ACADEMIC SUCCESS & ADVISEMENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020
International Academic Advisement

Matador Statue
Photo by Steven Wein
Courtesy of the USU at CSUN
The following dates apply to New F-1 International students only.

**Fall 2019 Semester**

- **August 16, 2019**: F-1 Visa SEVIS Entry Deadline
- **August 21**: Official Start of Fall 2019 semester
- **August 22**: New (F-1) Freshman/Transfer International Student Orientation
- **August 23**: Last day to take Math Selection Assessment (MSA) exam for new Fall admits
- **August 24**: Saturday only and Friday/Saturday classes begin
- **August 26**: Weekday classes begin
- **August 31**: Last day to request a change in schedule
- **August 30**: Tuition payment deadline for new Fall admits
- **September 2**: Labor Day Holiday, campus closed (No Instructions September 1-3)
- **September 3-13**: Permission numbers are required to add all classes
- **September 13**: Last day to add/drop classes (Friday of Week 3)
- **November 11**: Veterans Day Holiday, campus closed
- **November 28-29**: Thanksgiving Holiday, campus closed
- **December 10**: Last day of formal instruction
- **December 11-17**: Final examinations
- **December 24**: Last day of the Fall 2019 semester
- **January 25, 2020**: Winter Holidays, Campus Closed

**Spring 2020 Semester**

- **January 13**: F-1 Visa SEVIS Entry Deadline
- **January 17**: Official Start of Spring 2020
- **January 16**: New (F-1) Freshman/Transfer International Student Orientation
- **January 17**: Last day to take Math Selection Assessment (MSA) exam for new Spring admits
- **January 20**: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Campus Closed
- **January 21**: Weekday classes begin
- **January 24**: Last day for to request a change in schedule
- **January 24**: Tuition payment deadline for new Spring admits
- **January 27-29**: Permission numbers are required to add all classes
- **February 7**: Last day to add/drop classes (Friday of Week 3)
- **March 16-22**: Spring Recess, No instructions
- **March 31**: Cesar Chavez Holiday, Campus Closed
- **May 18**: Last day of formal instruction
- **May 9-15**: Final examinations
- **May 22**: Last day of the 2019-2020 academic year
- **May 25**: Memorial Day Holiday, Campus Closed

**Before leaving the U.S. for holidays, make sure you see your major advisor, take care of holds, and register for classes. Don’t forget to obtain a travel signature on your I-20 from a Foreign Student Advisor at the International & Exchange Student Center (IESC). Make sure your visa is still valid for re-entry into the U.S.**

Written and designed by Nate Nguyen
Content contributions and editing by Shay James & Geraldine Sare
MISSION STATEMENT

The UGS-International Academic Advisement Center provides comprehensive support and advisement services to all new F-1 international undergraduate students. Individualized services include early outreach, academic advisement, first-semester enrollment into degree applicable courses, university orientation and second-semester referrals. The foundational services we offer provide students with the tools and resources needed to support a positive transition into and academic success at CSUN.

WELCOME REMARKS

Hello.

If you are reading this message, then you have chosen CSUN as your university. On behalf of the Advisors and me, we are happy to welcome you to the CSUN community and invite you to think of us as a guide during your first semester. CSUN is a large campus with more than 40,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff. We understand that, for many of you, this is your first time attending a university. It may take you a few weeks to a full year to get used to being at a new school and away from your family. CSUN offers a variety of resources to help you through the adjustment period. Please come by and feel free to ask us questions, especially if you begin to feel lost. Our priority is to see you succeed.

This academic success & advising handbook was created for you. Please take the time to review and highlight areas that may be helpful.

Cheers!

Geraldine E. Sare, M.A.
Director of Academic Advisement for new F-1 International Students

Special thanks to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, especially Elizabeth Adams and Shelly Thompson for their continued support with international student success.
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IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

**International Academic Advising** (first semester academic advising & enrollment)
Extended University Commons (EU) 150
(818) 677-6968  ugs.intladvisor@csun.edu
http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/new-intlstudent-process

**International Admissions** (transfer, transcripts, and admissions related issues)
Bayramian Hall (BH) 160
(818) 677-3760  http://www.csun.edu/admissions-records/international

**Student Finance** (tuition, fees, refunds, parking fees)
Bayramian Hall, Lobby
(818) 677-8000  http://www.csun.edu/stufin

**International & Exchange Student Center, IESC** (immigration, social programs & resources)
University Student Union, Building C
(818) 677-3053  http://www.csun.edu/international

**Klotz Student Health Center** (immunization & health services)
(818) 677-3666  http://www.csun.edu/shc

**Learning Resource Center, LRC** (tutoring, writing workshops, UDWPE support, conversation swap)
Oviatt Library, 3rd Floor, East Wing
(818) 677-2033  http://www.csun.edu/lrc

**University Counseling Services** (mental health, emotional health, and counseling)
Bayramian Hall (BH) 520
(818) 677-2366  http://www.csun.edu/counseling/

**Disability Resources & Educational Services, DRES** (disability services & accommodations)
Bayramian Hall (BH) 110
(818) 677-2684  http://www.csun.edu/dres

**Testing Center** (admissions exams, placement tests, UDWPE)
Bayramian Hall (BH) 190
(818) 677-2369  http://www.csun.edu/testing/

**Academic Services for Student Athletes**
Bayramian Hall (BH) 240
(818) 677-4781  http://www.csun.edu/assa
2nd semester international freshmen will continue to be advised by International Academic Advisement. 2nd semester transfer international students and continuing international students will be advised by their college’s Student Services Center.

**International Academic Advisement** (2nd semester freshman advising)
Extended University Commons (EU) 150
(818) 677-2900 [https://www.csun.edu/thehub](https://www.csun.edu/thehub)

**Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication**
Nordhoff Hall (NH) 135
(818) 677-2024 | [http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/academic-advisement](http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/academic-advisement)

**David Nazarian College of Business and Economics**
Juniper Hall (JH) 2113
(818) 677-3537 | [http://www.csun.edu/cobaessc](http://www.csun.edu/cobaessc)

**Michael D. Eisner College of Education**
Education (ED) 1105F
(818) 677-7011 | [http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/deaf-studies/academic-advisement](http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/deaf-studies/academic-advisement)

**College of Engineering and Computer Science**
Jacaranda (JD) 1501
(818) 677-2191 | [http://www.csun.edu/engineering-computer-science/student-services-centereops](http://www.csun.edu/engineering-computer-science/student-services-centereops)

**College of Health and Human Development**
Sequoia Hall (SQ) 111

**College of Humanities**
Jerome Richfield (JR) 240
(818) 677-4784 | [http://www.csun.edu/humanities/student-services-center-educational-opportunity-program](http://www.csun.edu/humanities/student-services-center-educational-opportunity-program)

**College of Science and Mathematics**
Eucalyptus Hall (EH) 2126

**College of Social and Behavioral Sciences**
Sierra Hall (SH) 204
**ENROLLMENT PROCESS FOR NEW F-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**FIRST SEMESTER AT CSUN**

**F-1 Students are pre-enrolled by an advisor. Here’s why:**

From our experience, we know it can be difficult for international students to navigate the enrollment process and get into classes they need. International students can be admitted later than domestic students, many do not arrive in the U.S. until a month before classes start, and classes at CSUN become full very fast. So to help students, we’ve developed this proven process that makes it easier for students to be enrolled earlier and be guaranteed into 12 units of classes they want and need toward their major and general education (GE) requirements!

**This Proven Process:**

- Helps new F-1 international students ensure that they are enrolled in at least 12 units for major and general education requirements.
- Makes transition easier for the many students who are still abroad and/or not familiar with CSUN’s course requirements and enrollment procedures.
- Speeds up the enrollment process for students who have not been able to take their placement exams.
- Allows advisors to review courses for prerequisites *(the classes, exams, grades, etc. required before taking certain classes)* and help students avoid being dropped from classes after school has begun.
- Allows advisors to make sure students don’t mistakenly enroll into multiple online classes or courses that they are not eligible for or do not need. This helps students to graduate on-time and meet university policies and requirements.

Extended University Commons, Photo Credit: LPA Inc.
Enrollment is NOT automatic. What must students do to be enrolled?

All newly admitted undergraduate F-1 international students (freshmen & transfers) must fill out the online Response Questionnaire and complete the “Not Anymore” Title 9 training first! This tells CSUN that you plan to attend, and International Academic Advisors will begin to work on your file and place you in classes based on the indicated preferences on your Response Questionnaire.

After completing the Response Questionnaire:

- Advisors enroll students with priority given to students who fill out the Response Questionnaire by the deadlines indicated in their Welcome Letter.
- Advisors enroll students in classes based on students’ indicated preferences, major and GE requirements, and availability of classes.
- Students who complete the Questionnaire late or after the deadline may be placed into courses that meet during times that are not ideal, GE that are not top preference, or risk part-time enrollment.

Enrollment after the semester has started:

- If students inform CSUN of their intention to attend after the semester has started, students must “run for permission numbers” during the first week to be enrolled. This process requires students to attend class and request permission from instructors to add the class. Since most classes will be full, getting permission numbers to enroll will not be an easy task!

If you wish to withdraw or defer (postpone) your admissions after enrollment:

- Notify your international academic advisor or the office of Admissions and Records as soon as possible so you can be dropped from classes and receive a refund. If students withdraw from classes after the semester has started, students will only be able to receive a partial refund. (See page 26-27 for complete add/drop and refund policies.)
FIRST SEMESTER SCHEDULE CHANGE REQUEST

We understand that sometimes students change their minds or have changes in life circumstances. Therefore, we try to make the Schedule Change Request easy to meet your needs. Once we enroll you in classes, you will receive an email confirmation with a deadline to request schedule change. The deadline is typically Friday after classes start. Inform us by the deadline and we will consider your request.

After the Schedule Change Request deadline, students must get approval from International Academic Advisor. Approval for schedule change will only be made for extenuating circumstances. Having permission numbers or approval from instructors does not guarantee approval for schedule change.

Why there is a deadline process: Past experience has shown that student do worse in their classes if they have a schedule change after the first week. Adding a class late causes students to fall behind in readings and assignments. Therefore, this deadline process is put in place to help students do well in their first semester at CSUN.

UNDERSTANDING HOLDS ON YOUR ACCOUNT

Holds are system indicators on your account that prevent you from registering for classes or changing your schedule.

Advisement holds for major, new international students, or first time freshmen: these holds will stay on your account for the first semester. Students DO NOT need to get these hold removed. Enrollment and changes to schedule are done by an academic advisor. Advisement holds will be lifted before students register for 2nd semester.

Financial Hold: indicates you have a balance due with University Cash Services for tuition and fees. Go to Bayramian Hall Lobby to see University Cash Services.

Foreign hold: The Foreign hold is placed by the International & Exchange Student Center (IESC). To clear the Foreign hold, you must complete the “Six-Step Immigration Requirements,” including check-in and submitting proof of health insurance to IESC.

Missing Transcript hold: Indicates you have not submitted either high school or college transcript to CSUN International Admissions. Please contact your International Admissions Advisor or go to BH 160.

Rubella/Rubeola hold: All students must submit proof of immunization (vaccination) to the Klotz Student Health Center in order for this hold to be lifted. Other immunization holds include: Hepatitis B, Measles, and/or Meningococcal.

Title 9 Training or Refresher Required hold: All students are required to complete the “Not Anymore” training before they can be enrolled in classes. To complete this hold, go to “My Checklist” in the student portal, and locate and complete “Not Anymore” training. This training is required once a year.

Writing Proficiency Exam hold: Indicates that you have reached 75 units and have not taken the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam. You must register and take the exam before this hold is removed. If you have missed the exam registration deadline, you may apply for an extension appeal. See UDWPE.
FRESHMAN ADVISEMENT

1st and 2nd semester international students are advised through the International Academic Advisement office. 1st semester enrollment is done by an advisor, and in-person advisement is not required. 2nd semester advisement is mandatory, and students will be required to attend in-person advisement workshops. At these in-person workshops, advisors will teach you about enrollment, major requirements, and advise you on what classes to take. You will be responsible for enrolling yourself into classes once your holds have been removed. Check your CSUN email often, read announcements carefully, and plan to attend required workshops.

For 3rd semester and onward, you will be advised by your college’s Student Services Center depending on your major. See page 6.

TRANSFER ADVISEMENT

Transfer students going into their 2nd semester and onward will be advised by their college’s Student Services Center or major department (see page 6). Each college has its own advisement process, and students should contact their college’s Student Services Center to make an appointment to see their major advisor. Plan to meet with your major advisor after the 5th week in the semester and before your registration date. Don’t leave the U.S. until you have seen your major advisor!

REGISTRATION TIPS

Advising

Once you have received advising from your advisor, any advising holds you have will be lifted, and you can then register for classes on your own through your MyNorthridge student portal. (More information about the MyNorthridge student portal is available on page 16.)

Do it Yourself Registration in Five Easy Steps

1) Know your Registration-by-Appointment date and other deadlines. Classes fill up quick, so registering as soon as you’re permitted can ensure getting the classes you want!

2) Register for your most important classes first. These should be your major and general education classes recommended by your advisor. See the How To Guides if you need registration help.

3) Waitlist a class if it’s closed. You cannot waitlist classes that have required labs. Waitlists also have a separate schedule for enrollment.

4) Make sure you are enrolled in 12 units. Even if you have courses waitlisted, there is no guarantee you’ll get them. So enroll in 12 units first, and have your waitlisted courses as backups. You can swap courses later when waitlisted courses become open to you.

5) Pay your fees on time! You can be dropped from classes if fees are paid late or if you don’t have a financial letter of support from your embassy.

Change of Schedule: starting second semester, students have the freedom to change their own schedule. However, CSUN’s add/drop policy apply. See page 26.
UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE AS A STUDENT, WHAT’S EXPECTED

It’s challenging being an international student. Expectations are different, and classroom and cultural practices can be confusing. However, the university still holds you to meeting these expectations. Below is a helpful guide for you to successfully carry out your role as a university student.

**Attendance, Motivation, & Participation**
Attendance & participation are required and are often part of your grades. U.S. classrooms are considered student centered, meaning students are expected to be self-motivated and actively participate and contribute to the teaching and learning that happen in the classroom. One way to prepare for classroom participation is to complete your assigned readings and assignments on time.

Participation helps students learn and connect materials much more than passive learning. When you participate, you master and take ownership of information. Participate by asking and answering questions, taking notes, maintaining eye-contact, join in discussions, and collaborate on assigned group work and projects.

**Communicate & Ask for Help**
Students are expected to be mature and independent. This means communicating with professors and advisors when you need help. If you need to be absent from class, don’t understand assignments or lectures, communicate. If you are unclear of policies or regulations, communicate. The best way to learn is to ask.

**Take Responsibility for Learning & Decisions**
Get to know yourself. What are your personal interests, abilities, values, and goals? Seek out and take advantage of all the resources CSUN has to offer. You must be responsible for motivating yourself and developing an interest in your studies. While we expect students to be independent, you don’t have to do everything yourself. Ask for help and get advising from faculty and advisors, then make good decisions toward personal and academic goals. Finally, accept responsibility for your decisions. Keep in mind, “advisors advise; students decide.”
UNDERSTANDING THE GRADING SYSTEM & GPA CALCULATION

The U.S. grading system might be different from your past schools. At the end of the semester, your professors assign you a letter grade based on the total points or percentages you received from completing all assignments and exams. Each letter grade you receive is worth a set value known as a grade point (see chart below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>F/WU</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Classes taken as CR/NC do not effect GPA and are not used in GPA calculation.

Your grade point average, or your GPA, is calculated in the following way:

\[
\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{Total Grade Points}}{\text{Total Units Attempted}}
\]

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Example</th>
<th>Received Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Units Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHYS 220A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYS 220AL</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 107</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 115</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 131</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Step 1. **Multiply** each grade point value by the number of units attempted.

\[
\begin{align*}
4.0 \times 3 &= 12 \\
4.0 \times 1 &= 4.0 \\
3.3 \times 3 &= 9.9 \\
3.0 \times 3 &= 9.0 \\
0.7 \times 3 &= 2.1
\end{align*}
\]

Step 2. **Add** the sum of all the grade points

\[
12 + 4 + 9.9 + 9 + 2.1 = 37
\]

Step 3. **Add** the number of units attempted

\[
3 + 1 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 13
\]

Step 4. **Divide** total grade points by total units attempted.

\[
\frac{37}{13} = 2.85 \text{ GPA}
\]

For easy calculation of your term & cumulative (overall) GPA, consider using the **Online GPA Calculator** available at the [International Academic Advising](#) homepage.
UNDERSTANDING U.S. ACADEMIC CULTURE

Depending on where you’re from, your experience of the classroom could be very different from how classes are conducted here at CSUN. Instructors have different methods of teaching, and your classroom experience will vary even more depending on the format (lecture, lab, or activity) and subject of the classes you’re taking. It can be confusing and you might not know how to act.

However, all classes are conducted with the following underlying values. These are U.S. academic cultural values. They are what we believe in as the core standards for academic teaching and learning. To become academically successful, it’s important that you learn, understand, and integrate these values into your life. So observe carefully, ask questions, and give these values a try!

Credit: Nate Nguyen
COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTES

HOW TO CONTACT PROFESSORS

Professors are friendly and generous. They love seeing students participate and ask for help outside of class. Even though professors are busy teaching multiple classes, they always set aside time to meet with students; these are called Office Hours.

Office Hours are listed in your class syllabus or class website. You can simply show up during those hours, or notify your professors in advance so they can reserve a time slot for you. Advanced notice is preferred.

Other ways to meet your professor is before or after class depending on your professor’s availability. These before and after class meetings are often public and short. So if you prefer more time and privacy, consider using office hours. If office hours conflict with your class schedule, many professors will also make appointments outside of office hours. You can always request meetings with professors by email. Remember to keep your appointment, and don’t be late. (See page 15 for email etiquettes that will ensure you get a quick response from professors and advisors)

OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours are often utilized in U.S. universities. Don’t be shy. There are many great benefits to using Office Hours.

1) You can get additional help, clarification of readings or lectures that you didn’t understand.
2) You can ask questions and get help preparing for assignments, papers, or upcoming exams.
3) By attending office hours, you show professors that you care about your learning, which leaves a positive impression on professors.
4) When professors get to know you more personally, this leads to better letter of recommendation for internship, work, or graduate school.
5) Your professors are expert in the fields and they can provide you with guidance on your major, career, internship, and graduate school.
EMAIL ETIQUETTES

How you communicate speaks volumes to how you’re perceived. Emails are the most common form of communication in the U.S. Emails should not be treated like text messages, and don’t expect an immediate response. Emails are formal communication. Therefore, it’s important to learn how to write professional emails. Email etiquettes will be useful even after graduating from CSUN!

Some important reminders:

1. Always use your CSUN email account with professors and staff.
2. Subject Line: always include a short and clear subject line.
3. Personal Information: include your full name and student ID number.
4. Salutations: start and end your email with a greeting. It’s good formality.
5. Body: keep it short and to the point while always keeping a polite tone.
6. End your email with your full name as your signature.
7. Wait. Give recipients up to 48 hours to respond before following up.

Good email etiquette example:

Dear Professor Smith,

My name is Taemin Park, and I am a student in your MWF 10:00 AM ENGL 113A class. Recently I have been having a hard time understanding your lecture, even though I have been keeping up with my reading assignments. May I have an appointment with you during your Office Hour next Tuesday, March 25th at 3:00 PM to discuss the course material?

Sincerely,

Taemin Park
108456275
MyNorthridge Student Portal is one of your most important tools for success while at CSUN. The portal is where you can find your student schedule, course contents, unofficial transcript, register for classes, update and access personal and academic records. You are encouraged to become familiar with all the functions of your student portal. You are also expected to use your student portal regularly at CSUN.

Below are some key features we want to highlight to help you get started. However, it is your responsibility to learn the rest. The office of Admissions & Records has a how-to-guide for all these functions and more. You can access the How-To-Guides for Students here: www.csun.edu/admissions-records/guides

To get started, go to www.csun.edu and login using your student ID and password that you received in your welcome packet. Through the MyNorthridge Student Portal, you’ll have access to:

Email: the main form of communication at CSUN. Your official CSUN email account is served through Gmail. All official communications with professors and CSUN staff must be done with your CSUN email account. No personal email address will be accepted as this is to protect your online privacy and security. Do not share your username/password with anyone.

Solar Center: where you’ll go to enroll in classes, view and take care of your student finances, and update personal information every time you move. Remember, your F-1 regulation requires you to update your address within 10 days of moving. You should also update your contact information in case of emergency.

Canvas: the online classroom management system used at CSUN. Many of your classes will also have a Canvas class where professors will post readings, handouts, grades, assignments, quizzes. It is also where you can submit your assignments and papers electronically if required to do so.

Class Search: allows students to view courses offered in the current, past, and future terms at CSUN. The class search provides times, locations, and course requirements such as co-requisites, prerequisites, and departmental restrictions.

Degree Planning Tools: include the Degree Road Map, Degree Progress Report/Planner (DPR), and Registration Planner. The Degree Road Map provides recommended semester-by-semester sequence of classes for your major. The Degree Progress Report (DPR) lists all courses you have taken and need to take in general education and major requirements in order to graduate. It is a useful tool for all students to reach their graduation goal on time. The Registration Planner allows you to generate preferred schedules each semester.
ACADEMIC & STUDY SKILLS FOR SUCCESS AT CSUN

HOW TO READ A SYLLABUS

In each class, you will receive a syllabus. A syllabus is a document that outlines the course, rules and policies, and your responsibilities in the class. It is a teaching/learning contract between you and the professor. It is your responsibility to read it carefully and pay attention to the course schedule for assignment deadlines and due dates.

A syllabus has the following components:

- **Class Information**: meeting times, location, and dates.
- **Instructor's Information**: contacts & office hours.
- **Course Description**: outlines the content of the class.
- **Methodology**: how the class will be conducted.
- **Class Assignments**: types and details of assignments & exams.
- **Text & Materials**: required textbooks and materials for class.
- **Course/Grading Policies**: rules for the class & how students will be graded.
- **Schedule**: detailed outline of instructions, assignments and exam dates.

NOTE-TAKING SKILLS

There are many methods and strategies to note-taking. It is important that students develop their own note-taking skills that best fit with their learning styles. However, the Five Rs to note-taking below is a good and general start.

- **Record** main ideas & meaningful facts.
- **Reduce** notes by summarizing ideas and concepts, clarifying meanings and relationships between ideas, lectures, and readings.
- **Recite** facts and ideas to commit them to memory. It’s helpful to discuss ideas with others.
- **Reflect** by connecting lectures with readings, real world events, past and personal experiences.
- **Review** your notes for short periods every week to retain information better.

Don’t wait to only review notes before tests.

Credit: Walter Pauk
HOW TO READ A TEXTBOOK

College textbooks are great learning resources, but with long reading assignments, it’s difficult to read everything word-for-word. Developing reading strategies allow you to read faster, and understand and grasp concepts better when you read.

Consider the **P2R Reading Strategy** below. Credit: Van Blerkom

**Preview**
- Determine what you intend to read, then break up large reading into smaller segments.
- Preview the chapter and focus on: headings, introductions, section and paragraph headings, bold prints, pictures, tables, graphs, chapter summaries, and questions at the end of the section/chapter.

**Read**
- Actively & strategically read what you think is important based on your preview of the text.
- Question what you are reading while you are reading. What are the important points? What are the supporting details?
- Mark your text when you come across idea you don’t understand. Make notations and write questions in the margin so you can discuss in class.

**Review**
- After reading, summarize the main points in your own words.
- Make a list of key terms, definition, concepts, and ideas.
- Make a review sheet for each chapter or major concept to help you study for exams. Include your chapter summaries, concept maps, key words, and your answers to end-of-chapter questions.
- Review what you have read by discussing the reading with a classmate to confirm understanding, challenge ideas, fill-in gaps, and improve overall retention of learning.

GROUP WORK

Group work is an important element of learning in U.S. schools. While group work can be challenging, it teaches innovation through collaboration, problem solving, and leadership skills that are important to both academic and career development. In group work, remember the following points for success:

- Work Together
- Communicate
- Have clear expectations
- Be fair & be helpful
- Commit to the work
- Share group responsibilities
TEST-TAKING SKILLS

There are different types of exams: multiple choice, short answers, essays, online quizzes, midterms and final exams. Different exam formats and expectations can be confusing and anxiety inducing. Here are some tips to prepare for exams:

1) Find out in advance the format of your exams. Professors will usually let you know. If not, just ask. Use office hours for additional help and advice to prepare for exams.

2) Prepare in advance! Use your syllabus and plan ahead to review materials and create your own study guide. Don’t wait until it’s too late. Also consider forming study groups.

3) Memorizing materials is not enough. Learn to make connections, analyze, think critically, and develop writing skills for short answers and essays. The LRC has writing workshops that can help you improve your writing skills.

4) Pace yourself when taking a test. Preview the test first to find out how points are allocated. Then develop a plan to spend more time on questions that are worth more points. Skip questions you don’t know, and revisit them after you complete other questions first.

5) If you have test-anxiety, consult with the Student Counseling Services for ways to manage your anxiety and improve test-taking skills.

ACADEMIC WRITING

Writing is important for all majors at CSUN! Academic writing however, have different formats and expectations that you might not be familiar with. It is important to be serious and spend time in your first year to improve your English and writing skills through your GE writing classes.

Academic writing goes beyond reporting what you have read and know. It requires you to analyze information, develop a thesis, make arguments, support your arguments with evidence, and cite your evidence using standard formats such as MLA or APA, etc.

Work with your instructors, major department, and utilize the University Writing Center to get help and feedback on your writing. The [University Writing Center](#) also provides workshops and tutoring to familiarize you to academic
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is important to the maintenance of standards and quality of education at CSUN. Acceptable practices in your home country might not be acceptable in the U.S. It is your responsibility to know and avoid academic dishonesty at CSUN, as discipline for dishonestly is strictly enforced. Not knowing does not excuse a student from academic dishonesty offenses. For the complete policy, see page 26. You can generally avoid academic dishonesty by:

+ Do your own work - Don’t buy essays or have others do your work
+ Don’t copy - Don’t falsify (make up) information
+ Don’t cheat - Remember to give credit/cite your sources
+ Don’t help others cheat - Don’t do work together unless authorized

TIME MANAGEMENT

We all have limited number of hours per day to accomplish all we need to do. For students, this can be a challenge as you have so many responsibilities. With time management and prioritization, you can make the best use of your time to accomplish your daily, weekly, semester, and academic goals.

1. **Understand how you use your time.** Keeping a time log of your typical week will help you understand when and where you waste time.

2. **Prioritize your activities.** What’s most important to you? What are your goals? What can you do now that you can’t do later?

3. **Create a schedule and stick to it.** It takes discipline and practice to develop good habits of following a schedule. Use technology such as a calendar app to help you manage your schedule.

4. **Be flexible, but also learn to say “No!”** Keep in mind that no schedule is perfect. Events and new responsibilities come up, so it’s important to be flexible and adjust your schedule accordingly. But it’s also easy to get distracted or be pressured into activities that waste a lot of time. It is crucial that you learn when and how to say no, and keep yourself in check.

5. **Have fun, but be responsible.** Being in a foreign country, you’ll want to explore and have fun. But don’t forget your goals and why you’re here. So have fun, but always be responsible to yourself and your goals!
SURVIVAL SKILLS 101

Your first year in the U.S. will likely be the hardest. We want you to do more than survive, but thrive!

Thriving is when you are doing well, happy, growing, and developing in positive directions. Remember you don’t have to do it alone. There are a lot of help and resources to support you as international students. Checkout the next few pages for on-campus and off-campus resources to support your overall experience as international students.

For example, when you need additional help academically, consider visiting the Learning Resource Center *(see page 22)* for tutoring, writing workshops, and even fun events like Conversation Swap where you get to practice English with native-speakers. When you’re feeling homesick or having trouble making friends and would like some guidance on your life, the University Counseling Services *(see page 22)* offer an array of workshops, tutoring, and mentors to help you understand your problems and find ways to improve.

Don’t just aim to survive your first semester at CSUN, but thrive and become happy and successful. To get you started, we’ve compiled these helpful hints and that will help you thrive academically and personally!

**Thrive Academically**
- Learn about classroom etiquettes
- Don’t procrastinate/delay
- Attend all classes & be on time
- Complete all assignments
- Ask for help & communicate
- Participate & actively learn
- Improve your language skills
- Motivate yourself & focus on goals

**Thrive Personally**
- Avoid peer pressure
- Make good friends
- Get involved on campus
- Embrace your identities & diversity
- Talk & get help if feeling homesick/sad
- Be open to new cultures & ideas
- Regulate yourself & manage your time
- Have fun & be responsible

California State University, Northridge is where individuals rise!

We want to see you rise above your challenges and difficulties, and we want to see you rise to your greatest potentials. So reach out, ask for help, and rise!
ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

OVIATT LIBRARY

The Oviatt Library is the center for information, educational resources, research, and learning services. Librarians provide great support in research and learning. The library also has great study spaces, computer labs, printing, computer and iPads check out, and technology assistance. Your CSUN ID card is your library card. [www.library.csun.edu](http://www.library.csun.edu)

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides programs and supports students to develop and strengthen critical thinking skills, study strategies, writing skills, and performance in subject matter courses. Visit the LRC and become a better learner. [www.csun.edu/lrc](http://www.csun.edu/lrc)

OTHER TUTORING CENTERS SPECIFIC TO MAJORS

Different departments and majors also have tutoring centers that are specific to the majors. Check with the student services center of your college for specific location and availability of tutoring. See Other Tutoring Resources for additional information.

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES

University Counseling Services (UCS) offers free short term counseling services to students to improve overall mental health, academic performance, and quality of life. When you feel homesick or sad and want to talk to someone, visit the UCS. [www.csun.edu/counseling](http://www.csun.edu/counseling)

STUDENT RECREATION CENTER & OASIS WELLNESS CENTER

When you feel stressed from your studies or from being in a new environment, consider exercising to improve your physical body and your mind. The Student Recreation Center (SRC) is a 138,000 square foot facility for exercise and leisure activities that promote lifelong health and wellness. [www.csun.edu/src](http://www.csun.edu/src)

The Oasis is a welcoming destination where CSUN students can find serenity and relaxation amid the rush and activity of campus life. It offers nutrition counseling, meditation, massages, acupuncture, nap pods and workshops focused on wellness and managing stress, all intended to promote student academic success. [www.csun.edu/oasis](http://www.csun.edu/oasis)

KLOTZ STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

The Student Health Center provides health education programs as well as health services at little or no cost to CSUN students. There are physicians in family medicine, internal medicine, sports medicine, gynecology, and a variety of other areas. There are also specialists in physical therapy, chiropractic services, massage therapy, acupuncture, optometry, podiatry, dentistry, and women's and men's health. For immunization holds, see page 9. [www.csun.edu/shc](http://www.csun.edu/shc)
INTERNATIONAL & EXCHANGE STUDENT CENTER

The International and Exchange Student Center (IESC) provides immigration compliance services to newly admitted and continuing international students. The IESC coordinates cultural and social events that allow students to share their national heritage and get involved with the campus community. www.csun.edu/international

CAREER CENTER

The Career Center at CSUN offers career exploration and advisement along with job-search strategies to students and eligible alumni. The Career Center helps students advance on their career paths by providing guidance on choosing a major, how to make decisions, and how to set goals and plans. The center also hosts an array of programs to connect students with internships and employers, and prepare students for the job search and interview process. www.csun.edu/career/

OFFICE OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

At such a large campus like CSUN, it’s easy for international students to feel homesick, lost, and disconnected. One way to become connected is to get involved. The Office of Student Involvement & Development connects students to meeting people with similar interests, discovering clubs and organizations, volunteer projects, fraternities and sororities, and resources for leadership development. www.csun.edu/osid

There are more than 300 student organizations/clubs at CSUN. Below are examples of the clubs international students have found a home in. See the complete list of clubs at CSUN: www.csun.edu/mic/clubs-and-organizations

+ International Student Association (ISA)
+ Phi Beta Delta (Honor Society for International Scholars)
+ Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)
+ Muslim Students Association (MSA)

OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

POLICE SERVICES

While on or near campus, CSUN Police department can handle all incidents relating to the law, safety, crimes, and emergency preparedness. If you need immediate police service while on or near campus, call the 24 hour CSUN police dispatch line at: 818-677-2111. www.csun.edu/police/.

If you ever feel unsafe on campus and would like a free personal safety escort to walk with you to your car, class, or housing, contact the Matador Patrol at (818) 677-5042 and a student or police officer will walk with you to your destination.

While off-campus, dial 911 in cases of emergency. For non-emergencies, call 877-275-5273 for police information in the Los Angeles area. It’s better to be safe than sorry, so contact police services if you ever feel unsafe, in an emergency, or need assistance.
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE (DMV)

Planning on getting your Driver License or owning a car? The Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) is the office that issues Driver License or State ID. When visiting the DMV, schedule appointments online to reduce very long wait time.  https://www.dmv.ca.gov/

- **Winnetka DMV Office**
  - 20725 Sherman Way
  - Winnetka, CA 91306

- **Arleta DMV Office**
  - 1440 Van Nuys Blvd.
  - Arleta, CA 91331

- **Granada Hills Office (Driver’s License Only)**
  - 16201 San Fernando Mission Blvd.
  - Granada Hills, CA 91344

HOSPITALS & SEEING A DOCTOR

Seeing a doctor or going to the hospital can be expensive. It’s important to use the Emergency Room (ER) for only for emergencies. For non-emergencies, consider an appointment with your primary care doctor, visit a clinic or the Student Health Center.

It’s also important to be prepared and know in advance how your insurance works and where it is accepted. Most doctor’s visits require an appointment, while many clinics and the Student Health Center have walk-in services based on availability of doctors. There are many hospitals and clinics available, so find out in advance which ones are closest to you. The closest hospital to CSUN is:

- **Northridge Hospital Medical Center**
  - 18300 Roscoe Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 91328.
  - (818) 885-8500
  - Website: [northridgehospital.org](http://northridgehospital.org)

- **Olive View Medical Center**
  - 14445 Olive View Drive #2B101, Sylmar, CA, 91342
  - (818) 364-1555
  - Website: [Olive View Medical Center](http://Olive View Medical Center)

PHARMACY

Pharmacies sell over-the-counter and doctor’s prescribed medicines. For minor issues such as headaches, stomach issues, cold and fever etc., you can purchase medicines at the pharmacies without a doctor’s prescription. Pharmacists can also answer questions you have about over-the-counter medicines.

After seeing a doctor, you might receive a prescription which you can take the pharmacy for the prescribed medicine. Pharmacies are available at CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, Walmart, and Target. Prescription medicine may be covered by your health insurance, check with your insurance to verify.

- **Klotz Student Health Center Pharmacy**
  - Located on - campus
  - 1 (818) 677 - 3671

- **CVS Pharmacy**
  - 8999 Balboa Blvd, Northridge, CA 91325
  - 1 (818) 924 - 9002

- **Rite Aid**
  - 18444 Plummer St. Northridge, CA 91325
  - 1 (818) 349 - 6267

TRANSPORTATION

The LA & San Fernando Valley areas offer an array of public transportations including buses and train to get you wherever you need to go. Major public transit agencies include Metro information on carpool services, CSUN shuttle services, parking, and complete links to local transit agencies.  [www.csun.edu/parking/transportation](http://www.csun.edu/parking/transportation)
LOANS/SCHOLARSHIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

There are many CSUN scholarships, with some available to international students. Visit [https://csun.starsscholarshipsonline.com/](https://csun.starsscholarshipsonline.com/). You can review all available scholarships, but you’ll need sign up for an account in order to apply. Keep track of deadlines and application requirements. Some require letter of recommendations or personal statement to accompany the application, so plan ahead.

For other off-campus scholarships, loans, and guide to education financing for international students, see this list of helpful websites compiled by the office of Financial Aid & Scholarship.

www.csun.edu/financialaid/international-students.

POLICIES

MATH PLACEMENT EXAM

The **Math Selection Assessment (MSA)** is an assessment tool that places first semester international students into Math 196QR, 196S, 102, 103, 131, 140, 105, or 150A. Even if you have completed your general education math requirements through transfer or standardized tests, the MSA is still recommended for students in Science and Engineering majors who need higher level math courses. Students who do not take the MSA or are not exempt will be placed into the lowest level math. [www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/developmental-mathematics/math-selection-assessment](http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/developmental-mathematics/math-selection-assessment)

EXECUTIVE ORDER 1100

All entering students are required to complete their General Education Basic Skills requirements (Freshman Composition, Critical Thinking, Math, and Oral Communication) with a grade of “C-” or higher in order to graduate. Students will be required to repeat Basic Skills courses if they obtain grades lower than “C-.”

All continuing students who have any remaining Basic Skills requirements must also pass their Basic Skills courses with grade of “C-” or higher starting Fall 2016.

UPPER DIVISION WRITING PROFICIENCY EXAM (UDWPE)

Students must attempt the Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam before reaching 75 units. For transfer students with 60 or more units, this typically means attempting the UDWPE in the first semester at CSUN. Registration holds will be placed on students who have not attempted the exam on time. The TOEFL does not exempt students from the exam. For registration and available dates, visit [www.csun.edu/udwpe](http://www.csun.edu/udwpe).

Students are advised to start taking the UDPWE around 56 units. There are many resources available for international student writers offered through the Learning Resource Center. Visit the [UDWPE Preparation Page](http://www.csun.edu/udwpe) for information on preparation sessions, workshops, and individual consultation.
LATE ADD/DROP DEADLINES & PROCEDURES

For international students, your first semester add/drop deadline is outlined under “First Semester Change of Schedule Request” on page 10. Additionally, the Late Add-Drop Class policy is university wide and applies to all students. Please see the following for add/drop/grade change dates, instructions, and forms needed for late changes to your schedule. www.csun.edu/admissions-records/late-add-drop-classes

PART-TIME & CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

Part-time: For academic hardship, students may be approved for one-time permission to be enrolled for less than 12 units. In other cases, part-time enrollment approval may be made under conditions such as health/medical or final semester. Students should see a Foreign Advisor with IESC for approval or to discuss their individual situations.

Concurrent Enrollment: Students may be approved to take a class or classes at another school while enrolled at CSUN. Students must be enrolled in minimum 6 units at CSUN, and the combined units from concurrent enrollment must be at least 12 units each semester. Part-time and Concurrent Enrollment is not available to all students. Students must visit IESC for more information and prior authorization.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this university. Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a CSU campus is listed in Section 41301, Title 5, and California Code of Regulations as an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended or given a less severe disciplinary sanction. Academic dishonesty is an especially serious offense and diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on the integrity of the University’s programs.

Academic dishonesty might be treated differently in other countries, however, discipline is fully enforced in the U.S. and at CSUN. Such dishonesty includes:

Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Fabrication: Intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas or work of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.

For examples and complete details on Academic Dishonesty Policy, see: www.csun.edu/catalog/policies/academic-dishonesty/

STUDENT CONDUCT

The university is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy living and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to be good members and to engage in responsible behaviors that reflect well upon their university, to be civil to one another in the campus community, and to contribute positively to student and university life. www.csun.edu/catalog/policies/student-conduct-code/
WITHDRAWALS, REFUNDS, & VISA ISSUES

Before the start of the first semester, if students decide to withdraw or defer enrollment, please inform an International Academic Advisor or Admissions & Records. Once the semester has started, if students need to completely withdraw from CSUN, make sure to follow this policy: [www.csun.edu/catalog/policies/withdrawals-undergraduate-policy/](http://www.csun.edu/catalog/policies/withdrawals-undergraduate-policy/).

Depending on when students withdraw from classes, their refund will be affected. For refund information, visit: [www.csun.edu/stufin/ucs-refund-information](http://www.csun.edu/stufin/ucs-refund-information).

**Withdrawing from classes will affect your F-1 visa status.** F-1 international students are required to enroll in 12 units each semester. If students withdraw completely, their I-20 and immigration status will be affected. Please consult with a Foreign Advisor at IESC before making complete withdrawals from CSUN.

Withdrawing from classes that results in enrolling in less than 12 units can also negatively affect a student’s legal F-1 status. See “Part-Time & Concurrent Enrollment” on page 26.

GLOSSARY

**Academic Disqualification:** Once on academic probation, students can be disqualified from CSUN if their following semester GPA drops below 1.50 (for freshmen), 1.70 (for sophomores), 1.85 (for juniors), 1.95 (for seniors). Disqualified students can only take units through Tseng College or another university, and must reapply to return to CSUN. Students also risk visa issues.

**Academic Probation:** A warning when either CSUN or cumulative (total) GPA falls below 2.0. Probation students can register for up to 13 units each semester, are required mandatory advisement, and can have negative effects on financial aid and scholarships. Once on probation, students can be disqualified if they do not improve their GPA in the next semester. See Academic Disqualification.

**Academic Standing:** Describes a student’s academic standing based on their Grade Point Average (see page 12 for GPA calculation). Good Standing refers to continuing students with a GPA above 2.0 and allowed to register for up to 16 units each semester at CSUN. Other academic standings include Academic Probation and Academic Disqualification.

**Add/drop:** Refers to registering for classes. Students have until the 3rd week of the semester to add and drop a class without a penalty.

**Catalog:** In depth descriptions of all majors, minors, and university policies.

**Citation:** The rules and conventions of documenting sources used in academic writing. Such documentation includes referencing the author, source, year, page number, reference list, etc. Students are responsible for using APA, MLA, or other approved citation styles. [http://library.csun.edu/Guides/ResearchStrategies/CitationStyleGuides](http://library.csun.edu/Guides/ResearchStrategies/CitationStyleGuides)

**Class Standing:** Describes the class status of students and may affect registration date and GPA requirements to avoid Academic Disqualification. Class standing is determined by units completed: freshman (0-29), sophomore (30-59), junior (60-89), senior (90+ units).

**College:** Academic home for a group of similar departments and majors. For example, the College of Engineering and Computer Science is home for all computer science and engineering related majors. Within a college, there are Departments that oversee a group of similar majors and provide administrative oversight for those majors.
**Co-requisite**: Refers to classes that must be taken at the same time. Many science and math classes have co-requisite labs.

**Course Description**: Brief description of what a class entails and also list any prerequisites or co-requisites.

**Credit/No Credit**: These classes are either pass or no pass, and do not affect your GPA but may be required for the major. Oftentimes mandatory labs come as credit/no credit. General Education courses must be taken for a grade, not Credit/No Credit.

**Degree Progress Report (DPR)**: Lists all general education and major requirements fulfilled and remaining coursework required to meet graduation requirements. Listing includes courses, units, GPA, and includes all transfer course work that applies to GE, major, & electives.

**Degree Road Map**: Recommended sequence of classes laid out semester-to-semester for individual majors.

**General Education (GE)**: Classes meant to shape students into a well-rounded individuals, and expose students to life skills in areas of arts, culture, science, critical thinking, writing, etc. GE classes are required for all majors to graduate from CSUN. Students need approximately 48 lower division GE units and 9 upper division GE units (300-400 level) to meet General Education graduation requirement. Some GE classes double count with major courses.

**GPA**: Grade Point Average that determines your Academic Status. CSUN GPA is calculated from all courses taken at CSUN. Cumulative GPA is combined GPA from all course transferred in and taken at CSUN. Major GPA is calculated from all courses taken specifically for the major (typically 300-400 level major classes). All 3 GPA’s must be above a 2.0 to graduate from CSUN. Semester GPA is calculated from courses taken in a single semester.

**Group work/projects**: Assignments that require working with other students. These can be research projects/papers and presentations. Students should only work together if assigned as group assignments, or have prior permission from instructors. Working together without prior authorization may be considered as cheating or plagiarism.

**Hybrid Class (OH)**: Online Hybrid classes that meet half online and half in person. Some OH classes meet on a certain schedule such as once every two weeks.

**Labs**: Classes that test the applications of what students have learned in a lecture and usually requires hands on work. Most labs can be as short as 50 minutes.

**Lectures**: Core classes that teaches knowledge and skills. They are usually 1hr 15min for classes that meet two or more days per week classes, or 2-3 hours for classes that meet once a week.

**Major Classes**: Classes required to teach students knowledge and skills in the specific areas of the major. Lower division major classes (100-200 level) are foundation courses to prepare students with the basic knowledge necessary to continue in the major. Many majors require lower division core to be completed before moving on to upper division core. Upper division major classes (300-400 level) focus on in-depth and specialized learning and application.

**MyNorthridge Student Portal/Solar**: Personal account that contains all relevant CSUN related information including, financial aid distribution, phone number and address, class schedule and grades, required text books, etc. See page 16.
Online Classes (OF): Online classes that meet online only, including for exams. Some OF classes also require you to meet online at a specific time. International students are permitted to take only 3 units of online classes per semester.

Pass/Fail: In order to pass a class, student must earn a grade of A, B, C, D or CR. A grade of F or NC are failing grades. Certain classes or majors have different minimum grade requirement to meet prerequisites or meet major requirements, students should always check the Catalog for most updated requirements.

Permission Numbers: Special codes to add a class if students are missing the prerequisite, if the class is closed or restricted, or if adding a class during weeks 2-3.

Prerequisite: Refers to requirements that must be fulfilled before registering for a class, such as class standing, passed exams, or a specific grade in a previous class.

Registration-by-Appointment date: The day that students can begin enrolling in classes. Each semester, students will have different registration dates. Registration dates are distributed by class standing unless students qualify for priority registration.

Rubric: A guide that instructors use to grade assignments constructively. A rubric is common for writing assignments or projects and helps instructors grade objectively.

Stopped Out: Continuing students who did not pass developmental writing and/or math courses within the first year of enrollment and must temporarily leave CSUN until remediation is complete. Stopped out students do not need to reapply to return if returning to CSUN within three semester of being stopped out.

Syllabus: Document drafted by professors that outlines the student’s responsibilities and learning expectations. A syllabus typically includes future assignments, grading system, rules regarding exams, late/absence policy, office hours etc. A syllabus is a teaching/learning contract between students and the professor, so read it carefully.

Term/research paper: Typically are large/major papers that require research, and are written over the course of the semester and account for a large part of the course grade.

Units: Description value of credits earned from passing classes. All students need a minimum of 120 units to graduate, however each major may have their own unit requirements. Each lecture is worth about 3 units and most labs are worth 1 or 2 units. Students can transfer in at most 70 units from a community college and 90 units from a university. All international students must be enrolled in at least 12 units each semester in order to maintain F-1 status.