

The Journey Begins...

Handbook

**PROCEDURES &
GUIDELINES
FOR THE
GRADUATE
COORDINATOR**

FRESNO STATE

Research and Graduate Studies

FROM THE DEAN OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

DEAR GRADUATE COORDINATOR:

This is your handbook! Whether you are a new appointee to this position or an already experienced graduate coordinator, this handbook is meant to help clarify your role, and to serve as a quick reference guide to those important graduate advisement questions that are an inevitable part of the coordinator/director's job.

Our handbook is not meant to take the place of the university's General Catalog, which will always remain your official resource for procedures. Instead, in this handbook, we have carefully assembled important information from a variety of sources that may already be familiar to you, trying to simplify some of the jargon and arrange the material in an easily accessible, logical manner. Where other sources are critical to understanding and interpreting policy and procedures, we have indicated these in notes at the end of the relevant section.

We hope that you will feel free to share this handbook with others in your program who may find it useful. We also ask that you use this manual and the suggested resources as your first line of inquiry. Our staff is of course always ready to assist you, should you need further answers or explanations. Best wishes for a successful coordinator/director's term, and thank you for your willingness to serve our graduate students!

Sincerely,



James E. Marshall, Dean
Division of Research and Graduate Studies

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For further information about the content in this handbook or for referral to appropriate offices, contact:

Division of Research and Graduate Studies
5241 North Maple Avenue, TA51
Fresno, CA 93740-8027

Website: www.fresnostate.edu/academics/gradstudies
Phone: 559.278.2448
Fax: 559.278.4658

rev: 08/08/17 clr

THE GRADUATE COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR

ROLE

As graduate coordinator/director you are essential to the welfare of our graduate community; you bear the major responsibility for leadership of the graduate program within your department or college/school. As such, you have the important role of liaison with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, and you will need to stay current on policies and procedures related to graduate education.

The following is a general overview of the graduate coordinator's position; more specific duties and responsibilities are determined by the department chair or appropriate administrator and may vary from program to program. The Academic Policy Manual ([sec. 122](#)) contains the full policy on the Graduate Coordinator/Director position.

The graduate coordinator/director works with the department chair and program faculty to

- direct and coordinate the graduate program;
- lead marketing and program recruitment efforts;
- coordinate procedures for admission or denial of graduate program applicants;
- provide initial graduate student advising;
- maintain departmental graduate student records and track all students in the program;
- handle graduate student petitions and appeals, lead graduate program planning and curriculum development, and coordinate program review and assessment; and
- coordinate paperwork required for graduate students as they progress through their program.

Important: The Graduate Program Coordinator's signature is required on all forms filed with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. In your absence, the department chair or other designee has signature authority.

Change of Graduate Coordinator/Director

New and interim appointments should be filed on the "[Graduate Coordinator/Director Official Appointment Notification](#)" form.

RESOURCES

We want you to know that you are not alone! The campus offers many forms of support to help you through your advisement and decision making. We have included here a selection of what we consider the most useful.

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

During your tenure as graduate coordinator/director, you will have access to a large group of administrators, staff, and faculty appointees whose special expertise is important to your advisement role. A short list follows:

University Graduate Committee

The University Graduate Committee is a standing committee of the Academic Senate and consists of representatives from each of the academic colleges/schools and the graduate dean. Members are charged as follows: "The Graduate Committee shall be the deliberative body of the faculty on matters relating to . . . postbaccalaureate and graduate instructional development and delivery; . . . and recommend such university-wide graduate policies, standards, and procedures as are conducive to the maintenance of quality in advanced degree programs" (*APM 129-8*). The committee meets regularly every Tuesday throughout the academic year. Minutes are distributed to the departments through the chair and the department administrative assistants and should be reviewed carefully.

The University Graduate Committee members are elected by the faculty.

Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee

The Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee is a standing subcommittee of the University Graduate Committee and consists of representatives from each of the academic colleges/schools. This committee reviews proposals for course/curriculum changes, deletions, new course proposals, changes in the graduate writing requirement, and catalog copy pertaining to graduate programs. An exception is substantive graduate program changes; these are reviewed by the University Graduate Committee.

Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee members are appointed by the University Graduate Committee.

Departmental Support: Chair, Graduate Faculty, Department Graduate Committee

Your department chair is the primary support for you in your coordinator/director assignment. He or she has signature authority in your absence, and provides advisement and fiscal leadership within the department.

Graduate Faculty: Each graduate program has a designated group of graduate faculty who is primarily responsible for supporting the program and serving as the program's consultative body (a minimum of five, as stated in the *Academic Policy Manual*, [sec. 226](#), "Policy on Graduate Faculty Groups for Graduate Degree Programs" [for graduate faculty] and "Policy for Graduate Faculty Groups for Doctoral Degree Programs" for doctoral faculty). In summary, a member of the graduate faculty or doctoral faculty

- must be a full-time, tenured, or tenure track faculty member;
- must be willing to serve and assume the responsibilities of the graduate/doctoral faculty group, including serving on and/or chairing theses, projects, dissertations, and/or examination committees;
- should show evidence of ongoing scholarly activity and possess expertise specific to the graduate/doctoral program;
- must have been recommended in accordance with program bylaws, have the approval of the department chair and college/school dean, and meet any additional criteria the department may recommend.

Your department's graduate faculty and graduate committee help interpret and adjudicate departmental policy, course and curriculum, and other related graduate issues.

College/School Support

The academic college/school dean provides college-level leadership, resources, and linkage to overall university administrative personnel and policy decisions. The college/school University Graduate Committee representative reports to the college/school.

Division of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS)

The graduate dean, along with the staff, offer specific expertise related to the major areas of graduate studies. Coordinators/directors are encouraged to stop by the office and become acquainted with the staff early in their advisement career.

PUBLICATIONS/FILES

At some point, you will probably need to consult one or more of the following publications, which, along with your students' files, can be considered the "core" of a coordinator's/director's library.

General Catalog	University catalogs for the past five years — our university's limitation on a student's time to degree — may be needed for consultation. This is one of the most critical of your resources. Official policy is recorded here. The current catalog and an archive of past catalogs are available online. Detailed information regarding graduate policies and procedures is found in the Graduate Studies Regulations section of the online catalog (under <i>Regulations</i>).
Academic Policy Manual	Indispensable! This regularly updated manual defines roles such as that of the University Graduate Committee and contains official procedural statements on such matters as plagiarism, grievance, etc. (Available through the department or via the website .)
Guidelines for Thesis Preparation	The Graduate Division publishes Guidelines for Thesis Preparation , which details the process and requirements for thesis submission.
Format and Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation	The Format and Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation is a requirement for doctoral students undertaking their dissertation. The dissertation process, all formatting requirements, and requirement sample pages can be found in this document.
Student Files	Files for all program students must be carefully maintained and updated. Copies of all critical paperwork and student contacts should be kept. For your general information, the DRGS retains Petitions of Advancement to Candidacy and degree clearance paperwork permanently in Onbase, the university's imaging system. Retention of all other departmental paperwork (student contact notes, etc.) may be determined within the individual program.
Chart Your Course	Chart Your Course is a guidebook is designed for use by students. It explains the three basic steps (admission to graduate standing, advancement to candidacy, and awarding of the graduate degree) and provides other information supplemental to the graduate degree experience.

ELECTRONIC SUPPORT

DRGS Website	The Division of Research and Graduate Studies website includes comprehensive information for you and students on the following: admissions, financial aid, procedures and guidelines for new and current students, deadlines, handbook, thesis, news and events, and access to forms. Encourage use of our website for your graduate students' convenience.
Graduate Net Initiative	The Graduate Net is a federally-funded program focused on improving, expanding, and developing resources for graduate student success from first contact to degree completion. Student services include the Graduate Net online portal, program application support, academic and professional development opportunities, and a number of fellowships and grants. The Initiative also supports graduate faculty in expanding access to their academic programs through more robust outreach efforts and improved online teaching and mentoring.
Research and Sponsored Programs	As a division of Academic Affairs under the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, Research and Sponsored Programs ' mission is to advance research and external support by providing leadership and professional assistance for faculty, students and staff in pursuit of a wide range of educational goals.
PeopleSoft Questions	PeopleSoft questions should be directed to the Help Desk at 278.5000.
Useful Resources	Cal State Apply Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships FAFSA application Academic Policy Manual (APM) Chart Your Course to a Master's Degree Office of Institutional Effectiveness Career Development Center (Job search)

DIVISION RESOURCES

The dean and staff of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies welcome your personal visit, or telephone/e-mail inquiries regarding matters not answered in this handbook and the sources listed. Many of the staff are also available by special arrangement for seminars, workshops, and meetings to address graduate issues in their area.

James E. Marshall, Dean, jamesm@csufresno.edu

Location	Division of Research and Graduate Studies 5241 N. Maple Avenue, M/S TA51 Fresno, CA 93740-8027
Phone/Fax	Phone: 559.278.2448 Fax: 559.278.4658
Hours	Office hours: M-F: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. & 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Summer office hours (approx. from end of May to mid-August): M-F: 7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. & 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

General Information

Reiko Elledge
Front Desk Manager
relledge@csufresno.edu,
General information regarding DRGS deadlines and events. Requests for Graduate Division forms, publications, and recruitment materials.

Special Admission, Classification, Advancement to Candidacy, Evaluation, and Degree Clearance

Marcee Varela
Graduate Degree Manager
marceev@csufresno.edu,
Coordinator for special admission, changes of graduate degree objective, probation, disqualification, classification requests, advancement to candidacy, program adjustment requests, course validation, graduate degree and certificate of advanced study evaluation; clearance of graduate degrees and certificates of advanced study; letters of certification

Misty Brazil
Graduate Degree Specialist
mistyb@csufresno.edu,
Special admission, changes of graduate degree objective, probation, disqualification, classification requests, advancement to candidacy, program adjustment requests, course validation, graduate degree and certificate of advanced study evaluation; clearance of graduate degrees and certificates of advanced study; letters of certification (alpha section A-D)

Aide Navarro
Graduate Degree Specialist
ainavarro@csufresno.edu,
Special admission, changes of graduate degree objective, probation, disqualification, classification requests, advancement to candidacy, program adjustment requests, course validation, graduate degree and certificate of advanced study evaluation (alpha section E-M)

Melissa Rowe
Graduate Degree Specialist
merowe@csufresno.edu,
Special admission, changes of graduate degree objective, probation, disqualification, classification requests, advancement to candidacy, program adjustment requests, course validation, graduate degree and certificate of advanced study evaluation (alpha section N-Z)

Thesis and Dissertation Review, Publications, Graduate Student Resources

Chuck Radke

Thesis Consultant

cradke@csufresno.edu,

Thesis and dissertation review and final approval; Graduate Writing Studio

Debra Neufeld

Graduate Writing Studio

dneufeld@csufresno.edu

Graduate Writing Studio: operations, consultations, social media, communications

Ronald Dzerigian

Graduate Writing Studio

rdzerigian@csufresno.edu

Graduate Writing Studio: operations, consultations, social media, communications

Christopher Greenwood

Graduate Statistics Studio

cgreenwood@csufresno.edu

Graduate Statistics Studio: operations, consultations, communications, social media

Program Review, Course and Curriculum, Petitions

Liliana Suzuki

Assistant to the

Dean/Budget Assistant

lsuzuki@csufresno.edu

Administrative support to the dean; budget and financials; course and curriculum processes; travel grants

Mary Kelly

Program Review Coordinator

marykelly@csufresno.edu

Undergraduate and graduate program review schedule, site visits, planning/implementation meetings, on- and off-campus panel members, travel arrangements for external reviewer, panel reports, department and dean's responses, university committee reports, and action plans.

Outreach and Retention, Marketing, Website, Publications, Financial Opportunities

Rodrigo Gomez

Graduate Outreach

Coordinator

rodrigog@csufresno.edu

Outreach and retention of students for graduate programs and certificates of advanced study; coordination of related recruitment, special events, and marketing activities; fellowships (e.g., California Pre-Doctoral Scholars Program, Graduate Equity) and scholarships; financial opportunities; maintenance of Graduate Division website

Additional Division Student Support Resources

[Graduate Writing Studio](#)

Henry Madden Library, Room 2119, 559-278-2450

[Graduate Statistics Studio](#)

Henry Madden Library, Room 2119, 559-278-2451

[Graduate Net Initiative](#)

Thomas Building, Room 121, 559-278-1622

TERMINOLOGY

ADMISSIONS

Graduate Standing

Conditionally Classified	The applicant granted conditionally classified graduate standing has <ul style="list-style-type: none">• been admitted to the university• not yet satisfied all program admission requirements.
Classified	The applicant who has been granted classified graduate standing has <ul style="list-style-type: none">• been admitted to the university• fulfilled all program admission requirements. Thus, classified graduate students are those who have been fully admitted to their program.
Special Admission	This process is reserved for those applicants who have not met grade point average eligibility requirements for admission to the university.

Postbaccalaureate Standing

Classified	The applicant granted classified postbaccalaureate standing has been admitted to a credential or certificate program.
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PROGRESS TO DEGREE

Classification	Graduate students admitted conditionally classified must complete program admission conditions in order to achieve classified standing (full admission). The “Classified Graduate Standing Request” form is required for requesting classification for a student. This form can be downloaded from the DRGS website, under the “Form and Policies” link.
Advancement to Candidacy	Advancement to candidacy is a procedure that provides the student with a program of study that has been officially reviewed and approved by both the student’s program faculty and by the graduate dean. Students who have been advanced to candidacy have official permission to proceed toward qualifying for the degree. “Petition of Advancement to Candidacy” forms specific to each degree program can be downloaded from the DRGS website, under the “Form and Policies” link.
Continuous Enrollment	University policy requires graduate students to be continuously enrolled at the university every fall and spring semester until the awarding of the degree. If students have applied for graduation during the summer, they must maintain continuous enrollment in that term as well. This policy does not apply to students who have been granted an official leave of absence.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is frequently part of the graduate coordinator/director's responsibilities. Ideally, the recruiting of students into the graduate program should be a task shared by all program faculty. However, it will probably be the program coordinator/director's responsibility to lead this effort. The DRGS graduate recruiter is available to work with individual graduate programs to assist them with promoting their academic programs to prospective students.

The DRGS regularly sponsors or participates in special recruitment events. DRGS-sponsored events may be held on campus or within the university's service area. Department chairs, graduate program coordinators/directors, and their representatives are frequently invited to participate in these recruitment activities. At other times, recruitment materials from each of the graduate programs are requested, as appropriate. Division staff also participate in recruitment opportunities outside of the San Joaquin Valley.

The following is a partial listing of recruitment opportunities:

- Graduate Info events for your own undergraduate students
- Alumni events or newsletters
- Community organizations
- Career Fairs
- Programs
- Program open houses
- Local/state chapters of professional organizations
- Other institutions with undergraduate programs, but no graduate
- Graduate fairs

The implementation of Radius has provided a way to record and process prospective student inquiries. We are now able to enter all of our inquiries into Radius on a daily basis, whether originating by e-mail, website, or phone. Radius allows DRGS to streamline communication with prospective students as they consider Fresno State for their graduate education needs.

RETENTION

Retention is often as important as recruiting in maintaining a critical mass of students in the graduate program. Commitment of the entire graduate program faculty to student advising and mentoring is essential to ensuring that all students are successful in the timely completion of the program. Some specific suggestions for helping students to complete their graduate degree include:

- Develop a strong support system, including faculty mentoring and student support groups.
- Develop handbooks and orientation sessions to help students understand the critical steps leading to a graduate degree and the many campus facilities and services available to meet their needs.
- Encourage students to select an adviser early and meet with that person regularly.
- Create opportunities for new graduate students to meet the program faculty and other fellow graduate students.
- Encourage graduate student participation in department student organizations such as student chapters of discipline-related professional organizations.
- Keep students well informed about all opportunities for funding.
- Develop and maintain a list of all funding opportunities for students within the department, school/college, university, community, and professional organizations (local and national).
- Seek special opportunities to establish scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships through grants and private funds. Your school/college development officer can assist with this.
- Assure that students are informed on an updated basis about available graduate student services, campus support programs, and facilities (e.g., the Graduate Writing Studio, Disabled Student Services) for meeting their unique needs.

ADMISSIONS

As graduate coordinator/director, one of your central tasks is to help assure that the necessary sequence of procedures and paperwork is being followed. Your careful, timely shepherding of this process is critical to the overall health of your program!

The following section provides an abbreviated outline of the admission procedures as they relate to domestic applicants to a graduate program.

Please see “[International Student Services and Programs](#)” for admission guidelines relating to all international applicants.

THE ADMISSION CYCLE

Students may check the status of their admission at [My Fresno State](#).

- The applicant submits an online application and fee to the university through [CalStateApply](#)
- Official transcripts and test scores are sent to the Graduate Admissions Office in the Joyal Administration Building.
- All transcripts are then entered into PeopleSoft and imaged into the OnBase Imaging system. Transcripts are available for viewing online.
- As soon as university admission personnel determine the applicant’s satisfactory admissibility, an email notification is sent to the graduate program and a PeopleSoft screen is activated for the coordinator’s eventual data entry of the admission decision.
- After reviewing the applicant’s information via PeopleSoft, the graduate coordinator/director can enter their decision in PeopleSoft using the Evaluator Rating page. This will notify the Graduate Admissions office and they will notify the applicant.
- A letter and email is then sent by the Graduate Admissions office to the student indicating program admission status, conditions listed for admission, or denial to the program.

CANCELLATION OF ADMISSION

Admission to the university is for a specific semester. Students who do not register for that semester will have their admission cancelled. When seeking admission to a future semester, students must file a new application, follow the complete application procedure, and pay the application processing fee. Transcripts are on file in OnBase. Transcripts of any added coursework from institutions other than Fresno State must be submitted at the time of new application.

The following pages outline the main aspects of the domestic and international admission process.

ADMISSIONS - DOMESTIC

UNIVERSITY ADMISSION - GRADUATE/POSTBACCALAUREATE

Applicants to graduate programs at Fresno State must meet both university admission requirements and specific program requirements to be fully admitted to the university.

Required Applicant Paperwork

- Application to the university submitted online through [CalStateApply](#)
- A \$55.00, nonrefundable application processing fee.
- Official transcripts from each external college or university previously attended and/or currently attending.

Note: Transcripts must include grades for the most recently completed coursework. If a student is currently enrolled, or has been a student at California State University, Fresno, transcripts will be generated by the university upon receipt of the application.

- Standardized test scores (if required by program)

Note: Applications will not be sent to the graduate program for consideration until the application fee, all transcripts, and residency data (if required) are received. All documents should be received within two weeks after application is submitted.

External transcripts and required test scores are sent to the Graduate Admissions Office in Joyal Administration, 5150 N Maple Ave., MS JA57, Fresno, CA. 93740-8026, or imaging@csufresno.edu, school code 4312.

All program application materials required for your program (letters of intent, letters of recommendation and/or program application) should be submitted directly to the department office. The applicant accesses the program application process through the application confirmation page.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following university requirements for admission:

- have completed a four-year college course of study and hold an acceptable baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association, or shall have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by appropriate campus authorities;
- be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended;
- have earned a grade point average of at least 2.5 on the last degree completed or have attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 (A=4.0) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units attempted; and
- satisfactorily meet the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards for graduate study, including qualifying examinations, as appropriate campus authorities may prescribe.

In unusual circumstances, a campus may make exceptions to these criteria.

Deadlines

Consult the university or the DRGS website for current application deadlines.

PROGRAM ADMISSION

Applicants must also be admitted to either a program's graduate degree, credential, or certificate of advanced study program. Listed below are the requirements applicants must complete with their program.

Required Applicant Paperwork

- Standardized test scores (GRE, GMAT, or MAT), if required; see "[Standardized Testing](#)" section in this handbook. Test requirements vary with the program.
- Submit all program requirements for admission. This may include letters of recommendation, a personal statement, or additional application information.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must

- have met all previously listed university requirements for admission
- meet other requirements as specified by the program

Program Recommendation

Program recommendations for admission are either done online, if dealing with new or returning applicants, or via paper, if the applicant is a continuing student and changing majors.

- Online admissions for new and returning students are handled through the Graduate Admissions office. This involves using PeopleSoft and looking up student information, which contains transcript data, test scores, and evaluation of admissibility. Program decisions are entered in the Evaluator Rating page by the graduate program coordinator/director. Training for this process may be handled by the Graduate Admissions office in group and individual settings.
- Paper admission for continuing students who want to change majors is handled by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Refer to the [Change of Degree Objective](#) section of this handbook (p. 18).

Procedures

Departmental recommendations must be completed according to the appropriate admissions area: University Admissions (electronic) or Division of Research and Graduate Studies (paper).

As program coordinator/director, you may indicate one of three different responses on this form:

Classified Standing

Indicate semester of classification. No further recommendation is needed. No more than 10 units (including transfer and postbaccalaureate) taken prior to achieving classified standing may be used toward the graduate degree program (listed on the "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form).

Conditional Classified Standing

Outline on the Departmental Recommendation form all conditions required for the applicant to attain classified graduate standing.

Note: If and when all conditions have been met, you must submit the "[Classified Graduate Standing Request](#)" form to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies before classified standing can be formally granted.

Unable to Admit

Reasons for not admitting must be provided.

Contact [Graduate Admissions](#) about additional choices.

ADMISSIONS – INTERNATIONAL

International applicants need to comply with varied and different sets of regulations, and therefore follow a special procedure for admission. For summary information, see also “International Student Program Admissions Criteria,” available online via the “[Forms](#)” link on the DRGS website.

Required Applicant Documents

- International applicants should apply online at [CalStateApply](#) and choose the “International” application.
- Nonrefundable application processing fee of \$55.00.
- Submit official Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL) score with a minimum of 80 on the internet-based, or 550 on the paper-based. An International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.5 is also acceptable. (Some programs may require a higher score see Standardized Testing in this handbook).
- Official records: undergraduate transcripts, grade reports, or mark sheets and certified copy of degree certificates or diplomas. They need to be equivalent to a recognized U.S. bachelor’s degree. (Unofficial copies are acceptable for initial admission processing.)
- Official copies of test scores (GRE, GMAT, or others), sent to Fresno State directly from Educational Testing Services. Some programs do not require tests for admission. Students should check with their desired department to find out which test(s) is required. (Unofficial copies are acceptable for initial admission processing.)
- All program application materials required for your program (letters of intent, letters of recommendation, and/or supplemental program application) submitted directly to the department office.
- Financial guarantee/bank statement from the sponsor or self, showing amount and source of support. It may be submitted after the acceptance offer is made by the university. (If the sponsor is a government agency, organization, or other group, a separate letter that includes the terms of sponsorship, in English, must be attached.)
- Transcripts and test scores sent to International Admissions, 5150 N. Maple Ave., MS JA56, Fresno, CA 93740-8026. (Scanned or faxed copies will be considered unofficial.)
- All program application materials required for your program (letters of intent, letters of recommendation, and/or program application) submitted directly to the department office. Applicants will receive department application information as part of the “one-step” application process.

Mailing Address for Official Supporting Documents

- Except for CalStateApply application and the \$55 application fee, please mail all the required official supporting documents to International Programs and Services (ISSP)- International Admissions, 5150 N. Maple Ave., MS JA56, Fresno, CA 93740-8026..

Admission Criteria

To be considered for admission, an applicant must

- hold a minimum converted U.S. grade point average of 2.5 out of 4 point scales;
- satisfactorily meet the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards for graduate study;
- be in good standing at the last higher education institution attended;
- have acquired competence in the English language prior to enrolling in a graduate program or prerequisite courses;
- submit appropriate standardized test scores (GRE, GMAT, or others), if required.

Deadlines

Deadlines vary. Please visit the International Student Services and Programs’ website at <http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/issp/future/>.

ADMISSIONS – GENERAL INFORMATION

STANDARDIZED TESTING

[Fresno State Office of Testing Services](#)

Applicants are required to submit standardized test scores if required by the program. The General Test of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) may be required. Some departments may additionally require the GRE Subject Test.

Note: GRE test scores are not to be used as the sole criterion for judging a candidate's eligibility. However, they may be regarded as providing a useful tool for an objective assessment of the average ability of applicants across disciplines. International applicants need to be informed that the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is required for all applicants from countries in which the official language is not English. Minimal TOEFL requirements differ from program to program (see also International Student Program Admissions Criteria).

Note: The TOEFL or IELTS may be required for domestic applicants with academic documents from countries in which the official language is not English. Contact the Graduate Admissions office or the International Admissions office as appropriate.

GRE Testing information is accessible through the [GRE website](#). Current information on test dates and test sites may also be found in the GRE Bulletin, available from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies and the Testing Services office (Family Food Science, Room 110, 278.2457). GRE scores are available from the National Graduate Records Center for 5 years from the testing date.

General Test: Computer-based testing for the GRE General Test is available on the Fresno State campus through the Testing Services office.

Note: A limited number of fee waivers for the GRE General and Subject tests are available to those who meet the eligibility requirements.

GMAT Testing information is accessible through www.mba.com. Computer-based testing for the GMAT is available in Fresno through the Pearson Professional Center (559.256.0060 or 800.717.4628).

MAT The MAT is offered at the Testing Office by appointment Monday through Friday. Consult the university's Testing Services office (FFS 110, 278.2457) or www.milleranalogies.com

TOEFL Students requesting information on dates, times, scheduling, costs, and sites may be referred to Educational Testing Service (609.771.7100 or www.toefl.org) or IELTS www.ielts.org. The TOEFL Information Bulletin for Computer-Based Testing is available from the Testing Services offices. Computer-based testing for the TOEFL is available on the Fresno State campus through the Testing Services office.

CBEST Information on dates, times, scheduling, costs and test sites can be found by vising [CBEST registration information](#)

SPECIAL ADMISSION

Certain applicants to the university who do not meet the minimum 2.50 GPA for admission may request special admission.

Paperwork

The special admission process is a self-managed procedure. Denied applicants to the university who wish to appeal may do so by requesting special admission. Information detailing the process, "[Guidelines for Postbaccalaureate/Graduate Assessment for Special Admission](#)," and the supporting form, "[Assessment for Special Admission](#)," are available electronically.

Denied postbaccalaureate students who seek information on the special admission process to programs other than a graduate degree or certificate of advanced study should contact the Graduate Admissions Office, Joyal Administration Building, room 121, 559.278.4073.

SPECIAL ADMISSION FOLLOW-UP

The academic progress of all students admitted by special admission must be carefully monitored.

Procedure

Support of the program faculty is essential to this process. Based on sufficient evidence of academic and professional potential, the program coordinator/director may then recommend special admission to the university and to a graduate program to conditionally classified standing. Conditions need to be indicated on the form.

If the applicant is *not* recommended for admission to the university and program, reasons need to be indicated on the form.

BREAK IN ENROLLMENT — READMISSION OF RETURNING STUDENTS

Coordinators must advise students who break their enrollment **for more than one semester** to reapply to the university (full application plus application fee).

“STOP OUT” POLICY

A continuing student in good standing is eligible to register for two subsequent semesters if he/she was enrolled by the eleventh day of instruction and had paid fees for the previous semester. A continuing student can "stop out" for one semester and still maintain registration eligibility without the need to reapply for admission and without the need to request an educational leave of absence. Students must make progress toward fulfillment of degree requirements to remain in good standing. Students who enroll and withdraw and do not complete any course work for two consecutive semesters may lose their continuing student status.

CHANGE OF DEGREE OBJECTIVE

Continuing students wanting to change their plan (graduate program and/or option or advanced certificate program), or add a second graduate degree objective, may do so by filing the required request. All requests to add or change graduate degree or certificate of advanced study objective must be handled in the same manner as a new application to the program concerned.

Required Student Paperwork

- “Add or Change Graduate Degree or Certificate of Advanced Study Objective,” available at the DRGS office or on the DRGS website via the "[Forms and Policies](#)" link.
A \$5.00 non-refundable service fee, paid at the cashier’s window. Submit receipt with form to the DRGS office.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must have a 2.5 cumulative undergraduate GPA, or a 2.5 GPA on the last 60 units (including post baccalaureate work).
- If required, must have completed the appropriate standardized test (GRE, MAT, or GMAT). International students must have also passed the TOEFL exam.
- Must provide a copy of transcript if BA/BS degree received from an institution other than Fresno State.

Deadlines

Requests are accepted throughout the year.

Procedure

The Division of Research and Graduate Studies will evaluate requests and forward “Departmental Recommendation for Graduate Program Admission” form to the program coordinator/director for their program decision.

The Division of Research and Graduate Studies will update student program/plan, student standing, and checklist in the PeopleSoft system.

SECOND GRADUATE DEGREE

There may be some instances where a student will find it desirable to pursue a second graduate degree. Such instances may include preparation for a change in career path, a need for meeting licensure requirements, or a desire to add to professional marketability.

Coordinators should advise students wishing to seek more than one graduate degree to consult with a graduate degree specialist in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Special rules apply regarding time limitation and counting of coursework.

The following additional limitations apply:

- Prior approval from the graduate dean is required.
- A second graduate degree in the same field is not allowed.
- Coursework may not be double counted.

M.A. OR M.S. IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

If the graduate programs currently offered on this campus do not meet students’ interests or specific needs, it is possible for them to design their own program of study through an M.A. (formerly M.A. Special Major) or M.S. in [Interdisciplinary Studies](#). All proposals for a master’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies must be approved by the chairs and graduate program coordinators/directors of the departments concerned prior to the student embarking upon graduate courses that might be included in the core program. Consult the Division of Research and Graduate Studies for details about this degree.

ENROLLMENT/REGISTRATION

CATALOG YEAR

Graduate degree requirements usually are based on the published requirements of the catalog in effect at the time of the student's advancement to candidacy. In certain circumstances, catalog requirements published in the year when the individual student was fully admitted to the program may apply.

CAMPUS DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME STUDENT STATUS

The university defines full-time study as 12 units; however, while undergraduate course units are counted at face value, graduate course units (those numbered in the 200 series) are weighted at 1.5 units per each course unit. Therefore, 8 units of 200 level courses constitute an equivalent full-time study load of 12 units.

FULL TIME VS. PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

For the purpose of reporting enrollment for graduate students, regardless of status:

- Full-time 9 or more units
- Part-time less than 9 units

For the purpose of financial aid (loans, etc.):

- Part-time 1/2 time 6-8 1/2 equivalent units
- Part-time 3/4 time 9-11 1/2 equivalent units
- Full-time 8 units of 200-level courses; or 12 equivalent units from combined 200 and 100 level

Note: "Equivalent units" are calculated at 1.5 units for each 200-level unit, and at face value for each 100-level unit.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

University policy requires all graduate students to be continuously enrolled at the university each semester until the awarding of the degree. Students must also be enrolled in any summer term in which an application for graduation is filed. A full course load is encouraged in order to facilitate timely completion of the degree.

Enrollment in Project (298) or Thesis (299) Units

Initial enrollment in project (298) and thesis (299) units occurs in the department office, where students can obtain the permission and class numbers.

To maintain continuous enrollment after enrolling in all courses toward the degree, including project (298) or thesis (299) units, students must enroll in zero units, as follows:

Project Students

Students who have enrolled in the required number of project (298) units, but have not completed their project, must maintain continuous enrollment by enrolling in 298C (zero units) through *regular* enrollment each semester until the awarding of the degree. Students may enroll twice in 298C with department approval. Additional registrations are not encouraged, and must be approved by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Permission and class numbers for 298C must be obtained from the department.

Thesis Students

Students who have enrolled in the required number of thesis (299) units, but have not completed their thesis, must maintain continuous enrollment by enrolling in 299C (zero units) through *regular* enrollment each semester until the awarding of the degree. Students may enroll twice in 299C with department approval. Additional registrations are not encouraged, and must be approved by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Permission and class numbers for 299C must be obtained from the department.

Comprehensive Examination Students

Comprehensive examination students who have enrolled in all courses toward the degree must maintain continuous enrollment by enrolling in GS Continuation (zero units through Continuing and Global Education). After one semester of enrollment in GS Continuation, students must maintain enrollment thereafter by enrolling in GS 299C (zero units through *regular* enrollment) each semester until the awarding of the degree. Authorization for enrollment in both GS Continuation and GS 299C must be approved by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, Frank W. Thomas Building, Room 130. Permission and class numbers for GS299C must be obtained from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.

REQUIREMENT FOR FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The United States Office of Homeland Security (OHS) requires international students on non-immigrant F-1 and J-1 visas to pursue full-time study in a specific program for each semester of enrollment. Full-time study includes 12 weighted academic units of approved prerequisite, corequisite, or graduate program courses. (Note: Graduate 200-series courses have weighting factor of 1.5 per course unit.)

- Using the definitions for full-time student status, international graduate students are advised to work closely with their faculty advisor to plan a program of full-time study for each semester of enrollment.
- Graduate program coordinators/directors should not admit international students to their programs in those instances where a sufficient number of courses are not expected to be available during each semester of enrollment in the program.

PLANNED EDUCATIONAL LEAVE REQUESTS

Students wishing to temporarily suspend their formal studies in order to pursue other activities that will help clarify and contribute to their educational goals may request a planned leave.

- A student may be granted only one leave of absence during their post-baccalaureate career. Planned educational leaves will be granted for 2 to 4 consecutive semesters. It is not necessary to file for a leave of absence for only one semester. Students may “stop out” for one semester and return the following semester without losing registration eligibility. If a student “stops out” more than one semester, a new application for admission is required along with the application fee
- Students must submit a “Planned Educational Leave Request” form to the Admissions & Records Service windows, in the north lobby of the Joyal Administration Building. Forms are available from Joyal Administration Building, Room 106, or [online](#).
- Planned educational leaves of absence do not change the existing five-year time limit for completion of the degree.
- The Registrar’s Office will send notification to the student and program coordinator.
- A student who is approved for a planned leave will be considered a continuing California State University, Fresno student, for the period of time granted for leave.

TIME TO DEGREE

A time limit of five years from the earliest course listed on the student’s approved “Petition of Advancement to Candidacy” form is allowed for completion of the graduate degree. A limited number of outdated courses (older than five years) may be validated. (See “Course Validation,” under “Appeals and Petitions” [in this handbook, p. 23], for further information relevant to this procedure.)

In rare circumstances only, extensions beyond the five-year limit (no more than two additional years) may be granted, per Title 5, California State Education Code. Contact the Division of Research and Graduate Studies 559.278.2448.

REQUEST FOR RECORD ADJUSTMENT

The university does recognize that on rare occasions students will experience exceptional situations that prohibit them from completing some procedures in a timely manner. A student may request consideration for record adjustment by completing the “Record Adjustment Petition” (i.e., Retroactive Withdrawal, Retroactive Add, Change of Grading Option or Other).

- The form is available at the Admissions and Records Public Contact Windows or [online](#).
- Post-baccalaureate/graduate students requesting retroactive withdrawal must obtain all required signatures on the form.
- Return the completed form with appropriate documentation to the receptionist in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.
- Decisions will be sent to students approximately 10 working days from the date the form and supporting documents were submitted.
- If approved, students must pay a \$10.00 administrative fee.

TUITION AND REGISTRATION FEES

Tuition and registration fees are listed on the [Accounting Services](#) office for each semester for both domestic and international students. Summer extension fees may be found in the [Division of Continuing and Global Education \(CGE\) Catalog](#). Fees are subject to change.

Students may check their [My Fresno State Portal](#) to see if they have an outstanding balance. If fees are not paid, they will be dropped from their classes.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

The “[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)” form serves as a guideline for progress toward and completion of the degree. Please encourage completion of this step early in the student’s program. Your careful review, as graduate coordinator/director, is important.

Required Paperwork

- “[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)”
- *If transfer work is listed on the petition:* Course description and graduate degree program description demonstrating that the course could have been used toward a graduate degree at the other institution; the course numbering and grading systems; information clarifying whether the institution used the semester or quarter system; and one official transcript of the transfer work in a sealed envelope.

Eligibility Criteria

The student must have

- achieved Classified Standing;
- fulfilled the graduate writing skills requirement;
- passed the GRE Subject Test (if required);
- passed the Department Qualifying Examination (if required);
- completed at least 9 units at Fresno State toward the proposed program;
- attained a minimum program GPA of 3.0 in coursework listed on the advancement petition;
- completed the foreign language requirement (if required).

Deadlines

- Consult the “[Graduate Degree Deadlines](#)” section of the DRGS website for exact deadlines. The advancement petition must be approved by DRGS prior to a student enrolling in the culminating experience and/or applying for graduation.

Procedure

The student must

- schedule an appointment to meet with his or her graduate adviser and complete the “Petition of Advancement to Candidacy,”
- obtain the signature of the graduate program adviser, coordinator/director, and if required, that of the department chair, and college/school dean, and
- return the advancement petition to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies for final approval.

Advising Tips

- Courses used to fulfill General Education curriculum, undergraduate writing “W” courses, 300-series courses, lower division courses, and courses older than five years may not be listed on the advancement petitions.
- A maximum of one-fifth of the program units (e.g., 6 units of a 30-unit graduate degree) listed on the advancement petition may be independent study units.
- A minimum of 70% of a student’s program must consist of 200-series courses.
- A maximum of one-fifth of the program coursework may consist of CR-graded units (e.g., 6 units of a 30-unit graduate degree). Graduate students may not elect to take a course for a CR grade to fulfill either prerequisite or program requirements unless the course is only available for CR/NC grading.
- A maximum of 6 units of CR-graded coursework may apply toward a 30-unit graduate degree.
- A maximum of 9 transfer units may apply toward a 30-unit graduate degree.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

As graduate coordinator, you will need to indicate/verify fulfillment of the following items on the “Petition of Advancement to Candidacy.” Include date where appropriate.

- Classified Graduate Standing (required)
 - Graduate Writing Skills Requirement (required)
 - GRE Subject Test (as required)
 - Department Qualifying Exam (as required), established by the program
 - Foreign Language Requirement (as required), determined within the program
- All students must satisfy the writing requirement as defined by the student’s program and approved by the University Graduate Committee before being allowed to advance to candidacy. For information regarding current policy, see “Graduate Writing Requirement,” available at the DRGS office.

PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT REQUEST

Once a student has been officially advanced to candidacy, the “[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)” may be changed only on the written request of the student and his or her department via a “[Program Adjustment Request](#)” (PAR) form.

APPEALS AND PETITIONS

ACADEMIC OVERLOAD

The maximum allowable load is 16 units for full-time graduate degree students, when one or more courses in the 200 series are included. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be addressed to the Graduate Division on a “Graduate Student Petition for Academic Overload” (available from DRGS and online via the [“Forms and Policies”](#) link on the DRGS website) during the registration period.

COURSE VALIDATION

Course validation determines the student’s current knowledge in outdated (older than five years) coursework. A maximum of one-third of the courses listed on the student’s approved “Petition of Advancement to Candidacy” may be validated. Validation methods are determined individually for each course by the instructor of record.

Required Paperwork

“Recommendation for Course Validation” form (available from DRGS and online via the [“Forms and Policies”](#) link on the DRGS website).

Eligibility Criteria

- Student must have an approved “Petition of Advancement to Candidacy” form on file in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.
- Coursework can only be validated when both the instructor of the course and the graduate coordinator/director have approved the validation method.

Deadlines

- The final day of the term in which the student applies to graduate.

Procedure

Students should pick up the [“Recommendation for Course Validation”](#) form from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies or print it from the DRGS website; meet with the instructor of the outdated course, or if no longer present, meet with the current instructor to determine the method of validation; obtain the instructor’s and graduate coordinator’s/ director’s signatures after validation has been completed; and return the form to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.

- Only courses taken at California State University, Fresno may be validated.
- Course validation may be allowed only when courses fall out of date after the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy has already been approved. Courses older than five years may not be listed in the advancement petition at the time approval of the petition is granted.
- If a “C” has been obtained in a course, then validation is not an option.

GRADUATE STUDENT PETITIONS (General)

Graduate students may, for justifiable and appropriate reasons, petition to waive department, program, or Division of Research and Graduate Studies regulations regarding acceptable academic standards of performance (i.e., curricula, program coursework, grading, timelines, degree progress). Students may also wish to petition for an exception or waiver of university-wide policies under special circumstances, including those pertaining to registration matters, grades, student conduct, or interpretation of established regulations. Decisions on individual cases shall be made in accordance with the procedures detailed in the *Academic Policy Manual*.

GRADING/ACADEMIC CREDITS

ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMIC PROBATION (AAP)

Students enrolled in graduate programs are required to maintain a minimum 3.0 post baccalaureate cumulative grade point average (GPA) prior to advancement to candidacy. Once students have advanced to candidacy, they must maintain a minimum 3.0 program GPA, which includes only coursework listed on the Petition for Advancement to Candidacy.

Graduate students are automatically placed on AAP by the university system when their GPA falls below the minimum GPA of 3.0 required by Title 5, California State Education Code. Upon review, a graduate degree specialist will determine if the AAP notation can be removed for students who are advanced to candidacy based on coursework listed on the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy.

Graduate programs may also place a graduate student on AAP for the following reasons:

- withdrawal from a substantial portion of a program in two successive terms or in any three terms,
- repeated failure to make progress toward the graduate degree, or
- failure to comply with an academic requirement or regulation that is routine for all students or for a defined group of students.

Procedure

- Administrative Academic Probation notation will be automatically recorded to a student's transcript if GPA falls below 3.0.
- Graduate program electing to place a student on AAP for reasons unrelated to the GPA must send a letter to the student outlining reasons for AAP with a copy to the DRGS office.
- DRGS will update PeopleSoft system to AAP. Administrative Academic Probation notation is placed on student's transcript.

ACADEMIC DISQUALIFICATION

- Effective Fall 2007, students who are placed on AAP for any two semesters will be disqualified from the university.
- Graduate students are automatically disqualified by the university system when their postbaccalaureate GPA falls below 2.00 or if they are placed on AAP (Administrative Academic Probation) for any two semesters. Graduate students who are academically disqualified after the posting of semester grades will not be given automatic readmission to the university for the following semester.
- You will need to be prepared for students who may want your support in recommending them for re-admission. Please keep in mind that even with extenuating circumstances, it may not be realistic for academically disqualified students to raise their GPA to the required 3.0.
- The disqualification process automatically places the notation "Academic Disqualification" on the student's transcript. Before this is done, there is an internal checking process by campus staff to determine that the notation is placed on academic records that truly warrant the entry.
- At the end of each term, automated emails are sent to students through the Fresno State Messaging Center informing them of their academic disqualification with a link to the "[Petition for Readmission of Disqualified Graduate or Advanced Certificate Student](#)"
- Programs need to establish a graduate program faculty committee and have a written internal appeals process.
- Timing and deadline dates are to be determined by graduate program faculty and the graduate program coordinator/director.

Note: The graduate program faculty could decide that the timing and availability of faculty will mean that the student will have to wait a semester before the appeal process and decision can be made. If this occurs, the student will need to reapply to Fresno State.

Appeal Process

- Students who choose to petition will need to complete the [“Petition for Readmission of Disqualified Graduate or Advanced Certificate Student”](#) and attach a one-page typed appeal explaining the circumstances of their GPA, with supporting documentation if there were extenuating circumstances.
- Students should make an appointment to meet with the graduate program coordinator/director to discuss their situation. You should take this opportunity to review the student’s academic record.
 - In some cases there may be extenuating circumstances to warrant a request for retroactive withdrawal. If it is evident that a student failed an entire semester and there were extenuating circumstances, with appropriate and strong supporting documentation and justification, the student should be advised to submit a [“Record Adjustment Petition.”](#) A university committee meets every Tuesday to review requests and make decisions. If approved, the adjustment may place the student back into good standing.
- The graduate program faculty committee will be responsible for making the recommendation on whether the student will be approved or denied readmission. The committee should meet, review the student’s petition, and make a recommendation (with conditions, if approved) to the graduate program coordinator/director.

NOTE: It is recommended that students not continue to enroll in “new” 200-level courses until they retain the required GPA. It may be possible to allow the repeat of a failed 200-level course with program coordinator/director’s approval, but grade substitution is not allowed.
- The decision (including conditions, if approved) is recorded on the [“Petition for Readmission of Disqualified Graduate Student”](#) form and student is notified by graduate program coordinator/director. Graduate program coordinator/directors will need to monitor and follow up on disqualified readmitted students and the conditions they are expected to meet.
- Graduate students who have been readmitted to their program after being disqualified will be allowed to continue in probationary status as long as their term GPA is 3.5 or higher. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher will place the student back into good standing.
- It is most important that graduate program coordinators/directors meet with graduate students who are on AAP to ensure that they understand the seriousness of their position and the importance of completing the term with a 3.0 GPA.

Returning to Fresno State in Academic Disqualification Status

If disqualified graduate students choose not to petition for readmission, leave the university, and at some point reapply to Fresno State, they will be required to submit the [“Petition for Readmission of Disqualified Graduate or Advanced Certificate Student”](#) (this form is available online to download) and not pursue the Special Admission process.

PROGRAM DISQUALIFICATION

Graduate program coordinators/directors may request that students be disqualified from graduate programs for other reasons not related to GPA.

Required Paperwork

- Graduate program coordinators/directors send a letter to the student outlining reasons for disqualification from the graduate program with a copy to the DRGS.
- DRGS will update the PeopleSoft system. A notation, “Disqualified from Graduate Program,” is placed on student’s transcript.

CREDIT/NO CREDIT GRADING (CR/NC)

A limited number of CR-graded courses may be used toward a graduate degree program. To apply a CR-graded course toward a graduate degree program, the course must be CR/NC graded only.

- A maximum of 6 CR-graded units may be included on a 30-unit program.
- A maximum of 12 CR-graded units may be included on a 60-unit program.
- Some programs do not allow any CR-graded coursework to be counted toward the degree.

CONTINUING & GLOBAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT (EXTENSION)

On rare occasions, a graduate degree student may use a limited number of extension courses toward the degree. Conditions for enrollment include:

- Students must have special permission from the graduate coordinator/director; the purpose of enrollment may not be to bypass the university fee structure;
- A maximum of 9 units, including any other transfer work, may be used on a 30-unit program;
- 300-level courses may not be used to satisfy requirements toward the graduate degree; and
- Students who have been disqualified from the university may not enroll in 200-level coursework through Extension.

INCOMPLETES

- All courses must be completed prior to the final day of the semester or term when a student expects to graduate.
- “I’s,” “RP’s,” and “RD’s” are types of incomplete grades.
- A student with an “I” (Incomplete grade) in a course cannot re-enroll in that course. The student must either earn a grade or wait a year for the grade to convert to an “IC.” An “IC” is a failing grade.

REPETITION OF COURSES/GRADE SUBSTITUTION

Students pursuing a graduate degree program may repeat a course; however, grade substitution is not allowed.

RETROACTIVE WITHDRAWALS

Students unable to withdraw from a course within the allotted time period for withdrawals due to extenuating circumstances or university error may file a “[Record Adjustment Petition](#)” form (available on the [Admissions and Records](#) office website). The form must be completed with justification for request, required signatures (instructor, graduate program coordinator/director, and Dean of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies), and attached supporting documentation prior to submitting to the Admissions and Records Office, Joyal Administration Building service windows. Students will be notified of the committee’s decision.

UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT IN 200-LEVEL COURSES

Last-semester undergraduate seniors wanting to enroll in 200-level courses must meet all criteria listed on the “[Undergraduate Petition to Enroll in Graduate \(200-Level\) Courses](#)” form, available from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies and online on the DRGS website under the “[Form and Policies](#)” link. At the time that the petition is approved, the department will be notified and a permission number can then be issued to the student so that they may add the course(s). Permission numbers **may not** be issued prior to the approval of the petition.

THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

The culminating experience for a student's graduate program is carefully spelled out by the California State Education Code, Title 5. Graduate degree students may choose one culminating experience from the three, as determined by the particular program. Not all programs offer all three options. A doctoral student's culminating experience is determined by the specific program.

Certain advising tips apply equally to all forms of the culminating experience, and as such, deserve your special attention as graduate coordinator/director:

- Once enrolled in a particular culminating experience and having earned an RP grade, students may not switch to an alternative. For example, a student who has received a semester/term RP grade for units in a thesis may not file a "[Program Adjustment Request for a Graduate Degree](#)" (PAR) to change to a project. However, had this same student not yet enrolled for units or withdrawn from the university during the semester/term (thus receiving no RP grade), he or she could file a PAR to change the selection indicated on the approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form.
- The **total number of units** assigned for the thesis or the project may not exceed 6, or be less than 2.
- Advisers should counsel students that they are expected to be appropriately enrolled each semester while working on their project, examination, or thesis (see also [Enrollment/Registration](#)).
- Advisers should assure that the culminating experience selected by the student is appropriate to that student's particular program emphasis and career goals.
- It is imperative that programs and individual committee advisers set **early** dates for completion of the exam, thesis, or project. This will ensure sufficient time for completing the review, grading, and submission of graduate degree clearance paperwork by the graduate coordinator/director to the Graduate Division by the posted deadline. Students are counting on the timely posting of their degrees! If the required, signed clearance forms have not been submitted by the deadlines listed, students' graduation dates may be delayed or postponed to the following semester or term.

Additionally, for both the thesis and project:

- Grades must be submitted on the "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form. This is the only acceptable method for submitting these grades. Faculty should not enter thesis or project grades online as they do for other courses.
- It is important that faculty members meet regularly with the student to analyze progress toward completion of the thesis/project.
- No academic distinction is made between a thesis and a project. Either one is acceptable as a means of fulfilling the requirements of the graduate degree. Coordinators/directors provide essential guidance and instructions on whether a student should enroll in 298 (project) or 299 (thesis).

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Catalog Definition

A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination evidence independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained in accordance with the records retention policy of the California State University.

Paperwork

Graduate Coordinators/Directors must submit a "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form, with required signatures and date indicated for completion of the exam.

Eligibility Criteria

An approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form must be on file with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

Deadlines

The exam must be completed in time for the "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form to be issued by the deadline (available at the "[Graduate Degree Deadlines](#)" section of the DRGS website.)

Procedure

- The process varies from program to program, as appropriate to the discipline. Each program should establish its own procedures and policy (including appeals policy) and have it available in writing to all graduate students.
- Copies of examination questions and responses must be kept on file.

THE PROJECT

Catalog Definition

A project is a significant undertaking of a pursuit appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It must evidence originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It must be described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.

Content Summary

- A project reflects applied field research or creative effort, often suited to the student's individual and/or professional goals.
- A project allows application of technical skills and knowledge with a practical emphasis.

Paperwork

- Varies with program requirements. Usually, a project committee form, signed by the committee members and the graduate coordinator/director, is required.
- The "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form, with required signatures, must be submitted to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies by the posted deadline at the end of the semester/term in which the student intends to graduate. The form indicates the grade for the project assigned by the committee for the enrolled project units. (See "Graduation" [in this handbook, p. 33] for complete discussion of required paper work and procedures.)

Eligibility Criteria

An approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form must be on file with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies one semester prior to signing up for project units in the department.

Deadlines

The project must be completed in time for the "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form to be issued by the deadline (available at the "[Graduate Degree Deadlines](#)" section of the DRGS website.)

Procedure

- Project committees are formed according to departmental specifications and guidelines. Frequently, project committees consist of two committee members rather than three, as required for the thesis.
- Rules governing format and content are determined by the program. Most programs follow the general layout required for theses ([Thesis Guidelines](#)). The project guidelines should be published and applied across the program.
- Final project format and quality approval rests with the department. Signatures on the project approval page attest to the approval of committee members regarding form and content of the project, as meeting Title 5 regulations (see Catalog Definition, above).

Advising Tips

Be sure to set early dates for completion and submission of projects in order to ensure time for committee review, grading, and submission of clearance paperwork to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies by the posted deadline.

Digitized Projects

The purpose of the policy is to bring greater visibility to the research done by our university's project (298) students and provide them with an opportunity to have their projects formally reviewed at the university level.

Faculty and students who wish to have a project eligible for binding must complete the electronic submission and review process for dissertations and theses, attesting that the project meets required standards of scholarship, format, and style of the university and the student's program.

Students may submit an endorsed project any time during their semester or term of graduation, but no later than the deadline for completion of academic work for a given semester (Fall, early Dec.; Spring, early May). This deadline is meant to address time constraint concerns from programs designed such that students don't begin writing the project until the beginning of their final semester.

The university's thesis consultant in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies will review the recommended projects. Library-bound projects must meet the manuscript requirements of the thesis (299) detailed in the university's [Thesis Guidelines](#)

THE THESIS

Catalog Definition

A thesis is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It clearly identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, and accurate and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis will be required.

Critical and independent thinking should characterize every thesis. Mere description, cataloging, compilation, and other superficial procedures are not adequate.

Content Summary

- The thesis is a highly structured document resulting from original student research.
- The thesis investigates specific, well-defined questions or issues, frequently forming hypotheses to be tested.
- The thesis relates to an existing body of theoretical or empirical knowledge in the field.

Eligibility Criteria

An approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form must be on file with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies one semester prior to signing up for thesis units in the department.

Paperwork

- "[Committee Assignment](#)" form, available at the DRGS office (Thomas 130) and online. This form should be filed with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies before or at the time of the student's first registration for thesis units in the department.

Signatures of all committee members and the graduate coordinator or department chair are required.

- For a third, off-campus committee member, a curriculum vita or resume must be submitted with the committee assignment form to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.
- For changes in committee chair, second, or third committee members, or in the thesis topic, students must submit a "[Change in Committee Assignment](#)" form.
- "[Human/Animal Subjects Clearance](#)" form, as applicable. To be submitted to the student's departmental Human/Animal Subjects Clearance committee.
- Research involving human subjects should not begin until written approval has been received from the departmental human subjects committee and, where review demands, the university Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). Guidelines and forms for protocols can be obtained from the departmental office or [online](#).
- Research involving live animals on campus must receive approval from the Animal Care and Use Committee. Forms may be obtained from the departmental or college dean's office.
- "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form, with required signatures, must be submitted to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies by the posted deadline at the end of the semester/term the student intends to graduate in. The grade for thesis units is recorded on this form by the thesis chair, on behalf of the committee, and

given to the graduate coordinator/director for final processing (see “[Graduation](#)” [in this handbook, p. 33] for complete discussion).

Deadlines

- Final thesis submission: Approximately seven weeks before last day of classes. Consult the [Dissertation/Thesis Office](#) website for exact date.

Procedure

- Thesis format must follow the university [Thesis Guidelines](#).
- Theses are submitted to the DRGS in two stages: initial review by the thesis consultant (final submission) and clearance review of the corrected final copy for binding (publication copy). By signing the publication copy approval page, the committee signifies that the form and content of the thesis meet Title 5 regulations (see Catalog definition, above) as well as program standards.
- Thesis committees are formed according to guidelines established by the Graduate Committee of the Academic Senate. The committee consists of three members; the chair and at least one other committee member must be appointed members of the department’s Graduate Faculty Group of the student’s degree program. With requisite expertise, an individual who is not a member of the department faculty in the student’s program may serve as a member, with approval of the department chair. (See “[Thesis/Dissertation Committee Policy and Guidelines](#).”)
- When approved for quality, format, and style, the graduate dean signs the publication copy approval page.
- In order for the graduate evaluator to register final thesis clearance or the degree, the final grade for the thesis must have been recorded on the “[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)” form.

Advising Tips

- Set early internal program deadlines for committee review and approval of theses to ensure that students meet university timelines for graduation.
- Students should be directed to the [Dissertation/Thesis Office](#) website, which has a number of indispensable resources designed to assist students through the thesis process.
- Thesis support is available from the Dissertation/Thesis Office in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies or in the Fresno State [Graduate Writing Studio](#). Class and group lectures may be arranged by calling the thesis consultant (ext. 2448).
- Students should inform the thesis consultant about their plans for the semester/term of their thesis submission. Out-of-town students should contact the thesis consultant before leaving campus for advice on the best way to handle these processes from a distance.

THE DISSERTATION

Eligibility Criteria

Students writing a dissertation must have an approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form on file with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies one semester prior to signing up for dissertation units in the department.

Paperwork

Dissertation students should be advised to follow the same paperwork procedure as that recommended for thesis students.

Procedure

- Dissertation format must follow the program's [Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation](#).
- The remaining procedures for dissertation submission and review will follow those for thesis students.

Graduate Writing Studio (GWS)

GWS consultants will meet graduate students at any stage of the writing process. However, consultants are not permitted to proofread and edit papers for mechanical and grammatical errors without explanation or discussion with the student.

GWS consultants are trained to promote collaborative learning, where the student is an active participant in the session; offer practical encouragement and constructive criticism; and direct students to resources that will help the continue their work independently after the session. The goal of each session is for the student to increase his or her skill level, confidence, and independence as a writer.

GWS consultants are trained as well to ask students questions about their writing goals and concerns. Given the length of most graduate-level writing assignments (e.g., theses, projects), consultants will not likely be able to review the entire piece of writing; students should be prepared to identify which portion or portions of an assigned writing task they wish to cover within the timeframe of the consultation.

Graduate Statistics Studio (GWS)

Graduate Statistics Consultants work one-on-one with master's and doctoral students, assisting them in the application of statistical methods. Consultants explain and clarify statistical concepts, and provide support with the creation, import, and cleaning of data. To accomplish this, graduate statistics consultants are trained in effective learning facilitation approaches, and are required to attend training sessions, shadow other consultants, and participate in Studio meetings regularly.

GRADUATION

Students must apply for graduation online at their Student Center and pay a non-refundable application filing fee in order to graduate in a particular semester. Degrees are not granted automatically!

Eligibility Criteria

- A previously approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)" on file in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.
- A minimum program grade point average of 3.0.
- Permission from the graduate coordinator/director to apply for graduation. This permission is granted online. The graduate coordinator/director will receive emails alerting them of the graduation applications awaiting their approval. Upon receipt of the emails, coordinators/directors must click on the "Master's Grad Applicant Search" link at their Faculty Self Service page to find their applicants. This link takes them to a PeopleSoft screen where they may select their graduation applicants and approve or deny.

Deadlines

- The application filing period occurs approximately the first two weeks of the fall and spring semesters, or the first three weeks of the summer term; consult the "[Graduate Degree Deadlines](#)" section of the DRGS website for exact dates.
- For the "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" form, the last day of the semester or final summer term.

Procedure

- Students must apply for graduation online at their Student Center and pay a non-refundable graduation application fee. *Your online approval as coordinator/director is required in order for students to complete the application process.*
- Coordinators/directors should schedule a meeting with graduating students to determine how final requirements (e.g., culminating experience, clearance of incomplete coursework, appropriate paperwork) are to be met.
- "[Graduate Degree Clearance](#)" forms must be submitted to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies by the graduate program coordinator/director. Your signature is required. Students are not permitted to submit clearance forms.
- Graduation in the summer is optional, based on the availability of the student's faculty, and appropriate class required for continuous enrollment.

Note: Do not give your written approval/signature on the graduate application unless you are assured of the presence of critical program faculty during this period.

- The graduate degree specialists review applicants' files to determine completion of all requirements and clear all degrees. Transcripts showing conferred degrees are available after this point only.

HOODING CEREMONY

The Hooding Ceremony has been decentralized to each school/college/department convocation celebration.

In addition, holding the ceremony at the School/College/Department level showcases the experience to undergraduate students who are attending the convocation ceremony and may inspire them to consider pursuing their own graduate degree.

DISTINCTION

Graduate coordinators/directors may inform students who are graduating with distinction (minimum 3.9 GPA in all coursework listed on the approved "[Petition of Advancement to Candidacy](#)") that this honor is noted on the student's diploma and official transcript.

Note: Grade reporting deadlines for the spring semester do not permit notation of distinction in the "Commencement Program" for spring candidates.

PROOF OF DEGREE GRANTED

Coordinators/directors may receive requests from students needing verification that their degrees have been posted. Proof of degree granted is available as follows:

- **Transcripts**

Transcripts with the graduate degree posted are available upon clearance of the degree. However, transcripts showing the degree are **not** automatically sent to the student upon graduation. Transcript requests can only be done in person or by mail. Coordinators/directors should refer students to the Public Contact Windows in the Joyal Administration Building or the transcripts [website](#) to print the transcript request form. There is a fee of \$4.00 for the first copy and \$2.00 for each additional copy through ten.

- **Diplomas**

The Degree Advising Office mails the diploma to the student approximately three months after the degree is posted. Students will receive an email prior to the mailing of their diplomas.

CERTIFICATION LETTERS

Students who have completed all requirements with grades posted in all courses, and need written confirmation of their degrees prior to the official degree granting date (i.e., the final day of the semester) may request a Letter of Certification from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. A small fee is required.

AND BEYOND!

The [Career Development Center](#) offers services for graduate students including individual, hour-long counseling/coaching appointments, walk-in advising for quick questions or resume reviews, career assessments, resume/CV & cover letter critiques, job searching tools, and doctoral program advising. Students can avail themselves of Career Services assistance for free while enrolled, and for six months after graduation. After that, services are available to alumni for a small fee.

CURRICULUM CHANGE

An important part of the graduate coordinator's responsibilities is to oversee the curriculum, forwarding requests for course and curriculum change. To ensure full consideration, be sure that all proposals follow procedures, use the correct forms, and meet submission deadlines! The following section outlines the process and provides some basic tips.

Paperwork

- The "[New Graduate Course Request](#)", "[Graduate Course Change or Deletion Request](#)", and the "[Catalog Statement Revision Request](#)" forms are available online.
- New course proposals should follow Definitions of Graduate Level Instruction in the CSU (attached to the blue form) and Policy on Course Syllabi and Grading as published in Section 241 of the Academic Policy Manual.
- All course and curriculum change requests must be submitted to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, to be forwarded to the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee for consideration.

Procedure

- Change in course prefix, number, or title; course description and/or catalog copy; and new course proposals must be submitted to the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee, via DRGS, for approval on the proper forms.
- The committee chair will invite the program representatives to be present during the first reading of their proposal.
- The committee's action ("Approved," "Denied," or "Deferred") is recorded in the official committee minutes. A request for more information usually accompanies a "Deferred" recommendation.
- If denied or deferred, the proposal may be revised and resubmitted for further consideration.
- Questions or concerns regarding proposals may be addressed to the college/school's representative on the committee, the committee chair, or the dean in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.
- A list of committee members and minutes of the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee are available at the [Office of the Academic Senate's website](#).

WRITING REQUIREMENT

If changes are proposed in the Writing Skills Requirement, please submit the complete program policy that complies with the current policy, along with the "[Graduate Program Catalog Statement Revision Request](#)" form to DRGS by the published fall or spring deadline.

NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

The level of the graduate coordinator/director's involvement with proposals for establishing new programs, including new degrees, options, emphases, concentrations, or Certificates of Advanced Study (CAS), will vary from program to program. For your general information, a basic outline of paperwork and procedure as well as useful advising tips is offered here.

Paperwork

Varies by request. Please contact the Division of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) for information and assistance. Forms are available online in the [Faculty section](#) of our website under "[Proposing New Programs](#)."

Deadlines

Vary by request. Please contact the DRGS for information.

Procedure

- All new program proposals (degree, option, emphasis, concentration, or CAS) must be approved by the University Graduate Committee and other entities on campus.
- Before proposing a new degree, option, emphasis, concentration, or CAS, the department(s) should meet with the graduate dean to discuss the procedures and strategies for new program proposals.
- The department should forward proposals to the DRGS to be placed on the University Graduate Committee's agenda.
- The University Graduate Committee chair will invite program representatives to be present during the preliminary discussion of the proposal.
- The committee chair will send a memo informing the program of the committee's action.
- The request, if approved, will be forwarded to other appropriate Academic Senate committees and placed on the agenda or the Consent Calendar by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate.
- If approved by the senate, the request will be forwarded for the Provost's and the President's signature.
- As needed, the request will be forwarded to the Chancellor's Office for approval.

Tips for Proposals

- Work in cooperation with the department faculty.
- Secure the support of the department chair and college/school dean prior to preparing proposal.
- Start early.
- Early in the process, consult with other departments that you plan to collaborate with or whose courses you plan to list as requirements or electives, or who offer related coursework. Secure letters of support for your proposal from potentially affected departments.
- Expect the process to take longer than you would prefer.

TEACHING ASSOCIATES/GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Teaching Associateships (TAs) and Graduate Assistantships (GAs) provide part-time university employment for graduate students, offering professional growth opportunities through teaching and nonteaching experiences.

Required Paperwork

Review the classification standards to determine the appropriate assignment. All appointments as a Teaching Associate or Graduate Assistant must be made using one of the following methods:

- 1) open hire where a recruitment was posted using eRecruit;
- 2) the student is under an existing advising relationship with a faculty member;
- 3) the position was used to fulfill a commitment of support made to a student at the time of admission.

For procedures and forms visit the Faculty Affairs [website](#) or contact Academic Personnel at 278.3027.

Required:

- Recruitment (if an Open Hire)
- Application
- Appointment Notice
- Evaluation Criteria
- Duties Form

Eligibility

The student must

- be currently enrolled in at least 6 units of graduate study in the department where the teaching associateship/graduate assistantship is to be held,
- be at least conditionally classified in the discipline,
- be making significant progress toward the degree each semester,
- have a 3.0 minimum grade point average, and
- have an approved assignment (*note the limit of six WTUs or 20 hours/week*).

Procedure

After determining the appropriate classification:

- Prepare an appointment notice – BEFORE APPOINTMENT BEGINS
- Appointment notice is processed for signatures with attached evaluation criteria
- Supervising faculty member completes Duties Form

Further Procedural Tips

- For approved assignment guidelines, see Classification and Qualifications Standards of the Trustees of the State of California (available from the *APM* 311-312).
- For further details on eligibility and procedure, consult the full Policy on Teaching Associates and Policy on Graduate Assistants (*APM* 311-312).

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED STUDY

The Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) is the only university-recognized graduate certificate. Advanced certificate programs include no less than 12 semester units and normally do not exceed 16 semester units of study. These programs are either “free-standing” (developed in an area of advanced study where the university does not offer a related graduate degree) or “supplementary” (programs where the university offers a related degree).

CAS structure varies with each program, but all must include a coherent set of postbaccalaureate academic courses, with possible related non-course assignments such as workshops, fieldwork, and practice. There is no culminating experience (thesis or project).

Eligibility Criteria

Students seeking the CAS are expected to meet established admission requirements for the Division of Research and Graduate Studies.

Admission Paperwork

- CAS eligible students follow same admissions process as any post-baccalaureate student (see [“Admissions”](#))
- For continuing postbaccalaureate students: [“Add or Change a Graduate Degree or Certificate of Advanced Study Objective”](#) form.
- Additional CAS program information as requested by department

Note: Applicants to certificate programs are admitted to Classified Postbaccalaureate Standing. Classified Graduate Standing is reserved for students admitted to graduate degree programs.

Program Paperwork

After completing one semester of coursework, the CAS student must file a [“Proposed Program for the Certificate of Advanced Study”](#) form with DRGS. In this program, the following conditions apply:

- A minimum of 12 approved postbaccalaureate semester units (upper division 100-series, graduate 200-series, and professional 300-series courses), with not less than 50% of the total units in 200-series courses.
- Traditional letter grades only
- Courses taken through regular or extension enrollment at California State University, Fresno only; transfer work is not acceptable
- A minimum of 9 units must be unique to the CAS program (coursework not used toward the completion of any other previous, planned or concurrent degree/program). Beyond this, other graduate-level units may be double counted with prior permission of the graduate program.
- Courses older than 5 years will not apply
- Changes made to the approved program require filing a [“Program Adjustment Request for the CAS”](#).

The [“Application for the Award of the Certificate of Advanced Study”](#) must be filed within the first two weeks of the semester or term in which the program is to be completed. The following conditions apply:

- Coursework must be completed within a 5-year time limit
- A minimum grade point average of 3.0 (“B” average) must be obtained
- Grades below a “C” and grades of “I,” “RP,” or “RD” do not qualify toward the CAS program.

Deadlines

All deadlines pertaining to graduate degrees apply to Certificate students. Graduate deadlines are posted on the [“Graduate Degree Deadlines”](#) section of the DRGS website.

Awarding of the Certificate

Upon satisfactory completion of the certificate program per the above conditions, the Certificate of Advanced Study is awarded to the student and is posted to the student’s transcript. All certificates are issued by the program departments.