



Office of Undergraduate Education

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Academic Progress to Degree

Finish in Four

The general requirements for an undergraduate baccalaureate degree from The Ohio State University are governed by section 3335-9-30 of the [University Faculty Rules](#). Graduation requirements are specified by the college or school that oversees the degree being pursued. Most baccalaureate degrees require 121 semester credit hours, so to complete these requirements in four years, careful planning is required.

In order to graduate with the desired degree in four years, it is imperative that students plan carefully and follow the guidelines in their college of enrollment, for the particular degree that is being pursued. Students are encouraged to talk with their academic advisor early and often about their path to completion in four years

Students should keep in mind:

- For certain financial aid purposes, the federal government considers enrollment in 12 credit hours as full-time enrollment, but if a student limits their load to 12 hours per semester, they will not complete their degree in 4 years!
- Do the math - if a major requires 121 hours, and considering the 1-credit hour University Survey course required of everyone, 15 hours per semester is the minimum required credit hour load to account for the remaining 120 hours!
- Pay less by taking at least 15 credit hours per semester. There is no additional tuition per credit hour charged for hours between 12 and 18. So if

students take only 12 hours, they will pay for every credit hour. If they take 15 hours, they will get three free credit hours each semester, saving them an entire year's worth of tuition!

- College is a commitment. Earning 15 credits per semester may not be easy, but it will give students the advantage of graduating on time and getting ahead. Students should know the courses they need to graduate, and meet with their advisor to map out a plan to earn their degree on time.
 - Make school a priority. If it's possible, students should cut back on work time so they can earn 15 credits per semester and finish faster. The payoff in their salary as a college graduate will be worth it. Students should consider working on campus while taking 15 credits, allowing for more flexibility in their schedule and a shorter commute time than if they work off campus. Check out the [**Student Job Board**](#) on the Student Financial Aid website.
 - Research shows that students who are taking 15 credit hours actually perform better in their classes than those who are taking 12 hours. Research also shows that students who work on campus do better than those who work the same number of hours off campus.
 - Be ready for freshman English and Math, and take these courses as part of their first year of college. Students who take 15 credits per semester and complete their English and Math courses early are more likely to graduate on time.
 - Fill out the [**FAFSA**](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), the application used by nearly all colleges and universities to determine eligibility for federal, state and college-sponsored financial aid, including grants, educational loans and work-study programs. Some students may be eligible for grants and free gift aid, which do not have to be paid back. With financial assistance, students can concentrate on their studies, work fewer hours and finish their degree faster.
 - Be proactive and ask for help. On campus, students are surrounded with people and resources with the purpose of helping them get their degree. Students should ask for help from professors, teaching assistants, academic advisors and even fellow students when they need it.
 - Take summer classes! Even if a student can't take 15 credits a semester, they could consider taking Ohio State summer classes to stay on track. Ohio State is developing many courses for online delivery. Check Buckeye Link scheduling to find them.
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Pathways to a Degree in Three Years

A first-year student who has already earned substantial credit for college-level course work (30 semester hours or more) may be able to complete some degree programs in three years. Students in this group typically have applicable credit for Ohio State coursework through one or more of the following sources:

- Credit by examination resulting from successful scores on Advanced Placement (AP) or College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams;
- Credit by examination resulting from scores on foreign-language placement exams in French, German, Italian, Latin, or Spanish;
- Credit for college or university coursework completed in concurrent enrollment during high school, including coursework completed through the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Program (PSEOP), the International Baccalaureate (IB), or other recognized dual-enrollment programs;
- Credit obtained at community colleges or technical schools, subject to articulation guidelines;
- Credit obtained through recognized online programs;
- Conversion of military training and coursework, subject to articulation guidelines.
- Completing required course work during short sessions or summer programs may also shorten time to degree.

A large number of incoming credits, however, does not in itself guarantee a shorter path to a degree!

The curricular requirements of many programs are linked to the requirements and standards of professional accreditation. How (and whether) a student's credits apply to degree requirements will determine the student's time to degree. Although credits from the sources listed above will transfer to Ohio State, those credits may not help to fulfill the particular requirements for a specific degree. For example, though a student may earn a substantial number of credits in a foreign language by satisfactory completion of the language placement test (and though satisfactory testing and the resulting credits in a foreign language certainly represent an admirable level of academic achievement), those credits will not significantly advance progress toward a degree if 1) the student's program does not require foreign language proficiency and 2) the program does not require elective course work.

And because of sequenced courses (and course prerequisites) and the requirements for disciplinary accreditation, certain programs cannot be completed in three years. For

example, programs in the College of Engineering, the College of Nursing, and the Department of Design all have requirements that won't allow completion in three years, even with significant incoming credit hours.

Effective long-range academic planning and careful consultation with academic advisors are essential!

A student aiming to complete a three-year degree will need to know early what major/degree he or she wants to complete and must take appropriate coursework, even while in high school. Most students on this three-year track will not be able to explore educational alternatives or change their minds about courses, programs or majors, and will need to take advantage of available curricular efficiencies. A student on a three-year track should also consider the impacts of that goal on co-curricular activities and opportunities for academic enrichment, including study abroad, internships, membership in student clubs or student government, service learning, honors work, participation in research, etc., as well as eligibility for admission to graduate programs.

Academics

Academic Integrity	
Academic Progress to Degree	
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General Education (GE)	▶
Syllabus Policies & Statements	▶
Policies and faculty resources	



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