

GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q. WHAT IS GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025?

A. Graduation Initiative 2025 aims to dramatically increase completion rates for all students while eliminating equity gaps, the difference in graduation rates between students from historically underserved backgrounds and their peers. Achieving these goals would place the California State University (CSU) as the nation’s leader among public comprehensive universities in degree completion in all categories. Graduation Initiative 2025 significantly benefits all CSU students, particularly underserved students of color, first-generation college students and students from modest-income families. Meeting Graduation Initiative 2025 goals also will have a significant positive impact on the future of California’s economy and workforce.

Q. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025?

A. The goal of Graduation Initiative 2025 is to ensure that every CSU student has a fair and equal opportunity to earn their degree, contribute to the California workforce and thrive in their community.

Q. WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SINCE THE INITIATIVE LAUNCHED IN 2015?

A. Completion rates are at all-time highs with more students earning their bachelor’s degrees than ever before—with nearly 110,000 students walking across their university’s commencement stage to receive their bachelor’s degrees in May 2022. That’s 23,000 more students than before Graduation Initiative 2025 was launched. Despite a rise in graduation rates, equity gaps persist, possibly because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disparate impacts across communities of color and low-income families.

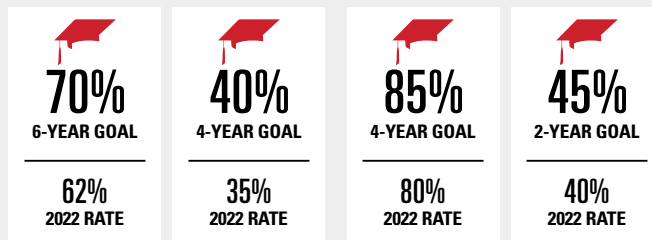
Q. HOW WILL THE CSU ELIMINATE EQUITY GAPS?

A. With guidance from an advisory committee composed of students, faculty, staff and other key partners, the CSU has outlined five equity priorities that focus on systemwide interventions to address urgent and acute factors contributing to equity gaps.

GRADUATION RATE GOALS FOR 2025

First-Time Students

Transfer Students



0 Equity Gaps (Underrepresented Minority and Pell Recipients)

WHAT ARE THE GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025 EQUITY PRIORITIES?

- **Reengage and Reenroll Underserved Students**—Reflecting a nationwide trend exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, student retention has decreased disproportionately among students of color. Robust outreach efforts focus on underserved students including Pell Grant recipients, first-generation college students and Black, Native American and Latinx students.
- **Ensure Equitable Access to Digital Degree Roadmaps**—Digital degree planners help students navigate the registration process, select core courses and keep them on track for timely graduation.
- **Expand Credit Opportunities with Summer/Intersession**—Summer sessions and intersessions provide additional credit accumulation opportunities, which can be critical for students of color and first-generation college students who often arrive at the CSU with fewer credits. Additional funding supports students who may be falling behind in academic credits and helps facilitate timely degree completion.

- **Eliminate Administrative Barriers to Graduation**—Administrative barriers disproportionately affect low-income and first-generation college students who often are more susceptible to academic disruption because of fee assessments or financial holds. Generally, financial holds indicate that a student is required to resolve a matter before a hold can be removed. Universities are reviewing administrative processes with an emphasis on equity, reevaluating drop-for-nonpayment and registration hold policies as well as reassessing graduation filing fees.
- **Promote Equitable Learning Practices and Reduce DFW Rates**—A nonpassing grade negatively impacts a student’s academic trajectory and increases the risk of attrition. Without compromising academic rigor, the CSU is exploring course design for classes that have persistent high failure rates (such as D, F or Withdrawal) and providing learning support for students who would benefit from it.

Q. HOW IS THE CSU ENSURING ACADEMIC RIGOR REMAINS HIGH IN ALL COURSES?

A. Improving student learning outcomes challenges the CSU to reimagine teaching without compromising academic rigor. Research has shown that implementing project-based activities, collaborative learning and enhanced student support such as supplemental instruction achieve that. This focused and intentional work is happening in academic departments across all 23 CSUs.

Q. HOW WERE THE COMPLETION TARGETS ESTABLISHED?

A. The original Graduation Initiative 2025 Advisory Committee convened in 2016 by then-Chancellor Timothy P. White was composed of a cross section of campus academic and student affairs leaders, members of the CSU Board of Trustees, university presidents and students who developed the goal-setting methodology that was based on [peer comparator university data](#) provided by Education Trust. The data benchmarks each university against 10 to 15 public higher education peer institutions.

Q. HOW ARE THE GOALS BEING ACHIEVED?

A. Graduation Initiative 2025 unites all 23 universities in a collective effort to significantly improve student success. Learn more about the [six pillars](#) that form the foundation of Graduation Initiative 2025.

Q. WILL ALL CSU STUDENTS BE REQUIRED TO GRADUATE IN FOUR YEARS?

A. No. Not all students’ schedules allow them to take 15 units per semester because of work or family commitments. The intent of Graduation Initiative 2025 is to remove barriers and bottlenecks that impede students from earning degrees in a timely manner.

Q. WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025?

A. Details about Graduation Initiative 2025, systemwide goals, [equity priorities](#) and student success and completion are available at <http://calstate.edu/gradinitiative2025>.

