

Toolkit for 120-Unit Baccalaureate Review

The following curriculum design strategies are shared for campus consideration as department faculty and campus governance bodies collaborate on the review and revision process. In support of student access and affordable baccalaureate education, campuses are asked to review and reduce to 120 semester (180 quarter) units, as appropriate, (plus concentration) the requirements in bachelor’s degree programs. This effort aims to improve student access and reduce total costs to students. With fewer units required, more students will graduate sooner, thereby creating access for new students who have been waiting to enter the university as freshmen or community college transfers. Additionally, as more CSU programs will qualify for the 60 + 60 unit “Associate Degree for Transfer” degree pathways, which improve community college student transfer and CSU degree completion.

Reducing to 120/180 units could lower student debt levels and reduce student reliance on financial aid, and students in reduced-unit programs are less likely to be assessed the proposed Third-Tier Tuition Fees (if that policy is adopted). Shortening the time to degree would be especially valuable for students entering the CSU with required remediation work ahead of them, as those students are already obligated to take more courses than are their college-ready counterparts.

The Chancellor’s Office thanks the Academic Senate CSU for contributions to this document.

Comparing Similar CSU Programs

A review of the number of similar programs in the system will show a range of required units and may reveal patterns that could be helpful in considering where changes to unit counts may be appropriate.

Number of Similar CSU Programs	Systemwide Range of Max Units (lower end)	Systemwide Range of Max Units (upper end)
<i>(example) 11</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>136</i>

Responding to External Pressures

Campuses are asked to review current requirements in place for accreditation, licensing, examinations, etc., if external pressures have caused programs to exceed 120/180 units. In recent years, accreditation processes have shifted focus from unit requirements to learning outcomes or educational content, which may give programs new latitude in curriculum design.

External Requirements	Source of Externally Imposed Requirements	Number of Units Required Externally	Number Required in Campus Degree Program
Professional accreditation requirements			
Licensure/certification requirements			
Units required to sit for professional exam			
Other			

Suggested Strategies for Reducing Total Required Units.

Campuses may find many other strategies helpful, as well.

Options for reducing bachelor's degree unit requirements
Reduce the number of major core units.
Reduce the number of required major elective units.
Reduce the number of prerequisite units.
Reduce the number of co-requisite units.
Reduce number of units in concentration ("option").
Reduce units associated with a course or courses.
Eliminate required minor.
Double count American Institutions with major course requirements.
Double count American Institutions with general education requirements.
Double count GE with campus-specific requirements (satisfy GE requirements through other courses).
Reduce the number of campus-specific graduation requirements (e.g. technological proficiency, cross-cultural competence, or language other than English, which may be addressed across the curriculum instead of only through a dedicated course).
Reduce one or more GE requirements (per EO 1065). This requires campus approval.