



Baccalaureate

Unique and
Interdisciplinary
Studies

partners in learning

a guide for faculty mentors of students

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1 history and mission

history - a brief overview

In 1971, in an effort to better integrate the various colleges comprising the CUNY system, the Board of Higher Education authorized the City University of New York to award a University-wide Bachelor's degree. This degree program was known as the CUNY Baccalaureate Program; in 2008 the name was changed to CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies (still commonly known also as CUNY BA, CUNY BA/BS or CUNY Baccalaureate) to better represent its specialized role within the university system. Regardless of the name change, CUNY Baccalaureate continues its original mission of permitting students a flexible and academically challenging way to earn their degrees while giving them a share of the responsibility for the design and content of those degrees.

CUNY BA offers highly motivated, academically strong students an individualized program of study. It is designed for students who have well-formulated academic and career goals and the vision and drive to design with CUNY faculty mentors their own unique and interdisciplinary areas of concentration. CUNY Baccalaureate is for students who want areas of concentration (majors) not available in typical departments at any of the four-year CUNY colleges. Each student can pursue one or two areas of concentration; for each area of concentration, students must have at least one faculty mentor (two, in the cases of interdisciplinary areas).

Each semester, approximately 600 students are enrolled. Admission and graduation patterns have been solid for many years; approximately 200 students enter each year and the same number of students graduate annually. Most CUNY BA students are working adults, and many are raising families: 80 percent are over 25 years old (49 percent are over 35 years old); and a significant number are returning to school, often after a hiatus of from five to thirty years. On average, they graduate with their degrees in 2.2 years. The graduation rate over the past twenty years has been between 65 and 72 percent (notably higher than the graduation rates for the rest of CUNY, SUNY, and New York's independent colleges). Approximately 50 percent graduate with honors.

The majority of students who are attracted to CUNY BA tend to have clear career paths in mind before they enter the program. Many are either seeking career advancement within the field in which they are already employed while others are seeking to make a specific career change. Upon graduation, more than half report receiving promotions or raises in their current positions or starting new careers. Moreover, annual alumni surveys show that the majority of CUNY BA students report that they are working in fields related to the areas of concentration they completed in the program.

Over the nearly four decades of its existence, more than six thousand CUNY BA students have completed Baccalaureate degrees in a dazzling array of student generated interdisciplinary subjects and areas of study. While each student is pursuing a unique area of concentration, a few broad categories of recent academic interest can be identified: Business Management, Computers and Entrepreneurship; Communications and Journalism; Creative and Multi-Media Arts; Cultural, Ethnic and Urban Studies; Education; Health; International Affairs; Psychology, Counseling and Social Work; Social Justice; and Sustainability.

mission statement

More than 35 years after it was founded, the program continues to have three basic goals:

- to encourage students to take advantage of the extraordinary resources and learning opportunities available at the City University's 17 colleges and at The Graduate Center;
- to allow self-directed, academically talented students to design an individualized program of study that complements their academic, professional, and personal goals and, in many instances, allows them to complete their Baccalaureate degrees after they have “stopped out” of undergraduate education for a variety of reasons; and
- to foster intellectual exploration and responsible educational innovation.

2 the academic dimension

academic standards

CUNY Baccalaureate maintains high academic standards. To be eligible for admission, students must become matriculated at a CUNY college, have passed (or been exempted from) all the required CUNY entrance exams, and have earned at least 15 credits with a minimum grade point average of 2.50 overall and on recent work (the average GPA upon admission is 3.2). Once admitted, students are required to maintain a 2.50 average overall and in their area(s) of concentration.

Students take a minimum of 60 credits in the liberal arts and sciences for the BS, 90 for the BA; within those credits, they satisfy a 13-course distribution requirement. All courses for the distribution must be taken for letter grades. Students also complete one or two areas of concentration (similar to a single or double major), earning a minimum of a C- for each course and a GPA in the concentration of at least 2.5.

Ninety credits for the degree must be earned in regular course work, thirty credits can be earned in non-collegiate work (see next paragraph), and half of any area of concentration must be completed in CUNY as a CUNY Baccalaureate student. All courses for an area of concentration must be approved by a CUNY faculty mentor and taken for letter grades at senior colleges that offer the appropriate bachelor's degree.

Students may earn up to 30 credits for non-collegiate work (formerly known as non-classroom work) such as credit by examination and military credits. Up to 15 of the 30 non-collegiate credits may be awarded for prior experiential learning (life experience) based on faculty evaluation of a portfolio documenting what the student has learned. About 15 percent of CUNY Baccalaureate students earn some credit for non-collegiate work.

CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies degrees are awarded by The City University of New York; the program is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and by the New York State Education Department.

encouraging academic growth

CUNY Baccalaureate students are actively encouraged to take advantage of the enormous range of academic opportunities offered in CUNY and to sample its rich variety by taking courses at different colleges. Each semester at least one-third of CUNY Baccalaureate students attend a college other than their home college, while one in five take courses at two or more campuses.

By allowing students to design their own area of concentration with guidance from a CUNY faculty mentor from the pertinent discipline, CUNY BA/BS promotes academic inquiry and growth.

Measures of the success of this approach include: an average graduation rate of 69 percent for the past 20 years; the average time to graduation of 2.2 years; the fact that more than half of the students graduate with honors; and the large number of alumni who earn graduate degrees. In addition, CUNY BA students are regularly recipients of John F. Kennedy, Jr. Fellows Program Scholarships, Thurgood Marshall Scholarships, Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Research Fellowships, Fulbright Fellowships, Mellon Fellowships, Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Fellowships, CUNY Women's Coalition Scholarships, CUNY Pipeline Fellowships, Women's Educational Forum Scholarships, Minority Access to Research Careers Program Scholarships, CUNY Student Senate Awards, CUNY Alumni Scholarships, CUNY Study Abroad Travel Grants, and Phi Beta Kappa and other honor society memberships.

The creativity of CUNY Baccalaureate students is demonstrated by the range of areas of concentration they have designed including, for example: Art Conservation, Basque Language and Culture, Biochemical Toxicology, Community Development and Technology, Corporate Fitness Management, Culinary Journalism, Disability Studies, Dispute Resolution, Engineering Psychology, Film and Cultural Theory, Graphic Arts Management, Health Care Reform, Marketing and Anthropology, Military History, Museum and Exhibition Design, Systems Ecology, Web-Based Information Technology, and Yoga and Eastern Philosophy.

With permission of the appropriate graduate department and the program's Academic Director, students may take graduate courses for undergraduate credit at CUNY senior colleges and at The Graduate Center. Students are also eligible to take classes at the CUNY School of Professional Studies and the City College Worker Education Center.

CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies encourages students to explore areas of inquiry with which they have little or no prior experience by permitting them to take up to 12 elective credits on a Pass/Fail basis, provided that this option is available at the college where the course is taught. Students are also encouraged to complement their regular classroom experiences with internships, independent study, study abroad, online courses, and honors and capstone seminars.

program grants

CUNY BA has received grants from the Diamond and Ford Foundations, the CUNY Consortium for the Study of Disabilities, the CUNY Workforce Development Initiative, the International Foundation for Study Abroad and the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning. In 2001, CUNY

received a million dollar grant from NASA to offer a University-wide degree in Space Science through CUNY BA/BS (led by faculty from Medgar Evers and City Colleges); the Middle Eastern and Middle Eastern American Center at The CUNY Graduate Center received a U.S. Department of Education Title VIA grant of over \$450,000 in 2005 to offer a University-wide degree in Middle Eastern Studies through-CUNY BA/BS. In January 2009, CUNY BA/BS received a grant from the International Foundation for Study Abroad, which will permit, over a two-year period, nine grants of \$5,000 to \$5,500 each to students studying abroad for full semester programs.

the thomas w. smith academic fellowships

The Thomas W. Smith Academic Fellowships are made possible by the generosity of Mr. Thomas W. Smith. These Fellowships are competitive; award decisions are based primarily on academic performance, the applicant's essay, and a letter of recommendation from the faculty mentor. Both part-time and full-time students are eligible to apply. All CUNY Baccalaureate students receive the notice about the availability of the application in November (online and in print); applications are due in late February. All applications are reviewed by a scholarships sub-committee of the University Committee on CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies, and the final decision, based on its recommendation, is made by the entire Committee. Smith Fellows receive an award, covering tuition and some additional expenses, each term until they complete their degree contract requirements, subject to the availability of funds and maintenance of good academic standing. As of October 2009, 545 students have been named Smith Academic Fellows since the inception of the awards in 1994.

other cuny ba/bs scholarships

The following scholarships have also been established exclusively for CUNY BA/BS: the Harriet Brows Scholarships, the Daniel E. Smith Scholarships for Returning Women, and the Memorial Scholarships for Students in Education or Human Services. A recent addition, by an alumnus, is the Albert Simic Scholarship for Actors, the first CUNY BA/BS scholarship available to entering students. For graduating students, the CUNY Baccalaureate Alumni Association Fund supports outstanding graduates who will be continuing their studies in graduate programs. Five named awards presented at commencement are the Nan Bauer-Maglin Prize for Literary Studies, the Barbara Kneller Memorial Scholarship, the Abby Stein Scholarship, the Susan Palmer-Van Brackle Award, and the Dan Daley Award for Journalism.

3 partners in learning

faculty mentors

The heart of the CUNY Baccalaureate learning partnership is the relationship between students and their faculty mentors. Mentors often report that working with CUNY BA students is among their most valuable academic experiences. Faculty mentors assume the key academic responsibility of ensuring that their students' areas of concentration will prepare them for graduate work in their chosen field of study. Students must have at least one mentor with expertise in the area(s) of concentration they choose.

The relationship of mentors and students varies as greatly as the individuals involved. Factors that shape the relationship include a student's needs and strengths, the level of independence with which faculty mentors and students are comfortable, a student's preferred learning style, a mentor's supervisory style, and the amount of time a mentor can spare for this voluntary service.

The ideal mentor ensures that the student's area of concentration is academically sound, monitors the student's academic progress, and contacts the CUNY BA/BS's Academic Director with any questions or concerns. (The specific duties of faculty mentors are in Section 4.)

To be eligible to serve as mentors, faculty must have professorial rank or be lecturers with a full-time teaching position at one of the senior colleges within the City University. Currently over 400 CUNY faculty members are contributing their time and expertise to mentor CUNY Baccalaureate students; most are Full or Associate Professors.

With the mentor's guidance, the student selects the courses to be taken for the area. (The specific degree requirements for areas of concentration are in Section 5.) The general rule is simple: if the selected courses will not provide the student with the background and preparation needed for admission to a master's program, the area of concentration is not adequate or academically valid. The large percentage of alumni accepted into graduate programs shows that this responsibility is understood and conscientiously fulfilled.

campus coordinators and registrar contacts

Each undergraduate campus has a designated CUNY Baccalaureate Coordinator who serves as a link between the program's staff and the home college. On some campuses, that role is filled by a faculty member, and on others it is filled by an administrator. The Coordinators provide information to students, publicize the program, and help solve problems. Each Registrar's office also has at least one contact to assist CUNY BA/BS students with registration procedures. CUNY BA Campus Coordinators and Registrar Contacts are available as a resource to faculty mentors. Visit www.cunyba.cuny.edu for the most up-to-date directory of these liaisons.

the university committee on the cuny baccalaureate program

The University Committee on CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies is the governing body of the program, composed of faculty, students and administrators from across the University. The entire Committee advises the Academic Director on the administration, coordination and development of the program, and its faculty members officially recommend the awarding of degrees to the CUNY Board of Trustees. This committee is responsible for approving, auditing, and certifying the academic policies and procedures governing CUNY Baccalaureate and serves as an appeal body for programmatic matters, policies, and procedures. The Committee meets at least twice each semester.

The membership of the Committee numbers at least fourteen, not including two alternates:

- six faculty and two alternates from different disciplines chosen by the University Faculty Senate for staggered three-year terms;
- five CUNY BA/BS students nominated by the Academic Director and confirmed by the University Student Senate for one-year terms;

- the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (or his/her designee), ex officio;
- the President of The Graduate Center (or his/her designee), ex officio;
- a CUNY college president chosen by the Council of Presidents for a one-year term (or his/her designee)

Each academic year, the University Committee elects a chairperson from among the Committee's faculty members. Faculty who are interested in serving on this committee should contact the Chairperson of the University Faculty Senate.

cuny baccalaureate staff

Staff members include an Academic Director, Deputy Director, Senior Registrar, Associate Registrar, Admissions and Recruitment Coordinator, Recruiter, three Academic Advisors, two support staff members, and a part-time alumni/scholarships coordinator. The Academic Director reports to the Graduate School and University Center's Associate Provost. Visit www.cunyba.cuny.edu for the staff directory.

The staff monitors students' progress toward the degree and compliance with degree requirements, and is available to students, mentors, and coordinators as a resource, answering questions, helping solve difficulties, and providing academic guidance.

the home college

In addition to being a part of CUNY Baccalaureate, each CUNY BA/BS student must be matriculated at one of the CUNY colleges. This is the student's home college where he or she pays all tuition and fees, registers for classes, takes the CUNY Entrance Tests and CPE, and handles all nonacademic matters, such as financial aid and obtaining a college I.D. card. A community college may be the home college until a student has earned an associate's degree or accumulated 60 credits, whichever comes first. At that point, the student must officially transfer to a senior college, which becomes the new home college.

full-time equivalencies, tuition, and graduation statistics

Most students matriculate into CUNY BA/BS from within CUNY; however, at least 30% arrive each semester from outside of the CUNY system. Regardless, every CUNY Baccalaureate student must be (or become before entry into CUNY BA/BS) matriculated in a CUNY college. The student's college of matriculation receives the tuition, fees and headcount; the college(s) the student attends receives the FTEs; and the student's first senior college of matriculation receives the graduation credit.

4 specific responsibilities of faculty mentors

For each area of concentration, CUNY Baccalaureate students must have at least one faculty mentor. For an interdisciplinary area, students choose two mentors representing the different

disciplines to be studied. The primary responsibilities of the mentor are to help the student select appropriate courses for the area of concentration, to ensure that those courses will prepare the student for graduate level work in the same field, and to be available to suggest substitute courses if the original choices are not available. (The specific degree requirements for areas of concentration are in Section 5.) The mentor role is vital. The CUNY BA/BS Academic Director does not and cannot have expertise in all the disciplines available as areas of concentration and thus must rely on the expertise of faculty mentors to ensure the academic viability of the proposed courses of study. A faculty member should not agree to serve as a mentor without knowing and supporting the student's general academic intentions.

Faculty mentors who agree to the course of study in the concentration automatically certify, upon the completion of the approved courses (and the fulfillment of other requirements), that the student has completed successfully the area(s) of concentration for the awarding of a bachelor's degree. Students' names are then presented to the University Committee on CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies, the faculty members of which have the formal responsibility and authority for recommending candidates for the degree.

Faculty mentors stay with their students through graduation. A student may not remove or replace a mentor unless the mentor resigns. Under appropriate circumstances deemed to be in the best interests of the student's academic progress, the University Committee permits the Academic Director to change a student's mentor. Mentors who retire from the University may continue to serve as mentors, if they so desire.

5 areas of concentration

The cornerstone of CUNY Baccalaureate is the opportunity it provides students to create their own unique specialization, working under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

The degree requirements specify that, in addition to introductory and prerequisite courses, students must complete an interrelated group of at least eight intermediate and upper level courses (at least 24 credits) for a single area, six courses (at least 18 credits) in each area for dual areas. (Intermediate and upper level courses are generally those that have at least one prerequisite course within the same discipline.) These courses must be taken for a letter grade at a senior college offering the appropriate bachelor's degree. If in the mentor's judgment these minimum requirements will not give the student a solid grounding in the discipline, he/she should require the student to complete more coursework.

As a group, the courses in an area must have some relation to one another, be of increasing complexity, and prepare the student for graduate level work. At least 50 percent of the work for an area of concentration must be completed in CUNY as a CUNY Baccalaureate student. Students must maintain at least a 2.5 average in their areas of concentration.

For a single area of concentration, two internships/independent studies may be included (i.e., two internships or two independent studies, or one internship and one independent study); for a dual area of concentration, one for each concentration may be included. With the approval of the faculty mentor, the Academic Director, and the individual graduate department, graduate

level courses can be included. Credits by examination and for life experience cannot be applied to the areas of concentration; the same is true of courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis (unless the course was only offered by the department P/F). Students entering CUNY BA/BS in Spring 2008 and later are required to achieve grades of C- or better in all area-of-concentration courses.

No two areas of concentration are exactly the same. Students have created specializations such as: African History and Spirituality, Alcoholism Studies, Applied Linguistics, Art Therapy, Botany and Ecosystems, Chinese Cultural Studies, Conflict Management, and the list goes on. Following are several examples of areas of concentration students have designed (more examples can be found at www.cunyba.cuny.edu):

Areas of concentration, requiring courses from different academic departments, from multiple colleges:

Women’s Health and Sexuality

City College	Latin Amer. Studies 312	Women and Health: Latinas and Other Women of Color
City College	Latin Amer. Studies 313	Health and Reproductive Rights
City College	Sociology 266	Family Relations
Hunter College	Psychology 309	Sex and Behavior
Hunter College	Political Science 486	Senior Colloquium (Body Politics: Sex and Reproduction)
Hunter College	Sociology 301	Medical Sociology
Hunter College	Women’s Studies 235	Psychology of Women
Hunter College	Women’s Studies 300	Sex Education
Hunter College	Women’s Studies 400	Ethnicity, Gender, and Disease

Theater and Political Change

Brooklyn College	Theater 74.1	Theater in the Classroom
Brooklyn College	Theater 83	Independent Research (Political Theater)
City College	Anthropology 230	Political Mobilization and Change
City College	Philosophy 311	Special Topics: Theory of Action
City College	Political Science 312	Seminar in Community Organizing
City College	Political Science 324	Politics of Protest
Hunter College	Theater 214	Multicultural Perspectives, Theatrical Performance
Professional Studies	Creative Arts 602	Theater of the Oppressed
Professional Studies	Creative Arts 603	Creating Meaning through Community Drama

Sociology and Gerontology

Hunter College	Sociology 301	Medical Sociology
Hunter College	Sociology 237	Social Welfare Policy
Hunter College	Sociology 331	Fieldwork (N.Y.C. Department for Aging)
Hunter College	Sociology 471	Independent Study (Images of Aging in Arts and Media)
John Jay College	Sociology 224	Death, Dying and Society
Hunter College	Health 323	Health Aspects of Aging
Hunter College	Psychology 345	Health Psychology
Hunter College	Religion 310	Religious Meanings of Death

An area of concentration, required courses offered in several different colleges, all within the same academic department:

Psychology of Addictions

Hunter College	Psychology	215	Research Methods in Psychology
Hunter College	Psychology	305	General Experimental Psychology*
John Jay College	Psychology	243	Theories of Personality
John Jay College	Psychology	266	Psychology of Alcoholism
John Jay College	Psychology	268	Therapeutic Interventions in Alcoholism
John Jay College	Psychology	342	Introduction to Counseling Psychology
Queens College	Psychology	352	Principles of Drug Action
Queens College	Psychology	360	Contemporary Psychotherapies

**Experimental Psychology, along with its Statistics prerequisite, are required courses for all students pursuing areas of concentration in Psychology.*

An area of concentration created requiring courses offered within one academic department:

Independent Documentary Production

Hunter College	Media	292	Basic Reporting
Hunter College	Media	299	Documentary Video
Hunter College	Media	299.1	Advanced Documentary Editing
Hunter College	Media	371	Television Culture
Hunter College	Media	385	Media and Society
Hunter College	Media	399	Criticism of Documentary Media
Hunter College	Media	751.1	Developing the Documentary (Graduate course)
Hunter College	Media	751.2	Digital Editing Workshop (Graduate course)

Dual areas of concentration (like a double major):

Children’s Studies (AOC 1)

Medgar Evers College	English	209	Children’s Literature I
Medgar Evers College	Education	307	Foundations of Education
Brooklyn College	Africana Studies	54	The Black Child and the Urban Education System
Brooklyn College	Children’s Studies	25	Special Topics (Children, Schools, Public Policy)
Brooklyn College	Children’s Studies	30	Human Rights of Children
Brooklyn College	Children’s Studies	31	Children in Crisis

African Diaspora (AOC 2)

Medgar Evers College	Interdisciplinary	310	Migration: The African Diaspora in the Americas
Medgar Evers College	History	231	History of Africa Since 1800
Medgar Evers College	History	242	History of the Caribbean
Brooklyn College	Africana Studies	12.4	Political Systems of Africa
Brooklyn College	Africana Studies	12.5	African American History to 1860
Brooklyn College	Africana Studies	23.1	African Religion & Culture in the New World

area of concentration (aoc) checklist

Below are the major points to consider when working with your mentee and reviewing area of concentration forms.

1. _____ Single area: a minimum of 8 courses/24 credits is required.
Dual area: a minimum of 6 courses/18 credits in each area is required.
Both the course and credit minimums must be met. Mentors can require more. When listing more than 8 (or 6) courses on an area of concentration form, there is a place on the form for the mentor to indicate whether the student must complete *all* courses listed; students are otherwise just required to complete the minimum. Courses must be on the intermediate or advanced level (generally these have at least one prerequisite in the same discipline).
2. _____ The title of the AOC is appropriate and accurately reflects the chosen courses.
3. _____ The courses make up a coherent plan of study that increases in complexity over time.
4. _____ The courses will prepare the student for graduate study.
5. _____ Each course is from a department at a senior college that offers a BA or BS in the related field. Graduate courses can be included.
6. _____ If applicable (if there are prior-to-CUNY BA/BS courses being used in the area), at least 50% of the AOC will be completed as a CUNY BA/BS student. Also, no more than 50% of the AOC courses can be utilized from outside CUNY.
7. _____ For all AOCs in Psychology, Experimental Psychology must be included.
8. _____ All courses are being taken for letter grades (not Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit, unless a particular course is only offered P/F or CR/NC). Also, all AOC courses must be completed with grades of at least C-.
9. _____ Two mentors are needed for interdisciplinary areas and for dual areas.
10. _____ Two independent studies/internships can be used. If there is an academic reason to include more than two, this should be justified to the Academic Director. Upon completion of the independent studies and internships, the student must provide their mentor and the Academic Director with a 1-2 paragraph description of each learning experience.

6

basic degree information

area(s) of concentration

See Section 5.

classroom credits

At least 90 credits of the 120 minimum required for the degree must be earned in regular course work.

credit load/credit limits

Students may not register for more than 18 credits per semester (12 credits in the summer) unless they obtain prior written permission from the Academic Director. Approval is given only to students who have no grades outstanding and who consistently do high-quality work.

degree requirements

The CUNY BA/BS staff is responsible for ensuring that students satisfy the program's degree requirements, including completion of the courses approved by the mentors for the areas of concentration. Individual requirements are listed in the degree contract each student receives and signs upon being admitted to CUNY BA/BS.

Note: CUNY Baccalaureate students must satisfy departmental course prerequisites (unless they are exempted by the department), but they are not bound by major-minor requirements at the colleges they attend nor by core, distribution, or other degree requirements of those colleges.

gpa

Students must maintain at least a 2.50 GPA overall and a 2.50 average in their area(s) of concentration for all coursework done in CUNY.

graduate courses for undergraduate credit

With the prior approval of the appropriate graduate department and of the program's Academic Director, students may take one or two courses at the graduate level for undergraduate credit. Approval is given only to students who have no grades outstanding, who consistently do high-quality work, who have an approved area of concentration form on file with the CUNY BA/BS office, and who have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

liberal arts and sciences distribution

CUNY BA/BS students must complete at least 60 credits in the liberal arts and sciences including the following distribution requirements:

- two courses in literature;
- three courses in humanities exclusive of the required literature courses and in subjects other than the area(s) of concentration, chosen from at least two different disciplines;
- three courses in social sciences in subjects other than the area(s) of concentration, chosen from at least two different disciplines;
- completion of the second semester of a language other than English (language exemptions are possible and are detailed in the *CUNY BA/BS Catalog*);
- three courses in Mathematics and Science in subjects other than the area(s) of concentration. Students must complete one Mathematics and one Science course. The third course may be a Mathematics, Science, or Computer Science course that is designated by CUNY Baccalaureate as a liberal arts and sciences course.

The *CUNY BA/BS Catalog* provides additional details on the distribution requirements. Note that CUNY BA/BS's definition of liberal arts and sciences (LAS), found in the *Catalog*, prevails over any other definitions. In other words, courses designated as LAS by a college may not fulfill the definition of LAS for CUNY BA. Courses graded Pass or CR may be accepted for the distribution in transfer but once a student matriculates into CUNY BA/BS distribution courses cannot be fulfilled by grades of P/F or CR/NC.

lower-division credits

No more than 60 community college credits are accepted toward the CUNY BA/BS degree.

non-collegiate credits

Students may earn up to 30 credits for non-collegiate work such as courses completed through NPONSI (National Program on Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction, administered by The University of the State of New York), ACE (American Council on Education), and credit by examination (e.g., CLEP). Up to 15 of the 30 non-collegiate credits may be awarded for life experience. Non-collegiate credits do not apply toward CUNY BA/BS's 30-credit residency requirement.

pass/fail option

Students may take up to 12 credits on a Pass/Fail basis, provided that the course is not part of the distribution requirement or of an area of concentration and that the department giving the course offers this option.

remedial and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) credits

No credits earned in remedial or ESL courses apply toward the degree, though such courses do appear on the student's transcript, if they were taken in CUNY.

repeating courses

If a student repeats a course for which *any* passing grade has been received (D- or better), only the first passing grade will be counted toward the CUNY Baccalaureate degree. The second course and grade will appear on the transcript, but it will not be counted in the GPA.

CUNY BA/BS follows the University policy on F grades which states that effective fall 1990, students may re-take up to 16 credits of F earned in courses taken in CUNY after September 1984. The course (same number and title) must be repeated at the college where it was originally taken. The student must earn a full "C" or better in the repeated course to have only the second grade count in the index, although both courses will continue to appear on the transcript.

residency

A minimum of 30 CUNY classroom credits must be completed as a CUNY Baccalaureate student in the program. Credits awarded for life experience and credits by examination are not counted toward residency.

7 how to help applicants

admissions criteria

- To be eligible for admission, a student must:
- be/become matriculated at a CUNY college;
 - have a valid academic reason for applying, such as a desire to: complete an interdisciplinary or otherwise unique area of concentration or to complete an area of specialization not available at a CUNY college.
 - have completed at least 15 credits (including transfer credits);
 - have a GPA of at least 2.50 overall and on recent work;
 - have passed (or been exempted from) all required CUNY entrance exams.
- These are the minimum criteria only and do not guarantee admission to the program.

assessing cuny baccalaureate candidates

Before deciding how to respond when a student asks for a letter of recommendation or your services as a mentor, faculty members may wish to review the following questions:

- Is the student self-directed, motivated, and academically able? A 2.50 GPA is the minimum required for admission and for graduation; the medium GPA of recently admitted students is 3.2.
- Does the student have clearly defined, viable academic and professional goals?
- Has the student thought carefully about the area(s) of concentration she/he wishes to pursue?
- Does the student demonstrate competent writing skills in her/his application essay? The quality of the essay plays a significant role in the Admissions Committee's decision.
- Can the student work independently, solve problems, deal maturely with obstacles, and benefit from the CUNY Baccalaureate experience by completing a learning program that has been thoughtfully designed to accomplish the student's own unique academic, professional, and personal goals?

letters of recommendation

The letter of recommendation should focus on the student's qualities as a learner, assess her/his ability to work independently of a cohort of peers and without the structure available to students in a traditional degree program, assess the academic quality of the program of study the student is proposing, particularly the area(s) of concentration, and estimate the student's intellectual ability to complete the proposed program of study successfully. Letters of recommendation must be on official letterhead and in an envelope signed along the flap.

the application process

If possible, prospective students should attend one of the regularly offered informational seminars at the CUNY Baccalaureate office. For the schedule contact the CUNY BA/BS office at 212-817-8220, or visit www.cunyba.cuny.edu.

All applicants must follow this procedure:

- Submit a completed application to the CUNY Baccalaureate's Admissions Coordinator. Non-matriculated students must simultaneously apply to a CUNY college, taking the required entrance exams and submitting proof of passing them to CUNY BA/BS. The CUNY BA/BS application also requires a 1-2 page statement of purpose and an outline of courses for the proposed area(s) of concentration.
- Obtain official transcripts of all previous college work.
- Have a faculty member write a letter of recommendation that evaluates their academic performance and promise. Re-entry students may submit letters from supervisors or employers.
- Submit all required documents as a package to the CUNY Baccalaureate office on or before the deadline (May 1 is the *recommended* deadline for the fall semester; Nov. 1 is the *recommended* deadline for the spring semester, although applications are continuously reviewed).

When all documents have been evaluated, qualified applicants are invited for an admission appointment, at which time they are told which credits will be accepted and how many credits must be completed for the degree. The Admissions Committee then conducts a review of the applicant's dossier and makes its final decision.

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feedback

What some CUNY faculty members have said about CUNY Baccalaureate:

“Thank you for running such an excellent program, and for sharing your wonderful students with me.” -Professor Paul Salisbury, Accounting and Business, York College

“CUNY Baccalaureate is a competitive and prestigious program. Students in it are among the finest in the CUNY System.” -Professor Jonathan Rosenberg, History, Hunter College

“When I made the decision to return to college in my mid-twenties, CUNY BA/BS made it possible for me to major in Women's Studies before such a major existed. Working closely with my mentor, a nationally recognized women's history scholar, I designed a program that enabled me to study with other luminaries in the field. The training I received as a CUNY BA/BS Women's Studies student secured my acceptance into Brown University's interdisciplinary American Studies Ph.D. program.”

-Professor Linda Grasso, English, York College/Graduate Center

“This program allows exceptional students to design their own curricula, under supervision of a selected mentor. Its mission is to prepare excellent students for doctoral graduate work.”

-Professor Bertram Ploog, Psychology, College of Staten Island

“CUNY BA/BS offers an education whose learning and teaching objective is not strictly theoretical and abstract knowledge, but an education that strives to transform the world around and inside us. I myself have been deeply rewarded and changed in this process. This is what true education is all about.”

-Professor David Traverso Galarza, Black and Hispanic Studies, Baruch College

“This highly selective program chooses students who are highly motivated and self-starters. They can construct their own course of study by picking the best courses at any of the City University's 17 colleges and the Graduate Center.”

-Professor Andrew Karmen, Sociology, John Jay College

“The CUNY Baccalaureate model provides what so many small, private liberal arts colleges offer: the chance to have a ‘developmental dialogue’ with a professional person who is dedicated to enhancing the undergraduate's academic and emotional development by actively recognizing and supporting their strengths and talents. When students make informed choices about what they want to study, their academic confidence grows.”

-Professor Judith KupperSmith, Psychology and Women's Studies, College of Staten Island

“I'm very impressed with the initiative of the CUNY BA/BS students to find the resources to make their program work for them so that it meets their personal, academic, and career goals.”

-Professor Jane Levitt, Health, Lehman College

“CUNY Baccalaureate is a versatile program in which students are required to have clear academic and career goals since they are allowed to design their own program of study leading to a B.A. or B.S. degree. I am impressed with the ambitious course of study my mentee has carved out for herself.” -Professor Peter J. Weston, Psychology, Brooklyn College

“CUNY BA/BS is one of the brightest stars in higher education in the nation. It is a brilliant and beneficial concept, and a truly unique strength of the City University.”

-Professor Bruce Brooks, Fine Arts and Humanities, LaGuardia Community College

“One of the most rewarding aspects of being a mentor is when you are able to learn *with* your mentee, and (my mentee) is a student with whom this has been possible. I have been so impressed with her insight, maturity and commitment to the therapeutic milieu that I have encouraged her to apply to a doctoral program in psychology.”

-Professor Lynn Roberts, Urban Public Health Program, Hunter College

“My mentee is extremely gifted and his work outshines that of the vast majority of my students. This semester I agreed to work with him in an independent study, even though this is something I try to avoid because of my heavy course load and the amount of initiative required from a student working on his own with only infrequent conferences. He has more than rewarded my confidence in him, and has produced some of his best work during this period.” -Professor Andrea Loewenstein, English, Medgar Evers College

“I am a firm believer in multi-disciplinary majors. A traditional major in one discipline is not appropriate for all students. Indeed, many students are interested in careers that require expertise in more than one area.” -Professor Hershey Friedman, Economics, Brooklyn College

“Mentoring is not simply a nice, good-feeling kind of gesture, but really a social obligation and a moral obligation. It is to pass on to young people necessary skills and understandings, and to learn from them in a dialectical relationship because education is a social process.”

-Professor David Brotherton, Sociology, John Jay College

“I was sufficiently impressed with this student’s interest in psychology and her match with my own interests that I agreed to be her mentor, although I had no prior experience as a mentor in CUNY BA/BS and was busy with other commitments. To my surprise, I have not regretted it. My mentee has been an interesting person to get to know and my involvement in the program has led me to understand and appreciate it more.”

-Professor Rebecca Farmer Huselid, Psychology, Hunter College

“CUNY BA/BS is unique in that it has brought students to me who are aware of and appreciate the interdisciplinary connections of health to other programs in CUNY and who can envision their career goals through this academic process....Mentoring in CUNY BA/BS has been an inspiration in other areas of my academic work at Hunter College; it has been a special gift to me. The essence of the program design is one that is consistent with democratic principles and the teachings of John Dewey. In a spirit that fosters cooperation between mentor and mentee, students are active participants in their learning experiences. This model works well for all ages.” -Professor Mary Lefkarites, Community Health Education, Hunter College

"CUNY Baccalaureate has long been the undergraduate pearl in CUNY's oyster."
-William Phipps, Executive Director, University Faculty Senate

"I frequently get requests from employers for smart, energetic, capable new college graduates; I often turn to my CUNY BA/BS students as great possibilities."
-Professor Nancy Romer, Psychology, Brooklyn College

"My students have benefitted greatly from the enhanced flexibility afforded them by being able to design programs of study that did not fit neatly in any one department or any one CUNY campus. They have all shown superb mastery of their fields, carving out unique perspectives that were only possible through the combination of courses across campuses that CUNY Baccalaureate allows."
-Professor Jason Young, Psychology, Hunter College

9 contact information

CUNY Baccalaureate Telephone Numbers

Main number: 212-817-8220

Admissions: 212-817-8230 or 8239

Academic Director: 212-817-8222

Academic Advisors:

Students A-F - 212-817-8229

Students G-N - 212-817-8225

Students O-Z - 212-817-8237

Registrar: 212-817-8227

FAX: 212-817-1512

CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies

At The CUNY Graduate School and University Center

365 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6412

New York, NY 10016

www.cunyba.cuny.edu

The office is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm (later by appointment).
In July and August office hours vary: call to verify them.