High Impact Practices (HIPs) and Engaged Learning (EL) Options

General Education Model
Between 33 and 39 hours

Baccalaureate Options
Between 1 and 6 hours

Option #1
0 courses, 0 hrs
Credentialize HIP or EL experiences

Option #2
1 - 3 course, 1-3 hrs
Certify an HIP or EL experience to fulfill a General Education requirement

Option #3
1 course, 3 hrs
Create a 3-credit "HIP/EL contract" Baccalaureate requirement

Option #1 - Students credentialize any EL HIP experiences on their transcript or in a digital portfolio. No requirement.

Option #2 - Approved co-curricular EL or HIP activities would qualify for fulfillment of a general education requirement.

Option #3 - Students to submit an "Engaged Learning Contract" for stipulating how an EL or HIP experience meets certain engaged learning Baccalaureate outcome goals.
According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities, engaged learning opportunities are called high impact practices (HIPs):

“High-Impact Practices (HIPs) are techniques and designs for teaching and learning that have proven to be beneficial for student engagement and successful learning among students from many backgrounds. Through intentional program design and advanced pedagogy, these types of practices can enhance student learning and work to narrow gaps in achievement across student populations.”

They include:

- First-Year Seminars
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

It is the goal to have Northern Illinois University graduates become life-long learners who are empowered, inquisitive, and responsible citizens. To achieve this, NIU fosters engaged learning (EL) by creating an environment where students invest time and effort, interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters, experience diversity, respond to more frequent feedback, reflect about and integrate learning, and discover the relevance of learning through real-world applications. These engaged learning behaviors provide a richer learning experience which ultimately contributes to students’ academic and career success. Such practices provide: (1) a structured learning experience integrated into a course that engages students in learning outside the classroom, such as in a community agency, professional organization, or in a research setting; (2) critical reflection on that experience through various assignments in class; and (3) synthesis of the experience through a final project or portfolio. At present, Northern Illinois University has identified the following engaged learning (EL) experiences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Bearing Curricular Activities</th>
<th>Non-credit bearing co-curricular activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curricular</td>
<td>Independent study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service-learning</td>
<td>Capstone/thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>Guided Research</td>
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<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>Field work</td>
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<td>Student Teaching</td>
<td>Senior Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>Volunteer/civic engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Internship</td>
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<td>Leadership role/experience</td>
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All students, regardless of when they enter the university, have the opportunity to participate in 2-4 engaged learning experiences during the course of their academic career. These experiences could easily be formally recognized by the University.
1. **Option # 1 – Credentialize HIP or EL experiences**

In this option, students are able to credentialize any engaged learning experience or HIP they participate formally on their transcript or in a digital portfolio. Through a data/activity capture/survey (through CAD-like system) of the campus community, namely faculty and staff, co-curricular, non-credit bearing engaged learning activities would be tracked for and recorded and documented on a student’s transcript or digital portfolio.

2. **Option # 2 – Certify an HIP or EL Experience to fulfill a General Education requirement**

Approved co-curricular EL activities would qualify for fulfillment of a general education requirement. Examples of activities would be the Business Passport program, Peer Leader or mentoring, student leadership, BOT student representative, RHA executive member, student organization executive member, Alternative spring break, Summer research programs, Northern Lights Ambassadors, internships, study abroad, etc.

3. **Option # 3 – Create a 3-credit “HIP/EL contract” Baccalaureate requirement**

In this option, students would be allowed to submit an "Engaged Learning Contract" that stipulates how an HIP or EL experience meets certain engaged learning outcome goals. Students may only use one EL Contract-based experience towards general education requirements by registering for an EL class. This option requires the creation of specific credit-bearing EL course options. The EL contract would outline the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

As a result of completing an experiential learning activity, the student will:

- synthesize connections among experiences outside of formal instruction to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden one’s own point of view;
- adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve problems, engage in creative expression, or explore complex issues in original ways; and
- demonstrate a developing sense of self as a reflective learner, building on prior knowledge to respond to new and challenging contexts; evaluating changes in one’s own learning over time recognizing complex contextual factors; and, articulating professional strengths and challenges to increase effectiveness in different contexts for professional development.

The EL contract would also outline the synthesis of the experience through the following formats: poster presentation, video, multi-media presentation, piece of art, a creative performance, portfolio artifact, faculty-mentored research project, or a culminating class project that clearly illustrates how experiential learning positively impacted degree achievement. The EL contract would identify a faculty/staff mentor to guide the student.