

Course Distribution Platform

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Overview

The Course Distribution Platform is a Moodle Instance hosted on the Nova Schools website.

www.novacourse.org. Nova courses are created by independent authors and provided to the general public for a fee. Courses may also be sold to K12 schools.

Course authors create their courses according to provided guidelines in a sand box area of Moodle. The sand box is a course category that initial users have access to. Course Authors are vetted prior to being granted access to the sand box by submitting their information on the Nova Schools website.

When a course author has completed a course, the author may request a quality review. The author is given feedback on how to improve the course. Once past the review, the author may publish the course. In publishing the course, the course is copied into a category that is publicly available.

Course authors may choose how to monetize their courses. They may set the fees a student pays to take the course. The student can then add the course to cart and pay to take the class. The course author is provided pricing guidelines but solely determines the course pricing.

Course authors may also allow the course to be purchased by a vetted private or public school. When the course is purchased by a school, the course is copied into the school's instance of Moodle. Initially, only participating schools are those that are using the Studia Nova Education Technology Platform. In time, Nova Schools will support other Moodle instances.

The platform is supported by participant fees. To be a student taking classes on the platform, users must pay a nominal monthly fee. To provide or sell courses on the platform, the sellers pay a nominal fee. Authors providing only free courses pay a lower fee rate. When courses are reviewed, the seller pays a fee to cover the cost of the review.

Many courses will require a teacher, at a minimum to grade work, or in other cases the teacher may conduct synchronous, paced lessons. Course authors may teach their course or allow others to teach their courses. Teachers pay a fee to Nova Schools CDP to teach on the platform.

The participant fee structure allows course authors and teachers to maximize their transactional revenue and favors prolific authors and favored teachers. The more participants use the platform, the less relevant the fees become.

Roles

Nova Courses are designed to be more participant-to-participant interactive than remote on-line learning platforms, Nova courses are developed by a community of learners, teachers, and authors, and so greater care must be taken to vet our participants.

The primary roles are Course Author, Teacher, and Student. Any participant may have any combination of roles, although the fee structure will be different based on the roles.

Course Author

To become a course author, the user must submit an online application at Nova Schools.org. The form contains basic information that helps vet the course author as genuinely interested in developing courses rather than those with a passing interest or curiosity.

Initially, Course authors are granted access to the sand box for a three month period. When their initial access has expired, they will be automatically charged the recurring rate unless they cancel their membership. Course Authors must pay a one-time fee for the three month trial period.

Course authors must also complete a Moodle course on how to create classes in Moodle. A course may not be submitted for review unless the course author has completed the training course.

Teachers

Teachers may teach classes authored by themselves or others. In order to become a teacher on the platform, teachers must complete a form on the Nova Schools website and go through a vetting process before being allowed to teach courses. Course Authors must grant specific teachers the right to teach their courses. They may review the teachers who have submitted their information and select teachers they feel appropriate.

Teachers interact with minors on the platform. Therefore, all teachers will need to submit their information for a formal background check.

Students

Students may be K12 or adults. In order to take classes on the platform, students must provide their first and last name as well as birth date.

All minor students must provide a primary guardian first and last name, email and cell phone number. The primary guardian must authorize the minor student to take courses on the platform via electronic means.

Configuration

Course Category

The Course Category structure is developed by Nova Courses and all courses must be added to an existing category. Where most courses are organized by subject, Nova Courses organizes its top level category by Philosophy.

Philosophical categories are:

- Christ Centered
- Classical Tradition
- Eastern Thought
- Natural Philosophy

A community of course creators may petition to add a Philosophical Category. Under each Philosophical Category are the basic subject areas. Literature, Humanities, Math and Science.

Well known thought leaders may petition to create a philosophical category that reflects their own body of work.

Question Bank

When a specific user creates a course, they will also create questions in their question bank. Course authors will have access only to the questions they create in their courses, they will not have access to system level question bank, or other course authors question bank.

Course authors should be able to use any question bank they have access to created in any course.

Teachers and Ratings

Nova Courses have teachers

In general, Nova Courses are different than other online learning systems because they have teachers. The involvement of the teacher may be simply grading or may include online real-time lectures. When a student buys a course that requires a teacher, the student must be able to select from the available teachers.

Note: some courses will be entirely auto-graded, these courses will not need teachers.

Teacher Groups

Teachers may teach groups of students, and there may be multiple teachers per course. The course author must authorize specific teachers to teach their course.

Teacher Ratings

Teachers will have ratings based on feedback from students.

Student Ratings

Students are only rated on whether they complete a course or not. It is useful to know if a student is serious if the teacher is deciding to enroll a student in a class that may be filled-up. Student ratings are visible to teachers and students only.

Course Ratings

Courses are rated only by students as teachers and other course authors have a conflict of interest in rating the courses.

Course Purchaser

Schools, or course purchaser, can buy course and add these courses to their own Moodle instance. No other LMS will be supported, as Moodle is the only truly open-source LMS.

A course purchaser is a vetted organization with its own Moodle instance. The school is provided a Moodle plug-in that they may download and add to their instance in order to import courses from the Course Distribution Platform. Schools pay for this software as a subscription service.

Home School Transcript

Home School students have a need to produce documentation of their coursework. Students may purchase a verified transcript from Nova Courses that shows the courses that were taken. The student is provided a configuration screen to complete the details required to generate the transcript, which will be available for download.

The transcript may also be presented to K12 institutions to request credit for courses taken on the Nova Course Platform.