Revised 11/3/26

CSUSM

OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

First Year Student Registration Handbook

2026-2027 Academic Year

Your success starts with us!

Table of Contents

Introduction: Pages 3-4
- *Welcome Message.....3*
- *How to Use This Handbook.....3*
- *Office of Success Coaching: How We Support You.....3-4*

Stage One: Understanding Registration Basics: Pages 5-7
- *What Is Registration and Why It Matters.....6*
- *Registration Date/Enrollment Appointment.....6*
- *Unit Load Requirements.....6-7*
- *General Education (GE).....7*
- *Course Catalog: Why it's important.....7*
- *Stage One Links.....7*

Stage Two: Getting Familiar with Enrollment Tools: Pages 8-11
- *MyCSUSM Student Portal Overview.....9*
- *Academic Requirement Report (ARR): Tracking Your Progress.....10*
- *Degree Planner: Planning Your Classes.....10*
- *Searching for Classes & Building Your Schedule.....10*
- *Shopping Cart: Saving Classes for Later.....11*
- *Stage Two Links.....11*

Stage Three: Ensuring a Smooth Enrollment Process: Pages 12-17
- *Adding/Dropping/Swapping a Class.....13*
- *Waitlisting a Class.....13-14*
- *Enrolling with a Permission Number.....14*
- *Academic Preparation and Placement.....14*
- *Routine Enrollment Error Messages.....15*
- *Holds: What They Are and How to Remove Them.....15*
- *AP, IB, Test, and Other Transfer Credit.....16*
- *Pre-Enrolled Courses: What They Mean.....16*
- *The Unusual and Peculiar.....16*
- *Stage 3 Links.....17*

Important Registration Deadlines & Timelines: Page 18
- *Enrollment Calendar*
- *Academic Calendar*
- *Add/Drop Period*
- *Tuition and Fee Payment*

Additional Support & Helpful Resources: Page 18
- *New Student Enrollment Tutorial*
- *Virtual Enrollment Workshops*
- *Getting Help with Enrollment*

Printable Resources: Pages 18-19
- *General Education (GE) Worksheet*
- *Major and Minor Worksheets*
- *First Year Student Registration Checklist*

CSUSM
OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

Welcome to California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)!

We are thrilled to welcome you to the Cougar family! As you embark on your first year of college, remember that you are not alone. Our team is here to support, guide, and encourage you every step of the way. We look forward to walking alongside you as you begin your journey at CSUSM.

How to Utilize This Handbook

This handbook is designed to guide you through the registration process in your first year at CSUSM. The **table of contents** allows you to easily locate the information that is most relevant to your needs, whether you are getting acquainted with registration terminology, exploring enrollment tools, or signing up for courses.

Organized Guidance

- Each section is carefully structured to build upon the last, providing a systematic approach throughout the process.
- You are encouraged to explore the sections at your own pace and revisit them whenever necessary.
- At the conclusion of each section, you will discover a list of links to the items and resources mentioned.

This handbook serves as a valuable resource, empowering you to approach registration with confidence. It is just one part of the support available to you as you navigate this process for the first time. Remember, you've got this!

Office of Success Coaching

We are your primary point of contact at CSUSM! Success Coaching serves as a comprehensive support resource designed to assist first-year students in navigating university resources and establishing a solid foundation during their initial year at CSUSM.

Your dedicated Success Coach is here to listen, guide, support, and encourage you as you transition into university life. Through Success Coaching, students cultivate self-efficacy, critical thinking skills, resilience, and self-determination, all of which are vital for long-term success. Students who meet with their Success Coach at least twice per semester earn higher GPAs and are more likely to persist into their 2nd year.

How do we achieve this?

- Personalized meetings - *Tailored to your individual goals and needs*
- Enrollment support - *Assistance with academic planning*
- Networking and community building - *Helping you feel connected on campus*
- Resource connections - *Linking you to campus services and support programs*

click here!

Meet your Academic Year 26-27 Success Coach

Stage One:



Understanding Registration

CSUSM
OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

Stage 1 offers an overview of essential course registration details at CSUSM. You will discover important information regarding enrollment dates, recommended unit loads, the concept of General Education (GE), and where to access a complete list of all approved courses at CSUSM.

The Basics



What is registration, and why is it important?

Course registration is the process by which students select and enroll in the classes they will take for the upcoming semester. During registration, students choose courses that align with their degree requirements. Students may hear the words “enrollment” and “registration” interchangeably. Students may also hear the words “classes” and “courses” interchangeably. Registering for classes is one of the most important steps each semester because it determines the courses you will complete toward your degree.

Registration Dates & Enrollment Appointment

Your **registration date** (also called an *enrollment appointment*) is:

- On the **specific day and time, YOU are allowed to *start* enrolling** in classes.
- Assigned individually to each student
- Found in your **MyCSUSM Student Center** and sent to you via CSUSM email.

*Think of it as your **“ticket time”**—you can’t register before it opens for you.*

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Enrollment

Unit Load Explanation

The measure of credit each course is assigned is based on the amount of time a student should devote to the course each week. For example, a unit of academic credit equates to one hour of classroom/laboratory time and two to three hours of preparation each week. Therefore, a 15-unit course load requires 45 to 60 hours of time each week. A unit load is the number of units a student is taking in any given semester.

Graduate On Time?

Each student must determine what graduating “on time” means to them. For those who desire to graduate in four years, a unit load of 15 units per semester or 30 units per academic year would be required. This could also include you taking summer school classes to get to the total units desired. Keep in mind that time to graduation may shift due to changes of major, adding a minor, etc.

Course Catalog

The CSUSM course catalog is the official online guide for California State University, San Marcos. It outlines all academic programs, course descriptions, degree requirements, and university policies.

In the course catalog:

- Review academic regulations and catalog rights
- Browse complete degree paths, pre-requisites, and course descriptions
- View a structured breakdown of undergraduate degree options

General Education (GE)

Effective Fall 2025 and subsequent catalog years, each student must complete forty-three (43) units of coursework from the six subject areas in order to satisfy the General Education (GE) requirements for a baccalaureate degree. A GE worksheet is a planning and checklist tool that outlines all the General Education courses required for graduation. It serves as a guide by listing each GE area (1-6) and identifying the types of courses students must complete within each category.



Stage 1 Links:

Enrollment Appointment
Unit Load
General Education

Stage Two:



Getting Familiar with Enrollment Tools

CSUSM
OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

Stage 2 outlines the technology resources at your disposal as you prepare for your initial college course enrollment. Each of these tools complements one another, ensuring that the process is as intuitive and straightforward as possible!

MyCSUSM - Your Student Center Hub



MyCSUSM serves as the central technology portal where students manage essential university tasks in one place.

Key Features and Services include:

- **Student Center:** The centralized hub where you can find everything you need.
- **To-Do List:** View outstanding action items in your to-do list. You can click on each 'to-do' for more detailed information.
- **Locate your Student ID:** Locate your 9-digit student ID, often requested when speaking to university personnel.
- **Communication Center:** Keep track of important emails sent to you from CSUSM, as well pending messages and pop-ups.
- **Financial Aid:** View, accept, and decline financial aid offers
- **My Academics:** View your grades, transfer credit, class schedule, and view/request transcripts.
- **Enrollment Date/Time:** Find your enrollment appointment here
- **My Account:** Review account balances, transaction history, and pay outstanding balances.
- **Personal Information:** Add a preferred name, update your contact information, submit an authorization to release your records, and add an emergency contact.
- **Holds**: If you have any holds on your enrollment or other activities, they will appear in the this section of the Student Center. By clicking on the hold, you can find out more details on how to remove it.
- **Enrollment Tools:** View your Academic Requirements Report (ARR) and Degree Planner & enroll (add/drop/swap) in classes using the Schedule

Academic Requirements Report (ARR) - Tracking your progress

The **Academic Requirements Report (ARR)** is the university's **official graduation evaluation tool**. It shows how your completed, in-progress, and planned coursework applies toward all requirements needed to earn your degree. The ARR will list all university, general education, major, and minor (if applicable) requirements.

Degree Planner - Your path to graduation

The degree planner takes the information from the ARR and plans out your degree completion by semester. While it is helpful to look ahead, students are encouraged, for the time being, to focus mainly on the first year at CSUSM.

Schedule Assistant - One way to build your schedule

A planning tool in MyCSUSM for building class schedules, allowing course searches and comparisons, but does not enroll students directly.

Class Search - Another way to build your schedule

The Class Search function in allows students to explore available courses for a specific term. Students can search by subject, course number, keyword, general education requirements, or time of day to find classes that fit their academic plan and schedule.

Class Search provides essential details for each course, including meeting times, instructors, locations, available seats, and prerequisites.

Important: make sure to always read the class notes before adding to the shopping cart.

Shopping Cart

The Enrollment Shopping Cart in MyCSUSM helps students organize classes before registration. While it allows course selection review and edits, it does not reserve seats; students must complete the enrollment process to register. After preparing their schedule, students can proceed to enroll.

Enroll

Once you have built your schedule and loaded your shopping cart - it's time to enroll!

Stage 2 Links:

Using MyCSUSM

Academic Requirements Report

Degree Planner

Building Your Schedule:

Using Schedule Assistant

Using the Class Search function *(page 1)*

Loading your Shopping Cart & Enrolling *(page 2)*

Stage Three



Navigating the Enrollment Process

CSUSM
OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

Stage 3 provides an overview of particular topics that students might come across or have inquiries about throughout the enrollment process. We trust that after reviewing the information, this will help make the enrollment process as seamless as possible!

Add/Dropping/Swapping a Class

Students have the opportunity to modify their schedules through the Add/Drop period each semester. You can find all three options at the top of the “Enroll” page in the MyCSUSM Student Center.

Options Available:

- **Add**: Incorporate classes one at a time into your course schedule using the tools available in stage 2.
- **Drop**: Remove classes you no longer wish to take. Please note that some classes come with “course drop protection,” which requires permission from a CSUSM official to drop the course. This information can be found in the class notes section of the course you are considering dropping.
- **Swap**: Utilize the swap feature to avoid accidentally dropping a class before securing a new one—this helps safeguard your schedule.

Waitlist

The waitlist allows students to wait for a course and be enrolled automatically if an open seat is available. By selecting the “waitlist if class is full” during enrollment, the student will be added to the waitlist for the course. Keep in mind that being added to the waitlist does not guarantee enrollment. It can be a helpful enrollment strategy; however, it is not guaranteed.

Waitlist tips:

- *Register for open course sections first; waitlists don't guarantee enrollment.*
- *Actively monitor waitlists and schedules in MyCSUSM as positions may change.*
- *Review "My Class Schedule" to remove unwanted waitlisted classes to avoid automatic enrollment.*
- *Avoid waitlisting courses that conflict with enrolled classes.*

Enrolling with a Permission Number

A permission number, provided by a department or instructor, allows enrollment in restricted or closed classes. It is needed for full courses, those requiring instructor approval, or unmet prerequisites. Entering the number during registration enables course addition.

Academic Preparation and Placement

Incoming freshmen at California State University (CSU) undergo an evaluation to assess readiness for first-year writing and math courses. This evaluation considers test scores (EAP, ACT, SAT, AP) and high school performance. While not required for admission, it aids in course selection.





Enrollment Error Messages

When enrolling, you may encounter several common issues:

- **Pre-requisite Needed**: Required prior courses not completed.
- Course Full/Closed: No waitlist or unadded waitlist prevents enrollment.
- **Time Conflict**: Overlapping classes require schedule adjustments or instructor permission.
- **Unit Limit Reached**: Initial cap is 16 units, increasing to 19 before the semester. Consult your Success Coach for plans over 16 units.
- **Class-Specific Requirements**: Some classes have specific requirements, such as CHEM 150 needing all components available, and some are restricted to specific majors or minors.

Holds

Holds are restrictions on a student's account that can prevent actions like class registration.

Common holds include:

- Financial Hold: Due to unpaid balances.
- Immunization Hold: Missing health records.
- Academic Notice Hold: GPA below 2.0.

Students can check active holds in MyCSUSM Student Center. It's crucial to resolve holds promptly to avoid registration delays.



Test and Other Transfer Credit

CSUSM allows students to earn graduation credit for standardized tests like AP, IB, and CLEP under CSU Executive Order 1036. Students awaiting scores should inform their Success Coach or Academic Advisor to avoid unnecessary course registration.

Pre-enrolled courses - (“I didn’t register for these classes!”)

At CSUSM, pre-enrolled courses are classes that the university automatically includes in a student’s schedule before the enrollment period begins. These courses are carefully chosen to assist in a student’s academic journey and to facilitate the timely fulfillment of degree and university requirements.

Pre-enrollment is primarily utilized for incoming or first-year students and generally encompasses essential courses such as Mathematics, General Education Writing, and First-Year Seminar.

The Unusual and Peculiar

Technology can sometimes be unpredictable, leading students to face unforeseen challenges during enrollment. Fortunately, Success Coaches and Academic Advisors are available to assist you in troubleshooting any issues. Don’t hesitate to reach out for support!

Stage 3 Links:

Add/Drop

Waitlist FAQs

Enrolling with a Permission Number

Enrollment Errors

Holds

Test and Transfer Credit

Academic Preparation and Placement

Pre-enrollment

Registration Timelines and Deadlines



Enrollment Calendar

Academic Calendar

Add/Drop Period

Tuition and Fee Payment

Additional Support & Helpful Resources



New Student Enrollment

Enrollment Tutorial

Virtual Enrollment Workshops

Getting Help with Enrollment

Office of Success Coaching

Office of Academic Advising

First Year Seminar Requirement

Enrollment FAQ

Enrollment Tips

Printable Resources



General Education (GE) Worksheet

Major & Minor Worksheets

First Year Student Registration Checklist (scroll down)

First Year Student Registration Checklist - Spring 2027

Before Registration Begins:
□ Review the First Year Registration Handbook
□ Review the Enrollment Tutorial
□ Remove any holds
□ Note your enrollment appointment date and time

Get Ready to Enroll:
□ Log in to MyCSUSM
□ Review any pre-enrolled courses
□ Load your shopping cart using tools from the enrollment tutorial, workshop, and handbook
□ Attend Success Coach or Academic Advising drop-ins for help during the enrollment period
□ Enroll in Spring 2027 starting at your enrollment date and time. Students should enroll before December 18th.

After You Register:
□ Review your final schedule
□ Monitor waitlisted classes (if applicable)
□ Confirm total units (full-time or part-time)
□ Pay tuition or confirm financial aid by Monday, January 11th (payment plans available)

Important Reminders:
□ Enroll by Friday, December 18th
□ Check your CSUSM email daily
□ Schedule required Success Coaching meetings (2 per semester)

Need Help?
Office of Success Coaching
Email: success@csusm.edu
Phone: 760-750-4580
Hours: 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday (excluding holidays)

CSUSM
OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

CSUSM

OFFICE OF SUCCESS COACHING

Your success starts with us!

Office of Success Coaching

Email: success@csusm.edu

Phone: 760-750-4580

Admin Building 2209

Monday - Thursday

8am-5pm

Friday

9am-5pm

Special thanks to the Office of Academic Advising and the Office of the Registrar for their support and contributions to the development of this handbook.