

# New Student Testing and Course Selection

**NIU's new student testing program is designed to assist students in making a smooth transition from earlier studies to their studies at Northern.**

New students are urged to take required and/or optional exams as early as possible—preferably before they attend new student orientation. If testing early is not possible, students must plan to take required placement exams on the afternoon of their orientation program. This is necessary to ensure the availability of placement scores for their orientation advising session. **To review the current testing schedule and register for exams, go to [www.niu.edu/testing](http://www.niu.edu/testing)**

Please note that students planning to pursue programs of study in biological sciences, chemistry, clinical laboratory sciences, engineering and engineering technology, physics, pre-medicine, and pre-physical therapy are required to complete all necessary testing before their scheduled orientation date, or they may be asked to return for a second day to complete their orientation activities.

Students must (1) identify the required and/or optional exams they wish to take, (2) select the testing date that best fits their schedule, and (3) follow the directions for arranging to take the exams on the date selected.

## Placement Exams

Placement exams are required of select new students and must be taken prior to registration for first semester courses. These exams provide information to help students select courses that correspond to their levels of achievement. Normally, a placement exam may be taken only once.

### ■ Chemistry Placement

Students are **required** to take the Chemistry Placement Exam if they plan to enroll in CHEM 210, General Chemistry I, and CHEM 212, General Chemistry Laboratory I. (Students planning to enroll in CHEM 110, Chemistry, need not take this exam.) This exam may be taken only once. Areas of study requiring CHEM 210 and CHEM 212 include:

Biochemistry	Pre-Dentistry
Biological Sciences	Pre-Engineering
Chemistry	Pre-Medicine
Clinical Laboratory Sciences	Pre-Optometry
Electrical Engineering	Pre-Osteopathy
Geology	Pre-Pharmacy
Industrial Engineering	Pre-Physical Therapy
Mechanical Engineering	Pre-Podiatry
Physics	Pre-Veterinary Medicine
	Technology

The Chemistry Placement Exam is divided into three equal parts: general mathematics, general chemical knowledge, and specific chemical knowledge. Nonprogrammable calculators may be used for this exam.

### ■ Foreign Language Placement

Students are **required** to take a placement exam in French, German, or Spanish if they have had previous experience with the language and plan to continue their study of that language at the college level, or if they anticipate receiving CLEP Subject Exam credit. Students who anticipate receiving transfer credit for college-level study of a language

need not take a placement exam, and are to register for the course that follows the highest level course for which transfer credit has been granted.

The Foreign Language Placement Exams measure reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and in some cases, cultural knowledge.

Freshmen who plan to study a foreign language *other than* French, German, or Spanish should see the appropriate coordinator in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Transfer students planning to study a foreign language *other than* French, German, or Spanish are to register for the course that follows the highest level course for which transfer credit has been granted. Students for whom placement is not clear—for whatever the reason—are to contact the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures for assistance. Phone (815) 753-1501.

### ■ Mathematics Placement

Students are **required** to take this exam if they plan to enroll in any of the following courses: MATH 110, College Algebra; MATH 155, Trigonometry and Elementary Functions; MATH 206, Introductory Discrete Mathematics; MATH 210, Finite Mathematics; MATH 211, Calculus for Business and Social Science; or MATH 229, Calculus I. Transfer students who have completed the mathematics requirement for their NIU program of study need not take this exam.

Students have the option of taking a paper/pencil version of the Math Placement Exam on NIU's main campus OR taking the computer-based Math Accuplacer at an off-campus location. For a list of off-campus locations go to [www.niu.edu/testing](http://www.niu.edu/testing).

The following areas of study have programs that require at least one of these courses.

Accountancy	Mathematics
Biochemistry	Mechanical Engineering
Biological Sciences	Nursing
Business Administration	Operations Management
Chemistry	Physics
Clinical Laboratory Sciences	Political Science
Public Health	Pre-Dentistry
Computer Science	Pre-Engineering
Deafness Rehabilitation	Pre-Medicine
Dietetics, Nutrition, And Food Systems	Pre-Optometry
Economics	Pre-Osteopathy
Electrical Engineering	Pre-Pharmacy
Family And Child Studies	Pre-Physical Therapy
Finance	Pre-Podiatry
Geography	Pre-Veterinary Medicine
Geology	Psychology
Industrial Engineering	Sociology
Journalism	Speech-Language Pathology/Audiology
Management	Statistics
Marketing	Technology
	Textiles, Apparel, And Merchandising

This exam is also required for students in any program leading to the B.S. degree in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and for **any students who are undecided majors.**

The Mathematics Placement Exam deals mainly with the subject matter of high school algebra and trigonometry. The first part contains questions on such topics as solutions to equations and inequalities, functions and graphs in the plane, exponential and logarithmic functions, systems of equations, and polynomials. The second part of the exam has questions on the trigonometric functions and their graphs, solutions of triangles, trigonometric identities, and the addition formulas.

**Calculators may NOT be used for this exam.**

## Proficiency Exams

**Proficiency exams are optional.** They are a part of NIU's Credit by Examination program and provide students with the opportunity to acquire credit in selected areas of study for learning that occurred prior to attending NIU. The biology and chemistry exams described below may be taken prior to registration for first semester courses as well as at scheduled times after the semester begins. Information about proficiency exams for courses other than those identified in this publication may be obtained from the appropriate academic department office.

Proficiency credit will be entered on the academic record as soon as it is approved by the appropriate university official. However, no credit may be awarded prior to the drop deadline of the student's first term of enrollment at NIU.

Normally, a proficiency exam may be taken only once in a student's career at NIU.

### ■ BIOS 103-104 Proficiency

Students who are especially well prepared in biology are invited to take this exam. However, the BIOS 103-104 proficiency exam is not available for credit for students majoring in biological sciences.

Those passing this exam at the highest level are awarded 4 semester hours of credit in BIOS 104, General Biology. Those passing this exam at the second level are awarded 3 semester hours of credit in BIOS 103, General Biology.

The exam will include questions covering the following topics: basic chemistry, chemical components of living systems, the origin of life, cell structure, nutrition, respiration, photosynthesis, the genetic code and syntheses, control of life systems (molecular, cellular, and organismal levels), animal behavior, heredity (including human genetic disorders), reproduction (including mitosis, meiosis, and birth control), evolution, ecological principles, and characteristics of major groups of living organisms. Most textbooks designed for an introductory college biology course include the information covered by the exam.

### ■ CHEM 110 Proficiency

Students who are especially well prepared in chemistry are invited to take the CHEM 110 proficiency exam.

Three semester hours of credit in CHEM 110, Chemistry, are awarded to those who pass the exam.

The exam covers the material usually found in a one-year high school chemistry course or a one-semester survey course in chemistry at the college level. The topics covered include formulas, equations, stoichiometry, atomic structure, the periodic table, chemical

bonding, kinetic theory of gases, equilibria, acids and bases, redox reactions, and the chemistry of some common elements.

**Nonprogrammable calculators may be used for this exam.**

### ■ CHEM 210-211 Proficiency

Students who have taken and received credit for two years of high school chemistry (or equivalent) are invited to take the CHEM 210-211 proficiency exam.

Students passing the exam at the highest level are awarded 8 semester hours of credit as follows: CHEM 210, General Chemistry I, 3 semester hours; CHEM 212, General Chemistry Laboratory I, 1 semester hour; CHEM 211, General Chemistry II, 3 semester hours; and CHEM 213, General Chemistry Laboratory II, 1 semester hour. Those passing the exam at the second level are awarded 4 semester hours of credit as follows: CHEM 210, 3 semester hours, and CHEM 212, 1 semester hour.

The exam covers the first year of general college chemistry. Topics covered include atomic structure, chemical bonding, stoichiometry, kinetic theory, solutions, gases and ionic equilibria, acids and bases, thermodynamics, reaction rates, and some descriptive chemistry.

**Nonprogrammable calculators may be used for this exam.**

### ■ Other Opportunities for Credit by Examination

Credit may also be awarded through the Advanced Placement Program (AP), the College-level Examination Program (CLEP), and the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) Program. Additional information about NIU's policies regarding these programs, including a full listing of minimum scores required for credit, is available in the *Credit by Exam Brochure* online at [www.niu.edu/testing](http://www.niu.edu/testing).

## Qualifying Exams

Qualifying exams help determine whether students interested in accountancy or education have sufficient skill levels to progress in these areas of study. **These exams, required of select transfer students, must be taken according to the descriptions that follow.**

### ■ Accountancy Qualifying Exam

Any student admitted to NIU can declare the accountancy major; however, to enroll in any 300- or 400-level accountancy courses one of the following criteria options must be met. The criteria options are as follows:

#### Criteria Option #1:

- Meet the requirements to enroll in UBUS 310, Business Core Lecture; and
- Obtain a 3.20 cumulative GPA or higher (NIU plus transfer GPA based on a four-point scale); and
- Obtain a minimum grade of B in ACCY 206, Introductory Financial Accounting, and a minimum grade of B in ACCY 207, Introductory Cost Management, or equivalent courses. Students who meet Criteria Option #1 must formally request a review of their transcript by sending a completed Department of Accountancy Transcript Review Request Form to the Department of Accountancy. This form and can be obtained from the NIU Department of Accountancy (815-753-1637 or FAX 815-753-8515 or [www.cob.niu.edu/accy/bs\\_admission.asp](http://www.cob.niu.edu/accy/bs_admission.asp))  
Note: This form is separate from the NIU Admission form and the UBUS 310 College of Business Transcript Form.

#### Criteria Option #2:

- Meet the requirements to enroll in UBUS 310, Business Core Lecture (including a cumulative GPA of 2.75); and
- Obtain a passing score on the Accountancy Qualifying Exam (AQE) [www.cob.niu.edu/accy/bs\\_admission.asp](http://www.cob.niu.edu/accy/bs_admission.asp)

### ■ Teacher Education Academic Skills Assessment

All students planning to enroll in any NIU initial teacher certification program are required to take and pass the Illinois Certification Testing System (ICTS) Basic Skills Test.

The ICTS Basic Skills Test measures basic proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics.

**It is recommended that students entering NIU as freshmen not test until the completion of their freshman year.**

**Transfer students should test before their first semester of attendance at NIU.**

Information about ICTS registration, test dates, and cost of testing is explained in the *Illinois Certification Testing System Registration Bulletin*. This publication may be obtained by contacting the Illinois Certification Testing System at Phone (800) 239-8107 or on the Internet at [www.icts.nesinc.com](http://www.icts.nesinc.com).

## Core Competency Requirements

To receive a baccalaureate degree from NIU, students must satisfy core competency requirements in oral communication, English, and mathematics. These requirements may be met by successfully completing the designated courses, by transfer credit, by Advanced Placement (AP) credit, by CLEP Subject Exam credit, or by passing NIU core competency exams.

Although passing a competency exam fulfills the requirement for the core competency, it does not result in awarding NIU course credit (i.e., it reduces the required number of general education hours but does not reduce the number of hours required for a degree).

### ■ Oral Communication

The oral communication core competency requirement may be satisfied by passing COMS 100, by transfer credit, or by passing the Oral Communication Competency Exam. Students choosing to enroll in COMS 100 should register for the course as soon as space permits.

#### Oral Communication Competency Exam

The Oral Communication Competency Exam is an **optional** two-part exam that tests competency in college level listening and speaking skills. Part one is a listening skills test on videotape. Students view and listen to a variety of communication exchanges and are asked questions about those exchanges. Students who demonstrate college level competence in listening and pass part one are then required to prepare and present a 6-8 minute extemporaneous persuasive speech as part two. Topics will be provided and students will be evaluated by experienced faculty who regularly teach COMS 100. The Oral Communication Competency Exam will be offered during the fall and spring semesters.

To register for this exam, a student must be attending NIU. A student cannot concurrently be enrolled in COMS 100 and register for or take the Oral Communication Competency Exam. This exam may be taken only once. **A student is advised to take this exam at least one year before graduating from NIU.**

Students with exceptional listening and speaking skills who wish to attempt the exam are directed to contact the Department of Communication early in their first semester at NIU.

Phone (815) 753-6999 or go online to <http://www.comm.niu.edu/index.php?id=57> for complete information or application.

### ■ English

The English core competency requirement may be satisfied by passing ENGL 103-104 or ENGL 105, if recommended for placement into ENGL 105; by transfer credit; by Advanced Placement (AP) credit; or passing the English Core Competency II Exam.

Students planning to meet this core competency requirement by completing the ENGL 103-104 sequence are to register for ENGL 103.

#### English Core Competency Exam

The English Core Competency Exam is an **optional** two-part exam, and must be taken before college-level course work. Transfer students may take the exam before they begin at NIU only if they have no previous course work in composition at the college level. ECCI consists of a one-hour writing exercise resulting in (1) placement into ENGL 103, the first course in NIU's ENGL 103-104 sequence; or (2) placement into ENGL 105, a one-semester advanced composition course that satisfies the English core competency requirement; or (3) an invitation to take ECCII, a comprehensive reading/writing exercise, to determine if students already have the skills to meet the entire English core competency requirement.

New freshmen whose ACT composite score is 22 or above or whose ACT English score is 22 or above are encouraged to take this exam, as are students whose SAT I verbal score is 500 or above. Students who have excelled in writing in high school also are encouraged to test.

New freshmen with ACT Combined English-Writing subscores of 30 or higher will be immediately placed into ENGL 105.

**Students planning to take the English Core Competency I Exam should not register for ENGL 103, 104, or 105 until their ECCI results are available.**

### ■ Mathematics

The mathematics core competency requirement may be satisfied by obtaining a C or better in Math 229, Calculus I; MATH 211, Calculus for Business and Social Science; MATH 210, Finite Mathematics; MATH 206, Introductory Discrete Mathematics; or MATH 155, Trigonometry and Elementary Functions; by passing Math 101, Core Competency in Mathematics; by transfer credit; by Advanced Placement (AP) credit; by CLEP Subject Exam credit; or by passing the Mathematics Core Competency Exam. A student with credit in STAT 208, Basic Statistics, has additional options for meeting the mathematics core competency requirement. More details may be obtained from the student's major college adviser.

For students planning to meet this requirement by completing a course in mathematical sciences, there are eight beginning courses available.

The proper course for a student to choose depends on the choice of major and/or minor and on ability, background, and academic interests. An academic adviser from the student's major department should be consulted if the correct choice of a beginning course is not apparent.

Students whose intended programs require MATH 229, MATH 211, MATH 210, MATH 206, or MATH 155, are required to take the Mathematics Placement Exam to determine the level at which they should begin their mathematics courses. This exam might indicate that it is necessary to take course work at a level lower than the required course. Students have the option of taking a paper/pencil version of the Math Placement Exam on NIU's main campus OR taking a computer-based Math Accuplacer at an off-campus location. For a list of off-campus locations go to [www.niu.edu/testing](http://www.niu.edu/testing).

Students planning to major in early childhood studies, elementary education, or special education will need MATH 201, Foundations of Elementary School Mathematics. Enrollment in MATH 201 at NIU is restricted to students in these majors. A grade of C or better fulfills the mathematics core competency requirement.

Students whose programs of study do not require one of the mathematics courses listed above still must meet the core competency requirement in mathematics.

#### Mathematics Core Competency Exam

This exam is **optional**. Contact Testing Services for additional information.

**Students with disabilities can request special arrangements for testing by contacting the Center for Access-Ability Resources at (815) 753-1303 (voice), (815) 753-3000 (TTY).**

#### Testing Services

Adams Hall 128  
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DeKalb, IL 60115  
Office (815) 753-1203  
FAX (815) 753-3701  
E-mail [testing@niu.edu](mailto:testing@niu.edu)  
Internet [www.niu.edu/testing](http://www.niu.edu/testing)  
OTS: 3-16-09

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