

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy

Program Handbook



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The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy

Program Handbook

<https://belinblank.education.uiowa.edu/students/academy/>



Welcome from our Director, Dr. Megan Foley Nicpon

Welcome to the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy! We are glad you are here. You are a part of a very special organization, the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa (UI). The Center's mission, *"The Belin-Blank Center creates opportunities for the equitable development of talent,"* helps guide the work we do with students, educators, and the community.

The Belin-Blank Center is housed in the College of Education, and we have two university-based programs for Iowa students. Your program, the Bucksbaum Academy, makes it possible for students to start college when they are ready. We support Bucksbaum students through weekly seminars, individual support meetings, social and study events, and much more. We want Bucksbaum students to have close connections with each other as they grow and develop their multiple talents.

Again, welcome to Iowa, the Belin-Blank Center, and the Bucksbaum Academy. Go Hawks!

General Timeline

Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy Application Opens – June 1

Information Sessions (Online) - Refer to the [Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy website](#)

Campus Visits - Refer to the [Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy website](#)

FAFSA Opens - October 1

Application (Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy) Deadline – First Friday of UI Spring Semester Classes (typically mid-January)

Interviews (On-Campus or Online) - January & February

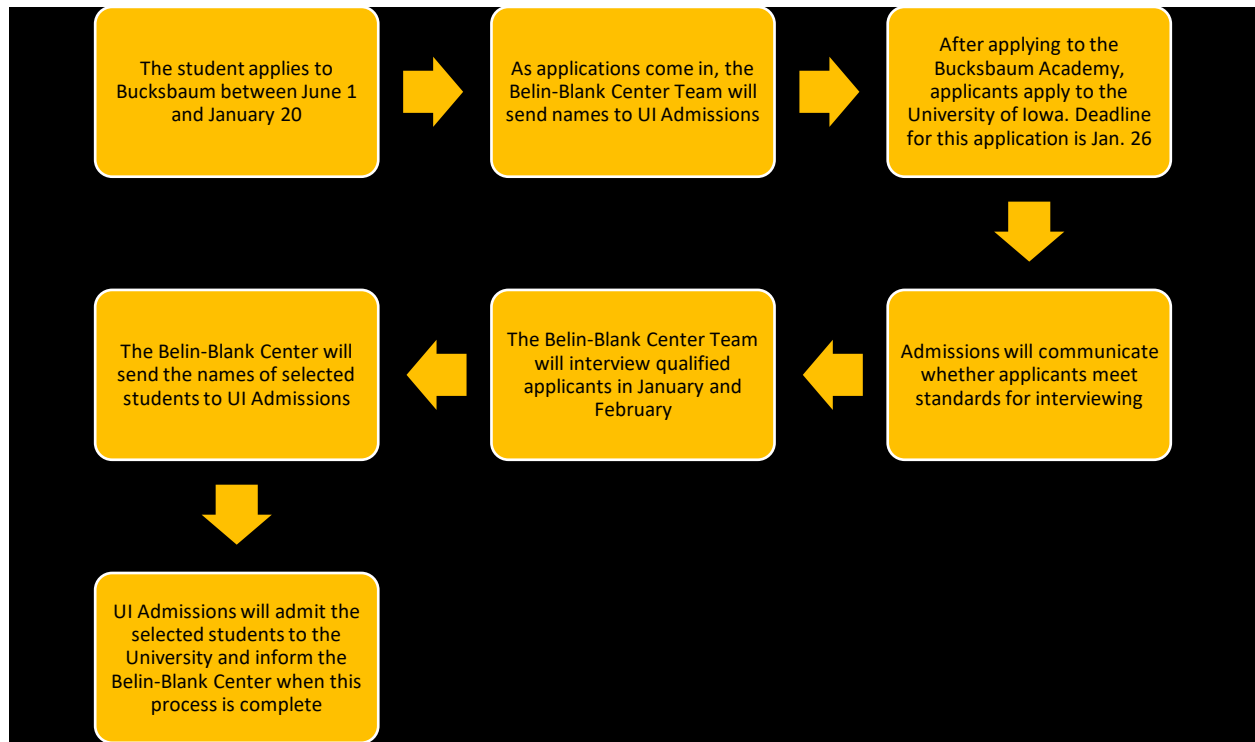
Acceptance Decisions & Scholarship Information Communicated – target date is March 15

Student Acceptance Deadline – May 1

Classes Begin - August (Refer to the University Calendar for exact date)

***Note: This timeline does NOT include all important University of Iowa dates and deadlines.

Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy Admissions Process



History of the Center

The Belin-Blank Center was created in 1988 through the vision of our founders, David & Connie Belin and Myron & Jacqueline Blank. The Center has been a research leader in the areas of academic acceleration and twice-exceptionality, as well as, providing unique programming for educators and students for decades. In Fall 1999, the Center launched an early entrance to college program called the National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering (NAASE). Through this program, high school students could begin a STEM major at the UI after their junior year.

About the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy



Because of a generous gift from Mary Bucksbaum Scanlan, the NAASE program was enhanced and renamed to the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy in 2016. The improved program permits students to choose any major offered at UI, has additional support services including a resident advisor, and increased student financial assistance.

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy provides an opportunity for high school students (who are 16 years of age by August 1 and ready academically, socially, and emotionally for university-level work, to enter college early. Program participants are full time University of Iowa students who participate in university activities such as taking classes, using libraries and laboratories, living in a residence hall, and being involved in campus life. Additionally, students experience an enriched academic and social community as they transition to university life together.

Overview of Support

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy commits to students' success at UI through a comprehensive support structure. The support focuses on students from admission through graduation.

The Belin-Blank Center is housed in the Blank Honors Center (BHC), which is centrally located on the UI campus. It has a skywalk that connects to Daum Residence Hall, and it also houses a small library, study rooms, computer and printer access, and a student lounge.

First- and second-year students attend a mandatory weekly seminar that is held at the Blank Honors Center. This seminar is a credited course in the participants' schedules. In addition to a focus on navigating UI campus and its services, the seminar covers multiple topics that are relevant to success in college with presentations from the course instructor as well as a variety of campus staff guests. We have found the seminar offers an excellent opportunity to build community among the students. A detailed syllabus is provided at the start of the seminar.

Every first-year student is required to meet weekly with a Belin-Blank Center graduate student. At these meetings, students discuss their transition to college and related issues, such as time management, sleep behavior, personal adjustment, making friends, communicating with professors, etc. While academic advising and/or therapeutic intervention are not part of these meetings, the graduate student ensures Bucksbaum students understand how and where to obtain these services on campus, if desired.

The Bucksbaum Academy has additional ways of supporting students. First year students receive class schedule priority status for both fall and spring semesters. Academy students also have their own resident advisor in Daum Hall, in addition to the general UI floor resident advisor. Our resident advisor plans events, checks in with our students, and meets regularly with Belin-Blank staff who work with the university-based programs.

We also host a variety of social events, such as group lunches, theatrical/musical events, wellness retreats, and events in downtown Iowa City. These events help build community among the students.

Residential Component

To foster a sense of community, students who are accepted into the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy must live in Daum Residence Hall their first year. Using input from a housing questionnaire, students are typically assigned a roommate who is also in the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy. If the need arises, a student might be paired with a student in the Academy for Twice-Exceptionality or an Honors student. First year Bucksbaum students will be assigned a move-in time into Daum Residence Hall from the university and will receive notice of that time.

Second-year students may choose to reside either in UI residence halls or move off-campus. Those who wish to live on-campus during their second year will apply through the university

housing system during the spring semester. The Belin-Blank Center does not pair roommates beyond the first year in the program.

Students will need a state or federal form of identification (e.g., driver's license, state ID card, or passport) to move into the residence halls.

Communication with Family

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy sends a newsletter to parents/guardians approximately once a month. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the Bucksbaum Academy staff whenever they have a question.

Beyond the Second Year

Although the seminar and weekly meetings conclude after the second year in the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy, we will keep in touch with all the students through graduation. We typically have an Academy-wide meal in the fall semester and attend a live performance together at Hancher Auditorium. We also have several group lunches in the dining halls. All students will receive the student newsletter that is published twice a semester.

Third- and fourth-year students are tapped to share experiences and advice with the younger cohorts. Insights from the upper-class students are also well-received from families and students who attend the on-campus Visit Days.

Finally, a special event is planned in the spring for students who are graduating (where the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy cords are distributed).

Admission Requirements

The Belin-Blank Center seeks to discover students for the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy whose profile strongly suggests they would be a good fit for early entrance to a Research One University. It is a highly selective program, especially for students applying before their third year of high school. Students MUST be 16 years of age by August 1 of the intended school year. (For students waiting to turn 16, the Belin-Blank Center can provide suggestions for challenge and enrichment.)

The goal when reviewing data from the student's application and interview is to be as sure as possible that the individual would be successful academically, socially, and emotionally at the UI. Applicants should note that admission requirements for the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy are considerably higher than they are for traditional students entering the University of Iowa.

- Standardized Test Score Performance (target scores ACT – 30 or SAT – 1400)
- High School GPA - 3.5
- College Readiness Coursework (Honors, AP, Dual Credit)
- Extracurricular Involvement
- Academic Enrichment Experiences (e.g., clubs, camps, competitions, mentorship)
- Volunteerism
- Personal Statement
- Letters of Recommendation

Matching Process

The process begins with an online application. Belin-Blank Center staff along with UI Admissions will review the pool of applicants. Finalists from the applicant pool will be asked to apply to the University of Iowa.

Finalists, who are admissible to the University of Iowa, will be scheduled for interviews by Belin-Blank Center staff.

Interviews are held in-person or via Zoom in January and February with Belin-Blank Center staff. The applicant and a parent/guardian are in attendance for the interview. The interview provides the opportunity for the student to expand on aspects of their application and share other relevant information that does not exist in the application. The interview also assists students in determining if the Bucksbaum Academy is a right fit for them.

Applicants will learn of their Bucksbaum Academy admission status (accepted, waitlisted, or deferred) by a target date of March 15th. For students who are accepted, the deadline to accept or decline the offer is May 1st, but we would really appreciate notice prior to this date.

High School Issues

Students accepted to the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy are automatically accepted to the University of Iowa, regardless of high school graduation status. Students will be able to provide UI transcripts to their high school and some high schools accept UI coursework for high school credit(s). Students in the Bucksbaum Academy are encouraged to explore options to obtain a high school diploma but must work with their high school administration if they seek to pursue this option.

Similarly, permission to attend high school events (e.g., prom, graduation) are left up to the high school, and we encourage students to go back and take part in any high school experiences that are important to them.

Benefits of the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy

Research has found that acceleration is the best intervention we have for advanced students. When this population of learners is challenged, they are more motivated and engaged in school. Probably the greatest benefit of the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Program is the provision of a more appropriate match between student readiness and academic experience. Other noted benefits (that are detailed more in this Program Guide) include:

- Financial Assistance / Scholarships
- Early move-in (first years)
- Assistance navigating UI campus and its services
- Individual weekly meetings
- Class schedule priority status (for the first year)
- University Honors
- Social events
- Support through graduation
- Sense of community

Scholarship

Mary Bucksbaum Scanlan's endowment of the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy allows the Belin-Blank Center to provide merit scholarships. The scholarship is renewable for four years. The scholarship is paid in two installments (half is paid at the start of the fall semester and half is paid at the start of the spring semester).

See the **"Scholarship Information Contract Form"** found later in this "Program Handbook".

UI Honors Program

All students who are accepted into the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy will apply to University Honors when they apply to the University of Iowa. The UI Honors Program offices are found on the 4th floor of the Blank Honors Center.

University Honors started in 1958 at the UI. Its mission is to enrich the undergraduate experience by cultivating intellectual curiosity and practical skills through engaging coursework, co-curricular involvement, and experiential learning to nurture a deeper understanding of one's discipline and self.

The UI awards University Honors at graduation (noted on transcript and diploma) to honors students who complete 12 honors credits of coursework and 12 hours of experiential learning. Students choose from a menu of options promoting many of the powerful learning experiences the University offers, such as mentored research, study abroad, service learning, internships, and experiential coursework. In addition, students may earn honors in the major recognition through their departments.

Conditions of Participation

To participate in the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy, students and their parents/guardians must sign the “Conditions of Participation” form. This form communicates program structure and expectations. A copy of this form is included in this handbook.

Campus Involvement

Campus involvement is important because it bolsters academic performance, sense of community, well-being, leadership, and multicultural awareness. Students in the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy are expected to be involved in at least one extracurricular activity. First year students typically join one of the hundreds of student organizations, but tend to get involved through research, tutoring, or employment as they move through their academic journey. Students may spend the first semester researching and visiting organizations before making a commitment.

When choosing the organization, it is important that students assess the time commitment expected. Some organizations demand more time than others. Once they have acclimated to the academic demands of college and determined if the time commitment is feasible for a specific organization, students can pursue membership in that organization.

Code of Student Life

Because they are University of Iowa students first, the UI Code of Student Life provides important information regarding student rights and responsibilities. The Belin-Blank Center expects that Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy students will familiarize themselves with UI rights and responsibilities and adhere to them.

<https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life/>

Employment

The Belin-Blank Center’s message is to focus on a successful transition into college. While working is a time commitment, we are aware of the benefits that do exist through employment (specifically time management, meeting others, and earning spending money). Like campus involvement, a student must conduct an individual evaluation of academic demands and time before seeking employment.

If a student chooses to work while on campus, a university job that avoids excessive hours per week (e.g., university dining) is suggested.

Transportation

First year Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy students are discouraged from bringing a car to campus. The student parking lot is NOT conveniently located in relation to Daum Residence Hall.

The Belin-Blank Center and Daum Residence Hall are centrally located on the UI campus and very close to downtown Iowa City. Students find that most places that they need to go are within walking distance. UI has an excellent campus FREE bus system (CAMBUS) that one can use to get to any university building. The cities of Iowa City and Coralville also have excellent transit systems.

Registration Self-Disclosure

Students should self-disclose their involvement in the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy when meeting with their UI Academic Advisor during Orientation. This will provide additional background information to the advisor during course selection and determine how many credit hours a student can manage.

BUCKSBAUM EARLY ENTRANCE ACADEMY

Scholarship Information Contract Form

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy guarantees its students a renewable merit scholarship (up to 4 years). The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy scholarship can be combined with other non-UI funding sources.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, your guaranteed scholarship amount is

_____ **pending you meet the scholarship conditions.** Scholarship amounts will be determined annually and in consideration of other financial aid and scholarship information for each student.

The scholarship is paid in two equal installments at the start of fall and spring semesters. Conditions of the scholarship are detailed in this form.

University of Iowa scholarships are not available for early entrance students until their normal high school cohort enrolls in college. For example, if a student graduates from high school after their junior year and starts college in fall 2023, they would not be eligible for University Iowa scholarships until fall 2024 (which aligns with their original senior graduation and enrollment date). These scholarships can be renewed for up to four years, or until a student receives their bachelor's degree (whichever comes first). Any externally funded scholarships (scholarships from faith-based organizations, family workplaces, or home community organizations) are available immediately for a student's first year and do not need to wait for the normal high school cohort.

Once student eligibility for UI scholarships occurs (either in the second or third year on campus), the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy scholarship will provide additional funds, so the guaranteed scholarship amount listed above is fulfilled. **If UI scholarships meet or exceed the guaranteed scholarship amount, students will receive a \$1,000 scholarship for books/materials from the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy.**

Students must maintain full-time student status and a cumulative GPA of 3.0. An individual notice regarding their scholarship status will be sent to each student at the start of the spring semester and during summer.

Good academic standing is required for the scholarship. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0, the student is considered on academic probation at the Belin-Blank Center and **MUST** meet with a staff member from the Academy. Academic probation serves as a warning. The student **MUST** receive a 3.0 GPA for the next semester to maintain any scholarship from the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy moving forward. Students whose GPAs fall below a cumulative 3.0 for a second semester will permanently lose eligibility for the Bucksbaum scholarship.

If a scholarship is discontinued due to low academic standing, it cannot be reinstated.

CONDITIONS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

- Maintain full time student status with a 3.0 cumulative GPA
- Meet the seminar and individual weekly meeting attendance expectation as stated in the syllabus (first- and second-year cohorts only)
- Meet the Daum Residence Hall event expectation that is stated in the syllabus (first year cohort only)
- Meet the community-building event expectation (up to two per semester)
- Participate in one campus student organization (or a qualifying experience)

We have read and accepted the scholarship conditions.

Student Signature _____ Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date:

BUCKSBAUM EARLY ENTRANCE ACADEMY

Conditions of Participation Form

The Belin-Blank Center is committed to making the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy an exceptional educational experience for its students. To accomplish this, it is important to keep close ties with students and parents. It is also important for the Belin-Blank Center to gather information so that we can evaluate the success of the Academy. Our intention is to work closely with the students, not only in the first year, but in all their years at UI and beyond.

The following are “Conditions of Participation” specific to the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy. These conditions are also required for the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy scholarship that is awarded from the Belin-Blank Center.

Conditions of Participation

- Attend the Bucksbaum orientation for students and their parents/guardians on move-in day
 - Meet the cohort event expectation (not to exceed two per semester)
 - Maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA
 - Participate in at least one university student organization
 - Agree to permit the Belin-Blank Center to receive progress and grade reports, scholarship and financial aid reports, and reports from University Housing & Dining and Dean of Students (including discipline records).
 - Agree to have Belin-Blank Center provide general progress information on Bucksbaum students to university officials as deemed necessary
 - Agree to sign the *FERPA Release Form* so Belin-Blank Center staff may provide relevant information concerning your progress in the Academy (e.g., academic, financial, and disciplinary) to parents/guardians (for students under the age of 18 only).
 - Understand that Belin-Blank Center staff will provide relevant medical/psychological information to parents/guardians if a concern arises
 - Agree to participate in data collection focusing on student educational performance and perceptions and/or evaluations of the Academy
 - Adhere to the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy Program Handbook
 - Adhere to the University of Iowa Academic Policies and Code of Student Conduct
-
- Reside in Daum Residence Hall (**first year only**)
 - Enroll in the Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy seminar (**first two years only**)
 - Meet the seminar and individual weekly meeting attendance expectation (**first two years only**)

We have read and accepted the “**Conditions of Participation**”

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date: _____

The University of Iowa
FERPA Release Form

By signing this form I agree to allow the University of Iowa to release any and all education records related to me, including but not limited to, transcripts, notes, evaluations, emails, letters, contracts, agreements, billing and payment records, scholarships and grants records, financial aid records, academic and non-academic misconduct records, as well as any and all information contained within such records, to:

[My parents/guardians], Print Names:

For the purpose of: Assessing progress in the Academy (e.g., academic, financial, and disciplinary)

This release is valid until [September 1, 2024].

Name: _____

(Please print your name)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____