

PLANNING YOUR STUDIES AT SF STATE

The baccalaureate degree at SF State includes a major, general education (GE) requirements, additional University graduation requirements, elective course work, and possibly a minor or a second major. Students, with the aid of advisors, combine these elements in a creative and thoughtful way. By taking the time to create a meaningful degree program, students will not only graduate in a timely manner, but will benefit from the opportunity to take personal responsibility for their learning.

Use GE to learn about yourself and your world.

As a freshman, if you are undecided about a major, it can be beneficial to enroll in lower division major courses of interest to consider if a major might be a good fit. Check to confirm that any pre-requisites to these courses have been met. Sometimes, this exploration can also complete needed GE requirements.

It's OK to be undeclared.

A large percentage of incoming first-time college students have not yet declared their major. Take time to explore the possibilities. Meet with an advisor in the [Undergraduate Advising Center](#) and use SF State services, such as [Career Services & Leadership Development](#), to help you find the right major. Students who begin their college studies at SF State as freshmen need to declare a major before completing 70 units.

It's OK to change your major.

Many students change their major at least once while in college. SF State has more than 100 undergraduate major programs including some that you may not have any familiarity with. The on-line SF State Bulletin has listings and descriptions of all majors and minors. When making a choice, fully explore the options that are available to you.

General Education and major requirements may sometimes overlap.

Most majors include courses that meet both GE and major requirements. This is referred to as "double-counting." By choosing certain courses, you can satisfy both GE and major requirements. For some majors, you can also meet GE requirements through "met in major." Refer to your major to see if there are any GE requirements that might be "met in major."

When you have decided on a major, make a tentative plan for your remaining semesters at SF State.

Many departments will provide you with an advising worksheet so you can keep track of your progress. Most majors have sample "roadmaps" that show a possible pathway to graduation. You can also refer to your Degree Progress Report, found in your Student Center, to track your progress towards completing your major as well as completion of GE and University requirements.

Plan your program in consultation with an advisor.

Review your advising worksheet or roadmap frequently and meet with an advisor on a regular basis. Go to your major department and request an advisor or, if you are undeclared, or thinking about changing your major, meet with an advisor in the [Undergraduate Advising Center](#).

Bring your advising materials to your advising sessions. (Unofficial transcripts, Degree Progress Report [DPR], Advanced Standing Evaluation Form [ASE], if applicable, etc.).

Utilize the SF State Bulletin

The [SF State Bulletin](#) is a complete source of information regarding graduation requirements and University policies and procedures. Use the bulletin to learn about major requirements, general education and University requirements, and course descriptions and pre-requisites.

Use the [online Class Schedule](#) to determine which courses are offered each semester. At the website, you will also find an academic calendar with information on important dates and deadlines. Some departments provide advance information on future course offerings, either online or in departmental offices.

Degree Progress Report (DPR) is an advising document to inform students of degree requirements and the completion of degree requirements as they occur. In most cases, transfer course work is evaluated and is displayed on the DPR. The DPR is updated after each semester and whenever transcripts from other colleges or college level test results are received. The DPR can be found by logging on to the [SF State Gateway](#) and going to the Student Center.

Advanced Standing Evaluation (ASE): A small number of students who began their studies at SF State prior to fall 2014, may have an ASE that reflects transfer coursework that does not appear on the Degree Progress Report. In addition, students readmitting to SF State fall 2014 and after, may also have an ASE for previously transferred and evaluated coursework. In this situation, students will see that they have "legacy units" recorded in the Transfer Credit Report in their Student Center. These legacy units are totaled on the ASE, and if the transfer courses have been evaluated and determined to fulfill GE or other specific graduation requirements, the ASE will display this as well. The ASE does not indicate completion of major or minor requirements. If a student has an ASE, to gain a complete understanding of completed units and requirements, the ASE must be used with the DPR. ASE's can be obtained from the Registrar's window at the One Stop in the Student Services Building.

Major and Minor Requirements Worksheets and Roadmaps provide information to assist students in fulfilling requirements. Some departments publish flowcharts and graphic illustrations of prerequisite structures to help in planning. Often worksheets include details in addition to what is found in the Bulletin and also provide space for advisor verification of course equivalencies in the major/minor.

Pay careful attention to course prerequisites.

Be sure to take courses in the proper sequence. Included in this Bulletin is a [description of all courses offered at SF State](#). If you need prior experience or exposure to a subject as background to a course, prerequisite requirements are listed which must be taken before you can enroll in the course.

Take advantage of as many opportunities as possible while in college.

If you plan your education well, you will find time to participate in internships, student organizations, and many other programs and services available at SF State. In most majors, you can spend a semester or a year studying abroad; the staff in the [Office of International Programs](#) will help you plan both your academic program and your finances if you would like to study abroad.

Go at your own speed.

It is a common perception that college is a four-year experience and many SF State students do graduate in four years. If a student averages 15 units every semester, it will take 8 semesters (4 years) to reach 120 units. If a student averages 12 units every semester, it will take 10 semesters (5 years) to reach 120 units. Many students take longer than 4 years. A large number of SF State students work and/or have additional responsibilities outside of college. Many have long commutes to and from campus. There are some large majors at SF State where courses are sequenced, and this makes it challenging to complete the degree in four years. It is important to balance academics with work, family, and other responsibilities when determining how many units to enroll in each semester. Students should also consider the degree of difficulty for courses planned for each semester.

How is transfer credit evaluated for GE?

SF State students who transfer from a California Community College and completed the CSU transfer pattern or IGETC pattern will receive credit for the GE and University areas fulfilled. This will also apply for students who transfer from another CSU campus and completed GE requirements at the former college. For students who transfer from other public or private colleges, admission evaluators at SF State will determine fulfillment of GE and University requirements. Transfer courses to be used for a major or minor are determined by the major or minor department.

Can I earn GE credit for college-level learning that I acquired through prior work or life experience?

In some instances, it may be possible for a matriculated student to earn academic credit at SF State for prior life or work experience for which no college credit has been awarded. This process occurs through the Credit by Evaluation for Experiential Learning (CEEL) Program. CEEL units can be earned as general elective units, may apply to some majors or minors (requires department chair approval), or may be applicable to some GE areas. To obtain further information about the CEEL Program, contact the [Undergraduate Advising Center](#).

Should I carefully plan my GE program?

Yes. Some courses may not be offered every semester. Exceptions to GE requirements are considered only under unusual and extenuating circumstances.