NUSTEP STUDENT HANDBOOK

Discover Imagine Succeed

www.Niagara.edu/NUSTEP

Office of Continuing Education
NUSTEP
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM

What is NUSTEP?

NUSTEP is a cooperative program between Niagara University and select high schools that enables qualified students to enroll in NU courses, earning college credits while remaining at their high school. The program seeks to avoid duplication in secondary and post-secondary programs, to provide qualified students with the opportunity to accelerate their academic pursuits, and to provide enriched instruction in the secondary school. The program serves as a bridge between high school and college.

NUSTEP is accredited through the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. NACEP is a professional organization for high schools and colleges that fosters and supports rigorous concurrent enrollment courses throughout the country, NACEP serves as a national accrediting body and supports all members by providing standards of excellence, research, communication and advocacy.

How does NUSTEP work?

Students who register and pay the corresponding tuition will take courses that are taught on the high school campus by a certified high school instructor. The instructors must use the course descriptions, outlines, syllabi and exams approved by the sponsoring college of the university. Examinations and term papers are graded by the high school instructor and then forwarded to the appropriate department chairperson for review. Grade rosters are completed by the instructor and forwarded to the university. If the course is completed successfully, the student earns college credit.

What if I don’t do well in the course?

Most students do very well in NUSTEP courses because:

• They are familiar with their high school campus.
• They probably know the instructor who will be teaching the course.
• They have been recommended by those at their school who monitor their academic progress.

However, your instructor will monitor everyone’s progress in the class, and will notify those students who have a D or an F at midterm. This will allow you to discuss with your instructor what is needed to bring your grade up to passing. **If you wish to drop the course, you must complete a NUSTEP Course Withdrawal Form.** This form is available online and a copy of it is printed at the back of this handbook. The date that you initiate the withdrawal process, complete the form and give it to your instructor who will determine whether you are withdrawn from the course or whether you receive an F.

**Do not disregard this policy; it can become very costly (financially and academically) if you disregard it.**

Who can apply?

Qualified students will be notified by the course instructor or school counselor of the opportunity to participate in the NUSTEP program. Students should be in their senior year of high school, and be academically prepared for collegiate-level course work. Academically ready juniors will be considered. This decision is made by the guidance department in conjunction with the local high school instructor who will teach the NUSTEP course. Students should demonstrate motivation to work hard and be challenged, as college courses will make greater demands overall on a student.

(Note: Acceptance in a NUSTEP course is not a guarantee of admission to Niagara University as an undergraduate degree candidate.)

Registration and Payment

A representative from Niagara University may visit your classroom at the beginning of the semester in which the class is being offered. The representative will explain the benefits of participating and facilitate completion of the registration form.

A video of the registration process is available at [www.niagara.edu/nustep](http://www.niagara.edu/nustep). Please tell your parents that this video is available so that they may be aware of the program requirements, including participation, payment, credits and transfer of credits.

The registration instructions and form are available online at [www.niagara.edu/nustep](http://www.niagara.edu/nustep). Please complete the form online. Once you have submitted the form, you will receive an email confirming your registration.

• If you pay by credit card, you will do that online. Directly beneath the online registration button, you will see the payment online.
• If you do not pay by credit card, you will receive a bill in the mail. It is your responsibility to send your check or money order to the university by the due date.
• If you are on free or reduced lunch, you must:
  • Check with your high school instructor to see if they prefer to send a master list of all F/R lunch students to the university. If they do not, then you must.
  • Return a copy of your F/R lunch approval letter with the bill you will receive so that a waiver may be posted to your account.
• If you do not pay your bill either by credit card, check or F/R lunch approval, your course will be dropped and you will not receive any college credit.

If the check you submit to the university for payment is returned for nonsufficient funds from the bank, you will be contacted by the university. You must provide a new check to the university. Failure to do so will result in your account balance being sent to collection.

The registration form will be due on a specified date. This date will be posted on the website and on the registration form instructions.

Payment for the course or courses is required by a specific date, usually Oct. 1-15 for fall courses and March 1-15 for spring courses. If payment is not received by this date, the student will be dropped from the course roster. **You cannot purchase credits after the due date or at the end of the course.** That is not how college works. Although you sat in class and did all the work, unless you paid for the course at the appropriate time, you will not get the credits.
University credit. Low cost. Early completion of college.

What if I decide not to attend Niagara University?
The course credit that you will receive upon successful completion of the course is transferable to other colleges and universities. Many colleges and universities offer programs similar to NUSTEP and will accept credits from other schools’ programs. However, it is not guaranteed that they will accept your credits. It is at the discretion of the other school to accept the course work for credit. You must complete a transcript request form that is available from your high school instructor or directly from the university. Contact the Records Office at 716.286.8731 or online at www.niagara.edu/records. Completion of this form, along with the required payment, must be sent to the Records Office at Niagara University. An official copy of your NU transcript will be issued and mailed to the designated school(s) you have requested it be sent to.

What if my college will not accept my Niagara University credits? Some schools will not accept any college credits. You may be exempted from certain similar courses or you may be allowed to take a higher level course as a result of your NUSTEP participation. It is entirely up to your college. Some schools will require you to provide them with the course syllabus. Your instructor can assist with that.

It is important that you have followed through with your intended college regarding your Niagara University credits. You must:

• ensure that your NU transcript was received by your college (see above).

• talk with the appropriate official at your college and explain your participation in the program.

• provide the syllabus and/or course description (from the NU catalog) to your college, if necessary.

• call the NU representative and request that he/she contact your college if you have difficulty with this process.

Will my credits be wasted if they are not accepted by my college? Absolutely not. The credits are yours, you earned them, and if for some reason you transfer to another school, you may be able to transfer your NU credits. Each time you apply to a college or university, you must remember to complete a transcript request form to have your grades sent to the new school, because once a college receives a transcript from a student, it becomes the property of that college and it will not forward the transcript to any other schools. Additionally, the educational experience of participating in a college-level class in high school will serve you well regardless of whether your credits were accepted or not. They are your credits for life and may come into play further in your educational career.

Where can I get more information?
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NUSTEP Advantages

• University credit. University credit is awarded for all courses successfully completed in this program. Students wishing to transfer NUSTEP credit to another college or university should check with that particular institution to ensure that it will be accepted.

• Low cost. High school students currently pay $60 per semester hour for each course taken. That’s $180 for a three-credit-hour course, and $240 for a four-credit-hour course.

• Early Completion of College. Many students who participate in the NUSTEP program will graduate from college early by a semester or more, thereby saving more money.

STUDENT PRIVILEGES/OBTAINING A STUDENT ID CARD

Student privileges are listed on the website. Please visit www.niagara.edu/nustep for the latest privileges associated with being a NUSTEP student.

In order to take advantage of the various resources that are available to you, you will need to make an appointment with the Office of Information Technology at 716.286.8040 in order to secure your NU photo ID card.

• You will need a current picture ID (driver’s license or high school ID)

Once you have your NU photo ID, you will be able to utilize the student privileges listed on the website, and also have funds placed on your ID card that you may use in the dining areas and campus store. The Student Accounts Office located in the Butler Building (near Health Services) will be able to assist you with this.

INFORMATION ABOUT NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

The university undergraduate catalog is the source for all policies, procedures and other pieces of information pertinent to the administration of an academic institution. It may be accessed at www.niagara.edu/literature-and-forms. Listed below are the pertinent pieces of information from the undergraduate catalog that students should be familiar with and abide by.

Code of Conduct

This program is designed to be both rigorous and rewarding. Students participating in NUSTEP seek a challenging, engaging, educational experience and it is expected that these students will adhere to all university rules and regulations as well as their high school code of conduct.

Conduct that is disrespectful or in violation of the rights of others, including but not limited to verbal, physical, or sexual harassment and bias-related graffiti will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action and
sanctions, including possible dismissal from the program. Students are expected to be respectful of all faculty, staff and other students they come in contact with both in and out of the classroom.

Academic Integrity

The integrity of an academic community necessitates the full and correct citation of ideas, methodologies and research findings to the appropriate source. This is necessary to protect the original work, whether it is found in reference material, other published matter, or unpublished communication from faculty, other scholars and fellow students. In addition, you can promote academic honesty by protecting your work from inappropriate use. Academic honesty is essential to ensure the validity of the grading system and to maintain a high standard of academic excellence. The principal violations of academic honesty are cheating and plagiarism.

- **Cheating** includes the unauthorized use of certain materials, information, or devices in writing examinations, or in preparing papers or other assignments. Any student who aids another student in such dishonesty is also guilty of cheating. Other possible forms of cheating include submitting the same work in more than one class without permission, and fabricating or altering references or actual research results.

- **Plagiarism** is the presentation of ideas, words and opinions of someone else as one’s own words. The offense does not extend solely to directly quoted materials presented without documentation. Paraphrased material, even if rendered in the student’s own words, must be attributed to the originator of the thought.

You should be well informed of the policy on academic dishonesty prior to the start of the course.

An instructor who suspects academic dishonesty will present the allegation and any corresponding evidence to the student. The student will be given the opportunity to respond and the instructor may accept or reject the response. If the response is rejected, the instructor assigns a penalty.

Penalties for cases of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following, according to the severity of the offense:

- Resubmitting an essay or rewriting an examination
- Assigning an F for the paper, project, or examination
- Assigning an F for the course (N.B. second offenders receive an automatic F)

- The high school may also impose penalties if it is deemed warranted

The instructor will submit a report of the offense to the NUSTEP coordinator and the faculty liaison during the semester in which it occurred. The complete policy on academic integrity and the appeal process may be found in the college catalog.

VISITING CAMPUS AND PARKING

If you plan to visit the campus to use any of the facilities, please stop at the Campus Safety building, located directly across from the Dwyer Ice Arena, for a parking pass. A day pass is free. If you attempt to park without a valid parking pass, you will probably receive a ticket. Tickets cost anywhere from $15 to $25 depending on the violation. Your student account will have a “hold” placed on it until you pay your ticket, and you will not be able to send transcripts to other schools until it is paid.

The campus map printed on the inside cover of the handbook will assist you in locating buildings on campus.

GRADING/ACCESSING GRADES

A letter grade will be assigned to you by your high school instructor. Your final grade may comprise many different factors, such as tests, quizzes, reports and/or projects. Your instructor will provide the grading details to you on the course syllabus.

At the end of your course, your grades will be posted online. They will not be mailed to you.

In order to access your grades, you must have a user ID and a password.

- **User ID (or username):**
  - Will always be a lowercase “s” followed by your seven-digit NU student ID number. This number is given to you on your ID card and it is also found on the instructor’s roster. If you lose your ID number, your instructor can help you.

- **Password is obtained by:**
  - Going to [www.niagara.edu/purplepass-account](http://www.niagara.edu/purplepass-account)
  - Click on the right sidebar: “new student” to activate Purple Pass
  - Enter username (ID number) and your date of birth
  - You will be given a random password to use. You should change it as soon as possible.

- Once you have your password, go to [www.niagara.edu/myNU](http://www.niagara.edu/myNU). Click on Web Advisor — enter your ID and password again.
  - Click on student.
  - Click on grades. Pick the correct semester.
  - Your grades should pop up.

  - Your username and password gets you into all of NU’s student systems.

TRANSCRIPTS OF RECORD

Once you have completed a course through NUSTEP, you will have an official record at Niagara University. Similar to your high school transcript, you will now have a college transcript. It is your responsibility to insure that the college you wish to attend receives an official copy of your transcript so that they can evaluate the coursework you have completed and possibly award you credit.

Transcripts of course work taken are available in the Records Office. Official transcripts may be requested using the transcript request form available online ([www.niagara.edu/records](http://www.niagara.edu/records)) or in the Records Office. Your instructor should also have a copy of the transcript request form that you may fill out. There is a charge of $5 for each official transcript requested. You will need to request that an official transcript be sent to the college/university you have decided to attend. Many students think this is done automatically, but it is not. You are the only person who may request that your transcript be sent somewhere. There is also a link on the NUSTEP website to request a transcript.
STUDENT RIGHTS UNDER FERPA
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law, states that students have certain rights pertaining to the disclosure and access to their education records.

- As a high school student, your parents have the right to inspect your educational records until you are 18 years old.
- However, when you enroll in NUSTEP, a dual enrollment program, your parents no longer have any FERPA rights to the college level course(s).
- Your parents cannot ask your NUSTEP instructor how you are doing in the course, or what your grade is. The instructor is only allowed to provide any observation that he/she has not committed to writing. Once it is in writing, it is an education record. Your instructor needs your permission to provide any information to your parents about the college level course(s).
- In order to allow for the free flow of communication between your parents, the high school, your dual enrollment instructor and Niagara University, you will need to sign a waiver which means you agree to waive your FERPA rights which will then allow those stated parties to discuss your dual enrollment course(s), grades, etc.
- The FERPA waiver is available on the NUSTEP website.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS BY NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
You will be asked, at the end of every course, to complete an evaluation of the course and your instructor. These evaluations contain very important information and will help to improve the program and the delivery of the course content. Please complete the evaluation when you receive it and answer the questions honestly. These evaluations will be collected either by your instructor or another high school administrator and returned to the university for review and assessment.

You will also have the opportunity to evaluate the NUSTEP program after you graduate from high school and again when you are in college by participating in online surveys. Please be sure to complete and return these surveys as well, as they are instrumental in measuring the success of this program and will allow the university the opportunity to ensure that the program is indeed helping students achieve their higher education goals.

The university reserves the right to change the program or other provisions described herein as deemed necessary.

NUSTEP WITHDRAWAL POLICY (Effective Fall 2011)
1. You must complete a NUSTEP course withdrawal form and hand it in to your instructor in order to officially withdraw from a NUSTEP course. You should be aware of the penalties involved should the decision to drop/withdraw a course occur after the first month of classes. The following dates will determine the outcome of the withdrawal:

FALL COURSES (fall courses run from early September through late January) If you withdraw:
- Until Sept. 30, there will be no charge.
- Course will be dropped. No academic penalty. Full refund if class was paid for.
- Between Oct. 1 and Jan. 1, you will receive a W on your transcript. No refunds will be made.
- After Jan. 1, the instructor will inform you of your grade and sign off either passing or failing. If the instructor signs off failing, you will receive an F on your transcript. The dean will also sign off during this period. (This was recommended by the advisory committee.)

SPRING COURSES (spring courses run from late January through June) If you withdraw:
- Until Feb. 28 for spring classes, there will be no charge.
- Course will be dropped. No academic penalty. Full refund if class was paid for.
- Between March 1 and June 1, you will receive a W on your transcript. No refunds will be made.
- After June 1, the instructor will inform you of your grade and sign off either passing or failing. If the instructor signs off failing, you will receive an F on your transcript. The dean will also sign off during this period.

FULL-YEAR COURSES (full-year courses run from early September through early June) If you withdraw:
- Until Sept. 30, there will be no charge.
- Between Oct. 1 and May 1, you will receive a W on your transcript. No refunds.
- After May 1, the instructor will inform you of your grade and sign off either passing or failing. If the instructor signs off failing, you will receive an F on your transcript. The dean will also sign off during this period.

2. The instructor signs and sends the withdrawal form to the NUSTEP coordinator, who sends the form to the appropriate dean (if required). The dean returns the form with his/her decision on the form to coordinator.
3. Coordinator sends the withdrawal form (with add/drop form) to the Records Office.
4. A copy of the withdrawal form will then be filed in the NUSTEP Office (with copy of add/drop attached) with NUSTEP registration forms.
5. This policy will be included in the student handbook, the instructor handbook and on the website. It will also be printed on the withdrawal form.
6. The form will be available online on the NUSTEP web page for students and high school instructors. It may be sent electronically, faxed or mailed to the university NUSTEP Office.
7. Withdrawals will not be approved to avoid failure. Unofficial withdrawals will result in the grade of F being entered on the transcripts.
NUSTEP MIDTERM POLICY (Effective Fall 2011)

Your NUSTEP instructor will notify you if you have a D or an F at midterm.

- This will allow you the opportunity to discuss with your instructor the possibility of improving your grade to passing prior to making a decision to withdraw from the course.
- In order to accommodate all the various start and end dates of NUSTEP classes, the following dates will be considered as midterm:

FALL CLASSES — MIDTERM: Nov. 15
- You will have from Nov. 15 to Jan. 1 to bring grade up or withdraw with a W.

SPRING CLASSES — MIDTERM: April 15
- You will have from April 15 to June 1 to bring grade up or withdraw with a W.

FULL-YEAR CLASSES — MIDTERM: March 15
- You will have from March 15 to May 1 to bring grade up or withdraw with a W.

NUSTEP COURSE WITHDRAWAL FORM

NB: A student must complete a NUSTEP course withdrawal form and hand it in to the instructor in order to officially withdraw from a NUSTEP course.

Today's date: ________________ High school: ________________

Student name: ___________________________ ID #: ___________________________

Please complete appropriate section using today's date:

If today's date falls within:
Sept. 1-30 (fall classes)/Feb. 1-28 (spring classes)/Sept. 1-30 (full year)

Instructor's signature and date ___________________________
Course number and section ___________________________
(Course will not appear on transcript)

If today's date falls within:
Oct. 1-Jan. 1 (fall classes)/March 1-June 1 (spring classes)/Oct. 1-May 1 (full year)

Instructor's signature and date ___________________________
Course number and section ___________________________
(Course will appear on transcript with a W)

If today's date falls within:
Jan. 2-31 (fall classes)/June 2-30 (spring classes)/May 2-June 30 (full year)

NB: Student will receive a grade of W if passing, or a grade of F if failing

_____ Withdrawing Passing (W)   _____ Withdrawing Not Passing (F)

Instructor's signature and date ___________________________
Course number and section ___________________________
(Course will appear on transcript with a W or an F)

Dean's decision: ___________________________

Dean's signature and date: ___________________________

(Instructor: Please fax completed form to the NUSTEP Office — 716.286.8210 or email to: cds@niagara.edu)