

Frequently Asked Questions Taking Courses Outside of Your Academic Requirements

I received an email saying that I'm registered for a course that doesn't apply to my degree or certificate. What should I do now?

- First, speak with an academic advisor who will ensure that your academic program plan (the degree or certificate you're pursuing) is in our system correctly and that it matches your goals. An advisor will identify the classes that are required for your SFCC degree or certificate and can help you decide which classes are best to meet both SFCC requirements and the transfer requirements of four-year universities you may be considering.
- If you use financial aid, you should speak with your Financial Aid Office to see how taking a class outside of your requirements will affect your financial aid package. Some students will not have any impact to their awards, while others will see their aid packages reduced.
- Regardless of your method of payment, be aware that taking courses that don't apply to your certificate/degree can result in longer time to graduation and a higher cost. Speak with an advisor to see if there's a similar course you can take that will apply to your academic requirements.

How will I know if the classes I'm registered for will be covered by financial aid?

- The best way to maximize your financial aid eligibility is by taking classes that are required for your academic program at SFCC. You can check how the classes you registered for are applying to your requirements by reviewing your degree audit, or Advisement Report. Check your degree audit in your student portal to determine which academic requirements you are still missing: these classes can be used to determine your financial aid eligibility
- Find your degree audit by logging in to the ctcLink portal, clicking My Academics > View my Advisement Report.
- If you have any questions about which classes are required for your degree or certificate, speak with an academic advisor.
- Check with your college's Financial Aid Office if you have questions about how your financial aid award may be adjusted based on your enrollment if you do register for ineligible courses.

Will financial aid cover courses that are required for my transfer college/university?

- It depends. Once you complete the requirements for your SFCC degree or certificate, financial aid will not cover additional courses that you might need for your transfer destination. You may still want to complete additional courses at SFCC, but you will be responsible to pay for them.
- Early and careful planning with an SFCC advisor can maximize your financial aid eligibility and ensure that you take classes that apply to both your SFCC requirements and the requirements of your intended transfer destination.

Can I receive federal financial aid for courses that fall outside of the requirements for my SFCC degree or certificate?

- No. Federal regulations prohibit SFCC from awarding financial aid for classes that do not count toward a student's SFCC degree or certificate. Financial aid can only pay for courses that are required for an eligible degree program or certificate. Some SFCC programs require elective credits; courses that apply to your remaining electives or other academic requirements can be used to determine your financial aid eligibility. Transfer coursework, courses completed for another program at SFCC, or other types of credit granted may already satisfy current degree requirements, and therefore cannot be used in the enrollment level for awarding purposes. Please contact the Admissions & Registration if you have questions about how previously completed credits apply to your program of study.
- For students using federal financial aid, this means that while you can certainly take courses outside of your academic requirements, financial aid eligibility cannot include the courses that do not apply. This may result in your financial aid award being reduced.
- Your financial aid award is applied directly to your tuition bill. If your award amount is reduced, your tuition charges may still be fully covered. Every student's situation is unique, so pay attention to the emails you receive in your SFCC student email account and work with Advising, Financial Aid and Registration to make the best decisions for you.

How do I know which classes are required for my degree or certificate?

- All students have access to their degree audit in the student portal. Your degree audit shows the classes that are required to earn your certificate or degree, including how your previous coursework applies to requirements and the classes you still need to complete. Taking classes that do not apply to these requirements may result in your financial aid award being reduced, and may require repayment of funds if you register for ineligible coursework after disbursement.
- You will be sent a message to your email if you are registered for a course that falls outside of your academic requirements.
- You can find your degree audit by logging in the ctcLink portal, clicking My Academics > View my Advisement Report.

What if I want to take classes to prepare to transfer or because they sound interesting?

- You can always register for any classes that you want! However, federal regulations prohibit SFCC from using courses that fall outside of your academic requirements to determine your aid eligibility. This means that you may have to pay out of pocket for some or all of your tuition if your classes do not apply to your SFCC requirements.
- To determine if your financial aid package will be adjusted based on your registration, speak with the Financial Aid Office immediately.

I use financial aid and am planning to take a course (or more) that doesn't apply to my degree or certificate. How can I tell if I'll owe a bill for my tuition?

- Your financial aid package is dependent on many factors, one of which is how many credits you're taking that apply to your academic requirements. Your financial aid award will typically be based on full-time status, assuming all courses are required for your degree program. If you are notified about ineligible classes, and intend on staying enrolled in those courses, contact FA immediately so that any necessary award and account adjustments can be made.
- For the most complete information about your financial aid package, speak with the Financial Aid Office at your college.