



# GUIDE TO SUCCESS AND EXCELLENCE

You are about to begin your college career at one of the most selective and highly respected universities in the United States. Your success will depend on your attitude, motivation and commitment. This guide contains studying and learning strategies, and approaches to learning and growing in a scholarly community that values and respects all of its members.

*Find your passion and deep learning will follow!*

## Take Responsibility for Your Learning

*I hear and I forget;  
I see and I remember;  
I do and I understand.*

— A Chinese Proverb

Your instructor is an intellectual guide but cannot learn for you. Your responsibility is to truly master the material in ways that exercise and expand your mind. This is very important, very personal, and your deepest responsibility.

## Study 25-35 Hours/Week

One of the greatest challenges students entering college will face is realizing how much they need to study.

*It takes time and commitment to learn.*

- Set aside blocks of quiet time — no texting or chatting with roommates.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle and get enough sleep. Avoid all-nighters.
- Set aside most of one weekend day for studying. Don't go home every weekend or stay out all night.
- Stay organized. Keep a calendar so you don't miss assignments. File exams, returned assignments, topic outlines, etc., in separate folders for each class.
- Take advantage of your instructor's office hours.
- Get to know a few people in each of your classes to study with. Prepare for group meetings so you can contribute.

## Help Create a Community of Love, Empathy and Respect

One of the most wonderful aspects of being on a college campus is the diversity of people who are here to learn and grow. You will encounter and acquire new ways of thinking, new concepts, and new knowledge. You will interact with people on campus who have different value systems, identities, religions, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is a strength that we are different from one another and we want to foster, grow and celebrate our diversity all within the context of mutual respect, empathy, and love for one another.



Help create an inclusive community that enables everyone on campus to have equitable opportunity to attain success and feel valued and respected for who they are.

## Take Time to Prepare for Exams, Quizzes and Written Assignments

*Exams and Quizzes – If you can explain something to someone else in a way that they can understand, you probably know it. If you can't, you don't.*

- Keep up with the material; don't cram for exams the night before
- Work with the material a little at a time and ask yourself questions as you read.

- Test yourself; don't let your instructor be the first to test your knowledge. Would any sports team seeking to do well walk on the field for a game without having practiced beforehand?
- Make a topic outline and explain it in depth without referring to your notes or textbook.
- Make a list of representative textbook problems and prove to yourself that you can work all types, one after another, without hints or assistance.

*For written assignments, write an outline and several drafts. Give yourself time to use your creativity.*

- Do a lot of thinking at first. Write down your ideas, cluster the ideas into an outline, convert the outline into a rough draft and revise the draft until you are satisfied.
- Do several drafts before turning in the final copy. Allow yourself plenty of time to fully develop your topic.
- Concentrate on meaningful content, good organization, maturity in expression, excellent grammar and vocabulary, excellent and varied sentence structure, conciseness and welldeveloped paragraphs.
- The [Writing and Learning Center](#) provides free virtual peer-to-peer tutoring for any assignment, project or course.

## Understand Your Curriculum

*A university education is not vocational training; it is an education for how to engage in life-long learning.*

Your curriculum consists of three parts: (1) major and support courses, (2) general education and breadth courses, and (3) elective courses. All are equally important. Your ability to communicate effectively, comprehend science and technology, understand history and current political systems, and appreciate the arts and literature will have an important impact on the quality of your life and your future opportunities. We are helping you prepare to have a career, not just a job, and to become a sensitive, thoughtful and contributing member of society.

## Seek Help and Advice During Your Academic Journey Virtually

*Virtual advising support is available now and throughout the academic year. Use the below links to access your virtual advising resource(s).*

- [First-Year Advising](#)
- [Transfer Student Advising](#)
- [Pre-Health Professions Drop-in Advising](#)
- [Frequently Used Resources for Cal Poly Students](#)

Cal Poly has created many resources to help students prepare for and be successful in a virtual learning environment. View these virtual learning resources [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). There is also a *What's Up Now* application for smartphones and tablets that helps students stay connected to important campus resources. Learn more [HERE](#).

Make it a goal to graduate in four years and make sure you understand and follow the prescribed curriculum. The College of Science and Mathematics Student Services office has

[professional academic and pre-health advisors](#) that will help you understand your curriculum and stay on track toward graduation. You will also be assigned a faculty mentor by your major department. It is important to develop

**STUDY  
25-35  
Hours/Week  
(2HRS/UNIT/WEEK)**

mentoring relationships with faculty and staff throughout your time at Cal Poly. These mentors often end up being life-long members of your professional networks.

## How Do I Get Help?

If you develop a problem, get help in the beginning. Don't wait until irreparable damage is done. The college deans are available to assist students who are facing challenges or barriers to their academic success. To reach the college deans, or for urgent matters, please contact CSM Student Services ([csmadvising@calpoly.edu](mailto:csmadvising@calpoly.edu)) and/or the Dean of Students office ([deanofstudents@calpoly.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@calpoly.edu)).

Remember, there are many resources, offices and people at your disposal. We will work closely with you so that you may be your most successful at Cal Poly. These resources include, but are not limited to: the instructors of your courses, your faculty mentor, department chair and department staff members, CSM Student Services, the College dean's office, the Mustang Success Center, the Transfer Student Center, the Academic Skills Center, the Writing and Learning Center, the Office of the Registrar, University Housing, Student Accounts, Campus Health and Well-Being, and so many more. The faculty and staff in our college and these other units at Cal Poly are committed to working with each and every one of you.

## Important Resource Links

- [Associated Students, Inc.](#)
- [Campus Health and Well Being](#)
  - <https://coronavirus.calpoly.edu/studentcare-resources>
- [College of Science and Mathematics](#)
  - [CSM Student Services](#)
  - [Pre-Health Professions Advising](#)
  - [Transfer Student Advising](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)
- [Disability Resource Center](#)
- [Dream Center](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [First-Year Advising \(Mustang Success Center\)](#)
- [Food Pantry](#)
- [General Resources for Cal Poly Students](#)
  - [What's Up Now App](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Student Academic Skills Center](#)
- [Student Accounts](#)
- [Transfer Student Center](#)
- [University Housing](#)
- [Week of Welcome \(September 2020\)](#)
- [Writing and Learning Center](#)
- [Virtual Learning Preparation](#)
  - <https://coronavirus.calpoly.edu/classesand-programs>
  - <https://success.calpoly.edu/virtualllearning>
  - <https://www.calpoly.edu/roadmap>