



**New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning  
Graduate School of Education**

**Graduate Student Handbook and Program Guide**  
(Updated June 17, 2024)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
1. Message from the Executive Director	2
2. Overview	3
3. Program Guides	12
4. Policies and Procedures	16



NEW JERSEY CENTER  
FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

Dear Students:

Thank you for choosing the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL).

NJCTL believes in the need for a systemic approach to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. That applies to both our work offering courses and programs to teachers, as well as their work in the classroom. Continuous improvement requires always questioning what we do and how we do it... always asking how we can improve our work to benefit both our graduate students and their students.

As part of this, we embrace technology as a valuable tool in improving student learning. Properly used, technology makes it possible to implement best practices in an easier, more efficient way. We look to new technologies to support us on our mission, while recognizing that technology is a tool, not a goal.

NJCTL is committed to a sustainable approach to improving student learning as well as to the environment. To this end, our content is available online instead of in print, and we utilize virtual learning and electronic communication.

As you progress through your experience, please keep in mind that we welcome all your input and suggestions so that we can continuously improve. Please email any of us with your comments and ideas. My email address is [bob@njctl.org](mailto:bob@njctl.org).

We welcome you to join us on our mission of improving access and quality STEM education for all students. Accomplishing this requires talented educators like you who have learned how to be effective using the tools provided by NJCTL to engage all students in higher levels of learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Goodman".

Robert Goodman, Ed.D.  
Executive Director

## **OVERVIEW**

NJCTL is an independent not-for-profit foundation, created by the New Jersey Education Association. Our mission Vision, Focus and Goals are as follows:

### **Mission**

To empower communities of educators and families to lead school improvement, so that all students have access to a high-quality education.

### **Vision**

A world in which all students have access to a high-quality education.

### **Focus**

Our focus is on the teaching and learning of science, mathematics and computer science.

### **Goals**

1. Increase the number of teachers certified and prepared to teach science, mathematics, and computer science.
2. Increase the number of teachers successfully completing NJCTL online asynchronous courses and programs.
3. Increase the number of students successfully completing NJCTL online asynchronous courses taught by their local teachers or NJCTL faculty.
4. Develop and promote new teaching methods and the effective use of technology in education.
5. Continuously improve our live teaching materials and online asynchronous courses.
6. Support faculty in their work to design, improve, and deliver NJCTL courses and materials.

NJCTL provides graduate courses, master's degrees, professional development, and add-on endorsement programs for teachers. We also provide online courses in science, mathematics and computer science for K12 students. All NJCTL courses for

teachers receive graduate credit and are offered online. Course credits are assigned based on 15 hours of online work, and up to twice that amount of time for offline work, per credit.

NJCTL uses proven and replicable approaches to teaching K12 science and math: the <sup>1</sup>Progressive Science Initiative<sup>®</sup> (PSI<sup>®</sup>); and the Progressive Mathematics Initiative<sup>®</sup> (PMI<sup>®</sup>). They provide students the essential foundation to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers.

PSI-PMI teaching methods, open educational resources and field experience are the foundation for all graduate courses and programs for teacher add-on endorsement, alternate route and professional development. PSI-PMI underlies all NJCTL's graduate courses, which are at the graduate level in terms of education pedagogy, and the K-12 and AP level in terms of course content.

### **Development of PSI**

A journey that began twenty-three years ago with the goal of improving science education for 16 pre-engineering students at a New Jersey (NJ) vocational/technical high school has opened the way for the U.S. to become a global leader in science and mathematics education.

In 1999, Dr. Robert Goodman – NJCTL's current executive director – launched a new high school pre-engineering program for students with weak science and mathematics skills. This need to bring underprepared students up to a very high standard in science and mathematics is seen across K12 and in higher education. This early service to Dr. Goodman's students formed the precedent and experience for developing PSI, a program that boosts student achievement in science and mathematics. In addition to improving students' mathematics and science scores, PSI helped Dr. Goodman's school become the leader in NJ for AP Physics. In 2006, Dr. Robert Goodman was named the NJ State Teacher of the Year, and in 2009, he became executive director of NJCTL.

### **Why PSI is Unique**

PSI combines direct instruction and social constructivism to create an engaging environment for students, regardless of their prior experience with science and mathematics. The classroom is filled with lively debate and collaborative problem solving. It makes science and mathematics the favorite subjects of many students as they achieve exceptional understanding.

---

<sup>1</sup> PROGRESSIVE SCIENCE INITIATIVE<sup>®</sup>, PSI<sup>®</sup>, and PROGRESSIVE MATHEMATICS INITIATIVE<sup>®</sup> PMI<sup>®</sup>, are registered trademarks of Dr. Robert Goodman and the NJ Center for Teaching and Learning is the exclusive Licensee of these marks.

A key aspect of PSI is correcting the science sequence to physics-chemistry-biology, a change from the traditional biology-chemistry-physics sequence. The traditional sequence made sense when it began in 1892, but had not changed since the advent of quantum theory and molecular biology more than 50 years ago. Science taught in the PSI sequence makes sense to students.

Furthermore, students learn algebra-based physics at the same time as algebra, bringing added meaning and context to mathematics in a way that is generally missing in traditional programs.

### **Expansion of PSI**

NJ policy makers supported bringing PSI to more schools. Expansion required course materials that could be broadly shared, and it also required more physics teachers – many more.

Course materials were created by capturing the content and pedagogy of PSI in interactive whiteboard software. Use of interactive whiteboards and student polling devices enables the blending of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment into a seamless whole. It also allows for easy replication of that experience via downloading and using PSI's free, editable electronic files.

The PSI methodology, used to teach physics to students, was also employed to teach physics to teachers, helping to grow the pool of qualified physics instructors.

NJCTL quickly became a leading producer of physics teachers in the U.S. Those teachers have led their schools to become top schools for students taking AP sciences. PSI first proved that all students could learn physics. It has now proven that teachers from any subject area can learn physics. And, that they can teach it successfully.

### **Expansion of PSI to Chemistry and K12 Mathematics**

Success in physics led NJCTL to expand to chemistry. Course materials were created to support the teaching of chemistry, using PSI pedagogy and interactive technology.

State and national standards offer the same curriculum coherence for K12 mathematics as PSI has for high school science. By applying the same methods for teaching and learning that were developed for PSI to mathematics, the Progressive Mathematics Initiative (PMI) was created. PMI now provides free editable content for teaching mathematics from kindergarten through grade 12.

More recently, state and national standards began providing that same curriculum coherence to K8 science. NJCTL used that opportunity to expand PSI science course materials to those grades – providing editable free science course materials from kindergarten through the AP sciences.

Offering complete sets of free editable course materials for all of K12 mathematics and science eliminates the expense of textbooks and allows real-time continuous improvement. It also provides K12 vertical alignment, from year to year, and horizontal alignment, between mathematics and science in each year. This provides unprecedented coherence, which has never before been possible.

Even more exciting, through our free, online materials, PSI and PMI are now available to educators and students around the globe. Through grant funding, NJCTL continues to demonstrate its commitment to education in the world. We have also worked with instructors in numerous countries throughout the world, including South America and in Africa.

### **Teacher Training**

The United States suffers from a chronic shortage of STEM teachers - a shortage so pronounced that 40% of American high schools have no physics instruction at all, a critical foundation for STEM. NJCTL addresses this problem by using the same teaching methods that have been successful in teaching K12 students to create a fast-track supply of new physics, chemistry and mathematics teachers.

NJCTL's rigorous add-on endorsement programs provide currently certified NJ teachers, in any subject area, an add-on endorsement to teach physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, physical science, middle school mathematics or middle school science through a combination of NJCTL online content courses, teaching methods, and field experience. Teachers dedicate more than 450 hours for a secondary add-on endorsements and more than 300 hours for a middle school add-on endorsement.

In addition to creating new STEM teachers, NJCTL provides online courses to current K12 teachers in PSI and PMI. Teachers must learn to teach in a new way to realize the full benefit of NJCTL's new instructional and learning paradigm; they must deliver brief direct instruction (5 to 10 minutes), pose questions that drive collaborative student problem solving, provide feedback on classroom results and then set up the next problem. Instructors must inspire the continuous improvement of student understanding. To a great extent, this involves teachers setting up the experience for students and then allowing students to take the lead.

More than 2,800 certified mathematics and science teachers have been trained in PSI and PMI and methods and 422 teachers have an add-on endorsement program. NJCTL has trained teachers in more than 300 schools in New Jersey, Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, Utah, Rhode Island, Vermont, Maine, Argentina, The Gambia, Lesotho, Rwanda, and Ghana.

NJCTL is granted licensure from the NJ Secretary of Higher Education to offer master's degree programs as follows:

- Master's of Science in Teaching and Learning Biology
- Master's of Science in Teaching and Learning Chemistry
- Master's of Science in Teaching and Learning Computer Science
- Master's of Science in Teaching and Learning Elementary Mathematics
- Master's of Science in Teaching and Learning Mathematics
- Master's of Science in Teaching and Learning Physics

NJ graduate students enrolled in one of our master's degree programs also fulfill the course credit requirement for an NJ add-on endorsement in chemistry, physics, or mathematics.

NJCTL received initial programmatic accreditation from the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) in February 2024. The AAQEP review team was composed of peer reviewers from other institutions of higher education and did a thorough analysis of NJCTL programs including student supports and outcomes. The Commission awarded NJCTL a commendation "...for the program's exceptionally strong assessment plan and wraparound support to ensure candidate success."

NJCTL is currently seeking institutional accreditation from a higher education accreditation agency.

NJCTL is also approved by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to offer seven NJ state-approved add-on endorsement programs for NJ teachers, and eight alternate route programs for prospective NJ teachers. Links describing the required courses and phases for each program are provided below.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is a core value of NJCTL. It is reflected in how we operate and in our programs. PSI and PMI eliminate textbooks, providing savings to schools which quickly repays investments in training and technology and thereafter provides lower education costs. It also reduces the environmental impact of printing, shipping, and storing textbooks while allowing the real-time continuous improvement of course materials. Teacher education courses and course materials are now online, reducing ancillary costs and eliminating the requirement for teachers to travel to a designated location for face-to-face training.

NJCTL has no building to deliver face-to-face courses. All NJCTL courses are offered online to teachers in an asynchronous format. All employees work from home and are

connected electronically. This lowers cost and eliminates wasted commuting time. It also is environmentally sound. The “greenest” building is no building; the most environmentally friendly commute is no commute.

NJCTL has a physical location in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. NJCTL uses this location for meetings with school district representatives, students, press, government officials, professional education associations, vendors, business operations, curriculum meetings, faculty meetings, and any other purpose that requires a face-to-face meeting.

### **Accomplishments**

- NJCTL is one of the top three producers of new physics teachers in the United States, putting NJCTL in the 99th percentile of all US colleges and universities.
- NJCTL opens access to STEM career paths for many students who would otherwise not have it, particularly students who are Black and/or Hispanic and/or live in economically depressed circumstances. <http://njc.tl/wh>
- NJCTL teachers are as likely to pass the Praxis physics or chemistry exams as non-NJCTL teachers. <http://njc.tl/1b1>
- Of the teachers who completed an online NJCTL master's degree and/or add-on endorsement program, more than 90% have:
  - Completed the program within 18 months
  - Passed the required Praxis exams
  - Would recommend the program to another teacher

Since 2010, 422 teachers have completed an NJCTL add-on endorsement program in either physics, chemistry, K12 mathematics, middle school science, or middle school mathematics. Graduates represent 54% women and 23% Black or Hispanic. Of these graduates, 138 have completed the requirements for a master's degree in physics, chemistry or mathematics.

### **Impact on K12 Education**

NJ students now rank 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation for total score on the AP and SAT II physics exams. NJ students now rank 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for total score on AP and SAT II chemistry exams.

### **Global Reach**

More than 225,000 students, teachers and other adults visited the NJCTL website during the past year. These visitors were from 50 states and 186 countries.

### **Moving Forward**

Join us in achieving our mission of improving access and quality of STEM education for all students. Accomplishing this requires talented educators who well understand how to



be effective using the tools provided by NJCTL to engage all students in higher levels of learning.

NJCTL's programs and courses are designed to make you an effective part of this movement to improve the world for so many students who currently lack the opportunity they all deserve. We look forward to working with you.

### **Governing Board**

NJCTL's governing board was established by the NJEA, which led the original recruitment and selection of board members to ensure that each board member believed that teachers have the knowledge, skills, and creative talent to transform schools and should drive school improvement efforts.

Current board members recruit and nominate prospective board members who have experience and a commitment to supporting our mission. Current board members include the following:

Joyce Powell  
Chair of the Board, NJCTL  
Former NJEA President and NEA Executive Committee Member, Retired

Dennis Bone  
Secretary Treasurer, NJCTL  
Executive in Residence - Feliciano School of Business  
Advisory Board - Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship

Victor Lawrence  
Associate Dean, Stevens Institute of Technology

Ed Friedman  
Professor Emeritus, Stevens Institute of Technology

Sean Spiller  
President, New Jersey Education Association

Kevin Kelleher  
Executive Director, New Jersey Education Association

Eric First, M.D.  
Co-Founder, Chief Scientific Officer, R3SET and Chief Scientific & Medical Officer, Alcresta Therapeutics  
Chief Medical Officer, Americas, Sirtex Medical Inc.

Ross Danis  
President, MeckEd

Peggy Stewart  
2006 NJ State Teacher of the Year, Education Consultant

## FACULTY

NJCTL's faculty is committed to the mission of the organization and advancing PSI and PMI education.

Current faculty members are listed below. Click the name of any faculty member to view his or her credentials:

[Dr. Robert Goodman](#), Executive Director: Physics, Mathematics, Biology

[Dr. Rosemary Knab](#), Advisor to the Executive Director: Teaching Methods, Mathematics, Field Experience

[Melissa Axelsson](#), Dean of Students: Biology, Middle School Science

[Susan Olszewski](#), Dean of Faculty: Teaching Methods

[Yuriy Zavorotniy](#), Director: Physics

[Dr. John Ennis](#), Physics

[Dan Reinhold](#), Chemistry

[Dr. Jayasree Sankar](#), Chemistry

[Rebecca Barrett](#), Chemistry

[Caitlin Downling](#), Biology, Middle School Science

[Audra Crist](#), Mathematics, Field Experience

[Maria Surace](#), Mathematics, Computer Science, Field Experience

[Josef Kariuki](#), Field Experience

[Kristin DeAngelis](#), Mathematics, Teaching Methods, Field Experience

[Kathryn Goodman](#), Computer Science

[Katherine Pede](#), Computer Science

[Brian Simone](#), Mathematics

[Jennifer Shimada](#), Librarian

Administrative Support

[Maureen Ollweiler](#), Director of Operations, Assistant to the Executive Director

## PROGRAM GUIDES

### Masters Degrees

NJCTL is approved by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (NJ OSHE) to offer three master's degree programs for any certified teacher in any state. NJCTL is approved by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to offer seven NJ state-approved add-on endorsement programs for NJ teachers, and eight alternate route programs for prospective NJ teachers. Links describing the required courses and phases for each program are provided below.

NJCTL is licensed and approved by the NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to offer the following degree programs:

- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Physics [www.njctl.org/phys-mstl/](http://www.njctl.org/phys-mstl/)
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Chemistry [www.njctl.org/chem-mstl/](http://www.njctl.org/chem-mstl/)
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Mathematics  
[www.njctl.org/math-mstl/](http://www.njctl.org/math-mstl/)
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Biology [www.njctl.org/bio-mstl/](http://www.njctl.org/bio-mstl/)
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Elementary Mathematics  
[www.njctl.org/elem-math-mstl/](http://www.njctl.org/elem-math-mstl/)
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Computer Science  
[www.njctl.org/compsci-mstl/](http://www.njctl.org/compsci-mstl/)

### NJ Add-on Endorsements

NJCTL also offers add-on endorsement programs for current certified teachers. These programs are approved by the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE). Teachers enrolled in a physics, chemistry or K12 mathematics NJCTL program also earn a master's degree in that content area.

The seven NJ state-approved add-on endorsement programs for currently certified teachers are as follows:

- Physics Add-on Endorsement Program with master's degree  
[www.njctl.org/phys-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/phys-endorsement/)
- Chemistry Add-on Endorsement Program with master's degree  
[www.njctl.org/chem-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/chem-endorsement/)
- K12 Mathematics Add-on Endorsement Program with master's degree  
[www.njctl.org/k12math-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/k12math-endorsement/)
- Biology Add-on Endorsement Program with master's degree  
[www.njctl.org/bio-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/bio-endorsement/)
- Physical Science Add-on Endorsement Program  
[www.njctl.org/physci-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/physci-endorsement/)

- Middle School Mathematics Add-on Endorsement Program  
[www.njctl.org/msmath-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/msmath-endorsement/)
- Middle School Science Add-on Endorsement Program  
[www.njctl.org/mssci-endorsement/](http://www.njctl.org/mssci-endorsement/)

Teachers who complete the program requirements for an add-on endorsement must pass state required Praxis exams to apply for the add-on endorsement. Candidates must send documentation of passing the required Praxis exam(s) to NJCTL in order to be nominated for their new subject-area endorsement.

### **NJ Alternate Route**

NJCTL also offers eight alternate route programs for prospective NJ teachers.

Four alternate route programs are for individuals with 30 content area credits and a 3.0 GPA. These programs are as follows:

- Physics Traditional Alternate Route [www.njctl.org/art-phys/](http://www.njctl.org/art-phys/)
- Chemistry Traditional Alternate Route [www.njctl.org/art-chem/](http://www.njctl.org/art-chem/)
- K12 Mathematics Traditional Alternate Route [www.njctl.org/art-math/](http://www.njctl.org/art-math/)
- Biology Traditional Alternate Route [www.njctl.org/art-bio/](http://www.njctl.org/art-bio/)

The remaining four alternate route programs are for individuals with a bachelor's degree who need to earn the content credits and/or need to raise their GPA to a 3.0.

These programs are as follows:

- Physics Alternate Route Shortage Area [www.njctl.org/ars-phys/](http://www.njctl.org/ars-phys/)
- Chemistry Alternate Route Shortage Area [www.njctl.org/ars-chem/](http://www.njctl.org/ars-chem/)
- K12 Mathematic Alternate Route Shortage Area [www.njctl.org/ars-math/](http://www.njctl.org/ars-math/)
- Biology Alternate Route Shortage Area [www.njctl.org/ars-bio/](http://www.njctl.org/ars-bio/)

NJCTL's Alternate Route programs will allow candidates to earn a Certificate of Eligibility (CE) so that they may begin teaching while completing the program. In order to convert this CE to a standard certificate, candidates must first teach in the subject-area, complete NJCTL coursework requirements, and receive two years of satisfactory evaluations. Once these requirements have been met, NJCTL will nominate the candidate for their new standard subject-area endorsement.

## **Out of State Students**

Students should check with their state department of education to see if NJCTL courses, credits, and degrees can be used for purposes of certification or adding endorsements and their district to see if they are eligible for salary advancement or tuition reimbursement.

## **California Students**

NJCTL complies with Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 5, § 76215 - Student Tuition Recovery Fund Disclosures. NJCTL pays this fee on behalf of its students. To view these disclosures see the end of this handbook or [click here](#).

## **Praxis Exams**

Praxis exams required for each NJ add-on endorsement and alternate route program are as follows:

Physics (Praxis 5435 and 5265)  
Chemistry (Praxis 5435 and 5245)  
K12 Mathematics (Praxis 5165)  
Biology (Praxis 5435 and 5235)  
Middle School Mathematics (Praxis 5164)  
Middle School Science (Praxis 5442)  
Physical Science (Praxis 5265 or 5254)

## **Professional Development Certificate programs**

NJCTL offers a program for teacher professional development. These courses provide graduate credit, but do not lead to a master's degree or teaching certificate. Program completers receive an NJCTL "certificate of completion" for this program.

- K-5 Mathematics [www.njctl.org/elem-math-certificate/](http://www.njctl.org/elem-math-certificate/)

## **Program Structure**

Each program consists of a PSI-PMI teaching methods course, several content courses and two field experience courses. Courses must be taken in a defined sequence in a series of 3 or 4 phases which are clearly outlined on the NJCTL website. Links to each program describing courses and phases are provided above.

Each student must complete a conditional application before enrolling in phase 1 of their program. After completing phase 1 of their program, students complete the formal admission process as described in this handbook.

After being formally admitted into the program, teachers are required to complete two “field experience” courses during Phase II. It is the responsibility of the teacher to obtain approval from their school/district to do the field experience. NJCTL will assist by providing program information to the teacher and school/district, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher to gain approval for the field experience. NJCTL will contact the district if a graduate student does not fulfill the field experience assignments or if they do not continue to make regular progress in the remaining courses.

NJCTL recommends that teachers discuss this requirement with their school before enrolling in a master’s degree, NJ add-on endorsement, or alternate route program.

Students enrolled in any NJCTL online course must receive an 80 or higher to successfully complete a course and receive credit for that course. An 80 is equivalent to a GPA of 2.7 or B-. Candidates for the Master Degree, add-on endorsement program or one of the alternate route programs must have an overall GPA of 3.0 to fulfill the requirements for the Master Degree.

### **Graduate Courses**

Any teacher may take any NJCTL online graduate course to improve their professional practice. Since graduate credits are available, a teacher may be able to use these credits to move on the salary guide or to fulfill his or her state’s requirements for an additional certification in a STEM subject. Before enrolling in courses for continuing education, graduate credit, the master’s degree, or additional certification, teachers will need to check with their school district and/or their state department of education to see if credit or certification can be earned by taking NJCTL courses. There are currently 52 graduate courses. Students should check the NJCTL [website](#) to see the course catalog with the current description of all graduate courses.

### **Credit Transcription**

Graduate students who need graduate credit from an accredited institution of higher education may pay a transcription fee to Adams State University for the courses they take from NJCTL. The transcription fee is \$55 per credit. More information about credit transcription is available [here](#).

NJCTL also partners with American College of Education (ACE). This partnership allows NJCTL students to transfer up to 15 NJCTL credits toward a master’s or doctoral degree program at ACE. NJCTL students are also eligible for a partner grant of \$500 or \$1000, depending on the program they enter with ACE. More information about this partnership is listed [here](#).

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Overview**

Maintaining a strong level of communication and collegiality across the NJCTL community is a high priority. A key step in fostering these traits occurs upon enrollment, when each NJCTL graduate student is introduced to the Dean of Students who will work with them on issues related to completing their program successfully. If a graduate student is not satisfied with the outcome of the support that he or she is receiving from the Dean of Students, they should then contact the Executive Director, who will work with them to ensure that any issues are resolved.

### **Academic Calendar and Pacing**

NJCTL does not maintain an academic calendar for graduate students, as it embraces a rolling admissions policy. However, graduate students in an add-on endorsement program and/or master's degree program should be aware of and adhere to certain deadlines, including mandated field experience coursework that must take place over two periods of ten consecutive weeks, each. As a reminder, graduate students in an NJ add-on endorsement program must take and pass the required Praxis exam(s) in order to be able to submit their paperwork to the NJ DOE to receive their subject-area add-on endorsement. These and any other key deadlines will be communicated to graduate students in their official Approval to Teach Field Experience letter, and may also be noted via pacing updates in email communications. It is the responsibility of each graduate student to be aware of and meet these deadlines. Although course sequences are set, specific cohort start dates are on a rolling enrollment so end dates will vary based on the needs of individual schools and students. Graduate students who fall significantly behind the recommended pacing will receive written warning from the Director of Recruitment and Student Services.

### **Inactivity / Leave of Absence (LOA)**

Please note that NJCTL classes are asynchronous, which means graduate students are encouraged to work at their own pace. However, graduate students who are making no progress within any 60-day period will be considered Inactive and labeled as such in Moodle.

Alternatively, graduate students who wish to request a Leave of Absence (LOA) should submit an email request to their instructor(s) and the Dean of Students (rosemary@njctl.org).

Graduate students who have been labeled Inactive or on a LOA must notify their instructor(s) and the Dean of Students when they are ready to resume coursework. In addition, graduate students may have to redo some or all assignments in a course if (A)



a new section of a course in which a graduate student had worked opens, and/or if (B) **the graduate student has been Inactive or on an LOA for 180 days or more.**

Please note that any graduate student may request a LOA or be designated as Inactive. Except under certain circumstances (e.g., documented medical needs), Endorsement Program graduate students who are Inactive or who receive an approved LOA will not receive an automatic extension of their field experience teaching approval.

### **Academic Integrity**

Graduate students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, reusing /repurposing your own work, unauthorized possession of academic materials, and unauthorized collaboration. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized materials (including online sources such as Course Hero, GitHub or Chegg) information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

### **Required Testing Procedures - Integrity**

As part of our continued effort to provide you with support and adhere to the highest levels of academic integrity, our instructors regularly monitor reports that are generated by Proctorio software and staff. Your efforts in following the procedures listed below will help to reduce “flags” noted in these reports due to irregularities.

1. You must be in an isolated area that is not a public space and will not be interrupted by others (including pets).
2. Your workspace must be free of all materials other than your computer/tablet, calculator, blank scrap paper/pencil, and, in physics or chemistry courses, the course-provided formula/equation sheet.
3. If you are using the course-provided formula/equation sheet for a test, please hold that up at the beginning of the assessment to the camera before you start the test.
4. Reduce all noise in the room; Proctorio will flag any stray or sudden sounds.
5. Maintain eye contact with the screen as much as possible. Proctorio will recognize when eye contact is lost.
6. Do not allow your test to “time out” (occurs after 2 minutes idle), close your test, terminate screen sharing, or leave the test until you are completely finished. Doing so will terminate your attempt and your work will not be counted.

If you experience technical issues while taking a test, please contact Proctorio immediately, while the issue is occurring, if possible, so they can troubleshoot. The best way to do this is by clicking the “shield” icon to the right of the address bar in Chrome to start a live chat. You may also call Proctorio support 24/7: 480-428-4089. Additionally,

please communicate the issue that occurred, and resolution with Proctorio, to the NJCTL Tech Support team immediately afterwards: [techsupport@njctl.org](mailto:techsupport@njctl.org)

Any concerning irregularities will be addressed by the instructor with the graduate student in accordance with NJCTL's Academic Integrity policy, which are outlined in this graduate student handbook.

### **Academic Standing**

NJCTL has established standards for academic good standing within a graduate student's academic program.

Graduate students enrolled in any NJCTL online course must receive an 80 or higher to successfully complete a course and receive credit for that course. An 80 is equivalent to a GPA of 2.7 or B-. Additionally, graduate students in an add-on endorsement and/or Master Degree program must receive a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all courses combined in order to successfully complete the program.

### **Retake Policy**

Consistent with NJCTL's teaching methods, graduate students have multiple opportunities to retake Mastery Exercises or exams (excluding Final Exams). Graduate students who wish to retake an exam should contact their instructor.

### **Additional Requirements for Students in an Add-On Endorsement and/or Master Degree Program**

- Graduate students in an add-on endorsement program must receive a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all courses combined in order to successfully complete the program.
- Graduate students who have a GPA below 3.0 are notified via email that they are being placed on Academic Warning. Graduate students are expected to check their email regularly.
- Graduate students are expected to keep track of their own grades using the grade reports in Moodle and to request support from their instructors. NJCTL's Dean of Students monitors the academic progress of each student and will work with graduate students and their instructors/coaches to help improve the graduate student's academic standing.
- Specifically, graduate students on Academic Warning must work with their instructor and coach to develop and agree to a corrective action plan to raise their GPA to a 3.0 or above in order to continue in their program.
- Graduate students whose grades remain below a 3.0 for two consecutive semesters will be placed on Academic Probation. If a graduate student is paying for his or her own coursework, notification of Academic Probation will be provided to the graduate student. If the graduate student's school or district is paying for the graduate student's coursework, notification of

Academic Probation also will be provided to the graduate student's school or district.

- If graduate students do not bring their cumulative GPA to a 3.0 or better after three consecutive terms, they will be removed from the program. If a graduate student is paying for his or her own coursework, notification of removal from the program will be provided to the graduate student. If the graduate student's school or district is paying for the graduate student's coursework, notification of removal from the program also will be provided to the graduate student's school or district.

### **Admissions Policy**

NJCTL embraces a rolling admissions policy. NJCTL allows open admissions to its courses.

There is a two-part admission process for teachers interested in applying for a NJCTL master degree program or the NJ add-on endorsement program. Applicants must be certified to teach in any state and have a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

#### **Phase 1: Conditional Application:**

Teachers complete the preliminary/conditional application, supplying their teaching certificate, teaching assignments and other contact information prior to taking Phase I courses (described in the course catalog. NJCTL may also require the applicant to provide a transcript from an institution of higher education indicating that they have a bachelor's degree.

#### **Phase II: Formal Admission**

Formal acceptance to an add-on endorsement program (which is required to enter Phase II, including field experience) requires the candidate to:

1. Submit their teaching certificate
2. Satisfactorily complete Phase I courses with a B average, with no course final grades lower than 80%.
3. Submit a letter from their district indicating they are permitted to do field experience by teaching the designated PSI/PMI course for their program, the course(s) they will be teaching, and that they can be videoed per our requirements for field experience.
4. Agree that NJCTL may communicate with the district if the participant is no longer in good standing, which includes making regular progress in NJCTL courses and maintaining at least a B average with no course final grades lower than 80%.

Once accepted, applicants will receive a letter from NJCTL formally admitting them into their program when these requirements are met.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to obtain approval from their school/district to do the field experience. NJCTL will assist the teacher by providing program information to the teacher and school/district, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher to gain approval for the field experience. NJCTL recommends that teachers discuss this requirement with their school before enrolling in a master degree or NJ add-on endorsement program.

## II. Graduate Student Credit Transfer Policy

NJCTL does not accept credits earned at other institutions or for other previous experiences. NJCTL currently has no credit-transfer option or articulation agreements with other universities.

NJCTL currently has an articulation agreement with Adams State University (an accredited Institution of Higher Education) to provide optional graduate credits to NJCTL students who successfully complete our graduate courses. Graduate students pay a transcription fee to Adams State to transcribe graduate credits. Information on how to transcribe credits and the cost of transcribing the credits is available [here](#).

NJCTL students are able to transcribe NJCTL graduate credits in physics with Thomas Edison State University (TESU). In addition, graduate credits from NJCTL can be transferred into one of TESU's master's degree programs. More information about credit transcription and transfer credits with TESU is available [here](#).

NJCTL also partners with American College of Education (ACE). This partnership allows NJCTL students to transfer up to 15 NJCTL credits toward a master's or doctoral degree program at ACE. NJCTL students are also eligible for a partner grant of \$500 or \$1000, depending on the program they enter with ACE. More information about this partnership is listed [here](#).

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

NJCTL supports the protections available to members of its community under Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 and all applicable State regulations. Consistent with state and federal statutes that affirm and protect the equal opportunity rights of persons with

disabilities, NJCTL has a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for otherwise-qualified persons with disabilities.

Any student with a disability who needs accommodations to successfully complete a course or program must contact the dean of students. The first step is for the student to voluntarily self-identify. Then, documentation of the disability must be sent to the dean of students who will schedule a meeting to collaborate on the needed accommodations. All information regarding a student's disability, and accommodations are considered privileged and confidential.

Students who have self-identified, provided the required documentation, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to modifications of course or program, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids to enable them to participate in, and benefit from, all educational programs and services.

Any instructor or student with a disability who believes that s/he has been the victim of discrimination may file a complaint to the office of the Executive Director under the NJ State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace.

### **Affordability**

NJCTL is committed to ensuring affordability for graduate students from all backgrounds. The tuition for NJCTL courses is \$180 per credit and there are no fees. This is substantially less than the tuition of many NJ state colleges and universities which are about \$790 per graduate credit.

Also, NJCTL graduate students typically are not required to purchase textbooks, as all course materials are free and open source. This represents a major cost savings for students.

NJCTL is an institution of higher education licensed by the NJ Secretary of the Office of Higher Education. NJCTL is currently seeking accreditation from a higher education accreditation agency. Accreditation will create opportunities for all educators to pursue participation in our low-cost programs, regardless of economic need or whether their district is offering to pay the costs.

### **Code of Conduct**

An overarching goal of this Code is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect that promotes free open feedback between faculty and students without any elements of derision or hostility. Within this constructive atmosphere, continuous growth and improvement of all parties are promoted while negative language and interactions, which close down openness and growth, are not tolerated.

This is consistent with the atmosphere that NJCTL's approaches are designed to create in K12 schools between teachers and students and between administrations and teachers.

Therefore all communication with and between faculty and students must be conducted in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

Faculty and students must respect the diverse opinions of instructors and fellow students and engage in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner.

NJCTL is committed to maintaining an environment free of harassment, stalking, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation toward instructors or other students. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, religious, age, disability, sexist (or sexual orientation), or racist nature; and the unwanted sexual advances or intimidations by email, or on discussion boards and other postings within, or connected to the online classroom.

Failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action including written notification of violation and warning. Multiple Code of Conduct violations may result in suspension or removal from courses or programs.

### **Complaint Procedures**

- Technical Complaints: These usually involve Proctorio, Django or Moodle and are sent to [techsupport@njctl.org](mailto:techsupport@njctl.org). Those emails are received by a group of staff members and are constantly monitored by a rotating schedule of on-call staff on weekends and holidays. The result is that complaints are usually responded to in a few hours and at least within 24 hours including weekends and holidays.
- Teaching Materials Complaints: NJCTL maintains an extensive catalog of free and open-source teaching materials on its website. Those materials form the foundation of our online graduate courses. Complaints related to these materials are received by comments through our website or via email. The complaint is reviewed and acknowledged within 24 hours. The appropriate content expert will answer the complaint and make adjustments if needed.
- Online Course Complaints: These complaints are sometimes related to the teaching material complaints discussed above or broken links, technical problems, etc. Those complaints are received via email and are acknowledged and responded to within 24 hours.

- **Grade Appeals:** Students who disagree with their grade can appeal to their instructor. If they are not satisfied, a process of further appeal is delineated in the Student Handbook that eventually results in the executive director making a determination if a resolution cannot be made in the initial process.
- **Harassment:** Any person who believes that he/she is the victim of any type of discriminatory conduct, should bring that conduct to the immediate attention of the executive director by email. NJCTL will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident in a confidential nature. If the investigation discloses that an individual has committed an act of discrimination, that individual will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Retaliation in any form against an employee who complains of discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Any supervisory employee to whom an employee brings a complaint of harassment but who fails to take appropriate action to resolve it will also be disciplined.
- **Website Accessibility:** NJCTL is committed to providing accessible content. If a user encounters issues accessing content on the NJCTL website, or needs to request an accommodation, they should contact NJCTL via the Website Accessibility button on the front page of the website and complete the form indicating their complaint. Those complaints are received via email and are acknowledged and responded to within 24 hours.
- **Accommodations:** NJCTL supports the protections available to members of its community under Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 and all applicable State regulations. Consistent with state and federal statutes that affirm and protect the equal opportunity rights of persons with disabilities, NJCTL has a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for otherwise-qualified persons with disabilities.

Any student with a disability who needs accommodations to successfully complete a course should email the Dean of Students. Any instructor or student with a disability who believes that s/he has been the victim of discrimination may email a complaint to the office of the Executive Director under the NJ State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace

- **General:** Any other person, whether inside or outside of NJCTL, can lodge a complaint by using the Contact/Complaint button on the front page of the

website. Those complaints are received via email and are acknowledged and responded to within 24 hours.

**Student Complaints Concerning Faculty or Staff:** Students should first try to resolve their complaint with the faculty or staff member. In the event they are unable to resolve the issue, or do not feel comfortable addressing the faculty or staff member directly, they should email the dean of students who will attempt to resolve the issue. If that is not successful, the issue will be escalated to the executive director.

### **Credit for Prior Learning Experiences**

NJCTL does not provide credit for prior learning experiences, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency learning.

### **Discrimination**

#### **I. Introduction**

##### **A. Laws Against Discrimination**

NJCTL is committed to addressing discrimination/harassment by students or against students because discrimination is unlawful and undermines the integrity of the academic environment. The NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and federal civil rights laws prohibit discrimination/harassment by or against instructors or students based upon the following protected categories: race, creed, religion, color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, age, sex/gender (including pregnancy), familial status, marital/civil union status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, domestic partnership status, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, disability, (including perceived disability, physical, mental and/or intellectual disabilities), or liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

##### **B. Applicability**

This policy applies to protect all students and instructors from discrimination/harassment by others at NJCTL, including students, faculty, staff members, vendors, and contractors. This policy applies to both physical and verbal conduct that occurs at NJCTL, (including electronic communications sent or received on campus) and that occurs at any location, which can be reasonably regarded as an extension of NJCTL (i.e., any field location, online course, or any facility where NJCTL-sponsored activities are being conducted or discussed).

##### **C. Protection of First Amendment Rights**



This policy will not be applied to abridge a student's exercise of free speech or expression which is protected by the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

## II. Prohibited Conduct

It is a violation of this policy for a student, teacher taking NJCTL courses, or NJCTL faculty or staff to engage in discriminatory conduct against another member of the NJCTL community based upon any of the protected categories outlined in Section A that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive so as to substantially disrupt college operations or materially limit another instructor ability to participate in or to receive the benefits, services or opportunities of NJCTL. Discrimination/harassment or the creation of a hostile environment can occur even if there was no intent on the part of an individual to harass or demean another.

## III. Faculty/Staff Responsibilities

### A. Policy on Discrimination/Harassment

Faculty/staff should make every effort to maintain an educational environment for students that is free from any form of prohibited discrimination/harassment. Faculty/staff and/or supervisors are required to take seriously all student allegations or complaints of discrimination/harassment, including sexual harassment, and to immediately report these matters to the office of the Executive Director for confidential investigation and to consult with the Executive Director on interim corrective measures which may be recommended to prevent continued violations of this policy. All employees are expected to cooperate with the investigation. Failure to cooperate in an investigation may result in disciplinary action.

### B. Policy on Faculty Research, Professional Development, and Scholarship

NJCTL supports faculty, staff and students by cultivating scholarship and research, encouraging research in emerging areas to advance basic knowledge in STEM education. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide ongoing suggestions to improve NJCTL courses and NJCTL methods, and to share research articles with NJCTL that address emerging issues in STEM education. NJCTL faculty regularly review each other's work – providing suggestions to improve research surveys, the interpretation of research results, research design, and articles for publication. Faculty input is sought on all NJCTL research projects.

## IV. Dissemination

NJCTL will annually disseminate this Policy through the student handbook and faculty/employee handbook.

## V. Complaint Process

NJCTL follows the State of New Jersey Model Procedures for Processing Internal Complaints Alleging Discrimination with regard to reporting, investigating, and where appropriate, remediating claims of discrimination/harassment. Each State entity is responsible for designating an individual or individuals to receive complaints of discrimination/harassment (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), investigating such complaints, and recommending appropriate remediation of such complaints.

The office of the Executive Director is responsible for handling complaints against discrimination.

The Executive Director shall maintain a written record of the discrimination/harassment complaints received. Written records shall be maintained as confidential records to the extent practicable and appropriate.

## VI. Prohibition Against Retaliation

Retaliation against any person who either alleges that s/he was the victim of discrimination/harassment, provides information in the course of an investigation into claims of discrimination/harassment in the academic environment, or opposes a discriminatory practice is prohibited by the Policy. Any teacher or student bringing a complaint, providing information for an investigation, or testifying in any proceeding under the Policy will not be subjected to adverse academic or employment consequences based upon such involvement nor be the subject of retaliation.

## V. False Accusations and Information

An instructor or student who knowingly makes a false accusation of prohibited discrimination/harassment, or who knowingly provides false information in the course of an investigation of a complaint, may be subjected to administrative and/or disciplinary action. Complaints made in good faith, even if found to be unsubstantiated, will not be considered a false accusation.

## VI. Confidentiality

All complaints and investigations shall be handled, to the extent possible, in a manner that will protect the privacy interests of those involved. To the extent practical and appropriate, confidentiality shall be maintained throughout the investigatory process. During the course of an investigation, it may be necessary to discuss the claims with the person against whom the complaint was filed and other persons who may have relevant knowledge or those who have a legitimate need to know about the matter. All persons interviewed,

including witnesses, shall be directed not to discuss any aspect of the investigation with others in light of the important privacy interests of all concerned. Appropriate administrative authorities may be contacted in the interim (before a final report is submitted to the Provost) if immediate or temporary actions must be taken to ensure the safety or well-being of any party to the complaint or to ensure the integrity of the investigation.

### **Drug-Free Environment**

Students may not be under the influence of any controlled substance, such as drugs or alcohol, while participating in NJCTL in-person events (e.g., workshops, labs, etc.). Prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications, taken as prescribed, are an exception to this policy.

### **Facilities and Student Support Services**

As an online institution, NJCTL has no buildings or facilities. However, a variety of graduate student supports are available and described throughout this Handbook, including support for students with disabilities, protection from discrimination, etc. Graduate students with any concerns or needs should reach out to their instructor or the dean of students for assistance.

### **Financial Aid**

NJCTL does not provide financial aid including Title IV funding. Most teachers in our master's degree programs receive tuition reimbursement from their school districts as they are certified teachers. Some districts pay for the entire program for their teachers because of their critical need for STEM teachers, regardless of the district's tuition reimbursement provisions.

In order to ensure accessibility to all teachers, NJCTL locks tuition once students enter its programs. There are no textbook or other fees associated with NJCTL courses, the stated tuition is the only cost.

If a student expresses interest in procuring a loan, NJCTL refers graduate students to the Greater Alliance Federal Credit Union for information about procuring a private loan for NJCTL tuition. Additional information about this program is available [here](#).

### **General Event Photography and Video Policy**

NJCTL instructors and students may be included in marketing and communications materials via photographs and/or video. As a general rule, it is not necessary to obtain an image/photo release of any individual or group that is photographed or videoed in public venues (such as classrooms) or attending public events in order to use those photos or videos to promote NJCTL. However, it is the policy of NJCTL that all

instructors and students will sign a general Release Form when enrolling in NJCTL courses, for the purpose of marketing.

Instructors or graduate students who have a concern about the use of their image or who would like NJCTL to remove their image from being used can contact the office of the Executive Director.

Graduate students taking a Field Experience course will be asked to submit video recordings of their lessons to NJCTL instructors. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to submit any necessary documentation requested by NJCTL instructors, including video recording releases/consents. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the teacher to comply with their district's policies and procedures regarding video recording of students if students are to be included in the video recording. Graduate students should contact their NJCTL instructor for help setting up video recordings.

### **Grading Scale**

In order for a course grade to be finalized, the participant must successfully complete all course requirements showing 100% completion on the progress bar and earn a grade of 80% or higher.

GPA (grade point average) is reported on a traditional 4.0 scale. NJCTL calculates GPA based on the following:

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	GPA
A	93-100	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7

D+	67-69	1.3
D	65-66	1.0
F	Below 65	0.0

## **Grade Appeals**

NJCTL recognizes a student's right to file an appeal of an academic nature. Course instructors must follow NJCTL's course requirements and performance standards. An instructor's evaluation of students' academic performance is based on the requirements set forth in the course syllabus and is expressed through the submission of final course grades. Under certain limited circumstances, a student may appeal a grade.

### **I. Circumstances Justifying an Appeal**

Grade appeals will be considered only if a student can provide documentation supporting his/her case. Circumstances that might justify a grade appeal include, but are not limited to, computational error; grading error, or contesting an alleged violation of academic integrity or policy.

### **II. Appeals Process**

If circumstances such as those described above can be documented, the student may appeal a grade by taking the following steps:

- A. No later than twenty (20) calendar days after the posting of grades, a student must bring his/her appeal to the attention of the course instructor in writing by email. Supporting documentation must be provided. Both parties should make good faith efforts to share viewpoints and mediate differences of opinion.
- B. If it is mutually agreed that a grade adjustment is warranted, the course instructor will make the adjustment and notify the Dean of Students of the final grade earned.
- C. If a graduate student and the course instructor cannot reach an agreement and a student wishes to further pursue a grade appeal, the student must email a written appeal, including pertinent course materials or course work, to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will confer with the graduate student and the course instructor, jointly or independently as he/she sees fit, review pertinent documents and course materials, and confer with other faculty or administrative staff members as appropriate.
- D. If the Dean of Students determines that a grade change is warranted, he/she will advise the course instructor and student in writing.

- E. If the Dean of Students determines that a grade change is not warranted, the course instructor and student will be so informed in writing.
- F. If the instructor or graduate student disagrees with the decision of the Dean of Students, the student or teacher may appeal this decision to the Office of the Executive Director. Appeals, including all pertinent documents related to the appeal, should be submitted within 7 days after the decision of the Dean of Students.
- G. The decision of the Office of the Executive Director is final.

### **Graduation for Master's Degree Programs**

Candidates completing all course requirements of their degree program with a GPA of 3.00 or better are eligible to receive a Master's Degree.

Candidates completing all course requirements with a GPA of 3.00 or better, and having no outstanding balances, are eligible to receive a Master's Degree.

Upon confirming that all requirements have been satisfied, a notice is sent to the student that they have graduated and that their transcript will reflect the issuance of a master's degree. Diplomas are issued reflecting graduation dates of December 31 or June 30, and sent to students shortly thereafter.

Graduates can request a transcript with their newly conferred degree by visiting the My NJCTL portal. Students should check their transcript carefully so that any discrepancies can be promptly corrected by the Dean of Students.

### **Completing a NJ Add-On Endorsement Program**

NJ teachers seeking the release of the paperwork required to apply for a NJ add-on endorsement are also required to provide evidence that they have successfully met all Praxis exam(s) score requirements. Upon completion of all required coursework with a GPA of 3.00 or better, and passing the relevant Praxis exam(s), teachers should request their VOPC paperwork and transcript using this [link](#). Once NJCTL has verified that all requirements have been met, NJCTL will create the teacher's nomination for the new add-on endorsement in NJEdCert. The teacher will get an email from NJEdCert prompting them to accept your nomination and pay the application fee.

### **Foreign Students**

NJCTL admits students from other countries. Since NJCTL offers asynchronous, online courses, no visas are required for students to enroll in our courses.

Courses are offered in English only. There is no requirement for a student to document their proficiency in English before enrolling in courses. Consistent with our withdrawal policy, if a student enrolls in a course and finds it too difficult to complete for any reason,

NJCTL will provide a full refund of tuition if the withdrawal occurs within the first two weeks after registering for the course.

### **Labs**

NJCTL uses PhET labs, along with open-source virtual labs from other providers, to create a virtual equivalent to most all our physical labs. We create lab assignments which include procedures which students use to collect data and answer questions using the virtual lab simulation.

When a virtual lab is not the best option, we use videos of physical labs being conducted and share the data. The lab assignment then asks the students to answer questions about the experiment based on the data.

### **Library Services**

The library fosters the success of the NJCTL community by:

- Developing and maintaining an information collection that supports the teaching, learning, and research needs of the NJCTL community
- Ensuring that patrons have access to information resources no matter their physical location
- And assisting patrons in finding, evaluating, and using information

### **Library Collection:**

NJCTL makes available for its graduate student's library resources commensurate with a new, small, specialized online college. Through credentialed staffing and focused resources, the institution provides library services appropriate for graduate students learning to teach K12 STEM subjects.

With respect to its collection, because NJCTL is a virtual campus accessible globally, it does not host a physical library collection. Instead, NJCTL is building and intends to maintain an electronic library collection. The core of NJCTL's collection comprises over 102,000 presentation slides and 7700 word documents created by NJCTL to support K12 mathematics, science and computer science instruction, including pacing guides, homework/classroom worksheets, classroom assessments, labs, and equation sheets. Also available are research articles, an extensive collection of video resources created by NJCTL and links to many online resources relevant to STEM teachers. These resources are part of the course materials used in the graduate courses.

Finally, to expand the library resources available to its students and faculty, NJCTL has recently hired a part-time librarian to oversee the development and maintenance of our electronic resources including acquiring additional library databases, finalize library

partnerships, set up inter-library loan, and work with faculty to identify other resources needed for courses. The librarian will also conduct a strategic plan to guide ongoing expansion of the library.

Information Literacy: NJCTL includes two modules on information literacy in our Teaching Methods Course, a course requirement for all candidates in the master's degree program.

### **Official Communications**

All faculty and students are required to have a current email address account which they check daily for important information and announcements from NJCTL. Instructors and students will be held responsible for information disseminated in this way.

### **Responsible Use of Electronic Communications**

It is a violation of federal law and NJCTL policy to share and/or distribute copyrighted materials without the permission of the copyright holder. Violators may be subject to civil and criminal prosecution under the provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), as well as personal sanctions specified in NJCTL policy.

### **Graduate Student Records**

NJCTL recognizes the importance of maintaining confidential records for each instructor and graduate student.

In order to protect the rights of graduate students regarding educational records, NJCTL has established policies and guidelines which describe what personal and non-personal information is collected and maintained, and policies for releasing information. NJCTL does not receive federal funding and is therefore not required to comply with the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended," (FERPA). However, NJCTL voluntarily complies with this regulation. Graduate students enrolled in NJCTL courses, anyone registering at the NJCTL website or downloading NJCTL course materials must agree to the NJCTL [Terms of Service](#).

Regarding transcripts and grades, NJCTL only discloses grades to graduate students, and only the graduate student can request a transcript. However, for graduate students in one of the NJ add-on endorsement programs, NJCTL will submit a transcript to the NJ Department of Education with the Verification of program completion form when the graduate student applies for an add-on endorsement. Secure files are kept in google drive and Dropbox only visible to senior staff.

### **Student Services**

NJCTL provides online graduate courses and programs only. Since there is no physical campus, NJCTL does not provide student services, career counseling, or other personal



services. Teachers enrolled in courses or a degree program are certified teachers who are currently employed.

The Director of Recruitment and Student Affairs works closely with teachers seeking admission to the program to assure that the course of study addresses the needs and goals of the student prior to admission. The director oversees the admission process, and once admitted, assists the teacher in enrolling in courses and the Moodle LMS platform.

A variety of other supports are available for graduate students including the following:

- admission counseling
- pacing guides
- support for students with disabilities
- protection from discrimination
- library services
- technology support
- and student loans

If a graduate student has difficulty in any course, they are encouraged to reach out to the faculty for additional help. Faculty respond to requests within 24 hours.

## **Transcripts**

Transcripts submitted to NJCTL must be at least at the bachelor's level and from an accredited institution. Transcripts must be sent directly from the institution from which they were awarded.

Transcripts from foreign institutions must be reviewed by a foreign credential/transcript agency and be equivalent to a bachelor's degree (at least a four-year program) or higher from an accredited institution. The transcript must show the semester-hour equivalent of each course and the cumulative grade point average. Students must request a two-part evaluation that includes a course-by-course listing, and a designation of whether each course is considered to be basic or advanced.

## **Voice of Educational Constituencies**

NJCTL is a collaborative organization with a relatively flat structure.

While ultimate responsibility is retained by the executive director, decisions are made through a process of discussion that is both horizontal and vertical in nature. The office of the executive director works with staff so that decisions are arrived at through collaboration.

Ongoing dialog and discussion occur among employees on any issue raised by anyone in the organization.

In addition, any employee or student is welcome to contact anyone within NJCTL to share their comments and concerns. There are no limits to discussion between any employees, including with the executive director.

All parties working with NJCTL (e.g., vendors, school districts, policy makers) are encouraged to take advantage of this same open process to contact anyone within NJCTL and know that their concerns will be shared within NJCTL.

### **Withdrawal/ Tuition Refunds**

NJCTL does not require students to pay an institutional fee to take graduate courses or to enroll in an institutional program. The only cost to students is the tuition for each course.

#### **Full Refund:**

Students withdrawing from a course will receive a full refund within the first two weeks of starting their course. Notice of withdrawal must be in writing and sent to the Dean of Students within two weeks of starting their course; refunds will be issued within 45 days.

#### **Partial Refund:**

Students withdrawing upon completion of up to two modules in their course, will receive a 50% refund. Notice of withdrawal must be in writing and sent to the Dean of Students upon completing the 2nd module; refunds will be issued within 45 days.

# Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 5, § 76215 - Student Tuition Recovery Fund Disclosures

(a) A qualifying institution shall include the following statement on both its enrollment agreement and school catalog:

"The State of California established the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) to relieve or mitigate economic loss suffered by a student in an educational program at a qualifying institution, who is or was a California resident while enrolled, or was enrolled in a residency program, if the student enrolled in the institution, prepaid tuition, and suffered an economic loss. Unless relieved of the obligation to do so, you must pay the state-imposed assessment for the STRF, or it must be paid on your behalf, if you are a student in an educational program, who is a California resident, or are enrolled in a residency program, and prepay all or part of your tuition.

You are not eligible for protection from the STRF and you are not required to pay the STRF assessment, if you are not a California resident, or are not enrolled in a residency program."

(b) In addition to the statement required under subdivision (a) of this section, a qualifying institution shall include the following statement in its school catalog:

"It is important that you keep copies of your enrollment agreement, financial aid documents, receipts, or any other information that documents the amount paid to the school. Questions regarding the STRF may be directed to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, 1747 North Market Blvd., Suite 225, Sacramento, California, 95834, (916) 574-8900 or (888) 370-7589.

To be eligible for STRF, you must be a California resident or enrolled in a residency program, prepaid tuition, paid or deemed to have paid the STRF assessment, and suffered an economic loss as a result of any of the following:

1. The institution, a location of the institution, or an educational program offered by the institution was closed or discontinued, and you did not choose to participate in a teach-out plan approved by the Bureau or did not complete a chosen teach-out plan approved by the Bureau.

2. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution within the 120 day period before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, or were enrolled in an educational program within the 120 day period before the program was discontinued.

3. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution more than 120 days before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, in an educational program offered by the institution as to which the Bureau determined there was a significant decline in the quality or value of the program more than 120 days before closure.

4. The institution has been ordered to pay a refund by the Bureau but has failed to do so.

5. The institution has failed to pay or reimburse loan proceeds under a federal student loan program as required by law, or has failed to pay or reimburse proceeds received by the institution in excess of tuition and other costs.

6. You have been awarded restitution, a refund, or other monetary award by an arbitrator or court, based on a violation of this chapter by an institution or representative of an institution, but have been unable to collect the award from the institution.

7. You sought legal counsel that resulted in the cancellation of one or more of your student loans and have an invoice for services rendered and evidence of the cancellation of the student loan or loans.

To qualify for STRF reimbursement, the application must be received within four (4) years from the date of the action or event that made the student eligible for recovery from STRF.

A student whose loan is revived by a loan holder or debt collector after a period of non collection may, at any time, file a written application for recovery from STRF for the debt that would have otherwise been eligible for recovery. If it has been more than four (4) years since the action or event that made the student eligible, the student must have filed a written application for recovery within the original four (4) year period, unless the period has been extended by another act of law.

However, no claim can be paid to any student without a social security number or a taxpayer identification number."