

FAQs

Terms to Semesters

1. How will the semester conversion affect The Northwood Idea?

The philosophical underpinnings of Northwood University do not rest within the academic calendar, but rather in the ideals and beliefs that we hold as guiding principles. These ideas are reflected within the curriculum, but the ideas themselves are independent of how Northwood operates on academic calendar.

2. What is the difference between a quarter and a semester?

A quarter is normally 10 weeks of instruction, then a week for final exams, while a semester is 15 weeks of instruction and a week for finals. It takes three quarters to make an entire academic year, while it takes two semesters. Under either system, there are about 30 weeks of instruction in one academic year.

3. Why is Northwood University changing from quarters to semesters?

Semesters provide several advantages to students, faculty and staff. The semester system:

- Provides more time for learning course material;
- Provides an opportunity for faculty to update curricula;
- Provides more time for summer internships;
- Brings NU courses in line with most textbooks which are written on the semester calendar;
- Gives students a better chance at summer jobs because the school year ends earlier;
- Allows graduating seniors to enter the job market earlier;
- Reduces registration and financial aid activity from three times to two times per academic year;
- Brings NU's calendar into line with the academic calendars of over 75 percent of the colleges and universities in this country;
- Brings NU's calendar into line with most of the state supported universities;
- Allows better scheduling of off-campus learning experience
- and
- Promotes better scheduling of activities involving other universities and colleges such as conferences and athletic events.

4. When will NU implement the official change?

The semester calendar will begin with the fall semester, 2010.

5. I am a freshman, sophomore, or junior and started Northwood on terms. How will this affect my remaining years at NU?

Sophomores and juniors who are on track with their curriculum guide and will graduate prior to the fall of 2010 will not be affected. Sophomore and juniors who are off-sequence can meet with an Academic Counselor to develop a plan to complete by way of mini-sessions, summer sessions, and other options.

The existing curriculum committees and faculty will begin planning the transition of course material to semesters with the fourth year senior level classes, as our current freshmen will start their senior year in the fall of 2010.

6. When will I be able to get specific information about the conversion?

The specific program semester information will be available in your department and program. Course schedules with descriptions and details will be available well in advance of your need to register for fall semester 2010. As soon as this information has been published, an announcement will be made on Blackboard™ or accessed at www.northwood.edu. See your advisor or department chairperson for more information.

7. Will tuition and fees be higher under semesters than under quarters?

No. Tuition and fees for the full academic year under semesters will be the same as they would have been for a full academic year under quarters. Keep in mind, though, that because the full year's charges will now be divided into two semesters rather than three terms, one semester's charges will be proportionately higher than those for one term. If tuition is increased, it will not be because of the change to semesters.

8. Will I lose any credit hours under semesters?

No. All quarter hours will be converted to their equivalent number of semester hours.

9. How many hours are considered full-time under the semester calendar?

Enrollment in 12 semester hours is required for full-time status. Most students will take about 15 hours to stay on track for graduation.

10. How many credit hours under the semester system will be required for graduation?

The state-required minimum number of hours needed to earn a bachelor's degree is 120. However, most Northwood University degree programs require more than the state-required minimum.

11. Will semester conversion affect my graduation date?

If you are currently on track for graduation, conversion to semesters should not affect your graduation date. A Degree Completion Plan (DCP) completed with your academic counselor will project your graduation date.

12. As a student what do I need to do to prepare for the change?

Ask questions. Talk to your academic counselor, department chair, the Registrar's Office, and the

Provost's office. Complete a Degree Completion Plan (DCP). Keep up-to-date on new information. Read and save all information released concerning semester conversion.

13. How will my transcript look if I started under terms and graduate under semesters?

Typically, your transcript will show all credit hours earned as term hours prior to Fall term 2010. These hours will then be converted to semester hours by dividing the number of term hours by 1.5. Thereafter, your transcript will show credit hours earned under semesters. A note on your transcript will advise readers of this conversion method.

14. Under terms, we had a 3/7 week split for winter term. What will my breaks look like under semesters?

In general, the fall semester will start sometime towards the end of August and end with final exams prior to Christmas. The winter semester will start sometime at beginning of January and final exams and commencement should fall near the beginning of May.

15. How are the class times going to be? Will they be 2 hours or different?

There are many ways that courses will be offered, as you know. We can't say "how class times will be" as it depends on each department's schedule and available classrooms. However, the "block" schedule has a standard of Monday, Wednesday and Friday courses of one hour each; Tuesday/Thursday classes will be one hour and 20 minutes each. Not all courses meet these standards however.

16. Will all courses be offered in the full semester term?

Regular courses will normally be full semester courses. Exceptions may include bridge courses (short term transition courses) designed as necessary during the transition to semesters for some programs and limited to specific students. Other exceptions may include laboratory courses or internships within full semester courses, developmental courses, co-op programs and other such offerings.

17. Will I be able to repeat a course, to improve a grade and my GPA, after the course has been converted to a semester from the original quarter course?

Yes, you can continue to repeat courses to replace grades from a term course to a semester course change. If the course has been changed and merged with other content, the Department can review the individual student's request and determine how the replacement grade and which equivalent course would change the old course grade.

Completion of a content category on the term system will translate into completion of the same content category on the semester system.

18. How will the semester conversion affect mini-terms?

We expect to continue to offer opportunities for credit-based expedited learning, similar to mini-terms.

19. I am a graduate student, how will this change impact my program of study?

As you know, DeVos Graduate School currently operates on a 15-week semester system. With this change all operating units will now be on the same semester system. While there may be some minor

tweaking of the DeVos calendar, in no way will the length of your program of study or graduation date be adversely affected.

Information contained in Shawnees State University's and University of Alabama Birmingham's Semester Conversion: FAQs were used in developing this document.