

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION PLANNING

California State University, Chico offers a wonderful array of courses and academic programs—including majors, minors, options, credentials, and certificates—in an enriching residential environment. Your program represents a considerable commitment of your time, money, resources, and effort. Plan early and revisit your plan frequently to make the most of your college education.

Degree Program Components

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 (your area of focused study);
2. Additional graduation requirements (General Education, writing, etc.); and
3. Elective courses (additional courses of your choice to reach the 120-unit graduation requirement)

The details of these components are described in the Bachelor's Degree Requirements section. You may already have met some of these requirements before coming to Chico State.

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, that focus on a particular field of study. Majors include broad areas of knowledge in what is often referred to as "the liberal arts" such as English, history, psychology, mathematics, and chemistry. These majors prepare students for a wide range of careers. 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 awarding 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, you will be part of the Exploratory Studies program and receive support in major exploration and course selection from Undergraduate Education and Academic Success (<https://www.csuchico.edu/ued/>), in MLIB 338, and a professional advisor in Academic Advising Programs (<https://www.csuchico.edu/aap/>), located in SSC 220.

Options

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

Teaching Credentials

For those considering a career in education, Chico State offers several programs leading to various teaching credentials. Programs include those that 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 includes all requirements for the corresponding major, and most are identified as a specific option within the major. See the Education (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/colleges-departments/college-communication-education/education/>) section for more information on credentials.

Pre-Professional Programs

If you are considering continuing 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 that 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. Additional Graduation Requirements

General Education

While your major provides an in-depth study of your discipline, General Education (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/colleges-departments/undergraduate-education-academic-success/general-education/>) (GE) is designed to acquaint you with a variety of academic disciplines and to provide a broad understanding of contemporary experience in light of the scientific, cultural, social, intellectual, and artistic heritage of the world. GE helps you discover the connections among various fields of knowledge and prepares you for success as a lifelong learner and civically engaged member of a democratic society.

Your major is likely to overlap with GE requirements. One or more specific GE courses are required or are elective credits for almost all of the majors offered. As you plan your program, consider those GE courses that are required for majors of interest.

GE is organized into thematic Pathways that allow you to earn an interdisciplinary minor in one of 10 subjects.

Chico State's GE program also includes the opportunity for you to pursue Honors in General Education. Honors students satisfy nearly half of their GE requirements by taking distinctive Honors courses that provide interdisciplinary approaches to big questions.

Diversity Requirement

You must complete a minimum of two courses that focus primarily on cultural diversity. At least one course must be in US Diversity (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/undergraduate-requirements/diversity-requirements/#USDV>) and at least one in Global Cultures (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/undergraduate-requirements/diversity-requirements/#GBCL>).

Writing Across the Curriculum

To satisfy the University's Writing Across the Curriculum (EM 17-009 (<https://www.csuchico.edu/pres/em/2017/17-009.shtml/>)) requirement, you must complete a GE English Composition (1A) (<https://>

catalog.csuchico.edu/colleges-departments/undergraduate-education-academic-success/general-education/#1A) course with a grade of C- or higher, and a Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GW) course in your major with a grade of C- or higher. You also must complete two additional Writing (W) courses.

3. Elective Courses

The remaining component of your study at Chico State, and the part most easily personalized, is your selection of elective courses. Except in a few high-unit majors, considerable freedom remains for you to take courses that satisfy your interests or needs beyond the requirements of your major and General Education. Such courses might include an activity in music or physical education, an opportunity for service through Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE), or additional courses in an academic area of interest. You may also use available elective units to complete a minor or certificate, an additional major, or a self-designed block of courses concentrating on a single field of study.

Minors

A minor (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/academic-programs-resources/academic-programs/#minorstext>) is an approved group of related courses—similar to a major but requiring fewer courses—successful completion of which is recognized by certification on the transcript by the Registrar. Minors are an opportunity to complement your major with a set of courses from a related discipline or to gain knowledge of a different field of study entirely.

Minors may consist only of those courses stipulated by the departments, schools, or academic units having administrative control of the program and, in addition, shall include all college-level prerequisites to the courses so stipulated. "A minor shall include not fewer than 18 nor more than 30 semester units. Each minor shall include a minimum of 6 upper-division units" (EM 86-001).

Certificate Programs

Separate from its undergraduate degrees, the University offers certificate programs, a group of university-level courses or related experience that are open to students enrolled in degree programs as well as those pursuing a more specific educational goal. Successful completion of a program is recognized with a certificate of completion awarded by the University.

Students completing certificate programs are not obligated to meet other University graduation requirements. Coursework 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.

Undergraduate certificate programs include no fewer than 12 semester units. A maximum of six units of transfer credit may be granted (EM 23-018). A grade point average of 2.0 must be earned and/or maintained to complete an undergraduate-level certificate. Academic programs overseeing certificates may set higher minimum standards.

Completing the Degree in Four Years or Less

To graduate in four years, plan to take a full course load (15-16 units per semester) and monitor your progress closely. The University is here to support your goals at every step. Advisors in Academic Advising Program and your major are available to help you navigate requirements and explore options. The need to work or the pursuit of additional educational opportunities may make a four-year plan more challenging, but with careful planning and sound advising, a student can graduate in four years and include important educational activities such as internships and study abroad. It is possible to complete any bachelor's degree program offered by the University in four years or less. Many students do it even in our most demanding majors. Winter and summer session courses also provide opportunities to earn additional credit during the year and stay on track for graduation.

Planning Your Course of Study

By understanding how your major requirements, General Education, 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 coursework at Chico State.

- Most students change their major. Be open to the possibilities. #This University offers more than 200 different majors, options, minors, credentials, and certificates. Begin your exploration early.
- Conserve your elective credit. #In your first year or so concentrate primarily on GE and courses that 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. And note that some high-unit majors like computer science have very few elective units.
- Keep things in perspective. #Many graduates find that other interests and skills cultivated during their college years become more important than the major in the long run.
- 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. If you are interested in these activities, then more careful planning is needed to graduate in four years.
- Develop relationships with faculty. They can offer insight and perspective on careers, educational opportunities, values, and issues.
- Invest time exploring educational and career options. #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.

Tips for Successful Planning

- Plan your program in consultation with academic and graduation advisors. Review your plan frequently and meet with your advisors every semester.
- When you have decided on a major, make a plan for the balance of your program. Monitor your progress to graduation with your Degree Progress Report (DPR) in your Student Center. Meet with a major department advisor for major coursework, and meet with an

academic advisor (SSC 220) to review General Education and other graduation requirements.

- Complete your Degree Planner. If possible, plan the entire balance of your program semester-by-semester and review your Degree Planner with your advisor.
- Double-count courses whenever possible. Double-count Global Cultures and US Diversity with GE requirements, preferably in lower division GE courses.
- If you are enrolling in a high-unit major, determine whether 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.
- Complete satisfactorily a minimum of 30 units per year. A BA, BFA, or BS degree requires a total of 120 units; however, a BS in some engineering programs may require up to 128 units. Winter 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.
- If you are considering a teaching credential, be sure you have a clear understanding of the special requirements you must meet to be admitted to the teacher credential program. Contact School of Education (<https://www.csuchico.edu/soe/>) for information.
- Determine in consultation with your academic and graduation advisors 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? Do you have room for a second major, minor, or certificate program? Are there courses that count for both the minor and GE?
- Consider using elective credit to develop a specific competency such as a foreign language or computer skills, 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 the more than 60 majors from which you may choose. Units required to complete majors vary from 30 to over 100. 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. Psychology majors frequently complete combinations of second majors, one or more minors, internships, and additional psychology credits in preparation for careers or graduate work. Though the total units of the major are few, careful attention to the four-semester sequence of required courses is important.

- 42 units required for the major
- Up to 9 units in major count for GE
- 34 additional GE units. The Global Cultures and US Diversity requirement may be double counted in General Education or the major.
- 44 elective units
- 120 total units for the BA degree

- 15 average number of units per semester to complete a carefully planned program in 8 semesters

Business Administration—a medium-sized major. Business administration majors who complete minors must plan carefully and take advantage of courses that 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 by the College of Business.

- 75 units required for the major
- 9 units in major count for GE
- 34 additional GE units. The Global Cultures and US Diversity requirement may be double counted in General Education or the major.
- 11 elective units
- 120 total units for the BS degree
- 15 average number of units per semester to complete a carefully planned program in 8 semesters

Mechanical Engineering—a high unit major. 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.

- 100 units required for the major
- 18 units in major count for GE
- 25 additional GE units. The Global Cultures and US Diversity requirement should be double-counted in General Education.
- 2 available elective units
- 127 total units for the BS degree
- 15.9 average number of units per semester to complete a carefully planned program in 8 semesters

How to Graduate Within Your Planned Timeframe

A college education is exciting, difficult, and deeply satisfying work. It requires both discipline and courage. Tips for success include:

- Set high personal standards, develop a strong sense of purpose, come to class well-prepared, and complete assignments on time.
- Build a weekly schedule that includes adequate time for academics. Typically, classes are designed with the expectation that for every hour in class students will spend two hours out of class on assignments and studying.
- 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 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. Use the course tools (syllabus, office hours, course website, etc.) to determine exactly what is expected.
- Experiment with all teaching and learning strategies used in classes and determine which works best for you.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.

Time is important; quality is paramount. We 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. Be sure you read and understand the rights, responsibilities, and rules found in this *University Catalog*. Ask an academic advisor for clarification if you do not understand any part of the catalog.

For additional tips on how to graduate within your planned time frame, contact Academic Advising Programs in SSC 220, 530-898-5712, chicoadvisor@csuchico.edu.

Honors in the Major

Honors in the Major is a program of independent work in your major. It requires six units of honors coursework completed over two semesters.

The Honors in the Major program allows you to work closely with a faculty mentor in your area of interest on an original performance or research project. This year-long collaboration allows you to work in your field at a professional level and culminates in a public presentation of your work. Students sometimes take their projects beyond the University for submission in professional journals, presentation at conferences, or academic competition. Such experience is valuable for graduate school and professional life. Your honors work will be recognized at your graduation, on your permanent transcripts, and on your diploma. It is often accompanied by letters of commendation from your mentor in the department or the department chair.

Some common features of Honors in the Major program are:

- You must take six units of Honors in the Major coursework. All six units are honors courses (marked by a suffix of H), and at least three of these units are independent study (399H, 499H, 599H) as specified by your department. You must complete each course with a minimum grade of B.
- You must have completed 9 units of upper-division coursework or 21 overall units in your major before you can be admitted to Honors in the Major. Check the requirements for your major carefully, as there may be specific courses that must be included in these units.
- Your cumulative GPA should be at least 3.5 or within the top 5% of majors in your department.
- Your GPA in your major should be at least 3.5 or within the top 5% of majors in your department.
- Most students apply for or are invited to participate in Honors in the Major during the second semester of their junior year. Then they complete the six units of coursework over the two semesters of their senior year.
- Your honors work culminates with a public presentation of your honors project.

Honors in the Major is not part of the Honors Program. Each department administers its own program. Please contact your major department or major advisor to apply.

Dean's List

Each semester the college deans recognize superior scholarship by including on their Dean's List those students who earn a 3.5 GPA or better on 12 or more graded units the preceding semester.

Honors at Graduation

Honors at graduation shall be granted to students who graduate with a baccalaureate degree within the following cumulative grade point average (GPA) range after final grades are posted (EM 24-044) (https://www.csuchico.edu/pres/_assets/documents/em-24-044.pdf).

- Cum laude: 3.500 to 3.749
- Magna cum laude: 3.750 to 3.899
- Summa cum laude: 3.900 to 4.000