

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The University Core

Northwestern has a broadly based core curriculum that is central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' requirements for general education survey courses applicable to all students regardless of their major. The core encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. Its requirements are designed to improve students' writing and speaking, to expand students' aptitude in mathematics and its applications, to strengthen students' understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences, and to develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities.

The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree program, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for the following general education competencies:

- To demonstrate writing as a purpose-driven process of communication within specific contexts.
- To apply mathematical and analytical reasoning skills.
- To understand the universe through the study of life and physical sciences.
- To understand the diversity of human knowledge and experience across cultures as examined through the humanities.
- To demonstrate an understanding of human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies.
- To explore purposes and processes in the visual and performing arts and the ways in which fine arts conceive and express the human experience.

To accomplish this goal, students at Northwestern State University are required to take courses as defined below for baccalaureate and associate degrees. Together, these courses provide the breadth of their educational programs while the major requirements listed in subsequent sections of this catalog provide the depth of education.

Baccalaureate Degrees

The University core requires that each baccalaureate curriculum includes the following:

1. **English (6 hours):** English 1010, English 1020.
2. **Mathematics (6 hours):** (taken in pairs indicated and in sequence): Mathematics 1020 and 1060; 1020 and 1090; 1020 and 2010; 1035 and 1060; 1100 (6 hours); 1810 (6 hours); or 2100 and 2110 (10 hours).
3. **Natural Sciences (9 hours):**
 - **Physical:** 3 or 6 hours selected from Chemistry 1030, 1040, 1070; Physics 2030; or Science 1010, 2010.
 - **Biological:** 3 or 6 hours selected from Biology 1010, 2250, 2260; or Science 1020, 2020.
4. **Humanities (9 hours*):**
 - **Literature:** 3 hours selected from English 2070 or 2110.
 - **History:** 3 hours selected from History 1010, 1020, 2010, or 2020.
 - **Communication:** 3 hours selected from Business Administration 2200; Communication 1010, 2500; or Philosophy 1010.
5. **Social/Behavioral Sciences (6 hours):**
 - **Social Science:** 3 hours selected from Anthropology 1510, 2020; Economics 2000; Geography 1010, 1020; or Political Science 2010.
 - **Behavioral Science:** 3 hours selected from Educational Psychology 2020; Psychology 1010, 2050; and Sociology 1010.
6. **Fine Arts (3 hours):** Fine Arts 1040.

*The Bachelor of Applied Science in Allied Health requires completion of only 3 hours of humanities.

Associate (non-designated) Degrees

The University core requires that Associate (non-designated) degrees include the following:

1. **English (6 hours):** English 1010, English 1020.
2. **Mathematics (3 hours):** Mathematics 1020, 1035.
3. **Natural Sciences (6 hours):** In any combination of physical or biological science selected from Biology 1010, 1020, 2060, 2250, 2260; Chemistry 1030, 1040, 1070; Physics 2030; Science 1010, 2010; or Science 1020, 2020.
4. **Humanities (3 hours):** Selected from Communication 1010, 2500; English 2110; History 1010, 1020, 2010, 2020; and Philosophy 1010.
5. **Social/Behavioral Sciences (6 hours):**
 - **Social Science:** 3 hours selected from Anthropology 1510; Economics 2000; Geography 1010; or Political Science 2010.
 - **Behavioral Science:** 3 hours selected from Educational Psychology 2020; Psychology 1010, 2050; and Sociology 1010.
6. **Fine Arts (3 hours):** Fine Arts 1040.

Associate of Science Degrees

The University core requires that Associate of Science degrees include the following:

1. **English (6 hours):** English 1010, English 1020.
2. **Mathematics (6 hours):** Complete 6 hours of mathematics selected from the following paired courses Mathematics 1020 and 1060; 1020 and 1090; 1020 and 2010; 1035 and 1060; 1100 (6 hours); 1810 (6 hours); or 2100 and 2110 (10 hours).
3. **Natural Sciences (6 hours):**
 - **Physical:** 3 hours selected from Chemistry 1030, 1040, 1070; Physics 2030; Science 1010, 2010.
 - **Biological:** 3 hours selected from Biology 1010, 2060, 2250, 2260; or Science 1020, 2020.
4. **Humanities (3 hours):** Selected from Communication 1010, 2500; English 2070, 2110; History 1010, 1020, 2010, 2020; and Philosophy 1010.
5. **Social/Behavioral Sciences (3 hours):** selected from Anthropology 1510, 2020; Economics 2000; Political Science 2010; Geography 1010, 1020; Educational Psychology 2020; Psychology 1010, 2050; and Sociology 1010.
6. **Fine Arts (3 hours):** Fine Arts 1040.

Academic Assessment

To ensure quality in its academic program offerings and to comply with requirements of the Louisiana Board of Regents, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and various national accrediting associations, Northwestern administers a comprehensive program of academic assessment. This includes the administration of student learning outcomes to assess the effectiveness of general education and major fields of study in each academic degree and certificate program. **Students are required to participate in academic assessment**

activities.

Student Learning Outcomes are statements that specify what each student will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate when they have completed or participated in a degree program, course, project or activity. Northwestern's annual assessment process is focused on assessing the extent to which students achieve these outcomes, and through the analysis of the results, effect change to make improvements in student learning or program development. As part of the Northwestern's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model there is a series of ongoing and systematic institutional procedures and integrated practices reflected in the strategic, operational, and tactical decisions made by the President and his senior leaders, the college deans and unit directors, and degree program coordinators and faculty in the classroom. The Model encompasses strategic and operational planning, the allocation of resources, and the evaluation of student achievement, programs and services, and administrative and experiential learning activities. It includes the identification and measurement of outcomes across all objectives, including strategic focus areas, student learning and service outcomes, and the analysis of data and assessment results to inform decision making. These coordinated activities are intended to support and enhance the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of Northwestern State University by improving programs and services and increasing student success and institutional quality. Visit the NSU Institutional Effectiveness website and see *Assessment Cycle Reports* to review degree program assessment of student learning outcomes.

Assessment of Major Fields of Study

Each student completing a baccalaureate degree program at Northwestern takes an appropriate senior examination that assesses how well the program meets its objectives. Most examinations for major field assessment are normed on a large population of students completing degrees in that field.

Registration in a Degree Program

Each student entering NSU must register in a curriculum, and in order to graduate must complete satisfactorily the work required as described in the catalog in effect at the time of registration in that curriculum or the one in effect at the time degree requirements are completed.

A student who does not attend NSU for three consecutive (including summer) semesters or longer and who then returns to the University must complete the course work prescribed in the catalog which is in effect at the time of the return.

A student who transfers to another curriculum at NSU must complete the course work prescribed in the catalog in effect at the time the transfer is made.

After registering in a curriculum, a student is expected to complete the work required in that curriculum within seven years. A student who misses three consecutive semesters must enter under the catalog in effect at the time of their re-entry. Exceptions to this requirement may result from actions taken by authorities higher than the University, in certain cases involving teacher certification, and in special circumstances where the curriculum has substantially changed, and the change is approved by academic dean of said program.

Requirements for Majors

A major is that part of a degree program which consists of a

specified group of courses in a particular discipline(s) or field(s). The name of the major is usually consistent with the degree subject area. A major usually consists of 25 percent or more of total hours required in an undergraduate curriculum.

Requirements for Concentrations

A concentration is an alternative track of courses within a major, accounting for at least 30 percent of the major requirements. Concentrations can only be earned within each specified major.

Requirements for Minors

A minor is that part of a degree program which consists of a specified group of courses in a particular discipline(s) or field(s), consisting usually of 15 percent or more of the total hours required in an undergraduate curriculum.

Provisional Admission for Undergraduate Students to take Graduate Courses

Graduating seniors who have a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.2 on all undergraduate work attempted may be allowed to register for graduate credit if they meet the following criteria:

1. Their admission into the program is approved by their academic dean and the Dean of the Graduate School.
2. The students lack no more than 30 semester hours to complete baccalaureate degree requirements.
3. The students may earn no more than 12 graduate credit hours while completing baccalaureate requirements.
4. Courses taken for graduate credit cannot be used to satisfy undergraduate requirements.
5. Such students retain their undergraduate status until they are awarded the baccalaureate degree.
6. While in the concurrent program, students shall maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.0.
7. The student must complete a permit form to receive PRIOR approval from the Dean of the Graduate School. The permit form may be obtained in the University Registrar's Office or the Graduate School Office.
8. A recipient of a baccalaureate degree who continues enrollment to pursue a second baccalaureate degree cannot apply for graduate studies until the completion of the second baccalaureate degree.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Student Responsibility

Students are personally responsible for completing all requirements established for their degree by the University. It is the student's responsibility to be informed of these requirements. A student's advisor may not assume these responsibilities and may not substitute, waive, or exempt the student from any established requirement or academic standard. Changes in academic regulations enacted between catalog publications are published in the University newspaper and posted on bulletin boards. Students are responsible for knowing these changes.

It is the student's responsibility to make official application for graduation. Students must apply online for graduation by accessing NSUconnect through myNSU at <https://my.nsu.edu> according to the following published graduation deadlines: