

# Graduation and General Education Requirements

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Students are personally responsible for meeting all University graduation requirements and the requirements for their particular academic degree programs.

**Completed and signed applications for graduation are due in the Registrar's Office for Summer and Fall graduates on April 20th and Spring graduates are due by October 20th.** Completed applications include a graduation application, completed degree works audit or completed program sheet, signature by your advisor and the Dean of your college and a copy of the \$50.00 payment receipt. Graduation applications are available on-line or in the Registrar's Office.

## Minimum Course Grades for Graduation

In accordance with Board of Regents Policy 301.5.3, students graduating from Montana State University-Northern must earn the following minimum grades:

1. A "D-" or better in all classes that are used to satisfy free elective credits in an associate or baccalaureate degree program;
2. A "C-" or better in all classes that are used to satisfy a general education program;
3. A "C-" or better in all classes that are used to satisfy the pre-requisites or required courses for a major, minor option or certificate.

## General Education Course Placement

Course placement procedures ensure students are academically prepared for successful higher level course completion.

The following determines general education course placement:

1. Evaluation of previous higher education courses completed.
2. Students who earn the following minimum scores on tests taken during high school will be placed directly into a college-level freshman composition course without further testing.
  - a. A score of 7 or above on the writing test or 18 or above on the ELA (weighted composite based on the English, reading, and writing scores) of the optional writing test of the ACT; or
  - b. A score of 25 or above on the writing and language test of the SAT; or
  - c. A score of 3 or above on the AP English language or English literature examination; or
  - d. A score of 4 or above on the IB language A1 exam; or
  - e. A score of 50 or above on the (CLEP) subject examinations in composition.
  - f. For students without writing placement examination scores, see Board of Regent Policy 301.17 for placement information.
3. Mathematics proficiency policy grants full admission to students with minimum mathematics scores of:
  - a. 22 for M 105 Contemporary Mathematics or 23 for M 121 College Algebra on the ACT,
  - b. 27.5 for M 105 Contemporary Mathematics or 28.5 M 121 College Algebra on the SAT, or
  - c. 3 or above on the AP Calculus AB or BC Subject Examinations.
4. Students with scores below these thresholds are placed into developmental courses. Details about placement testing are available from the Testing Center in Vandebogart Library Room 208.

## Catalog of Record

Students may elect to follow the catalog in effect when they began their freshman year at MSU-Northern, or any subsequent catalog within the seven-year catalog limitation if there has not been a break of more than one academic term (Fall and Spring) in a year.

Students transferring from one institution to another in the Montana University System (MUS) or from any of Montana's two-year institutions to a unit of the MUS may elect to graduate under the program of study in effect at the new institution at the time they first enrolled at the sending institution if:

1. They have maintained continuous, full-time enrollment in good standing.
2. They meet the admissions requirements for the program or major at the new institution; and
3. The required courses are still available.

The catalog of record for these students shall not be more than four years old.

## Obsolete Course Content

In evaluating coursework from postsecondary institutions, Montana State University-Northern will:

1. Guarantee that any postsecondary course work taken within five (5) years of being admitted or re-admitted to the campus will be included in the transfer analysis of specific required classes in a major, minor, option or certificate.

2. Guarantee that any postsecondary course work taken within fifteen (15) years of being admitted or re-admitted to the campus will be included in the transfer analysis of general education core and elective course work.

Course work that falls outside these guarantee periods may be included in the evaluation, at the discretion of the University. This is a discretionary decision and cannot be challenged by students.

## Departmental Distinction

Students maintaining a 3.50 GPA and selected by the appropriate faculty may be eligible to graduate with departmental distinction. This distinction will be noted on the commencement program.

## Graduation Academic Latin Honors

Graduation academic Latin honors levels are based on **all higher education work** completed at the time the program was printed. This does not include work completed at the end of the Spring Semester of commencement. If work completed after the commencement program was printed changed any honors levels, every effort will be made to provide the proper cords.

| Latin Honors    | Minimum GPA |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Cum Laude       | 3.50        |
| Magna Cum Laude | 3.75        |
| Summa Cum Laude | 4.00        |

## Honor Cords

Montana State University-Northern recognizes associate and baccalaureate students with excellent grades by awarding traditional Latin academic honors at graduation. Honored graduates wear honors cords and their names are noted in the commencement program. Cord colors are as follows:

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Cum Laude       | Maroon |
| Magna Cum Laude | Silver |
| Summa Cum Laude | Gold   |

## The College of Technical Sciences Departmental Certificates

Students completing departmental certificate programs will receive a Certificate of Completion from the academic college but will not receive a diploma or participate in commencement ceremonies. The certificate does not appear on their academic transcript.

## Related Instruction

All certificates of applied science and associate of applied science degrees must include instruction in program related areas of communications, computation (math), and human relations. This instruction may be included as separate coursework, or embedded in courses that are part of the degree. Courses containing embedded related education coursework must be identified and related education subjects clearly identified as part of course syllabi.

## Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs

All associate and associate of applied science degrees require the following, plus course requirements under specific programs:

1. At least fifteen (15) of the total credits must be taken at Montana State University-Northern for an associate or associate of applied science degree.
2. An associate of science/arts degree is normally limited to sixty (60) credits and requires a minimum 2.00 cumulative grade point average.
3. An associate of applied science degree has a minimum of sixty (60) credits and a maximum of seventy-two (72) credits and requires a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00.
4. No more than 6 credits total of independent study courses (designated x92) may be applied towards an associate or associate of applied science degree.

## Bachelor of Applied Science Degree

The bachelor of applied science (B.A.S.) degree is designed for students who have already earned an associate of applied science (AAS) degree from a regionally accredited institution, and would like to use that degree as a first step toward earning a baccalaureate degree. Using the A.A.S. degree as a base, the B.A.S. degree at Montana State University-Northern includes additional general education core coursework, a program of study in some selected area, and a minimum number of credits at the 300 – 400 level. The program of study typically builds on courses and the specialized study completed for the A.A.S. degree.

The specific requirements for a bachelor of applied science (B.A.S.) degree at MSU-Northern are as follows:

1. An associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree from a regionally accredited institution; that degree must have at least 60 semester credits.
2. At least 60 semester credits beyond the A.A.S. degree.
3. Thirty of those credits described in 2 above from Montana State University-Northern.
4. Successful completion of the general education core for a baccalaureate degree at MSU-Northern. The general education core for a bachelor of applied science degree is the same as a general education core for all baccalaureate programs at MSU-Northern. Credits earned as part of the A.A.S. degree may be used to satisfy this requirement, but only if they would be accepted as appropriate coursework for any other baccalaureate general education core at MSU-Northern. **PLEASE NOTE:** Although Board of Regents Policy 301.10 almost certainly would not apply to the coursework completed by a student for an A.A.S. degree, students should ask about the Montana University System General Education Transfer Policy to determine its applicability to their work on a B.A.S. degree at Montana State University-Northern.
5. At least 30 credits in some program of study; the specific credits to satisfy this requirement will be approved by a faculty member in the program of study.
6. At least 39 of the credits at the 300 or 400 level; those upper division credits can be part of the program of study, the general education core coursework, or any elective credits that the student chooses to take.
7. A cumulative grade point average of 2.00 and a grade point average of 2.25 in the program of study.
8. No more than 9 credits of independent study courses (designated X92).

## Bachelor Degree Programs

All bachelor degrees require the following, plus course requirements under specific programs:

1. The general education core requirements must be completed.
2. At least thirty (30) of the total credits must be taken at Montana State University-Northern.
3. Some programs may include additional requirements for graduation. If so, they will be noted in the recommended sequence for any individual program.
4. A bachelor of arts/science degree has 120 credits with a cumulative GPA of 2.00 and a GPA in both the major and the minor of at least 2.25. Some programs may include additional credit requirements. Some programs may also have minimum grade requirements for graduation. **PLEASE NOTE:** Students graduating under the 1997-1999 catalog and subsequent catalog need 120 credits to earn a bachelor's degree, unless their degree specifies more credits. Students graduating under a catalog prior to 1997-1999 will need a minimum of 128 credits to earn a bachelor's degree, unless the degree specifies more credits.
5. Students are required to have thirty-nine (39) upper division level credits (300 – 400 level courses) for graduation.
6. No more than 9 credits total of independent study courses (x92) may apply toward a bachelor's degree.

## Minors

A minor is a supporting or complementary field taken along with a major for a baccalaureate degree. Teaching majors require teaching minors and non-teaching majors require non-teaching minors.

## Minor Requirements

1. They must consist of eighteen to thirty (18 to 30) semester hours of credit.
2. At least one-third of the credits must be at the upper division level.
3. At least ten (10) of the total credits must be taken at Montana State University-Northern.
4. Students must have at least a 2.25 GPA in their minor.

## Commencement without Graduation Policy

University policy allows students who have six (6) or fewer credits remaining toward requirements for graduation at the end of the Spring Semester, or who can demonstrate that they will complete graduation requirements by the end of the Summer Semester, to participate in the commencement ceremony provided that they submit graduation clearance papers by the deadline. If a student has more than six (6) credits remaining, they may petition to Admissions and Standards to request an exception to walk in the Spring ceremony.

## Articulated Coursework

MSU-Northern develops articulation agreements with other post secondary institutions. For current information on these agreements, please see the Registrar's Office website.

## General Education Requirements

General education core forms a significant part of every degree program. The general education core develops areas of appreciation not necessarily provided for in the specialized areas of the major, and provides a sense of the interrelationship between the various disciplines. Above all, the general education core makes available to students the tools and awareness necessary for lifelong learning and for active, literate participation in today's

technological society. Students must meet the program requirements as specified for either a baccalaureate, associate, or associate of applied science degree.

The Registrar determines the acceptability of transfer credits toward general education requirements at the University.

## **General Education Substitutions or Waivers**

Only the Admissions and Standards Committee can substitute or waive a general education requirement. Therefore, any request to substitute or waive a general education requirement must be submitted on a petition form to the Admissions and Standards Committee for approval.

The Lower Division general education requirements are waived for students who already have an associate of art, associate of science, or bachelor's degree from Montana State University-Northern or another Montana institution's Board of Regent approved general education core.

To qualify for the waiver, students must meet the following conditions:

1. Their previous degree must be from a regionally accredited institution.
2. The previous degree must be an associate of art, an associate of science, a bachelor of art, a bachelor of science, or a bachelor of applied science degree.
3. If the degree is a prior MSU-Northern associate of art or associate of science degree, the degree must have been earned in accordance with the Fall 2005 catalog or later.
4. The degree must not be an associate of applied science or associate degree nursing.

General Education programs at institutions whose general education core is not Montana Board of Regents approved will be evaluated on a course by course basis.

PLEASE NOTE: Students who transfer between units of the Montana University System may be governed by the general education transfer policy adopted by the Montana Board of Regents. That policy is set out on page 15 of this catalog. When reviewing that policy, students should pay particular attention to the IMPORTANT LIMITATION language.

This waiver does not constitute a waiver of any other graduation requirements.