

# ADMISSION

## Admission

### General Requirements for Admission

Northwestern University attracts and enrolls a student body of high ability that reflects a variety of talents, ideas, backgrounds, and experiences, thereby contributing to the diversity of the campus community.

Candidates for admission should demonstrate a level of performance in curricular and extracurricular areas that indicates they will be able to succeed in a competitive academic environment. In the selection of students, careful attention is given to the ability of each candidate as evidenced by academic records and the results of entrance tests as well as by character and personal qualities. The University attempts to select students who are committed to scholarship and who have shown a willingness to become involved in their expressed interest areas. In determining whether to accept a candidate, the University considers

- Secondary school record
- College record – required for transfer candidates
- Recommendations from school officials and other persons who have information pertinent to the candidate's probable success at Northwestern
- Results of standardized tests – Northwestern will remain test-optional for first-year and transfer applicants in the 2024–25 admission cycle. Applicants may submit an SAT and/or ACT score if they wish, but scores are not required. The writing sections for these tests are optional.
- Supplemental Application – required of Bienen School of Music candidates
- Candidate's written statements
- Any other information received by the University that bears on the candidate's readiness for study at Northwestern

### English Proficiency for International Applicants

In addition to meeting all regular admission requirements, international students are required to present evidence of their English language proficiency. International applicants whose first language is not English, or whose schooling has not been in English, must submit results from a Duolingo English Test, IELTS/IELTS Indicator, or TOEFL/TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition (TOEFL ITP Plus for China Solution is not accepted).

### Required Subjects

A broad academic experience in high school is the best preparation for admission to Northwestern. Whatever fields of study students follow, the best foundation consists of reading, writing, and mathematics. The value of thorough training in fundamental subjects cannot be overemphasized.

In considering the academic record of a candidate for admission, the Office of Undergraduate Admission notes the subjects studied, the rigor of coursework taken, and the grades received. The student's record should include a minimum of 16 units. (A unit represents a course studied for one year.)

The subject recommendations in the following list represent the minimum requirements for entrance to the University. Allowances are made to permit students to pursue special areas of academic interest. Most applicants present more academic subjects than the minimum.

### Recommended Units

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences; School of Communication; School of Education and Social Policy; Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications; and Bienen School of Music: 16 units, divided among the following academic areas:

- English: 4 units
- Foreign language: 2 to 4 units
- Mathematics: 3 to 4 units
- Laboratory science: 2 to 3 units
- History/social studies: 2 to 4 units
- Electives: 1 to 3 units in the above academic areas

Students preparing for college are strongly advised to take four years of work in English with as much emphasis on composition as the curriculum allows. Two units of the same foreign language should be taken; three or four years are strongly recommended.

The McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science requires a sound secondary school education as described above, with strong preparation in mathematics and science. Specifically recommended are

- Mathematics: 3½ to 4 units (the minimum requirements for mathematics include algebra [2 units], plane geometry [1 unit], and trigonometry [½ unit]; most entering McCormick first-year students will have taken calculus [1 unit])
- Science: 2 units (credit in both chemistry and physics is recommended)

Credit in other subjects should bring the total to 16 units or more, including 4 units of English and work in social studies and foreign languages.

### Admission Notification

Northwestern offers incoming first-year candidates a choice of two notification plans, Early Decision and Regular Decision. Early Decision is a binding admission commitment. Candidates accepted to Northwestern under Early Decision must withdraw all other university applications.

The table below outlines these plans, the notification plans for transfer students, and the financial aid application procedure, including deadlines and the forms available through the College Scholarship Service.

### Admission Procedure

To be considered for admission to Northwestern, candidates must complete the following steps:

- Complete the Common Application (<https://apply.commonapp.org/Login/?ma=184>), the Coalition Application (<https://app.scoir.com/app/signup/2800124/>), or the QuestBridge Application (<https://www.questbridge.org/college-partners/northwestern-university/>). Applications for admission may be submitted before candidates take standardized tests for college admission.
- Arrange with the officials of their high school to complete and forward the Secondary School Report to the Office of Undergraduate Admission. All candidates should have their records through the sixth semester (or equivalent) sent to Northwestern as early in the senior year as possible. Candidates should have seventh-semester grades (or equivalent) sent as soon as they are available.
- Submit applicable standardized tests as outlined in the General Requirements for Admission section and/or the English Proficiency for International Applicants sections in this chapter. Testing

deadlines can be found in the Application and Testing Deadlines table. If choosing to submit an SAT and/or ACT score, applicants may self-report the SAT and ACT scores, taking care to report their highest individual sections of the SAT and/or highest ACT composite/section score(s). Applicants are not obligated to report scores from all test dates, though are welcome to do so. Students who have been admitted with consideration of test scores and who choose to enroll will be required to submit official SAT or ACT test scores that correspond to the highest self-reported scores prior to matriculation. English proficiency scores may not be self-reported; these should be submitted officially via the testing company at the applicant stage.

- Present a supplemental application if applying for admission to the Bienen School of Music. For more information, visit the Undergraduate Auditions (<https://music.northwestern.edu/admission/undergraduate/auditions/>) webpage.

## Application to Dual Bachelor's Degree Programs

A student interested in taking advantage of the opportunity to receive bachelor's degrees from two different Northwestern undergraduate schools in five years must apply to both schools. It is possible to be admitted to only one or both schools since applicants are considered for each school separately.

Dual degree programs available include the following:

- BA/BS in Liberal Arts and Engineering\*
- BA/BMus in Liberal Arts and Music
- BA/BS or BS/BS in Communication and Engineering
- BA/BMus, BS/BMus, BA/BAMus, or BS/BAMus in Communication and Music
- BSED/BMus or BSED/BAMus in Education and Social Policy and Music
- BS/BMus or BS/BAMus in Engineering and Music
- BSJ/BMus in Journalism and Music
- BSED/BSJ in Education and Social Policy and in Journalism

*\*Interested students may apply to the BA/BS program in Liberal Arts and Engineering after enrolling.*

For descriptions of these and other dual bachelor's degree programs, see the Dual Bachelor's Degree Programs (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/dual-bachelors-degrees/>) chapter of this catalog.

## Special Admission Programs

The following undergraduate programs at Northwestern have special application requirements.

### Integrated Science Program

A student wishing to be considered for Weinberg College's Integrated Science Program, which provides a rigorous background in the major scientific disciplines and mathematics and can lead to a bachelor of arts degree in three years, must complete the special ISP application (available at [isp.northwestern.edu/admissions/applying/](http://isp.northwestern.edu/admissions/applying/)). Applicants to the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Sciences may also submit an ISP application, but doing the additional major in ISP along with engineering does not accelerate completion of the bachelor of science degree. Either the Common Application or the Coalition Application is also required of applicants.

For more information on ISP, see the Integrated Science Program (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/>

<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/>) chapter of this catalog.

### Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences

A student interested in Weinberg College's program in Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences (MMSS), which is designed for students with high mathematical aptitude and strong interest in social problems and issues, must complete the special MMSS application (<https://www.mmss.northwestern.edu/admission/first-year-application.html>). Either the Common Application or the Coalition Application is also required. For more information on MMSS, visit this website (<https://www.mmss.northwestern.edu/>).

## Application and Testing Deadlines: Notification Plans

### Regular Programs for Fall Quarter Matriculation

Event	Early Decision	Regular Decision
First-year students enter in fall quarter. New undergraduates may not request matriculation for any other quarter.		
Apply by	November 1	January 2
If taking SAT or ACT, take by	November test	December test
To apply for financial aid, file CSS PROFILE by	December 1	February 1
and file FAFSA by	December 1	February 1
and submit tax materials by	December 5	February 5
Northwestern releases its decision by	Mid-December	March 31
Applicant's reply and nonrefundable tuition and housing deposits due by	February 1	May 1

### Transfer Students for Fall Quarter Matriculation

Event	Regular Decision
Transfer students enter in fall quarter. New undergraduates may not request matriculation for any other quarter.	
Apply by	March 15 (soft deadline)
(Space is limited in some programs.)	
If taking SAT or ACT, take by	March 15
(Scores from previous academic years are acceptable.)	
Apply for financial aid by	March 15
(Aid availability is limited; consult the Office of Undergraduate Admission.)	

Northwestern releases decisions on a rolling basis through the end of May; applicant's reply is due within three weeks of receiving a preliminary credit evaluation.

## Advanced Placement

In nearly all areas Northwestern awards credit for Advanced Placement Examination scores of 5; in some cases credit is also awarded for scores of 3 and 4. Specific questions concerning Northwestern's advanced placement policies should be addressed to the Office of the Registrar or the school adviser. In some fields advanced placement and/or credit can be earned through appropriate performance on examinations administered by Northwestern departments.

Northwestern may award credit for distinguished performance on certain foreign national examinations, and the higher-level examinations of the International Baccalaureate. Students will receive credit only once for the same course of study even if mastery is demonstrated on multiple exams (e.g., mathematics AP and IB exams). Also, credit is awarded only for exams taken prior to matriculation at Northwestern.

Northwestern also may award credit for college courses taken by incoming first-year students before they enter the University. To qualify for such recognition, the courses must be similar to courses offered at Northwestern, must have been completed at a college or university whose accreditation is recognized by Northwestern, must not have been submitted in partial fulfillment of the normal secondary school graduation requirement, and must have been taken primarily by bona fide college students (i.e., high school graduates pursuing a college degree).

## Transfer Candidates

Students may be considered for admission as transfers from another college or university provided they are in good standing at their postsecondary institution and have maintained at least a B average in rigorous academic courses. Successful transfer applicants typically arrive at Northwestern having completed at least one academic year of full-time college coursework (24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours). If students have been enrolled full-time at any institution except Northwestern, they cannot be considered for admission as first-year candidates and must meet the criteria to apply as transfer candidates. Undergraduate schools at Northwestern enroll transfer students in the fall quarter only, and admitted transfer students may not defer their enrollment to any subsequent fall. Transfer students must meet the relevant provisions of the Undergraduate Registration Requirement (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/requirements-policies/undergraduate-registration-requirement/>).

## Transfer Admission Procedure

To be considered for admission, transfer students must complete the following steps:

- Complete the Common Application (<https://apply.commonapp.org/Login/?ma=184>) or the Coalition Application (<https://app.scoir.com/app/signup/2800124/>).
- Request that a high school official forwards the complete high school report to the Office of Undergraduate Admission.
- If choosing to submit an SAT and/or ACT score, applicants may self-report the SAT and ACT scores, taking care to report their highest individual sections of the SAT and/or highest ACT composite/section score(s). Applicants are not obligated to report scores from all test dates, though are welcome to do so. Students who have

been admitted with consideration of test scores and who choose to enroll will be required to submit official SAT or ACT test scores that correspond to the highest self-reported scores prior to matriculation. English proficiency scores may not be self-reported; these should be submitted officially via the testing company at the applicant stage.

- Arrange with the registrar of each college previously attended to forward transcripts of record to the Office of Undergraduate Admission.
- Request a statement of good academic and social standing from the dean of students at the college from which the student is transferring.
- Present a supplemental application if applying for admission to the Bienen School of Music. For more information, visit the Undergraduate Auditions (<https://music.northwestern.edu/admission/undergraduate/auditions/>) webpage.
- Submit application for admission before the March 15 deadline.

## Evaluation of Credits

Transfer candidates who are accepted by Northwestern will receive a preliminary evaluation of the credits they have earned to date before matriculation, assuming all pertinent transcripts have been received. An official evaluation of credits earned will be made by the Office of the Registrar when an admitted student matriculates. To read the transfer credit policy, visit the Transfer and Test Credit ([https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/graduation/transfer\\_and\\_test\\_credit.html](https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/graduation/transfer_and_test_credit.html)) webpage.

## Professional Education Students

The Northwestern University School of Professional Studies, the University's continuing education division, offers an extensive range of programs and courses in Chicago, Evanston, and online for adult students seeking personal enrichment or professional mobility, preparation for graduate study, or pursuit of a degree or a certificate.

The school allows adults with a college degree, or some college credit and good standing, or a high school diploma but no prior college work to enroll in courses as students at large. Students who wish to earn a degree or a certificate should speak with an academic adviser about admission.

More information about the school is available on the School of Professional Studies website (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/>).

## Special Students

Properly qualified persons who demonstrate a need for certain courses required for their academic or professional advancement may apply to the University as Non-degree Special Students (NDSS). Applicants must present official transcripts of previous study and show evidence of successful academic achievement. Persons who do not meet these requirements should not apply.

Enrollment as a special student does not constitute admission to any degree program at the University, and credits earned as a special student may not be counted toward a degree at Northwestern. (Exception: Special students who subsequently become eligible for admission into the School of Professional Studies may apply these credits toward a degree.) Special Students are granted academic credit for coursework satisfactorily completed, and these credits may be transferred to another institution.

Special students are admitted with the understanding that they may register only after students working toward Northwestern degrees

have registered. Some classes will be closed, and some schools or departments may not accept nondegree students. These restrictions do not apply to Summer Session.

Special students are not permitted to enroll in 399 or 499 Independent Study courses.

All tuition and fees for special students are charged at the undergraduate rate. Complete instructions and application forms may be obtained from the:

Office of Special Students  
Northwestern University  
405 Church Street  
Evanston, Illinois 60208

For more information see the Non-degree Special Student (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/nondegree-special-students/>) webpage.

### **Admission Withdrawal**

If we do not receive your transcripts, disciplinary disclosure form, and, for students who included SAT or ACT scores in their application, official test scores by fall move-in, or if your final transcript indicates that your senior-year academic performance faltered seriously, our offer of admission may be withdrawn. Northwestern also reserves the right to take that action if it receives information that, in its judgment, reflects significantly on your character or your fitness for study or participation in the Northwestern community.