

CU-Boulder

Undergraduate participation in special academic opportunities

Special academic opportunities are a hallmark of the total learning environment provided by a comprehensive research university with top faculty and a large and diverse student population. Our ultimate goal is that all undergraduates have the opportunity for a personalized, small-group academic experience, whether they avail themselves of such opportunities or not. We measure the proportion of entering-freshmen graduates who have participated in special academic opportunities as a proxy, and aim to keep this proportion at or above two-thirds.

The special academic opportunities considered are honors courses, independent study, credit internships, service learning, and independent research courses; courses sponsored by research centers including the museum; special research programs for undergraduates; study abroad; completion of an honors thesis in the major discipline; leadership, residential, and first-term small-group academic programs; double and student-designed majors; formal minors; combined bachelors-masters programs; and academically-intense programs for students with special needs.

Current results and summary: More than 2,000 entering freshmen participate in a small-group academic program during their first year. Approximately three quarters of CU-Boulder degree recipients participate in some type of special academic opportunity before they graduate. The most popular programs are honors courses, study abroad, formal minors, and first-year residential academic programs.

In addition to these top programs, large numbers of graduates also have participated in double majors or degree, independent study, and credit internships.

Over-time comparisons of the number of entering freshmen in small-group academic programs (fall), as well as the number of undergraduate participants in the fiscal year in various programs, are posted as part of CU-Boulder's [Performance Indicators](#). See items B and C under Goal 1.

Data sources and definitions:

- Full-time fall freshmen: First time students, usual IPEDS definition; includes those entering the prior summer and enrolled in their first fall
- Calendar year bachelor's degree recipients: From spring, summer, and fall terms.
- Participation is measured by course enrollments, degree records (e.g., for honors and combined bachelor's/master's), and listings of participants by programs in which participation yields neither credit enrollments or identifiable degrees (e.g., undergraduate research participation).