

# EngagePLUS

## Policies and Procedures

### Introduction

EngagePLUS provides students with the opportunity to earn notations on their official transcripts for hands-on learning experiences they completed while enrolled at NIU. Students can apply in one of six categories:

- Artistry
- Career Related Work Experience
- Experiential Learning
- Leadership
- Service-Learning
- Undergraduate Research

Additionally, students can use hands-on learning experiences to satisfy the Human Diversity Requirement (non-course based option), possibly in conjunction with an EngagePLUS notation.

### EngagePLUS Criteria

The criteria for each EngagePLUS category as well as the Human Diversity Requirement are listed below.<sup>1</sup>

#### 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.
2. Student worked under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of artistry.
4. Experience involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real-world" activities or problems.
5. Student focused on art as process or product.
6. Experience led to the creation of a new work and/or the development of personal voice/pedagogy/technical mastery in the arts.

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<sup>1</sup>For a student to receive an EngagePLUS notation and also satisfy the Human Diversity Requirement with the same experience, they must demonstrate that the criteria have been met for both the EngagePLUS category and the Human Diversity Requirement. Proposals and Reflections submitted for both will be considered and approved/denied separately.

## Career Related Work Experience

Career Related Work Experience 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 120 hours of active engagement in an extensive and immersive internship.
2. Student worked under the supervision of an appropriate supervisor.
3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the subject matter.
4. Experience involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real-world" activities or problems.
5. 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 preprofessional experience, such as field or clinical work, co-op, instruction or other practical learning experience.
2. Student worked under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the subject matter.
4. Experience involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real-world" activities or problems.
5. Experience led to increased professional preparation including the development of skills in problem-solving and decision-making.

## 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.
2. Student worked under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.
3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of effective leadership.
4. Experience involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real-world" activities or problems.
5. Student was directly involved with high-level decision-making and skill development.
6. 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.

## 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.
2. Student worked under the close guidance of a qualified mentor.

3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the community they served and its needs.
4. Experience involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real-world" activities or problems.
5. Experience included intentional reflection of the student's sense of personal, social and community responsibility.

### 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.
2. Student worked under the close guidance of a qualified faculty mentor.
3. Experience deepened the student's knowledge of the subject matter and of best practices in academic research.
4. Experience involved direct application of classroom knowledge to "real-world" activities or problems.
5. Experience led to the creation of new knowledge and/or the expansion of current knowledge.

### Human Diversity Requirement (Non-Course Based Option)

EngagePLUS and other Human Diversity experiences will satisfy the Human Diversity Requirement 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 percent 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.

### EngagePLUS Application Process

To be considered for a transcript notation, students are required to submit an EngagePLUS Application, which consists of (1) a Proposal that is submitted before or early on in the experience and (2) a Reflection that is submitted upon completion of the experience. The entire EngagePLUS Application process is conducted electronically using the EngagePLUS online system. Students can access the system to begin or continue the application process by visiting the [EngagePLUS](#) website.

## Proposal

Students should submit the Proposal prior to or toward the beginning of the engaged learning experience.<sup>2</sup> The Proposal asks students basic questions about the experience (e.g., EngagePLUS category, experience description, start and end dates) and also requires them to review the criteria for the selected category.

Once the student has submitted the Proposal, the individual the student designated as the mentor or supervisor for the experience will receive an email with instructions for reviewing and approving or denying the Proposal.<sup>3</sup>

If the Proposal is approved, an in-progress milestone will be generated in the student's degree audit and the student will be able to submit a Reflection upon completion of the experience. If the Proposal is denied, the student may choose to discuss the decision with the mentor or supervisor and submit a new Proposal.

## Reflection

Students must submit the Reflection within four weeks following the end of the semester in which the engaged learning experience was completed.<sup>4</sup> The Reflection asks students to write a brief summary of the experience and then respond to a writing prompt in 500 to 800 words. Students who apply for an EngagePLUS notation and to satisfy the Human Diversity Requirement will respond to two prompts (one each for EngagePLUS and Human Diversity).

The EngagePLUS Reflection asks students to examine how they were able to put classroom learning into practice, the benefits and challenges of the experience, and how the experience will impact future endeavors. The Human Diversity Reflection asks students to identify a particular social category and then examine how power structures/dynamics influence access to resources.

Submission of the Reflection(s) completes the EngagePLUS Application. Once the student has submitted the Reflection, the mentor or supervisor for the experience will receive an email with instructions for reviewing and approving or denying the Application.<sup>5</sup>

If the Application is approved, the milestone in the student's degree audit will show as complete and the notation will be added to the student's transcript. If the Application is denied, the student may elect to petition for a review of the decision.

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<sup>2</sup>Students who intend to satisfy the Human Diversity Requirement must submit a Proposal prior to the start of the semester in which the experience will take place.

<sup>3</sup>For Career Related Work Experience applications, Career Services staff will approve or deny Proposals. For Human Diversity Requirement proposals, college sponsored experiences will be approved or denied by college equity teams and non-college sponsored experiences will be approved by the Committee for Multicultural Curriculum Transformation (CMCT).

<sup>4</sup>Graduating seniors must submit Reflections two weeks prior to graduation.

<sup>5</sup>For Career Related Work Experience applications, Career Services staff will approve or deny Applications. For Human Diversity Requirement applications, college sponsored experiences will be approved or denied by college equity teams and non-college sponsored experiences will be approved by the Committee for Multicultural Curriculum Transformation (CMCT).

## 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 (1) circumstances not related to the student's performance of duties or (2) lack of clarity of denial justification

### The Appeal Process<sup>6</sup>

Students 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 Program Advisor and EngagePLUS Advisory Committee. 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 10 business days after the review of the petition unless additional information is required. Visit the [EngagePLUS](#) website to access the online petition form.

## Engage PLUS Notations by Category

EngagePLUS notations will appear on the official transcript for each category as follows:

- **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.*

## Awards

Students who earn EngagePLUS transcript notations have the opportunity to earn the awards of Engage BRONZE, SILVER or GOLD Scholar. The more categories of notations students earn, the greater the award they will receive.

- **Engage BRONZE Scholar:** This award is given to students who earn an EngagePLUS notation in one category.
- **Engage SILVER Scholar:** This award is given to students who earn EngagePLUS notations in two categories.
- **Engage GOLD Scholar:** This award is given to students who earn EngagePLUS notations in four categories. Additionally, Engage GOLD Scholars will receive campus recognition and the award will appear on the official transcript.

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<sup>6</sup> This appeal process pertains to EngagePLUS applications. Human Diversity Requirement Application appeals should be directed to the Committee for Multicultural Curriculum Transformation (CMCT) at [equity@niu.edu](mailto:equity@niu.edu).