

BACCALAUREATE COUNCIL (BC)
Third Meeting/2020-21 Academic Year
November 12, 2020

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NIU UHP: Proposed Catalogue Change for “Honors Transfer Credit”

Approved by Honors Committee 10/2/2020

Undergraduate Catalogue Proposed Change

Honors Transfer Credit

~~Those students who have previously completed Honors course work may have these courses counted as curricular credit toward the completion of Full University Honors.~~ **Students who have previously completed Honors course work or completed co-curricular experiences may have these counted for up to half the points necessary to complete the program. Students may transfer a combination of courses and co-curricular experiences equaling or less than three (3) points for Associate University Honors, and may transfer a combination of courses and co-curricular experiences equaling six (6) points or less for Full University Honors.** For such credit to be applied the following conditions must be met:

The Honors course work must have been completed in an established Honors Program that is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council or Honors Council of the Illinois Region, **or must be part of an Honors program vetted by the NIU UHP.**

The Honors course work must be accepted by NIU toward the student’s major(s), minor(s), or general education requirements, or as electives.

A grade of B- or better must have been earned in the Honors course work offered for honors transfer credit.

Co-curricular activities must meet the standards of Honors Engaged as determined by the NIU UHP.

The Honors seminar requirement (for Associate University Honors and Full University Honors) and the capstone requirement (for Full University Honors) must be fulfilled at NIU.

It is the student’s responsibility to provide documentation of Honors course work **and co-curricular activities** to the NIU UHP for evaluation and verification. ~~Transfer credit is not accepted for co-curricular experiences students have completed in the past, nor may students apply curricular transfer credit towards the partial or complete fulfillment of Associate University Honors requirements. However, curricular credit does transfer towards this distinct portion of Full University Honors requirements.~~

Rationale for Catalog Changes

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The core of our proposal is as follows:

- (1) To allow those pursuing Associate University Honors (AUH) to count a maximum of three points toward program completion. Currently, unlike those pursuing Full University Honors (FUH), they are not allowed to transfer any honors credits.
- (2) To specify the number of points allowed to count for transfer students pursuing FUH. Current catalog language does not impose a maximum on Honors courses that can be transferred for FUH, nor does it stipulate that capstones and Honors seminars should be completed at NIU.
- (3) To allow co-curricular activities to count towards NIU UHP points. Currently, it is not possible to transfer credit for co-curricular points.

Taking each in turn, please view key aspects of the rationale:

- (1) *To allow those pursuing Associate University Honors (AUH) to count a maximum of three points towards program completion.*
 - a. There is no reason to discriminate against those transfer students who wish to complete AUH by not transferring any of their legitimate Honors courses from vetted community college honors programs.
 - b. With this proposal, we have structured the transfer allowances in such a way that these students would still have to complete half of their Honors work in the NIU UHP, including the crucial Honors seminar requirement. The courses transferred would have to meet exactly the same stipulations as those counted towards Full University Honors (FUH).
 - c. It is very likely that AUH will be the preferred route for incoming transfer students, which means that we need to make that program attractive to this community. Very few transfer students have graduated with University Honors (which is replaced by FUH). Only 23 students that transferred to NIU and joined honors have completed the old University Honors designation in the last four years; that's fewer than 6 per academic year.
- (2) *To specify the number of points allowed to count for program for transfer students pursuing FUH.* Allowing students to count up to half their curriculum for either program (3 points for AUH and 6 points for FUH) provides clear guidelines for the process, gives credit for work done before NIU, while also ensuring that students do a substantial amount of the honors work at NIU, including seminars and capstone.
- (3) *Allowing co-curricular activities to count towards NIU UHP points.*
 - a. With current catalog language no co-curricular credit can be earned by transfer students coming into the NIU UHP. We believe that the most significant reason for this is that the co-curricular component of the UHP was aligned to Engaged PLUS, which does not recognize any experiences not completed at NIU and without an NIU mentor. Now that Honors Engaged is a separate entity from Engaged PLUS, and it does not require students to complete an activity at NIU for it to count (for instance, an internship in Washington under the auspices of an international organization), there is no structural or philosophic reason not to admit an activity that would qualify according to Honors Engaged standards.
 - b. Additionally, it is unrealistic for transfer students to complete all their co-curricular points in two years or less, especially the FUH. Consider an incoming transfer student

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who completed a community college honors program and can transfer in a number of courses; this person would still have to complete 3 experiences at NIU in two years, in addition to a seminar, capstone, all major requirements.

- c. If they have already completed a meaningful experience during their college years that can be verified, it seems punitive not to count it. According to this new language, transfer students who want to complete AUH can transfer up to 3 Honors points overall, in whatever combination of Honors courses and suitable co-curricular experiences they choose. Same goes for FUH, but up to 6 points overall.

In addition to the above, we want to say more generally that it behooves us to support transfer students when we accept them into the NIU UHP and set them up to succeed. The transfer population is often non-traditional, diverse, and with many responsibilities and pressures outside of their student life. They are also much more often than our freshmen a commuter population that does not find it as easy to take on co- and extra-curricular projects. We have consistently heard this in program satisfaction surveys. We also want to improve our relationships with community colleges to attract students to NIU; showing them that their prior experiences count, when they meet our criteria, can really help.

Transfer students make up a significant part of the Honors population. Currently, they are 26% of our 1034 students. They make up 105 of our 287 incoming class of fall 2020 or 37%. Their graduation rates are often below their overall representation in the program. For instance, in fall 2019 students that came in through the transfer process made up 17% of honors students who graduated with one of the honors levels of distinction, while in spring 2020, they made up only 9% of honors students who successfully completed one of the honors programs to earn an honors transcript notation. This is not due to the changes in the catalog, as these students were graduating under the old “classic” system rather than the new co-curricular system; however, with not counting any transfer credits for co-curricular experiences, this honors graduation deficit for transfer students will likely grow.

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Foundational Studies Quantitative Literacy Requirement (0-6)

This requirement can be satisfied by:

- passing MATH 101 or equivalent course (including Illinois Articulation Initiative Foundational Studies Quantitative Literacy courses that do not have a direct NIU course equivalent), or
- obtaining a C or better in MATH 155, MATH 201, MATH 206, MATH 210, MATH 211, or MATH 229, or an equivalent course, or
- obtaining credit for one of the mathematics courses listed above, except MATH 101, through credit by examination (Advanced Placement), or

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- obtaining a grade of C or better in STAT 100, STAT 300, or ISYE 335; and obtaining
 - a grade of C or better in MATH 110, or
 - an ACT mathematics score of at least 24, or
 - an SAT mathematics score of at least 560, or
 - an A- or B-level placement on the mathematics placement examination
- obtaining equivalent transfer credit, or
- passing the Mathematics Competency Examination.

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Readmission of Former NIU Students

Students who have previously enrolled in the university but whose attendance has been interrupted by more than one year must file an application for readmission with the Office of Admissions. Reentering students who left NIU on academic probation must make an appointment with the appropriate college advising office prior to being cleared to register for classes. Reentering students who left NIU on academic probation who have no college affiliation must make their appointment with the Academic Advising Center prior to being cleared to register for classes.

Academic Recovery

Students who apply for readmission after an absence of two ten years or longer may request consideration for the benefits of a returning student special readmission policy. Such a request will be referred by the Office of Admissions to the college advising office of the intended major for appropriate college and departmental review. Students who apply for readmission after an absence of two years (four fall/spring semesters excluding summer terms) or longer are eligible for the academic recovery policy. Students reinstated or readmitted on academic probation under the provisions of this policy, establish a new GPA which only includes course work attempted after the reentry date. Students who left NIU in good standing after an absence of two years (four fall/spring semesters excluding summer terms) or longer may submit a written request through their academic advisor to apply the academic recovery policy upon reenrollment. All other current university regulations apply, and additional stipulations may be made by the major department including limited admission and limited retention may apply. Recalculation of GPA under the academic recovery policy does not alter financial aid eligibility (satisfactory academic progress) resulting from the original GPA. All previously earned hours of NIU course work will be counted toward graduation requirements. Students who reenter under this policy having previously been dismissed or on academic probation will be candidates for academic dismissal if they do not establish a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the conclusion of the semester the academic recovery policy is applied. Students who reenter through academic recovery cannot graduate without earning credit for at least one course in their major department to establish a major GPA at or above 2.00. Recalculation of GPA under the academic recovery policy may be applied only one-time in a student's

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undergraduate academic career. All reentering students applying the academic recovery policy must meet with an academic advisor in their major college or the Academic Advising Center where they will develop a success plan.

Direct Reentrance

Students who were in good academic standing or on academic probation when they left the university and who have not attended another college or university since leaving must complete and return an application for readmission to the Office of Admissions. Students on academic probation when they left NIU will return on academic probation.

Reentrance with Additional Credit

Students who were in good academic standing or on academic probation when they left the university and who have since taken course work at another educational institution must complete and return an application for readmission to the Office of Admissions. They must also supply the Office of Admissions with an official transcript from each college or university attended since last attending NIU. To be eligible for reentrance, such students must have at least an overall C average (as computed by NIU standards) in all work taken at all other institutions, and must be in good academic standing at the last school attended. Students on academic probation when they left NIU will return on academic probation.

Reentrance of Illinois-Public Community College Graduates

A former student who left NIU in good standing, has been away from NIU for at least a fall or spring semester, and reenters with the baccalaureate-oriented associate degree or approved A.A.T. degree from an Illinois a public community college earned after leaving NIU will be granted the same academic benefits as Illinois public community college graduates new to NIU, if the student left NIU with fewer than 60 total semester hours of credit and has completed no more than 80 total semester hours (including all transfer course work and all NIU course work except courses not counting toward graduation) at the time of reentry.

In addition to receiving the benefits listed under the section headed “Illinois-Public Community College Graduates,” such a student reentering NIU will be eligible for the academic recovery policy. Students reinstated or readmitted on academic probation under the provisions of this policy, establish a new GPA only including course work attempted after the reentry date. Students who left NIU in good standing may submit a written request through their academic advisor to apply the academic recovery policy upon reenrollment also begin a new NIU grade point average. A student not wishing to have the benefits granted to Illinois public community college graduates, which include a new GPA, must inform the Office of Admissions of this at the time of reentry.

~~Former students who were enrolled as visiting or nondegree students are subject to the restrictions pertaining to those categories and are not assured of the academic benefits granted to Illinois public community college graduates.~~

~~A former NIU student who was academically dismissed or left NIU on academic probation and who has since graduated from an Illinois a public community college with a baccalaureate-oriented associate~~

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degree or approved A.A.T. degree will be granted the same academic benefits as a community college graduate new to NIU if the following conditions are satisfied:

~~The student had completed fewer than 60 semester hours prior to leaving NIU on academic probation or dismissal.~~

~~The student has completed no more than 80 total semester hours (including all transfer course work and all NIU course work except courses not counting toward graduation) at the time of reentry.~~

~~The student has been away from NIU for at least a fall or spring semester.~~

~~The student was not enrolled as a nondegree or visiting student. A former NIU student who was enrolled as a nondegree or visiting student is subject to restrictions pertaining to those categories and is not assured the benefits granted to Illinois public community college graduates.~~

A student who reenters under these conditions will return to NIU on final **academic recovery** probation. Recalculation of GPA under the academic recovery policy may be applied only one-time in a student's undergraduate academic career. Recalculation of GPA under the academic recovery policy does not alter financial aid eligibility (satisfactory academic progress) resulting from the original GPA. Students who reenter under this policy having previously been dismissed or on academic probation will be candidates for academic dismissal if they do not establish a 2.00 cumulative GPA at the conclusion of the semester the academic recover policy is applied. All reentering students applying the academic recovery policy must meet with an academic advisor in their major college or the Academic Advising Center where they will develop a success plan.

~~Reentrance of Out-of-State Public Community College Graduates~~

~~The same provisions as noted for the “Reentrance of Illinois Public Community College Graduates” will apply to out-of-state, public, community college graduates with a baccalaureate-oriented Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) degree.~~

Reinstatement

Students who have been academically dismissed from the university must provide a written petition for reinstatement which describes the expenditure of their time since leaving the university and outlines reasons for believing that their previous record will be improved if they are reinstated. Such students are not eligible for reinstatement until after they have been away for at least one fall or spring semester. Students reinstated after being dismissed for poor scholarship are reinstated on final academic probation and must establish a cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 for all hours taken at this university by the end of the semester or summer session of reinstatement.

Each reinstatement case will be considered by a committee in the student's major college; in no case may it be assumed that after an absence of one semester any student is automatically entitled to reinstatement.

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Applications for reinstatement (including an application for readmission, the written petition described above, and transcripts of all course work completed since leaving NIU) must be received in the Office of Admissions by the following dates. In addition, any encumbrances the student has on his or her record (placed by such offices as the bursar, admissions, and health services) must be cleared by the reinstatement deadline.

Term	Application complete by
Spring	December 1, 2020
Summer	May 15, 2021
Fall	August 1, 2021

Rationale:

Advising directors and curricular deans set out to address two questions

1. With regard to our “ten-year forgiveness” policy, is ten years too long?
2. Is our policy that affords a GPA reset to students returning with an AA/AS degree only if they leave NIU with fewer than 60 hours fair?

With regard to question #1:

Advising directors and deans see examples of students who applied for reinstatement between two and seven years with significant grade point deficits who we were compelled to help based on their letters/transcripts etc.. We had to either tell them to pursue their education elsewhere, wait several more years for GPA forgiveness or ask for an exception to the forgiveness policy from the Vice Provost. Jerry Montag researched similar policies within the state and found that NIU was clearly the outlier with ten years being the longest and one year the shortest duration for such policies.

With regard to question #2:

Our policy stating that a student must leave NIU with fewer than 60 hours in order to receive the GPA reset benefits does create some problematic situations. Consider these examples:

Student A leaves NIU with 59 hours and a GPA below 2.00 after failing all of their classes in their last semester. They earn their AA/AS degree and are readmitted with a new GPA under current policy.

Student B leaves NIU with 62 hours and a GPA below 2.00 (potentially higher than Student A’s GPA) after failing all but one of their classes in their last semester. Because they left NIU with >59 hours, they are not eligible for the new GPA as Student A was.

Effectively, our current policy is telling Student B that they did not do poorly enough to warrant the benefits of the GPA reset.

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Therefore, we recommend reducing the ten-year forgiveness policy to two years and eliminating the 60/80 provisions associated with returning after earning an AA/AS degree. We recommend that a GPA reset under this academic recovery policy be allowed only once in a student's academic career. Therefore, students who return after leaving in good standing must opt-in after careful consideration with their academic advisor. A student who leaves NIU in good standing might benefit from such a policy in certain cases. For example, if courses they failed are no longer offered and therefore cannot be repeated for grade replacement where the student's overall GPA is above 2.00, but their major GPA may be below 2.00.

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Proposal: Deletion of course withdraw limits from NIU Undergraduate catalog.

A review of the course withdraw limit policy was discussed during the October 6th Advising Deans/Director meeting. Discussion examined level of enforcement, purpose, impact on student's financial aid. It was discovered:

- NIU Policy is not in alignment with financial aid policy
- Various Colleges do not enforce limits of withdraws with students
- Ambiguous purpose of policy

Further discussion indicated check points (impact on completion of degree, financial aid, co-requisites, ect) are in place when students request a course withdraw are discussed with academic advisors.

The following recommendations are being made to the Undergraduate Catalog:

Semester Withdrawal

Semester withdrawal refers to the process of un-enrolling from all courses for the semester in question, regardless of when it occurs in the semester. For 16-week courses, students may process a semester withdrawal to their schedules during the first week of the semester through MyNIU. During week 2 a semester withdrawal request is processed by the student's college advising office or the Academic Advising Center if the student has no college affiliation. The course(s) will be removed from the student's academic record. Between week 3 to day 5 of week 10 a semester withdrawal is processed by the student's college advising office or the Academic Advising Center if the student has no college affiliation. **A "W" will permanently appear on the student's academic record for all courses from which the student has withdrawn.**

A semester withdrawal requested beginning in week 11 will be granted only in exceptional cases for circumstances **beyond the student's control** (medical reasons, military reasons, or hardship). If the semester withdrawal is granted by the college office, or Academic Advising

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Center if the student has no college affiliation, a “W” will permanently appear on the student’s academic record for all courses from which the student has withdrawn. Students seeking a semester withdrawal for exceptional reasons must initiate and complete the withdrawal process during the semester of enrollment in the course(s). Additional information regarding semester withdrawal for exceptional reasons can be found at www.niu.edu/academicaffairs/withdrawals.

~~Students are limited in the number of semester hours from which they can withdraw. Students with fewer than 7 transfer hours are allowed to withdraw from a total of 17 semester hours during the pursuit of the baccalaureate degree.~~

~~The maximum number of hours from which a transfer student may withdraw during pursuit of a baccalaureate degree at NIU is determined by the number of hours of transfer credit accepted at the time of enrollment at NIU plus all hours earned at NIU prior to enrollment, as indicated in the following table.~~

~~***Transfer Plus Maximum
Pre-enrollment Withdrawal
NIU Hours Hours***~~

1-6	17
7-15	15
16-30	12
31-45	9
46 or more	6

~~Students who cease to attend any course in which they are enrolled without officially withdrawing will receive an F for that course.~~

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Academic Regulations [LINK](#) **Undergraduate Online Catalog**

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Grading System

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Change of Grade

Final grades, once posted in MyNIU, cannot be changed without a written request and explanation for the change of grade authorized from the instructor and approval by the department chair, school director, associate dean, program director, or center director as determined by the academic organization the course is housed under.

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~~In the case of undergraduates, the request is sent directly to the appropriate college office of the course.~~
All grade changes proposed for academically dismissed students must be submitted to the college office. In the case of graduate students, a request for a grade change is sent to the Graduate School for entry into MyNIU. A grade change request for an undergraduate taking a graduate course is also sent to the Graduate School.

~~Any change of grade in an undergraduate course (other than from Incomplete) submitted more than one month after the opening of the next session in which the student is enrolled requires the written explanation and approval of the instructor of the course, the chair of the department, and the dean (or delegate) of the college in which the grade was awarded.~~

Rationale:

The Grade Change form is being moved to an automated routing process in MyNIU. The process is being streamlined to eliminate the final approval at the College level. Faculty will input the grade change via a webpage and this will be routed in MyNIU to the Department Chair, School Director, School Chair, Center Director, or Associate Dean responsible for specified programs as visualized in the attachment. The bold section above is not new catalog language but it needs to be operationalized differently given the new routing process. A PeopleSoft query is being developed that each College will need to run periodically to capture this information.