



California State University  
SAN MARCOS

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Graduate Studies  
& Research

# Graduate Student Handbook

INSPIRING  
EXCELLENCE

Updated Summer 2016

# Greetings!

Welcome to California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)! I am pleased that you have 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 familiar with 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 here at CSUSM.

I look forward to hearing about your success.

Best wishes,

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

*The Office of Graduate Studies & Research - Inspiring excellence!*

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# University Policies

# Continuous Enrollment Requirement and Time-limit to Degree

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## 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<sup>1</sup>. Leaves 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

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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.

An online copy of the policy is available in the 2016-2018 Catalog on page 118 and in the link below:

[www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/policies.html](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/policies.html)

# Graduate Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement

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## PROBATION

A. A student will be placed on academic probation if, during any academic term, the student fails to maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in all units attempted subsequent to admission to the program.

B. A student may also be placed on administrative- academic probation by the Dean of Graduate Studies for any of the following reasons:

1. Withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of a program of studies in two successive terms or in any three terms. (Note: A student whose withdrawal is directly associated with a chronic or recurring medical condition or its treatment is not to be subject to administrative probation for such withdrawal.)

2. Repeated failure to progress toward the stated degree objective or other program objective, including that resulting from assignment of 15 units of No Credit, when such failure appears to be due to circumstances within the control of the student.

3. Failure to comply, after due notice, with an academic requirement or regulation, as defined by campus policy, which is routine for all students or a defined group of students (examples: failure to complete a required examination, failure to complete a required practicum, failure to comply with professional standards appropriate to the field of study, failure to complete a specified number of units as a condition for receiving student financial aid or making satisfactory progress in the academic program).

C. The student shall be advised of probation status promptly, and shall be provided with the conditions for removal from probation and the circumstances that would lead to disqualification, should probation

# Graduate Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement

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not be removed. Notification shall occur through one of the following actions, as appropriate:

1. Students whose GPA places them on academic probation shall be informed in writing by the department/program's graduate coordinator or designee prior to the beginning of the next term (with a copy provided to the Dean of Graduate Studies).

2. Students shall be placed on administrative-academic probation by the Dean of Graduate Studies, following consultation with the program/department. The probationary student shall be informed in writing by the graduate dean (with a copy provided to the department/ program).

The Dean of Graduate Studies shall inform Registration and Records when students have been placed on or removed from administrative-academic probationary status so that student records can be updated.

D. When a student is placed on academic or administrative probation, s/he must work with the program coordinator to develop a plan for remediation, including a timeline for completion. In the case of administrative-academic probation, the remediation plan must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies, who will send a letter to the student documenting the plan.

E. Without the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, a student cannot be advanced to candidacy if s/he is on either academic or administrative-academic probation.

The disqualification and reinstatement procedures, as well as the full policy of Graduate Probation, Disqualification and Reinstatement can be found in the 2016-2018 Catalog on page 120 and in the link below:

[www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/policies.html](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/policies.html)

# Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

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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

# Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement

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combined score from all of the four (I-IV) sections is 10 points, with no 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.

An online copy of the policy is available in the 2016-2018 Catalog on page 118 and in the link below:

[www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/graduate\\_writing\\_assessment\\_requirement.html](http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/graduate_writing_assessment_requirement.html)

# Master's Thesis And Project Committee Composition

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## 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 program must approve the composition of the thesis committee.

# Master's Thesis And Project Committee Composition

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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.

An online copy of the policy is available here: [www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/masters\\_thesis\\_and\\_project\\_committee\\_composition.html](http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/masters_thesis_and_project_committee_composition.html)

# Culminating Experience

# Culminating Experience

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## 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: ETD SUBMISSION GUIDE

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.

Online information regarding this is available here:  
[www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/completion.html](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/completion.html)

# Research Requirements

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

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The role of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to review all proposed research by CSUSM faculty, students, and staff involving human subjects to ensure that subjects (meaning research participants) are treated ethically and that their rights and welfare are adequately protected.

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. “Research” in the context of IRB is considered to be a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

The IRB committee is composed primarily of faculty members from various disciplines and members from the community. The role of the IRB committee is to assure that research with human subjects is conducted in accordance with legal requirements and ethical principles of Respect for Persons, Beneficence and Justice. These principles require the balancing of risks to subjects against the scientific knowledge to be gained and the potential benefits to subjects and society.

All research activities involving the use of human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before data collection can begin. Investigators may not solicit subject participation or begin data collection until they have IRB approval. We recommend that you submit your IRB application at least 3 months before you plan to collect data.

For information on how to submit your research for IRB review, please visit: <http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/irb/index.html>

An online copy of the policy is available here:

[www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/human\\_subjects\\_protection\\_in\\_research.html](http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/human_subjects_protection_in_research.html)

# Institutional Animal Use and Care Committee (IACUC)

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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.

For information on how to submit your research for IACUC review, please visit: <http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/iacuc/forms.html>

An online copy of the policy is available here:  
[www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/humane\\_care\\_and\\_use\\_of\\_laboratory\\_animals.html](http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/humane_care_and_use_of_laboratory_animals.html)

# Resources

# CSU Scholarship Programs

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## 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.

Online CSU system wide information regarding this opportunity is available here: [www.calstate.edu/HR/cdip/](http://www.calstate.edu/HR/cdip/)

# CSU Scholarship Programs

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## 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.

Online information regarding this opportunity is available here:  
[www.csusm.edu/gsr/csu\\_scholarships/pre-doc.html](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/csu_scholarships/pre-doc.html)

# Graduate Research Dissemination Fund

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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

Online information regarding this opportunity is available here:

[www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/rdf.html](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/rdf.html)

Interested Students may fill out the Application Form and forward it to the Office of Graduate Studies, CRA 5102.

# Graduate Studies Resources

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The Dean of Graduate Studies and Office of Graduate Studies and Research (OGSR) staff promote graduate education, monitors graduate policy implementation, recruits prospective graduate students, and offers resources for graduate students.

## **CSUSM WRITING CENTER**

The Writing Center offers two forms of writing assistance to graduate students: walk-in and appointment-based consultations for coursework; and weekend “retreats,” where students can work undisturbed and get help with all stages of MA theses and projects, and with Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) papers. For more information, contact the Writing Center: [writing@csusm.edu](mailto:writing@csusm.edu)

## **CSUSM AUMNI GRADUATE SCHOOL DIGITAL MAP**

The OGSR maintains a digital map of master’s and doctoral programs where our CSUSM alumni have enrolled. The map can be viewed and updated at: [www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/graduatealumnimap.htm](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/graduatestudies/graduatealumnimap.htm)

## **SEMINARS ON “PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY”**

In collaboration with OGSR, the Faculty Center is hosting a series of seminars on “Preparing Future Faculty.” The workshops provide graduate students with opportunities to learn about instructor responsibilities and to exchange ideas and experiences with fellow graduate students across disciplines. For more information, contact the Faculty Center

# Research Opportunities

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## **SYMPOSIUM ON STUDENT RESEARCH, CREATIVE ACTIVITIES, & INNOVATION**

Each spring CSUSM holds an annual symposium for undergraduate and graduate scholarly activities with the purpose of recognizing outstanding student accomplishments from across the disciplines. Students' research projects include class and individual projects completed during the prior spring and fall semesters. Students present orally before panels of professional experts. Ten finalists receive cash awards and paid travel expenses to participate in the statewide research competition with fellow CSU students from twenty-three campuses. For further information about this event can be found at: [www.csusm.edu/gsr/student/src](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/student/src)

## **CSU STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION (SRC)**

Each year the CSU hosts the statewide Student Research Competition at one of its 23 campuses for CSU undergraduate and graduate students. Students are selected for this event through the campus Symposium event held in the spring. Up to ten Symposium finalists from each of the participating CSU's receive cash awards and paid travel expenses to participate the statewide competition. For further information, please contact OGSR office: [www.csusm.edu/gsr/student/src](http://www.csusm.edu/gsr/student/src)

## **CSUSM STUDENT RESEARCH POSTER SHOWCASE**

The showcase provides an opportunity for students to display and share their research (works in progress included) with the campus community. This is a non-competitive event, but space is limited. CSUSM students from all disciplines are encouraged to participate. The Showcase may be considered preparation for our local Student Research Competition event. For more information, please contact OGSR staff.

## For more information:

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please visit [www.csusm.edu/gradstudies](http://www.csusm.edu/gradstudies)

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