2022-2023 Undergraduate Catalog

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- Academic and Student Life Policy and Procedures: Office of Academic Affairs (https://www.esc.edu/academic-affairs/provost-office/staff/)
- Financial Information: Office of Administration (https://www.esc.edu/administration/)
- Admissions Information: Admissions (https://www.esc.edu/admissions/)
- Learning Resources: Information Technology Services (https://www.esc.edu/its/)
- Technology Information: Information Technology Services (https://www.esc.edu/its/)

Our Students

SUNY Empire State College students represent a diverse community of learners. They are motivated and enthusiastic. They are busy adults – with jobs, families and real lives that simply won’t accommodate the conventional college experience.

Most of our undergraduate students are between 25 and 50 years old (with an average age of 35), and are in the prime of their working lives. They are employed as professionals, managers or as skilled workers. They may be anyone from the CEO of a company to a working performing artist. More than 67 percent study part time. Most of our students are New York state residents, and they reflect the diversity that can be found from the Canadian border to Long Island’s eastern shore. They come from large metropolitan areas, suburbs, and small towns and rural communities. Forty-eight percent are white; 13 percent are African-American; 12 percent are Hispanic; 3 percent are Asian/Pacific Islanders or American Indians; and while 2 percent identified as multiracial.1 We also have students from most states in the U.S. and from many other countries. Nonresidents of New York state, representing more than 10 percent of our undergraduate students, generally enroll in online degree programs.

Nearly 65 percent of the college’s students are enrolled in the School for Undergraduate Studies, 19 percent are in our School for Graduate Studies, while the remaining enroll through other programs, such as The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies (7%), the School of Nursing and Allied Health (7%) or International Education (nearly 3%).

As a public college, SUNY Empire State College’s mission includes helping military service members and veterans further their education.

Our Office of Veteran and Military Education is staffed with experts who are knowledgeable and accessible and ready to help returning veterans and service members find the educational program that best meets their needs, whether stateside or on deployment.

Your Undergraduate Degree Program

There is no hard and fast time frame for how long it will take to earn your degree, since this depends on how many studies you take at a time and how much credit you can include from credit transfer, exams and prior learning assessment. However, approximately 53 percent of our bachelor’s degree students who enter at an advanced level complete their degrees within three years on a part-time basis; some take as little as a year.

Perhaps you’re not ready to begin a degree program right now. SUNY Empire State College offers nonmatriculated study that allows you to earn college credit.

However you choose to learn, SUNY Empire is dedicated to providing you with the best education in a time-efficient and affordable way.

Faculty Mentors

The more than 200 full- and part-time members of SUNY Empire State College’s undergraduate faculty come from a variety of backgrounds, from business to the arts. Ninety-six percent of the full-time faculty hold doctoral or other terminal degrees.

What the faculty have in common is a passion for teaching adult students. Our faculty are called mentors because they are partners and guides in your education. Every undergraduate student at SUNY Empire is assigned a mentor who serves as their own academic guide and resource from orientation to graduation. They respect the years of experience and knowledge that adults bring to an academic program, and are glad to share their own expertise. Our students confer with their mentors on a regular basis to receive advice, to develop their degree plans, and to carry out learning activities. Students maintain contact with their mentors in a variety of ways: face-to-face, email, online discussion areas, or even by mail. Most students value the personal attention, and when our students graduate, often it is their mentors whom they celebrate when they look back on their college years.

Planning Your Degree Program

Working with a faculty mentor, you design your own degree program. The degree you design reflects your goals and meets college requirements. You can incorporate prior learning from credit earned at other colleges, and college-level learning gained from work, volunteer or community activities, military training, reading, research and travel, and plan your additional study.

You formally begin degree planning through an educational planning course. For an associate or bachelor’s degree, the college requires at least 4 credits of educational planning.

As you work through your educational planning course with your mentor, you will review college requirements, and for individualized programs, define a concentration that meets your goals. When designing your degree program, consult the information on the “Program Details” tab in this catalog’s Undergraduate Programs section (http://catalog.esc.edu/undergraduate/areas-study-degrees-certificates/).

Once you and your mentor complete the development of your degree program proposal, the proposal is submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs.
Review for review and approval by a faculty committee. The final step is a policy review and approval by the Office of the Registrar. Detailed information on planning your degree is available in the Student Degree Planning Guide (http://www.esc.edu/degree-planning-academic-review/degree-program/student-degree-planning-guide/) and the Individualized Prior Learning Assessment (iPLA) Guide (http://www.esc.edu/degree-planning-academic-review/prior-learning-assessment/individualized-prior-learning-assessment/). Both publications are available at your location and online on MyESC (http://my.esc.edu/). Additionally, the college provides an online degree program planning tool called DP Planner available through MyESC to help you organize your degree program and submit it for review.

Degree Completion
When you have successfully completed your degree studies, your location staff will review all your academic records, and, when all is in order, forward a recommendation for degree conferral to the Office of the Registrar and Student Accounts. The registrar’s staff performs a final review of your complete academic record, while Student Accounts performs a final review of your student financial account.

When the academic clearance is completed, the registrar assigns a degree award date. Although your degree will be awarded upon academic clearance, you will not be issued a diploma, transcript or degree verification letter until all outstanding financial obligations to the college have been met. You will receive an invitation to attend the next commencement ceremony.

Rates Of Degree Completion*
All Students
Entering Fall 2015 - 2168
Graduated by Fall 2021 - 1038
Completion Rate - 47.88%

Part-Time
Entering Fall 2015 - 970
Graduated by Fall 2021 - 483
Completion Rate - 49.79%

Full-Time
Entering Fall 2015 - 1198
Graduated by Fall 2021 - 555
Completion Rate - 46.33%

*Within six years for bachelor’s degree seeking students entering SUNY Empire State College during fall 2015.
Source of data: Decision Support Annual Retention Cube (Data Warehouse), fall 2015 new, matriculated, bachelor’s degree seeking.