

National University Redesignated as National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD)

The nonprofit university is one of only six four-year institutions in California to receive the prestigious designation from the National Security Agency

La Jolla, CA – October 4, 2021 – With October being cybersecurity awareness month nationwide, National University is proud to announce that the U.S. National Security Agency has extended the University's designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) in recognition of the university's extensive cybersecurity curriculum.

"Your ability to meet the increasing demands of the program criteria will serve the nation well in contributing to the protection of the National Information Infrastructure," Centers for Academic Excellence Program Manager Karen Leuschner wrote to National University in a letter announcing the redesignation. "A highly skilled cybersecurity workforce is a strategic national security advantage."

National University, a nonprofit with a 50-year history of serving working adult learners, educators, and veterans, was the first to receive the prestigious designation in San Diego County in 2013. NU is one of only two institutions in the region to currently hold it. The redesignation of the university's [master's degree program in cybersecurity](#) extends through the academic year 2028.

National University was among the first institutions in San Diego to offer a master's degree in cybersecurity in 2011. Building off that success, NU launched a bachelor's program in 2017. The [Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity](#) curriculum focuses on fundamental security skills, basic information technology management concepts, and ethical issues associated with cybersecurity. It also offers concentrations in computer network defense or digital forensics. The Master of Science in Cybersecurity program offers specializations in ethical hacking and penetration testing, as well as enterprise cybersecurity management

"Cybersecurity is one of the most in-demand, fastest-growing job sectors in the country," said National University Professor Chris Simpson, director of the program. "With the redesignation of the MS Cybersecurity program complete, we will be able to submit our BS Cybersecurity for a program of study review by the NSA."

NU's population of adult learners, military, and underrepresented populations also adds diversity to the field. About 25 percent of NU students identify as Hispanic, 10 percent as Black and 10 percent as Asian. Approximately 25 percent of National University students are active duty or have previously served in the military, and more than half of cybersecurity students are current or former military personnel.

Cybersecurity students gain real world experience while going through the NU program. Graduate students engage with local businesses and nonprofits by providing valuable cybersecurity audits and risk assessments at no charge to the participating organization. Capstone projects and internships allow students to give back to the community while gaining valuable experience to take into the field after graduation. Cybersecurity programs are tailored to meet specific workforce needs conveyed directly to faculty by the University's Cybersecurity Advisory Board, which comprises industry representatives from public, private and government cybersecurity organizations. Additionally, the university has a competitive cybersecurity team that regularly participates in regional competitions.

Recognizing that the best way to grow the cybersecurity workforce is to develop pathways to careers starting in K-12, NU also works with community and industry partners to run the SoCal Cyber Cup Challenge for middle and high school students in San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, Orange and San Bernardino counties. And as a Hispanic Serving Institution, National University was selected by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities to host the STEM Youth Leadership Development Forum in 2017, an interactive day of learning and exploring STEM fields, including cybersecurity, for more than 500 middle and high school students. More recently, the university has been working closely with Girl Scouts on their national STEM initiative to introduce STEM programs to girls at a young age and help to further diversify the cybersecurity workforce.

About National University

National University, a veteran-founded nonprofit, has been dedicated to meeting the needs of hard-working adults by providing accessible, affordable, achievable higher education opportunities since 1971. As San Diego's largest private nonprofit university, NU offers over 75 online and on-campus programs and flexible four-week classes designed to help students reach their goals while balancing busy lives. Since its founding, the NU community has grown to over 30,000 students and 185,000 alumni around the globe, many of whom serve in helping industries such as business, education, health care, cybersecurity, and law and criminal justice. Learn more at [NU.edu](https://www.nu.edu).