



Saddleback College Football Stadium

**Saddleback College's** Cybersecurity and Cyber Defense program offers students a strong academic foundation and a practical pathway into the national cybersecurity workforce. Recognized as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD), Saddleback aligns its curriculum and hands-on training with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Cyber Workforce Framework (DCWF) and the critical priorities of the DoD Chief Information Officer (CIO).

The program is anchored by an Associate in Science in Computer Science, designed to facilitate seamless transfer to four-year institutions while also preparing students for industry-recognized certifications. Notably, students are encouraged to pursue the Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) exam, which meets the minimum certification requirements for multiple DoD Cyber Security Service Provider (CSSP) roles, including Analyst, Infrastructure Support, Incident

Responder, and Auditor.

Saddleback's program uniquely combines academic rigor with immersive training that simulates real-world Security Operations Center (SOC) environments. Students advance through role-based scenarios aligned with DCWF work roles, engaging in activities such as log analysis, intrusion detection, vulnerability assessment, incident response, and risk evaluation. The curriculum is directly mapped to the NICE/NIST Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) and integrates tools and frameworks used in both the private and public sectors.

Through participation in CORE (Cyber Operations Readiness Evaluation) teams, students operate in red, blue, and purple team environments, simulating adversarial engagements and SOC rotations. Live-fire lab exercises, often based on student-accessible cloud infrastructure and open-source Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) platforms, prepare students for real-world environments where analysis, judgment, and speed are critical.

The Cybersecurity and Cyber Defense program at Saddleback College reflects the institution's broader mission: to provide high-quality, accessible education that meets the evolving needs of industry and national security. Whether students choose to pursue transfer opportunities or enter directly into DoD-aligned roles, they graduate with skills and certifications that align with the DoD CIO's vision of a modern, agile cyber workforce.

## DESIGNATIONS

- CAE-Cyber Defense

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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