



## Engage PLUS Policies and Procedures

### **Introduction**

Engage PLUS is an optional process that provides students with an opportunity to request consideration for academic transcript notation for co-curricular engaged learning activities. In order to have an activity transcribed, students will need to submit a request for pre-approval of identified activities, and upon completion, submit a full-application for transcript notation. Engaged learning activities will fall in one of six categories: *Artistry, Career Related Work Experiences, Experiential Learning, Leadership, Service-Learning, and Undergraduate Research.*

### **Process for Engage PLUS Academic Transcript Notation**

#### *Pre-Approval*

Once a student identifies an activity that he/she believes to qualify for consideration for academic transcript notation, the student will submit a pre-approval request through the Engage PLUS application, which can be found at [www.niu.edu/plus/engage-plus](http://www.niu.edu/plus/engage-plus) or in MyNIU. The pre-approval request will allow the mentor or supervisor to review the criteria for the category selected and indicate whether the activity will meet the criteria. Students can select only ONE category for each activity submitted. Once an activity has been approved, the same activity cannot be submitted for transcript notation in other categories.

If the pre-approval is denied, the student will not be able to have this activity considered for academic transcript notation. However, the student has the right to discuss the denial with the mentor or supervisor to determine whether there are ways to increase the depth or breadth of the activity in order to meet the criteria.

#### *Engagement in Activity*

The student should be aware of the criteria, as he/she will be asked to speak to each criterion upon final submission of the Engage PLUS application. The final submission will not be done until the student has completed the activity.

#### *Final Application Submission*

Once the student has completed the activity, he/she will submit the final application for consideration for academic transcript notation through the Engage PLUS system. The final application will be reviewed by the mentor or supervisor for approval or denial.

#### *Application Approval*

If the application is approved, the student will be notified by email and the notation will be added to the student's transcript.

### **The Right of Fair and Equal Evaluation of Student Petitions**

If a student's application is denied, the student has a right to petition if the student believes that the denial was given as a result of:

- Circumstances not related to the student's performance of duties; or
- Lack of clarity of denial justification

### **The Appeal Process**

Students must complete an online petition form within ten business days of the date of the denial notification. Once the petition is received, the Engage PLUS Program Advisor will review the petition and allow the Engage PLUS Advisory Committee to review the petition. During this time, the student may be asked to meet with the committee in person if further information is needed. The committee will meet once per semester. A resolution will be made no later than ten business days after the review of the petition unless additional information is required. Visit [www.niu.edu/plus/engage-plus](http://www.niu.edu/plus/engage-plus) to access the online petition form.

### **Engage PLUS Criteria**

Qualified engaged learning co-curricular activities represent supervised, on- and off-campus, non-credit bearing accomplishments that will be indicated by an undergraduate transcript notation.

All engaged learning activities must meet the following criteria:

- A minimum of 80 hours of an extensive immersive experience, which provides students with learning opportunities through "active" participation;
- Direct supervision by an appropriate mentor or supervisor;
- Evidence that learning expands general knowledge or develops new knowledge;
- Evidence of knowledge integration and/or direct application of classroom knowledge to "real world" problems and may include increased awareness of personal and social responsibility; development of critical thinking skills, and creative intellection;
- An intentional learning and reflective experience, which includes a culminating synthesis of knowledge gained and/or personal or professional impact (e.g., reflective journal, ePortfolio, performance, paper, etc.).

Co-curricular engagement experiences will be classified based on six unique categories: **Artistry, Career Related Work Experiences, Experiential Learning, Leadership, Service-Learning, and Undergraduate Research**. Each unique category will include an additional set of guidelines. Engaged learning activities are

intended to promote the integration of learning and the expansion of knowledge outside of the classroom. It is expected that engaged learning experiences also include some type of reflection or culminating experience that provides proof of learning. Engage PLUS activities are intended to encourage a breadth of engagement in diverse experiences. Each approved activity must meet the established criteria. The criteria for each identified category include:

### **Artistry**

1. Engagement in a non-credit bearing artistry experience, which must occur under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
2. Engagement in an artistry experience, which leads to the creation of a new work and/or development of personal voice/pedagogy/technical mastery in the arts.
3. Engagement in an artistry experience, which focuses on art as process or product.
4. Engagement in an artistry experience, which must be aligned with one of the eight Baccalaureate learning outcomes.

### **Career Related Work Experience**

1. Engagement in a non-credit bearing internship, co-op, practical or clinical experience which requires students to complete a minimum of 120 hours.
2. Engagement in a career related work experience, which must promote academic, career and/or personal development.
3. Engagement in a career related work experience, which must lead to the development and use of professional skills and strategies.
4. Engagement in a career related work experience, which must be under the supervision of an appropriate supervisor.
5. Engagement in a career related work experience, which is aligned with one of the eight Baccalaureate learning outcomes.

### **Experiential Learning**

1. Engagement in an experiential learning experience, which may include non-credit bearing pre-professional experiences, field/clinical work, instruction or other non-credit bearing experiences that lead to increased professional preparation including the development of skills in problem-solving, decision-making and application of knowledge. ***Note: Internships should be submitted as a career related work experience.***
2. Engagement in an experiential learning experience that is supervised by an appropriate mentor.
3. Engagement in an experiential learning experience, which is aligned with one of the eight Baccalaureate learning outcomes.

### **Leadership**

1. Engagement in an extensive leadership development experience, which is non-credit bearing and includes direct involvement with high-level decision making and skill development.

2. Engagement in an extensive leadership development experience that goes beyond membership or mere involvement and is evidenced by the student's ability to do one or more of the following: effectively involve followers, create a shared vision, articulate shared goals and how these goals have been achieved, and reflect on both individual growth and the growth in others.
3. Engagement in an extensive leadership experience, which is aligned with one of the eight Baccalaureate learning outcomes.

### **Service-Learning**

1. Engagement in a non-credit bearing service-learning experience where learning occurs through service and involves an extensive reflective experience where students are able to articulate:
  - a. How this service-learning experience has increased their awareness of community needs and has impacted their sense of personal, social and community responsibility.
  - b. How their prior knowledge applies to the service-learning experience.
  - c. How this service-learning experience has increased their knowledge about the community for which they served.
2. Engagement in a service-learning experience, which is aligned with one of the eight Baccalaureate learning outcomes.

### **Undergraduate Research**

1. Engagement in a non-credit bearing undergraduate research experience, which must occur under the close guidance of a qualified faculty mentor.
2. Engagement in an undergraduate research experience must lead to the creation of new knowledge and/or the expansion of current knowledge.
3. Engagement in an undergraduate research experience, which is aligned with one of the eight Baccalaureate learning outcomes.

### *Engage PLUS Notations by Category*

#### Artistry

*Student has engaged in an extensive artistry experience that involved a showcase of artistic skill.*

#### Career Related Work Experience

*Student has completed a career-related work experience.*

#### Experiential Learning

*Student has completed a hands-on learning experience involving direct application of classroom knowledge.*

#### Leadership

*Student has increased leadership skills via an extensive leadership development experience.*

Service-Learning

*Student has engaged in an extensive community engagement experience, which included guided reflection.*

Undergraduate Research

*Student has completed a faculty-mentored research experience.*

### **Other Policies for Engage PLUS Academic Transcript Notation**

All engaged learning experiences must have occurred during the time that the student was enrolled or active as a student at Northern Illinois University. No high school or community college activities will be considered nor will events be retroactively considered once a student has graduated from NIU.

### **Retroactive Petition Requests (only available during the 2016-2017 academic year)**

Engage PLUS is intended to allow students to request consideration for academic transcript notation for co-curricular engaged learning experiences as they are pursuing them. Requests for retroactive petitions will **ONLY** be considered during the 2016-2017 academic year. Retroactive petitions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will need to meet the following parameters in order to be considered:

- Activities cannot have occurred prior to becoming an NIU student.
- Activities **MUST** meet all established criteria.
- Supervisor or mentor must be accessible and able to review the petition through the designated petition review process.
- There cannot be more than one academic year since the activity was completed.
- Student cannot have graduated from NIU.
- Student must be enrolled as current NIU student.
- Activity must have occurred while enrolled at NIU.

### **Completion Requirements**

Final applications for consideration of academic transcript notation must be submitted within the first four weeks of the semester following completion of the co-curricular engaged learning experience. For graduating seniors, applications must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the end of the semester in which you plan to graduate.

### **Tracking Progress to Completion**

Once students receive the pre-approval it will be tracked as a milestone on the degree audit.

### **Policy and Procedure for Engage Scholar Recognition**

Students who receive approval for academic transcript notation through Engage PLUS have an opportunity to receive the honor of Engage BRONZE, SILVER or GOLD Scholar. Our hope is that students will engage in a breadth of hands-on learning experiences across a number of different categories.

***Engage GOLD Scholar:*** Students must complete and have approved at least four co-curricular engaged learning experiences (an average of one to two per year for continuing students and an average of two per year for transfer students). Students must have completed the experiences from at least four unique categories. Students who achieve Engage GOLD will receive campus recognition and Engage GOLD Scholar will be listed as an honor on their final transcript.

***Engage SILVER Scholar:*** Students must complete and have approved two to three co-curricular engaged learning experiences. Students must have completed experiences from at least two of the six categories.

***Engage BRONZE Scholar:*** Students must complete and have approved one co-curricular engaged learning experience during their time at NIU.