

In addition to the College-wide expectations, successful participation in the Wheaton in the Black Hills program is predicated on being able to acknowledge and fulfill the following identified Program-Specific Essential Elements:

A. Expected level of academic performance:

1. All participants must be in good academic standing; exceptions must include consent of Registrar and Office of Student Development.

2. Academic learning at Wheaton College Field Station (WCFS) includes a mix of classroom lectures and outdoor lab studies. Students typically collect natural materials and/or record observations in the field. The amount of time in the classroom vs. outdoors varies from course to course and day to day. A reasonable proportion of time in the field for all courses ranges from 50% to 75%.

3. Academic rigor compares with on-campus courses. Students take one course at a time. Courses are 2-8 weeks in length, with one credit hour earned per week of classes. Classes meet every weekday from about 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, unless field trips dictate a different schedule. An exception is that astronomy portions of PHYS 305 meet late evening-early morning for observations. The daytime schedule is adjusted accordingly for those days.

4. Accommodations will be made for students requiring extra time and special accommodations to complete exams or assignments as documented with the Learning and Accessibility Services Office.

5. Textbook and supply lists in will be available in advance of the start of courses.

B. Student adaptability necessary for successful participation in the Black Hills

1. Students must be adaptable to living in a camp setting, with much time spent outdoors. Typical high/low daily temperatures (°F): May 71°/42°, June 81°/50°, July 95°/57°. Late May and early June may be rainy and cool. Mid-June and July are typically dry and hot.

2. Housing is rustic; gender separated dorms consist of rooms shared by four to six students with bunk beds and a general shower room. There is no air conditioning in the dorms. Students are responsible for housekeeping in dorms and public areas.

3. The campus and field-learning environment includes potentially hazardous plants (poison ivy) and animals such as insects, snakes, bats, and other wild mammals. The Black Hills are a habitat for mountain lions, but sightings are rare. For this and other reasons of safety, students are expected to use the buddy system when hiking off-campus and use flashlights at night.

4. Students are expected to be ready for the start of each class, as stated in the syllabus or announced by the instructor and must follow directions for field activities, such as times to return to the vehicles during field trips.

5. Depending on the course, students will participate in frequent rigorous hikes (daily for many courses), short to long duration over-night camping trips to remote locations, or late-night astronomical observations.

6. Students are expected to work together as a team on field excursions with duties such as packing and meal preparation/clean up, setting up tents and cleaning vehicles.

7. Students are expected to adapt to an environment where mobile phone and Internet communications are less dependable than on Wheaton's main campus. Most mobile phone services work from WCFS property, but not from all remote field locations. Wireless Internet is available on station, but there is narrow bandwidth and slow speeds; it is not provided for entertainment purposes.

8. Students are encouraged to choose to earn modest income as part-time kitchen helpers (setting tables, serving food, cleanup, dish washing). We depend on student helpers for this work - it does not interfere with class activities.

9. Students are expected to participate in weekly vespers services (WCFS chapel) on Sunday evenings.

10. A student handbook with WCFS policies will be provided and must be read before the start of classes.

Do you acknowledge that you have read and understand the Black Hills program-specific expectations and pre-requisites?

C. Meal Service during Wheaton in the Black Hills

1. Students will eat most meals in the dining hall prepared by our kitchen staff. Students will also prepare "pack-out lunches" of provided food for sandwiches, fruit and snacks for daylong field trips away from campus. Overnight camping trips will involve students preparing their own meals with food provided by kitchen. Communal meals are an essential element of the program.

2. Meals provide for a balanced diet including meat, vegetables, and dairy. We will accommodate individuals with vegetarian preferences, food restrictions (allergies) or intolerances (e.g., gluten-free or lactose-free) when disclosed on the Dietary/Meal Questionnaire. While we are happy to entertain menu suggestions, we cannot guarantee or accommodate individual food preferences.

3. Water, fruit, and healthy snacks are available between meals. Students are asked to limit food kept in the dorms to well-wrapped or sealed snacks foods to prevent insect and rodent infestations.

4. There are no facilities for student to prepare their own food. Access to food beyond the campus is severely limited, requiring vehicular transportation of at least 12 miles.

5. The dining facility will make an effort to minimize exposure if a student has a known food allergy, however we cannot guarantee an environment completely free of allergens. Students with food allergies should be aware that closest emergency medical facilities are 12 miles from WCFS and often very much farther from remote field locations.

6. Students are typically satisfied with food service at WCFS. The Head Cook will welcome reasonable suggestions for menus that can be prepared economically and would likely appeal to the greater community.

D. Physical capacity or conditioning necessary for successful participation

1. The Field Station in the Black Hills is a camp-like setting at about 4400 ft. above sea level, with uneven ground, elevation differences, and few paved walkways. Students must be able to walk on grass, dirt, or gravel trails between buildings. The distance between the men's dorm and the dining hall is about 600

feet (essentially flat). The distance between the women's dorm and the dining hall is about 660 feet (33 ft elevation difference along gravel road).

2. Some courses include frequent (sometimes daily) rigorous hikes of several miles on uneven trails, often with steep gradients (from 3000 to 6000 ft above sea level). Students must be able to keep with the average pace of other students and instructor. Some activities involve wading in water or jumping narrow streams. Students are responsible for keeping hydrated and protected from the sun.

3. Students who experience travel sickness should be aware of that travel to remote locations for field studies involve vehicular transport on curvy, mountainous roads.

4. Students in some classes will be expected to camp, using sleeping bags and pads on the ground in tents. Trips in GEOL 201, BIOL 242, PHYS 305 and CORE 325 are generally one-night duration (one to two trips per course). Trips in BIOL 351 and GEOL 412 are weeklong and include high-elevation settings and extreme temperature conditions (below freezing at night).

Do you acknowledge that you have read and understand the Black Hills program-specific expectations and pre-requisites?

E. Mental/emotional health requirements

1. Emotional stressors from the academic experience in the Black Hills is probably not too different for most students from their experiences on the Wheaton campus. Many students find that taking one course per session in a field setting is very enjoyable and less stressful. On the other hand, the courses compress a semester's worth of content into four weeks. Assignments and readings must be completed quickly, along with the physical demands of fieldwork. This change in schedule and the increased physical activity can be disconcerting for students, so mental adaptability and physical self-care is important.

2. The Black Hills campus is small and rustic, so students live and work in very close proximity. The lack of privacy may be stressful for some students. There are no single student accommodations available.

F. Accessibility of health care providers near the Field Station campus in the Black Hills

1. There is limited access to medical and/or mental health care providers, especially from remote field locations. Medical facilities closest to the Black Hills campus include walk-in clinics and the Rapid City Regional Hospital (25 minutes, 12.6 miles). In-network providers for a specific health insurance plan are not guaranteed. Emergency services are available in the vicinity of the Field Station for transport to the Rapid City Regional Hospital emergency room. Smaller clinics and hospitals are located closer to some remote field sites. Emergency medical facilities are rarely close to field locations on the BIOL 351 and GEOL 412 "western trips" to Wyoming and Montana. Helicopter rescue is required from some locations.

2. Medication prescriptions can be filled at local stores of national pharmacy companies (such as CVS, Walgreens). First aid supplies are available on station and in vehicles. There is an AED (automated external defibrillator) available on station.

Do you acknowledge that you have read and understand the Black Hills program-specific expectations and pre-requisites?

12) Application Acknowledgement (REQUIRED)

Please acknowledge that if accepted, you understand you must meet the College-wide requirements and Program-specific Essential Elements, with or without reasonable accommodation(s), to participate. Participation in any off-campus program is always voluntary.

Students who have a disability or health condition (including mental health conditions, learning disabilities, ADHD, etc.) and require ADA accommodations to ensure equal access to this off-campus program should contact the Learning and Accessibility Services (LAS) Office **well in advance** of the commitment deadline and/or the start of their off-campus program or experience to begin the interactive accommodations process. LAS services are completely free and confidential. You can initiate an accommodations request [here](#) or reach out to las@wheaton.edu with any questions.

I understand the College and program-specific requirements and recognize participation is voluntary