

# ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES AND SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS

## Accreditation Statement

MSU Billings is institutionally accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. As such, all college-level coursework from institutions accredited by the following list of agencies will be received and applied toward associate or baccalaureate degrees as applicable to general education, major, minor, and elective requirements.

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission of Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
- WASC Senior College and University Commission

Students who transfer credit from institutions not accredited by the agencies in the above list (excluding foreign institutions) will not be accepted for transfer. Policy and procedure information may be obtained from the Registrar's Office.

Students transferring from institutions in pre-approval status must earn at least 20 credits at MSU Billings with a minimum 2.0 institutional GPA before their credits from the former institution will be considered for acceptance.

International coursework (except from institutions where English is the language of instruction) may require evaluation by a foreign credential evaluation company.

## Regular and Substantive Interaction

New U.S. Department of Education regulations for distance (online) education require **regular and substantive interaction** between students and their instructors. The phrase "regular and substantive interaction" comes from the federal definition of distance education. While regular and substantive interaction is specifically mentioned in the U.S. Department of Education's definition of distance education, it is applicable to any class regardless of instructional modality (synchronous or asynchronous).

While this is a federal requirement, MSU Billings, as a leader in distance education in Montana, has long realized that the interaction between faculty and students is the hallmark of quality education. We have both a legal and ethical responsibility to provide quality interaction with our students.

Regular and Substantive Interaction has three elements: 1) It must be initiated by the instructor; 2) it must be frequent and consistent; 3) it must be focused on the course subject.

Faculty teaching online courses are responsible for complying with this policy and its associated federal regulations. Faculty teaching online courses are responsible for ensuring their courses are designed to facilitate regular and substantive interaction between instructors and students. Faculty may consult with the Center for Teaching and Learning to ensure that their online courses meet the above regular and substantive interaction requirements.

Each department or academic unit is responsible for ensuring instructors who teach online courses in their department comply with this policy.

## Definitions of Regular and Substantive Interaction

*Substantive interaction* is defined as engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

1. Providing direct instruction;
2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
4. Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency;
5. Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

*Regular interaction* requires the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency. The instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student.

## Examples of Regular and Substantive Interaction

1. Participation in regularly scheduled learning sessions where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the student and the qualified instructor. (Note: merely logging into class is insufficient without further participation.)
2. Provide personalized comments (in any medium) for an individual student's assignment or exam.
3. Actively facilitate an online discussion.
4. Post-assessment debriefings based upon class performance.
5. Provide an overview video to accompany recorded lectures.
6. Use of small working/study groups that are moderated by the instructor.

## Examples of What is Not Considered Regular and Substantive Interaction

1. Assignment of recorded webinars, videos, and reading materials without instructor-initiated interaction.
2. Contact with instructors not related to the course subject matter.
3. Adding numeric grades to the course gradebook
4. A student submits a quiz that is automatically graded.
5. Reminding students of the course attendance policy.
6. Posting an announcement about an upcoming assignment deadline.
7. Providing an open-ended online forum that is not moderated by the instructor.

## Scholastic Requirements

### Grading System

Letter Grade	Description
A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Average
D	Minimally Passing
I	Incomplete work (not included in GPA).
F	Failure, grade below passing (included in GPA)
W	Withdrawal from class without penalty (not included in GPA)
N	No credit/Audit

P	Passing (not included in GPA but credits count toward graduation)
T	Graduate work in progress. Student has 6 years to complete work and have a change of grade submitted.
X	No Pass

## Incomplete "I" Grade

Upon request, a grade of incomplete ("I") may be given in a course for which the course requirements are normally expected to be completed in the semester of enrollment. To qualify, a student (undergraduate/graduate) must have completed at least three-fourths (3/4) of the course requirements but has been prevented by circumstances beyond their control from completing all the requirements of the course at its conclusion. The student must have a passing grade at the time in which the incomplete is administered. Prior to the time the instructor submits final grades, the student must provide adequate evidence, in writing, to the instructor as to the reason(s) why they are unable to complete the course requirements. All remaining work to complete the course must be specified in writing and be completed by the end of the subsequent semester (excluding summer). If a grade of "I" incomplete has been given, the instructor shall advise the student, the chair of the department offering the course, and the Registrar's office in writing what the student must do to remove the deficiency. Access to learning management system to finish incomplete work is arranged through the Registrar's Office.

Extensions to this time allotment may be requested by a student appeal, recommended by the instructor and unit chairperson, and approved by the MSU Billings Academic Standards & Scholastic Standing Committee (undergraduate students) or the MSU Billings Graduate Committee (graduate students).

An incomplete grade not made up within the prescribed length of time will automatically be converted to an "F" grade. Once the grade of incomplete has been converted to an "F" grade, the course must be repeated to have the grade changed. An "I" grade will not be included in the calculation of the GPA.

In instances involving extended leave or resignation of the instructor of the incomplete course, the unit chairperson may act to establish an appropriate grade and verify completion of the coursework within the approved time frame.

## Change of Grade

A change of grade may be made for error only. A change of grade may not be made to allow additional time or for additional work once the semester is completed.

A change of grade is not meant to substitute for an Incomplete grade when an Incomplete cannot be justified. No grade may be changed after one full year unless approved by the instructor's Academic Dean. Once a grade has been submitted to the Registrar's Office, it may not be changed to a lower grade without the written approval of the Dean of the respective college.

## Pass/No Pass Grading Mode

Pass/No Pass is offered as an opportunity for undergraduate students to explore courses outside their major, minor, or option curricula and outside the Professional Core Requirements for the Educator Preparation Program or Pre-Admission Requirements for Business.

Under the grading mode, the grade of "P" is given if the students' work is judged to be the equivalent of "A," "B," or "C." The grade of "No Pass" (symbolized by "X") is awarded if the work is equivalent to "D" or "F." The students' Pass/No Pass grades do not affect overall GPA. However, "P" grades may be counted as credits earned toward a degree. Other policies concerning Pass/No Pass are as follows:

1. Courses designated by the departments are available Pass/No Pass. Certain courses are taught only with this grading mode; other courses may be excluded

from Pass/No Pass grading. Therefore, students should check with their advisor for details.

2. Students may enroll in courses as Pass/No Pass up to a limit of 20 semester credit hours to be counted towards graduation. Credits earned by challenge, experiential learning assessment such as military credits, cooperative education, or internships do not count toward this 20-credit limit.
3. Students declare this grading mode at the time of registration. Students may change their grading mode to Pass/No Pass up through the last day to add at the beginning of each semester or term. After the last day to add, any request to change grading mode (Pass/No Pass to letter grade or vice versa) must be petitioned by the student to the Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee.
4. Courses taken under Pass/No Pass may be repeated for a letter grade. A course taken for a letter grade may not be repeated as Pass/No Pass.

## Credit Hour Policy

At Montana State University Billings the credit hour is used as a unit of instruction to quantify student learning. The credit hour is typically related to seat time, as a minimum of three class work hours (60 minutes of classroom instruction and an additional two hours of out-of-class student work) each week during a 15-week (minimum) semester. Using a seat-time approach, one credit of instruction should be approximated by 45 hours of combined direct instruction (counting a 60-minute class as 1 hour of instruction) and student work.

If the learning experience is offered in a different time frame (e.g., eight-week summer session), the student time required to complete the course should reasonably approximate 45 hours of combined direct instruction and student work per credit.

If direct instruction is not the principal mode of learning for an academic experience (e.g., laboratory courses, internships, studio work, some on-line courses), the student time required to complete the course should reasonably approximate 45 hours of student work per credit.

## Grade Points (Grade Point Average)

In order to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, a student must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.00 in

1. all courses attempted at Montana State University Billings;
2. the academic major; and
3. the academic minor.

For BA/BS Teaching Options, students must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.65.

In order to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in the College of Business, a student must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.00 in

1. all courses in the College of Business; and
2. all courses attempted at Montana State University Billings.

In order to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree, a minimum grade point average of 2.65 must be earned in

1. all courses attempted at Montana State University Billings;
2. the academic major;
3. the academic minor; and
4. the Professional Education Core.

In order to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services degree, a student must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.00 in

1. all courses attempted at Montana State University Billings; and
2. all coursework completed for the Human Services major.

## Grade Reports

Students' grades are available on the web at [www.msubillings.edu](http://www.msubillings.edu) (<http://www.msubillings.edu>) Students who wish to have their grades mailed may request a transcript.

## How to Calculate the Grade Point Average

Each grade is worth a predetermined number of grade points as indicated below. Total grade points are established by multiplying the number of credits of a course times the number of grade points of the grade received.

The grade point average is determined by dividing the number of grade points earned by the number of course credits attempted. In computing the number of grade points earned, each letter grade is assigned a certain grade point value per credit hour as follows:

Letter Grade	Description
Each credit hour of A	4 points
Each credit hour of B	3 points
Each credit hour of C	2 points
Each credit hour of D	1 point
Each credit hour of F	0 points

Effective Fall 2005 for all transfer, re-admitted, and continuing students, in accordance with Board of Regents policy, all campuses of the Montana University System will use the following values when determining grade point averages. Faculty may choose to use plain letter grades (no plus/minus).

Letter Grade	GPA
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0.0

Grade point averages calculated before Fall Semester 2005, using the values noted above, will not be recalculated, using the new weights or values.

The new values should not be applied retroactively to grade point averages already calculated for students in the Montana University System. Decisions about those students' academic performance, including satisfactory progress, admission to limited enrollment programs, graduation and financial aid eligibility, have been made, using the grading scale in place at the time of those decisions. The decisions should not be invalidated because of a subsequent change in grade point average calculations.

## Examples

WRIT 101 is a 3 credit course. If a grade of "B" was received, multiply 3 credits times 3 grade points for a total of 9 grade points (3 credits x 3 grade points = 9 grade points).

PSYX 100 is a 3 credit course. If a grade of "C" was received, it would produce an additional 6 grade points (3 credits x 2 grade points = 6 grade points).

Add the 9 grade points from WRIT 101 and the 6 grade points from PSYX 100 for a total of 15 grade points. Then, divide the total grade points (15) by the total number of credits (6) to determine the grade point average for the two courses. In this case, the grade point average is 2.50 (15/6 = 2.50). Remember, the total grade points divided by the total credits attempted equals the grade point average (GPA).

## Academic Honors

In recognition of scholastic achievement, the University makes public at the close of each semester an honor roll of undergraduate students who earn 12 or more credits which are not of a Pass/No Pass nature and who earn a grade point average of 3.50 or better.

## Minimal Academic Progress

Students are in good standing at Montana State University Billings as long as they have a 2.00 grade point average (GPA) although additional requirements may have to be met in specific fields (see, for example, Educator Preparation Program).

## Academic Warning

### Full-Time Students (12 or more credits attempted)

Students are placed on academic warning the first time their cumulative institutional GPA falls below the required 2.00. If they later meet the required 2.00 cumulative institutional GPA, they are removed from academic warning. Students who are on academic warning and fail to earn at least a 2.00 GPA during the next semester or have a 2.00 cumulative institutional GPA are suspended for one academic (Fall or Spring) semester. Summer does not count for the one term suspension. However, students on academic warning or continued academic warning who do not meet the required 2.00 cumulative institutional GPA are allowed to continue in college as long as they have a 2.00 GPA for each succeeding semester. Students on academic warning should not carry more than 16 credits in the warning period. All students on academic warning should meet with their academic advisors to review their respective course schedules.

### Part-Time Students (Less than 12 credits attempted)

Part-time students are placed on academic warning whenever they have attempted a total of 10 overall (transfer and institutional) cumulative semester credits and do not have a 2.00 cumulative institutional GPA or a 2.0 institutional term GPA. Part-time students are suspended whenever they have attempted a total of 30 overall (transfer and institutional) cumulative semester credits and do not have a 2.00 cumulative institutional GPA or a 2.00 institutional term GPA. Part-time students on academic warning are allowed to continue in college as long as they earn a 2.00 GPA in each succeeding semester.

## Academic Suspension

Any full-time student who has been on academic warning one semester and who did not make a 2.00 GPA during the last semester is suspended for one academic (Fall or Spring) semester; Summer does not count for the one term suspension. A student who is suspended may, however, attend Montana State University Billings during the Summer Session by meeting the requirements stated below.

Students should meet with the designated staff person (Registrar or designee) to discuss their options for attending summer semester. Students suspended from Montana State University Billings may register for no more than a total of 16 semester credits during the Summer Session without reinstatement. Students who at the end of Summer Session have earned at least a 2.00 GPA are re-admitted Fall Semester on continued academic warning. However, students who attend the Summer Session and fail to earn the 2.00 GPA will be suspended for an additional two semesters.

Students who are reinstated after a period of suspension must submit an application for re-admission. Upon re-admission, students are placed on continued academic warning (suspension fulfilled) and must maintain a 2.00 GPA for each successive semester of work and meet any other pertinent conditions imposed by the Academic and Scholastic Standing Committee. Students who do not meet the stipulations set by the Committee incur automatic suspension.

A student who has been academically suspended from Montana State University Billings may apply for re-admission after one semester has elapsed. A student who has two or more academic suspensions is suspended for two semesters excluding summer term. The student may, however, petition the Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee for reinstatement after one semester.

Exceptions to this regulation may be made for students who provide evidence to the Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee that their reinstatement can be justified. Only extreme cases of extenuating circumstances may be considered by the Committee for re-admitting a student who has been suspended, or if there is evidence that the student has taken some reasonable action to correct the cause(s) for suspension. The student must have approval from his/her major department chairperson before the Academic Standards and Scholastic Committee will consider the student for reinstatement.

Upon action by the Administration, a student may also be suspended for nonacademic reasons. Such a notation will be placed in the student's conduct file.

### **Veterans Receiving Educational Benefits**

Veterans or other individuals who receive educational benefits from the Veterans' Administration remain eligible for those benefits as long as they remain in good academic standing at Montana State University Billings and are permitted to continue in college. All veterans eligible to receive benefits should report to the Veterans Certifying Official in the Military and Veteran's Success Center prior to each term of enrollment to re-certify.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Students at Montana State University Billings are expected to do their own work in their own words and with their own ideas. If they quote or paraphrase the words of others, they are expected to indicate whom it is they are quoting or paraphrasing. An instructor who believes that a student has claimed the work of someone else as his or her own may take what steps he or she wishes up to failing the student and referring the student to others on campus for further discipline. Please refer to Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students: [www.msubillings.edu/provost/pdf/academic-affairs-policies-and-procedures.pdf](http://www.msubillings.edu/provost/pdf/academic-affairs-policies-and-procedures.pdf) (<https://www.msubillings.edu/provost/pdf/academic-affairs-policies-and-procedures.pdf>)

### **Fresh Start Option (Academic Bankruptcy)**

The Fresh Start option is available to undergraduate students. It is a one-time opportunity for MSU Billings students and those who transfer to MSU Billings.

Students may bankrupt up to two consecutive semesters of previous coursework in which they received poor grades. Students must not have been enrolled in any institution for a minimum of three calendar years. To be eligible for the Fresh Start option, students must have completed 15 semester credits in residence for students seeking Certificate, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts/Science Degrees or 30 semester credits in residence for students seeking Baccalaureate Degrees (BS/BA/BFA/BSED) since entering or returning to MSU Billings, earning a 2.65 grade point average (GPA) or higher. The bankrupted coursework will remain on the student's academic record. The student has the option to save "A" and "B" grades or bankrupt all courses. Bankrupted credits and grades will not be carried forward into the student's cumulative GPA. Once a degree has been posted, the student academic record is final and a fresh start can no longer be processed to alter the GPA.

### **Eligibility for Intercollegiate Athletics and Other Activities**

To be eligible for intercollegiate athletics, students must meet the specific requirements of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II. Prospective student-athletes should consult with the appropriate Athletic Department Administrator regarding these requirements. Students are eligible during a semester to represent MSU Billings in an University sponsored activity off-campus or to participate in co-curricular activities as long as the students are officially enrolled (this applies only to the activities that are not sanctioned by the NCAA Division II). Intercollegiate athletics and certain activities may have additional eligibility requirements that students must meet.

### **Student Records**

#### **Academic Records**

Official academic records of each student's scholastic achievement are kept on file (on file may indicate electronic records) in the Registrar's Office, and include the following:

1. A signed "Official Class Roll and Final Grade Report" from the instructor of each class in which the student is enrolled each semester.
2. An "Official Academic Record" for each student officially enrolled.
3. Directory information of a student currently enrolled. (See the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Revised.)

#### **Transcripts**

A transcript is a copy of the complete, unabridged educational record of a student who has been or is currently enrolled. It is issued only to the student upon the student's written request. An official transcript is distinguished from an unofficial copy of the student's record in that the official transcript carries the signature of the Registrar and bears the seal of Montana State University Billings.

As often as possible, transcripts are issued immediately following receipt of the transcript request and payment of the fee. During periods of registration, changes in registration, grading periods, and Commencement, the Registrar's Office staff has to devote full time to such activities. The records are necessarily incomplete, and the status of students is pending; consequently, a longer time than usual is required for the issuance of transcripts.

All current and former MSU Billings students are entitled to one free official transcript; thereafter, each official transcript request is processed only upon the receipt of the transcript fee. The student's signature and/or personal request is required for the release of any transcript except when the transcript is released to those individuals who are considered to have a legitimate educational reason to have access to the student's transcript.

#### **Misuse of Electronic Devices**

Cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic devices shall not be used in a manner that causes disruption in the classroom, library, or within any college-owned or college-operated facility. Abuse of cellular devices with photographic capabilities, use of devices for purposes of photographing test questions or other notes and materials is prohibited. Photographing individuals in secured areas such as bathrooms, locker rooms, or other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, and/or taking photographs of any person without expressed permission is strictly prohibited.

### **Appeals and Petitions for Exceptions to University Regulations**

#### **Appeal by a Student on Academic Matters**

The student should confer with the faculty member against whom the alleged problem exists. The student must confer with the department chairperson or, in the

event the problem involves a department chairperson, with the appropriate dean before resorting to the formal grievance process. The student should consult the Student Resolution Officer for proper procedures.

## Petition for Exception to University Regulations

Certain problems encountered by a student may result in a request to have an exception considered to an academic standard or to an academic regulation of the University. A student may request an exception to an MSU Billings regulation by filing a special petition with the Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee. The petition form may be obtained from the Registrar's Office and it is to be returned there after the student has completed the form. The Registrar's Office will present the petition to the committee. The student is encouraged to appear before the committee to respond to questions about the student's petition. The student will be notified in writing of the decision as soon as it is determined.

## Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures

Please refer to Academic Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students: [www.msubillings.edu/provost/pdf/academic-affairs-policies-and-procedures.pdf](http://www.msubillings.edu/provost/pdf/academic-affairs-policies-and-procedures.pdf) (<https://www.msubillings.edu/provost/pdf/academic-affairs-policies-and-procedures.pdf>)

## Prior Learning Assessment Policy

At Montana State University Billings, students may earn credit through a variety of methods including work experience and challenge tests. The University will work with the student to determine which type of experience can be translated into credit.

See Admissions and Registration (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/admissions-registration/>) for the policy and procedures.

## Graduation Requirements

### Graduation Guarantee

MSU Billings has created a Graduation Guarantee for Undergraduates which students may utilize as they begin study. The Guarantee includes a set of conditions that the student needs to fulfill as well as the University; the Guarantee itself is signed by the student as well as the advisor. If the student fulfills his/her conditions and the University fails to do so, postponing graduating, the student may appeal to the Academic Standards and Scholastic Standing Committee prior to the beginning of classes for the last term of the signed Guarantee. If the Committee finds the University at fault, appropriate actions will include waiving course requirements, waiving tuition and fees, or a combination of the two.

Copies of this Guarantee are available at the Advising Center (McMullen Hall first floor west). Students are urged to examine this Guarantee to see if it will assist them in facilitating their completion of requirements and graduation. Advisors in the Center can explain the Guarantee and prepare appropriate plans of study for students.

### Time Limit for Degree

A student is expected to complete requirements for graduation within six years after original entrance to MSU Billings, during which time the graduation requirements are those of the catalog in effect at the time of entrance to MSU Billings, or any subsequent catalog, if there has not been a break of more than one academic year in attendance and if they fall within the six-year catalog limitation. After six years, students are expected to meet the graduation requirements of the catalog current at that time, or the requirements of any Montana State University Billings catalog under which they have been enrolled during the six years prior to graduation, provided there has been no break in attendance of more than one academic year. Any request for an extension of time beyond the six-year limit must be approved in writing by the Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

General Education requirements and the first major must be under the same catalog within the six-year period; the minor and/or second major may be under any catalog

within that six-year period. The University reserves the right to make substitutions for requirements or changes in course offerings.

Students who transfer to MSU Billings from a regionally accredited (p. 1) institution may have their credits evaluated on the basis of the current catalog at the initial time of entry to Montana State University Billings; or students may elect to enter under the catalog that was in effect during the year in which they entered any regionally accredited (p. 1) institution of higher education in the United States within the six year time limit, provided they have maintained continuous, full-time enrollment (excluding summers) in good standing.

## Six-Year Catalog Limitation

Each MSU Billings catalog covers a specific time period beginning fall semester of the first year and ending the following summer session. From the time a student enters Montana State University Billings, he or she has six years to fulfill the curricular requirements stated in the catalog in effect when he or she entered. If a student does not complete the requirements in six years, he or she must select a subsequent catalog. This policy applies to all students, including undergraduates who change curriculum and transfer students.

## Conferring of Degrees

The degree a student is to receive will be posted on the student's Official Academic Record at the end of the semester in which the student meets all requirements. Degrees and certificates are conferred three times per year, at the end of the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. The academic transcript is the official record of degree conferral.

## Certificate or Associate of Applied Science Degree

City College offers certificates in a number of trades, for practical nurses, and in areas of office and accounting technology. In addition it offers associate of applied science degrees in many of these same areas. Please see the City College catalog for details about these programs and for additional information about City College.

## Associate of Arts or Science Degree Requirements

In addition to AAS degrees, City College also awards Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees.

AA and AS degrees can have a special focus or no particular disciplinary affiliation.

These degrees require that students meet general education requirements as specified below. Students earning an associate degree with no disciplinary affiliation should work with their advisor on a plan of study but are not subject to any additional requirements other than those listed next.

1. Students must earn a minimum of 60 semester credits must be earned with a minimum grade point average of 2.00 for all coursework.
2. Students must earn a minimum of 20 semester credits with 40 grade points (2.0 grade point average) must be earned at Montana State University Billings. (see GPA, above)
3. Students must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.00 in
  - a. all college work to be applied toward the degree for which credits and grades have been received, and in
  - b. all courses completed with credits and grades at Montana State University Billings and applied toward the degree.
4. Students may elect a maximum of 16 semester credits on the Pass/No Pass option in lieu of regular course grades.
5. Students seeking an associate degree must satisfy the following general education requirements:

Code	Title	Credits
<b>I. Global Academic Skills</b>		
A.	Mathematics	3
B.	English	3
C.	Communication & Information Literacy	3
<b>II. Natural Sciences (7 credits total)</b>		
A.	Life Sciences	3
B.	Physical Sciences	3
*	Lab taken with either Life Sciences or Physical Sciences	1
<b>III. Social Sciences and History</b>		
A.	Social Sciences	3
B.	History	3
<b>IV. Cultural Diversity</b>		
<b>V. Arts &amp; Humanities</b>		
A.	Fine Arts	3
B.	Humanities	3
Total		31
<b>Electives</b>		
Selected in consultation with advisor		29
<b>Total Minimum Credits</b>		<b>60</b>

## Bachelor's Degree Requirements

### Major and Minor Requirements

Each student in the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree program must complete a subject field major of at least 30 semester credits. Certain subject field majors require more than 30 semester credits. A subject field minor of at least 20 semester credits is required in selected degree programs. Subject to the approval of the appropriate department chairperson, certain courses may fulfill both major and minor course requirements, but the credits may be counted only once. Therefore, substitutions must be made to meet at least the minimum credits of both the major and the minor. Students should consult the appropriate section of this catalog to determine the specific requirements for the various majors and minors and should review their programs with their advisors.

In programs that include minors, a student may, with permission of the chairperson concerned, elect to complete an extended major instead of a minor. Specific details of the extended major program may be obtained from the academic advisor or chairperson of the academic department concerned.

### Special Major and Minor Options

- Any major or minor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences may be added to a required degree program offered in the College of Business.
- Selected majors and/or minors in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences may be added to certain degree programs in the College of Education. Prior approval is required from the Dean of the College of Education.
- Selected minors in the College of Education (Special Education, Health Education) and in the College of Health Professions and Sciences (Rehabilitation and Related Services) and selected minors in the College of Business (Business Administration) may be added to or may take the place of the required minor for degree programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.
- Students who plan to meet the requirements for two majors concurrently and who plan to apply the two majors to one degree must have the approval of the respective department chairpersons and deans.

To avoid any misunderstanding, students should seek the required approval of their advisors and of their respective deans prior to enrolling in any required courses for a specific major or minor.

### Credits Earned for Graduation

Credits earned for graduation shall mean the total number of credits for which passing grades (A, B, C, D, P) have been received in courses applicable toward graduation. If a student repeats a course in which a passing grade is earned, the last grade will be the effective grade for graduation and in no case are the credits to be counted more than once toward fulfilling the credit requirements for graduation.

For bachelor's degrees, a minimum of 120 semester credits must be earned, and a prescribed degree curriculum must be completed at Montana State University Billings. A minimum of 30 semester credits and satisfactory completion of all degree requirements in a prescribed bachelor's degree program must be earned at Montana State University Billings. This may include up to 10 semester credits of residency in the major area of study and up to six semester credits of residency in the minor area of study as determined by individual departments. Students should contact their major and/or minor department advisors to determine the major and/or minor requirements.

At least 36 semester credits must be in upper division courses (numbered 300 or above), and at least 12 semester credits of these upper division credits must be in the subject major program.

A transfer student may not use community college or other two-year college credits for or in lieu of upper division credits required at MSU Billings.

Except when used to satisfy the requirements of a specified teaching major or minor, not more than a total of eight semester credits in any combination of the following may be counted in the minimum of 120 semester credits required for graduation:

music performance groups, drama and ensemble music credits, and physical education activity credits.

Not more than 20 semester credits of courses taken on a Pass/No Pass basis may be counted toward graduation.

### Early College (Dual Enrollment) Student Graduation

In accordance with Board of Regents Admission Policy 301, students must have graduated from a high school accredited by the state accrediting agency, or have a high school equivalency completion assessment designated by the Montana Board of Public Education, to be admitted to any campus of the Montana University System.

Early college/dual enrollment students to MSU Billings and City College at MSU Billings are not fully admitted in accordance with this policy until these credentials are presented.

Students who are earning credits while still in high school are encouraged to submit a graduation application and participate in ceremonies if they have earned enough college level credits to do so. However conferral of a certificate of technical studies, certificate of applied science, associate of applied science, associate, or bachelor's degree(s) will only be posted to a student's transcript after receipt of these official credentials required for full admission.

### Second Degree

A student may earn a second bachelor's degree at Montana State University Billings by taking a minimum of an additional 30 semester credits in residence beyond the 120 semester credits required for the first bachelor's degree. Once the first bachelor's degree has been awarded, the student must earn an additional 30 semester credits regardless of the total number of credits earned within the first degree. Students at Montana State University Billings may earn the two degrees concurrently. In order to earn two bachelor's degrees concurrently, a student

must earn a minimum of 150 semester credits. The student must meet all other requirements for the second degree. Students transferring to MSU Billings for the second degree must have earned the first degree at an institution accredited by its regional accrediting (p. 1) association. Montana State University Billings will not grant a student a second degree if the second degree is the same degree and from the same Montana State University Billings College that awarded the first degree.

Students who have previously earned a master's degree or a more advanced degree may be eligible to earn a bachelor's degree. The bachelor's degree must be outside of the major concentration of the advanced degree, and the student must earn no less than 30 additional semester credits at Montana State University Billings while meeting all the requirements for the bachelor's degree.

## Posthumous Degree

MSU Billings considers requests for awarding of a posthumous degree based on the following: the student was enrolled at the time of death, was in good academic standing, and had completed two-thirds of the requirements for the degree to be awarded. In the case of graduate students, the major professor, department head, and college dean should recommend to the Graduate Committee and the University administration potential recipients of posthumous graduate degrees.

## Graduating with Honors

Graduation with honors will apply to students who earn their first and/or second bachelor's degree at MSU Billings. Students who earn a second bachelor's degree at MSU Billings will have all of the grades earned in their first degree included in the determination of the recognition of academic honors. In all cases and for all degrees or certificates, transfer credits earned elsewhere to this University must be calculated with the credits earned at MSU Billings in order to qualify for academic honors.

Depending on total academic undergraduate grade point average a student seeking a bachelor's degree may be granted graduation with the designation of academic honors: cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude. Again, these designations include all undergraduate academic work accomplished by the student, transfer work as well as academic work done at MSU Billings.

The designation of cum laude signifies a grade point average of 3.50 to 3.74 for a student's entire undergraduate academic record. Magna cum laude signifies a grade point average of 3.75 to 3.99 for a student's entire academic record. Summa cum laude signifies a grade point average of 4.00 for a student's entire academic record. These designations are awarded to bachelor degree candidates only.

The designation of honors and high honors is awarded to associate degree or certificate recipients. Honors recognizes students with a total academic grade point average of 3.50 to 3.74; high honors recognizes students with a total academic grade point average of 3.75 to 4.00. Again, this designation is for associate degree or certificate recipients and based on their total cumulative grade point average which includes transfer work as well as academic work done at MSU Billings.

Lists of students receiving academic honors are provided to academic departments and available in the Registrar's Office by April 1 and are calculated using the academic grades on the student transcript at that time. Students are urged to check the list, as this is the official list used to designate honors for convocations and for Commencement.

## Commencement

Commencement is held once each year at the end of the Spring term. The date of graduation and the degree a student is to receive will be posted on the student's Official Academic Record at the end of the semester in which the student meets all requirements. The academic transcript is the official record of degree conferral. Diplomas are ordered after all degrees are awarded. Printing and preparation of the diplomas takes several months. Students will be notified when they are available for

pick up. Diplomas not picked up will be mailed. Students should acquaint themselves with their specific majors' academic requirements. An advisor is assigned to every student; however, it is the student's responsibility to know and meet the requirements for graduation.

A student who intends to graduate with a master's degree, bachelor's degree, associate degree or certificate will be permitted to participate in the Spring Semester Commencement Ceremony only if the student complies with the following procedure:

1. Students are to file their Application for Graduation the semester before the semester of graduation. Application forms are available online at [www.msubitillings.edu](http://www.msubitillings.edu) (<http://www.msubitillings.edu>) Refer to the academic calendar for due dates. The graduation fee should be paid at the Cashier's Window and the application needs to be filed with the Registrar's Office, McMullen first floor west. This application is good for one year from the date of information supplied by the student on the Application for Graduation in the blank labeled "Semester/Year Graduating." After one calendar year from that date, the application will be destroyed and the student will need to re-apply and re-pay the fee. If the fee presents a hardship, please contact the Registrar.

The Application for Graduation is required in order to prepare and forward the Final Evaluation for Graduation to the necessary offices for approval. A student who submits an Application for Graduation after the designated due date will be assessed a late graduation application fee and may have the final evaluation for graduation processed the following semester and will graduate at the end of that particular semester.

The Final Evaluation will be circulated during the student's final semester. The Final Evaluation must be completed, must have all the required signatures, and must be returned to the Registrar's Office before notification of the student's graduation is posted on the student's Official Academic Record.

2. Student must meet, by the end of the Summer Session, all of the graded requirements for graduation or be enrolled in Pass/No Pass coursework (excluding student teaching) the following Fall Semester and meet all the requirements for graduation by the end of that Fall Semester.

Diplomas are generally mailed near the end of the next academic term (i.e., Fall graduates in June, Spring graduates in January).

**Please note:** Certain departments may have additional academic requirements that must be met before students will be permitted to graduate and/or participate in the commencement ceremony. Students should check with their major department for any additional departmental requirements.

The determination for honors for students who will graduate at the end of the Spring Semester or Summer Session will be calculated on the most recent semester completed. Should a student's cumulative grade point average (including any transfer work) at the end of the Spring Semester or Summer Session entitle the student to an honors designation, this recognition will be recorded on the student's Montana State University Billings academic record.

## Release of Information

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Registrar's Office at Montana State University Billings may disclose directory information from the educational records of a student who is in attendance at the University. If the student wishes to have all directory information excluded as public information, the student must notify the Registrar's Office, McMullen Hall first floor west, within the first two weeks of the current academic year. This notice is good until revoked in writing.

A complete copy of the MSU Billings' FERPA policy is available upon request at the Registrar's Office or online at [www.msubillings.edu](http://www.msubillings.edu) (<http://www.msubillings.edu>)