GRADUATE EDUCATION

Prospective Graduate Students

Cal Poly offers over 50 master’s degree programs covering all of our six colleges:

- College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES)
- College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED)
- Orfalea College of Business (OCOB)
- College of Engineering (CENG)
- College of Science and Mathematics (CSM) & School of Education (SOE)

A complete listing of our graduate programs can be found on the Graduate Programs site at http://grad.calpoly.edu/.

Application for Admission

An application for admission to a Master’s program is available at www.calstate.edu/apply (http://www.calstate.edu/apply). The CSU Apply system allows students to browse through general information about CSU’s twenty-three campuses, view multimedia campus presentations, send and receive electronic responses to specific questions, and apply for admission and financial aid.

All graduate and post-baccalaureate applicants (e.g., master’s degree applicants, those seeking educational credentials, or graduate certificates) must file a complete graduate application as described in the graduate and post-baccalaureate admission materials at https://admissions.calpoly.edu/. Applicants who completed undergraduate degree requirements on a CSU campus and graduated the preceding term are also required to complete and submit an application and pay the $55 nonrefundable application fee.

The CSU advises prospective students that they must supply complete and accurate information on the application for admission, residence questionnaire, and financial aid forms. Further, applicants must submit authentic and certified transcripts of all previous academic work attempted. Transcripts must be official and sent directly from the issuing institution. Failure to complete, accurate, and authentic application documents may result in denial of admission, cancellation of academic credit, suspension, or expulsion (Section 41301, Article 1.1, Title 5, California Code of Regulations). Contact the Cal Poly Extended Education Office (http://www.extended.calpoly.edu) if you have questions about the application process. Extended Education does not guarantee that Professional Certificate courses will be offered unless adequate enrollments are realized. Applicants for certificates involving online courses will not be accepted from the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon; pending interstate distance education regulations.

For additional questions regarding the application process, please email us at gradadmissions@calpoly.edu.

Graduate and Postbaccalaureate Admission Requirements

Graduate and post-baccalaureate applicants may apply for a degree objective, a credential or graduate certificate objective. Depending on the objective, the CSU considers an application for admission as follows:

- **General Requirements** – The minimum requirements for admission to graduate and post-baccalaureate studies at a California State University campus are in accordance with university regulations as well as Title 5, chapter 1, sub-chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations.

- Specifically, a student shall at the time of enrollment:

  1. 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;
  2. be in good standing at the last college or university attended;
  3. have attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 (A = 4.0) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units attempted or have earned a grade point average of at least 2.5 on the last degree completed by the candidate; and
  4. 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.

   - A student who meets the minimum requirements for graduate and post-baccalaureate studies may be considered for admission in one of the four following categories:
Residency Status Determination
The campus Admissions Office determines the residency status of all new and returning students for nonresident tuition purposes. Responses to the application for admission and, if necessary, other evidence furnished by the student are used in making this determination. A student who fails to submit adequate information to establish a right to classification as a California resident is classified as a nonresident. For detailed explanation please refer to https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/mycalpoly/resinfo.html.

International (Foreign) Student Admission Requirements
The CSU must assess the academic preparation of foreign students. For this purpose, "foreign students” include those who hold U.S. temporary visas as students, exchange visitors, or in other non-immigrant classifications. The CSU uses separate requirements and application filing dates in the admission of "foreign students”. All graduate and post-baccalaureate applicants, regardless of citizenship, whose native language is not English and whose preparatory education was principally in a language other than English must demonstrate competence in English. Those who do not possess a bachelor’s degree from a post-secondary institution where English is the principal language of instruction must take either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam.

The Office of Admissions completes an initial portfolio review that includes verification of an equivalent B.A./B.S. degree, a determination of the appropriate level of study and an evaluation of all work completed. The Office of Admissions notifies all applicants of the appropriate level of study and an evaluation of all work completed. Graduate coordinators may require additional documentation to assist them in determining an applicant’s suitability for the program of study.

International students are only accepted for Fall terms and the process for filing an international application can be found at https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international.

Master's Degrees
In graduate courses, students cope with more complex ideas, problems, techniques and materials than in undergraduate courses. Graduate study requires searching and exhaustive analysis, identification and investigation of theories and principles; application of theory to new ideas, problems, and materials; extensive use of bibliographic and other resource materials, with emphasis on primary sources for data; and demonstration of competence in scholarly presentation of the results of independent study.

Regulations governing fees, grading, and financial aid are located elsewhere in the catalog. This section of the catalog reviews university policy and minimum requirements governing graduate studies. It is not, however, all inclusive.

Within these general requirements there are specific departmental requirements for each degree. These are found in the descriptions of master's degree programs within each school’s description. It is important that graduate students, in consultation with their advisors, familiarize themselves with these requirements. Failure to do so may result in a substantial delay in progress towards the degree and graduation. It is the responsibility of the student to ascertain and comply with all university, college and departmental procedures and requirements.

• All available master’s degree programs, graduate certificates and professional certificates can be found on the graduate education website http://grad.calpoly.edu/programs/index.html.

Master's Degree Programs
• Accounting, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/msaccounting)
• Aerospace Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/aerospaceengineering/#graduatetext)
• Research Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/aerospaceengineering/msaerospaceenginereingspecializationinresearch)
• Agricultural Education, Master of (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefoodenvironmentalsciences/agriculturaleducationcommunication/masterofagriculturaleducation)
• Agriculture, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefoodenvironmentalsciences/#graduatetext)
• BioResource and Agricultural Systems Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefoodenvironmentalsciences/bioresourceagriculturalsystems)
• Animal Science Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefoodenvironmentalsciences/ms_animalscience)
• Crop Science Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefoodenvironmentalsciences/cropscience)
• Dairy Products Technology Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefooeenvironmentalsciences/dairyproudtecthentity)
• Environmental Horticulture Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefooeenvironmentalsciences/environmentalthorticulture)
• Food Science Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefooeenvironmentalsciences/fooe)
• Irrigation Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefooeenvironmentalsciences/irrigation)
• Plant Protection Science Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefooeenvironmentalsciences/plantprotectionscience)
• Soil Science Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefooeenvironmentalsciences/soilsce)

• Architectural Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofarchitectureandenvironmentaldesign/architecturalengineering/msarchitecturalengineering)
• Architecture, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofarchitectureandenvironmentaldesign/architecture/masterofscienceinarchitecture)
• Biological Sciences, MA (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/biologicalsciences/ma)
• Biomedical Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/biomedicalengineering/ms)
• Biomedical Engineering Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/biomedicalengineering/ msbiomedicalengineering)
• Specialization in Regenerative Medicine (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/biologicalsciences/msbiologicalsciencesspecializationinregenerativemedicine)

• Biomedical Engineering Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/biologicalsciences/msbiomedicalengineering)
• Specialization in Regenerative Medicine (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/biologicalsciences/msbiomedicalengineeringingspecializationinregenerativemedicine)

• Business Administration, MBA (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/#graduatetext)
• General Management Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/generalmanagement)
• Graphic Communication Document Systems Management Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/graphiccommunication)
• Business Analytics, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/msbusinessanalytics)

• City and Regional Planning, MCRP (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofarchitectureandenvironmentaldesign/cityregionalplanning/masterofcityandregionalplanning)
• Civil and Environmental Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/civilevironmentalengineering/mscivilandenvironmentalengineer)
• Computer Science, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/computersciencesoftwareengineering/mscomputer)
• Computer Science Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/computersciencesoftwareengineering/mscomputer)
• Economics, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/mseconomics)
• Education, MA (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/schoolofeducation/#master_of_arts_in_education)
• Counseling and Guidance Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/schoolofeducation/maeducationspecializationincounselingandguidance)
• Curriculum and Instruction Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/schoolofeducation/maeducationspecializationincurriculuminstruction)
• Educational Leadership and Administration Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/schoolofeducation/maeducationspecializationineducationaleadershipandadministration)
• Special Education Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofsciencemathematics/schoolofeducation/maeducationspecializationinspecialeducation)
• Electrical Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/electricalengineering/mselectricalengineering)
• Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/#graduatetext)
• Biomedical Engineering Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/msbiomedicalengineeringspecialization)
• Integrated Technology Management Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/msbiomedicalengineeringspecializationinintegratedtechnologymanagement)
• Water Engineering Specialization (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/msbiomedicalengineeringspecializationinwaterengineering)
• Engineering Management, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/interdiciplinaryprograms/mbsengineering/#graduatetext)
• Engineering, Specialization in Transportation Planning MCRP/MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/interdiciplinaryprograms/mcrpmengineeringtransportationplanning/#graduatetext)
• English, MA (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofliberalarts/eng/maenglish)
• Fire Protection Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/msfireprotectionengineering)
• Forestry Sciences, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofforestryandenvironmentalsciences/msforestrysciences)
• History, MA (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofliberalarts/history/mahistory)
• Industrial Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/industrialmanufacturingengineering/msindustrialengineering)¹
• Kinesiology, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofflisciencemathematics/kinesiology/mskinesiology)
• Mathematics, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofflisciencemathematics/msmathematics)¹
• Mechanical Engineering, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/mechanicalengineering/msmechanicalengineering)¹
• Nutrition, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofforestryandenvironmentalsciences/foodsciencenutrition/msnutrition)
• Packaging Value Chain, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/mspackagingvaluechain)
• Polymers and Coatings Science, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/chemistrybiochemistry/mspolymersandcoatingsscience)¹
• Psychology, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofliberalarts/psychologychilddevelopment/mspsychology)
• Public Policy, MPP (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofliberalarts/politicalscience/masterofpublicpolicy)
• Taxation, MS (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/orfaleacollegeofbusiness/mstaxation)

¹ Blended BS+MS programs available. See individual program for information.

**Graduate Certificate Programs**

• Fire Protection Engineering Applications (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/fireprotectionengineeringapplications/graduatecertificate)
• Fire Protection Engineering Science (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofengineering/fireprotectionengineeringscience/graduatecertificate)

Cal Poly offers studies leading to graduate certificates through its instructional departments. Graduate certificates carry Cal Poly academic credit and require matriculation into the program. Credit from these certificates can be applied to a master's degree within the unit restrictions specified in this catalog.

**Academic Requirements**

The following conditions and requirements are common to all master's degrees:

• All students shall attempt to satisfy the graduation writing requirement during the first quarter of enrollment. The GWR requirement must be satisfied before advancement to candidacy will be granted.
• A student shall file an approved working formal study plan before the twelfth unit of graduate study is completed.
• A student shall maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (grade of B on a scale where A = 4.0), or better, in all courses in their final formal program of study for their degree. A course in which no letter grade is assigned shall not be used in computing the grade point average.
• A student shall maintain satisfactory scholarship and professional standards. Only those graduate students who continue to demonstrate a satisfactory level of scholastic competence and fitness, as determined by the appropriate university authorities, shall be eligible to continue in such curricula. Students whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory by the authorities of the University may be required to withdraw from all graduate degree curricula offered by the University.
• A student shall successfully complete a culminating experience (thesis, project and/or comprehensive examination).
• A student shall complete all of the graduate work in their formal study plan within the seven-year period, which begins the first term a student is matriculated into their master’s program. Note that conditional admission is considered matriculated.
• A student may elect to meet the graduation requirements in effect in the catalog either at the time the student was admitted to graduate standing (conditional or classified) provided that continuous enrollment was maintained, or at the time of graduation. The student may be required to make substitutions for discontinued courses.

**Graduate Student Continuous Enrollment Policy**

Effective Fall Quarter 2009, graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrollment from the time of first enrollment in a graduate program until completion of the degree. Continuous enrollment is defined as being enrolled during Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters each year. Students can maintain continuous enrollment either by being enrolled as a regular student; obtaining approval for an education or medical leave prior to the quarter when such a leave would begin; or by registering in a special course designated for this purpose, during quarters in which they are not regularly enrolled. The special course, GS 597, is listed in the University catalog and is taken through Cal Poly Extended Education. GS 597 is a one-unit course, at a cost of $289 per unit, offered credit/no credit; credits in GS 597 do not count toward meeting degree requirements. Students who fail to fulfill this continuous enrollment requirement will not be permitted to graduate, even if all degree requirements have been completed, until payment has been made for all quarters of non-enrollment. This requirement is not retroactive to terms prior to Fall 2009. In addition, all graduate students must be enrolled the quarter they graduate.

For further information and a registration form, visit the Graduate Education website at: http://grad.calpoly.edu/students/continuous.html

**General Policies**

**Academic Probation**

A student who is enrolled in a graduate degree program in conditionally classified or classified standing may be placed on academic probation for failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0...
A student who has been admitted as post-baccalaureate classified in order to pursue a credential program shall be subject to academic probation for failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in all units taken in the credential program. A post-baccalaureate unclassified student (one who has not been admitted to either a credential or graduate degree program) shall be subject to academic probation for failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 in all units attempted subsequent to admission to post-baccalaureate standing.

### Academic Disqualification

A graduate or post-baccalaureate student shall be subject to disqualification if while on probation the student fails to achieve a sufficient grade point average to be removed from probationary status. Disqualification may be either from further registration in the program or from further enrollment at the University as determined by the Dean of Graduate Education. Notification of disqualification is made by the Dean of Graduate Education.

### Administrative Probation

A graduate student may be placed on administrative-academic probation by action of the dean of the college (or the dean’s designate) in which the student is enrolled for any of the following reasons:

1. Withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of a program of study in two successive quarters or in any three quarters. (Note: a student who is on an approved leave of absence is not subject to administrative-academic probation for such withdrawal.)
2. Repeated failure to make progress toward the stated degree or program objective 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 which is routine for all students or a defined group of students (for example, failure to complete a required campus or program examination, failure to complete a required practicum, failure to complete a required internship, failure to comply with professional standards appropriate to the field of study, failure to make satisfactory progress in the academic program, etc.).

When such action is taken, students are notified via email and are provided with the conditions for removal from probation and the circumstances that would lead to disqualification, should probation not be removed.

### Administrative Academic Disqualification

A graduate student who has been placed on administrative-academic probation may be disqualified from further attendance in a program by action of the Dean of the college (or the Dean’s designate) in which the student is enrolled for any of the following reasons:

1. The conditions for removal of administrative-academic probation are not met within the period specified.
2. The student goes on academic probation while on administrative-academic probation.
3. The student is subject to administrative-academic probation for the same or similar reason for which the student has been placed on administrative-academic probation previously, although not currently in such status.

When such action is taken, the student is notified via email that includes an explanation of the basis for the action.

### Dismissal from University

This is an administrative action that prevents students from enrolling at Cal Poly for any future quarters. Dismissal may result from academic disqualification, administrative disqualification, or from a disciplinary action.

### Student Conduct and Discipline

It is expected that all Cal Poly students are enrolled for serious educational pursuits and that they conduct themselves so as to preserve an appropriate atmosphere of learning. It is also expected that all students who enroll at Cal Poly are willing to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in the campus community. Association in such a community is voluntary, and students may withdraw from it at any time that they consider the obligations of membership disproportionate to the benefits. While enrolled, students are subject to campus authority that includes the prerogative of dismissing those whose conduct is inimical to the aims of an institution of higher education. While enrolled, students are subject to the regulations governing discipline stated in Education Code Section 66017 and in Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 41301–41302, and to such rules and regulations as have been approved and promulgated by authority of the President.

Copies of Title 5 California Code of Regulations 41301 and 41302, which deal specifically with student disciplinary regulations, are available to all students through the Cal Poly Catalog. Other applicable regulations are contained in this Catalog, in the Campus Administrative Policies, the Standards for Student Conduct, Rights and Responsibilities, and in other official university publications, including the Cal Poly website.

### Advancement to Candidacy

Advancement to candidacy recognizes that the student has demonstrated the ability to operate at and sustain a level of scholarly competence that is satisfactory for successful completion of the degree requirements. The student is then cleared for the final stages of the program, which, in addition to any remaining coursework, includes the thesis, project, and/or comprehensive examination.

The student may request advancement to candidacy only after a formal program of study has been submitted, the graduation writing requirement has been satisfied, and sufficient coursework has been completed to allow the department to make a judgment about the student’s potential to complete the program.

### Academic Advising

Students should contact the graduate coordinator for their master’s program prior to registration for information concerning prerequisites requirements. Then during the first quarter of enrollment, students should contact the graduate coordinator for their program and establish a working formal study plan that outlines all of the courses they plan to take to satisfy their degree requirements.

Departmental or area chairs and graduate coordinators share the responsibility for advising master’s degree students throughout their academic studies. Students are urged to maintain a personal file of
transcripts and other records of all undergraduate and graduate work undertaken, and to make this file available whenever they seek advising.

**Blended Bachelor’s + Master’s Programs**

Blended programs provide an accelerated route for students to complete their academic goals, with simultaneous conferring of both bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Blended programs allow for the possibility of students’ to schedule senior electives that can be applied towards their master degree program, however keep in mind that courses can only be applied toward a bachelor’s degree or a master’s degree but not both. Blended programs provide a seamless process whereby students can progress from undergraduate to graduate status without having to apply through the CSU Admissions process (thereby eliminating the need to pay the application fee). In addition, blended programs provide an opportunity for students to integrate their senior project with their graduate thesis/project. However, students in a blended program must complete all undergraduate requirements, including senior project requirements as detailed in the Cal Poly Catalog, along with their graduate master’s degree culminating event requirements as detailed in the Cal Poly Catalog. A student can align the objectives of their senior project with the objectives of their thesis or project, if a thesis or project is the approved culminating event for the program. A thesis or project does not satisfy, replace or substitute for the undergraduate senior project requirement. Senior project requirements must be completed before a student begins their thesis or project requirements.

Students may be admitted to the blended program in their third or fourth year of undergraduate study. Admission is at the program level with approval from the Graduate Education Office. The specific requirements for admission are set by the program with approval by the Graduate Education Office. Students will take graduate-level courses towards master’s degree requirements, as their schedules permit, provided they have the course prerequisites.

Students admitted to the blended program will maintain their undergraduate status until they have reached a minimum of 180 or a maximum of 196 degree applicable units towards their undergraduate degree. By the end of the first academic term in which the student has earned the appropriate degree applicable units, the student must file a formal change of degree objective form, available on the Graduate Education website www.grad.calpoly.edu. If students wish to change their post-baccalaureate objective, they must formally file this intention by obtaining a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective form, available on the Graduate Education website www.grad.calpoly.edu.

**Change of Post-Baccalaureate Objective**

If students wish to change their post-baccalaureate objective, they must formally file this intention by obtaining a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective form, available on the Graduate Education website www.grad.calpoly.edu.

**Culminating Experience**

The culminating experience for the granting of a graduate degree is the successful completion of a thesis, project or comprehensive examination. The quality of work accomplished, including the quality of the writing, is the major consideration in judging the acceptability of the thesis, project, or comprehensive examination. The student must successfully complete the culminating experience required by the specific program to be granted a graduate degree.

**Comprehensive Examination**

A comprehensive examination is one of the possible culminating experiences for the master’s degree and assesses the student’s ability to integrate knowledge, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination should provide evidence of these abilities and achievement. A record of the examination questions and responses must be maintained by the graduate program.

**Courses Counting Towards Graduation and Credit/No Credit Grading**

Only those letter-graded courses in which an A, B, or C is earned (C- is acceptable) count towards satisfying the total unit requirement for the degree. Courses which are offered only on a credit/no credit basis also satisfy the unit requirement if a credit grade is earned. The equivalent of an A or a B is required to earn credit in such courses.

Graduate students may elect to take courses that are not part of their formal program of study on a credit/no credit basis.

**Credit by Exam for Coursework**

See Evaluation of Transfer Credit (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/academicstandardsandpolicies/evaluationoftransfercredit).

**Enrollment in Graduate Courses**

To enroll in 500-level graduate courses a student must have post-baccalaureate standing, graduate standing, or permission of the instructor.

**Formal Study Plan**

The student should make an appointment with their Program Graduate Coordinator during their first quarter of graduate study to develop a working formal program of study for the master’s degree. A formal study plan is an agreement between the student and the college on the specific coursework to be completed in order to fulfill the requirements for the master’s degree. A copy of the study plan must be submitted to Graduate Education for review and final approval.
Certain 400-series courses may be completed by the graduate student as part of the degree program when this is consistent with university requirements, departmental master’s degree specifications, and the candidate’s formal program of study. The student should always consult their graduate coordinator to make certain that only approved courses are selected, since departmental requirements vary and some courses are excluded. No fewer than 60% of the units required for the degree shall be in courses organized primarily for graduate students (500-level).

Only 400- and 500-level courses are allowed in an approved graduate plan of study. In those programs where specific courses below the 400-level may be essential for a student’s success, the student may be conditionally accepted to the program contingent upon completing those courses. Courses below the 400-level may not constitute any part of the approved units in the formal plan of graduate study.

No fewer than 32 quarter units of a 45-unit program shall be completed while in a matriculated status. In programs with more than 45 units an equivalent proportion (32/45) of units must be taken “while matriculated”. Extended Education (Open University) courses may not be counted as part of the 32 units but special session certificate units may be part of the 32 unit count.

No more than 24 quarter units maximum of approved Extended Education special session (Certificate) courses shall be accepted for the master’s degree.

No more than 12 Open University quarter units should be included in the submission of a formal study plan. A request for special consideration can be filed with the Dean of Graduate Education for more than 12 units if adequate justification is supplied.

In addition to the above rules, the following apply to courses included on the formal study plan:

• No more than nine quarter units shall be in student teaching.
• No more than nine quarter units shall be allowed for a thesis or project.
• No more than 12 quarter units of approved post-baccalaureate (unclassified) course credit may be accepted for the master’s degree.

### Full-Time Graduate Student Status

A full-time graduate student is defined as one taking 8 or more units in a quarter. Students receiving financial aid may need to meet different requirements to be considered full-time and should consult with the Financial Aid Office. Normally graduate students are not permitted to enroll in more than 16 units each quarter.

### Grade Point Calculation for Graduate Degree

Satisfaction of the GPA requirement for the conferring of the master’s degree requires a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or more in the courses taken in the formal study plan. Repeating a course does not remove a lower letter grade from the overall GPA calculation on the student’s transcript.

### Graduate Certificate Programs

An academic graduate certificate program declares that a student has satisfactorily completed a sequence of advanced academic courses that provide instruction in a stand-alone, coherent body of specialized knowledge. It is designed to meet requirements for professional competence, expand access to specialized knowledge, or meet occupational needs for advanced interdisciplinary work.

### Specific Requirements:

• Admission to a graduate certificate program requires a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution with a major in a relevant field of study. The applicant must have attained a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the last 90 units attempted or have earned a GPA of at least 2.5 in the last degree completed.
• Courses taken to satisfy the requirements of a graduate certificate program (24 unit max) may be applied to the requirements of a graduate degree program; however, students must apply separately for admission into a graduate degree program. No course-work for the certificate may be below the 400 level.
• A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for successful completion of a graduate certificate program. Students may not elect to take courses required for the certificate as credit/no credit. A graduate certificate program must be completed within three years.
• Students who are enrolled only in a graduate certificate program are exempt from the continuous enrollment requirement for graduate students.

### Graduate Courses Taken by Undergraduates for Graduate Credit

Cal Poly undergraduates may take courses in the 400 or 500 series for graduate credit while still undergraduates. If they subsequently enter a Cal Poly master’s or credential program, they may petition to have such course credit applied toward their master’s degree or credential program, if the units were not used for the baccalaureate degree.

### Graduation

A student planning to graduate should request a final graduation evaluation from the Evaluations Office approximately two quarters prior to the anticipated date of degree completion. The Request for Graduation Evaluation is submitted to Graduate Education after both the Formal Study Plan and Advancement to Candidacy have been approved. A student cannot graduate without this evaluation.

### Academic Excellence

Master’s degree candidates who are academically in the top 10 percent of their program and are recommended by their Graduate Program Coordinator are eligible to be recognized for Academic Excellence. Nominations must be approved by the appropriate College Dean. If approved, the student will be permitted to wear “honor cords” at commencement.

### Graduation with Distinction

Graduation with Distinction will be determined by the Registrar’s Office after a student’s final Formal Study Plan has been reviewed and approved. It will NOT be awarded at the December or June Commencement Ceremonies. The designation will appear on a student’s final transcript and diploma. The criterion for graduation with distinction is defined on the Office of Registrar’s website and in the Cal Poly catalog: “a student whose grade point average is 3.75 or better, may upon the recommendation of the college dean be designated as ‘Graduating with Distinction’.”
June Only Commencement Awards
Faculty in each program of study should make recommendations for the Outstanding Graduate Student and the Outstanding Graduate Thesis awards to the appropriate Graduate Coordinator. For a program having more than 50 students, two nominations per award can be made. Finalists for the awards may be asked to supply additional information or material to a review committee appointed by the Dean of Graduate Education. The students selected for these awards will only be recognized at the Spring Commencement ceremony.

Graduation Requirement in Writing Proficiency
The Board of Trustees of the California State University has mandated that all students earning undergraduate or graduate degrees in the CSU must be certified as proficient in writing. In accordance with this mandate, all Cal Poly students must demonstrate competency in writing skills as a requirement for graduation.

Graduate students seeking a Master’s Degree should attempt to fulfill the GWR during their first quarter of residency. (Note: Students who do not complete the GWR will not be advanced to candidacy.)

To fulfill the GWR, graduate students should review their program requirements and determine which of the following three options is appropriate:

1. Pass the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE).
2. Earn both a grade of C or better (C- or below does not qualify) AND certification of writing proficiency based on a 500 to 800 word in-class essay in a GWR-approved upper-division course selected from the eligible classes listed on PASS. The GWR-approved course may be taken on a CR/NC basis, but the required final course grade of C or better must still be earned in order to satisfy the GWR component of the class.
3. Document that the GWR was met as part of an undergraduate program of study at Cal Poly or another CSU campus within seven years of matriculation as a graduate student.
4. A score of 5 or higher on the analytical writing section of the GRE would serve to satisfy the GWR.

The Graduation Writing Requirement may be waived, at the discretion of campus authorities, in the following circumstances:

1. An equivalent upper-division, graduation writing requirement was satisfied at another 4-year college or university. Again, no more than seven (7) years may elapse between meeting the requirement elsewhere and beginning graduate study at Cal Poly. Students requesting a waiver must complete the "Application Process and Checklist for a GWR Waiver at Cal Poly" (available on the Writing Skills Program webpage, http://www.writingcenter.calpoly.edu/) before presenting their official, dated documentation to the Writing Skills Program Office, Agriculture Building 10, Room 130.
2. An advanced degree at least equivalent to a Master’s was earned. Supporting documentation, such as a transcript showing the graduation date, must be presented to the Writing Skills Program Office.

Further information on the GWR may be obtained from the Writing Skills Program Office, Agriculture Building (10) Room 130, Phone: 805.756.2067, or on the Writing Skills Program webpage, http://www.writingcenter.calpoly.edu/.

Leaves of Absence
See undergraduate section (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/ academicstandardsandpolicies/registration).

Prerequisites
Each master’s degree program has specific prerequisites, both in courses and in grade-point average. Deficiencies in prerequisites must be removed prior to classified admission. Courses taken for this purpose normally do not count toward fulfillment of the unit requirement for the degree. Conditional admission offers cannot require students to take more than 25% of the minimum required units for their program as additional prerequisites. This 25% restriction translates to a limit of 12 prerequisite units for a 45 unit degree program; 15 prerequisite units for a 60 unit degree program; and 23 prerequisite units for a 90 unit degree program.

Registration
The schedule and instructions for registration and payment of fees are available through the registration and enrollment tab at the MyCalPoly web portal. Detailed descriptions of courses are found in the back of this catalog.

Research Involving Special Conditions
Research that involves the use of human subjects, vertebrate animals, hazardous materials, or information and materials subject to export-control regulations requires special campus review before the study begins. If your research involves any of these special conditions, check with your graduate coordinator and Graduate Education for procedures.

Discontinuation
Matriculated students who have not registered for three consecutive quarters and have not been on an approved leave of absence will be discontinued and will not be allowed to enroll. To enroll again, students must apply for readmission before the deadline dates listed below for each quarter. An application fee must accompany the application for readmission. http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/returning/

Application Deadlines for Returning Students

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<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Quarter</td>
<td>April 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Quarter</td>
<td>July 1</td>
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<td>Winter Quarter</td>
<td>October 1</td>
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<td>Spring Quarter</td>
<td>February 1</td>
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Second Master’s Degree
A student can earn only one master’s degree in any one discipline. A student who wishes to complete a second master’s degree in another discipline, or two master’s degrees simultaneously, must complete all requirements for both degrees. No units of coursework may be used to satisfy requirements in both master’s degree programs.

Report In Progress (RP) Grades
The grade of RP is used in connection with courses that extend beyond one academic term. It indicates that work is in progress and has been
evaluated and found to be satisfactory to date, but that assignment of a grade must await completion of additional work. Work is to be completed within a stipulated time period. The RP symbol shall be replaced with the appropriate final grade within one year for all courses; except for graduate degree theses or project courses for which the time may be up to but may not exceed the overall time limit for completion of all master’s degree requirements. Failure to complete the assigned work will result in the RP being converted to a F for grade point average computation.

**Thesis or Project Report Requirements**

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 methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required.

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 and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written report that includes the project’s significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required. A project report does not need to be reviewed by the Graduate Education office and will not be submitted to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly.

The following are requirements for a thesis committee: 1) that the graduate student have a thesis advisor who is a permanent full-time faculty member from the student’s program; 2) that the thesis advisor and the student recommend, for approval by the graduate coordinator and/or department head, a thesis committee comprising at least three faculty members; 3) that two of these members, one of which is the committee chair, be from the student’s program. Exceptions to the thesis committee composition must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Education.

If a thesis is required in a master’s degree program, a committee-approved copy must be completed in accordance with university specifications. Guidelines to be followed in preparing final copy for filing with the University can be obtained from Graduate Education, or online at www.grad.calpoly.edu.

A copy of the thesis must be received and reviewed by the Thesis Editor in Graduate Education. Upon completion of any required corrections, the student submits the electronic thesis report to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly, a digital archive for the University. These steps must be completed before the degree is awarded.

**Time Limit for Degree**

The time allowed to complete all coursework in the formal study plan, including thesis and project courses, is seven years. The University, at its option, and in exceptional cases, may extend the time frame. Students who wish to extend the seven-year limit must file a petition for special consideration with Graduate Education, explaining the reasons why the extension is necessary, what courses are requested for inclusion in the study plan that will be over seven years old at the proposed time of graduation; and what evidence is offered to support claims of currency in that coursework.