

Quick Guide to AB 540: Expanded In-State Tuition Eligibility in California

Overview

AB 540 (expanded by SB 68 & SB 1141) enables students to count years spent at a California Community College (CCC) and adult school towards eligibility for in-state tuition. Additionally, the completion of an associate degree or satisfaction of the minimum requirements to transfer to the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) will meet the degree or unit requirements. SB 1141 removed the two-year limit of credits from the California Community Colleges (CCC). These new eligibility criteria expand possibilities for students educated in CA to qualify for in-state tuition and state based financial aid at CCCs, CSUs, and UCs.

Who Is Eligible?

Undocumented individuals, T and U visa holders, U.S. citizens, and lawfully present immigrants that meet eligibility criteria can apply. Individuals with international student visas, visitor visas, or other “non-immigrant” statuses are not eligible to apply.

Requirements

To be considered for the nonresident tuition exemption under AB 540, students must meet 2 requirements: 1) Length of time & coursework completed per school; and 2) Degree completion, unit requirements, GED, or other.

Requirements		
<p>PART ONE Length of time & coursework completed per school</p>	<p>Three full-time (FT) years of attendance or attainment of part-time equivalent credits earned in a California:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school¹ • Adult school² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 1 full-time year of attendance = min of 420 hrs/school year • Community College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Credit courses³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 full-time year of attendance = 24 semester units or 36 quarter units ◦ Noncredit courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 full-time year of attendance = min of 420 hrs/school year • Or any combination of the above 	<p>Or</p> <p>Three years of high school coursework and three years of total attendance in a California:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elementary school • secondary school • or any combination of these two.
<p>PART TWO Degree completion, unit requirements, GED, etc.</p>	<p>Fulfill one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate from a CA high school • Obtain a certificate of completion, GED, HiSet, or TASC in CA • Attain an associate degree from a CA Community College • Fulfill minimum transfer requirements for University of California or California State University 	

¹ California high schools must be established by the State Board of Education

² California adult school must be established by:

- County Office of Education
- Unified School District/High School District
- The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

³ SB 1141 removed the two year maximum for credit courses at CCCs

Check Your Eligibility

Immigrants Rising's CA In-State Tuition Tool helps you determine if you meet the attendance and degree requirements for in-state tuition. Even if you do not yet qualify, this tool can help you determine what steps you need to take to meet eligibility requirements in the future. Go to immigrantsrising.org/istt.

Immigrants Rising helps you make decisions based on your potential, not your perceived limits. Visit our website so you can see what's possible: immigrantsrising.org. For inquiries regarding this resource, please contact Nancy Jodaitis, Director of Higher Education at nancy@immigrantsrising.org. Revised 9/2023.