Cañada College – College of San Mateo – Skyline College

DegreeWorks
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated February 2013

1. *What is DegreeWorks?*

DegreeWorks is a web-based tool to help students and counselors monitor progress toward degree and certificate completion. DegreeWorks looks at the program requirements found in the Canada, CSM and Skyline catalogs and the coursework you have completed to produce an easy-to-read audit. The audit is divided into block requirements of how courses taken or proposed count toward program requirements. Checkboxes exist within each block to easily outline your completed courses and requirements.

DegreeWorks also shows progress toward CSU GE certification and IGETC certification which is important for students who plan to transfer to a California State University or University of California campus.

2. *Who can use DegreeWorks?*

All students may use DegreeWorks. However, Degree Works only stores catalog requirements back to the 2007/08 catalog year. Counselors and other authorized staff have access to DegreeWorks for the purpose of supporting students' progress through their academic career.

3. *Is my information confidential?*

Yes. Like other processes you use through the WebSMART, DegreeWorks is accessed through your secure log in. Remember that counselors and authorized staff are able to view the information contained in DegreeWorks.

4. *Will DegreeWorks evaluate courses I've taken at all three San Mateo District colleges?*

Yes, the Degree Works system is programmed to evaluate all the courses you have completed at Canada, CSM and Skyline. Whenever a course meets a requirement, the requirement will show that it has been met.

5. *What if I have taken coursework at a college outside the San Mateo District? Will those courses be included in the evaluation?*

Yes, if you request an official TES evaluation. The SMCCCD Transcript Evaluation Service (TES) provides eligible students who have completed coursework outside of the San Mateo District with an official evaluation of how the outside coursework applies to associate degrees, certificates, CSU GE certification, and IGETC certification. The results of the TES evaluation are viewable in DegreeWorks. For more information and to request an official TES evaluation to the website: www.smccd.edu/transeval . It is highly recommended that students request a TES evaluation within the first semester of attendance in the San Mateo District.

6. What is a STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PLAN on DegreeWorks?

A STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PLAN (SEP) is an important tool for students who intend to complete a certificate, associate degree, or transfer to a university. The SEP maps out semester by semester courses needed to meet specific educational goals. You are encouraged to meet with a counselor to develop an SEP. SEPs are recorded in DegreeWorks under the Ed Plan tab! The DegreeWorks SEP remains viewable to you to use as a reference and resource when selecting courses for enrollment. The SEP may also include notes and reminders to assist as you work toward goals. Students with SEPs have a slightly higher registration priority than students who do not have SEPs.

7. Can I register for classes in DegreeWorks?

No. Registration will continue to be handled separately through the WebSMART.

8. What is a degree audit?

A DegreeWorks audit is an audit of past, current and planned coursework that provides information on completed and outstanding catalog requirements necessary to complete a degree/certificate. The audit is divided into block requirements such as Foundation Studies, Core Studies, Area Studies, and Major Requirements. Each block works like a checklist that has boxes that are automatically checked when a requirement is met. If you have completed coursework for colleges or universities outside of the San Mateo District please see information provided in question #5.

9. How current will my information be in DegreeWorks?

The information in DegreeWorks is refreshed each night. Changes made today (e.g., grade changes or classes added/dropped) will be seen in DegreeWorks tomorrow.

10. Are my grades visible in DegreeWorks?

Yes. Once grades have been processed at the end of the semester, they are viewable in DegreeWorks.

11. Why are my courses still in the In-Progress section of the audit when I already received grades?
Each term DegreeWorks will reset the In-Progress term after grades have rolled to academic history. This will happen the day after completion of grade processing.

12. Can I see a list of all the classes I've taken?

Yes. On the Audits tab, click on the Class History link at the top for a list of courses taken at the three colleges (Canada, CSM and Skyline)

13. How is my degree audit different from my transcript?

Your degree audit is a tool to provide you with academic information related to your degree/certificate progress. It displays courses required and completed in your program. Your transcript is your official academic record and provides a chronological list of courses completed and other academic information.

14. When should I look at my degree audit?

You can review your audit at any time. At a minimum you should review it at least two or three times

per semester. You should always review your audit:

1. Before you meet with your counselor to discuss registration for an upcoming semester.
2. After you register to ensure that the courses you selected applied to your requirements as you thought they would.
3. After your grades for each semester are posted.
4. Any time you make a change to your schedule or program of study.

It is highly recommended that you become familiar with this tool and learn how to use the Worksheets, view the Ed Plan, use the WHAT IF function to explore how coursework completed can meet requirements for a range of educational goals, view Class History, and within Class History, the Term and Cumulative SPA Tracker.

15. How does DegreeWorks "know" what my major is?

In DegreeWorks you see a major/goal listed at the top of the page. When you applied for admissions, you entered a college goal and major on the admissions application and it is that information you see in DegreeWorks. If your goals and major has changed you should correct it in your WebSMART. It is your responsibility to keep student information up-to-date in WebSMART, and this includes your primary educational goal and major. To update this information -
- Log into WebSMART
- Select the STUDENT tab
- Scroll down to select UPDATE YOUR STUDENT INFORMATION
- Select the current TERM
- You are now on the STUDENT INFORMATION page
- Make sure questions 1 (educational goal) and 2 (declared major) are accurate
- Click on UPDATE to save the information

16. How do I know what classes I need to take?

Your audit will outline courses needed to meet degree/certificate requirements within each specific block. You may use this information to discuss your plan with your counselor.

17. I'm pursuing a degree and a certificate. Only one appears on the audit. How can I check the requirements for my other program of study?

DegreeWorks will automatically display an audit of the goal you selected in WebSMART. To see your progress toward additional degrees or certificates select the blue "What-If" link and complete the information about your additional goal then select the "Process What-If" button to view your audit.

18. How does DegreeWorks decide where to place courses that I've completed?

DegreeWorks looks at your program holistically, and places each course using a "best fit" scenario. The "best fit" process will not always be perfect, particularly when multiple possibilities exist. Classes may apply to different sections as you take more courses. If you have a course that does not appear in the area in which you expected, please contact a counselor for assistance.

19. DegreeWorks placed one of my courses in two different places. Is that okay?

In most cases, yes. DegreeWorks is programmed to recognize that some courses can fulfill more than one requirement. If you have any questions, contact your counselor.

20. Are there requirements for graduation that DegreeWorks doesn't check?

A few. While DegreeWorks has been designed to check almost everything that you must complete to qualify for graduation, there may be additional requirements for your program of study that must be completed as well. You should use DegreeWorks in conjunction with the College catalog and with any information that your counselor provides to ensure that you remain on track for graduation. If you have questions about any additional requirements for your major, contact your counselor.

21. I have been cleared for graduation, but DegreeWorks says that I haven't completed all my requirements. Does this mean that I won't be able to graduate?

Not necessarily. This can be a timing issue such as posting of grades for the current term. If you have followed through on any requirements you were told to complete, you should still be on track for graduation. Contact your counselor as soon as possible.

22. Everything on my audit is checked, but the degree progress bar only says that I am 97% done. What is wrong?

The degree progress bar will not show 100% completion until you finish all of your in-progress courses and earn acceptable grades in them.

23. I've seen the '@' symbol in several places on my audit. What does this mean?

This is a wild card in DegreeWorks. If the @ sign appears with course numbers after it (e.g., @ 100:299), it means that you can take any subject area a 100-299 level course from any subject area. If it appears after a subject prefix (e.g., PSYC @), it means that you can take any course with that subject prefix (in this example, any course in Psychology).

24. I think my audit is incorrect. What should I do?

While we have done everything we could to make sure that your audit is correct, it would have been impossible for us to predict every unique situation or problem. We want to work with you to correct any issues as soon as possible. Please ask your counselor for assistance. The first step is to clarify what information you believe is wrong. These are the most common problems and courses of action:

1. My program of study is wrong on my audit.

   DegreeWorks will default to the last major you identified when updating your information in WebSMART. If you have changed your major, you may select the new major from the drop down menu. You should also discuss this change with your counselor.

2. The requirements for my degree/certificate are wrong.

Look at the catalog year that appears on the requirements bar block of the audit. According to our records this is the catalog that you are using to complete your program of study. If you believe you should be using older or newer requirements outlined in a different catalog, contact your counselor. .

3.   Classes are not applying in the "right" place.

DegreeWorks uses a "best fit" approach for meeting requirements so classes may apply to different sections as you take more courses. If you have further questions, please contact your counselor.

25. Who should I contact if I still have questions or disagree with the audit?

Please contact your counselor.

26. What is an audit history?

DegreeWorks saves the last three student audits in history. This is helpful when trying to discover why a course was applied in an earlier audit but not in a later one (or vice versa). While this feature is especially helpful as we troubleshoot audit problems, it can also be beneficial for counselors and students to see how recent changes (in registration or major) affected the student's degree audit.

27. I want to look at different majors and goals. How can I see what would be required for multiple goals?

You can use the "What If" option on the Audits tab to do an audit using criteria you select. Please be sure to select a Degree, Catalog Year and Major. "What If" audits do not guarantee that you will be able to major in the area you select. If you decide you'd like to change your major, contact your counselor.

28. Can my counselor see my "What If" scenario?

Since What If scenarios are not stored on DegreeWorks, your counselor can only see your results if the two of you work through a What If procedure together. You can also print a copy to show your counselor.

29. What if I'm not sure of my major yet. How should I proceed?

Don't worry. Degree Works provides you the opportunity to input different majors at each of the colleges and find out how close you are to meeting the requirements for that particular major. These are called "What If" scenarios and are a good way for you to use the system to find out how close you are to meeting requirements for different degrees. The information you receive might help you narrow down your ideas. You should also continue to work closely with your counselor to explore majors at the three colleges. In addition, all three colleges offer career exploration courses.

30. Should I meet with a counselor after I've used Degree Works?

Yes, it is important that you review your DegreeWorks report with a counselor for accuracy and to then plan the courses you should take to complete your educational goal. Work with a counselor to create a STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PLAN in DegreeWorks.

31. My goal is to transfer to a CSU or UC? Will Degree Works evaluate my progress toward completing my general education courses and major requirements?

Yes, when you select what type of report you wish to run using DegreeWorks, you can select CSU GE or IGETC. You will then be able to determine how close you are to completing a general education transfer package. Unfortunately, given the different requirements for majors at four year colleges and universities, **you will not be able to see lower division major requirements for transfer.** You should meet with a counselor to determine the major preparatory courses you should complete before transferring.

32. I repeated a course and I don't understand how it appears on the degree audit. Can you explain this to me?

In most cases, if you successfully repeat a course, only your last attempt counts toward degree requirements.

33. I'm pursuing a degree and a certificate. Only one appears on the audit. How can I check the requirements for my other program of study?

DegreeWorks will automatically display an audit of the goal you selected in WebSMART. To see your progress toward additional degrees or certificates select the blue "What-If" link and complete the information about your additional goal then select the "Process What-If" button to view your audit.

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