

Integrated Baccalaureate and Master's Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences



The Integrated Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Program in Liberal Arts and Sciences at Western Illinois University provides an opportunity for outstanding undergraduate Liberal Arts and Sciences majors to complete both a bachelor's and master's of Liberal Arts and Sciences (BLAS and MLAS) degree in five years. This multidisciplinary program promotes an advanced level of critique, analysis and comparison across disciplines. Students explore the broad questions faced by human beings, as well as the specific means by which individual disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics have addressed these questions.

Admission Requirements

Undergraduate Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) students may apply for admission to the Integrated Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Program (IBMP) after completing 60 semester hours (SH) of undergraduate coursework, of which a minimum of 30 SH must be at Western Illinois University. Applicants for admission to the integrated program in LAS must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 and a major GPA of at least 3.25.

To apply to the integrated program, students need to submit the following documents to the WIU School of Graduate Studies:

- A School of Graduate Studies application form (available at wiu.edu/grad)
- Official transcripts from each college or university previously attended
- A one- to two-page personal statement that explains their larger personal career goals and how the MLAS degree will further those objectives
- An academic paper of at least 5-10 pages that demonstrates an ability to develop a thesis and make a sustained, well-researched argument
- Three confidential letters of recommendation

Applications will not be reviewed until all materials have been received.

Benefits of an Integrated Degree

- **Start graduate courses earlier** – Upon acceptance, integrated degree students may take up to three graduate courses that can count toward both undergraduate and MLAS degrees (called “bridge” courses). As a result, integrated degree students get a jump start on their graduate degree and eventual career.
- **Save money** – Integrated degree students have 9 SH fewer of tuition/fee expenses, and

they can lock in the tuition rate in the graduate catalog from when they first continually enroll at WIU.

- **Acquire a unique credential** – Integrated degree students acquire concrete, practical language skills, while developing higher order analytical skills, as they work across disciplines. This broad range of skills and flexibility is in demand by employers.

Integrated Degree Requirements

Admission must be granted by the WIU School of Graduate Studies before a student will be allowed to enroll in IBMP “bridge” (“B”) courses. Students may begin taking bridge courses after the completion of 90 SH. Students in the integrated program may use up to 9 SH of bridge courses to satisfy both the BLAS and MLAS degrees. LAS 495G/B and LAS 501/501B, 502/502B, and 503/503B may be taken as bridge courses to fulfill requirements in the integrated program.

Undergraduate Degree Requirements– Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The minimum semester-hour requirement for the Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences (BLAS) degree is 120 SH. All students seeking the integrated BLAS/MLAS degree must fulfill the following for the BLAS degree (for a complete explanation of requirements, please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog):

- I. University General Education and College of Arts and Sciences Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences Requirements (57 SH)
- II. Core Courses (6 SH)
 - LAS 195 Introduction to Liberal Arts and Sciences (3 SH)
 - LAS 495/495B Liberal Arts and Sciences Senior Capstone (3 SH)

Contact Information

Questions about the program:
Liberal Arts and Sciences Program
Professor Amy Carr, graduate director
Morgan Hall 203A
(309) 298-2507
grad-las@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/las

General admission questions:
School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad

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- III. Emphasis of Study (select Multidisciplinary Studies, Environmental Studies, paired minor, or Peace Corps emphasis; at least 18 SH must be at the 300 or 400 level) (at least 33 SH)
- IV. Minor (minimum of 16-24 SH)
- V. Open electives (0-8 SH)

Graduate Degree Requirements—Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MLAS) program's core courses provide a broad overview of the three areas of the arts and sciences: humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and mathematics. The electives allow students to develop their interdisciplinary interests through courses across the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Finally, the exit option is an opportunity to apply coursework through a thesis, applied project or internship experience, depending on the student's educational, personal and career goals.

The minimum semester-hour requirement for the master's degree is 33 SH. All students seeking the integrated BLAS/MLAS degree must fulfill the following for the MLAS degree:

- I. Core Courses (9 SH)
 - LAS 501/501B Tradition and Change: Focus on the History and Philosophy of the Sciences (3 SH)
 - LAS 502/502B Tradition and Change: Focus on the Social Sciences (3 SH)
 - LAS 503/503B Tradition and Change: Focus on the Humanities (3 SH)
- II. Any CAS post-baccalaureate certificate and/or directed electives approved by the director of Liberal Arts and Sciences – no more than 3 SH of electives may be independent work (18 SH)
- III. Select one of the following exit options (6 SH):
 - *Thesis*
LAS 667 Thesis (6 SH)
 - *Internship*
LAS 695 Internship Preparation (3 SH)
LAS 696 Internship (3 SH)
 - *Applied Project*
LAS 699 Applied Project (6 SH)

Total Program: 33 SH

Distinctive Features

The BLAS/MLAS integrated program has many distinctive features and opportunities for its students:

- **Personalized Education** – The strong commitment of WIU College of Arts and Sciences faculty to undergraduate teaching and student learning is evidenced by its small class sizes, which make it possible for students to participate actively in class discussions, and for faculty to get to know students on an individual basis. Faculty members are accessible to students, and individualized advising and career counseling are provided by the LAS program.



- **Flexible Program Structure** – For their exit option, students can write a thesis, develop an applied project or pursue an internship. Through a close mentoring relationship with a faculty director, individuals choose and tailor their exit options to meet their personal or professional goals, including preparation for doctoral work, a new career or advancement within a current career.
- **Research and Scholarly Activities** – There are many activities in which students in the program can participate: annual departmental conferences; WIU Graduate Research Conference; departmental, college and University speaker events; professionalization workshops; and graduate organizations, clubs. LAS students are active in the LAS Graduate Student Organization (LASGO) in Macomb and the LAS Student Organization (LASSO) in the Quad Cities.

Career Opportunities

An MLAS degree prepares graduates to adapt to different social and professional contexts and to apply their diverse skills and knowledge as creative problem solvers. Alumni are currently work in the following areas: career advising, customer service, data management, education, human resources, non-profit administration, sales and marketing and social and human services.

Assistantships and Other Funding Opportunities

There are numerous funding opportunities available for graduate students in the program through awards, scholarships and fellowships in the graduate school, as well as University-wide assistantships.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status.

“The Liberal Arts and Sciences integrated program has provided me with many opportunities. I enjoyed taking graduate courses as an undergraduate because the courses were challenging and rewarding. Also, the dual credits and time length for the program were appealing because it allowed me to not only challenge myself as a student but also consider my financial needs. Overall, this program has allowed me to customize my degree without financially straining myself.”

– Ashley Clinton, BLAS/MLAS alumna '14 '17