



STUDENTS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON SEMESTER CONVERSION

BACKGROUND

1. Why are we switching to semesters?

Semester conversion will align our academic calendar with the other CSU campuses, our CCCs, and more than 90% of colleges and universities nationwide. Thus, one of the main reasons we are switching to semesters is to make it easier to transfer and apply course credits towards degree completion. Did you know that of the more than 70% of students who transfer to CSU East Bay, the majority does so from the California Community Colleges (CCC)? Of the 112 CCCs, 109 use a semester calendar. The trend right now is for all of the CSU campuses to move from quarter to semester.

Semesters also create more opportunities to participate in internships, field experiences, and community engagement projects on and off the campus, and semesters give students more time to absorb and learn course material. Please also see President Morishita's recent comments about semester conversion, which are available on the [Semester Conversion website](#).

The beginning (August) and end (May) of the semester calendar will align better with the K-12 school-year calendar, supporting those of you who are also caregivers or parents of younger children. Students will be able to enter the summer job market at the same time as those attending other universities. Another convenience will be that you will only need to register for classes, pay fees, and complete other administrative tasks twice a year rather than three times a year.

2. When will the semester term start at CSUEB?

CSU East Bay will begin its semester calendar in fall 2018.

3. What are the differences and similarities between a quarter system and a semester system?

The quarter system divides the academic year into three terms per year of 10-11 weeks each, typically beginning in September and ending in June, plus an optional summer term. The semester system divides the year into two terms of 15 instructional weeks, typically beginning in August and ending in May, with an optional shorter summer term. Both the quarter and semester models require 147 instructional days during the academic year.

4. With the semester system, will there be a fall and spring admission period?

There will be official Fall and Spring semester admissions cycles in the semester system. As is done now, though, the University will need to determine every year whether or not we are open for the Spring cycle and which applications are being accepted. In most cases the University will only be open to certain groups. Also, some majors may only be open for the Fall cycle.

5. How many semester units must I enroll in to be considered full-time?

An undergraduate student must enroll in 12 or more semester units to be considered full-time. A post-baccalaureate student seeking an additional undergraduate degree or an unclassified post-baccalaureate student must enroll in 12 or more semester units to be considered full-time.

Full-time classified post-baccalaureate students admitted to a teaching credential program must enroll in at least 8 semester units to be considered full-time. Full-time graduate students who are admitted to a master or doctoral degree program must carry at least 8 semester units.

6. What is considered a full time load for international students with F-1 visas?

For students with an F-1 visa, 8 units is the minimum for full-time graduate students and 12 units is the minimum for undergraduate students.

7. What will my schedule look like under the semester model?

Currently, undergraduate students need to complete 180-quarter units to graduate. That works out to 45 units per year for four years, or 15 units per quarter (approximately four courses). Under the semester model, students will need to complete 120-semester units to graduate. That works out to 30 units per year for four years, or 15 units per semester. Most semester courses are 3-unit or 4-unit courses, so a student will typically take five courses per semester to graduate in four years.

The length of a semester is 15 weeks, with another week for exams, as compared to 10 weeks plus an exam week in the quarter model. Class sessions will be shorter but the time over the entire term will be 45 hours for a 3-unit semester class whereas it is 40 hours for a 4-unit quarter class.

8. Will the caps and number of class sections offered increase with semester conversion?

Class sizes are dependent on a wide range of factors including pedagogy, department FTES targets, availability of instructors, and numbers of students needing to take the course. The same factors will be at play with the semester system and will inform caps and number of course sections.

9. How will the semester calendar affect commencement?

Conversion to semesters will not affect the commencement ceremony itself. The benefit to a semester calendar is that the ceremonies will be held earlier in the year. This will give you, the

future graduate, a chance to enter the job market at the same time as others who are also on the semester system.

10. What will the summer session preceding fall 2018 conversion to semesters look like?

The University is still discussing the issue of summer session both before the conversion and as we plan our future academic calendars. [Here](#) is where you can find more information about the plans for the semester calendar.

11. How is Associated Students Incorporated (ASI) involved in semester conversion?

In fall 2014, the ASI Board appointed two of its members—President Thamer Alhatal and Vice President for Internal Affairs Hendrix Erhahon—to serve on the Semester Conversion Steering Committee (SCSC). The SCSC meets every other Friday from 12-2pm, posting its agenda, minutes, and documents on the [Semester Conversion website](#). All meetings are open; students are more than welcome to attend. In Winter 2015, the ASI Board voted to establish a student subcommittee on semester conversion, which will begin meeting in fall 2015.

At the March 4, 2015 ASI meeting, board members approved the formation of the Quarter to Semester Conversion Committee. This committee is an ad hoc committee of ASI External Affairs Committee, and its overall purpose is to ensure that student concerns are being heard in the quarter-to-semester conversion. Please see the [minutes](#) from this meeting for additional information about the committee.

ADVISING AND COMPLETING THE DEGREE

1. Will I still be able to graduate on time?

Yes, provided you work closely with an academic advisor, beginning now, to develop an Individualized Advisement Plan toward timely graduation. Do not wait until the semester schedule is upon us. Your academic advisor will have access to a transition plan for your major. Getting an early start in the preparation for the semester conversion is your key to keeping on track and on time. Please see our [Pledge to Our Students](#) in which the University promises that students will graduate on time and will not lose earned credits provided they meet with advisors, develop an Individualized Advisement Plan, and follow the plan.

2. Will all of my quarter units count toward my degree following the conversion?

The University will make every effort to ensure that the units you have already earned will count toward your degree. Each college and department will be working individually on plans for transitioning its courses from quarters to semesters to make the move go smoothly for students.

Please see our [Pledge to Our Students](#) in which the University promises that students will graduate on time and will not lose earned credits provided they meet with advisors, develop an Individualized Advisement Plan, and follow the plan.

CATALOG RIGHTS

Beginning June 1, 2018, for academic year 2018-9, students can claim rights to the 2018-9 Catalog for either graduation requirements (including GE for undergraduates) or major requirements. Here are some frequent questions asked by students and advisors.

1. How do I change my major catalog year to semesters?

Use the [Request to Update Major Catalog Year](#) form.

2. If I want to elect to use the semester catalog for my major, how does that affect my GE?

It does not have to affect your GE. Students may use different catalogs for their major and graduation requirements.

3. Should I use the quarter or semester catalog for my major?

Each situation is different and speaking with your major advisor is a particularly good idea to fully understand the impact of your decision. Generally speaking, a student who is just reaching their junior year or has not reached junior status yet should probably use the semester catalog. In any event, ask your advisor for an “individualized advisement plan” to help you decide.

Graduate students should consult with their program’s graduate coordinator or their faculty advisor to determine which catalog they should choose. The choice will depend on how far along you are in your program and how significantly your program requirements will change in semesters.

4. What are the pros and cons of using the quarter or semester catalog for graduation requirements?

AACE and College Center advisors have the complete information. The biggest differences are that the quarter requirements include GE Areas B5 and F, whereas the semester requirements include Social Justice and Sustainability Overlays. The semester catalog also allows for some double-counting between GE and major courses (this does not apply retroactively). Generally speaking, a student who has satisfied areas B5 and F or is already taking upper division GE courses should stay on the quarter graduation requirements catalog.

5. What if I make the wrong choice?

According to Title 5, for major requirements, students may use the Catalog from the time they declare their major, the time they entered CSUEB (if that is after they declared their major), or their time of graduation, if they have continuous enrollment at a California community college

or a CSU. For general graduation requirements (including GE), students may use the Catalog of entry into California community college or CSU, the time of entry to CSUEB, or their time of graduation, if they have continuous enrollment at a California community college or a CSU. Declaring the 2018-9 Catalog does not relinquish those rights. So, if it turns out that you could graduate had you not switched, you can revert to your quarter catalog provided that you have continuous enrollment at a California community college or a CSU. However, you cannot declare rights to the 2018-9 after the end of the academic year.

TUITION, FEES, FINANCIAL AID

1. Will tuition cost more under the semester calendar?

No. At the time of the semester conversion, annual academic year student tuition for two semesters will equal annual student tuition charged for three quarters. See our [Pledge to Our Students](#).

2. Currently basic student tuition per quarter is the same for 1-6 units (as part-time students), and a higher rate for more than 6 quarter units. Will this be the same for semester units? That is, will a student pay the same basic tuition per semester for 1-6 semester units, and a higher rate for more than 6 semester units?

Yes, under the semester system the same fee structure will apply. See [CSU Fee Schedules](#). The annual cost of your education will not be impacted by the quarter to semester transition. However, the cost per term will be higher because there are only 2 terms (semesters) vs. 3 terms (quarters).

3. Will the cost of student housing or parking be affected by the conversion to semester?

Housing fees vary from campus to campus and depend on the type of housing. CSU semester and quarter campuses report similar housing costs for an academic year. Since the school year will be approximately the same length on the semester system, it is unlikely housing fees will be greatly impacted by a conversion. There is no reason for calendar conversion to change the annual rate for parking.

4. How will semester conversion affect my financial aid package?

Semester conversion should not adversely affect your financial aid package. A semester schedule will decrease the number of financial aid check disbursements. However, your financial aid is awarded for the academic year regardless of whether the school's calendar is quarter or semester based. Financial aid recipients will see an adjustment in their award packages to accommodate this difference. The Office of Financial Aid will advise students on the impact semester conversion may have, if any, on their financial aid eligibility.

STUDENT SERVICES ON CAMPUS

1. How will semesters affect student services on campus?

Campus offices that provide student services will experience fewer fluctuations in their scheduling as the semester calendar requires one less period to process documents or perform business transactions. Examples of these are: University Housing will have one less period to process applications for student housing; Accessibility Services will spend one less time determining student eligibility for accommodations; offices that employ students will spend less time verifying student eligibility for work on-campus; the Student Center for Academic Achievement will schedule tutors twice rather than three times per year. In general, the semester calendar is more efficient across the campus, potentially allowing offices to have more time for better planning, special projects for service improvement or enhancement and staff development.

The student services located in the University Union, such as food service, entertainment and information counter, and the ASI's business unit that manages its budget and operates all the student services, will not be adversely affected by a change in the academic calendar. They will continue to serve the students all year long.

2. How will semesters affect student study abroad and summer opportunities?

[The Center for International Education](#) (CIE) coordinates the planning for students who wish to study abroad and provides a list of universities worldwide that students at the 23 CSU campuses can attend. Because most universities worldwide follow some version of a semester system, our conversion to semesters should make it easier for students to study abroad.

It is also possible that students will have more opportunities for summer employment, internships, research opportunities, and summer study at other institutions on a semester calendar. Though employers and institutions try to work with students and their availabilities, 90% of colleges and universities follow the semester calendar, so many employers follow this schedule and begin seeking candidates for summer employment in early spring.

CSU East Bay will continue to offer a summer session through either state-support or self-support.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

1. What will be the maximum number of units that Teaching Assistants (TAs) can teach under the semester system?

TAs normally teach up to 20 hours per week (0.5 FTE, or 7.5 units). Under unusual circumstances TAs may teach a higher load. This will not change under semesters.

2. Will there be any flexibility for teaching assistant (TAs) to teach a few extra units one semester and fewer in the next semester?

TAs may teach beyond 0.5 FTE under unusual circumstances, but in no case may they exceed full time employment in a given semester.

