Since 2008, the Eli Whitney Students Program has offered non-traditional students the opportunity to enroll in Yale College for the completion of the B.A. or B.S. degree. Yale seeks applicants whose academic background, work experience, and community involvement are particularly suited to study at Yale. All candidates must present evidence of high academic potential, maturity, and clear motivation for their proposed course of study.

There are generally 25-30 students in the program in any given year, and current students range in age from 25-65. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds, life experiences, jobs and careers, and college experiences. Moreover, the Eli Whitney Students Program is the most common pathway for veterans to enroll in Yale College. What unites them is a strong understanding of their purpose for seeking a Yale education, and a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to attend our university. Admissions rates to the Eli Whitney Students Program closely parallel those of traditional undergraduates.

The program was designed in part to meet the needs of students unable to attend college full-time by offering the opportunity to enroll part-time and take a minimum of three courses per year. Eli Whitney students are allowed up to seven years to complete the B.A. or B.S., though most graduate in four to five years. Students in the program tend to choose both options—full- or part-time enrollment—and many benefit from the program’s flexibility by taking varying numbers of courses each term. Current students tend to elect 3.5 course credits per term, or 7 course credits per year, on average, as compared to the traditional undergraduate’s schedule of 4.5 credits per term and 9 course credits per year.

Eli Whitney students do not live in the colleges, though they are each affiliated with a residential college. The current Eli Whitney colleges are Berkeley, Hopper, Ezra Stiles, Silliman, Timothy Dwight, and Trumbull colleges.

Advising is provided by a faculty adviser (for incoming students), a peer liaison, and the dean of the residential college. If an Eli Whitney student seems to be having difficulties in a course, he or she should be referred to the dean of the residential college with which he or she is affiliated. Other inquiries may be addressed to the director of the Eli Whitney Students Program, Dean Risa Sodi (risa.sodi@yale.edu), SSS 32 (1 Prospect Street, lower level).

Eli Whitney students apply for their status to the appropriate associate director of undergraduate admissions by an established deadline, are admitted after a careful screening process, and pay tuition on a per-course basis. They are undergraduates in all effects and purposes, and are included on the class lists routinely sent to instructors, often with the letters “DS” (degree, special) or “EW” (Eli Whitney) in the “Class” column.

Beginning this year, Eli Whitney students will have to option of designating a class year (based on the number of graduation credits accumulated), thus allowing instructors and the DUS to easily determine whether or not they qualify for seminars restricted to sophomores, juniors, or seniors.

Information about the Eli Whitney Students Program is contained in the Academic Regulations in the YCPS.