

# A Guide to Using the Catalog

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**General Information:** [www.calpoly.edu](http://www.calpoly.edu)

**Catalog:** [www.catalog.calpoly.edu](http://www.catalog.calpoly.edu)

**General Education:** [www.ge.calpoly.edu](http://www.ge.calpoly.edu)

Academic terminology and a university catalog can be confusing to someone first entering the University. This section explains some of the jargon you will quickly come to know and explains briefly how the catalog is organized.

For the most current information, students are encouraged to visit the Cal Poly web pages shown above and to consult with their academic advisors.

## College and Departments

The faculty who supply instruction at Cal Poly hold positions in academic departments, which in turn are grouped into Colleges. All of the academic programs offered by the University are described in the catalog. A complete listing of academic programs at Cal Poly may be found on page 11.

Sections for each College follow in alphabetical order. Departments are arranged alphabetically within the appropriate College.

## Degrees

A *degree* is an academic rank which the University confers on a student who satisfactorily completes a designated curriculum, or program of study. Cal Poly grants undergraduate degrees – also called baccalaureate degrees – as well as master's degrees, and, jointly with the University of California at Santa Barbara, the doctorate of education.

### At the undergraduate level, Cal Poly grants the

- \* Bachelor of Arts (BA),
- \* Bachelor of Science (BS),
- \* Bachelor of Architecture (BArch), and
- \* Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA).

### At the graduate level, Cal Poly grants the

- \* Master of Arts (MA),
- \* Master of Science (MS),
- \* Master of Business Administration (MBA),
- \* Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP),
- \* Master of Public Policy (MPP), and
- \* Doctorate of Education (EdD) jointly with UCSB

## Majors

A *major* is a program of study that provides students with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to pursue a specific career or advanced study and leads to an undergraduate degree in that subject. Each major is offered in an academic department.

Undergraduate applicants to Cal Poly select a major at the time they apply for admission.

General requirements for bachelor's degrees are given in "Academic Requirements," and for master's degrees in "Graduate Programs." The specific requirements for a particular major degree program are listed under the academic department that offers the major.

The curriculum display for each bachelor's degree program shows courses arranged by *Major*, *Support*, *General Education* and *Electives*. These curriculum displays are useful guides, but students should consult with their academic advisors

**Academic Advising.** Information regarding academic advising is available on page 18.

## Courses

Descriptions of Cal Poly courses are located in the back half of the catalog, arranged alphabetically by course prefix (an abbreviation that represents the subject or offering department). The courses in a bachelor's degree curriculum are identified as *major courses*, *support courses*, *general education*, and *electives*.

**Major courses** are designed to provide competence in the professional field in which a degree is earned. They are usually offered by the academic department in which the degree program is offered, but they may include courses from other departments.

**Support courses** provide background needed for major courses and are offered by departments other than the department in which the major is offered. For example, most majors in engineering and in the sciences require support courses in mathematics. Some degree programs do not include support courses.

**General Education (GE)** courses provide a common foundation of knowledge for all undergraduate programs. GE requirements are described in detail on page 50.

**Electives** are courses that students can choose simply to pursue their own interests.

**Prerequisites** are one or more courses that must be completed, or other knowledge, skills, or standards that must be demonstrated, before a student is permitted to take certain courses. Prerequisites (if any) for a course are listed in the course description of the catalog.

Some prerequisites have their own prerequisites, forming a string of courses that must all be taken. The catalog

course description shows the last course in the prerequisite string of courses. For example, *ME 212 Engineering Dynamics* has prerequisites of MATH 241 and ME 211. *MATH 241* requires MATH 143, which requires MATH 142, which requires MATH 141. *ME 211* requires ME 241 and PHYS 131. To enroll in ME 212, students must have successfully completed MATH 241, 143, 142, 141 and ME 211 and PHYS 131.

Statements in the catalog course descriptions may also contain the words “**concurrent**” which means that two or more courses must be taken in the same term or “**corequisite**” which means that the course or courses may be taken prior to the course being described (prerequisite) or in the same term (concurrent).

**Crosslisted courses** are shared by two or more academic units and have identical titles, descriptions, units, modes of instruction and prerequisites. They are interchangeable for degree requirements. They cannot be repeated for degree credit under separate prefixes. Example: HNRS 141/MATH 141 Calculus I

**Selected Advanced Topics (470s)** are generic courses that offer special topics on an "as needed basis." The specific title appears in the Class Schedule and on the students' transcripts.

**Topic courses** are shown in the catalog with generic titles and are repeatable with different topics. Specific topic titles appear in the Schedule of Classes and on students' transcripts. Example: ENGL 439 Significant British Authors, repeatable to 12 units with different subtitles (e.g., Jane Austen, Victorian Poets, Hardy).

Other statements in the course descriptions include, “**major credit limit**” (total number of units allowed toward the major) and “**total credit limit**” (total number of units students can take a course for credit).

### COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM

Courses are generally numbered according to the plan shown below.

- 010–099 Nondegree credit or short courses.
- 100–299 Courses primarily for freshman and sophomore students.
- 300–399 Courses primarily for advanced undergraduate students with prerequisite coursework.
- 400–499 Courses for advanced undergraduates. Certain 400-level courses can be used in graduate programs. See page 70.
- 500–599 Graduate courses.

### MODES OF INSTRUCTION

The mode of instruction is included in each course description; for supervision courses, no mode is indicated. Some courses have more than one mode of instruction.

| Mode               | Class meets weekly for:   |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>Activity</i>    | 2 hours per unit of credit.   |
| <i>Laboratory</i>  | 3 hours per unit of credit.   |
| <i>Lecture</i>     | 1 hour per unit of credit.  |
| <i>Seminar</i>     | 1 hour per unit of credit.  |
| <i>Supervision</i> | 3 hours per week per unit of credit.<br>Courses involve independent work done by students under the guidance of the faculty and do not meet regularly in a classroom. |

### Concentrations

A **concentration** is a group of courses designed to provide specialized knowledge within a bachelor's degree program. Completion of a concentration is noted on the student's transcript, but not shown on the diploma.

### Specializations

A **specialization** is a similarly specialized group of courses in a master's degree program. Completion of a specialization is noted on the student's transcript and shown on the diploma.

### Minors

A **minor** is an integrated, coherent group of courses designed to give a student knowledge in an academic area outside of the major field of study. The minor is completed along with the requirements for the bachelor's degree. For more information and a list including available minors at Cal Poly, see page 11.

### Quarters and Quarter Units

Cal Poly's academic calendar consists of four quarters – Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer (see page 7 for Academic Calendar).

Cal Poly's **academic year** consists of Fall, Winter and Spring quarters.

The **university year** includes, and begins with, Summer Quarter.

Each course offered by the University carries a value in **quarter units**, often referred to simply as units or credits.

To convert semester units to quarter units, multiply by 1.5. For example,

$$6 \text{ semester units} \times 1.5 = 9 \text{ quarter units.}$$