



California State University
SAN MARCOS



Graduate Student Handbook

Office of Graduate Studies
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Welcome to Graduate Studies



Wesley Schultz, Ph.D.
Dean of Graduate Studies & Research

Welcome to California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)! I am pleased that you had decided to enroll at our campus. CSUSM offers high-quality graduate programs with talented faculty. Our campus values graduate education and takes great pride in the accomplishments of our graduate programs and alumni.

This handbook outlines key university policies for general graduate school requirements and timelines. It is very important for you to become knowledgeable of these policies and attend to them as you progress through your graduate program curriculum. Furthermore, consulting with your graduate program coordinator and faculty advisor is essential toward ensuring your completion of specific requirements for your master's degree.

The Office of Graduate Studies & Research is committed to facilitating your success in graduate school. Our office works closely with graduate programs to provide guidance and support. We also offer services and resources to support graduate programs and graduate students, such as research travel support, academic development workshops, and scholarship opportunities. I hope that you take advantage of the services and resources available to you.

We promote a strong graduate culture and community to enrich your graduate experience. We organize several graduate student activities including our annual Mixer and End-of-the-Year recognition event. I encourage you to participate in graduate program co-curricular activities, and to help build a vibrant graduate community at CSUSM.

I look forward to hearing about your success.

Best wishes,

Wesley Schultz, Ph.D.
Dean of Graduate Studies & Research

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Continuous Enrollment Requirement and Time-limit to Degree

I. GRADUATE STUDIES: CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT AND TIME-LIMIT TO DEGREE

a. Conditionally Classified or Classified graduate students must be continuously enrolled unless an authorized Request for Graduate Student Leave of Absence has been granted by the program and filed with the Office of Registration and Records. No more than two (2) semesters can be excused through authorized leaves of absence. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment are dropped from the graduate program and must reapply to the university and the graduate program to be considered for reinstatement.

b. Requirements for the master's degree are to be finished within five (5) years following admission as a Conditionally Classified or Classified graduate student at CSUSM. Authorized leaves of absence do not extend the time limit for completion of the master's degree.

II. GRADUATE STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE

a. Graduate degree students may take an authorized leave of absence for up to two (2) semesters. 1 Leave of absence can be authorized for conditionally classified or classified graduate students providing the student is: (1) in good academic standing (as defined by the program's requirements), (2) has completed at least six credit hours of CSUSM coursework toward the graduate degree in the program, and (3) has filed a completed Request for Graduate Student Leave of Absence form. The completed form, including signatures of the student's faculty advisor (where applicable) and the graduate program coordinator, must be filed with the Office of Registration and Records before the end of the add/drop period of the term for which the leave has been requested. A leave of absence will not be authorized if the student has completed all requirements

Continuous Enrollment Requirement and Time-limit to Degree

except the culminating experience. Unauthorized leaves and failures to return from an authorized leave of absence will result in the student being dropped from the graduate program. In such cases, the student must reapply to the university and the graduate program to be considered for reinstatement.

b. An authorized leave of absence preserves curriculum rights regarding catalog requirements. A student on a leave of absence may not have access to or use of university resources. Students submitting the completed thesis or final project must be regularly enrolled or enrolled for thesis or project extension credit through the Office of Extended Studies; the completed thesis or final project will not be accepted during the term of an authorized leave of absence.

c. Authorized leaves of absence do not extend the time limit for completion of the master's degree.

d. Students with exceptional circumstances that fall outside this policy may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies for special consideration. A petition must include the recommendation of the graduate program coordinator.

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

I. This Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) applies to graduate students enrolled in master's programs.

II. The writing requirement must be completed before a graduate student advances to candidacy. A student may satisfy the graduate writing requirement in one of two ways:

- an acceptable standardized test score, such as the Analytical Writing subtest of the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) or the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE)
- a paper(s) that receive(s) a passing score as described in Point 5 below.

III. The College/Department/Program from which the student will receive the graduate degree determines the manner by which a student satisfies or does not satisfy the graduate writing requirement.

IV. The College/Department/Program from which the student will receive the graduate degree determines the passing score on standardized tests.

V. If a student is satisfying the graduate writing requirement through a submission of a paper(s), the student's writing should demonstrate graduate level skills in:

- style and format
- mechanics
- content and organization
- integration and critical analysis.

VI. The paper(s) will be scored using a rubric (1 - 4) in each of four areas: "I. Style and Format", "II. Mechanics", "III. Content and Organization", and "IV. Integration and Critical Analysis". The minimal acceptable combined score from all of the four (I-IV) sections is 10 points, with no

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

scores of “1” on any section, resulting in a minimum of a 2.5 average for all sections. A master’s program may establish a higher minimum average score for passing.

VII. Each master’s program will have a remediation protocol for admitted graduate students who do not satisfy the graduate writing requirement on their first attempt. Each master’s program will specify the maximum number of attempts that students may be allowed to satisfy the GVAR.

VIII. Each master’s program will file its respective GVAR and remediation protocol with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research (OGSR). Each master’s program will provide the OGSR with annual aggregate student GVAR performance data.



Master's Thesis And Project Committee Composition

THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE AND COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Every Master's degree program is required to include a culminating experience. The form of this experience differs according to degree programs, but all Master's students must satisfactorily complete either a thesis, a project or a comprehensive examination. The Master's Thesis and Project Committee Composition Policy governs who may serve on the student's committee.

A finished Master's thesis is a scholarly work that is the product of extensive research and related preparation. The University will make Master's theses, abstracts and projects publicly available to other students, faculty, and outside researchers via ScholarWorks, our institutional repository.

I. INTRODUCTION

All members of the thesis or project committee will be individuals with advanced degrees and/or relevant professional experience.

II. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

A. Thesis Committee: Each thesis committee will have a minimum of two members.

1. The chair of the thesis committee, who must be a tenure line CSUSM faculty member, ensures that the thesis conforms to program and university standards. S/He must have knowledge and expertise in the field of study and is responsible for the intellectual integrity, rigor, and quality of research.
2. A second member of the thesis committee must hold a graduate degree
3. The thesis chair and the coordinator/director of the graduate

Master's Thesis And Project Committee Composition

B. Project Committee: Each project committee will have a minimum of two members, one of whom must be a tenure line CSUSM faculty member.

1. The chair of the project committee will normally be a tenure line faculty member, who ensures the culminating project conforms to program and university standards. S/he must have knowledge and expertise in the field of study and is responsible for the intellectual integrity, rigor, and quality of the project.
2. The coordinator/director of the graduate program must approve the composition of the project committee or delegate the approval of its composition to an appropriate faculty member.
3. Any exceptions to the project chair being a tenure line faculty member must be approved by the coordinator/director of the graduate program and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Exceptions will be granted only when the on-tenure track individual has unique knowledge and expertise which will enhance the quality of the project.

Individual programs may have more stringent guidelines for thesis and project committee membership, as approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects

California State University San Marcos acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities for protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects of research covered by this policy statement.

A “human subject” means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or (2) identifiable private information.

This policy applies to all faculty, staff and students whenever they are supervising or conducting any activity involving human subjects, regardless of whether the research is funded, and regardless of whether the subjects are members of the University community. This policy applies to research conducted at other institutions by CSUSM faculty, staff, and students, even if that institution has its own review process.



Institutional Animal Use and Care Committee (IACUC)

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) has responsibility for the care and use of live, non-human vertebrate animals involved in research, research training, experimentation, biological testing, teaching, and related activities. This policy applies to such research conducted:

- By CSUSM faculty, staff, or students or
- At any CSUSM site or facility

The University maintains an Assurance with the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW).

The University will ensure that all individuals involved in the care and use of laboratory animals understand their individual and collective responsibilities for the care and use of animals in research and teaching.



CSU Scholarship Programs

CHANCELLOR'S DOCTORAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM (CDIP)

The Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) is a competitive program that provides loans to a limited number of full-time doctoral students at accredited universities across the United States. Its purpose is to increase the pool of individuals who show promise of becoming strong candidates for CSU instructional faculty positions by providing financial assistance to doctoral students with the motivation, skills, and experience needed to teach the diverse student body in the CSU. It is a competitive program open to doctoral students across the country.

The Program provides loans of up to \$10,000 per year and may borrow a maximum of \$30,000 over a five-year period. Participants who successfully obtain a CSU faculty position will have twenty percent of the loan forgiven for each year of full-time postdoctoral teaching at a CSU campus. Part-time postdoctoral teaching in the CSU may also be considered for partial loan forgiveness.

CSU Scholarship Programs

CSU CALIFORNIA PRE-DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The California Pre-Doctoral Program is designed to increase the pool of potential faculty by supporting the doctoral aspirations of California State University (CSU) students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages. The program places a special emphasis on increasing the number of CSU students who enter doctoral programs at one of the University of California (UC) institutions. Scholars are exposed to unique opportunities to explore and prepare to succeed in doctoral programs.

Opportunities may include:

- One-on-one work with faculty members at the CSU and doctoral-granting institutions
- Funded summer research internship programs in chosen field
- Visits to doctoral-granting institutions
- Travel to national symposia or professional meetings
- Membership in professional organizations
- Journal subscriptions
- Graduate school application and test fees

SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRE-DOCTORAL SCHOLARS

The California Pre-Doctoral Program provides summer research internship opportunities to Pre-Doctoral Scholars. The summer research program is open to all current Pre-Doctoral Scholars, both graduate and undergraduate. The summer research internship generally consists of 8-10 weeks in residence at a University of California campus, or other doctoral institutions.

Graduate Research Dissemination Fund

The Graduate Research Dissemination Fund is designed to help graduate students capitalize on scholarship and creative activity completed at Cal State San Marcos. Appropriate activities include support for travel to a conference at which a student's paper or poster has been accepted, page charges for publication of a paper (in appropriate fields), and other activities designed to help disseminate the results of student research and creative activities.

- Funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, until funds for the current year run out
- Students may only receive one award during their Master's career (in order to extend the funds to many students)
- Potential sources of other support will be taken into account in determining the size of the award
- Group projects as well as individual projects may be funded



Culminating Experience

MASTER'S THESIS, PROJECT, AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAM INFORMATION

Every Master's degree program is required to include a culminating experience. The form of this experience differs according to degree programs, but all Master's students must satisfactorily complete either:

- a thesis,
- a project,
- a comprehensive examination,
- or a dissertation for Ed.D. candidates

A finished Master's thesis is a scholarly work that is the product of extensive research and related preparation. The University will make Master's theses and projects publicly available to other students, faculty, and outside researchers via ScholarWorks, our institutional repository.

THESIS, PROJECT OR DISSERTATION: SUBMISSION GUIDE

Electronic theses, projects, and dissertations are also known as ETDs. The library has created a step by step guideline on how to submit a thesis, project or dissertation electronically. Students must refer to the library website for the submission deadline to qualify for graduation in a given semester. The student's electronic thesis/project/dissertation must meet the American Disability Act (ADA) compliance. **Students are highly encouraged to attend ADA online workshops at the beginning of their culminating experience.**

MASTER'S COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: CERTIFICATION FORM

Some master's programs allow for a comprehensive exam as the culminating experience instead of a thesis or project. The program will set the parameters of the test, if it is available. Students should check with their program's Graduate Coordinator, if they are seeking this as an option, and a certification form must be submitted to the program's Graduate Coordinator.

