

COMMUNICATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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COMMUNICATION EXCHANGE

Communication Exchange is an opportunity for selected Northwestern Qatar students to spend the Spring semester of their junior year as a fulltime student and experience life as a Northwestern University student at the home campus in Evanston, Illinois. The period of exchange spans two quarters from January to June.

The selection committee assesses applications based on the eligibility and criteria specified later in this Policies and Procedures section. Selection is competitive and determined by the quality of applications. Final approval and participation in Communication Exchange are subject to visa requirements in the United States.

Timeline

Application Process Opens	Summer Break
Application Deadline	Second Thursday of Fall Semester
Pre-Departure Sessions	Four sessions through Fall Semester
Fly to Chicago	Day before the winter classes begin
First day of classes	January
Last day of exams	June

Cancellation of Communication Exchange Program

The Communication Exchange Program will be cancelled under the following circumstances:

1. The US Embassy in Qatar suspends the issuance of student visa applications.
2. The United States government does not allow non-US citizens to enter the country.
3. The home campus moves classes from live to remote status.
4. Force majeure such as war, epidemic, and the like.

It is pertinent that applicants work closely with their Academic Adviser on alternative plans should the Communication Exchange Program be cancelled.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Comm Exchange, the applicant must:

- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 at the time of application.

- Be a full-time student (taking a minimum of 3 NU-Q classes) at the time of application.
- Have completed four full-time (fall and spring) semesters at the time of application.
- Have completed five full-time semesters by the beginning of Communication Exchange.
- Have earned junior standing (14 units according to NU-Q policy) by the start of Communication Exchange.
- Have completed all MIT major requirements for the first two years of the degree program prior to participation in Communication Exchange.

Students are NOT eligible to participate in Communication Exchange if they:

- Are planning to graduate in the same academic year as participation in Communication Exchange.
- Are on academic probation or warning.
- Received an incomplete grade during the term immediately before Communication Exchange or have other unresolved incomplete grades.
- Have a registration hold.
- Have any academic integrity sanctions, pending cases, or an active academic integrity sanction such as probation or suspension.
- Are under [conduct review or disciplinary probation](#) for non-academic conduct violation.
- Have a financial hold.

NOTE: Any disciplinary actions, past violations of academic integrity, or other academic standing issues will disqualify a student regardless of his/her other qualifications. If any of these issues arise between acceptance to Communication Exchange and departure to the United States, a student will be removed from the program.

Plan ahead and ensure to raise your questions about eligibility, Evanston classes, or how Communication Exchange works in relation to your degree/graduation plan, to your NU-Q primary Academic Adviser at the earliest opportunity, and ideally before submitting your application.

Application

The Communication Exchange application consists of five questions that students should prepare to answer in advance of completing the online application. The answers to each of the following questions must be 250 words or less.

1. Why do you want to participate in Communication Exchange? Please make clear the reasons you want to participate in this program as they relate to two things: A) your academic plan and goals and B) your career ambitions.
2. Specify five courses you would like to take and explain how each is connected to your academic plan and the progress you have already made in your coursework. Note: You will take more than five courses. The committee is looking to see if you have done a thorough job of preparing and planning for a productive academic experience.
3. Beyond academic and professional interests, explain how and why participating in Communication Exchange will contribute to your personal development. How would Communication Exchange

contribute to your personal growth?

4. What associations, activities, and experiences do you hope to engage in during your semester on Communication Exchange, if you are selected?
5. Describe the personal support network you would rely upon during the Communication Exchange semester, both in terms of family and friends as well as NU-E resources.

In preparing your response to Question 2, please review the [Northwestern Undergraduate Catalog](#). In addition to the catalog, we encourage students to look at Evanston schedules for previous terms available on CAESAR for a clearer picture of courses that have been typically offered. As with all university course catalogues and schedules, all courses are not offered every term or every year. Hence, consulting with your Academic Adviser after this step will clarify what is realistic in planning for coursework during the Communication Exchange period.

The Communication Exchange application opens during Summer Break and closes during the second week of each Fall Semester. When the applications interface opens, a link will be sent by email and the application should be completed and submitted online.

Please note that the application must be completed from start to finish once you begin. It is not possible to save an unfinished form and return to it later. We recommend that students prepare their responses in a separate document ahead of time to enable copy-pasting them into the application form. Do not leave the form open in the browser for several days thinking to come back later. Doing so will prevent accurate submission of the application information. Inaccurate and incomplete applications are removed from the pool of files reviewed by the Communication Exchange Selection Committee.

Selection

The Communication Exchange Selection Committee consists of faculty members from the Communication Program. Applications are blind reviewed. This means the Committee will not know who submitted each application. All applications are evaluated equitably. The Committee will recommend the best applications evaluated based on the given criteria/rubric. All the applicants will be notified of the result of their respective application through their university email.

PRE-DEPARTURE REQUIREMENTS

Pre-Departure and Information Sessions

Selected students are required to participate in all pre-departure sessions (a minimum of two). The sessions will be scheduled during the Fall Semester and will always take place in the evening to accommodate the staff in Evanston. Additional information with specific details and resources will be provided in the Communication Exchange CANVAS page. All students selected to participate are required to review all information in the CANVAS page prior to departing for the U.S.

Visa Application

The United States does not allow students from abroad to study on a tourist (B2) visa. All Communication Exchange students who are not U.S. citizens and do not have an American passport must apply for a J1 Student Visa. The US State Department must approve the application for a student to go to Evanston for Communication Exchange. Students selected for Communication Exchange will receive detailed instructions about and guidance regarding the visa application process.

There are two fees in the application process: the U.S. SEVIS I-901 [fee](#) and the DS-160 visa fee. The visa fee amount varies according to nationality. Each student should [check online](#) for the precise amount depending on their home country and citizenship. Communication Exchange is an elective program hence payment of visa fees should be borne by the student and will not be covered by Northwestern University Qatar.

The visa process can be tedious, and visa and travel requirements can change. We advise students to start the process immediately upon notification of acceptance. Although each student must submit their own application, the Communication Program Coordinator can help with clarification of instructions and guidance. NU-Q cannot guarantee the approval of the student's visa application. The issuance of visa is entirely at the discretion of the U.S. Embassy. NU-Q will not provide immigration support if the visa application is denied.

Student Travel Requirements

Since Communication Exchange is a school-sponsored trip, participating students must adhere to the NU-Q Student Travel Policy. This means completing all the pre-departure requirements. All students should review the [NU-Q Student Travel Requirements](#) before applying.

Health Clearance Form

Communication Exchange participants are required to submit a Health Clearance Form from a clinic by a licensed professional in the State of Qatar, unrelated to the student. The physician should attest the student is mentally and physically fit to travel and study abroad. If the student does not comply with this requirement, the student will not be approved to participate in the Communication Exchange Program.

ACADEMIC ADVISING AND REGISTRATION

Academic Advising

Students participating in the Communication Exchange MUST meet with their NU-Q primary academic adviser before each quarter of registration and after they complete the quarter registration to ensure they are on track of graduation.

Use Bookings to schedule an appointment with your NU-Q primary academic adviser.

Prior to meeting with your NU-Q primary adviser, request your updated degree audit.

During the meeting discuss:

- Your remaining degree requirements
- Remaining minor requirements
- Courses of interest at NUE and what requirements you plan to fulfill during Communication Exchange.

NU-Q advisers will forward the interests of the selected Communication Exchange students to NUE advisers prior to the joint meeting.

NUE and NU-Q advisers will schedule a meeting with the selected Communication Exchange students once courses are viewable in CAESAR (usually late October or early November). All students must attend this advising session; beforehand students should review the list of winter course offerings in CAESAR, including course descriptions and any pre-requisite, and come prepared with a possible schedule and list of questions.

Registration

All students must maintain full-time status while studying at the Evanston campus. The full-time course load is three courses in each of the two quarters, i.e., Winter and Spring. Thus, Communication Exchange students must complete six courses in total during the period they are in residence at the Evanston campus. This is a requirement of the U.S. State Department for all students on J-1 visas. Students who have fallen out of valid J1 status by failing to register for and complete the required course load will have their SEVIS record terminated and will be required to return to Qatar immediately.

Winter courses will be viewable on CAESAR and appointment times will be announced on the Communication Exchange CANVAS course. NUE has two registration periods: a preregistration period for classes in a student's major and a regular registration period. For the purposes of NUE registration, Communication Exchange students are categorized as majoring in both Radio/Television/Film (RTVF) and Communication Studies.

Students will register for spring quarter courses in February. Before spring registration, Communication Exchange students are encouraged to meet with their NUE advisor to discuss course selection.

Course days/times are listed on CAESAR. However, these can change prior to the enrollment period. Note that courses may display for NUQ students in Arabian Standard Time.

NUE strongly recommends that Communication Exchange students enroll in four units for each quarter. This allows students to maintain a full-time course load should they need to drop a class during the quarter.

Due to the fast pace of NUE's quarter system, students are generally discouraged from enrolling in five units in a given quarter. Students are not permitted to sign up for more than 4.99 units until the first day of a quarter.

Pre-registration – Dates to be announced on the Communication Exchange canvas course.

"Communication Exchange students may preregister for up to ONE RTVF course and ONE Communication Studies course during preregistration. If a student preregisters for two courses in either program, they will be dropped from both and placed in a placeholder course. If a Communication Exchange student violates this rule, they will be notified of their mistake by the department's program assistant and given the opportunity to fix their enrollment, but only if spots still remain open in one of the courses, they were interested in.

Regular registration – Dates to be announced on the Communication exchange canvas course.

If a course is closed when you preregister/register, you may contact the instructor to check if they are keeping a wait list. If no instructor is listed, you may contact the department.

Note regarding RTVF registration: Once regular registration begins, two courses of a type in RTVF are the maximum (i.e., two production and/or two writing). Course rosters will be checked daily by the RTVF office. If you enroll in more than two RTVF courses of a type during regular registration, YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM ALL COURSES OF THAT TYPE and must re-enroll if there is still space.

Only RTVF and Comm Studies courses may satisfy the MIT major requirements.

Each NUE unit is equivalent to 0.7 NU-Q

Earning a Minor

Several minors are offered at the home campus that are not available at NU-Q. Earning a minor during the Communication Exchange period is possible in some cases but often difficult for a number of reasons:

- Courses the student needs may not be offered during those quarters.
- Students may not be able to register for a given course.
- Students at NU-Q may not have completed the necessary prerequisites for classes in Evanston.

Students seeking to complete an Evanston minor should speak with their Academic Adviser as early as possible to determine what is realistic and, when deemed possible, to fulfill any advance requirements during the fall semester at NU-Q before going to Evanston. NU-Q and NU-E do not guarantee the completion of minors; and even students who attend NU-E on the Communication Exchange Program may not be able to complete an Evanston minor with courses that are available during the time they are enrolled at the main campus.

NU-Q and NUE do not plan course offerings to support the completion of minors.

NU-Q Minors

Students wishing to fulfill NU-Q minor courses at Evanston need to inform their NU-Q academic adviser and request the approval of the minor chair/committee.

Students cannot fulfill the strategic communication minor/ certificate at NU-Q by completing Medill Integrated Marketing and Communications (IMC) courses during their Communication Exchange. Students interested in taking courses in IMC as electives should contact their NUE advisor.

NUE Minors

Students wishing to pursue an NUE minor during Communication Exchange must notify their NUQ and NUE advisers and complete a minor interest form before the winter quarter.

Only students who have completed the interest form may have an NUE minor added to their plan upon completion. If a student who submitted the minor interest form is approved to declare a minor offered only on the Evanston campus, that student must notify their NU-Q Primary Academic Adviser in writing and provide a scan of any minor, certificate, module, or other transcript-visible declaration from the Evanston department offering the minor, certificate, or module. This must be done before their return to NU-Q from Evanston.

Students may not use courses completed at NU-Q towards the fulfillment of NUE minors without approval from both the minor advisor and the NUQ advisor.

All minors, whether at NU-Q or NU-E, must be officially declared by the end of the Junior year. This applies to all students, whether participating in Communication Exchange or not. NOTE: NU-Q cannot guarantee the completion of a minor for any individual student or guarantee seats in courses for students enrolled in minors.

Minor rules

Students may not double count major courses with the minor

Final Grade and Academic Standing

All academic policies of Northwestern University in Qatar apply to the Communication Exchange Program. Final grade and academic standing evaluation for courses taken in Evanston will occur at the completion of the Communication Exchange Program. As such, grades and any applicable academic standing notifications will happen once grades are added to the student's Northwestern University in Qatar transcripts. This usually occurs in July, following the spring term in Evanston.

A student's academic standing at NU-Q is determined according to the grades that the student earns. The student with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher is in good academic standing.

STUDYING ABROAD

Housing & Meal Plan

For the duration of the Communication Exchange period at NU-E, all NU-Q students must reside in student housing. Any request for off-campus living will be declined. Housing assignments are determined by NU-E [Residential Services](#) and NU-Q is not involved in the process of assigning housing in Evanston for Communication Exchange students. Communication Exchange students will follow the same application process as NU-E students living on campus and must follow the policies and procedures of NU Residential Services.

NU-Q will fund students living in a double or triple sharing room. This means that all Communication Exchange students should plan to have at least one roommate. If a Communication Exchange student requests a single room or any room changes, and that request is granted, the student is responsible for paying the additional fee for that change unless the student has a medical accommodation at NU-Q that would require a single room prior to participating in the exchange. Whether accommodating for medical reasons or personal preference, **NU-E Residential Services cannot always accommodate requests so all students should be prepared to adjust to their assigned housing upon arrival.**

Students can indicate their preference for an all-female residence hall. However, there is only one all-female residence hall at the Evanston campus hence availability is extremely limited, and NU-Q cannot guarantee available rooms. There are also some coed buildings with one or more female-only floor, and all public and shared spaces are coed. It should be noted that NU-Q is not involved in the assignment of housing at the main campus and cannot make any guarantee.

All Communication Exchange students will have the Open Access Meal Plan, which provides unlimited access to all the NU-E dining halls.

- Meal Plan FAQs: <https://dineoncampus.com/northwestern/meal-plan-faqs>
- NU-E Dining website: <https://dineoncampus.com/northwestern/>
- Daily menus for campus Dining Halls and other dining locations (cafés, fast casual restaurants, etc.): <https://dineoncampus.com/northwestern/whats-on-the-menu>

Personal Travel

The Program Coordinator will book the airline tickets according to the duration of the program only. There will be a uniform schedule of departure from Qatar to Chicago and vice versa. Personal travels outside of the program location is not permitted or supported during the Program. Students should be aware of the implications of any personal travel, including missing important aspects of the program, such as classes, deadlines, or other aspects of the program that impact their academic performance and success.

Part time or full-time work and Internship

In order to ensure success in this rigorous academic-focused program, students participating in Communication Exchange are generally not permitted to work during the program dates. Any student work must be pre-approved and coordinated with the Qatar Support Office in Evanston and the Communication Exchange Coordinator in Qatar. Any approved student must comply with US Visa Immigration Laws and NUQ Student Policies.

Students participating in the Communication Exchange Program are not permitted to pursue a credited or non-credited internship after the completion of Communication Exchange and may not seek the support of NUE advisers to facilitate internships or any other study abroad program.

Students may not participate in two consecutive study abroad programs.

Buddy System

Students participating in the Comm Exchange program will be paired with a fellow participant of the same gender as part of the Buddy System. This system is designed to foster a sense of safety and support in an unfamiliar environment, helping students adjust to new surroundings and navigate cultural differences together. Most importantly, it provides added security during emergencies, ensuring that no one is left alone and that help is readily available. Additionally, the Buddy System promotes social engagement, allowing participants to build friendships and enrich their overall experience by sharing it with a companion.

PROGRAM COST AND FUNDING

NUQ will cover the following cost for the duration of the Communication Exchange Program:

- Flight tickets (Doha-Chicago-Doha)
- Housing
- Meal Cards
- Medical Insurance
- Living Expense Allowance

NUQ will NOT COVER the following cost:

- All costs associated with applying for a U.S. visa and the SEVIS I-901 fee associated with the J-1 student status. The fees may vary based on nationality. We recommend investigating the costs prior to applying for Communication Exchange.
- Out-of-pocket expenses for incidental meals or snacks, transport, communications, or other personal items and services

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Prior to the program's commencement: If you decide to withdraw from the Communication Exchange program before commencement, please note that Northwestern University in Qatar will not cover costs related to, but not limited to, passport and visa fees, vaccinations, and transportation expenses.

If you confirm your participation and later choose to withdraw, you will need to complete a withdrawal form and reimburse the university for the following expenses:

1. Airfare cancellation fee (if applicable)
2. Travel insurance
3. Living allowance (if paid in advance prior to cancellation)

No financial aid is available to any of these costs.

After the program's commencement:

1. Refunds cannot be issued once the program has commenced.
2. You will be responsible for any costs related to early withdrawal, including but not limited to airfare and ground transportation expenses.
3. Depending on the timing of your withdrawal, academic credit may not be awarded.
4. You may be required to reimburse the university for the living allowance and NU insurance fees, based on the timing of your withdrawal.
5. Student Finance may bill the outstanding balance for program costs to your Northwestern student account.

If you receive financial aid and/or loans, please consult with the Student Finance Office to understand how your withdrawal may affect your financial aid status.

VIOLETION OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Students who withheld or falsified any submitted information and/or violated any of the policies and procedures set forth in the Communication Exchange Program Policies and Procedures, as determined by the Communication Exchange Committee, will be subject to NUQ and/or NUE student conduct investigation.