaching qualifications as outlined by the state of California, and the number of years experience teaching in the subject matter for which they are credentialed. All NUVHS teachers are required to complete an application for employment. And are asked to compose responses to a series of questions that comprise part of the teaching application in which they address their teaching and learning philosophy, both in traditional and online formats. They also describe any professional development they have completed. These responses then become the basis for interviews that take place between the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction and the applicant. Such information helps to further identify qualified instructors with solid teaching experience, a serious vested interest in online teaching and learning, and a commitment to learning outcomes and assessment.

Prior to teaching their first online course, NUVHS instructors meet with the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction to discuss their expertise and experience with online instruction, and the Curriculum Manager works closely with each instructor to prepare him/her in the following areas:

- Becoming familiar with NUVHS curriculum
- Becoming acquainted with the online learning management system through which course content is delivered
- Dissemination of unique attributes of online teaching
- Understanding policies and procedures concerning curricular processes and instructional procedures
- Becoming familiar with curriculum and additional resource materials to assist in online teaching and learning

Additionally, a 24/7 Help Desk and a virtual Teacher Academy are available to the instructors.

4. Do you offer orientation for students, parents, partners and monitors? What form does it take? Does it include netiquette and academic integrity?

Students are required to complete the NUVHS Application for Admission during the admission process as well as have the Course Transferability form completed by their primary school's counselor or designated official. Full time students must also provide transcripts so that the NUVHS staff can determine course eligibility. The admission application requires students to provide all essential demographic and academic data that assists the school in properly placing them in the correct course. This process also requires students and parents to read and sign a Student/Parent Compact that outlines student expectations and preparedness prior to starting their first course. For part-time enrollment, students must also have the Course Transferability form completed and signed by the primary school official. This form attests to the student's academic preparedness to complete the course online and ensures the course will transfer upon completion.

Upon a student's admission to the school, the coordinator of student services and outreach sends a series of welcome emails to the student providing information essential to successfully starting the online course, including login procedures, directions to access the online course tutorial, technical assistance contact information, and a list of course materials. The parent, guardian or partnership school representative, along with the NUVHS instructor is also included this information to further increase school to parent communication and involvement.

Prior to beginning coursework, students must complete an online tutorial that is designed to assist them in fully understanding how to use the various tools in the online course as well as how to easily navigate the course content. Additionally this tutorial provides students information and assistance on how to prepare for and successfully succeed in an online teaching and learning environment including



best practices such as time management, and online navigation. Issues of netiquette and academic integrity are included in a variety of places, including each individual course, the orientation materials, student / parent handbook and the application for admission process.

5. Does your course design follow a standard process? How is content broken down? Is there an overall time constraint and can it be extended? Is there any screening for enrollment? Do you reference multiple modalities when writing a course?

National University Virtual High School, one of the first all-virtual high schools in California, offers a well-rounded cadre of courses geared toward students in the eighth through twelfth grades. The courses consist of engaging and challenging curriculum delivered through a comprehensive, easy-to-navigate learning management system (eCollege), which incorporates a variety of teaching/learning tools as well as enhanced measurement mechanisms designed to assist in monitoring student learning, course progression and completion, as well as student achievement. The learning management system also incorporates multiple tools designed to enhance student to student and student to teacher interaction and collaboration, further strengthening the teaching and learning process.

NUVHS offers the following courses:

NUVHS Course Offerings	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>English</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">English 9 A/B English 10 A/B (World Literature) English 11 A/B (American Literature) English 12 A/B (British Literature) AP Literature and Composition A/B AP Language and Composition A/B</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mathematics</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pre-Algebra A/B Algebra I A/B Geometry A/B Algebra II A/B Pre-Calculus A/B AP Calculus A/B/C Statistics A/B</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Science</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Biology A/B Chemistry A/B Physics A/B Earth Science A/B Marine Science A/B Physics A/B AP Biology A/B AP Chemistry A/B</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Social Science</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">World History A/B US History A/B American Government Economics AP European History A/B</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Foreign Language</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spanish I A/B Spanish II A/B Spanish III A/B Persian I A/B Persian II A/B Arabic I A/B Arabic II A/B</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Physical Education</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sports Training Nutrition & Weight Management</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Other/Electives</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Health Introduction to Computers Introduction to Journalism Game Theory Geography Survey of Humanities Financial Literacy Introduction to Sociology Introduction to Psychology CAHSEE Math Prep</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Fine Arts</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduction to Digital Photography Advanced Digital Photography</p>



AP US History A/B
AP Government

Key highlights of NUVHS courses include:

- Curricula that align with California content standards, and national standards.
- Courses led by highly-qualified, credentialed teachers with multiple years of teaching experience.
- 24/7 access to course content and technical support.
- Frequent and meaningful communication among instructors and students.
- Special attention to students' preferred learning style.
- 24/7 access to one of the nation's largest e-libraries, as well as access to the online writing and math tutorial centers.
- AP course offerings.

All NUVHS standards based courses are instructor-led and offered online through the eCollege learning management system. Accessible 24 hours a day, students have the ability to log into their courses at any time to work on the subject-matter requirements. All courses have been written by subject matter experts and are in alignment with California content standards and national standards when applicable. All courses incorporate a variety of components including interactive assignments, project-based assignments, appropriate assessment tools, lectures and synchronous and asynchronous capabilities.

Courses are structured around a unit or modular learning format. Each semester course includes eight units, and within each unit are a series of lectures, readings, assignments and assessments, as well as other media-rich tools relevant to the unit topic.

6. How is course content aligned to standards? How would you describe the rigor or higher-level thinking? How have you ensured that multicultural views are integrated? Are there multiple paths to concepts? Do you teach related skills?

NUVHS courses are aligned with California State Content Standards as well as National Content Standards. Course developers chose those particular standards for several reasons: academic rigor, CST testing, and to maintain competitiveness with the rest of the nation. Under the auspices of the school's Manager of Curriculum and Instruction, NUVHS administration and teachers work together to ensure consistency of curricula alignment to California State Content Standards and National Curriculum and Content Standards through periodic review cycles and ongoing feedback from the teaching staff. Additionally, all NUVHS courses have been reviewed by National University faculty from the School of Education to further ensure that the appropriate standards are being addressed within each course.

NUVHS offers over sixty five courses in all required subject disciplines, including a variety of Advanced Placement courses. Courses are offered in a semester format. Additionally, both first and second semester section of each course is available each term. All courses NUVHS offers courses representing a full high school curriculum. Each course requires students to utilize analytic thinking



skills as well as critical thinking skills. Courses do much more than “spoon feed” student’s factual information. They are interactive, and have a “human touch” as evidenced by the participation of the instructor.

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In some courses, students have access to e-textbook editions of the required textbook, depending upon the publisher. These interactive textbooks further augment students’ learning experiences with media-rich components such as simulations, audio/visual and real-life scenario-based learning. For classes that do not include e-textbooks, the course is structured to include appropriate curricular enhancements, many of which are media based, to supplement the textbook.

Additional key highlights of NUVHS courses include:

- Curricula that aligns with California State Content standards, and National Curriculum and Content Standards
- Courses taught by highly-qualified, credentialed teachers with multiple years of teaching experience
- 24/7 access to courses and technical support services
- Frequent and meaningful communication between teachers and students
- Special attention to students’ preferred learning style
- 24/7 access to one of the nation’s largest e-libraries, as well as access to online writing and math tutorial centers
- AP course offerings

7. What percentage of instruction is typically synchronous? What percentage is interactive? How do you handle text books? How often are courses evaluated and updated?

In some courses, students have access to e-textbook editions of the required textbook, depending upon the publisher. These interactive textbooks further augment students’ learning experiences with media-rich components such as simulations, audio/visual, and real-life scenario-based learning. For classes that do not include e-textbooks, the course is structured to include appropriate curricular enhancements, many of which are media based, to supplement the textbook. Coursework is available online 24 hours a day 7 days a week from anywhere that the student can access the internet. All courses are password protected and are housed on the eCollege learning management system with extensive internal controls to further secure the learning environment. Students have the option of both synchronous and asynchronous communication with teachers and other students through a variety of tools in the class. The majority of communication occurs asynchronously, although synchronous communication is available and is generally set up on an individual basis with the teacher as needed.

NUVHS operates on a flexible, open-enrollment format within specified fall, spring and summer terms. NUVHS students can enroll and begin courses at NUVHS at any time throughout a term up until four weeks before the term end date, so ensure students have adequate time to complete all

course work by the end of the term. Students have the flexibility to work at their own pace while still receiving instructor attention and engaging with other students through a variety of the course communication tools. Such flexibility in schedule and pace allows for NUVHS to respond more closely to individual student, school and district needs and academic calendars.

8. What types of assessments are used to determine student grades? Are you using grading rubrics? How quickly are assignments returned with grading/comments? Do you allow multiple attempts on tests, quizzes and assignments? Is your instruction responsive to multiple learning styles?

All NUVHS courses have included a variety of assessment methods designed to measure student achievement and mastery of subject area competency. Assessment methods include unit based quizzes, with a mid-term and final examination, course projects, discussion board forums, unit centered assignments, and for certain courses (specifically the sciences) simulated lab work. Many NUVHS courses also include a pre-assessment tool designed to measure student mastery of subject matter prior to beginning the course. This mechanism aids teachers in gauging individual students' specific strengths and weaknesses. It also allows students to target their own areas of strength and weakness in the subject matter, resulting in opportunities, due to the flexible progression format of course completion, to concentrate more fully on those specific areas of the course. Students are also assessed on their class participation through the discussion board forums to direct content-related questions as well as their replies to other student posts.

Assessment results are made available to students almost immediately upon completion of quizzes and assignments through the gradebook feature within the learning management system. Because exams and quizzes are designed in such a way that they are auto-graded by the system, students are provided their assessment results along with the correct answer to any questions in the assessment they may have missed as well as explanations, when appropriate, for why the correct answer is correct. Major assessments do not allow for multiple attempts. NUVHS has proctoring guidelines available for major assessments such as mid-terms and finals. The ability for students to have multiple attempts for any unit assignments would be at the discretion of the teacher and dependent on the nature of the course.

Teachers provide individual progress reports to students, generally via email, on a monthly basis. This gives students regular communication of student achievement as well as identified areas where students may be struggling. During the teaching process, many teachers provide regular feedback to student assignments, projects and quizzes to further assist students in producing quality work that achieves the stated learning objectives of the assignment, unit or course. There is also a great deal of informal course review occurring on a continuous basis in which administrative staff review each course to identify students who may be at risk of failing to successfully complete the course so that intervention measures can be put into place, providing every opportunity for students to succeed.

Courses also include a learning styles assessment tool. This tool helps students and teachers identify learning and teaching strategies conducive to the specific students' learning processes. Such device aids instructors in better understanding how their students learn and allow them to adjust course methodologies appropriately.

9. Do you include any resource packages, online access to library or database or other reference works? Are teacher notes typically available? Do students have access to detailed answers and explanations?

NUVHS is very proud of its relationship with National University and as such NUVHS students have the same student support systems that the University student body has. Processes are in place to support NUVHS students struggling either academically or emotionally. NUVHS provides students



and parents information and resources on academic and study skills, college planning, volunteering and career options. NUVHS, in conjunction with the NU System also provides a variety of academic support services that further support successful student learning. These types of services include the following:

National University Library Services – NUVHS students and teachers have full access to the National University Library, and an extensive e-library with more than 120,000 e-books and 29,000 e-journals. The NUVHS website and the homepage in the learning management system that houses NUVHS courses have a direct link to the library site from which students may access a variety of research tools including multiple search databases, online journal articles, and electronic book collections. The library also provides online training tutorials to assist students in using the various library resources.

National University Writing Center - This service provides students assistance in such areas as writing skill improvement at any stage of the writing process including drafting, revising, and organizing student written work. NUVHS students can access the Writing Center online and receive directed, individualized feedback on specific writing assignments. Students are referred to the Writing Center by their NUVHS teachers or staff or they can contact the center on their own.

National University Mathematics Tutor Services – Individualized tutoring and assistance in mathematics is also available to all NUVHS students. Students may receive individualized tutoring via email or telephone. Students are referred to math tutors by their NUVHS teachers or staff or they can contact the direct of the service on their own to be assigned a tutor.

National University Career and Test Center – The career counselors assist students with learning about various options, employment outlook and information on what it takes to enter a specific career field. The center offers career assessments and one-on-one career counseling to explore options relating to them, as well as information on education and training needs for these fields. The testing center also offers proctoring services to NUVHS students.

To further ensure student success in an online learning environment students are enrolled in and required to complete an online student tutorial that prepares students for learning in an online environment. This self-paced tutorial provides instruction on how to use the various tools within the learning management system as well as provides students assistance on learning techniques such as time management that further prepares them to be successful in an online classroom. Students are enrolled in the tutorial throughout the duration of their program, and the tutorial is revised and updated by administrative staff on a regular basis to ensure students receive the latest information regarding NUVHS, their program and academic success. Students also have access to 24/7 technical support helpdesk for technical issues that may arise. The helpdesk is specially trained in navigating and understanding the learning management system and the technological requirements associated with LMS access. In conjunction with the National University System, NUVHS students and parents will also have access to the Student Concierge Services department, which will provide another level of student support.

10. What privacy policies are in place? Who has access to student files, especially in the case of partnerships? What protections are built in?

NUVHS houses all historical student records as well as other school records on a secure administrative database system known as PeopleSoft. All record keeping is in compliance with state and federal regulations. NUVHS currently uses the Financial, Human Resources and Student Administration suites to support its internal operational and record keeping requirements for staff, students and teachers, as well as to integrate with the NU System. All business process supporting these resources are periodically and systematically reviewed with internal functional and technical experts, as well as with external consultants and adaptations are made to the software to support the



format and needs of NUVHS. All coordination for student record keeping in a secure database is in collaboration with the University's Office of the Registrar in which all student records and other internal school records are housed in PeopleSoft. The school receives high security and information technology support from the National University System relating to this area. The various types of security and record keeping support received include:

- Maintenance of a central network of servers and shared drives to support NUVHS
- Maintenance of NUVHS software student database and internal / external security measures
- Assistance in developing and maintaining student database queries to aggregate relevant student information
- Providing software upgrades that maximize student record database security and performance
- Support of school's internal email and other technology systems including relevant security features

In addition to a robust and secure database for maintaining student records, NUVHS also maintains a core set of student records in hard copy which are housed in a secure office at the administrative headquarters of NUVHS and the NU System. Access to the hard copy materials as well as the NUVHS student record database is secure and restricted to only designated NUVHS or other key personnel. The General Manager of NUVHS must authorize the release of any secure documentation related to NUVHS or student records to any non-authorized internal personnel or external agencies.

11. Do you have affiliate rates for courses including dual-credit courses? Do you have different course tiers? Who covers costs of any surface or air mailings of materials, texts and ancillary materials?

Fees

National University Virtual High School tuition is \$275.00 per semester course per student. An NCLB highly qualified teacher is provided for each course. In forming a partnership with NUVHS, there is a 10 percent reduction per student, adjusting the cost of tuition to \$250.00 per student per semester course. The cost for Advanced Placement courses is \$375.00 which is also eligible for a reduced rate of \$340.00. There is also a one time \$60.00 admission fee for each student. Any other modifications of fees must be approved by administration.

Hosting Fees

NUVHS can provide curriculum hosted on a learning management system for \$100 per user per course or \$80 per user per course with a minimum of 20 students. For this format, the school provides complete instruction.

Textbooks

Partnering schools are required to provide textbooks to each student. Also, because of the nature of our study program, there is opportunity to minimize textbook costs through collaborative sharing among students. Many of the courses in math and science utilize e-textbooks that can be made available for courses taught through NUVHS at no additional charge. Also for some courses, all content is included and do not require the use of textbooks.

12. What minimum standards have you set for hardware and software? What compatibility is there for Windows XP, Vista, Mac OS and Linux? What modes of interaction are typically used between the student and teachers, administrators and other students?



To take full advantage of the interactivity of NUVHS courses, the following are the technology requirements and recommendations for students and instructors:

Windows OS	Minimum Requirements	Highly Recommended
Operating System	Windows ME, 2000, or XP	Windows ME, 2000, or XP
RAM	64 MB	128 MB
Connection Speed	28.8 kbps	56K or High Speed Internet
Misc.	Sound Card, Speakers, Microphone	Sound card, Speakers, Headset

Mac OS	Minimum Requirements	Highly Recommended
Operating System	Mac OS 9.1 and OS X	Mac OS 9.1 and OS X
RAM	32 MB	128 MB
Connection Speed	28.8 kbps	56K or High Speed Internet
Misc.	Sound Card, Speakers, Microphone	Sound card, Speakers, Headset

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

An ISP is a company that provides users with the software and access necessary for getting onto the Internet. Students will need reliable Internet access, at a recommended connection speed of at least 56 kbps, to take NUVHS courses.

Email Account

An email account is required to register for an NUVHS course. Free accounts can be established at Yahoo, Hotmail and Gmail. Special characters can cause problems with some systems that make it difficult to reach the intended mailbox. NUVHS suggests that users avoid special characters, such as +, &, \$, etc. in email addresses.

Web Browser

Though other browsers are supported, NUVHS recommends the use of the following:

- PC Users: Internet Explorer 6.0 (or higher)
- Mac Users: Mozilla Firefox 3.6 (or higher)

Additional Requirements

Individual courses may have additional software and hardware requirements. To find out if a course has specific requirements students should review the NUVHS Textbook list, found on the Student Bookstore page of the NUVHS website.