

NORTHWOOD INSTITUTE OF TAXIDERMY, INC.

SCHOOL CATALOG

January 2026

ADDRESS 2231 Stoystown Road Friedens, PA 15541 (814) 445-6215

FACULTY Joel N. Zimmerman, Director / Instructor
Alecia S. Zimmerman, Office Manager, Acting Director

HISTORY & INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Northwood Institute of Taxidermy (NIT) was established in the Fall of 2007. Mr. Joel N. Zimmerman, Director of the Institute, graduated from the American Institute of Taxidermy in Janesville, Wisconsin in 1978. He taught at another school for five years before opening the Northwood School of Taxidermy, Inc. in 1990. Mr. Zimmerman has successfully taught hundreds of students the art of Taxidermy and is excited about continuing as the Director of the Northwood Institute of Taxidermy, Inc. Joel is a Master Taxidermist who has been invited to judge State competitions and teach seminars. He has won numerous awards at State, National and World competitions. His work has been on the cover of Taxidermy Today and featured in articles of various publications as an authority in Taxidermy.

FACILITIES

The Northwood Institute of Taxidermy, Inc. is located at 2231 Stoystown Road (Rt. 281), Friedens, PA. It consists of a large classroom and instructional area, restroom, paint and storage room and an administrative office. The facility is barrier free to assist students who may be confined to a wheelchair.

EQUIPMENT

Mounting stands, 6 fleshing machines, 2 tanning machines, band saw, table saw, Dremel grinder, glue guns, air compressors, cordless screwdrivers, double-bowl sinks, bench grinder, tumbler, washing machine, dryers, air staplers, blow dryers, paint guns, electric drills, assorted hand tools, work benches, chest freezers, walk-in freezer, refrigerator, microwave and a reference library.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To teach skills required to become proficient as a commercial taxidermist.
2. To employ these skills by providing experiences in all areas of mounting, preserving and displaying of specimens.
3. To expose students to necessary business skills and procedures vital to a successful commercial taxidermy operation.
4. To prepare students for State Licensing examinations.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

2026 1/05/26 – 4/03/26

2027 1/04/27 – 4/02/27

2028 1/03/28 – 3/31/28

8/24/26 – 11/20/26

8/23/27 – 11/19/27

8/21/28 – 11/17/28

HOLIDAYS AND HOURS

2026 – Good Friday - 4/3/26, Labor Day – 9/7/26

Classes will run 8:00 AM until 12:00 noon and 12:30 PM until 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

1. Students must be at least 17 years of age or beyond the compulsory school age in their state.
2. Students should be able to discern the various colors of the spectrum, a simple test will be given at the commencement of classes to determine if there are any impairments that need to be addressed.
3. Students need no prior experience in Taxidermy.

TUITION

Tuition for the complete thirteen (13) week course is \$8795.00. This cost includes everything you will need to mount 4 game fish, 2 upland birds, 2 waterfowl, 2 white tail game heads, 1 medium to large life-size mammal, (ex. Coyote, bobcat) and 1 open-mouth rug. Supply catalogs, a full course textbook and a tool kit will be provided. Housing for the full thirteen week course is \$1000. No meals are provided.

Fish Partial - \$2195 + housing \$250. The school will furnish all supplies, specimens and base work needed to mount 6 game fish. Supply catalogs, a partial course textbook and a tool kit will be provided.

Bird Partial - \$2095 + housing \$250. The school will furnish all supplies and specimens needed to mount 2 upland birds and 2 waterfowl. Supply catalogs, a partial course textbook and a tool kit will be provided.

Fur Partial - \$5395 + housing \$500. The school will furnish all supplies and specimens needed to mount 2 white tail game heads, 1 medium to large life-size mammal (ex. Coyote, bobcat) and 1 open-mouth rug. Supply catalogs, a partial course textbook and a tool kit will be provided.

Weekend Seminars are \$1000 unless otherwise stated.

OTHER EXPENSES

There are no other hidden costs to you. However, upon graduation you may wish to purchase supplies such as paints, alginate, methanol, formic acid, mounting stands, fleshing machines, tanning machines or specimens. We will provide all vendor information for such for our students. We have various brands of fleshing machines in house to allow you to choose which one is right for you.

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Payment can be made for tuition by either cash, check, or money order. There will be a returned check fee of \$35. If there is a second return check student will be responsible for the returned check fee of \$35 and will need to make all future payments in cash

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

Students wishing to enroll must fill out the Enrollment Application and send it to the school along with a tuition deposit of \$1500, which includes a \$750 application fee. The \$1500 deposit will be applied to the tuition and reserves the student a place in that particular session. \$750 of the \$1500 deposit is refundable if student cancels prior to the first day of class. Students will be accepted up until the starting date of a new term unless the class limit (eight students) is filled prior to that date.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students will complete for grades the following specimens:

1. 4 game fish, such as bass, trout and pike.
2. 2 medium size upland game birds.
3. 2 medium size waterfowl
4. 1 small to medium size mammal (such as coyote or bobcat).
5. 2 game heads (such as white tail deer).
6. 1 open mouth rug to be sent out for felt (such as a coyote).

GRADING/AWARD

Students shall be tested, in writing and by judgment of the completed specimen, in each phase of the taxidermy course (Fish, Birds & Fur). Grading will be on accumulated average with (100-91=A), (90-81=B), (80-71=C), (70-60=D), (Below 60=F). Students maintaining a "C" average or higher in all areas set forth by the Institute will receive a diploma upon completion of the Full Taxidermy Training Course. A Certificate of Completion is awarded to student upon completion of a partial course/program.

Tests and judgment sheets will be promptly corrected, recorded and returned to the student following each phase (Fish, Birds & Fur) of the taxidermy course.

If a student is failing to meet the minimum standards set by the Northwood Institute of Taxidermy, Inc. in any phase of the taxidermy course, he will be notified far enough in advance so as to not obligate himself to complete and pay for the entire 13 (thirteen) week term.

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

The student will be given a reasonable extension of time to report in case of illness or an Act of God that would necessitate a delay in starting, but cannot begin a new course beyond the third day of class. Students must attend all classes and field trips. No leaves, class cuts or

tardiness will be permitted, unless approved by the school. The school will arrange to make up hours lost to approved absences on a mutually agreed upon system but student must attend 480 hours of the 520 hour course. The student agrees to maintain regular attendance and any violations or infringements of the school's rules and regulations may be subject to dismissal of the student. The school is relieved and released of all claims by the student that may arise as a result of the school's inability to perform where under as a result of an Act of God or any other matter or thing, beyond the control of the school.

The school reserves the right to alter the hours of attendance and/or starting dates when deemed necessary. Such changes will not alter the program costs or refund policy. If conditions beyond the control of the school require postponement of a starting date or temporary suspension of classes, appropriate adjustments will be made to provide the student all of the instruction to which they are entitled. Students who have enrolled but have not started attending school will, be issued a refund of moneys paid if postponement exceeds one semester. The student shall have the right to terminate training at any time at his/her option. the school requests withdrawal notices to be in writing but is not required. The school will make an attendance determination once the student has been absent for 5 academic days without previous communication or notice.

VA SECTION

Veteran students must keep their grades at least a "C" level at all times. If their grade falls below that level, they will have 2 weeks in order to bring it up to "C" level. After 2 weeks and their grade is still below a "C" level, the school will notify the Veterans Education of the fact and that their probationary period has not helped bring their grades to "C" level and that the student must be dropped from Taxidermy. Re-entry in that class will not be permitted.

Veterans must also keep their attendance up to 480 hours of the 520 hours. If at any time the student has missed over 40 hours of class time and has not made arrangements to make it up, the Veterans Education office will be notified and the student will be dropped from Taxidermy. Re-entry in that class will not be permitted.

VA BENEFITS

NIT is approved for participation in various funding programs offered through the Veterans' Administration. A student entitled to educational assistance under chapter 31 or 33, should submit a certificate of eligibility as early as possible, but no later than the first day of class. Students who request in writing to use their chapter 31 or 33 entitlement and provide all necessary information for a timely certification of enrollment will receive a budget sheet outlining these benefits which would be used to pay for costs the student will incur. In such cases, the institution will not impose any penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the requirement that a covered individual borrow additional funds due to the individual's inability to meet his or her financial obligations to the institution due to the delayed disbursement of a payment to be provided under chapter 31 or 33.

VA INFO CALL 1-800-827-1000

VA students only. The Pro Rata Refund policy applies.

In the event a veteran fails to enter, withdraws or is discontinued from the program at any time prior to completion, the amount charged to the veteran does not exceed the pro rata portion of the total charges for tuition, fees and other charges that the length of the completed portion of the program bears to its total length.

FINANCIAL AID

We currently do not have any financial aid available. We have decided in order to keep our tuition reasonable we will not become accredited at this time as this would only raise our tuition \$5000 to accommodate all the costs incurred to be able to receive government funding. We like passing the savings on to our students. We know you will need money to start your business, that is why our school is the most reasonably priced school around. We are always exploring financial aid opportunities, should it become available we will publish and make known such information promptly.

CONDUCT

Students must abide by the rules and regulations of the school. No stealing, rowdiness or disruptive behavior will be tolerated. Any student attending class in an intoxicated state or in possession of any illegal substance may be subject to dismissal. Also, any student who willfully and maliciously damages or destroys properties of the school, or of other students, may also be dismissed. Smoking will not be permitted in the classroom or apartments due to fire codes. The schools sexual Harassment policy can be found at the end of the student catalog. If a student violates the rules or policies to the extent of a dismissal, re-entry in that class will not be permitted.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

No placement service is offered. Training is geared to provide the student with the knowledge to embark on a self-sustaining career in his/her own business venture. However, some students may wish to become employed by established taxidermists and the Northwood Institute of Taxidermy, Inc. will endeavor to aid those students seeking such employment.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

The balance due on tuition must be paid in full no later than the beginning of the first week of class, except in cases where students are receiving funding from state or federal agencies or in house financing. All bills must be paid prior to graduation.

CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS TRAINING

Transcripts and/or taxidermy courses taken by the student prior to entering the school will be evaluated on an individual basis, including their finished taxidermy specimens.

CANCELLATION POLICY

1. If a student enrolls and is rejected by the school, the student will be refunded all monies paid within 30 days of notice of rejection, including application fee.
2. If a student requests cancellation within 5 calendar days after signing the enrollment agreement all monies paid will be refunded within 30 days of cancellation, less the \$750 application fee.
3. A request for cancellation which is not made in writing shall be confirmed in writing by the student within an additional period of 5 calendar days.

REFUND & WITHDRAWAL POLICY

1. If a student withdraws after beginning training but within the first week of the term, the school shall refund 75% of the tuition.
2. If a student withdraws after the first week but within the first 25% of the term, the school shall refund 55% of the tuition.
3. If a student withdraws after 25% but within 50% of the term, the school shall refund 30% of the tuition.
4. Beyond 50% of the term the student is entitled to NO REFUND.

5. NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL by a student is requested to be in writing but not required. The school shall make the appropriate refund within thirty (30) days of the date of determination. The date of determination is calculated by the student's last date of attendance.
6. A student who does not attend classes for a period of two (2) consecutive days and who does not give the school, prior to or during the period of absence, an explanation regarding the absence is considered to have withdrawn from the school.
 - a. Special Cases: In case of student prolonged illness or accident, death in the family, or other circumstances that make it impossible or impractical to complete the course, the school shall make a settlement which is reasonable to both parties.
7. VA Students see VA section.

HOUSING

Students may make their own living arrangements if they desire. However, the school makes available a fully furnished apartment that may be shared with other students. The cost for this type of living arrangement is \$1000 for the duration of the Full Taxidermy Course.

RECREATION

It is important to us that your stay be as enjoyable and as memorable as possible. There are a lot of fishing spots very close to the school. Trout streams, lakes, and reservoirs are within 5 minutes. Hunting is also abundant. There are many areas open to public hunting; you are welcome to bring your hunting gear. During the winter months, skiing at three nearby resorts: Hidden Valley, Seven Springs, and Blue Knob are all within 30 minutes. There are also snowmobile trails minutes away at Forbes and Babcock State Forest. You are welcome to bring your snowmobile if you like.

TAXIDERMY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS (520 CLOCK HOURS)

2 Hours – Orientation

Introductions, your future in taxidermy, laws, explanations of how the course is run, regulations, equipment, collection of references, safety and hygiene.

166 Hours – Fish Course

Handling, skinning, fleshing, pattern making, body making, skin preservation, casting, mounting, fin preparation, finish modeling, eye setting, airbrushing techniques and displaying.

120 Hours – Bird Mounting

Skinning, fleshing, degreasing, washing, drying, skin preservation, wiring, mounting, posing, feather adjustments, color restoration and displaying.

216 Hours – Fur Course

Field care, measuring, skinning, fleshing, skin preservation, tanning techniques, manikin selection, eye setting, ear preparation, form alterations, mounting, finish modeling, color restorations, grooming, base making and displaying.

16 Hours – Business Course

Setting up a business, pricing and overhead, targeted marketing, advertising, displays, receipts, licensing and regulations.

STUDENT COMPLAINT & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a student does not feel that the school has adequately addressed a complaint or concern, the student may consider contacting the:

State Board of Private Licensed Schools
Pennsylvania Department of Education
607 South Drive, Floor 3E
Harrisburg, PA 17120

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Due to the specific nature of our course, it is unlikely that any credits earned at our school would be transferable to another institution.

CONGRATULATIONS

Upon enrollment in the Northwood Institute of Taxidermy, Inc. you have taken the first important step in learning to become a professional taxidermist.

Taxidermy can be one of the most exciting and rewarding businesses in which an individual can engage. The future of taxidermy can only be described as unlimited, with more individuals hunting and fishing than ever before.

By enrolling with the Northwood Institute of Taxidermy, Inc. you will have chosen one of the most personal and extensive taxidermy schools in North America.

You the student will be offered:

1. A 13 week, 520 hour extensive course including tanning all of your own skins, detail habitat courses and all hands on live demonstrations, no videos. You may also choose a partial course.
2. Enrollment in a class of not more than 8 students. (Small class means more individual attention.)
3. Master Instruction. (Instructor has won numerous awards in State, National and World taxidermy competitions, also judged numerous competitions and instructed seminars.)
4. Completed mounts valued up to \$5000 to be retained by the student.
5. Up-to-date, modern equipment.
6. Fully furnished on-site housing.
7. A tuition cost considerably less per class clock hour than offered by other schools. No hidden costs. Specimens and all supplies included in tuition.
8. Located in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania with excellent hunting and fishing in close proximity to the school.

RECORDS

Student records are maintained by NIT and are available upon request.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY The Northwood Institute of Taxidermy sexual harassment policy aims to safeguard students of all sexes and gender identities in our school from unwanted sexual advances and provide them with guidelines to report incidents.

This policy applies to all Northwood Institute of Taxidermy students and staff.

Sexual harassment definition:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are defined as sexual harassment when: The offensive behavior creates an intimidating, abusive, or hostile learning environment, or interferes with work performance.

Anybody can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex or gender identity and that of the offending party.

Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents that may be physical, verbal, or non-verbal, and includes:

- Commenting on somebody's appearance, sexual orientation, or gender in a derogatory or objectifying way, or in a way that makes them uncomfortable.
- Creating or posting sexually offensive materials in the classroom.
- Flirting at an inappropriate time, even if these advances would have been welcome in a different setting. These actions can damage a person's reputation and expose them to further sexual harassment.
- Flirting with somebody or pursuing them persistently against their will.
- Using obscene comments, gestures, pranks, and jokes that degrade or offend somebody.
- Sending or displaying sexually explicit objects or messages.
- Invading somebody's personal space, for example by touching them inappropriately.
- Threatening, coercing, stalking, or intimidating somebody to pressure them to engage in sexual acts.
- Proposing, demanding, or insinuating sexual favors.
- Sexual assault.

Reporting Process:

- If you believe that you are the target of sexual harassment, inform the offending party (except in cases of sexual assault) verbally or in writing that their conduct is offensive and needs to stop.
- If you don't want to communicate with the offending party, or if your communication is ineffective, you need to report them.
- Complaints can be made in writing to the School Director. Your complaint will be documented and resolved within [3] days. Complaints will be treated as confidential.
- Both Northwood Institute of Taxidermy and federal law prohibit any form of retaliation against somebody claiming sexual harassment.

Investigation Process:

Northwood Institute of Taxidermy will:

- Record the dates, times, and circumstances of the incidents.
- Ensure that the complainant understands Northwood Institute of Taxidermy procedures for dealing with the complaint.
- Determine what outcome the complainant wants.
- Investigate the matter.

Based on the above, Northwood Institute of Taxidermy will further:

- Contact the offending party and set up a meeting to explain the complaint, and to ask them to stop this behavior.
- If the complainant agrees, arrange for mediation sessions with the complainant and the alleged perpetrator to resolve the issue.

Penalties for Sexual Harassment:

Students who are found guilty of sexual harassment (excluding sexual assault, for which they will be dismissed) the first time may:

- Receive a verbal warning.
- Receive a written warning.
- School will dismiss repeat offenders after a second offense.

All sexual assault complaints will be referred to the police.

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by this policy.

Signed: _____
"Student Name"

Date: _____