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# Basic Requirements for the Master's Degrees

To receive the master's degree at San Diego State University, the candidate must complete the following general requirements of the Graduate Division and the specific requirements listed in the appropriate sections of Part Three of this bulletin.

## Official Programs of Study

Official programs of study are to be submitted to the Graduate Division for approval after the student has been granted classified graduate standing. The program must be submitted prior to the time the student wishes to be considered for advancement to candidacy. The requirements governing the official program will be those specified in the bulletin in effect at the time the program is approved in the Graduate Division.

Official master's degree programs of study, as recommended by the graduate adviser and approved by the Graduate Dean, are binding unless the student withdraws from the University. Withdrawal is defined as having taken no courses during a calendar year.

A student who withdraws from the University and is later readmitted with classified graduate standing may, with the consent of the graduate adviser and the Graduate Dean, continue with the original official program of study or may be required to submit a new program that complies with the requirements of the current **Bulletin of the Graduate Division** in effect at the time of readmission.

When course requirements listed on an official master's degree program deviate from those prescribed in the **Bulletin of the Graduate Division**, the student must submit to the Graduate Dean a petition for adjustment of academic requirements.

It is the student's responsibility to complete the specific courses listed on the official program of study. No changes will be permitted unless approved by the graduate adviser and the Graduate Dean. No course can be deleted from an official program of study after the course has been completed. This includes a course for which a student has registered and received an "Incomplete" or "SP" grade.

## Foreign Language Requirement

Departments that require students to pass a foreign language examination may direct a student to complete one of the following options or a combination thereof: a departmental examination administered either by the department or by the appropriate foreign language department; the appropriate part or parts of the MLA-Cooperative Foreign Language Test. Students may not attempt the MLA test more than twice.

## Advancement to Candidacy

A student who holds classified graduate standing and who meets the scholastic, professional, and personal standards of the University may be considered for advancement to candidacy for the master's degree provided an official program of study has

been approved by the graduate adviser and the Graduate Dean. For the Master of Arts, the Master of Science, the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Music, the Master of Public Administration, and the Master of Public Health degrees, a student may be advanced to candidacy after completing at least 12 units of coursework listed on the official program of study with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B); for the Master of City Planning, the Master of Science in Counseling, the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling, and the Master of Social Work degrees, the student must have earned at least 24 units of coursework listed on the official program of study with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B); for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Art, or the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Arts, the student must have earned at least 30 units of coursework listed on the official program of study with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B); for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, the student must have earned at least 30 units of coursework listed on the official program of study with a minimum grade point average of 3.25.

In addition to having classified graduate standing and the grade point averages specified above, the student must (1) have maintained the required grade point averages with no grade of less than 2.0 (C) in a program course; (2) have completed all the undergraduate deficiencies and the special requirements of the department or school concerned; (3) have passed the foreign language examination if required; (4) have been recommended for advancement to candidacy by the department or school concerned; and (5) have been approved for advancement by the Graduate Dean. The Graduate Division will send the students written notification of advancement to candidacy.

A minimum of nine units of courses listed on the official program of study must be enrolled in and completed **concurrently with or after** advancement to candidacy for the Master of Arts, the Master of Science, the Master of Public Administration, the Master of Public Health, and the Master of Business Administration degrees. A minimum of 24 units on programs of study for the Master of City Planning, the Master of Fine Arts, the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling, and the Master of Social Work degrees must be enrolled in and completed **concurrently with or after** advancement to candidacy. Removal of incomplete grades does not meet this requirement. A student may not enroll in 799A or take a Plan B comprehensive examination until advanced to candidacy.

## Unit Requirements

Credit earned by correspondence or by examination is not acceptable on advanced degree programs. Courses applied toward one advanced degree may not be used to fulfill the requirements of another advanced degree.

### **Master of Arts, Master of Music, Master of Science, and Master of Public Administration Degrees**

Thirty units (60-62 units for the Master of Science in Counseling degree; 36 units for the Master of Public Administration and the Master of Science degree in Psychology; 42 units for the Master of Science in Nursing) of approved 500-, 600- and 700-numbered courses earned in graduate standing, at least 21 of which must be completed in residence. At least half of the units required must be in 600- and 700-numbered courses. Not more than nine units in approved extension and transfer courses may be used to satisfy the minimum unit requirement for the degree. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 30 units required for the degree. **Not more than a total of six units in courses numbered 797 and 798 will be accepted for credit toward the degree.**

### **Master of Business Administration Degree**

Forty-nine units of 500-, 600-, and 700-level courses specified by the College of Business Administration. A maximum of six units of 500-level courses are acceptable. Up to nine units of coursework may be accepted for transfer credit. **Not more than a total of six units in courses numbered 797 and 798 will be accepted for credit toward the degree.**

### **Master of City Planning Degree**

Forty-eight units of approved 500-, 600- and 700-numbered courses earned in graduate standing, at least 39 of which must be completed in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 48 units for the degree. **Not more than a total of nine units in courses numbered 797 and 798 will be accepted for credit toward the degree.**

### **Master of Fine Arts in Art Degree**

Sixty units of 500-, 600- and 700-numbered courses specified by the Department of Art at least 30 of which must be completed in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 60 units for the degree. **No more than a total of nine units in course 798 will be accepted for credit toward the degree.**

### **Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Degree**

Fifty-four units of 500-, 600- and 700-numbered courses specified by the Department of English and Comparative Literature, at least 36 of which must be completed in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 54 units for the degree. **No more than a total of six units in course 798 will be accepted for credit toward the degree.**

### **Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Arts Degree**

Sixty units of 500-, 600- and 700-numbered courses specified by the Department of Theatre, at least 30 of which must be completed in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 60 units for the degree. **Not more than a total of six units in course 798 will be accepted for credit toward the degree.**

### **Master of Public Health Degree**

Forty-eight units (55 units for Health Services Administration) of approved 500- 600- and 700-numbered courses earned in graduate standing, at least 39 (except for the Maternal and Child Health concentration) of which must be earned in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 48 units required for the degree. The concentration in Maternal and Child Health requires 36 units of residence credit. Twelve additional units of field experience are required unless the student has previous equivalent experience as determined by the graduate adviser. **Not more than a total of six units in courses numbered 797 and 798 will be accepted for degree credit.**

### **Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling Degree**

Sixty units of 600- and 700-numbered courses specified by the Rehabilitation Counselor Program, at least 30 of which must be completed in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 60 units for the degree. **Not more than a total of nine units in course 744 will be accepted; not more than a total of nine units in courses numbered 743 and 745 will be accepted.**

### **Master of Social Work Degree**

Fifty-eight units of 500-, 600- and 700-numbered courses specified by the School of Social Work at least 28 of which must be completed in residence. Courses required to remove undergraduate deficiencies are in addition to the minimum 58 units for the degree.

## **Grade Point Averages**

Grade point averages of at least 3.0 (B) must be maintained in:

1. All courses listed on the official degree program required to complete undergraduate deficiencies.
2. All courses listed on the official degree program.
3. All courses, 300-level and above, taken at San Diego State University concurrently with or subsequent to the earliest course listed on the official degree program, including courses accepted for transfer credit.

No transfer or extension credit may be used to improve the grade point average of units completed at San Diego State University whether computed to determine the average on the official degree program or the overall average.

## **Grade Restrictions for Master's Degree Programs**

No course in which a final grade below "C" (2.0) was earned may be used to satisfy the requirements for an advanced degree. No 500-numbered courses graded Credit/No Credit except those offered for Credit/No Credit only are acceptable on a master's degree program. No undergraduate courses graded Credit/No Credit may be assigned to the deficiencies listed on a master's degree program. At least 70 percent of the units used to fulfill the minimum requirements on a master's degree program shall be letter graded.

Units graded Credit/No Credit earned in practica, field experiences, and internships explicitly stated as specific requirements for a graduate degree will not be included in the determination of the number of non-lettergraded units allowable on the program of study.

### Degree Time Limitations

In all advanced degree curricula and advanced certificate curricula offered at San Diego State University, any course completed more than seven years prior to the date on which all requirements for the degree are completed cannot be used to satisfy unit requirements of the official program of study. This includes a course for which a student has registered and received an "Incomplete" or "SP" grade. On the recommendation of the department or school concerned, the Graduate Council may extend the time for students who pass an examination covering the content of each outdated course. With the approval of the graduate adviser and the Graduate Dean, an outdated course may be repeated, a more recently completed course substituted, or additional coursework of equal unit value assigned. Specifically required courses must either be repeated or validated by examination. In some instances, the graduate adviser and the Graduate Council may authorize students in Plan A to validate outdated courses by passing a comprehensive examination in the subject field of the degree.

Students validating by examination either individual courses or an entire program will be required to specify a date certain by which all requirements for the degree will be completed. Only in exceptional circumstances will this time limit exceed one calendar year from the date of validation. A course or program may be validated by examination only once.

A course completed prior to seven years of the date that the official master's degree program is approved cannot be listed on the program.

### Thesis, Plan A and Non-Thesis, Plan B

Satisfactory completion of a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination, is defined as follows:

(a) A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and the methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization, language, and format, high level of writing competency, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required.

(b) A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form, language use, and organization, and a rationale. It is 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.

(c) 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, high level of writing competency, 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.

**Plan A**, requiring a thesis or project, may be selected by a student seeking the master's degree provided the department or school concerned approves the listing of Course 799A, Thesis, on the official program of study. Three units of "Cr" are granted for the satisfactory completion of the thesis or project following

its acceptance by the student's thesis committee, the department or school concerned, and the Graduate Council. Assigning of "Cr" grade for the thesis is the responsibility of the Graduate Division. Registration in Course 799A, Thesis, is required; however, students will not be permitted to register for this course until they have received official notification of advancement to candidacy from the Graduate Division and have an officially approved thesis or project committee form on file in the Graduate Division. The student must obtain clearance for registration in Thesis from the Graduate Division. Failure to obtain this clearance may result in cancellation of enrollment in 799A.

Two microfiche copies and one bound copy of all master's theses or projects are accessioned by the library of San Diego State University and are subject to the regulations of the library with respect to the circulation or duplication of its cataloged materials. Students should obtain a current edition of the **Master's Thesis and Project Manual**. The manual is available at Aztec Shops Campus Store.

**Plan B**, requiring a comprehensive written examination in lieu of a thesis, may be followed in certain graduate degree curricula as indicated in Part Three of this bulletin. Dates on which comprehensive examinations are given are determined by the department or school concerned. Results of comprehensive examinations must be reported to the Graduate Division by the department or school. Refer to the academic calendar in Part One of this bulletin for deadline dates. To be eligible to take the Plan B comprehensive examination, the student must have been advanced to candidacy.

### Thesis Committee

In consultation with the graduate adviser, a student will select a chair for the thesis committee. The student, the graduate adviser, and the thesis committee chair select the other faculty members who will be asked to serve on the thesis committee. The student must obtain the signature of the thesis chair, the other committee members, and the graduate adviser on the Appointment of Thesis Committee Form and submit that form to the Graduate Division. Determination of whether the research will involve human or animal subjects must be made at this point (see next section). If human or animal subjects will be used, appropriate authorization for such use must accompany the Thesis Committee Form when it is submitted to the Graduate Division. After the committee is approved, the student may enroll in Course 799A, Thesis, through the Graduate Division. Enrollment must occur during the normal registration period each semester. Dates are listed in the academic calendar each year.

Normally, the thesis committee is composed of three full-time faculty members. At least two of the members of the thesis committee, including the chair of the committee, must hold permanent faculty appointments. Two of the committee members should be members of the department or of the interdisciplinary faculty group in which the thesis is written. The third committee member should be from a department other than the department in which the thesis is written.

### Thesis Research Involving Human Subjects or Animal Subjects

**Committee authorization must be obtained in advance of conducting research involving humans or animals.**

Students whose research include procedures to obtain information from people through the use of a survey, interview, observation or experimentation or who are planning to analyze human

tissues, records, samples or other data previously collected from human subjects must obtain approval to conduct this research through the Committee on Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). Application materials used to request a review by the CPHS can be obtained via Internet at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~cphs/> or through the Division of Research Administration of Graduate and Research Affairs.

Students planning to conduct research that involves the use of live, vertebrate animals must receive approval from the University Animal Subjects Committee (UASC).

Upon receipt of written authorization from the relevant committee, CPHS or UASC, students may initiate their research and register for thesis or dissertation if all other requirements are met.

### **Theses in Foreign Languages**

As presentations of original research to the academic community, theses are ordinarily prepared for the University in the English language. In certain cases, however, a student's thesis in the history and literary analysis of non-English languages and literatures may be presented in the subject language. When the departmental graduate adviser and the prospective thesis committee deem this academically appropriate for the specific research topic, the appointment of the student's thesis committee and authorization of the thesis research by the Graduate Dean shall be based on the provisions that (1) an abstract of the thesis shall be presented in English; (2) all members of the thesis committee shall be fluent in the subject language; and (3) student competency in standard written English shall be demonstrated through satisfactory completion of graduate courses in research methodology and bibliography.

### **Submission of Theses**

Final submittal of a thesis requires the formal approval of the officially appointed faculty thesis committee and acceptance of the thesis by the Graduate Dean for deposit in the University Library. The Dean will only accept thesis manuscript that conform to the format and presentation requirements specified by the Graduate Council and the sponsoring department. The Council requirements are fully presented in the San Diego State University ***Master's Thesis and Project Manual***.

The University requires that the student be enrolled in 799A, Thesis, or 799B, Thesis Extension, in the term in which the thesis is granted final approval by the faculty committee and submitted to the Graduate Division for formal review. Unless the thesis manuscript is deemed unready for submission (see below), students will not be required to reregister for Thesis in any subsequent term if the thesis is submitted to the Thesis Review Service by the end of the last working day of the semester or summer session in which the student is enrolled in 799A or 799B. Consult the academic calendar in Part One of this bulletin for specific deadline dates. A "credit" grade will not be recorded or the degree awarded, however, unless the thesis has been approved by the Thesis Review Service and arrangements made to deposit the required copies in the University Library (this can be done most conveniently through Aztec Shops Customized Materials). If this final process is not completed by the noon deadline date listed in the academic calendar, the student will be required to reapply for

graduation in any subsequent term in which he or she expects to graduate.

Manuscripts deemed unready for submission, as determined by the Graduate Dean, will be rejected and returned to the student. Manuscripts will be rejected if there are gross deficiencies of format or presentation or if they are incomplete. Students who cannot meet the final deadline for submission because of such rejection will be required to reenroll in Thesis as well as to reapply for graduation.

Students are expected to make all required changes and submit the final revised manuscript within 30 days following the date of the initial review by the Thesis Review Service. Students who fail to complete the submission process within this period may be required to repeat the process in the term in which the thesis is completed.

### **Final Approval**

The student's official program of study, as approved by the graduate adviser and the Graduate Dean, and all required examinations must be completed in a satisfactory manner in order for the Graduate Council to recommend a student for an advanced degree.

### **Writing Competency**

The University requires that all candidates for an advanced degree demonstrate writing competency in the English language. This requirement may be met by successful completion of the written comprehensive examination in Plan B or final approval of a thesis or project in Plan A.

In cases of organic disorder that make it impossible for the student to fulfill the ordinary obligations of writing competency, alternative modes will be used (Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act).

### **Application for Graduation**

Graduation is not automatic on the completion of degree requirements. An application must be filed in the Graduate Division during the semester or term in which the student expects to be graduated. Refer to the academic calendar preceding Part One of this bulletin for deadline dates.

There is a \$16 commencement fee and a \$16 graduation evaluation and diploma fee. Students who do not graduate in the semester or term for which they have applied must reapply and pay the \$16 graduation evaluation and diploma fee in the subsequent semester or term in which they expect to be graduated.

### **Award of Degrees**

Upon the recommendation of the faculty of San Diego State University, the Board of Trustees of The California State University awards the appropriate degree to a student who has completed the prescribed course of study.

### **Diploma**

The Graduate Division will mail the appropriate diploma to the student approximately eight to ten weeks after the date of graduation.