

NATEF E-Learning Q & A

Q - How does NATEF define e-learning in terms of program certification?

A - NATEF's definition of e-learning is: an electronically-based instructor-managed and student-driven process that enhances and/or supplements learning—outside the regularly scheduled classroom and lab/shop timeframe—and ***includes integrated and scored auditable assessment and reporting*** in compliance with NATEF's e-learning general framework criteria.

The definition is easier to understand when it is examined in smaller phrases. In other words, the instructor will determine the course content and each student will be responsible for learning the content. The course content must enhance and/or supplement the instruction delivered during regularly scheduled classroom and lab/shop instructional time. To meet NATEF's requirements, e-learning must take place outside of the classroom and lab/shop time (using a computer at home, public library, school computer lab, etc.). E-learning curricular materials must include tests to assess student knowledge and understanding of the content. E-learning instructional materials must incorporate an electronic Learning Management System (LMS) to track student progress and provide reports to the instructor.

Q – What is a Learning Management System (LMS)?

A – A LMS is an interactive electronic instructional delivery platform that also includes an administrative component to monitor and report student progress, time on task, and evaluations of all learning activities performed within the LMS.

Q – Can e-learning count toward meeting hour requirements for program certification in each content area?

A – Yes, as of July 2009, e-learning may be used in Automobile programs only. E-learning that is completed outside regularly scheduled program hours can count for up to 25 percent of the required hours in any of the automobile specialty program areas.

For example, up to 25 percent of the NATEF hour requirement in Brakes (26 of the 105 hours) could be delivered using e-learning instructional materials. This means that a minimum of 79 clock hours of actual class and lab/shop time must be included in the program's master schedule and up to 26 hours delivered using e-learning instructional materials outside of actual class and lab/shop time may be counted.

(NATEF anticipates that the General Service Technician (GST), Collision, and Truck programs will be added in the future.)

Q - Which tasks lend themselves to e-learning?

A – That’s a good question and one that requires careful consideration on the part of the instructor(s). Instructors may find that e-learning may be most appropriate for the introduction of theory and demonstration of how to perform a task, similar to an instructor demonstrating performance of a task to students. Using e-learning instructional materials, some tasks may be introduced outside of regularly scheduled classroom time followed by additional information and/or ‘hands-on’ component (application) within the classroom and lab/shop time. Providers of e-learning instructional materials must identify an average or approximate time that is required to complete a learning activity. That said, many instructors say that one of the benefits of e-learning is that students are able to review the information as many times as necessary to learn the material.

Please keep in mind that the sophistication of the software may dictate, to some degree, the tasks that can be taught via e-learning. Additionally, the program advisory committee may be a valuable resource in determining the content of the instruction that could be taught via e-learning.

Q – How do we calculate the average time to complete an e-learning activity?

A - Software providers should establish the average time required to complete a learning activity as part of their instructional materials package. This should be based on a study of the actual time representative students take to complete a learning activity. This study should be reviewed occasionally for accuracy. The software provider must maintain documentation that indicates when and how the study was initially conducted as well as when any subsequent reviews or adjustments were performed. NATEF reserves the right to review this documentation.

Q – What kind of documentation must a program provide to the on-site team to use e-learning activities for program certification?

A – NATEF, with the assistance of subject matter experts, has developed a separate Standard 11 specifically for programs that use e-learning to meet the hour requirements for program certification. Standard 11 includes six criteria that require a Yes or No response. Programs must be able to document that they can achieve a ‘YES’ response for all six criteria before a program can apply the hours for program certification purposes.

The six criteria are:

1. Is there documentation that students have access to appropriate technology for e-learning purposes? YES NO
2. Are the content/tasks and program hours that are to be delivered via e-learning clearly highlighted in the course of study? YES NO
3. Is there documentation that e-learning is incorporated into the content/tasks in the program plan? YES NO

4. Do the instructional hours to be credited toward meeting up to 25 percent of the program specialty hour requirements correlate with the software provider's average completion time for each instructional module? YES NO
5. Is there documentation of the implementation and use of e-learning instructional materials as evidenced in a learning management system? YES NO
6. Are Advisory Committee meeting minutes available to confirm that the committee has discussed and approved e-learning? YES NO

Q - If e-learning materials are used for the purpose of program certification, do all of the students have to participate?

A – Yes, e-learning is not a selective process, but must be available to all students enrolled in the program specialty area. Otherwise, some students may not have the opportunity to learn some of the course of study content in the tasks that are taught via e-learning.

Q - Can our school develop an e-learning system and how do we know if the e-learning process being used will be acceptable to the NATEF on-site evaluation team?

A – NATEF suggests that the criteria listed in Standard 11 be reviewed first. Have the program Advisory Committee discuss and endorse the e-learning process and record the Advisory Committee's endorsement in the meeting minutes. During the self-evaluation process, provide the documentation needed to answer the six Yes or No questions in Standard 11 – E-learning. If your program can provide the documentation to answer Yes to each of the six questions for e-learning activities that take place **outside of classroom and lab/shop time, up to 25% of the hours (not tasks)** required for certification may be applied in that area.

Q – We use e-learning curricular materials during classroom and lab/shop time, will that count for Standard 11?

A – No, time spent using e-learning curricular materials during classroom and lab/shop time may be counted as part of the regular program hours, but may not be applied to meet the requirements for Standard 11.