

S E C T I O N

01

LEVELING UP: YOUR GUIDE TO GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Choosing a University That Supports You

Choosing a graduate school is a personal decision. It's not just about rankings, it's about finding a place where you feel supported, safe, and seen. As an undocumented student, your needs may be different, and that's completely valid. You deserve a space that honors your story and helps you grow.

Some factors to consider

- **Support Services:** Does the school have a Dream Center or staff who support undocumented students? Are there any scholarships or fellowships that don't require a SSN?
- **Financial Aid:** Can you access institutional aid or assistantships using an ITIN? Are you eligible for in-state tuition under AB 540?
- **Campus Climate:** Are there student groups or mentors who understand your experience? Does the school show a commitment to inclusion?
- **Program Flexibility:** Does the program offer part-time, hybrid, or evening options? Are faculty open to learning about and supporting your needs?

There are more factors to consider , but this a start

Paying for Grad School

Paying for grad school can feel overwhelming, especially when you don't have access to federal financial aid. But you are not out of options. Many undocumented students have successfully funded their education through scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and community support. This section will help you explore what's possible.

Scholarship and Grants

There are private scholarships and fellowships that are open to undocumented students, including those without DACA. These are often based on your leadership, academics, or community involvement—not your immigration status.

Visit the USS Website

- [CPP USS Scholarships & Financial Resources](#)

Other Resources:

- [TheDream.US Scholarships](#)
- [Immigrants Rising: Scholarships & Fellowships](#)
- [Scholarships.com – Undocumented Students](#)

Professional School or Graduate School

After earning your bachelor's degree, you've got a few different paths you can take, and two of the most common are graduate school and professional school. They might sound similar, but they're actually different.

Graduate school usually focuses on academic or research-based programs, like getting a master's or Ph.D. in fields such as education, engineering, or sociology. These programs help you dive deeper into a subject you care about and can lead to careers in research, teaching, or specialized industries.

Professional school prepares you for a specific licensed career, such as becoming a doctor, lawyer, dentist, or pharmacist. These programs are more hands-on and are designed to get you ready for certification or licensure in your field.

Example of pathways

Pathway	Example Degrees/Titles
Graduate School	• Master's Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA) • Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)
Professional School	• Law School (J.D.) • Medical School (M.D. / D.O.)
Industry / Workforce	• Certifications (e.g., RN, PMP) • Job Titles (Software Engineer, Project Manager)

CSU Graduate Programs

The California State University (CSU) system is home to a wide variety of graduate programs, including both master's and doctoral degrees, depending on the campus. You can explore programs across the state and find the one that best fits your goals.

And no matter where you go, just know:

CSU Tuition 2026

Programs	Academic Year
Undergraduate	
6.1+ units	\$6,450
0-6 units	\$3,738
Credential	
6.1+ units	\$7,488
0-6 units	\$4,344
Graduate and Other Postbaccalaureate	
6.1+ units	\$8,064
0-6 units	\$4,680
Doctoral Programs	
Doctor of Audiology	\$16,560
Doctor of Education	\$13,296
Doctor of Nursing Practice	\$17,160
Doctor of Occupational Therapy	\$19,320
Doctor of Physical Therapy	\$19,320
Doctor of Public Health	\$20,034

Cal Poly Pomona Graduate Programs

At Cal Poly Pomona, we're proud to offer a wide range of graduate opportunities that may align with your goals and passions.

- Across eight academic colleges, CPP offers 34 master's programs in fields like engineering, education, science, business, and the arts.
- We also offer a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership for those interested in leading change in schools and communities.

Once a Bronco, always a Bronco!

You'll always have a home here, and we're here to support you every step of the way. To learn more about graduate programs at Cal Poly Pomona:

- Visit the Graduate Studies website
- Connect with the Office of Graduate Studies for advising and support

But remember, education is your choice. You get to decide what path is right for you. Whether you choose to stay at CPP, explore another CSU campus, or attend a different university altogether, your journey is valid.

Graduate Studies at CPP

Cal Poly Pomona
Office of Graduate Studies
Student Services Building Building 121, 1st Floor
Orange Center
(909) 869-3331
gradstudies@cpp.edu

[Graduate Studies Website](#)

Explore CSU Graduate Opportunities

The California State University (CSU) system offers a wide range of graduate and doctoral pathways across its 22 campuses. Whether you're preparing for a master's program, planning for a doctoral degree, or exploring academic career pathways, the CSU provides accessible, high-quality options designed to support your goals.

Explore programs and opportunities:

[CSU Apply - Graduate](#)

CSU Graduate Resources You Should Know

Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP)

Supports students who want to become future CSU faculty through mentorship, professional development, and a forgivable loan program.

[CDIP Website](#)

Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Program

Helps students prepare for doctoral study with mentorship, funding for research/travel, and summer research opportunities.

[PDP Website](#)

CSU Ed.D. Programs in Educational Leadership

Doctoral programs designed to prepare leaders in K-12 and higher education with a focus on equity and applied research.

[Educational Leadership Website](#)

CSU Professional Doctorate Programs

Applied doctoral degrees such as the DNP, DPT, and AuD for students pursuing advanced clinical or leadership roles.

[CSU Doctorate Website](#)



WHAT ABOUT PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

What is Professional School

Professional school—like law, medical, dental, or social work—is a real option for undocumented students, even without DACA. Many programs accept undocumented applicants, but it's important to research each school's policies. You don't need a specific major to apply, often prerequisite courses and a strong commitment to the field are considered in the application process. Some careers require a license to practice, which can be a barrier in some states, but places like California have made it possible for undocumented individuals to get licensed.

Funding can be limited since federal aid isn't available, but there are options:

- Private scholarships
- Institutional aid
- Fellowships

Professional School Pathways: Think Beyond Your Major

Your undergraduate degree does not restrict which professional schools you can attend. Programs like law, medicine, or business welcome students from a wide variety of academic backgrounds.

- Example: An Art major can go to Law School.
- Example: A History major can go to Medical School.

Many professional programs value diverse academic backgrounds and experiences. To explore possibilities, check out resources like the [CSU Graduate Programs](#) website as a starting point. While CSU doesn't cover every post-grad option, it's a great place to see the range of programs and requirements.

Tip: Always research specific admissions prerequisites — some programs may require certain coursework or experience regardless of your major.

How Your Major Can Lead to Professional School

No matter what you studied at Cal Poly Pomona, your major can help open doors to professional school. Many programs do not require a specific major and are also interested in your skills, experiences, and passion for the field. For example, you don't need to be a political science major to apply to law school.

Even if your major does not directly match a professional program, your strengths in areas such as writing, problem solving, leadership, or research can still make you a competitive applicant. It is always important to research each program's specific requirements and prerequisites.

Here is how some common CPP majors can connect to professional school pathways:

- Business → Master of Business Administration (MBA), Law School (J.D.), Public Administration (M.P.A.)
- Biology or Chemistry → Medical School (M.D./D.O.), Dental School, Pharmacy School, Veterinary School
- Psychology → Clinical Psychology (Psy.D./Ph.D.), Social Work (M.S.W.), Counseling,
- Engineering → MBA, Law School (especially patent or tech law), Architecture (M.Arch.)
- Liberal Arts or Political Science → Law School, Public Policy, Education (Ed.D. or credential programs)
- Kinesiology or Health Science → Physical Therapy (D.P.T.), Occupational Therapy, Nursing (M.S.N./D.N.P.), Public Health (M.P.H.), Occupational Therapy
- Education → Teaching credentials, Educational Leadership (Ed.D.), School Counseling
- Animal Science → Veterinary School (D.V.M.), Animal Nutrition, Public Health, or Agricultural Policy
- Architecture → Master of Architecture (M.Arch.), Urban Planning, Sustainable Design, or Construction Management
- Education majors → Teaching credentials, Educational Leadership (Ed.D.), or School Counseling

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: UNDOCUPROFESSIONALS

UndocuProfessional believes that undocumented professionals deserve equal opportunities and should never be discriminated against because of their legal status. Their mission is to create pathways for success by breaking down barriers that many face when completing their education and entering the workforce.

Through a strong community and partnerships with schools, businesses, and companies, UndocuProfessional works to adopt career pathways and nondiscriminatory policies that empower undocumented professionals to thrive.

What they offer

Entrepreneurship & Freelancing Hub

- Step-by-step guides on how to start a business or work as an independent contractor.
- Business planning tools like Business Model Canvas and Design Thinking Worksheets.

Entrepreneurship Fund

- Grants for undocumented entrepreneurs working on projects that create positive social change.

ITINs, EINs, and Taxes Guide

- How to apply for an ITIN.
- Use your ITIN to get an EIN.
- File taxes as a business owner or independent contractor.
- Includes sample forms, tax tips, and a checklist.

Workshops and Webinars

- Free resources to help undocumented individuals pursue educational and career goals.
- Tools, guides, and support for starting and growing a business or launching an LLC.



undocuprofessionals.net



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[@undocuprofessionals](https://www.instagram.com/undocuprofessionals)

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL AND GLOBAL EDUCATION (CPGE)

What is CPGE?

CPGE is Cal Poly Pomona's continuing education division that provides accessible, career-focused learning opportunities for adult learners, working professionals, and community members. It serves as the university's hub for professional development, workforce training, global education, and lifelong learning. CPGE offers flexible options including evening, weekend, hybrid, and online pathways to support learners at any stage of their professional journey.

Learning Paths at CPGE

CPGE organizes its programs into several pathways to meet different goals:

- **Professional Development Certificates**
 - Short-term programs that help learners build specialized skills for career advancement. Examples: Construction Management, AutoCAD.
- **Industry & Technical Training**
 - Hands-on programs for technical, engineering, construction, and manufacturing fields. Examples: Assistant Brewer Training, Plastics Engineering Technology.
- **Public Sector & Government Programs**
 - Certificates for city, county, and public agency employees. Examples: Local Government Leadership, Public Sector HR Management.
- **Online Learning Programs**
 - Self-paced or instructor-led online courses offered through partners like ed2go. Examples: Discover Digital Photography, Start Your Own Small Business.

Important Note

Online learning programs are offered through CPGE in partnership with approved third-party providers such as ed2go, and are sponsored by Cal Poly Pomona Enterprises. These non-credit courses are not taught by CPP or CPGE faculty and do not apply toward a degree. Course details may change at any time. If you have questions, please contact cpge@cpp.edu.



Visit the official page for full program listings, schedules, and registration:
<https://www.cpp.edu/cpge/professional-development/index.shtml>

Your Journey, Your Choice

As we close this chapter, we want to remind you that education is a deeply personal journey. Whether you are considering graduate school, professional school, or exploring other paths, the choice is yours, and it should reflect your goals, values, and dreams.

In this section, we explored:

- What graduate and professional schools are all about
- The options available to you here at Cal Poly Pomona
- How your major can support your future plans
- The variety of programs out there and how to start thinking about what fits you best

Remember, you do not have to figure it all out alone. If you are curious about graduate school, visit us at USS. We would love to talk through the pros and cons with you. If you are leaning toward a professional path, we can explore it together.

We are here to support you, not to decide for you.

No matter what you choose, know this: you belong in higher education, and your future is full of possibilities. Keep asking questions, keep dreaming big, and keep moving forward on your terms.

Let us keep the conversation going.

