

# Academic Senate Instruction Committee

## Credit/No Credit Grading Policy for Semesters

Still in First Reading  
Presentation to  
Academic Senate  
1/13/2026



CAL POLY

# Summary from First Reading

November 18, 2025

- Described guiding principles for Instruction Committee to review CR/NC Policy for Semesters.
- Described the outreach and consultation process.
- There is no CSU Executive Order about CR/NC policies.
- Described the current CR/NC Policy on Quarters.
- Provided some background on why the current policy is complicated to understand and monitor.
- Resolution for Semesters maintains status quo with adjustments for units and timeline to opt-in.

# Current CR/NC Policy

## Quarter Policy adopted in 1997 - AS-479-97

- There is no CSU Executive Order that informs CR/NC Policy
- Limited to 16 quarter units
  - No more than one course in major/support (if allowed)
  - No more than one course in GE
  - C minus for CREDIT for undergraduates
  - B minus for CREDIT for graduate students
- Policy amended in 2024 to extend the opt-in deadline to 80% of instruction.

# Why is it complicated?

Current policy is not well understood by students and others.

- Policy varies from program to program.
- Selection of CR/NC cannot be automated in the Student Center Registration System.
- Requires monitoring and correcting each quarter.
- This process is very labor intensive.
- Degree Progress Report enforces CR/NC policy in a way a student may not expect.
- Can be a problem for change of major students.
- 2024 Revision of deadline to 80% resulted in unintended consequences.

# Where we Landed - Status Quo

## Proposed Policy for Semesters – specific language for Graduate/Post-Bac Programs

- Maximum of 12 semester units with Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) grading – opt-in by 50% of instruction.
- Undergraduates
  - A C minus or better to earn credit
  - No more than one course in GE (3, 4, or 5 unit)
  - No more than one course in the Major, if allowed by the student's major program/department
- Graduate Students
  - No Courses required for graduate degree
  - A B minus or to earn credit
- Post-Bacc/Teaching Credential Students
  - No courses required for teaching credential or pre-requisites
  - A B minus to earn credit

# Course in the Major

## What is a Major Course?

- Major Course includes all of the following:
  - ✓ Core
  - ✓ Advisor Approved Electives
  - ✓ Technical Electives
  - ✓ Concentration Courses
    - ✓ “choose from list”
  - ✓ Support courses

# Labs to meet GE 5C

## Stand Alone 1 unit Life of Physical Science Labs

- The new GE template parses out the 1-unit laboratory to meet the requirement for GE area 5C.
- At Cal Poly nearly all the courses that satisfy GE area 5 embed the 5C lab requirement in the course. (i.e.; the lecture and lab are linked together and though each may be graded separately, only one final grade is posted for the course.
- Very few students will not satisfy the GE 5C requirements when completing a GE Area 5 course. But there will be some.
- **Question:** Should a 1 unit stand alone lab count as the students only allowable GE course?

# Rationale for CR/NC Grading

## Summary of WHEREAS Clauses

- Students should have the option to take a limited number of courses CR/NC.
- Semester curricula may now have more double-counting opportunities
- CR/NC policy may mitigate unforeseen complications with the launch of the semester curriculum.
- Students may take a higher course load during some semesters
- Support students managing unforeseen challenging circumstances
- Programs and Departments are best positioned to decide on CR/NC in the major

# Likely Outcomes

## The proposed policy

- **Can support student success** and allow the opportunity to explore unfamiliar or challenging subject areas
- **Does** give all programs/departments the ability to choose the merit of CR/NC in the major.
- **Does** provide a reasonable timeline to opt-in to CR/NC supporting students to make informed decisions about their academic progress
- **Does** provide a policy that can help students make progress toward degree when managing unforeseen challenging circumstances.
- **Does NOT** result in a policy that is more easily understood by students and faculty.
- **Does NOT** result in a policy that is easier to implement and monitor.

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End of Presentation  
...Questions

# Guiding Principles for Policy Review

## Credit/No Credit Grading Policy for Semesters

- ✓ Focus on Student Success and Progress toward Degree.
- ✓ Semester conversion offers the opportunity to consider possibilities.
- ✓ Every choice/compromise has benefits and costs.
- ✓ Avoid the choice is the greater offense?
- ✓ Can a semester policy help mitigate challenges students caught on the “Q2S Bridge” might face.
- ✓ What will work for Cal Poly Maritime Academy programs?

# Outreach and Consultation

How does the current policy work? It's Complicated ...

- Consulted with University Advising Professionals.
- Collaborative Advising for Student Success(CASS) Work Group
- Office of the Registrar
  - The automation and enforcement process.
    - Very complicated and labor intensive
- Outreach to Colleges, Graduate Programs, Teaching Credential Programs and Instructional Department Heads/Chairs (IDHC)
- Academic Senate Executive Committee

# Choices the Instruction Committee vetted for a universal campus policy

## Too Extreme or Too Complicated

- Keep it at 16 units.
- 12 units - no restrictions.
- 12 units - no major courses, no GE courses

## Too Complicated:

- ✓ No major core courses
  - ✓ (allows one support, concentration, advisor approved elective, or technical elective.

## Possible Paths

- ✓ 12 units - one major course and one GE course
  - ❖ Or one major and two GE
- ✓ 12 units - no major courses and one GE course
  - ❖ Or no major courses and two GE
- ✓ 12 units - one GE and one major course if stated in the catalog that it is allowed by student's major program/department.

# GE Courses

It was suggested to allow up to two courses

- More flexible for students.
- **Many more GE courses embedded in the major.**  
This may result in some confusion for students bridging quarter to semester.
- Students may be taking higher course loads during some semesters as we adjust to term typically offered, unable to enroll the previous semester, failed a pre-requisite.
- To move more quickly to degree.
- **Could not reach consensus for 2 GE courses.**