

Bachelor of Liberal Studies, B.L.S.

Bachelor of Liberal Studies Major

The Bachelor of Liberal Studies (B.L.S.) program is offered by the three Iowa Regents' Universities: University of Northern Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Iowa. The purpose of the B.L.S. is to offer educational opportunities to those students who are unable to attend college as full-time, on-campus students. Students often use self-paced and other distance learning opportunities to earn credit. **This major may not be declared with any other major.**

Program Distribution Requirements

To ensure sufficient breadth of study, each student's program must include, in addition to the credit used to fulfill the UNIFI/General Education requirements previously stated, a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit in each of the three (3) areas selected from the following list. Of the total 36 semester hours of credit applied to fulfill this requirement, 24 semester hours must be in upper-level credits as defined by the institution in which the courses are taken, with at least 6 semester hours of upper-level credits in each of the three areas chosen.

1. Humanities
2. Communications and Arts
3. Natural Sciences and Mathematics
4. Social Sciences
5. Professional fields (such as business, applied human sciences, social work, and education)

Information and details regarding admission to the B.L.S. program, evaluation of prior academic work, program advising, and declaration of major may be obtained from:

Online and Distance Education
HPC 106

Students may also call the B.L.S. advisor at 1-800-772-1746 or 319-273-2504.

Students are also encouraged to visit the B.L.S. website online.uni.edu/bls.

Admission to the Program

Each student entering the program must have earned:

1. an Associate of Arts degree from an accredited, two-year college, or at least 24 semester hours of college credit acceptable toward graduation at UNI;
2. a minimum 2.00 grade point average.

Total Credit Requirements

A total of at least 120 semester hours of credit, including transferable credit earned, is required for graduation. The total must fulfill the following specifications:

1. 45 semester hours of credit earned at four-year colleges in courses defined as upper-level at the colleges in which courses are taken. At the University of Northern Iowa, upper-level courses are those numbered 3000/4000-level and above;

2. at least 30 hours of credit earned in the junior and/or senior years in courses at UNI. This total may include nonresidence credit.

Learning Outcomes

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Four essential student learning outcomes have been identified for the Bachelor of Liberal Studies and General Studies majors.

- effective written communication;
- critical thinking;
- information literacy and
- integrative learning.

These student outcomes are expressly meant to prepare GS and BLS students for success in a rapidly changing, globally competitive and culturally diverse world and to lead productive and responsible lives. The details of each outcome are defined as follows:

Learning Outcome #1: Effective written communication – written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. For written communication to be effective, one must possess the ability to use written language in a precise and user-friendly way in order to clearly express oneself to the intended audience. Students will achieve this goal by:

- Composing and presenting effective written messages with a variety of audiences using appropriate academic discourse and technologies.
- Scoring a 4, 3, or 2 for all components within the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric for artifacts submitted to demonstrate written communication.

Learning Outcome #2: Critical thinking – critical thinking is the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. To exercise critical thinking, one must possess the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking and understand the logical connection between ideas. Students will achieve this goal by:

- Clearly identifying an issue or problem and carefully analyzing it using relevant sources of information in order to formulate logical conclusions.
- Scoring a 4, 3, or 2 for all components within the AAC&U Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric for artifacts submitted to demonstrate critical thinking.

Learning Outcome #3: Information literacy – information literacy is the ability to know when information is needed. To be an information literate person, one must be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use sources of information for an issue or problem at hand. Students will achieve this goal by:

- Determining the extent of information needed, accessing information using well designed strategies and evaluating it critically through ethical and legal means.

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- Scoring a 4, 3, or 2 for all components within the Information Literacy Rubric (adopted from the AAC&U Information Literacy VALUE Rubric, the ACRL Information Literacy Framework and the PALNI consortium information literacy learning objectives) for artifacts submitted to demonstrate information literacy.

Learning Outcome #4: Integrative Learning – integrative learning is the ability to make connections across disciplines. To effectively use integrative learning, one must be able to make connections among ideas and experiences and transfer learning to new situations. Students will achieve this goal by:

- Connecting relevant experience and academic knowledge across disciplines and applying them to new situations.
- Scoring a 4, 3, or 2 for all components within the AAC&U Integrative Learning Rubric for artifacts submitted to demonstrate integrative learning.