EngagePLUS

Policies and Procedures

Overview

EngagePLUS provides students with the opportunity to apply for transcript notations and to satisfy graduation requirements using their co-curricular learning experiences. Through EngagePLUS, students can access applications that result in the following:

- Official transcript notations awarded for completion of a co-curricular learning experience in one of the six EngagePLUS categories
- Official transcript notation awarded for completion of a Professional Development program
- Satisfaction of the Human Diversity Requirement (non-course option)

EngagePLUS Transcript Notations

Categories & Criteria

EngagePLUS transcript notations are available in six possible categories. See below for the criteria associated with each of the six categories.

Artistry

Artistry experiences are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 80 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive artistry experience under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
2. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of artistry and involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" activities or problems.
3. Student focused on art as process or product.
4. Experience led to the creation of a new work and/or the development of personal voice, pedagogy, or technical mastery in the arts.
5. Experience included critical reflection that challenged students to connect their co-curricular and curricular experiences and deepen their understanding of their own learning.

Career Related Work Experience

Career Related Work Experience internships are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 120 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive internship under the supervision of an appropriate supervisor.
2. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the subject matter and involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" activities or problems.
3. Student developed and made use of professional skills and strategies.

Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning experiences are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 80 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive pre-professional experience, such as field or clinical work, co-op, instruction, or other practical learning experience under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
2. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the subject matter and involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" activities or problems.
3. Experience led to increased professional preparation including the development of skills in problem-solving and decision-making.
4. Experience included critical reflection that challenged students to connect their co-curricular and curricular experiences and deepen their understanding of their own learning.

Leadership

Leadership experiences are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 80 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive leadership experience under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
2. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of effective leadership and involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" activities or problems.
3. Student was directly involved with high-level decision making and skill development.
4. Student demonstrated ability to involve followers, create a shared vision, articulate shared goals and how these goals have been achieved, and/or reflect on personal and professional growth of both self and others.
5. Experience included critical reflection that challenged students to connect their co-curricular and curricular experiences and deepen their understanding of their own learning.

Service-Learning

Service-Learning experiences are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 80 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive service-learning experience under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
2. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the community they served and its needs and involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" activities or problems.
3. Experience included critical reflection that challenged students to connect their co-curricular and curricular experiences and deepen their understanding of their own learning.

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate Research experiences are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 80 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive research project under the close guidance of a qualified faculty mentor.
2. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the subject matter and of best practices in academic research and involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" activities or problems.
3. Experience led to the creation of new knowledge and/or the expansion of current knowledge.
4. Experience included critical reflection that challenged students to connect their co-curricular and curricular experiences and deepen their understanding of their own learning.

Pre-Approved Programs

The EngagePLUS Advisory Board has approved select programs to be designated as Pre-Approved. Pre-Approved programs have demonstrated they satisfy the necessary criteria for their categories and are listed on the EngagePLUS website. These programs are also selectable in the EngagePLUS application system. Students who are involved in programs that have not been Pre-Approved are still encouraged to apply, but will have to provide more detailed information about the experience.

Awards

There are two awards available to students who earn EngagePLUS transcript notations in multiple categories. Students who earn notations in two categories will receive the EngageSILVER Scholar award and those who earn notations in four categories will receive the EngageGOLD Scholar award. The EngageGOLD Scholar award will appear in the awards section of the official transcript.

Professional Development Transcript Notation

Criteria

Professional Development notations are available to students who have completed an extensive and immersive professional development program, series or experience that has been Pre-Approved by the EngagePLUS Advisory Board. Professional Development experiences are eligible for transcript notations provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed an extensive and immersive professional development program, series, or experience that entailed a minimum of 35 hours or equivalent of active engagement.
2. Experience was sponsored by or affiliated with NIU and overseen by NIU faculty or staff.
3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of subject matter that is relevant to a particular field or broadly applicable to general career success.
4. Experience required students to produce artifacts or evidence of learning, such as a portfolio, project, paper, or presentation.
5. Experience included instruction and/or practice that prepared students to clearly communicate the meaning and implications of their experiences and accomplishments as indicated by transcript notations, certificates, badges, etc.

Pre-Approved Programs

The EngagePLUS Advisory Board has approved select programs to be designated as Pre-Approved. Pre-Approved programs have demonstrated they satisfy the necessary criteria for this notation and are listed on the EngagePLUS website. These programs are also selectable in the EngagePLUS application system. Professional development programs that have not been Pre-Approved are ineligible for transcript notations.

Human Diversity Requirement

Criteria

The Human Diversity Requirement can be satisfied through completion of qualifying co-curricular learning experiences provided they do not result in academic credit and they meet the following criteria:

1. Student completed a minimum of 48 hours of work. This corresponds to 33% of a 16-week course – 16 contact hours and 32 hours of work outside of class.
2. Student worked under the close guidance of a qualified faculty mentor or staff supervisor.

3. Experience focused on one or more of the following social categories: gender, ability, race/ethnicity, citizenship, wealth/material resources, religion, age, or sexual orientation.
4. Experience involved an analysis of power and addressed people's differing access to resources/opportunities.

Qualifying Human Diversity experiences must also meet NIU's Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcome on intercultural competency:

- Exhibit intercultural competencies with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives

Application Processes

Students complete all the necessary application forms in the EngagePLUS system and all processing is conducted online.

EngagePLUS & Professional Development Applications

Process

EngagePLUS and Professional Development applications require two main components: a Proposal that is submitted before or during the experience and a Summary that is submitted upon completion of the experience. The application processes for both types of transcript notations follow the same basic steps:

Before or during the experience…

Step 1.   Student logs into EngagePLUS.

Step 2.   Student creates a new application, answers the questions in the Proposal forms, and submits the Proposal.

Step 3.   Approver reviews student's Proposal, then approves or denies.

Step 4.   Student receives email with decision information.

Upon completion of the experience…

Step 5.   Student logs back into EngagePLUS.

Step 6.   Student continues application, answers the questions in the Summary forms, and submits the Summary.

Step 7.   Approver reviews student's Summary, then approves or denies.

Step 8.   Student receives email with decision information.

Deadlines

Proposals are accepted any time prior to the end of the experience. Summaries are due four weeks after the end of the academic term in which the experience has been completed. For example, if an experience ends in March, the deadline for the Summary is four weeks after the end of the spring semester.

Graduating students must submit the Summary two weeks prior to graduation, as changes to the transcript are not permitted once the student has graduated.

Approvers

The approver for both EngagePLUS and Professional Development applications depends upon the type of application. In most cases, the approver will be whoever the student identifies as the mentor or site supervisor in the Proposal. For EngagePLUS applications submitted in the Career Related Work Experience category, the approver will be Career Services staff.

Milestones

Upon approval of the Proposal, a milestone will appear in the student's degree audit report as in-progress. When the Summary has been approved, the milestone will appear as complete in the student's degree audit report and the notation will appear on the student's official transcript.

Appeals

If a student's Proposal is denied, the student may submit a new Proposal with the revisions necessary to qualify for the desired notation.

If a student's Summary (and, therefore, application) is denied, the student has a right to petition if the student believes that the denial was given as a result of (1) circumstances not related to the student's performance of duties or (2) lack of clarity of denial justification.

To appeal a denied Summary, the student must complete an online petition form within 10 business days of the date of the denial notification. Once the petition is received, it will be reviewed by the EngagePLUS Advisory Board. During this time, the student may be asked to meet with the board in person if further information is needed. The committee will meet once per semester. A resolution will be made no later than 10 business days after the review of the petition unless additional information is required. Visit the EngagePLUS website to access the online petition form.

Human Diversity Application

Process

Human Diversity applications require two main components: a Proposal that is submitted before the start of the academic term in which the experience will begin and a Reflection that is submitted upon completion of the experience. The application process follows these basic steps:

Before the start of the academic term…

Step 1.   Student logs into EngagePLUS.

Step 2.   Student creates a new application, answers the questions in the Proposal forms, and submits the Proposal.

Step 3.   Approvers review student's Proposal, then approve or deny.

Step 4.   Student receives email with decision information.

Upon completion of the experience…

Step 5.   Student logs back into EngagePLUS.

Step 6.   Student continues application, answers the questions in the Reflection forms, and submits the Reflection.

Step 7.   Approvers review student's Reflection, then approve or deny.

Step 8.   Student receives email with decision information.

Deadlines

Proposals are due before the start of the academic term in which the experience will begin. For example, if an experience will begin in October, the deadline for the Proposal is before the start of the fall semester. Reflections are due four weeks after the end of the academic term in which the experience has been completed. For example, if an experience ends in March, the deadline for the Reflection is four weeks after the end of the spring semester.

Graduating students must submit the Reflection two weeks prior to graduation, as changes to the transcript are not permitted once the student has graduated.

Approvers

There are two approvers for Human Diversity applications: (1) whoever the student identifies as the mentor or site supervisor in the Proposal and (2) either the Committee for Multicultural Curriculum Transformation (CMCT) or, for college-sponsored activities, the appropriate College Equity Team. For the Proposal or Reflection to be approved, both approvers must approve. If one approver denies, then the application will not continue.

Reflection

The Reflection asks students to write a short polished essay of a minimum of 500 words in which they discuss their growth throughout the learning experience. Students and approvers may look to the Reflection Rubric for guidance on the qualities of a successful reflection.

Appeals

Human Diversity application appeals should be directed to the Committee for Multicultural Curriculum Transformation (CMCT) at equity@niu.edu.