

## Undergraduate Education

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Chico State offers a wonderful array of courses and academic programs—including majors, minors, options, credentials, and certificates—in an enriching residential environment. The quality and character of your undergraduate experience is determined by the choices you make in developing your program. Your program represents a considerable commitment of your time, money, resources, and effort. The decisions you make are closely linked to the satisfaction and growth you will experience. These will influence your attainment of academic, personal and career goals, and the contributions you will make to society. The earlier you assume responsibility for the direction of your education and begin to discover its rewards, the more you will gain.

It is a goal of the University to offer you the best education possible within its resources and to help you develop and achieve academic goals consistent with your interests and abilities. It is likewise a goal of the University to help you do so as efficiently as possible through timely provision of courses, advising, and support services. Any baccalaureate program offered by the University can be completed within four years by students just beginning their college career if they follow the guidelines outlined later in this section.

If you are a transfer student, you will have less flexibility than freshmen, depending on choices you have already made. Nonetheless, you too can develop an efficient program plan that will result in an outstanding academic experience.

### The Three Components of a Degree Program

You will plan your program most effectively by understanding the three basic course components of the baccalaureate and the relationship of these to each other: 1) the major; 2) general education and other requirements; and 3) elective courses. These three are structured around a framework of nine graduation requirements, described in the section “Bachelor’s Degree Requirements,” which are the building blocks of your degree program. If you have already completed some college course work, you need to determine as early as possible how that credit applies to these requirements.

### 1. The Major

The most easily identifiable portion of your academic program is your major. A major is defined as a program of related courses, and all University-level prerequisites to those courses, which focus on a field of study. These include majors in broad areas of accumulated knowledge in what are often referred to as “the liberal arts” such as English, history, psychology, mathematics, and chemistry. Other majors are “professionally” or “technically” oriented. These draw heavily on the liberal arts in applied settings such as business administration, computer science, recreation administration, and engineering. Successful completion of a major, along with other requirements, is recognized by award of the appropriate degree.

You may declare your major on your application for admission to the University. If you are a freshman or sophomore and, like many, still deciding on your academic or career goals, you may elect to remain undeclared until you determine the direction you plan to take. As an undeclared student—still deciding your major—your “home” for advising purposes is the Academic Advising Programs (SSC 120), whose staff will assist you with your program planning and academic career decisions.

### Options

Many of the majors offered by the University have **Major Program Options**. For example, within the business administration major, you may choose the accounting or finance option, among several other choices. An option is an officially recognized program of specialization within a major. It includes requirements specific to the option plus a core of courses taken by all students in the major regardless of option selected. Successful completion of an option is noted on your transcript.

### Advising Patterns

Some majors and major program options offer additional **Advising Patterns** which, while not identified on transcripts, are specific ways of completing the major which allow you to emphasize a sub-specialization or area of concentration within your program.

*When you declare your major, if it contains an option or advising pattern, you will be required to declare both the option or pattern of your choice.* This combination of an option and/or pattern within a major will be recorded in your student record as a **Concentration**, and may appear as such on your registration or advising materials provided to you each semester by mail or via a required conference with your academic advisor. It will also appear on the various Student Information System (SIS) and On-Course degree audit screens used by your academic advisor.

### Credentials

For those considering a career in education, Chico offers several programs leading to various **Teaching Credentials**. Programs include those which lead to the Multiple Subject (elementary) Credential, to a Single Subject (secondary) Credential in many academic areas, or to any of a variety of specialist credentials. Completion of the subject matter requirements for many of these include all requirements for the corresponding major, and most are identified as a specific option within the major. For more information on any of these, see the “Education” chapter in the *University Catalog*.

## Pre-Professional Programs

If you are considering continuing on in a professional training program at another university, you may need to enroll in specialized courses of study within, or in addition to, your major, which are called **Pre-professional Programs**. Pre-professional programs and advising are designed to provide a solid background for further study in dentistry, law, library science, medicine, optometry, physical therapy, veterinary medicine, and other professions requiring advanced study. The academic departments which provide pre-professional advising are committed to their students. They have spent many years building relationships with professional schools so that their students receive the best possible information and assistance in their efforts to be admitted to and succeed in professional programs.

## 2. General Education and Other University Course Requirements

In addition to the major you select, you will complete a **General Education Program (GE)**. You will also take courses to satisfy the **United States History, Constitution, and American Ideals**, the **Diversity**, and **Literacy Requirements** as part of the overall course requirements for your degree.

The GE program is designed to acquaint you with a variety of academic disciplines and to provide as broad an understanding as possible of your scientific, cultural, social, intellectual, and artistic heritage. GE balances the in-depth study in your major by strengthening basic skills and increasing your understanding and awareness of issues and aspirations of people throughout the world.

With only a few exceptions, majors are not independent of the GE requirements. In fact, one or more specific GE courses are required or are elective credit for almost all of the majors offered by the University. As you plan your program consider those GE courses which are required for majors of interest.

Additionally, in several high-unit majors of the University, such as engineering, nursing, and agriculture, modifications to the GE requirements have been authorized. These modifications reduce the total number of GE units that otherwise would be required for the degree.

Chico's GE program includes two unique alternatives. The Freshman General Studies Thematic Program is an outstanding integrated approach to the first year of college. Students selected for this program complete 33 of the 48 required GE units in a team-taught setting. The Course Link program provides students the opportunity to take three GE courses with the same group of students. Both are described in this *Catalog*.

All students in the CSU must complete as part of the 48 GE units 9 upper-division units. At Chico this 9-unit requirement has been organized into themes, each one of which considers a significant concern of humankind. You must complete a total of 45 units before you begin your upper-division theme.

In addition to GE, you will take courses to satisfy the California State Education Code and additional University graduation requirements. These courses are designed to increase your understanding of United States history, its constitution, ideals, and cultural diversity; and English and mathematics.

## 3. Elective Courses

The remaining component of your study at Chico State, and the part most easily personalized, is the elective courses portion. Except in a few high-unit majors, considerable freedom remains for you to take courses which satisfy your individual interests or needs. Such courses might include an activity in music or physical education, an opportunity for service through Community Action Volunteers in Education (C.A.V.E.), or additional courses in an area which complements your major.

*You may direct available elective credit towards the completion of a minor or certificate, an additional major, or a self-designed block of courses concentrating in a single field of study.*

### Minors

A **Minor** is an approved group of related courses, 18–30 units in length, successful completion of which is also recognized on your transcript. Minors, like majors, consist of a set of required courses and all prerequisites to these courses. A minor is not usually a graduation requirement, although it may strengthen your undergraduate program, increase employment opportunities, and broaden your intellectual perspectives.

### Certificate Programs

The University offers **Certificate Programs**, a group of university-level courses or related experiences certified by academic units as equivalent to university course work on this campus. Successful completion of a program shall be recognized with a certificate of completion awarded by the University. To find details on requirements for certificate programs or qualifying for the certificate, see the academic department sponsoring the certificate program.

Students completing certificate programs are not obligated to meet other University graduation requirements. Course work completed to satisfy certificate programs might be applied to related majors.

Students will qualify for admission to certificate programs only if they are admissible by University and departmental standards, policies, and procedures. Students qualifying for admission may be completing or have completed a bachelor's degree and may wish to receive additional certification in a professionally oriented field of study, or may choose not to go beyond the program of courses required for the certificate.

The undergraduate certificate program will include no fewer than 21 units, of which at least 15 must be upper-division or graduate work. Lower-division prerequisites may be included in the program as necessary. A maximum of 9 units of transfer credit may be allowed in a certificate program. Students may apply up to 24 units of Open University enrollment towards the certificate program. A grade point average of 2.5 must be earned for courses required for the certificate program with at least a C or better earned in each course.

## Completing the Degree in Four Years or Less—

Admissions counselors and academic advisors are often asked, "Can I [or my son or daughter] complete the degree in four years?" In this age of shrinking financial resources and family incomes stretched to the limit, it is easy to understand the concern behind the question. The answer, however, is not a simple yes or no. There are a number of factors that directly affect the quality of your education as well as the length of time it may take to finish your program. These factors have to do with the choices you make, effective

advising, and the University's ability to balance its resources to meet your needs.

It is possible to complete any bachelor's degree program offered by the University in four years or less. In fact many students do it even in our most demanding majors. Others do not finish within four years, nor could they given the choices they made and the circumstances in which they found themselves.

To assist students in planning a four-year program of study, each department makes available a suggested "**Four-Year Degree Plan**" for each major and option program it offers. These plans list suggested eight-semester sequences of major, GE, and other required courses, and elective credit that will fulfill all graduation requirements.

*It is important to distinguish between (1) the number of units you complete in any given year at the University and (2) the number of courses and units which you include in your degree program.*

### 1. The Number of Units Completed per Year

If you work or for other reasons carry less than a full load (fifteen to sixteen units per semester) or "stop-out" one or more semesters, it may take you longer than four years to graduate.

You may elect to travel abroad or pursue an internship or cooperative-education for a semester or longer. For many students, such experiences become the testing ground for reality in helping them refine goals and sharpen educational commitment. These experiences may prove to be the high points of their education even though they may delay graduation.

### 2. The Number of Courses Included in Your Program

If you enroll in courses not needed for your major or other graduation requirements that are in excess of the number of elective units you need to graduate, you may delay your graduation. Following are four specific circumstances which may result in excess units:

- Many students change majors one or more times or do not decide on their majors until well into their college careers. This is often inevitable, even desirable as you mature and expand your interests, self-awareness, and understanding of the complexities of the world of work.
- Students enroll intentionally or otherwise in courses which do not apply to either their majors or General Education and are in excess of the number of available elective units. This may happen by choice because of your interest in an area, or as a consequence of misunderstanding requirements or failure to seek adequate advising. You may elect to study a second major, minor, foreign language, performing art, or other skill which may extend your time to graduate. You may decide to participate in an internship, the National Student Exchange Program, or one of the numerous study abroad programs. It is not uncommon for these choices to be those which prove most beneficial to your career development and employability.
- Students may need preparatory course work for specific programs which they could have taken in high school but did not, such as trigonometry prior to taking calculus.
- And there are those who fail or drop courses required for their programs which they must then repeat in a subsequent term.

**If you desire to finish within four years or less, the guidelines on the following two pages will help.**

## Planning Your Course of Study

By understanding how your major requirements, general education (GE), and elective units work together, you can create an academic program that is interesting and satisfying to you, and you can minimize problems that may delay your graduation. Here are some strategies to help you plan your course work at CSU, Chico.

(1) During your years in college your interests, skills, and understandings will change. This fact affects how you plan your program. For example:

- **Most students change their major. Be open to the possibilities.** This University offers over 200 different majors, options and patterns, minors, credentials, and certificates. Begin your exploration early.
- **Conserve your elective credit.** In your first year or so concentrate primarily on meeting GE and courses which introduce you to, or are required for, majors of interest. Explore, but keep in mind that if you use up elective credit too soon, you may have little or none left later when you have decided on a major.
- **Recognize that most majors and minors include courses which meet both GE and program requirements.** By taking advantage of these you may explore programs of interest, conserve elective credit, and reduce the time required to graduate.
- **Keep things in perspective.** Many graduates find in the long run that the major was of less significance than other interests and skills cultivated during their college years.
- **There are many opportunities from which to choose:** internships, cooperative education, exchange and travel-study abroad programs, student government, clubs and organizations, fine arts, and athletics, to name a few. Many may be included in a well-planned program.
- **Develop relationships with faculty who can offer you insight and perspective on careers, educational opportunities, values, and issues.**
- **Invest time exploring educational and career alternatives.** Seek help from several sources: family, people working in careers in which you are interested, faculty whose courses you particularly enjoy, University career and academic counselors, and academic advisors.
- **Immerse yourself in the academic, cultural, and intellectual life of the University.** You may develop lifelong commitments and interests that make you and the world better.

(2) Plan your program in consultation with academic advisors. Review your plan frequently and meet with your advisor every semester.

- **When you have decided on a major, make a plan for the balance of your program.** Obtain a copy of the suggested Four-Year Degree Plan for your major from your department office, advisor, new student orientation session, the Advising and Orientation Office, or the CSU, Chico Web. Carefully review requirements for the major in the *University Catalog* and the sequence of courses in the Four-Year Degree Plan, and develop and refine your personal plan with your advisor.
- **If you are enrolling in a high-unit major, determine whether or not there are modifications to GE and other graduation requirements.** Take advantage of these to avoid adding more semesters to your program.
- **Pay careful attention to course prerequisites.** Make certain that you take courses in the proper sequence.
- **If you are considering a teaching credential, be sure you have a clear understanding of the special requirements you must meet in order to be admitted to the professional education preparation program.** Contact the Professional Preparation Program for information.

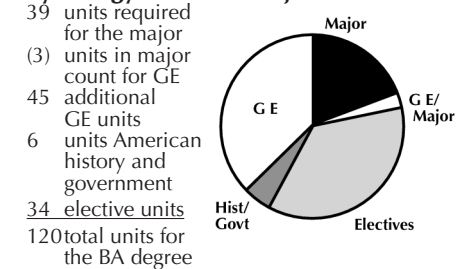
(3) Determine in consultation with your advisor or evaluator how much, if any, elective credit you will have available to you in addition to your major, GE and other requirements.

- **Discuss with advisors effective uses of available elective credit.** Are you going to graduate school? Have you room for a second major or minor? A certificate program? Are there courses which count for both the minor and GE?
- **Consider using elective credit to develop a specific competency such as a foreign language or computer skills, or to enrich your life through literature or the arts, or to expand your understanding of a social or other concern.**

Following are samples of the distribution of units in three of over sixty majors from which you may choose. Units required to complete majors vary from thirty to over one hundred. The examples suggest how the above strategies apply in programs of various sizes.

**Note:** If you have already accumulated college credit, these models may not accurately reflect your circumstances. See your advisor.

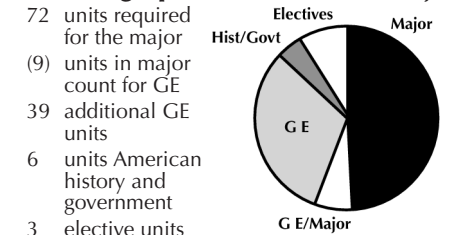
### Psychology—a low unit major:



15.5 average number of units per semester in order to complete a carefully planned program in 8 semesters.

Psychology majors frequently complete combinations of second majors, one or more minors, internships, and additional psychology credit in preparation for graduate work. Majors choose from several areas of emphasis within the major. Though the total units required for the major are few, careful attention to the four semester sequence of prerequisites is important.

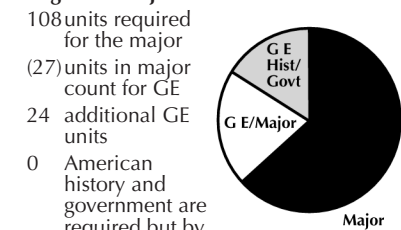
### Business Administration (Marketing Option)—a medium sized major:



15.0 average number of units per semester in order to complete a carefully planned program in 8 semesters.

Business administration majors who complete minors must plan carefully and take advantage of courses which count for both GE and the major or minor. Many complete a cooperative education program and are actively involved in various professional student groups sponsored within the College of Business.

### Mechanical Engineering—a high unit major:



16.5 average number of units per semester in order to complete a carefully planned program in 8 semesters.

Mechanical and other engineering majors must plan their programs carefully and take full advantage of GE modifications, and the overlap between GE and the major. Sequencing of courses is very important, especially with regard to mathematics. Inadequate preparation in math and science may extend the time required to complete the program. Some majors complete math minors, much of the credit for which counts for both programs.

## How to Graduate Within Your Planned Time Frame

### Academic Advising

Call: 530-898-5712

E-mail: [Chicoadviser@csuchico.edu](mailto:Chicoadviser@csuchico.edu)

California State University, Chico is committed to helping all students graduate within their planned time frame. At the same time we believe there is no substitute for a high-quality learning and growing experience. Thus, if you choose to change majors, enhance your education by taking additional courses, involve yourself in extracurricular activities, study abroad, engage in internships, or work, it is possible that you may need to adjust your time frame to accommodate these choices.

Time is important; quality is paramount. We will strive to provide you with an enriched educational experience within a residential community of faculty and students for however long you choose to study at Chico State.

### Join One of the Best!

CSU, Chico is among the top three campuses in the CSU system for the speed at which freshmen reach graduation, and for the percentage of freshmen who choose to stay at Chico and do not transfer or drop out.

Transfer students also discover that advisory assistance and good planning speed them along their path towards graduation at Chico State.

To maximize the likelihood of meeting your educational goals, plan to attend the New Student Orientation Program before beginning your first semester with us, and follow these guidelines for graduating on time, that is, within your planned time frame, be it four or more years.

### Take Placement Tests on Time

- Prior to enrolling in classes the first semester, take and pass the English Placement Test (EPT) and the Entry Level Mathematics Test (ELM) or be eligible to take GE level math and English upon admission to the University.
- If your ELM score is not passing, enroll in preparatory math course work each semester until you become eligible to take GE level math. If your EPT score is not passing, immediately enroll in the writing workshop, ENGL 030, along with ENGL 130.

### Plan Your Future

- Obtain the four-year plan for your major even if you are a transfer student. This plan will enable you and your advisor to plan for each semester.
- Meet each semester with your advisor. Confirm that you are taking courses in the proper sequence and that these will be offered when you need them. Also check your progress once a year with your evaluator. Arrive prepared for each meeting with your questions in writing, notes from previous meetings, and all relevant materials. Complete your plan for each year. If possible, plan the entire balance of your program semester-by-semester and review your plan with your advisor.
- Double-count classes whenever possible. If you are enrolling in a high-unit major, take full advantage of any GE modifications which may have been approved. Double-count Ethnic and Non-Western requirements with GE requirements, preferably in the GE breadth section.
- Declare a major as soon as possible but only after careful consideration of your options.
- Complete satisfactorily a minimum of 31–33 non-remedial units per year. A BA requires a total of 120–124 units; a BS requires a total of 120–132 units. January intersession and summer sessions are available as a means of earning additional credit during the year. A minimum grade point average of 2.0 is needed for graduation.
- Be sure you read and understand the rights, responsibilities, and rules found in the *University Catalog* and the *Class Schedule*. Ask your academic advisor for clarification if you do not understand any part of the *University Catalog* and the *Class Schedule*.

### Meet All Deadlines

- Each semester, register in advance through the Portal and pay fees by the deadline. Meet all financial aid deadlines and clear holds. Consider year-round registration.
- File for graduation by the deadline for the term in which you plan to graduate.

Students who have an interest in graduating within their planned time frame should go to or call

Advising & Orientation  
Meriam Library 190  
530-898-5712  
[Chicoadviser@csuchico.edu](mailto:Chicoadviser@csuchico.edu)

## Academic Rigor

Academic rigor means the consistent expectation of excellence and the aspiration to significant achievement. It should pervade the entire atmosphere of the University—teaching and learning, curriculum, evaluation of students and faculty, outreach, admissions, advising, and student life.

### Rigorous Teaching

Rigorous faculty are role models for the behaviors and accomplishments the University seeks to promote. They demonstrate a high level of professionalism and commitment to the University and to their discipline and inspire in students an excitement about learning. Guiding students towards excellence, they

- communicate high expectations and demonstrate them through a demanding syllabus and well-prepared classes.
- encourage student-faculty contact in and out of class and offer conscientious advising and consistent availability.
- encourage collaboration and active learning, fully involving students in the learning experience.
- provide students early, prompt, and frequent feedback and develop appropriate assessment strategies.
- emphasize time on task, clearly communicate time required for learning, make it clear that full-time study is full-time work, and design learning experiences so that homework matters.
- develop approaches and strategies geared to diverse talents and ways of learning, while maintaining high standards of accountability.
- reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty, and challenge its occurrence.

### Rigorous Learning

Rigorous students are part of the equation of rigorous teaching and learning. A rigorous education is vigorous, difficult, deeply satisfying work, and it requires a lifestyle conducive to achieving excellence. College is not a temporary diversion or a period of entertainment, but a fundamental piece of student character, citizenship, and employment future. A diploma and good grades from a demanding institution count for something. Rigorous students

- Set high personal standards, develop a strong sense of purpose, come to class well prepared, and complete assignments on time.
- Develop an effective relationship with the instructor, in and outside of class, and make the most of University advising and other services.
- Treat fellow students and the classroom environment with complete respect. Give each class full attention and participation. Do not miss class, arrive late, or leave early.
- Accept continuing responsibility for learning and for grades earned.
- Approach each class in a professional manner, as if the class were real employment. Treat a full-course load as full-time work and spend no less time on it. Determine exactly what is expected.
- Experiment with all teaching and learning strategies used in classes, and also determine which work best for them.
- Demonstrate complete honesty and integrity.