

# GRADUATE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Graduate Program Requirements

A graduate student must meet the department curriculum requirements published in the University Bulletin in the semester the student was admitted and enrolled. Programs that have enacted curriculum changes after publication of the Bulletin must notify students in writing of any changes in degree requirements at the time of enrollment. Updates in requirements may be published in the online Bulletin, the department student handbook, and/or in program advising materials. Continuing students must be notified by the department chair or graduate coordinator in writing with a return receipt required indicating the student's knowledge of the changes. Students readmitted to a graduate program after an absence of two consecutive regular semesters must meet the requirements of the program in place during the semester of their readmission.

## Graduate Program Unit Requirements

The minimum number of credit units for each type of degree program is:

- Master's degrees (M.A., M.S., M.P.H., M.M.): 30 units
- Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.): 60 units
- Doctoral degrees (Ed.D., D.P.T.): 60 units

## Master's Degree Requirements

To award the master's degree, SF State requires that all graduate students seeking a master's degree must:

- Meet the basic admission requirements for the University and the department or degree program;
- Complete two levels of the Written English Proficiency Requirement;
- Complete the specific course requirements leading to the degree (refer to program materials in this *Bulletin* and graduate program handbooks for department requirements);
- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average as a continuing student;
- Complete a Culminating Experience defined by the department/program and approved by the University.

## San Francisco State Scholars Programs (FastTrack)

The San Francisco State Scholars program provides undergraduate students with an accelerated pathway to a graduate degree. Students in this program pursue a bachelor's and master's degree simultaneously. This program allows students to earn graduate credit while in their junior and/or senior year, reducing the number of semesters required for completion of a master's degree. San Francisco State Scholars students will obtain classified graduate degree status at the end of the semester in which they earned 120-semester units.

### Award of San Francisco State Scholars Bachelor's and Master's Degrees:

Upon meeting undergraduate and graduate degree requirements, San Francisco State Scholars students will be awarded a bachelor's and master's degree simultaneously and recognized at the annual San Francisco State Commencement.

- San Francisco State Scholars must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA or better on all courses meeting graduate degree requirements.

- No lower-division courses (100-299) taken in graduate status will count towards the graduate degree.
- Students hold graduate student status for at least two semesters before they are eligible for graduation with both degrees.
- Students must have 1) Planned Course of Study; 2) Advancement to Candidacy; and 3) Proposal for Culminating Experience forms approved by the Division of Graduate Studies to be eligible for completion of the graduate degree.
- Students must submit a Report of Completion or Thesis submission.
- The minimum unit requirement to obtain both undergraduate and graduate degrees is 150 units (120 units and 30 units, respectively).
- If a student decides not to complete the master's degree requirements, they must inform the Division of Graduate Studies in writing. The award of the undergraduate degree will be granted if undergraduate degree requirements are met. There shall be no refund of previously paid graduate fees.

A student who does not maintain continuous enrollment in the San Francisco State Scholars Scholar program, must apply for readmission to the University through CAL STATE APPLY (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>), pay the application fee, and meet additional program requirements.

## Graduate Certificate Requirements

To award the graduate certificate, SF State requires that all graduate students seeking a graduate certificate must:

- Meet the basic admission requirements for the University and apply through the department or certificate program even if a student is already matriculated to a graduate program;
- Complete the specific course requirements leading to the certificate; and,
- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average as a continuing student.

## Graduate Credential Requirements

To award the graduate credential, SF State requires that all graduate students seeking a graduate credential must:

- Meet the basic admission requirements for the University and the department or degree program;
- Complete the specific course requirements leading to the credential;
- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average as a continuing student during the credential program.
- Adhere to the requirements of the specific credentialing body of the credential.

## Doctoral Degree Requirements

Students accepted into one of the two doctoral degrees at San Francisco State offered jointly with the University of California and students in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership should work closely with their academic advisors to ensure that all policies and procedures are being followed. Procedures for continuing student performance in doctoral programs are different from those required for students in master's programs. Review the department/program information in this Bulletin or contact the department office directly for specific requirements and program information for all doctoral degrees.

## Written English Proficiency Requirement

Each graduate student must demonstrate, in an independently written format, the ability to write English correctly and effectively

to explain, defend, or argue discipline-specific issues. The written English proficiency policy (#S16-014) requires two distinct levels of assessment: Level I (admission) and Level II (degree requirement). The Level I requirement must be met prior to admission, or no later than the first year of enrollment. Typical Level I written requirements may include a 4.0/6.0 or above on the Analytic Writing Assessment of the GRE or the GMAT, a score of at least 4.5/6.0 on the essay test of the paper-based [PBT] TOEFL, a minimum score of 24/30 on the Writing section iBT TOEFL, a score of at least 6.5/9.0 on the IELTS writing test, a department placement exam, writing samples, or creative works portfolio as determined by the department. Level I written English proficiency requirements are set by the academic department. Students who do not meet the Level I English Proficiency requirement at the time of admission may be conditionally admitted by the academic department with clear expectations that the student will meet the Level I English Proficiency requirement during the first year of attendance.

Units completed by a student to reach Level I competency cannot be counted on the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form. Students who, within the first year of attendance, do not meet the writing competency conditions stated in the admission letter are subject to declassification from the degree program. The Level II writing requirement is determined by the department/program and is usually associated with the completion of the Culminating Experience or may be related to a designated writing-intensive course taken prior to the Culminating Experience.

## The Advancement to Candidacy (ATC)

The plan of study that must be completed prior to award of the degree is documented on the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form. The form must be submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies after completion of 18 units toward the degree and no later than the semester prior to starting any preliminary research and before enrolling in the Culminating Experience course. The Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form must be approved by the graduate major advisor and the graduate coordinator/ chair of the student's department or program. The form is submitted to the dean of the Division of Graduate Studies for evaluation and approval. Upon approval of the ATC, the student is advanced to candidacy and classified status. Students who have submitted their ATC forms can check on their Advancement to Candidacy status by accessing *the Student Center* from *SF State Gateway* at the SF State login page (<http://www.sfsu.edu/login.htm>).

Any change in the ATC requires that the student submit to the Division of Graduate Studies a *Petition for ATC Course Substitution*, including all required original ink signatures. Required core courses listed in the *Bulletin* for a degree must be regularly offered. In the rare cases this is not possible because of University budgetary issues or curricular changes, file *the Waiver for Graduate Program Regulation Form*. An 899 Independent Study course may not be substituted for a core or required course for the degree. An ATC core course substitution must be approved prior to enrolling in a substituting course.

Forms are available on the Graduate Studies website and are specific to each degree program. Forms must be completed online and downloaded for original ink-based signature and submission. Handwritten forms will *not* be accepted. Electronic, copied, and scanned signatures are not accepted.

## Progress Toward Degree

Graduate students must make continuous satisfactory progress toward their degree by completing a minimum of 6 units each year, not including

the summer session. Departments or programs have the right to require that students complete more than the 6 units each year. Cohorted professional programs may require that students complete specified courses in sequence and maintain full-time enrollment. Graduate students who are enrolled, but not taking courses leading to the degree, may be disqualified by the department or the Dean of Graduate Studies upon recommendation by the department.

*Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations* requires that a master's or doctoral degree shall be completed in no more than seven years. No more than seven years may elapse from the first semester of enrollment after admission and completion of the degree requirements. This is the maximum time allowable. Students working full time should be able to complete a 30-unit program in five years, taking 6 units each year. Graduate programs requiring more than 30 units must also be completed within seven years. Programs may require that students complete all coursework within a shorter time period provided the curriculum, requirements, and timelines are clearly stated in the program materials and the sequence of course offerings is adequate for students to meet the required time to completion. Professional programs may require that students maintain continuous enrollment throughout their programs and complete courses in sequence as required for licensure or certification. See department handbooks for requirements.

If coursework on the student's Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) becomes outdated while the student is in good standing and making progress toward degree, the student may submit, with department approval, a petition to substitute another course (one already completed or which will be completed in the future) for the one which is outdated.

## Extension of Seven-Year Limit

Students, who for documented, serious, and compelling reasons, cannot complete their degree within the seven-year limit, may request one extension. Extensions cannot exceed one year. Students requesting an extension must be in good academic standing, have departmental validation that all coursework exceeding seven years is currently relevant in the field. Students requesting an extension after enrollment in the culminating experience will be required to enroll in the culminating experience continuous enrollment program, either in regular university or the College of Professional & Global Education, depending on the program expectations for enrollment.

Graduate students who have left the University for two or more consecutive semesters must reapply to the University. Any courses to be used toward the degree will be determined jointly by the program and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Outdated coursework (excluding transfer credits) may be validated by examination, retaking the course, substitution of coursework, demonstration of currency in the field, or other demonstration of competency in the relevant course or subject field as determined by the major department and approved by the dean of Graduate Studies.

Students who left the University after enrolling in the Culminating Experience must 1) submit a Petition for Extension for Seven-Year Limit; 2) reapply to the University; 3) submit documentation of progress on the Culminating Experience; and 4) enroll as a matriculated student or through the Continuous Enrollment program. Any student who has reached the seven-year limit and has not enrolled at the University for more than two semesters may be required to take additional coursework in the field. The Seven-Year Limit petition is filed with the Dean of Graduate Studies. Transfer credit that exceeds seven years may not be used to meet degree requirements.

The following chart provides examples of the dates of expiration of the work specified on the ATC for the **recommended** five-year completion time with the maximum extension to the seven-year limitation:

First Requirements on Graduate Admission	Five Year Completion Date	ATC Expiration Date
Summer 2015	Summer 2020	June 2022
Fall 2015	Fall 2020	August 2022
Spring 2016	Spring 2021	January 2023
Summer 2016	Summer 2021	June 2023
Fall 2016	Fall 2021	August 2023
Spring 2017	Spring 2022	January 2024
Summer 2017	Summer 2022	June 2024
Fall 2017	Fall 2022	August 2024
Spring 2018	Spring 2023	January 2025
Summer 2018	Summer 2023	June 2025
Fall 2018	Fall 2023	August 2025
Spring 2019	Spring 2024	January 2026
Summer 2019	Summer 2024	June 2026
Fall 2019	Fall 2024	August 2026
Spring 2020	Spring 2025	January 2027
Summer 2020	Summer 2025	June 2027
Fall 2020	Fall 2025	August 2027
Spring 2021	Spring 2026	January 2028
Summer 2021	Summer 2026	June 2028

## Consecutive Enrollment

Prior to enrolling in the Culminating Experience, a student who is not enrolled for two consecutive semesters must reapply for admission to the University and to the major department. If readmitted, the student must complete a new ATC that meets current University and program curricular requirements. Students who do not complete all required coursework, the written English proficiency requirement (Levels I and II), and the Culminating Experience within the **seven-year time limit** should refer to the Progress Toward Degree (p. ) section on this page.

## Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) Requirements

The following minimum standards apply to all Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) forms.

Units on ATC must include:

- A minimum of 30-semester units or more as required for the degree. No degree will be awarded where the minimum number of units specified for the degree has not been completed.
- Seventy Percent (70%) of the units must be from graduate-level courses:
  - Fifty percent (50%) of the units from exclusively graduate-level courses (700-999 level). Most programs require more units or all units to be taken at this level.
  - Twenty percent (20%) of the units on the ATC may be graduate paired courses (graduate students must always register for the graduate designated section of the paired course).
- Thirty percent (30%) of the units may be from upper-division level courses:
  - Thirty percent (30%) of the units on the ATC in some graduate programs may be from upper-division undergraduate courses.

Graduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses must complete additional coursework as specified by the instructor.

- No lower-division course work (100-299) is allowed on the ATC.
- At least 18 units of coursework taken within the department offering the degree program.
- No more than 9 units from any combination of Open University (CPaGL) work, credit by examination, and transfer work for the requirement of a 30-unit program and proportionally more for programs that exceed 30 units (e.g., a maximum of 18 semester units may be used in meeting the requirement of a 60-unit program if accepted by the program).
- No more than 12 units earned through an official graduate international exchange program (or proportionally more for higher unit programs) if approved by the department/program and the dean of Graduate Studies. Exchange work must be at the graduate level. Students using 12 units of exchange work on their ATC may not, in addition, use transfer work, Open University (CPaGL), credit by examination, or more than six units of 899 work on their ATC.
- All units of a completed (awarded by SFSU) graduate certificate are transferable to a degree with approval from the department and Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Any ATC course substitutions must be approved by the department prior to enrolling in a substituting course.
- The ATC may not include more than 6 units of credit in 899 Independent Study courses (699 not permitted) related to the degree objective. The 899 Independent Study may only be included on the ATC as an elective and cannot be used to substitute core required courses.
- All non-supervisory courses listed on the ATC must have a grade of B- or higher.
- The ATC may not include more than 4 graduate student teaching units applicable to the discipline.
- No more than 30 percent (e.g., 9 units on a 30 unit program) of the work with CR grades, including any transfer units.
- No more than 6 units of credit in experimental courses (874, 877). Undergraduate equivalents of these courses are not permitted on the ATC.
- No prerequisite coursework may be used to meet degree requirements.
- The ATC may not include any units used to obtain a previously awarded degree except if they are part of an approved curriculum in a blended program such as the SF Scholars program.
- At least 21 of 30 units must be taken in residence on this campus or proportionally more for programs that exceed 30 units.
- Summer Semester academic units are counted as residence credit.
- The ATC must specify how the student has met the Level I and Level II written English proficiency requirements in accordance with the regulations of the department.

## Grading Standards on the ATC

- Both a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in all post-baccalaureate work taken at San Francisco State AND an ATC GPA of 3.0 (coursework listed on the ATC) or better is required. Departments can have stricter requirements.
- An ATC will not be approved if the transcript reflects an incomplete grade (i.e., I or IC). Students should resubmit the ATC after a grade is earned for the incomplete. IC grades are not permitted on the ATC.

- All non-supervisory courses listed on the ATC must have a grade of B- or higher.
- Grades earned by international students in required English proficiency courses may not be used on the ATC and are not computed in the grade point average for the master's degree, but will be computed for evaluation of the SF State overall GPA.
- Graduate students in CR/NC courses must earn a B- or better to be granted a CR grade.
- A grade of RP is given for a Culminating Experience course until completed. Upon completion, the Culminating Experience course grade should be changed to CR or letter grade.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure all courses listed on the Advancement to Candidacy are completed with passing grades and are reflected on the transcript.

For General information on University grading standards, refer to the Grading Policy and Systems (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/policies-procedures/grading/>) section of this Bulletin.

## Culminating Experience

The ATC must specify the Culminating Experience and any additional oral or written exam requirements.

### Culminating Experience Requirements

In accordance with *Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations*, the Culminating Experience must be met by the satisfactory completion of a thesis, special project, comprehensive examination, or a combination of more than one of these. An oral defense of the work is normally required.

Students must file a Proposal for Culminating Experience (PCE) (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/culminating-experience/>) that has been approved by program faculty. The original form must be submitted subsequent to or simultaneous with the ATC. Both the PCE and ATC forms require original, ink-based faculty signatures. No stamped, copied, electronic, or scanned signatures are accepted. Students are not permitted to enroll in a Culminating Experience course until both of these forms have been approved by Graduate Studies. A Report of Completion of the Culminating Experience and/or Thesis submission or Written Creative Work must be submitted by the last day of the semester in order for the student to graduate in the semester of submission. Review the Division of Graduate Studies calendar (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/continuing-student-deadlines/>) for deadlines.

If changes occur in the project content, purpose, or research methods prior to completion of the Culminating Experience, a revised Proposal for Culminating Experience form must be submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies. If the type of Culminating Experience course changes after approval of the ATC and the Proposal for Culminating Experience, both a revised Proposal for Culminating Experience form and an ATC Substitution form must be submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies.

Use the revised Proposal for Culminating Experience form if the project's content, purpose, or research methods change. Title changes to the Proposal for Culminating Experience, after initial approval, must be requested through a Title Change Form (<https://powerforms.docusign.net/3df1b428-e353-4a20-bc96-69ecb0c42fee/?env=na3&acct=223bf8e1-bc14-478b-8607-15b5be78981f&accountId=223bf8e1-bc14-478b-8607-15b5be78981f>). To officially change the composition of a Culminating Experience committee, a student must submit a Petition for Committee Revision form

(<https://powerforms.docusign.net/57c67880-5840-4173-ab1a-e2e5b27b69ef/?env=na3&acct=223bf8e1-bc14-478b-8607-15b5be78981f&accountId=223bf8e1-bc14-478b-8607-15b5be78981f>) to Graduate Studies.

The types of Culminating Experience options to meet degree requirements are determined by the programs with approval of the Division of Graduate Studies. Typical Culminating Experience options are:

#### Seminar: Culminating Experience Seminar (890)

The 890 culminating experience course is not available for most programs. Check the department/program *Bulletin* information or handbook. The seminar may require a culminating paper, presentation, or exam. This requirement must show evidence of the application of knowledge and techniques learned in the field of study. This course requires additional supervision by the CE faculty. See the academic program handbook for information. Most departments or programs provide manuals or information about major-specific requirements. A Report of Completion form must be filed in Graduate Studies by the deadline date stated in the University calendar.

#### Supervised Field Internships (892)

A supervised field internship involves the placement of the student in a work experience situation culminating in a written report addressing the significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion. An oral defense of the report may be required by the department. A Report of Completion form must be filed in Graduate Studies by the deadline date stated in the University calendar.

#### Written Creative Work (893)

This Culminating Experience requirement is restricted to graduate students in the Creative Writing program and may consist of a short story, novel, series of poems, and/or play in which students demonstrate a unique style of writing. An annotation page must be completed and filed as a part of the final work. Students completing a written creative work should review and follow the *Guidelines for Formatting and Submitting Written Creative Works* (available at <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/thesis-dissertation-guidelines> (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/thesis-dissertation-guidelines/>)). The written creative work is a published product and will be maintained on file in the library. Students must submit their Thesis or Written Creative Work to the library by the deadline date stated in the University calendar. Formatting of the written creative work must be reviewed by Graduate Studies in advance of the deadline so any adjustments in formatting can be made by the final date of submission for the graduating term.

#### Creative Work Project (894)

This Culminating Experience may be a musical composition, a group of paintings, a performance, a film, a learning module, a design project, or another creative endeavor by an individual student, as specified by the program. A Report of Completion form must be filed in Graduate Studies by the deadline date stated in the University calendar. These projects must be described in a written document that summarizes the project's significance, objectives, creative methodology, and a conclusion. An oral defense of the project may be required. **Note:** MUS 894 for students with the composition emphasis requires that a bound copy of the music manuscript be filed with the library; consequently both a Report of Completion and a Thesis submission or Written Creative Work are required.

#### Field Study or Applied Research Project (895)

This Culminating Experience is a field study or research project by an individual student that incorporates the application of knowledge and

techniques acquired in the student's program of study. The field study or research project must be described in a written document which includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion. With faculty permission, the finished document may be formatted in the manner of a discipline-specific journal ready for publication.

An oral defense of the project may be required. A Report of Completion form must be filed in Graduate Studies by the deadline date stated in the University calendar.

### Comprehensive Examination (896EXM)

The comprehensive examination is a written examination that is prepared and administered by the major department so students can demonstrate their ability to integrate the content knowledge, independent thinking, and critical analysis, and, as may be appropriate, the accuracy of documentation. In most disciplines, students must also enroll in 896EXM (0 units), which is the marker that informs Graduate Studies that the comprehensive examination has been successfully satisfied. The results of the examination (pass or fail) must be reported to the Division of Graduate Studies on a Report of Completion form by the deadline date indicated in the University calendar.

### Thesis (898)/Dissertation (998)

A thesis/dissertation is the written product of an original study by an individual student. It demonstrates clarity of purpose, critical and independent thinking, and accurate and thorough documentation. An oral or written defense of the thesis/dissertation may be required. Students completing a thesis/dissertation should review and follow the *Guidelines for Formatting and Submitting a Master's Thesis* found on the Graduate Studies website (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/thesis-dissertation-guidelines/>). Thesis and dissertation formatting must be reviewed by the Division of Graduate Studies in advance of the deadline so any adjustments in formatting can be made by the final date of submission for the graduating term. The thesis/dissertation is a published product and will be maintained on file electronically in the J. Paul Leonard Library. Students must file a thesis/dissertation receipt form in Graduate Studies by the deadline date stated in the University calendar.

### Joint/Group Culminating Experience Projects and Theses

The Culminating Experience is usually the expression of a single student's work – a thesis (898), a dissertation (998), and a written creative work (893) must have a single author; however, the University recognizes that there are some circumstances that warrant joint/group projects. At no time will more than three students be able to submit a joint/group project.

Each student participating in the joint/group project must have separate responsibilities, and these must be reviewed, endorsed, and subsequently evaluated by the students' Culminating Experience committee members. Each student must complete a separate Culminating Experience Proposal, but they must be submitted jointly for review. Each proposal must have an attachment that includes:

- A list of the separate research areas/responsibilities of each student.
- A statement of the identifiable written component of the work to be completed by each student.
- The signatures of each student and the committee chair.

A Joint Project Statement form is available on the Graduate Studies website (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/joint-ce-project.pdf>).

If human or animal research is involved, students may submit one set of the research protocol documents but must list all participating students on the Protocol Approval Form.

### Human and Animal Protections Review Requirement

Any research conducted by a student that involves humans, vertebrate animals, or biological specimens (e.g., tissues, stem cells/cell lines, blood) requires approval at SF State, even though that research may have been approved at another institution and/or takes place at another location. Approved protocols from another institution must be approved and registered with the Office of Human and Animal Protections (HAP). **There are no exceptions. A student whose work involves humans, vertebrate animals, or biological specimens (e.g., tissues, stem cells/cell lines, blood) is not permitted to begin data collection without the explicit approval of the Division of Graduate Studies.** Before beginning any research with humans, vertebrate animals, or biological specimens (e.g., tissues, stem cells/cell lines, blood), students must review the Human and Animal Protections (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs/HAP) website (<https://research.sfsu.edu/HAP/>) for institutional regulations. This is a federal requirement. If you are uncertain if your research involves human or animal subjects complete an Application for Determination of Exemption found on the HAP website. (<https://sfsu.my.irbmanager.com/>)

### Composition of Student's Culminating Experience Committee

Regardless of the type of Culminating Experience being completed, a committee must be established to evaluate whether the student has satisfactorily completed the final requirement for the degree.

- The committee must consist of at least two members, and departments can require additional members.
- The chair and the second member of the committee must hold tenured/tenure-track faculty appointments in the major department.
- In circumstances where special expertise is available in another department, the Dean of Graduate Studies may authorize a designated tenured/tenure-track faculty member from a related department to serve as the first or second reader.
- With special permission from the Dean of Graduate Studies, some long-term lecturers, FERPs, selected faculty emeriti, or research collaborators with terminal degrees in their field or with special expertise may be approved as the second reviewer, provided their current curriculum vitae is on file in Graduate Studies. Due to the temporary nature of these special appointments, both the student and the lecturer must understand the risk to the timely completion of the Culminating Experience. An agreement form, establishing when a retired or FERP faculty member is available to work with the student, is available on the Graduate Studies website, found here: FERP Emeritus Thesis Agreement pdf download (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/ferp-emeritus-agreement.pdf>). It must be signed by both the student and committee member and submitted along with the Culminating Experience Proposal form.
- Lecturers or experts in the field from off-campus universities, industry, or research facilities may serve as a third member of a student's committee if they have extensive expertise in the area under study and hold a terminal degree in the field. A current curriculum vitae must be on file in Graduate Studies. Any proposed committee member who does not hold a terminal degree in the major field of study will be reviewed by the Graduate Dean to determine if committee membership is appropriate.

- If a committee member of the Culminating Experience leaves or is unavailable during the agreed-upon semesters of completion of the Culminating Experience, the student will need to reconstitute the committee. New faculty members often have different expectations and may require a student to revise and resubmit the Culminating Experience Proposal.
- Students should be aware that few faculty members are available to provide guidance with the Culminating Experience during Winter Break or the summer months. Students required to complete a defense of their thesis or research should plan for completion during the regular semester period. Agreements for review of drafts or defense hearings held outside of semester weeks should be obtained in writing.
- To officially change the composition of a Culminating Experience committee, a student must submit a Petition for Committee Revision form (<https://powerforms.docuform.net/57c67880-5840-4173-ab1a-e2e5b27b69ef/?env=na3&acct=223bf8e1-bc14-478b-8607-15b5be78981f&accountId=223bf8e1-bc14-478b-8607-15b5be78981f>) to Graduate Studies.

## Registration and Grading Procedures for Culminating Experience Courses

To register for a Culminating Experience course, a student must have a GPA of 3.0 or better in all post-baccalaureate coursework completed, as well as an approved Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form and Proposal for Culminating Experience (PCE) on file in Graduate Studies. Status of the ATC and Proposal for Culminating Experience approval can be found by accessing *SF State Gateway* on the web. After approval of the ATC and PCE, students may obtain permit numbers from their committee chair, and/or the graduate coordinator of the department to enroll in their Culminating Experience course.

- When the Culminating Experience project is completed, be sure that the student's committee chair (first reader) files a grade change to CR (Credit) with the Registrar's Office.
- A Report of Completion must be filed for all Culminating Experiences
- Thesis/Dissertation/Written Creative Works need to be reviewed by Graduate Studies and submitted to the Library. Adhere to Thesis Guidelines for completion.
- If students do not complete the course by the end of the semester of registration students will receive a grade of RP (Report in Progress) and should not register for the course again.

## Continuous Enrollment in Culminating Experience

Students have the semester they enroll in the CE and the following semester to complete their degree requirements. If all requirements except the CE are completed during the semester students enroll in the CE, they do not need to enroll the following semester.

Students who do not complete their Culminating Experience during the semester of enrollment in the Culminating Experience or the following semester, excluding winter and summer, (the "grace" semester) must enroll in a zero-unit course with the College of Professional & Global Education (CPaGL) and every subsequent semester until the Culminating Experience is completed. Enrollment in the CPaGL Culminating Experience course provides students access to SFSU libraries, discipline-associated laboratories and facilities, and Culminating Experience advisors. Students are automatically withdrawn from their degree program if they fail to maintain continuous enrollment status after the grace semester. The student must enroll in a 0-unit Culminating Experience Continuous Enrollment (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/>

continuous-enrollment-requirement/) courses through CPaGL, and adhere to the following processes:

- Enroll in the Culminating Experience Continuous Enrollment course under your college name: BUS 499, EDUC 499, ETHS 499, HSS 499, LCA 499, or SCI 499.
- Enroll in CEL 499 before the University's add/drop deadline (the add/drop deadline can be found on the Registrar's Office website).
- Committee Chair should submit a grade change to the Registrar's Office upon completion of Culminating Experience requirements.

Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment in their Culminating Experience course and subsequently return to complete their Culminating Experience within the 7-year time limit to complete requirements for graduate degrees must be reinstated in their degree program and may have to file a new Proposal for Culminating Experience.

Students who are past the 7-year limit must formally reapply for admission to the program in which they were completing their Culminating Experience. There is no guarantee of readmission. If readmitted, must submit a new Graduate Approved Program to the Division of Graduate Studies.

## Proof of Completion

Completion paperwork will only be accepted with original faculty signatures and must indicate the date the Culminating Experience requirements were completed. The completion date of the Culminating Experience must meet deadline requirements for the term (last date of final exams). If not, the student will be denied graduation and must reapply and pay the Application for Award of Degree fee again for the subsequent term.

## Dates of Completion

The Culminating Experience and all other requirements must be met by the last day of final exams. All dates of completion are posted on the Division of Graduate Studies website (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/continuing-student-deadlines/>).

## Application for Graduation

Candidates for a degree must file an application for graduation in accordance with the University calendar (<https://webapps.sfsu.edu/public/webcal/acadcalendar/>). Degree candidates must have both an approved Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form and Proposal for Culminating Experience (PCE) form on file and a cumulative and an ATC GPA of a 3.0 or better to be eligible to apply for graduation. Students can check ATC and CE approval status through the Student Center by accessing *SF State Gateway* on the web.

The Application for Award of the Graduate Degree must be completed online by accessing *SF State Gateway* on the web. It is the student's responsibility to verify the correct diploma name and address when submitting an application for the award of degree. Any errors on the diploma that need correction after issuance will result in additional fees.

Students graduate at the end of any semester – fall, spring, or summer. The Commencement (graduation) ceremony occurs once a year at the end of May. Students who wish to participate in the University Commencement ceremony must rent a cap, gown, and hood from the San Francisco State Bookstore. Students can link to the graduate student-specific Commencement website from the main University web page or on the Graduate Studies website for additional information.

If a candidate does not complete the requirements as planned in a particular semester, they must submit a new application for graduation and pay the application fee again to be considered in a subsequent semester. The Division of Graduate Studies cannot extend or switch terms for applications for graduation.

## Graduate Award for Distinguished Achievement Graduation Application Deadline

Students who wished to be considered for the Graduate Award for Distinguished Achievement (p. 10) and expect to graduate in the spring or summer semester must submit the application for the award of degree by the University deadline (typically by the end of February). Eligible students must have graduated in the previous summer or fall term or have applied to graduate in the current spring or upcoming summer term. For more information see Graduate Student Achievement Opportunities. (p. 10)

## Graduate Student Academic Standing

**All students who have earned an undergraduate degree and who are enrolled as graduate (classified or unclassified), credential, second baccalaureate, and certificate (graduate and undergraduate) students are held to these academic standards.**

### Good Standing

Students must maintain a semester and cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or better every semester.

### Academic Notice/Probation

Students will be placed on academic notice/probation if the overall, SF State, or semester GPA falls below 3.0 (B). Students under Academic Notice/Probation are notified by email and must meet with their graduate faculty advisor and complete the *Graduate Academic Notice Advising Form*. After grades are published by the Registrar at the end of the semester during which the student is on Academic Notice, one of three actions will occur:

- the student attains a 3.0 in the overall and semester GPA. The student is notified that they are no longer under Academic Notice/Probation
- the student does not attain a 3.0 GPA in the overall or semester GPA and the student is subject to disqualification and a registration hold is placed on the student record. To remove the hold, the student must meet with their graduate faculty advisor and complete the *Graduate Academic Notice Advising Form*.
- Students who are academically disqualified from the graduate degree, credential, or any certificate program and from further enrollment in the University may appeal the University Academic Disqualification.

### Disqualification

Students who are disqualified from the graduate degree, credential, or any certificate program and from further enrollment in the University may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies to appeal the action. This appeal must include a recommendation by the Graduate Coordinator in the student's department.

Students must appeal for reinstatement by completing the *Petition for Reinstatement Following Disqualification*. Faculty and the program graduate coordinator may approve the student to continue the program for one semester or deny the student the option to continue in the program. Students approved to continue in the program must meet the stipulated requirements or conditions set forth by the program. Denial of an Academic Notice petition is the right of the faculty of the graduate

program. Faculty may deem a student unable to continue the program and may not approve reinstatement even if a 3.0 GPA is achieved. Students reinstated after disqualification will not be allowed to enroll in classes for the following semester until grades have been posted. Following the posting of grades, students who attain a 3.0 will be allowed to register for classes in the Final Priority Registration period. Students who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement are disqualified and must improve their GPA through Open University in the College of Professional & Global Education. Review the Readmission of Disqualified Students section of this page for more information.

The student may not take lower-division, non-academic, or activity courses to improve their GPA. Coursework not related to the field of study, lower-division courses, or coursework completed at another university or college cannot be used to improve the GPA of a SF State graduate student who is on Academic Notice or disqualified.

### Readmission of Disqualified Students

Academically disqualified students may, after at least two semesters have elapsed, apply for readmission to the University providing evidence that they have removed the academic deficiencies, or resolved the problems which may have caused the disqualification. The work taken to eliminate an academic performance deficiency at this institution must be taken through Open University in the College of Professional & Global Education. Courses taken to improve the GPA may not be courses required for the degree, but should be relevant. If disqualification resulted from any reasons other than academic performance, approval must be obtained from the unit of the University which recommended the disqualification action. Students disqualified from another institution, including other CSU campuses, may not be admitted to SF State unless it can be demonstrated that the cause of the disqualification has been eliminated (additional coursework with good grades, etc.) and the student is otherwise eligible to return to the institution of disqualification. Readmission to the graduate program from which the student was disqualified is not guaranteed.

### Administrative Probation

A graduate degree, credential, or certificate student may be placed on administrative probation by the Board of Appeals and Review or Dean of Graduate Studies for any of the following reasons:

- Withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of a program of studies in successive terms. (A student whose withdrawal is directly associated with a documented chronic or recurring disability or its treatment is not to be subject to administrative/academic notice for such withdrawal.)
- Repeated failure to progress toward the stated degree objective, or another program objective.
- Failure to comply, after due notice, with an academic requirement or regulation that is routine for all students or a defined group of students.

### Administrative Disqualification

A graduate student who has been placed on administrative probation may be disqualified from further attendance if:

- The conditions for removal of administrative probation are not met within the period specified.
- The student becomes subject to academic notice while on administrative probation.

- The student becomes subject to administrative probation for the same or similar reason for which they were previously placed on administrative probation.
- In addition, an appropriate campus administrator may disqualify a student who at any time during enrollment has demonstrated behavior so contrary to the standards of the profession for which the student is preparing as to render them unfit for the profession. In such cases, a disqualification will occur immediately upon notice to the student, which shall include an explanation of the basis for the action, and the campus may require the student to discontinue enrollment as of the date of the notification.

## Declassification from the Degree Program

A student may be declassified (disenrolled) from a graduate degree program for a range of reasons even if the GPA is above a 3.0. Reasons for declassification may include, but are not restricted to: unprofessional conduct, behavioral issues that interfere with the teaching and learning of others, failure to make progress toward the degree as set forth by the University and program policies, failure to meet grade requirements to maintain good standing in the program and/or University, and/or the department/program faculty determine that the student is incapable of completing degree requirements at the level expected of a graduate student in the discipline.

- Failure to make progress toward the degree as set forth by the University and program policies (e.g., not taking courses related to the degree, not meeting program requirements to take a required number of courses each year, repeated "I" or "W" requests);
- Failure to meet expectations for discipline-required culminating experience with little improvement after multiple attempts or drafts;
- Failure to meet grade requirements to maintain good standing in the program and/or University;
- Plagiarism or academic dishonesty identified (cases are referred to Student Conduct Office).

The declassification request must be initiated by the major department with support from the department/program chair and college dean or designee. Requests are submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for final action and official notification to the student and the Registrar's Office. Declassified students will not be permitted to enroll through regular University or Open University in any undergraduate or graduate courses in the program or degree from which they were declassified. Unless declassification was related to conduct issues that interfere with campus interactions, declassified students are eligible to apply to a new program through CAL STATE APPLY (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>), pay the application fee, and be accepted as a student by the department/program.

## Planned Educational Leave of Absence

Continuing graduate students who have been officially admitted to, and who are actively pursuing a degree and/or credential program, may qualify to absent themselves from enrollment in the institution for periods up to two academic years and still maintain the option of continuing student status. As a consequence of a leave of absence, it is expected that a student will improve their ability to complete the graduate degree program. A petition for the leave must clearly demonstrate that during the absence from the University the student will pursue educational activities relevant to their program. Requests for leave due to financial or other personal reasons, or matriculation at another institution are not recognized for the purpose of granting a leave of absence. In the latter instances, students would need to reapply for admission when they are

ready to resume their studies at the University. Continuing graduate students can be absent from the University one fall or spring semester during a specific academic year and maintain their eligibility. Students do not have to submit an Application for Planned Educational Leave unless they plan to be absent for two consecutive semesters, excluding summer.

To be eligible for an educational leave of absence, a graduate student must:

- have been officially admitted to a master's and/or credential program offered by the University;
- have an Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) on file in the Division of Graduate Studies office or plan to complete Credential Program on file in the Credentials Office in the Graduate College of Education;
- be in good academic standing;
- have completed acceptable coursework (at least 9 units) toward the identified objective prior to the effective date of the leave; and
- attach a plan of study showing a relationship with degree focus.

Such a planned academic leave does not change the beginning or end dates of the seven-year completion of degree requirements for master's or doctoral degree candidates. International students should consult with the Office of International Programs prior to requesting a leave of absence from the Division of Graduate Studies. For further information, contact the Division of Graduate Studies office.

## Change of Graduate Program Concentration, or Credential

Changing from one graduate degree program to another or from one credential program to another is a serious decision that should be given thoughtful consideration. Graduate students who meet the eligibility requirements must apply to the new Graduate Program and formally be admitted to the new degree program, concentration, or credential. Only current graduate students who have a cumulative 3.0 GPA or better in all coursework taken while in post-baccalaureate standing at SF State are eligible to apply to a new graduate program.

Students who wish to change concentrations within the same academic department must be in good academic standing and must fill out the Change of Graduate Program Concentration Form. Students are only permitted to change graduate program concentrations if the new concentration is in the same degree program. If a change of graduate program concentration is approved, a new ATC form is required.

If students wish to change from a master's program to a credential-only program or from a credential-only to a master's program, they must formally apply to the new credential or master's program or credential, meet the eligibility requirements and follow the procedures as described in the Graduate Admissions section of this Bulletin.

To add a credential:

- Complete the Request for Change of Program Credential Form (<https://grad.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/change-program-credential.pdf>).
- No more than 12 units of already completed courses can be counted toward the graduate degree.

The new concentration coordinator/chair completes the department recommendation section of the form and submits it to the Division of Graduate Studies to determine if the student is in good standing (3.0 GPA) and to give final approval or denial. The University and department

hold the right to refuse Change of Graduate Program Concentration or Credential requests and admission to a program based on programmatic, resource, faculty scholarship focus, and faculty/student academic needs.

## Academic Standards

### Satisfactory Scholarship

Graduate students are expected to develop their full potential as scholars and to maintain a 3.0 GPA (based on a 4.0 scale) or better that indicates high scholastic ability and achievement. All courses completed by a student after award of the baccalaureate degree count in the overall graduate grade point average and are used in determining a student's academic standing. The 3.0 GPA standard applies to all students in post-baccalaureate status including credential and second baccalaureate programs.

Only the grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and CR are acceptable in courses on the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form. Graduate programs have the right to require specific grades (B or better) for specific courses that are appropriate to the discipline. Students taking upper-division undergraduate courses may be required by the program to earn a B or better if counted on the ATC. Requirements for specific grades must be clearly indicated in writing in the *Bulletin*, on the program website or in student handbooks. *Undergraduate level CR courses are not allowed on the ATC because the grade is translated as a C-*. The number of ATC courses taken for CR grades is restricted (see ATC Grading Standards above).

### Incomplete Grades

Students who do not complete required coursework during the scheduled time period must complete a written contract with the instructor to complete the work within the next academic year or earlier as stipulated by the faculty member. For example, a course granted an incomplete in a fall semester must be completed and a grade submitted by the end of the next fall or earlier whether or not the student is enrolled in the University. Only students who are in good academic standing in the course and have completed at least 75 percent of the required coursework are eligible to contract for an incomplete. The incomplete is shown on the transcript as an I. If work is not completed during that period, the incomplete is changed to an IC (incomplete charged) that is calculated as an F (zero grade points). Graduate students planning to pursue a doctoral degree should consider that a pattern of incomplete grades, even if completed within the time period, may be viewed negatively by an admissions committee.

### Repeat of Courses as a Graduate Student

A graduate student who has received a grade of B- or better, or a grade of CR, may not repeat a course unless the course is described in the current SF State *Bulletin* as repeatable for credit. If a course is repeated, both grades remain on the transcript, and the GPA for both courses is averaged for the overall GPA. The higher grade is used for the Advancement to Candidacy form (ATC). Graduate students who receive a grade lower than B-, or grades of IC, W, or WU, may repeat that course only **once** to earn a grade if a course repeat is permitted by the program. Requests by graduate students to repeat a course to improve the GPA are seldom granted by programs because it reflects lack of progress toward the degree. Repeated attempts to achieve the required GPA to meet graduate standards are not allowed. Departments may refuse to allow the repeat of a course to improve the GPA.

## Attendance

The instructor may consider regular attendance when assigning grades, and the requirement must be stated in writing as part of the course requirements. Most professional programs leading to licensure or certification require that students attend all class and laboratory sessions. See program handbooks for policies.

## Withdrawal from Courses

Students may add or drop courses without a W appearing on the transcript if they withdraw on or before the "drop" deadline. After the withdrawal deadline, a withdrawal will show as a W on the transcript. Students must check the University's academic calendar for deadlines. Graduate students planning to pursue a doctoral degree should consider that a pattern of withdrawals may be viewed negatively by an admissions committee. Students who register for a class, but who do not attend or who drop the class without formally withdrawing, may be given a WU (withdrawal unauthorized), which is calculated as an F.

## Grievances and Appeals

### Grade Appeals

The grade appeal process is managed within the college offering the course under appeal. A student who feels the grade posted on the transcript is not a fair representation of the work completed may request a review by the instructor. The request must be made during the semester of attendance or immediately following the semester in which the grade was assigned. If the instructor and the student can work out an agreement, a petition for a grade change can be submitted. If an agreement is not reached, the student should consult with the department chair or college dean for the formal procedures for filing a grade appeal. Students should contact the department or college in which the class was offered for a copy of the formal grade appeal process that is conducted at the college level. Refer to Grade Appeal Practices & Procedures (<http://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/grade-appeal-practices-procedures/>).

### Retroactive Withdrawal and Grade Change

Students may retroactively withdraw from the University or courses for serious and compelling reasons or in verified cases of extenuating circumstances (e.g., accident, illness, etc.) that prevented submission of a regular withdrawal petition by the deadline in the Class Schedule. A student wishing to request a retroactive grade change must initiate the request during the semester in attendance immediately following the semester when the original grade was assigned or the course in question was offered. A retroactive withdrawal or grade change cannot be used as a way to improve poor academic performance in a course(s) or remove "F" grades due to academic dishonesty. For more detailed procedures and appropriate petition forms, refer to SF State Student Withdrawal Services (<http://dos.sfsu.edu/content/sf-state-student-withdrawal-services/>).

### Grievance Procedures

A graduate student who has problems arising from academic evaluation, degree requirements, or general policies and procedures are strongly encouraged to follow the informal concerns and complaints process as outlined at Student Concerns and Complaints (<https://vpsaem.sfsu.edu/student-concerns-and-complaints/>). Graduate students should discuss grievances first with a graduate major advisor or graduate coordinator. Graduate coordinators are listed on the Graduate Studies website (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/graduate-coordinators/>). If a student wishes to appeal a decision, they should then consult with the

department chair, the college dean, or the dean of Graduate Studies, in that order. Should questions arise beyond this point, the University dean of students or designee may be consulted for advice.

If after following the informal process and the concern or complaint remains unresolved, students may pursue a formal complaint. For questions about the process, contact Eugene R. Chelberg, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Enrollment Management, SSB 403, (415) 338-2916 or concerns@sfsu.edu.

## **Graduate Student Achievement Opportunities**

### **California State University Student Research Competition**

Each spring semester, the CSU Student Research Competition provides an opportunity for both graduate and undergraduate students to present their outstanding research projects and creative works in a refereed or formal academic competition. Students who are currently enrolled, as well as those who graduated in the previous spring, summer, or fall semesters, are eligible. The system-wide competition is held at a different CSU campus in May of each academic year and the application deadlines are in mid-February. SF State selects up to 10 campus winners to compete in the CSU system-wide competition. SF State students have done very well in this competition in the past. Winners receive cash awards.

### **Graduate Research and Creative Works Showcase**

The Graduate Research and Creative Works Showcase is an annual exhibition of the diverse work of SF State's innovative and talented graduate students. Student presentations are typically in the form of a poster or visual display that depicts the purpose, methods, and results of their research or creative project. Participants and their faculty mentors are also invited to attend a dinner reception following the showcase where registered students are eligible to win prizes. The Graduate Research and Creative Works Showcase is held each spring following the CSU Research Competition.

### **Graduate Student Award for Distinguished Achievement**

This award is conferred on master and doctoral students who have a distinguished record of academic performance and degree-related service in their graduate program. Selection for the award is based on criteria that include academic performance, scholarly work, and service determined meritorious by the faculty in the respective graduate program areas. Criteria utilized vary from discipline to discipline consistent with standards of excellence. The selection of the awardees for the year is made each spring by the faculty of each department. Recipients are recognized at the Graduate Recognition Ceremony in May and are issued a *Certificate of Achievement*. The award is noted on the student's official SF State transcript once the graduate degree is earned.

### **Western Association of Graduate Schools Thesis Competition and Technology Innovation Award**

Each fall the Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies invites students to submit their master's theses and dissertations to compete for the WAGS master's Thesis Award or WAGS Technology Innovation Award (<http://wagsonline.org/awards/>). These prestigious awards represent the best and highest quality of master's and doctoral student work. One nominee for each award will be submitted by SF State to WAGS to compete with student entries from western universities and colleges in the United States and Canada. The national winner is awarded prize money and a trip to the WAGS annual conference.