

# ASU Online offers California community college students even more affordable path to degrees

**Arizona State University is launching special tuition for California community college students pursuing bachelor's degrees online**

By Meenah Rincon, ASU News  
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For thousands of California community college students, the decision to transfer is a step toward opportunity.

But for students living in California, rising costs, increasingly selective university admissions and limited seats at four-year universities can mean students are navigating a system that is working against them. And for those in educational deserts — regions with limited access to four-year universities — the path to a bachelor's degree can feel [geographically and financially out of reach](#).

That's why Arizona State University is clearing the pathway, rewarding persistence with possibility, making college more affordable and ensuring California community college students have a flexible path to a four-year degree from anywhere.

Beginning this fall, eligible California community college students and alumni can save 22% on tuition with the [California Community College Achievement Plan](#), a partnership between ASU and select California community colleges. This special tuition is for California community college students who enroll in an online bachelor's degree program through [ASU Online](#).

With no income requirements or special applications needed to receive the special tuition, the pilot program helps break financial barriers and creates an accessible, seamless transfer pathway for California residents to complete a degree.

“Our university is committed to enhancing access to high-quality education for all students capable of college-level work,” ASU President Michael M. Crow said. “Providing top online learning opportunities and making ASU’s world-class faculty available to the enthusiastic learners in our neighboring state will prepare more skilled graduates, strengthen our shared region and support a better future.”

Among California residents who attend community college, only 2.5% transfer to a four-year institution within two years, and just over 20% transition within four years, [according to a 2021 study](#). The report emphasized that transfer pathways are not only key to expanding access and improving student success but also essential to advancing equity in higher education and preparing students for California’s growing demand for a highly educated workforce.

As part of ASU’s larger commitment to affordable and accessible education, the university believes this new plan will expand opportunities for more students to earn a bachelor’s degree and achieve social mobility.

The special tuition supports transfer students at community colleges throughout California, from the San Diego Community College District to Sacramento City College and beyond. These students can start when they’re ready and progress at their own pace with resources and support along the way.

With generous transfer credit policies and personalized support services, ASU’s online degree programs are making it possible for students across California, from dense urban centers to more rural areas, to finish their degree on their terms.

The Chief Executive Officers of the California Community College (CEOCCC) Board, which represents 116 member colleges throughout the state, has endorsed ASU’s new program as having great potential to benefit many students, including students in regions where access to high-demand degrees and research universities is limited.

“This innovative partnership between ASU and California Community Colleges opens new doors for our students, especially those who are anchored in California or seeking affordable, high-quality pathways to a bachelor’s degree,” said Julianna M. Barnes, chancellor of the South Orange County Community College District and past president of the CEOCCC Board.

“The continued collaboration between ASU and our colleges reinforces our shared commitment to equity, access and a seamless transfer experience, and we’re proud that the two colleges in the South Orange County Community College District — Saddleback and Irvine Valley College — are leading the way for our community.”

Located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley in a largely agricultural region, Merced College has a mission to transform lives through education and to serve as an open-access institution committed to equity, excellence and opportunity.

This partnership with ASU expands transfer opportunities for their students, particularly those seeking the flexibility of online learning, by giving them access to a world-class university at a competitive cost, reflecting their commitment to meeting students where they are with the innovative opportunities they need.

Many students choose Merced College because they want to strengthen their ties to the Central Valley while preparing for professional success. As a rural community college, the college is focused not only on helping students reach their academic goals but also on empowering them to build strong, vibrant futures in the Central Valley and beyond.

The skills and credentials they earn through ASU Online will help them advance in local industries such as health care, education, business and public service.

“At Merced College, we believe talent is everywhere, but opportunity isn’t always within reach,” Merced College President Chris Vitelli said. “Our partnership with Arizona State University expands access through affordable, seamless transfer pathways — especially for students from rural and underserved communities. Together, we’re opening doors for students to achieve their goals, apply their skills locally and help shape the Central Valley’s future.”

ASU is reimagining what higher education can be — accessible, innovative and designed for impact — and ASU Online is at the forefront of digital learning. Students can choose from more than 180 online undergraduate degrees, offering California transfer students access to ASU’s on-campus faculty, instruction and curriculum, without the need to relocate.

Online students also gain access to resources, mentorship and a success coach — who can provide one-to-one guidance through life, work and school — helping each student build long-term success.

ASU Online has a long-standing presence in California, with more than 15,000 students currently enrolled online, [making meaningful contributions](#) to the state’s economy.

Through partnerships such as these, ASU will continue to prepare students to lead tomorrow, pursue high-demand careers and positively impact the communities that shaped them.

To learn how California students can take the next step toward their degree, visit [californiacc.asu.edu](http://californiacc.asu.edu).

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

**Main image**



A view of downtown Los Angeles from Dodger Stadium. Photo by Deanna Dent/Arizona State University

**Text image(s)**



ASU graduate Byron Roberson poses for a photo outside the ASU California Grand Center in downtown Los Angeles last fall. Photo by Samantha Chow/ASU