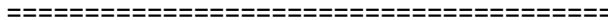




FIRST YEAR ADVISING HANDBOOK
2023-2024



compiled by

The Dean of Undergraduate
Students Office



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Much of the information in this handbook has been taken from the Caltech catalog, which can be consulted for more details.

THE ROLE OF AN ADVISOR

The Basics

This year, each First Year Advisor has been assigned eight advisees as part of an Orientation Group. Each Orientation Group has also been assigned two upperclass Frosh Camp Counselors (FCCs), and a Staff Mentor. The FCCs will be asked to support their first-years through orientation; the Mentors will follow their students throughout the entire year.

Ideally, the first year advising process should involve discussions as a group as well as individual meetings a few times per term. These advising groups provide a way for the advisees and the advisor to talk about issues associated with the curriculum and Caltech, and about concerns associated with the transition from high school to college. It's also an opportunity for first-year students to interact one-on-one with faculty—unless they are in a humanities or writing course, the advisor may be the only faculty they meet with in the fall term.

Please plan on contacting/interacting with each of your advisees – either individually, or in a group – a few times each of the first two quarters. Funds are available from the Deans' Office to support lunches or other opportunities for social interaction. We learned last year that Zoom meetings can also be an effective way to connect for some. If you would like us to fund a virtual activity, we are happy to do so as well.

A meeting/outreach during the third week of each term would be a good time to check how the term is starting out; note that Add Day each term is at the end of that week. Another meeting/outreach in the seventh week should be late enough for advisors to have received the first year progress reports, and this week is just before Drop Day and prior to when the registration period for the following term opens.

When the first year advising program began, a student/faculty committee on academic advising presented the following list of ideal advisor characteristics, which hold true today. A good advisor:

- Is approachable
- Communicates availability and expectations to advisees
- Is flexible and sensitive to students' needs
- Meets with advisees outside of the office at least once a year
- Provides academic and research guidance (is familiar with undergraduate courses within the option, is willing to discuss problems the student is having, can discuss the pros and cons of choices such as overloading)
- Is familiar with Wellness Services, and is comfortable referring students when appropriate
- Is a resource for students interested in graduate school
- Knows advisees well enough to write them recommendation letters.

Additionally, conscientious advisors also respond whenever possible when their advisees try to contact them, even if it is just to say they are out of town.

Academic and Personal Counseling

Again, you may be the only Caltech faculty member to have one-to-one contact with your advisees this fall, unless they are in a first year humanities course. In your initial meeting with them, you should discuss their academic and personal preparation and goals – what are they most looking forward to, and what are they worried about?

Early on, please try to establish relationships with your advisees so they feel comfortable asking your advice, and come to you for more than approval of their registration changes. Determine with them the best way for them to reach you—office hours, email, etc.

Advisors can be an important part of the Caltech safety net by being tuned in to their advisees' overall well-being. It's important to establish a baseline with your advisees at the beginning of the year, so that you know what their pre-Caltech self-presentation looks like. The beginning of classes will likely lead to even more anxiety and strain for our entering students. Please do keep an eye on them, and let us know if you think they are not managing it well.

Important information and context, especially on suicide/depression, is provided on the Counseling Center's website at <https://wellness.caltech.edu/counseling>. If you are worried about an advisee, please email one of the deans, or submit a CARE referral: <http://caltechcares.caltech.edu/care-referrals>.

Academic Oversight

As a first year advisor, you will evaluate the course loads your advisees propose, taking their prior academic performance into consideration. You will consider and approve/deny requests for overloads and changes to their schedule via REGIS.

First Year Progress Reports and any midterm deficiency notices for your advisees will be emailed to you before Drop Day. Progress Reports are also issued at the end of the term. Please review them and follow up quickly with advisees who are doing poorly. It is important to do this in a timely manner, so the students have a chance to take appropriate measures, including possibly dropping a class by the deadline. It can be helpful to ask each advisee to make an appointment to discuss difficulties as they arise, rather than waiting for you to contact them.

A student who is having trouble in a class should be asked whether they watch/attend lectures and participates in sections, visits the teaching assistants during office hours, and participates in a study group. Encourage the student to meet directly with the instructor for advice.

The Deans' Office offers a tutoring program that is free to the student being tutored, and the tutor is paid from Institute funds. A student needing a tutor may suggest one or pick from a list of volunteers. If a class has no volunteers signed up, the office will try to find a tutor for that course. This is currently available on the Deans' Office website, but management of the tutor program is in the process of transitioning to the CTLO for AY 2023-24; please check the website or email us at deansoffice@caltech.edu if you or your students have any questions!

If a student needs a little bit of extra time to finish an assignment in a class, they should directly approach the instructor or head teaching assistant for an extension. Most classes have extension policies, and some classes have one free extension per term. When a student is seriously ill or incapacitated for a longer period of time due to extenuating circumstances, the deans and/or Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (CASS) will support extensions, or in extreme cases, reach out on a student's behalf.

Students whose grades make them academically ineligible at the end of term may petition the deans for initial reinstatement, although the deans sometimes refer such cases to the Undergraduate Academic Standards and Honors Committee (UASH); students ineligible for a second time are required to take two terms away and must petition UASH for reinstatement. Eligibility requirements are listed beginning on page 11.

THE DEANS' OFFICE

Lesley Nye (lnye@caltech.edu), usually an Associate Dean, is serving as the Interim Dean of Undergraduate Students for 2023-24, until Jennifer Jahner returns from sabbatical in May; Lesley works primarily with juniors and seniors. Kristin Weyman (kweyman@caltech.edu), Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students, works primarily with first and second year students.

Beth Larranaga (rosel@caltech.edu) is the office administrator. Please see the Deans' Office website for more information about the deans' role: <https://deans.caltech.edu/>.

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE AND REGIS

Christy Salinas is the Registrar (cssalina@caltech.edu). The primary contact for undergraduate matters is Gloria Brewster (ghb@caltech.edu). The registrar's website at regis.caltech.edu contains the course schedule (day, time, location, grade scheme, etc. of every course offered) for the current and prior terms, the list of option representatives, the academic calendar, religious holiday calendar, master schedule for core classes and large classes, UASH information and petition forms, and the Advising Arena. Within the Advising Arena, you will find sections on roles and responsibilities of advisors and advisees, FAQs, and links to useful resources.

The registrar's information system, REGIS, can be accessed from the registrar's website or directly through www.access.caltech.edu. Within REGIS you will find a list of your advisees under the My Advisees link. From here you can email your advisees, generate transcripts and degree audits, record private advising notes per advisee that can be referenced later on, and place advising holds on students which would prevent them from registering for courses during open enrollment periods. Clicking on the student's name during an open registration period will bring you to their class schedule where you can approve it or request a meeting with the student. Also, through the My Advisees link, an advisor can notify the registrar that the required annual meeting with each advisee has taken place. Since first-year advisees are expected to have several meetings with their advisees throughout the year, this rule is intended mainly for upper-level advisees; nevertheless, the notification to the registrar is required for all students.

PLACEMENT EXAMS AND REGISTRATION

First-year students are enrolled in their first-term classes over the preceding summer. The registrar makes assignments according to the results of placement exams in math, a writing assessment exam, the students' course selections and priorities as indicated on their registration forms, and seat availability. Most years, schedules are released to students accounting for scores, except in the case of computer science, which comes later; once the registrar receives the CS scores, the students will be updated accordingly. An average first-term unit load will be in the range of 42 to 45 units. Starting Tuesday, September 19 all students can adjust their schedules by adding and dropping classes in REGIS. Their updated schedules will be submitted for a new advisor approval.

For second and third terms, first year students will register via REGIS. Advisors will be notified by e-mail, and then they can log on and approve or request a meeting with the student. Advisors should meet with their advisees in advance of the open registration period to discuss course selection.

Any placement questions for math and writing should be referred to the respective department. Placement and Advanced Placement exams allow students to skip various terms of Ch 1, Ma 1, Ma 2,

Ph 1 and Ph 2; full units are awarded for any term in which advanced placement credit is awarded. No credit is involved with the writing assessment exam; it is just a tool to determine whether a student can go straight into first-year humanities or whether a first-year writing course must be completed first.

Based on the results of their math placement exams, some students may be put into a special section of Ma 1 a (section 1) in fall term and are then required to take Ma 1 d (*Series*, 4 units) along with Ma 1 b during the second term. Students enrolled in Ma 1 a section 1 should not be permitted to change sections. Similarly, some students may be placed in Ma 8 (*Problem Solving in Calculus*, 3 units), which is taken simultaneously with Ma 1 a first term. Any first year student seeking to drop Ma 8 must attend the first week and then receive approval of the instructor. First-year students cannot take Ma 1 and Ma 2 simultaneously.

Those who indicated an intended option of Chemistry or Chemical Engineering are expected to take Ch 3a. Due to enrollment limits for FA 2023-24, first-year students may not have been placed in Ch 3a. However, if a spot becomes available, first-year students with those intended options may add it. First-year students who did not intend options of Chemistry or Chemical Engineering are expected to take Ch 3x and may have already been enrolled. First-year students entering in 2021 and thereafter must take Ch 3 in their first six terms of residence in order to be graded pass/fail.

Ph 1a does not have specified sections for advanced students. If the Physics department decides there is a need to add one, they will announce it in class and students can move into that section.

Sometime in the fall, a placement exam will be offered for students wishing to place out of Bi 1 and take a higher level Biology class. The biology Core requirement can be met by any course numbered Bi 1 or Bi 1x. All Bi 1 courses may be taken pass/fail if they are taken in the first-year student's first year, independent of the term in which the course is taken. Alternatively, the requirement may be fulfilled by taking both Bi 8 and Bi 9, and nine units must be taken on grades. Students interested in majoring in biology or bioengineering should take Bi 8 and Bi 9 second and third terms, instead of Bi 1 third term. For 2023-24, Bi 1 courses will be offered in both winter and spring terms.

First-years should not take advanced courses like ACM 95 except in rare circumstances. Please do not approve registration for advanced courses unless the student has convinced both you and the instructor that it is a good idea. If a schedule is not approved by the advisor, the courses are not automatically dropped. The REGIS schedule approval process is a communication tool and should initiate conversations about any concerns. Advisors can ask the Registrar's Office to drop a student from a course. To do so, email regis@caltech.edu.

ADDING AND DROPPING CLASSES

Adding and dropping classes in any term must be completed by the respective add and drop dates; refer to the calendar starting on page 15. This will be done via REGIS for all students, starting Tuesday, September 19. More information on the FA 2023-24 Add/Drop period will be sent to the students and faculty prior to September 19. The communication will also cover processes for course conflicts and audit requests.

Core institute requirements cannot be dropped except with the approval of a dean. Do not allow first-year students to drop any Wr courses if they are required to take these courses before starting first-year humanities. The registrar's office has asked the first-year students not to drop specific Core courses, although they may change sections (with the exception of Ma 1a section 1). If a First-Year has attempted to drop such a course, please reject their change and ask them to add it back. The registrar's office will also run reports to catch any unapproved or accidental dropping of Core courses such as Ma 1a, Ph 1a, Ch 1a, and Wr 2.

First-year humanities courses must be completed first year, or following the completion of Wr 2. Postponing coursework in humanities and social sciences often leads to trouble.

COURSELOADS AND GRADING

Students need to average 40.5 units a term to graduate in four years. The minimum course load is 36 units per term, unless a petition to underload is approved by the deans. In their first and second terms, first year students will be limited to 45 units of classroom and laboratory courses. Although first-year students may register for up to 48 units, the remaining 3 units must be used for frontier (“pizza”) courses, PE, PVA, SA or research. The deans do not approve first year overload petitions for the first and second quarter.

Third term first-year students may take up to 51 units, but it requires their advisor’s approval for such an overload. To take more than 51 units, a first year student will need to convince you and the deans that an overload is appropriate in their case. Deadlines for approving overload and underload petitions are Add Day and Drop Day of a term, respectively, so petitions should be submitted well in advance of these dates. Forms for overloads and underloads are available on the Registrar’s Office and Deans’ Office websites.

A student who underloads should consult with the Financial Aid Office (see page 17) to see if any adjustments in his or her financial aid are triggered.

For the class entering in 2023-24, all permanent grades recorded for first year students during the first and second terms will be either P, indicating pass, or F, indicating fail. In the first or second terms, if a first year student is enrolled in a course in which the instructor gives letter grades, the registrar will nevertheless record P for all passing grades. Pass/Fail grades are not used in computing the cumulative grade-point average (As a transition to letter grades in the third term, shadow grades are given for first-year students, but as mentioned above, only the grades of P or F are recorded).

E & I GRADES

E Grades: At their discretion, instructors may give students who have not completed their work for a course by the end of the term a grade of E. The grade E indicates deficiencies that may be made up without repeating the course. If the instructor does not specify a date on the grade report sheet for completion of the work, students receiving an E will have until Add Day of the following term to have a grade recorded for that course. Instructors may, however, require the work for the course to be completed by an earlier date.

Students should be made aware that an E grade can impact ability to meet academic eligibility requirements. If an E grade will impact a student’s academic eligibility, the grade will be due by the first day of classes of the following term. If an advisee tells you they are requesting an E grade, please ask them about the potential impact on eligibility, and/or refer them to a dean for further discussion.

If a student receives an E and does not complete the work by the date specified by the instructors or by Add Day, the grade will be changed to an F. Adequate time must be afforded to instructors to grade the work and to submit the final grade to the registrar. It is the responsibility of a student receiving an E to confirm that the registrar has recorded the correct due date for the work, as agreed upon with the instructor.

With the written permission of the instructor, a student may extend the E grade past Add Day of the

following term, but doing so will cause an additional E grade to be registered. Each additional extension of the E will be until the date specified by the instructor or until Add Day of the following term but in each case will require the written permission of the instructor and the registering of an additional E grade.

E Count Limitations. An undergraduate student may have the grade of E recorded only six times in their time at Caltech. A petition for an additional E grade may be approved by the Undergraduate Academic Standards and Honors (UASH) Committee only in an exceptional case. Such a petition requires the support of the instructor and a dean.

I Grades: The grade I is given only in case of unexpected illness or other emergency, occurring near the end of the term, that impedes the completion of work in the class. An I grade is not intended to allow students to make up missed work from the majority of the term. If a student has not completed the majority of the work, they are not eligible for an Incomplete and they will be advised to late drop the class or take a leave of absence. An I grade is given at the discretion of the instructor, after approval by a dean; the grade cannot be recorded directly by the instructor, and the request to the registrar must come from a dean. If a student is seeking an I grade due to severe exacerbation or onset of a disability that occurred near the end of the term, they should contact Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (CASS) for support.

The deadline for completion of the I grade should be indicated in the request to the registrar, otherwise the default deadline will be Add Day of the following term. Students should be aware that I grades can impact ability to meet academic eligibility requirements. If an I grade will impact a student's academic eligibility, the grade will be due by the first day of classes of the following term.

The deadline for E and I grades will not be extended beyond one year after the date in which the grade of E or I was given, except under extraordinary circumstances. In the absence of an earlier deadline, an E will turn into an F one year after the date on which the E was given, and an I grade will turn into a W (standing for "withdrawn") one year after the date on which the I grade was given. Waiving of this one year rule requires the agreement before that one year anniversary, of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, Chair of UASH, and Executive Officer of the department in which the course was taken.

Grades of E and I shall not be considered in calculating a student's grade-point average.

CORE INSTITUTE REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements are applicable to incoming first-year students for 2023-24. Additional information about the Core can be found on the registrar's website by going to registrar.caltech.edu > Advising Arena > [Undergraduate Core](#).

	Units
First Year Mathematics (Ma 1abc)	27
First Year Physics (Ph 1abc)	27
First Year Chemistry (Ch 1ab)	15
First Year Biology (Any Bi 1 course or Bi 8 and Bi 9) ¹	9
Menu Class (currently Ay 1, EE 1, ESE 1, Ge 1, or IST 4)	9
First Year Chemistry Laboratory (Ch 3a) ²	6
Additional Introductory Laboratory	6
Scientific Writing ³	3
Humanities Courses	36
Social Sciences Courses	36
Additional Humanities and Social Sciences Courses	36
Physical Education	9

1. *The biology core requirement can be met by any Bi 1 course. Alternatively, the requirement may be fulfilled by taking both Bi 8 and Bi 9. Nine units must be taken on grades.*
2. *This requirement can also be met by completing Ch 3x, Ch 4a, Ch 8 or Ch/ChE 9.*
3. *This requirement can be met either by taking a course approved by the student's option to satisfy this requirement or En/Wr 84.*

Menu Classes

The intent of the menu class requirement is to introduce students to a subject that they did not plan to study. In many cases, it is the only class in that subject that they ever take; in other cases, they may decide to take more classes in that subject as a result. Students cannot take a menu class in a subject that they have already taken classes in or in their current option. Classes to satisfy the menu requirement are Ay 1, ESE 1, Ge 1, IST 4. These classes are all 9 units and are taught in the 3rd term. This requirement must be completed by the end of sophomore year. However, there are some options that have sophomore required courses that conflict with the menu offerings. If a student is interested in declaring ME, it is strongly recommended that they complete their menu course first year.

Introductory Laboratory Requirement

All students are required to take at least 12 units of laboratory work in experimental science during their first two years. Ch 3a or Ch 3x (6 units) shall be taken during the first year. The additional 6 units must be chosen from the following: APh/EE 9 (6 units), APh/EE 24 (9 units), Bi 1x (9 units but only if Bi 1x is not being used to satisfy the biology core requirement), Bi 10 (6 units), Ch 4ab (9 units), Ch 8 (9 units), Ch/ChE 9 (9 units), EE/ME 7 (6 units), ME 8 (6 units), Ge 116 (6 units), Ph 3 (6 units), Ph 5 (9 units), Ph 8bc (6 units) or a more advanced laboratory. If desiring to use a more advanced laboratory, the student must submit a petition to the Curriculum Committee. Computational laboratory courses may not be used to satisfy this requirement.

Humanities and Social Sciences Requirement

All students must complete 108 units in the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Of these,

36 must be in the humanities (English, history, history and philosophy of science, humanities, music, philosophy and visual culture) and 36 in the social sciences (anthropology, business economics and management, economics, law, political science, psychology, and social science), in each case divided equally between introductory and advanced courses. The remaining 36 may be drawn from humanities and social sciences, including HSS tutorial courses and 9 units of either Wr 1 or Wr 2. They may not include BEM 102.

Entering first year students are required to take two terms of first year humanities; that is, humanities courses numbered 60 or below in the Caltech catalog. These classes introduce students to the basic issues and methods in the disciplines of English, history, philosophy, and visual culture. Successful completion of two terms of first year humanities is a prerequisite for all other humanities courses, except for foreign languages. It is not a prerequisite, however, for introductory social sciences. The first year humanities classes may be taken in any two terms of the first year.

To encourage breadth, students will have to take their two first year humanities classes in different disciplines, the disciplines being English, history, philosophy and visual culture. No more than 18 units of first year humanities may be counted toward the 108-unit requirement.

While beginning, intermediate, and advanced language courses do not count toward the 36-unit humanities requirement, every term receives credit toward the final 36 units of the 108-unit requirement in HSS, except for courses in a student's native language.

Since writing is an important method for developing and sharing ideas, all first year humanities courses and other humanities courses numbered above 90, with the exception of some foreign languages, require at least 4,000 words of composition. Instructors give extensive feedback on written work and help students improve their prose. As entering students may not be fully prepared for the writing in first year humanities, all first year and transfer students take a writing assessment before the beginning of the fall term. On the basis of this assessment, some students may be required to pass *Wr 1, 2, 3, 4 and/or 50* before entering first year or advanced humanities classes.

The 108-unit requirement in the humanities and social sciences averages to one course per term over four years. First year students who have room in their schedules should be advised to complete one of the two required introductory social sciences courses. These must be selected from the following list: either An 14 or An 15 or An 16, Ec 11, PS 12, Psy 13. Included in the 12 humanities and social science courses, students must take at least 3 writing-intensive courses and these must be taken on grades.

Other First Year Courses

In addition to the required core classes described on the previous pages, first year students are encouraged to participate in first year seminar classes, frontier classes, research tutorials and other research opportunities.

More than 80% of Caltech students participate in research at some point in their academic career. Students may embark in research activities by registering for research credits with a faculty member, by working in a laboratory for pay during the summer or academic year, by completing a senior thesis, or by participating in Caltech's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program. The SURF program is described in the catalog.

FIRST YEAR SCHEDULING TABLE

The table below is a summary of the courses and scheduling information that will be sufficient for most first year students. Some students will place out of required courses, and a few students will have to delay their first year humanities requirement until they complete Wr 2. Students have until the end of their sophomore year to complete the additional introductory laboratory and the menu course.

As a reminder, first and second term first year students are limited to 45 units of classroom and laboratory courses. A reasonable unit load for a first year student is between 39 and 45 units per term. After the first two terms, 48 units is the maximum number of units students can register for; students may overload with up to 51 units with advisor approval; and above 51 units requires an overload petition submitted to the deans (will not be approved for first year students in their first and second terms).

Category	Courses	1 st term	2 nd term	3 rd term
		number of units		
Math	Ma 1 abc	9	9	9
Physics	Ph 1 abc	9	9	9
Chemistry	Ch 1 ab	6	9	0
Chemistry laboratory	Ch 3 a (or Ch 3 x)	6 units any term		
Biology	Bi 1 (or Bi 1 x)	0	0	9
First-year humanities courses and introductory social	Note 1	9	9	9
Additional introductory	6 units chosen from list in Note 2			
Menu course	Note 3	0	0	9
Electives	Note 4			
Frontier ("pizza") courses	Note 5			0
Physical education	PE (see Caltech catalog)	3 units any term; total of 9 units are required to graduate		

Note 1. First-year humanities courses are those listed in the Humanities section of the Caltech catalog numbered 60 or below. Two courses are required and they must be in different disciplines, the disciplines being English, history, philosophy and visual culture. An introductory social science course can be selected from An 14 (Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology, 9 units not offered 2023-24), An 15 (Human Evolution, 9 units, not offered 2023-24), An 16 (World Archeology, 9 units, not offered 2023-24), Ec 11 (Introduction to Economics, 9 units, 2nd term), PS 12 (Introduction to Political Science, 9 units, 1st and 3rd terms), Psy 13 (Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience, 9 units, 3rd term).

Note 2.

Laboratory	Units	Term Offered 2023-24
APh/EE 24 - Introductory Modern Optics Laboratory	9	Not Offered
APh/EE 9 - Solid-State Electronics for Integrated Circuits	6	First
Bi 10 - Cell Biology Laboratory	6	Third
Bi 1X - The Great Ideas of Biology	9	Third
Ch 4ab - Synthesis and Analysis of Organic and Inorganic Compounds	9	Second, Third
Ch 8 - Experimental Procedures of Synthetic Chemistry	9	First
Ch/ChE 9 - Chemical Synthesis and Characterization for Chemical Engineering	9	Third
EE/ME 7 - Introduction to Mechanics	6	First
Ge 116 - Analytical Techniques Laboratory	9	Second
ME 8 - Introduction to Robotics	6	First
Ph 3 - Introductory Physics Laboratory	6	First, Second, Third
Ph 5 - Analog Electronics for Physicists	9	First
Ph 8bc - Experiments in Electromagnetism (must take both to satisfy lab requirement)	3	Second, Third
Or a more advanced laboratory	6 or more	

Note 3. Ay 1 (The Evolving Universe), EE 1 (The Science of Data, Signals and Information; not offered 2023-24), ESE 1 (Introduction to Environmental Science and Engineering), Ge 1 (Earth and Environment), IST 4 (Information and Logic; not offered 2023-24)

Note 4. Partial list: foreign languages (see Languages section of the Caltech catalog; language courses count toward the additional 36 units of the humanities and social science requirement, but not the 36-unit humanities requirement), ACM 11 (Introduction to Matlab and Mathematica, 3 units, 3rd term), CS 1 (Introduction to Computer Programming, 9 units, 1st term), CS 2 (Introduction to Programming Methods, 9 units, 2nd term), CS 3 (Introduction to Software Engineering, 9 units, 3rd term), CS 11 (Computer Language Shop, 3 units, 1st, 2nd and 3rd terms), Ma 17 (How to Solve It, 4 units, 1st term), Ph 20, 21 and 22 (Computational Physics Laboratory, 6 units per term, various terms).

Note 5. BE 1 (Frontiers in Bioengineering, 1 unit, 1st term), Bi 2 (Current Research in Biology, 3 units, 1st term), Ch 10 ab (Frontiers in Chemistry, 3 units, 1st and 2nd term), ChE 10 (Introduction to Chemical Engineering, 3 units, 2nd term), CS 9 (Introduction to Computer Science Research, 1 unit, 1st term), E 2 (Frontiers in Engineering and Applied Science, 1 unit, 1st term), Ph 10 (Frontiers in Physics, 3 units, 1st term), Ma 20 (Frontiers in Mathematics, 1 unit, 1st term), Hum 80 (Frontiers in the Humanities, 1 unit, 3rd term).

ELIGIBILITY TO BE ENROLLED

All undergraduate students must complete a minimum of 27 units per term with a grade-point average of at least 1.9 in order to be eligible to remain enrolled in classes. The 2023-24 first-year students in the are not held to the 1.9 GPA requirement during the first two terms when all courses are taken pass/fail. A student may be excused from the 27-unit eligibility requirement if an underload petition has been approved, prior to Add Day by the dean or associate dean of undergraduate students. Under exceptional circumstances the deans may waive the requirement that such a petition be approved prior to Add Day, but may do so only once during that student's career at Caltech. In addition students must earn a total of 108 units per year (summer does not count): this averages to 36 units per term. The 108 unit requirement may be waived in the case of an approved underload by Add Day, terms away or having been academically ineligible in one of the past three terms.

When a student is ineligible for the first time, they may send a reinstatement petition to the dean or an associate dean of undergraduate students. The dean may choose to reinstate them, in which case they will be on academic probation. Alternatively, the dean may direct them to petition the Undergraduate Academic Standards and Honors Committee (UASH) for reinstatement. UASH will either approve their petition for reinstatement and place them on academic probation, or require them to withdraw from the Institute for at least two terms.

When a student becomes ineligible a second time, they will be required to withdraw from the Institute for at least two terms. Summer does not count as a term. A student who has been required to leave the Institute because of academic ineligibility may, after at least two terms of leave, petition the Undergraduate Academic Standards and Honors (UASH) Committee for reinstatement. The UASH Committee's decision regarding reinstatement will be based largely on whether or not such students have made good use of their time while away from the Institute. Useful activities include being gainfully employed having an internship, engaging in a significant amount of volunteer work or successfully completing courses at another college or university. The Committee will also expect that students applying for reinstatement will have completed work in all Caltech classes in which they had received an E or I grade.

When a student becomes ineligible a third time, they will ordinarily not be allowed to continue to enroll at Caltech

Students who are ineligible to petition may request an exception to the above. To do so, they must first obtain permission from two of the following three individuals: the dean of undergraduate students, the chair of the UASH Committee, and the Registrar. Such requests require that a reinstatement petition be sent to the Registrar's Office at least three days prior to the next UASH Committee meeting's published deadline. When sending a reinstatement petition, students are encouraged to include (in the body of the email) an additional note including why the student feels they have an exceptional circumstance that should be considered by UASH outside of the typical reinstatement procedures. If the petition receives sufficient votes, it will be added to the agenda for the following meeting.

As noted above, academic eligibility is affected by a variety of factors. The UASH page has a [flow-chart](#) that can help students and advisors navigate scenarios that may lead to academic ineligibility.

LEAVES

All students in good academic standing may request a voluntary leave of absence for personal reasons (personal leave) by submitting a written petition via completion of the [undergraduate leave form](#). International students should consult with the International Student Programs Office regarding visa implications prior to submitting the leave petition, and athletes should consult with the assistant director of athletics.

Any time a student separates from the Institute, a leave form must be completed. The registrar and other appropriate offices are then notified, and the effective date is entered by the deans.

A student who withdraws after Add Day of a term receives a mark of W in each class for which he/she/they were enrolled. These marks are not used in computing grade point average. Any student can voluntarily withdraw up to the last day of classes and receive W marks in their classes instead of grades. If a student leaves without filing the leave form, the grades entered on the transcript will be those reported by the instructor or F grades for courses in which grades are not reported.

A student may also be placed on involuntary leave for disciplinary reasons by the dean of students. For academic violations of the honor code, the Board of Control makes recommendations on leaves to the deans. In general, disciplinary leaves specify a minimum time away but are indefinite in the sense that reinstatement depends on certain conditions being met. Decisions on reinstatement are made by the deans, with consideration given to recommendations by the Board of Control when a leave is for academic violations of the honor code. See catalog for details.

The deans may place a student on medical leave if conditions warrant. Return from medical leave also requires their approval. Decisions on medical leaves and returns are always made in conjunction with Wellness Services.

A student who withdraws during a term is liable for a prorated amount of tuition based on the Title IV Federal Regulations. (Fees are not prorated.) A student on financial aid may be required to return some of their aid disbursement if withdrawing during a term; financial aid recipients should consult the Financial Aid Office before making a decision to withdraw.

Additional information about undergraduate student leaves may be found [here](#).

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Many students chose to come to Caltech because of the wealth of undergraduate research opportunities available. In 2019, approximately 68% of the first year class participated in SURF at the end of their first year. First year students may face special challenges in finding a SURF project – they know fewer faculty, are not as familiar with research on campus, and are often under the impression that no one would want to work with an inexperienced student. As a first year advisor you have the opportunity to help students navigate this path. Students should be encouraged to attend SURF Information Sessions and begin thinking about possible SURF projects by the end of Fall term.

Connection to individual faculty members is a key factor in students' academic success. While first year advising is one connection, mentoring from a research advisor is another. Through their participation in an undergraduate research project, students are able to understand and navigate the research process – from effectively developing a research question, to critiquing data, and communicating one's research findings.

For further information regarding the SURF program, contact the Student-Faculty Programs Office, sfp@caltech.edu, or visit the Student-Faculty Programs website at <http://www.sfp.caltech.edu>.

The deans operate the Housner endowment, which provides about \$100,000 every year for scholarly activities for undergraduates, such as research projects, robotics competitions, and travel to academic conferences

CHOOSING AN OPTION

All first-year students will be asked to choose an option during the third term, after which they will be assigned a permanent advisor in that option. First year advisors are not expected to be knowledgeable about every option, although it is suggested that they review the descriptive material contained in the Caltech catalog under each option. Advisors should encourage their advisees to discuss option choices with upper-level students as well as with the undergraduate option representatives. (See list starting on page 17.) Many options have frontier or “pizza” courses (see note 5 of the previous section) or other events during the year that provide useful information. A list of such events will be made available to the first year advisors so they can remind their advisees to attend.

THE HONOR SYSTEM

The Caltech Honor System is embodied in a single phrase: *“No member of the Caltech community shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the community.”* Both academic and non-academic affairs are considered to be under the honor system. The system for undergraduates is governed by the Board of Control (BoC) and by the Conduct Review Committee (CRC) composed of students, staff, and faculty). The BoC deals mainly with academic violations, while the CRC is concerned with non-academic situations, including violations of Caltech’s substance abuse or fire policies.

A student being investigated for an honor code violation may consult with their advisor. The advisor should not get involved directly in the judicial process, but rather counsel the student to cooperate fully. Any concerns that the advisor has about the situation should be brought up with the deans. The Honor Code handbook can be found at this link: <https://deans.caltech.edu/HonorCode>

Violations of Caltech’s harassment policy and sexual violence policy are dealt with by a process separate from the BoC and CRC. Please refer to the Caltech catalog.

STUDENT CONCERNS AND THE CARE TEAM

The CARE Team is a multidisciplinary group of professional staff from key areas of the Institute. Each member brings knowledge and expertise in fields including mental health, crisis intervention, student development, staff consultation, campus security, academic support, and residential life. The CARE Team also collaborates with many other entities across campus including athletics, Title IX, Center for Inclusion and Diversity, Student Faculty Programs, International Student Programs, and the academic divisions. The CARE Team connects students with resources and support. Through early identification of academic difficulties, social concerns, behavioral disruptions, or health issues, the CARE Team can partner with students to create individualized plans to help mitigate crises and promote success. If you are concerned about a student, please let us know! Signs could include missed coursework, unresponsiveness, visible changes in hygiene or mood, or disclosure of difficulties such as depression, sleep problems, anxiety, or family concerns.

Refer a concern to the CARE team:

https://caltech-gme-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid145884?

Website: <https://caltechcares.caltech.edu/>

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally-funded education programs or activities.

At the California Institute of Technology we take compliance with Title IX seriously and we are committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex.

The following are examples of types of sex-based discrimination that are prohibited by Title IX:

- Sexual harassment and sexual violence, including sexual assault, that occurs in connection with Caltech academic, athletic, extracurricular, or Institute programs, regardless of the location.
- Failure to provide equitable opportunity for a student or employee based on sex.
- Lack of athletic opportunities for women.
- Discrimination on the basis of gender, gender expression, and gender identity.

IMPORTANT FIRST YEAR DATES 2023-2024

First Term- 2023

September 17	Orientation Begins
September 25	Yom Kippur – classes excused
September 26	Beginning of Instruction, First Term
October 13	Add Day <i>Plan on an increased advising load as this day approaches. Consider an advisee group meeting.</i>
October 25 - 31	Midterm Examination Period
November 6	Midterm Progress Reports & Deficiency Notices Due <i>Review reports and discuss deficiencies with advisees prior to Drop Day.</i>
November 15	Drop Day <i>Plan on an increased advising load as this day approaches. Consider an advisee group meeting.</i>
November 16 – December 1	Registration for Winter term
November 23 - 24	Thanksgiving Recess
December 1	Last Day of Classes
December 6 - 8	Final Examinations
December 8	End of fall term
December 9 - January 2	Winter Recess
December 13	End-of-Term Progress Reports Due

Second Term - 2024

January 3	Beginning of Instruction, Second Term
January 15	Martin Luther King Day Holiday (classes do not meet)
January 24	Add Day <i>Plan on an increased advising load as this day approaches. Consider an advisee group meeting.</i>
February 2 - 8	Midterm Examination Period
February 12	Midterm Progress Reports & Deficiency Notices Due <i>Review reports and discuss deficiencies with advisees prior to Drop Day.</i>
February 19	Presidents' Day Holiday (classes do not meet)
February 21	Drop Day

Plan on an increased advising load as this day approaches. Consider an advisee group meeting.

February 22 - March 8 <i>Be available for advising.</i>	Registration for Third Term
March 8 March 13 - 15	Last Day of Classes Final Examinations
March 15	End of winter Term
March 15 – April 31	Spring Recess
March 20	End-of-Term Progress Reports Due

Third Term – 2024

April 1	Beginning of Instruction, Third Term
April 19 <i>Plan on an increased advising load as this day approaches. Consider an advisee group meeting.</i>	Add Day
May 1 - 7	Midterm Examination Period
May 13 <i>Review reports and discuss deficiencies with advisees prior to Drop Day.</i>	Midterm Progress Reports & Deficiency Notices Due
May 22 <i>Plan on an increased advising load as this day approaches. Consider an advisee group meeting.</i>	Drop Day
May 23 - June 7 <i>Be available for advising.</i>	Registration for First Term, 2023-24
May 27	Memorial Day Holiday (classes do not meet)
June 5 - 7	Final Exams for all undergraduates (except seniors)
June 14	Commencement
June 20	End-of-Term Progress Reports Due

UNDERGRADUATE OPTION REPRESENTATIVES

URL: <http://regis.caltech.edu/current-students/option-reps>

USEFUL CALTECH OFFICES AND CONTACTS

Deans' Office (academic and mental health issues; petitions such as underload, overload, leave and reinstatement; tutoring arrangements; behavioral issues; emergency loans and grants; back-up advisor functions)

210 Center for Student Services

Lesley Nye, Interim Dean of Undergraduate Students: lnye@caltech.edu

Kristin Weyman, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students: kweyman@caltech.edu

www.deans.caltech.edu

Student Wellness Services (physical and mental health issues, health insurance)

1239 Arden Road

Denise Lin, Interim Clinical Director of Counseling Services: denlin@caltech.edu

After-hours crisis support available 24/7: (626) 395-8331 and press "2" when prompted, please stay on the line

<http://wellness.caltech.edu/>

Registrar (registration, grades, progress reports, UASH issues, assignment of permanent advisors)

125 Center for Student Services

Christy Salinas, Registrar: cssalina@caltech.edu

Gloria Brewster (primary undergraduate contact): ghb@caltech.edu

www.registrar.caltech.edu

Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (disability accommodations)

Center for Student Services (First Floor)

Sean Cutting, Accessibility Services Specialist scutting@caltech.edu

Jocelyn Vargas, Student Accessibility and Neurodiversity Services Specialist

cass.caltech.edu

CARE Team

Chris Barragan, Case Manager for Student Affairs: cbarraga@caltech.edu

caltechcares.caltech.edu/

Financial Aid (financial aid packages, scholarship requirements, loans)

383 S. Hill (Second Floor)

Malina Chang, Director: machang@caltech.edu

Martha Michel, Associate Director: mmichel@caltech.edu

International Student Programs (immigration matters, advising re: social and cultural issues)

250 Center for Student Services isp@caltech.edu (north wing)

Laura Flower Kim, Associate Director: laura.flowerkim@caltech.edu

Daniel Yoder, International Student Advisor: dyoder@caltech.edu

Caltech Center for Inclusion and Diversity (advising and programming for women, underrepresented minority and LGBTQ students)

255 Center for Student Services

Tashiana Bryant-Myrick, Director, tsbryant@caltech.edu

Yazmin Y. Gonzalez, Assistant Director for Institutional Diversity, yazminy@caltech.edu

Career Achievement, Leadership, and Exploration (career advising, internships, pre-med questions)

310 Center for Student Services

Claire Ralph, Director: clairer@caltech.edu

James Berk (pre-health program): jberk@caltech.edu

Fellowships Advising and Study Abroad

319 Center for Student Services

Lauren Stolper, Director: lstolper@caltech.edu

Office of Student Experience (RLCs, RAs, Student Activities & Programs)

255 S. Hill Ave

Felicia Hunt, AVP for Student Affairs & Student Experience: fhunt@caltech.edu

Housing and Dining (practical issues regarding food & housing infrastructure, room assignments)

160 Center for Student Services (Housing)

Maria Katsas, Director of Housing: maria@caltech.edu

Frances Yokota, General Manager of Dining Services: fyakota@caltech.edu

Equity and Title IX (Discuss a Title IX concern, seek information or support around a Title IX issue, or to file a complaint)

205 Center for Student Services

Hima Vatti, AVP for Equity and Equity Investigations, Title IX Coordinator titleix@caltech.edu