

# BACHELOR OF LIBERAL STUDIES

## Bachelor of Liberal Studies Degree

The Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree (B.L.S.) is a general studies degree in the liberal arts. It was established by the three Iowa Regent universities primarily to meet the needs of Iowans who want to earn a college degree but whose circumstances present obstacles to completing a traditional on-campus degree program. While the B.L.S. does not have traditional majors focused on a specific discipline and students have more flexibility in choosing courses that apply to their program, the requirements for the degree are as rigorous as requirements for other degree programs offered by Iowa State University. With the assistance of a B.L.S. advisor, students can structure a program that meets their individual educational, vocational or personal goals.

The B.L.S. degree is a transfer-friendly degree. Work done in community colleges or other accredited colleges and universities can be applied toward the degree and can often meet requirements for one of the B.L.S. majors. Up to three-fourths of the total degree requirements can be transferred from accredited institutions. Students with military or professional and technical credits with outcomes contributing to the learning outcomes of the distribution areas of either major are encouraged to submit coursework for review to potentially apply such credits to the major. The B.L.S. degree has no residence requirements, but students are expected to have 30 credits from ISU earned during the junior and/or senior year.

Students can earn the Bachelor of Liberal Studies Degree by choosing to major in either Liberal Studies or Professional Studies.

## Declaring the b.l.s. degree

Students must have completed at least 24 semester credits of collegiate work acceptable toward graduation at ISU to declare the B.L.S.

## Student Learning Outcomes of the Liberal Studies Major

In addition to meeting the learning goals of the general education program of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and meeting University wide learning goals, Liberal Studies graduates should be able to:

- Use appropriate learning strategies to gain new knowledge.
- Integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from multiple disciplines.
- Apply their knowledge to evaluate issues and solve problems.
- Connect their learning to their professional goals.

## Student Learning Outcomes of the Professional Studies Major

In addition to meeting the learning goals of the general education program of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and meeting University-wide learning goals, Professional Studies graduates should be able to:

- Apply their knowledge to evaluate issues and solve problems.
- Express thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.
- Demonstrate awareness of the strengths of others and build collaborative relationships with diverse team members to achieve common goals.
- Demonstrate ability to select and use appropriate technology in order to accomplish a given task.
- Connect their learning to their professional goals.

## Requirements for the B.L.S. Degree With a Major in Liberal Studies

All students seeking a B.L.S. degree must meet the University-wide requirements (<https://catalog.iastate.edu/collegescurricula/>) for graduation, including earning a total of 120 credits. The Liberal Studies major requires 36 credits of coursework across three of five areas of distribution according to the requirements laid out below. Students determine which distribution areas to emphasize in their degree program through consultation with their Bachelor of Liberal Studies academic advisor.

Liberal Studies students must also meet the General Education, World Languages/Cultures and Career Proficiency Requirements of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and earn a minimum of 39 credits at the 300/400 level. Courses taken at Iowa State University on a pass/not pass basis may be counted toward graduation only as electives.

## University-wide Requirements

Communication Proficiency: Foundation Courses	6
ENGL 150 Critical Thinking and Communication	
ENGL 250 Written, Oral, Visual, and Electronic Composition (with a grade of C or better)	
or equivalent of ENGL 150, ENGL 250	
Communication Proficiency: Upper-level curricula (grade C- or better)	3
ENGL 302 Business Communication	
or ENGL 305 Creative Writing: Nonfiction	
or ENGL 309 Proposal and Report Writing	
or ENGL 314 Technical Communication	
or comparable extensive writing experience	
International Perspectives*	3
U.S. Diversity*	3

\*Students in all ISU majors must complete a three-credit course in U.S. diversity and a three-credit course in international perspectives. Check (<http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/courses/div-ip-guide.html>) for a list of approved courses. Discuss with your advisor how these courses can apply to your graduation plan.

### LAS General Education, World Languages/Cultures, and Career Proficiency Requirements

Arts and humanities*	12
Mathematics, statistics, or computer science*	3
Natural sciences*	8
Social sciences*	9
World languages/Cultures**	3-8
LAS 203 Professional Career Preparation	1

\*A list of courses acceptable in the general education groups can be obtained from the college website (<http://www.las.iastate.edu/students/academics/general-education/>).

\*\*The requirement may be met by completion of three or more years of high school study in one world language; by meeting the LAS World Language requirement; or by taking six credits from the list of International Perspectives courses, three credits of which cannot be used to satisfy another degree requirement.

### Distribution Requirements and Electives

A minimum of 12 credits is required in each of three of the five distribution areas listed below. Students determine which distribution areas to include in their degree program through consultation with their Bachelor of Liberal Studies academic advisor.

Distribution Areas (Three of five below, with a minimum of 6 credits at the 300 level or above in each of the three)

- Humanities (for example, literature, philosophy, history, religion, art and music appreciation)
- Communications and arts (for example, journalism, speech, writing, drama, art, world language, communication studies, advertising, public relations)
- Natural sciences and computational disciplines (for example, chemistry, physics, biology, geological and atmospheric sciences, mathematics, statistics, computer science, data science, environmental science)
- Social sciences (for example, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, anthropology, geography)
- Professional fields (for example, business, education, family and consumer sciences, agriculture, engineering -- generally courses taught outside the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

Electives to bring total credits to at least 120 Varies

### Other Requirements

Included in the minimum of 120 credits needed for graduation must be the following:

30 credits from ISU earned during the junior/and or senior year.

39 upper-level (300 level or above) credits from an accredited four-year college with a grade point average of 2.0 or higher.

A minimum grade point average of at least 2.00 (a C average).

No more than 9 credits of 490 (Independent Study) courses may be counted toward graduation.

Students in the B.L.S. program are not eligible for additional majors, but in consultation with their advisor they may earn a Certificate or minor. Minors attached to a B.L.S. must include 6 credits taken at Iowa State University in upper-level (300 level or above) courses and must include at least 9 credits that are not used to meet any other department, college, or university requirement.

Criteria for graduating with distinction and other academic honors with a B.L.S. degree are available under Scholastic Recognition (<http://catalog.iastate.edu/previouscatalogs/2023-2024/academics/#scholasticrecognitiontext>).

### Requirements for the B.L.S. Degree With a Major in Professional Studies

All students seeking a B.L.S. degree must meet the University-wide requirements (<https://catalog.iastate.edu/collegescurricula/>) for graduation, including earning a total of 120 credits. Students pursuing the Professional Studies major will take coursework across multiple areas aimed to develop broad professional competencies in critical thinking, communication, leadership/teamwork, and technology. Studies may be focused on coursework in closely-related disciplines or diversified over several disciplines.

The Professional Studies major requires 33 credits that meet the distribution area requirements laid out below. Professional Studies students must also meet the General Education, World Languages/ Cultures and Career Proficiency Requirements of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and earn a minimum of 39 credits at the 300/400 level. Courses taken at Iowa State University on a pass/not pass basis may be counted toward graduation only as electives.

### University-wide Requirements

Communication Proficiency: Foundation Courses	6
ENGL 150 Critical Thinking and Communication	
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or equivalent of ENGL 150, ENGL 250	

Communication Proficiency: Upper-level curricula (grade C- or better)	3
ENGL 302 Business Communication or ENGL 305 Creative Writing: Nonfiction or ENGL 309 Proposal and Report Writing or ENGL 314 Technical Communication or comparable extensive writing experience	
International Perspectives*	3
U.S. Diversity*	3

\*Students in all ISU majors must complete a three-credit course in U.S. diversity and a three-credit course in international perspectives. Check (<http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/courses/div-ip-guide.html>) for a list of approved courses. Discuss with your advisor how these courses can apply to your graduation plan.

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\*\*The requirement may be met by completion of three or more years of high school study in one world language; by meeting the LAS World Language requirement; or by taking six credits from the list of International Perspectives courses, three credits of which cannot be used to satisfy another degree requirement.

### Distribution Requirements and Electives

Students determine which distribution areas to emphasize in their degree program through consultation with their Bachelor of Liberal Studies academic advisor. Students are encouraged to select classes that prepare them for particular labor sectors and to talk with their advisor about adding at least one minor or certificate.

Distribution Areas (Three credits in each of the four areas below, with a minimum of 9 credits in at least two of the areas. 15 of the 33 credits required for this major must be at the 300 level or above.)

Critical Thinking (for example, history, philosophy, political science, psychology)	
Communication (for example, communication studies, journalism, speech, writing, world language, advertising, public relations)	

Leadership/Teamwork (for example, classes that apply to the Leadership Studies certificate or minor)	
Technology (for example, computer science, engineering, and other coursework focused on using technology)	
Electives to bring total credits to at least 120	Varies

### Other Requirements

Included in the minimum of 120 credits needed for graduation must be the following:

30 credits from ISU earned during the junior/and or senior year.

39 upper-level (300 level or above) credits from an accredited four-year college with a grade point average of 2.0 or higher.

A minimum grade point average of at least 2.00 (a C average).

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