EXPLORATORY STUDIES

The Program in Exploratory Studies is an independent program under the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and is home to approximately 25 percent of incoming first-year students. The program is particularly appropriate for those wanting to explore the many offerings at CU Boulder before deciding on a specific academic path. In addition, students who apply to a competitive-admission college or school may be offered admission to the program in exploratory studies, where they will work with advisors either to pursue that initial area of interest or identify related and complementary options on campus.

Students in the program eventually transfer to one of the seven degree-granting colleges, schools and programs on the Boulder campus. Advisors and coaches in the University Exploration & Advising Center (http://www.colorado.edu/ueac) work with students to develop academic pathways and explore related career options for more than 70 majors.

Admissions Requirements

Incoming First-Year Applicants
Beginning in Spring 2020, students applying to CU Boulder from high school can select the program in exploratory studies. Prior to that term, students interested in exploratory studies can join the program through the Intra-University Transfer process.

Intra-University Transfer (IUT)

Guaranteed Admission
Undergraduate students enrolled on the Boulder campus with fewer than 30 credit-hours earned and who are in good academic standing may apply to transfer to the program in exploratory studies. Good academic standing includes students in their first semester on campus who have not yet earned a CU Boulder GPA, students who have completed at least one semester on campus and have earned a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, as well as students on academic alert from another college on campus.

Students in good academic standing with 30 or more credit-hours earned may be limited to a single complete term after transferring to exploratory studies and will be required to meet with an advisor for development of a major declaration plan.

Admission Requiring Review
Students currently on academic recovery or probation from another college on campus are welcome to apply to exploratory studies, but admission is not guaranteed. A petition, including statement of interest, will be required and admission decisions will be made after final grades are posted for the recovery/probation term.

Note: Students currently on academic suspension from another college on campus are not eligible for an IUT.

Policies and Guidelines

Several policies and guidelines are of particular importance to students in the program in exploratory studies.

Intra-University Transfer
Exploratory studies students work closely with academic advisors throughout their first two semesters to establish a degree plan and move into a degree-granting program. This is accomplished through the Intra-University Transfer (IUT) process and generally takes place after the second or third semester. Requirements vary by college/school.

Recognition of Academic Achievement
Students in the program in exploratory studies are part of the intellectual community on the Boulder campus and may be pursuing admission to competitive admission programs. The program holds academic rigor and quality in the highest esteem and encourages students to be curious and ambitious. In recognition of high academic achievement, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education grants scholarly honors each term.

Students achieving a grade point average of 3.6 or higher in any given term are recognized by a letter from the Vice Provost and receive a notation on their transcript. Honors are based on at least 12 credit hours of coursework completed for a letter grade at CU Boulder. Once in a degree-granting program, students from the program in exploratory studies are encouraged to pursue honors that are recognized by each college at commencement.

Credit Limitations and Guidelines

Credits Each Term
In order to maintain good degree progress, students in exploratory studies are encouraged to enroll in an average of 15 credit hours each term.

Declaration of Major
Exploratory Studies students must declare a major in a degree-granting program once they have earned 45 credit hours. This generally translates into completion of three semesters of coursework.

Repetition of Courses
If a student takes a course for credit more than once, all grades are calculated into the grade point average. However, the course credit hours only count toward graduation once, unless a course description specifically states that it can be taken more than once for credit.

Students may also retake a course for grade replacement (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/credits-grading/#gradereplacementpolicytext) under the grade replacement policy. When a student retakes a course for grade replacement, the grade earned in the most recent prior attempt will still appear on the transcript, but their cumulative GPA and credit totals on the transcript will only include the grade from the latest attempt.

Consecutive Withdrawals
Students in the program in exploratory studies who withdraw from all of their registered courses two semesters in a row will have a hold placed on their account, prohibiting them from further registration until they meet with their advisor to assess degree progress.

GPA Requirements, Academic Alert and Scholastic Suspension
Students who fail to meet the minimum cumulative grade point requirement of 2.0 are still permitted to continue their studies on a provisional basis.

Students in their first year who do not achieve a 2.0 will be placed on academic alert for the following semester and are required to submit an academic improvement plan with their advisor. Scholastic records of students on academic alert are evaluated at the end of that semester. If students demonstrate good progress but have a cumulative GPA that...
remains below a 2.0, they will be placed on an academic improvement plan while they work on raising their GPA.

Continuing students who fail to meet the minimum cumulative grade point requirement of 2.0 in a given semester are permitted to continue their studies the following semester on a probationary basis. Scholastic records of students are evaluated at the end of the probationary semester and if the student has not achieved an overall 2.0 the student may be placed on suspension.

Students are notified of their academic status (e.g., alert, improvement plan, suspension) in writing and directed to contact their advisor to discuss options.

Focus on Exploration

The program in exploratory studies helps students explore their interests across all seven colleges and schools on the Boulder campus. In addition to identifying a primary major of interest, exploratory studies encourages students to explore certificates and minors available on campus in order to create a well-rounded and personalized academic experience.

To filter through all of the majors, minors and certificates offered at CU Boulder, see the undergraduate Programs A-Z (catalog.colorado.edu/programs-a-z/#filter=filter_19&filter_20&filter_21) section.

Pathways within Exploratory Studies

There are three plans of study within Exploratory Studies:

- Exploratory Studies (XXES)
- Pre-Business (PREB)
- Pre-Engineering (PREE)

The pre-business and pre-engineering programs are by invitation only; students in PREB and PREE are advised by the Leeds School of Business and the College of Engineering & Applied Science, respectively.

Degree-Granting Options and Intra-University Transfer

Because students cannot earn a degree from the program in exploratory studies, they must transfer into a degree-granting program on campus. This is accomplished through the Intra-University Transfer (p. 2) (IUT) process and generally takes place after the second or third semester.

Courses

The Office of Undergraduate Education hosts several academic course offerings that are particularly appropriate for students in exploratory studies:

FYSM 1000 First Year Seminar (3) – Have you ever wondered about the origins of the universe? Or what exactly “fake news” means? Or wanted to write a fairy tale? First-Year Seminars (https://www.colorado.edu/academics/first-year-seminar) tackle these and many other topics by approaching critical thinking and academic curriculum on a completely new level. We asked our inventive professors to develop courses that focus on unusual and thought-provoking topics (e.g., political dialogue, toxic chemicals, morality, and Batman), and then to structure the topics to meet our rigorous academic standards. The First-Year Seminar courses are small, interactive classes—limited to 19 students in each course—and are a great way to explore intriguing topics and establish connections with a faculty member and other students who share similar interests. Most First-Year Seminars are offered in the fall semester with typically 50 to 60 topics from which to choose.

FYXP 1000 Academic Exploration & Critical Decision Making (1) – Taught by advisors in the University Exploration & Advising Center (http://www.colorado.edu/ueac), the Academic Exploration Seminar is a one-credit course designed for first-year students in the Program in Exploratory Studies. Students will work through the major exploration process in a guided and intentional way and be introduced to a variety of college success strategies as they critically evaluate their strengths, interests, and goals. Students can expect to leave the course well-equipped to declare a major of interest in a timely fashion and to make a plan for supplementing their degree with opportunities for education abroad, undergraduate research or other co-curricular experiences that best match their interests, skills and abilities.

FYXP 1100 Academic Success Seminar (1) – The Academic Support Seminar is a one-credit course designed for first-year students in the Program in Exploratory Studies and is taught by academic coaches in the University Exploration & Advising Center (http://www.colorado.edu/ueac). In this seminar, students develop the skills needed to succeed in college. The class focuses on developing learning strategies, improving executive functioning (time management, organization, self-monitoring, etc.), and setting SMART goals. Students will identify their strengths and participate in peer-to-peer interaction to foster collaboration and positive outcomes.

General Education Requirements

Each college/school on the Boulder campus has a different set of general education requirements. Students in exploratory studies run degree audits (https://www.colorado.edu/registrar/students/degree-planning/audit/run) by clicking on the “Select a Different Program” option and then running an audit from the degree program they select. Students with interests that span multiple colleges work closely with advisors in the University Exploration & Advising Center (http://www.colorado.edu/ueac) to select courses that meet requirements for multiple degree pathways.

Degree-Granting Options and Intra-University Transfer

The program in exploratory studies does not confer degrees. Therefore, students will transfer into a degree-granting program at CU Boulder via the Intra-University Transfer (IUT) process, generally after the second or third semester.

Moving from the program in exploratory studies into one of the seven degree-granting programs at CU Boulder generally requires completion of specific prerequisite coursework, attainment of a specific GPA, and submission of IUT paperwork. Those requirements vary by college/school. More information can be found by linking to the specific section of the catalog for each college:

- College of Arts & Sciences (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/policies-requirements/#creditandenrollmenttext): includes majors in the natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities
- Leeds School of Business (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/business/policies-requirements/#creditandenrollmenttext): includes areas of emphasis in accounting, finance, management, and marketing
• School of Education (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/education/policies-requirements): includes majors in elementary education or leadership & community engagement as well as teacher licensure at all levels

• College of Engineering & Applied Science (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/engineering-applied-science/policies-requirements): includes majors in various engineering fields, computer science, applied sciences, and technology, arts, & media

• Program in Environmental Design (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/environmental-design/policies-requirements/#creditandenrollmenttext): includes areas of emphasis in architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and environmental product design

• College of Media, Communication, and Information (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information): includes majors in advertising, PR and media design, communication, critical media practices, information science, intermedia art, writing & performance, journalism, and media studies

• College of Music (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/music/policies-requirements/#creditandenrollmenttext): includes majors in various areas of music education and performance