

**Frequently Asked Questions about the
SOLANO LIBERAL STUDIES B.A. DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM**
offered by the
School of Social Sciences
in partnership with the School of Extended and International Education
www.sonoma.edu/exed/libs-solano

What do I need for admission to the program?

The minimum to enter is 60 transferable semester units from an accredited college at a C average (2.0), including 30 units in general education at a C or better. The five specific GE areas that must be completed with a grade of C or better are Area A (*Speech, Composition, and Critical Thinking*), B4 (*Quantitative Reasoning*), and your Physical and Biological Sciences, one of these with a Lab.

However, we strongly suggest that students complete all 70 transferable community college units before joining the program. It can be disappointing to finish your major and still have to take care of some lower-division general education coursework before being able to graduate.

Entrance requirements can be in progress or planned when you apply, but they must be completed by the end of the semester preceding enrollment (Fall or Spring). Additional courses not needed to fulfill minimum transfer requirements can be taken in the Summer or Intersession.

Foreign students who have not had at least three years of instruction in English must score at least 500 on the paper test, or 61 on the online test on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) taken within the last two years.

What is the application process?

Applications are accepted from October 1st through May 31st for the following Fall semester; for Spring, July 1st through October 31st. All materials must be received by these deadlines in order to process your application in time for the upcoming semester.

Fill out the program application at www.sonoma.edu/exed under *Apply to a Program* and submit it with a check for \$55 payable to Sonoma State University. Please note there is no online application for this program at CSU Mentor.

We will need two official, sealed copies of transcripts from *all* institutions previously attended, even if you did not complete any coursework, and even if you think the units are not transferable. We do not need SSU transcripts, but they are free if you want a copy for yourself. If you completed resident coursework at SSU within the last five years, all of your transcripts will still be on file and we will only need transcripts for more recent work. Please send all materials to the Program Advisor, not to Admissions. The address is on the application form.

Once your file is complete, it can take up to 10 weeks for Admissions to do their complete evaluation cycle. When they send a copy of your acceptance letter to the Program Advisor, you will be sent further information about registration and your remaining requirements. A \$200 non-refundable deposit will be required to hold your place in the program. This will be counted against your tuition.

What about resident SSU programs?

If you are interested in earning your degree in any of the other SSU departments, the SSU website has information for transfer students at www.sonoma.edu under the link *Future Students*.

What kind of advising is available?

Pre-admissions advising is available from Solano Community College counseling staff. They can help you select CSU-transferable classes that will meet general education requirements to create an individual transfer plan.

At SSU, we have a team of people ready to help you. Our Advisor, Susie McFeeters, can also assess your readiness to transfer and provide basic information about the program. You can mail copies of your transcripts, e-mail them to susan.mcfeters@sonoma.edu, or fax copies to her attention

at 707-664-2613. She will make an evaluation of your status in regards to entrance and graduation requirements and get back to you.

Unofficial transcripts are fine for pre-admissions advising, but please be sure that they show the details of all of your work at every college you have attended.

As you progress through the program, the Faculty Advisor, Rachel Donham, provides ongoing support and advising for the major. She can be reached at donham@sonoma.edu.

What are the major requirements?

Students must complete 50 units: 16 units in Arts/Humanities; 16 units in Behavioral Sciences; 6 units in Natural Sciences; and 12 units of electives. If you have upper-division coursework from another four-year college, the Faculty Advisor can assess it for award of credit against the major. Up to 12 units may be counted from another college and these are generally coded as electives.

Students may also take upper-division classes at SSU via the Open University process on a space-available basis, during Summer or Winter Intersession, or at other institutions on approval of the Faculty Advisor.

What is the class schedule?

Each semester, about 16 units of courses are scheduled to fulfill program requirements.

Courses are rotated to provide a variety of topics and instructors.

Classes are offered evenings and Saturdays at the Solano Community College Vallejo Center and at the Napa Valley College campus. Some classes have a hybrid format (face-to-face meetings with an online component).

Registration is restricted to Majors so you need not worry about classes filling up before you can get in.

What is the Portfolio?

Students will have the opportunity to compile a portfolio to document the range and depth of their educational experiences. In the process of reviewing their intellectual journey, they become aware of their values, talents and goals, and also gather materials they can use for future educational or career endeavors. Two courses complete the Portfolio sequence, SSCI 300, *Introduction to Portfolio Development* (1 unit), and SSCI 400, *Portfolio Evaluation* (3 units).

What else will I need to graduate?

Students need 120 units to graduate. We advise taking the maximum allowable 70 units at a community college before transferring. Then, the 50 units in the program will bring you to the required 120 units.

The Written English Proficiency Test (WEPT) is required of all students once they reach Junior status (60 units). This test can be proctored at Vallejo Center; see www.sonoma.edu/writingcenter for details.

The nine units of upper-division general education required to graduate are offered as part of the coursework in the Major.

How long will it take me to get my degree?

To complete in 2 years, you would need to take at least 12 units per semester for four semesters. But much depends on how many units you can manage per semester, and whether you can take Summer and Intersession classes. A full-time load is 12 units for undergraduate units. The minimum part-time enrollment for financial aid purposes is 6 units.

What kind of time commitment are we talking about ?

The usual formula for undergraduate work at a CSU is 2—3 hours per unit per week, so a person carrying a 12-unit full-time load should plan to spend 24—36 hours per week on readings and assignments. Given the full schedule that you will have, the key will be careful budgeting of time and learning how to overcome procrastination.

Who are the instructors?

Instructors in the Solano program are chosen from Sonoma State tenured, tenure-track, or emeritus faculty and from the adjunct faculty pool approved by departments on campus. They have a minimum of a Master's degree in their chosen subject, but most have a PhD. Our instructors bring a wide variety of skillsets and viewpoints to the program, and they enjoy working with adult students.

What are the fees for the courses?

Students in Extended Education programs pay a per-unit fee, \$375/unit as of Fall 2015. In the CSU, the fees are set based on number of units (1—6 or 7+) Here is a chart with a rough comparison of the fees. At half time, our fees are less; at full time, they are comparable.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Per Unit</u>
SSU/Solano Liberal Studies Program	6 (half time)	\$2,250	\$375
SSU Residential Students(1—6 unit fee)	6	\$2,489	\$415
SSU/Solano Liberal Studies Program	12 (full time)	\$4,500	\$375
SSU Residential students(7+ units)	12	\$3,638	\$304

Is financial aid available?

Financial aid, in the form of loans and grants, is available to qualified students. You can fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov after January 1st each year for the following academic year. As financial aid is distributed on a first-come basis, apply early; the deadline for CalGrants is January 31st and the federal aid priority deadline is March 2nd. You may apply before your tax return is filed and file an update after you submit your tax return.

Please be advised that some grants are based on full-time status (12 units). Also, programs such as EOP that reimburse the campus for State charges do not apply to our program because we do not receive State funding.

Private loan programs are also available; you can do a Web search for these. We do not have a preferred provider list, but one such opportunity is Sallie Mae, at www.salliemae.com/sonomaexed.

What about scholarships?

The campus scholarship program rewards those students with a high grade point average (GPA). For more information, see www.sonoma.edu/scholarship. The application window runs September 15th through January 15th. The site also has links to other scholarship opportunities. Please request letters of recommendation early in the process.

Some tax deductions can help defray the cost of the program, including the Lifetime Learning tax credit. Also, a certain amount of assistance from your employer can be excluded from your income. Ask your tax consultant for details, or see IRS Publication 970, *Tax Benefits for Education*, available at www.irs.gov.

Can I use my Veterans' Benefits?

Veterans' Benefits are available to qualifying service members and their families. Please visit the Veterans' Affairs Office website at <http://www.sonoma.edu/veterans/> for more information.

COMPARISON BETWEEN PROGRAMS

Both the Solano and the Saturday BA Degree Completion Program share these features:

- **Admissions requirements:** minimum of 60 semester units at a C average, with 30 in general education at a C or better, especially *Speech, Critical Thinking, Composition and Math*
- **Pre-Admissions Advising** available from Susie McFeeters (*Solano = SCC counselors*)
- **Application** filled out at www.sonoma.edu/exed
- **120 units minimum to graduate**
- **Written English Proficiency Test (WEPT)**
- **Upper-division GE included** (*Solano = courses offered in Major; Saturday = waived*)
- **Financial Aid eligibility** (*except EOP and other programs that reimburse the campus for State funding*)
- **Scholarship eligibility**
- **Veterans' benefits**

The following vary between the programs:

	Solano/Napa	Saturday Hybrid
Tuition cost per unit	\$375/unit	\$400/unit
Number of units in major	50	40
Total cost	\$18,750 plus cost of classes needed for remaining lower division GE	\$16,000 plus cost of classes needed to reach 120 units/GE requirements
Course location	Solano Community College Vallejo Center and Napa Valley College	SSU
Class meeting times	Evenings, Saturdays	One Saturday per month
Class format	Lecture/Discussion; some Hybrid (face-to-face plus online)	Hybrid (face-to-face plus online)
Units per class	1—4	10 units (one per semester for four semesters)
Student body	Individual students move through at own pace	Cohort model
Duration	Varies	2 years for Major; other requirements as needed
General questions	Susie McFeeters	Susie McFeeters
Major advising	Rachel Donham	Susie McFeeters
Additional admission requirements	Physical & Biological Science GE classes, one with lab	---