Do these guidelines apply to me?

These guidelines apply to all students but primarily affect those who have earned 105 units and have not submitted a graduation application. The guidelines are particularly restrictive for students who have earned 15 units more than required for their major program of study and most restrictive for those who have not established (and followed) an approved program for timely graduation.

(NOTE: If you have transferred more than 70 units from a community college, only 70 of those units count in the unit calculation. Example: Your transcript shows 95 units transferred from a community college. You have earned 20 units at SJSU. For purposes of this directive you have earned 70 from the cc and 20 from SJSU for a total of 90. You should apply for graduation soon, most likely during the current or next semester.) The most important step is to check with your advisor and ask when you should apply for graduation.

PD 2009-05 is concerned with making sure that students graduate in a timely manner. "High unit seniors" are students who have earned more units than their declared major requires. Most majors on campus require the CSU minimum 120 units; a few technical and professional majors require as many as 135 units.

It is your responsibility to determine how many units your major requires. You need to check your unofficial transcript to determine how many units you have earned. Remember that only 70 community college lower division transfer units can be counted in this total, no matter how many lower division units you transferred. As you approach the required number of units for your major, advisors will pay closer attention to the progress you are making. If you reach 135 units (150 units for a 135 unit major), certain restrictions begin to apply.

What is satisfactory academic progress, and how do I know if I am not making it?

Satisfactory academic progress can be seen in the transcript. Students may change majors (early), add majors/minors, struggle with some classes (have grade forgiveness, drops, incompletes) and still be making progress as long as the combination of these factors is not excessive. Some signs that raise questions about progress include: remaining undeclared after 60 units (fresh) or 30 units at SJSU (transfers); excessive numbers or semesters of drops, failures and grade forgiveness, incompletes (This may also be determined by percentage of classes taken that are passed); excessive numbers of or semesters including unnecessary courses. Such transcripts indicate a lack of focus on the part of the student, either in terms of focus on the degree or taking on too much. We would rather see you go part time and earn good grades than go full time and create a questionable record. We would rather see you take a semester off than damage your record or enroll in classes you don’t need. Whenever you have an unsuccessful semester, your performance the next semester is critical in the overall transcript picture of you as a successful student. Usually transcripts of those not making progress have clear patterns. See your advisor and use your campus resources. Make every class count.

Please note that failure to make satisfactory academic progress can affect your eligibility for financial aid and can result in Administrative Academic Probation and Disqualification.

Applying for Graduation

1. When do I need to apply for graduation?

   All students should apply for graduation when they reach 90 degree units, no matter how many units are required for their degree. If you are already a "high unit senior" (and you have not applied) you have received a message from AARS setting a deadline for you to apply. All students must apply for graduation in the semester in which they will complete 105 degree units. Failure to do so may result in blocked registration for future terms.

2. I am a transfer student. Are the guidelines any different for me?

   Only 70 units from a community college may be used towards a degree at SJSU. Transfer students should apply for graduation no later than when they have earned 30 units at SJSU.

3. What are the benefits of having a graduation application on file?

   All students with a graduation application form on file for the next 2 semesters are entitled to early registration, to register for up to 18 units from the beginning, and to senior verification cards. You will also receive a graduation worksheet once your complete record has been reviewed by the Office of the Registrar. You will know exactly which classes you need and can plan more effectively.

4. I will have 95 units by the end of this term. When do I have to apply for graduation?

   Students should apply for graduation when they reach 90 units. It is best to visit your major advisor during this semester to discuss graduation and determine if it is time to complete the appropriate forms.
5. I already have 125 units and have not yet applied for graduation. I actually don’t know when I will be able to graduate, so I have not applied. What do I do?

You must apply for graduation as soon as possible. Talk with your major advisor to make a plan to graduate. It doesn’t matter whether you are attending SJSU part time or full time. You can still work out a plan. If you cannot apply for graduation, you must provide a plan, you will be placed on contract, and your registration will be monitored. You are not to register for any classes not required for your degree.

6. I have not applied for graduation and already have 145 units. I’m not sure if I have all the requirements to graduate. What should I do?

The first thing you must do is meet with your major advisor and apply for graduation as soon as possible. If it is determined that you are already able to graduate, we will notify you, and your degree will be conferred at the next available graduation date.

7. What if I have already completed all requirements for graduation but I have already registered and paid for classes for the next semester?

That is no problem. We will work with the Registrar and Bursar to drop your classes, return your fees and allow you to graduate.

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**Choosing and adding a major**

1. I began at SJSU as a freshman and will have 58 units by the end of this semester. Do I have to choose a major by the end of this term?

Yes. Undeclared students with 60 units are notified by AARS of the need to submit an Application to Change the Major as soon as possible.

2. I will have completed 60 units by the end of this term. I am in the process of requesting to change my major and would like to request a double major. Is that possible?

Yes, it is possible to request a double major at 60 units. You may even be able to add a second major up until 90 units. The expectation, however, is that you will work on both of these majors at the same time. (If you get to 120 units and have not made adequate progress in both majors, you may lose the opportunity to complete one of them.) In addition, the number of additional units required and your prior academic performance are likely to influence whether a double major is approved.

3. I have 78 units and have not yet declared a major. I can’t decide and want to take a few more courses next term before I make that decision. Can I do that?

No. When you are notified of the requirement to change your major, you must do so by the stated deadline. Failure to declare a major will mean that your registration for the next semester will be blocked, or you may be placed on an Administrative Leave of Absence. Please visit the Career Center and/or advisors in the majors you are contemplating in order choose a major and submit your application as soon as possible.

4. I would like to change my major from the one I am currently enrolled in to one that is restricting the number of majors. How do I do that?

You must meet with the appropriate major advisor. All students applying to change or add a major must meet specific academic requirements. The requirements may be a certain SJSU cumulative GPA, completion of certain courses, or both. Each major has different requirements. If you are not accepted into your requested major, you will be allowed to apply a second time to that major but you may not take more than 12 units while re-applying.

5. I have 110 units and just discovered that I love chemistry. I am an English major. What do I do now?

If you have 105 or more units you will not be allowed to change your major except under special circumstances. We will look at the difference in number of units to completion between your newly requested major and your old major. We will also look at your academic record in both requested and current majors. The general rule, however, is that the more units you have already completed, and the more units remaining to complete the requested major, the less likely you will be able to change your major. If you have only completed a course or two in Chemistry by the time you have earned 110 units, chances are that you will not have the new major approved. All major changes for students with more than 90 units, including adding a minor, must be approved using the Presidential Directive Appeal Form. [http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/docs/Petition-PD_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/docs/Petition-PD_Guidelines.pdf)
6. I have been working toward a double major in business management and creative writing. I only declared the creative writing major, though. I already have 125 units. Can I still request to add the business management major?

The answer to this question will depend on how well you have performed academically overall and in both majors, whether you have taken unnecessary courses, how many courses remain in each major, and how much adding a second major will extend your graduation. The higher your number of units or the more units you have remaining, the less freedom will be granted to complete the second major.

7. I have over 120 units and would like to graduate in Mechanical Engineering. I have failed one of the required courses twice so have been unable to graduate. What do I do now? Can I change my major?

Our goal is to allow you to graduate in your chosen major if at all possible. See your advisor and discuss alternatives (such as substitutions or alternative means for demonstrating competency). If there are none in that major, visit the Engineering Student Success Center to explore changing to another of the Engineering majors. If no alternatives exist, visit AARS. An advisor there will discuss alternatives and potential referrals.

8. Do I have to pay any attention to the local/non-local issue that affected me at admission?

No, since you are already here on campus, you can request to change to any major without concerning yourself with your local/non-local status at the time you applied and were admitted to SJSU.

High Unit Seniors- NOTE: Students are considered High Unit Seniors when they have earned more units than their degree requires, including no more than 70 transfer units. This includes students who have applied for graduation but did not complete their degree in the requested semester.

1. I have 125 units and have recently decided to go to graduate school. I have almost completed my major but to get into grad school, I need minimally another 15 units, but optimally, another major. What can I do?

We will work with you to finish your major in a timely fashion. If you can do so during the next semester, you will be required to do so. If you can take one or two courses to complement your major while doing so, you will be allowed to add those courses. Your degree will be conferred at the end of that semester. You need to remember that you can take classes in Open University after completing your degree to cover additional courses you might need for graduate school.

2. I have 135 units. Will I have a hold on my registration and if so, what do I do?

Not necessarily. As long as you stick to your plan, pass your classes, and do not change your graduation date, you may not need a hold. If a hold is placed, you will be instructed via message in your MySJSU account how to remove/manage the hold on your registration.

3. What if I can't get into the one course I need to graduate?

If you can't get into a course on your requirements sheet and there are no other available courses listed on your form, 1) visit your major/minor advisor to get permission for a course substitution and to update your graduation form; 2) bring your form to your department chair. He/she might be able to help you get in one of the courses; 3) consult with the Associate Dean for your College to see if that person can help.

4. What if I can't get into one of the courses on my form so instead decide to take an interesting course that might help me be more employable and will allow me to reach 12 units?

Once you have applied for graduation, you should only take those classes required for you to complete your degree. You should see if another course can replace that one class (see answer #3), choose to make progress to degree, and understand that any increase in units, especially for any unrequired classes, may reduce your eligibility for financial aid and increase restrictions placed on your registration by the university.

5. What does it mean to be placed on contract?

Students who have taken too many units, taken unnecessary classes, changed their graduation date more than once, requested too many changes of major/minor, failed to respond to university requests for action and/or meetings, or in other ways demonstrated non-compliance with this directive, may be placed on contract. They will need to have a contract signed by themselves, the major advisor(s), any minor advisor(s), and the Director of AARS. These students are likely to have their registration managed and may be placed on Administrative Academic Probation or Disqualification for violation of the contract.
6. **What if I have a course that I must repeat in order to complete my graduation requirements?**

Students repeating a course must wait until the first day of classes to request an add code from the instructor. Graduating seniors have highest priority for any available seats ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES ONLY and should request a senior verification card for the class. It is a good idea to contact the instructor before class begins. If a seat in the class is not available, we also recommend the steps in answer #3. For students repeating a class, we strongly recommend that you make every class count and that you carefully consider the combination of classes as well as your other commitments. Having to repeat a class a third time creates serious difficulties. See answer #7 below.

7. **What if I fail that course again?**

You should be aware that financial aid cannot be used for a course being taken for the third time due to failure (Federal law). If you find yourself in this situation, you need to see your major/minor advisor, department chair, Associate Dean (in that order) to determine if another class can be substituted, you need to be prepared to pay for that class yourself, and you need to manage your circumstances so that your focus is on this class, even if that means taking only this class for a semester.

8. **What if I have failed the WST (Writing Skills Test)?**

If you have failed the WST once, you must either take ENGL 100A or LLD 100A to clear the writing requirement or take the WST each semester until you pass it. While we recommend that class for those who find the test difficult, in either case you are not to take any classes not required for your degree. Under no circumstances should you take unrequired classes and continue to amass units while attempting to pass the WST.

9. **What if I have taken the WST three times and have no more courses to take? What do I do now?**

You should take ENGL 100A or LLD 100A and no other courses. If you do not take the class, you may be placed on Administrative Leave for a year to complete your writing requirement. Contact the Director of Academic Advising and Retention Services if you find yourself in this situation.

10. **What if I need to change my graduation term?**

Graduation date changes most often result from the following (not necessarily in order of frequency): 1) filing for graduation late so that the graduation worksheet does not get back to you before you register for your final semester; 2) failing a required class; 3) inability to register for a required class; 4) adding or changing major/minor; 5) a decision to take unrequired classes. Many of these problems can be avoided by seeing your advisors regularly (at least once a year). Students may change their graduation date one time to the next semester when needed or when requested to do so by a graduation evaluator. Students attempting to change their graduation date a second time or to a term more than one semester later must have that action approved by the Associate Vice President of Student Academic Success Services or that officer’s designee.

**Appeals**

1. **I really want to change my major and I have been told that I cannot. Is there an appeal process?**

Yes, you may appeal the decision. You may find the [appeal petition online](#). You will be required to show evidence of extenuating circumstances justifying your appeal. You will file the appeal petition at the Office of Undergraduate Studies (ADM 159). Appeal decisions will be made within three weeks of filing.

2. **I have met all of the requirements for my bachelor’s degree and have been told that I must graduate this term and can no longer take courses. I have a very good reason to continue taking courses. Can I appeal the decision that I have to graduate this term?**

Yes, you can appeal your graduation if you are told that you must graduate this term. You must complete a petition and be able to demonstrate the additional value that you will receive if allowed to continue taking courses. Since you will be taking units from the fixed university total (meaning that other students will be limited by the number of units you are taking), the appeals committee will want to know why you should be allowed to do this.

**Other Issues**

1. **To what extent will PD 2009-05 become a permanent mode of operation at SJSU? That is, when we get past our current financial disaster, will we ever go back to a more relaxed set of rules for students taking more units, changing majors, etc.?**
The Presidential Directive was issued in response to emergency financial conditions in California. The severe underfunding of the CSU System means that under present conditions, the CSU System cannot afford to educate all of the students who are eligible to enroll. This has led to a principled rationing of units and the limitations on many student choices that were previously affordable. The Directive is intended to remain in force until such time as the conditions change and the President lifts the Directive, or until the SJSU Academic Senate replaces it with a new set of procedures for moving forward. We all hope that the state will restore full funding to the CSU as soon as possible, and we continue to send this message to our elected leaders.

2. **My department’s website doesn’t talk about any of these rules. If fact, some of the information is not even consistent with these rules. Which are the “real” rules?**

   Because the budget cuts to CSU System happened suddenly in the summer of 2009 at the last minute, we were compelled to develop new rules and procedures quickly in order to keep us within our assigned budget and enrollment limits. Since then, we have revised and updated these rules and procedures annually. Unfortunately, the budget situation continues to remain volatile. The importance of the special [Presidential Directive (2009-05)](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/presidential_directive/) is that it declares an emergency condition and sets guidelines that all students must follow during this emergency. PD 2009-05 supersedes other rules and procedures that were in place. Therefore, you must follow the implementation guidelines established under PD 2009-05. These FAQs are provided to help you understand these new rules.

3. **Where should I go if my questions still are not answered?**

   If you are not sure how these rules apply to your major, contact your major advisor first. If you have questions about how the university will apply the rules in your particular case, contact [AARS](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/presidential_directive/). To appeal a decision made under these rules, follow the procedures set forth in Guideline 7 of the Implementation Guidelines. The Directive, the Implementation Guidelines and other supportive information may be found at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/presidential_directive/](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/presidential_directive/).

### Related Information

*Version: April 12, 2012*