GRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND GRADUATE STUDIES

There are nearly 4,000 students enrolled in post-baccalaureate study in 93 master's programs, an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, and two joint doctoral programs with the University of California. The University also offers credential programs in education, specialized graduate certificate programs, and second baccalaureate degree programs. Our students, many of whom are working full- or part-time, are fully engaged in scholarly endeavors, including basic and applied research, creative projects, and community service. General information about graduate study and how to begin and complete a post-baccalaureate program can be found in the following pages of the Bulletin at Graduate Education (bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education), Graduate Studies website grad.sfsu.edu (http://grad.sfsu.edu), or by contacting the Division of Graduate Studies. A handbook for graduate students, the GradGuide, is available on the Graduate Studies website or in print at the Graduate Student Orientation held before the start of each fall semester.

For information about a specific program, the student should view the academic department website or contact the program graduate coordinator to obtain program-specific admission and/or degree requirements. Graduate coordinator contact information and department information can be accessed from the Graduate Studies website.

Faculty Teaching in Graduate Programs

Faculty members teaching in graduate programs hold doctoral or other terminal degrees in their field. These tenured and tenure-track faculty members serve as advisors on theses, creative works, field projects, and/or graduate comprehensive examinations committees. Faculty scholarship in specific areas of study may be assigned to faculty members. Based on the faculty member's expertise and area of research or scholarly work, in some cases, non-tenure track faculty members with exceptional backgrounds in specific areas of study may be assigned to teach graduate-level courses. You can review faculty backgrounds in our Bulletin faculty directory.

CSU Graduate Admission

General Eligibility Requirements

Minimum requirements for admission to graduate study in the California State University are in accordance with Title 5, Division 5, Chapter 1, Subchapter 3, of the California Code of Regulations. The University has the right to require higher standards than the minimum requirements published in Title 5.

To meet the minimum eligibility standards for graduate study at SF State, an applicant must:

1. hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution, or shall have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by the appropriate campus authority;
2. be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended;
3. have a 3.0 GPA in their earned undergraduate degree or in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units completed, or have earned a post-baccalaureate degree; and
4. meet the professional, personal, scholarly, 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.

Graduate Admission Processes

Application for admission to a graduate degree, credential, or certificate program requires the student to apply to both the University through the California State University (CSU) common application, CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply), and directly to the academic department/program. Applicants to post-baccalaureate study must file an application and be accepted to each program to be eligible to earn a degree, certificate, or credential. Retroactive admission and/or award of degree or certificate is prohibited for students who complete coursework in a program to which they have not been admitted. Applicants seeking prerequisites for entry to a graduate degree program should contact the Division of Graduate Studies. The CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply) online application system does not allow applicants to apply to more than one SF State graduate program per application term. Application materials will not be reviewed by any program other than the one the applicant has designated on their formal university application. If you are not selected for admission to your preferred program, contact Graduate Studies for an alternate program.

Applicants to a second baccalaureate degree program must use the graduate admission application through CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply). Second Baccalaureate admission is restricted to select degree programs by the CSU Chancellor's office. Applicants seeking admission to other second bachelor's degree programs must obtain written support for admission from the Academic Department Chair of the intended program of study. Contact the Division of Graduate Studies for procedures and forms to be considered for admission.

University Right to Select Students

The University reserves the right to select its students and deny admission to the University or any of its programs. The University, in its sole discretion, determines admissions based on an applicant's suitability for graduate study, which is based on the application materials submitted and the applicant's fit with the department's mission, goals, resources, and areas of faculty scholarship. Admission to graduate programs is selective and more people apply than can be accepted. Meeting minimum University or department requirements for admission does not ensure acceptance into a graduate program. The University graduate admissions process is conducted in compliance with its Nondiscrimination Policy (see the Regulations and Procedures (bulletin.sfsu.edu/policies-procedures/regulations-procedures/nondiscrimination-policy) section of this Bulletin for the complete policy).

Importance of Filing Complete, Accurate, and Authentic Application Documents

The University and its programs have the right to verify all information and documents submitted in and with the application. Applicants must supply complete and accurate information on all application materials for admission, residence questionnaire or residency reclassification request, and financial aid forms. Failure to file 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).

Transcripts

All graduate and post-baccalaureate applicants must provide the Division of Graduate Studies with one official transcript from each college or
Application Filing Periods

The CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply) online application filing periods open on the dates listed below. All applications must be submitted by the academic department deadline. Applicants should consult the Graduate Division website (http://grad.sfsu.edu/program-deadline-domestic), or contact the department/program directly for additional information.

Domestic and International Applications

Applications for fall are accepted beginning October 1.

Applications for spring are accepted beginning August 1. Not all programs accept spring applications. Consult the Graduate Division website (http://grad.sfsu.edu/program-deadline-domestic) for information on spring admissions.

Applicants from Institutions without Regional Accreditation

An applicant who is a graduate of an institution without regional accreditation, or from an institution whose degree is not considered equivalent to a baccalaureate degree from this University in terms of quality and/or content (e.g., specialized, professional, or certain international institutions), may not be admitted directly to graduate or credential status at SF State. Applicants from non-accredited institutions should speak with the Senior Associate Director of Graduate Admissions to determine alternative preparation for graduate study. Additional coursework at the undergraduate level may be required. Information about regionally accredited universities can be found at the Council for Higher Education website (www.chea.org).

International students should review the International Student Admission Requirements section below.

SF State Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Application Procedures

Application to a graduate degree, credential, or certificate program is a two-part process. Students must apply to the University via the online CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply) application and apply to the specific department/program offering the degree, credential or certificate. Applicants seeking prerequisites for entry to a graduate degree program should contact the Division of Graduate Studies. SF State accepts applications for admission for the fall and spring semesters only.

Applicants to post-baccalaureate study must file an application and be accepted to each program to be eligible to earn a degree, certificate, or credential. Retroactive admission and/or award of degree or certificate is prohibited for students who complete coursework in a program to which they have not been admitted.

The following processes must be followed to be considered for admission to a graduate degree, credential, second baccalaureate, or certificate program at SF State, including degree programs offered through Special Sessions in the College of Extended Learning.

Part One

Apply to the University online via CAL STATE APPLY at calstateapply.edu (http://www.csumentor.edu/admissionApp), pay the required application fee and submit to the Division of Graduate Studies official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. Applicants with multiple transcripts should remember that it may take the college or university
issuing the transcripts several weeks to send the documents. To ensure more rapid processing, applicants should gather official University-sealed transcripts from each institution previously attended, place them together in the same large envelope and submit them by mail or in person to:

Graduate Admissions
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway Avenue (ADM 250)
San Francisco, CA 94132-4013

eTranscripts will be accepted from participating universities and should be sent to graddocs@sfsu.edu. Evaluation of a student application will not be initiated until all University application materials have been received.

Applicants to graduate degree, credential, second baccalaureate, or certificate programs should apply early in the application period so that the Division of Graduate Studies can verify minimum university admission requirements and then forward this review to the department/programs by the department deadlines (http://grad.sfsu.edu/program-deadline-domestic).

Applicants to either of the two joint doctoral programs should check the Graduate Studies website for links to the department for specific application deadlines and requirements.

Part Two
All graduate degree, credential, and certificate programs have additional application requirements. Department/program specific application materials may include (but are not limited to): copies of transcripts, test scores, a statement of purpose, department specific essay, portfolio or work, letters of recommendation, résumé, etc. These required materials must be submitted directly to the department or program by the department deadline. Please consult directly with the department or program for information about additional required materials or check online at grad.sfsu.edu (http://grad.sfsu.edu) to link to department-specific requirements. Departments will stipulate how you must meet the pre-admission (Level I) writing assessment. Check the department website for expectations. Review the Pre-admission Writing Assessment section of this Bulletin for information.

International Applicant Admission Requirements
SF State has separate application requirements for international F-1 or J-1 visa holders or applicants who have earned degrees outside of the United States. International applicants applying to a graduate program may have earlier application deadlines than those listed for domestic students. Applicants holding or requiring F-1 or J-1 visas must also submit the Financial Affidavit Form and evidence of financial resources for study in the U.S. for the issuance of an SF State I-20 Certificate of Eligibility. International students should access the Graduate Studies website (http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/prospective/international/international-admissions) for information on admission criteria, English language requirements, and I-20 issuance.

All international applicants requiring an F-1/J-1 visa must be formally admitted and enrolled in conditionally classified or classified status as matriculated students in a degree program offered through the University. International applicants will be given full consideration for admission based on the SF State’s commitment to internationalizing the student body. The California State University (https://www2.calstate.edu/csush-system/media-center/Pages/CSU-Statement-on-President-Trumps-Executive-Order.aspx) is committed to being an inclusive and welcoming institution of higher education that is enhanced by the students, faculty, staff and alumni from our global community.

Academic Eligibility
Applicants educated outside of the United States must have earned a degree or diploma that SF State considers to be the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution. An official determination of eligibility will be made during the application process. Applicants graduating from international institutions with three-year degrees preceded by thirteen years of pre-collegiate work and “A-level” passes are admissible to SF State graduate programs if they meet all other University and program requirements. Applicants who hold a Bologna degree comprised of 180 ECTS may be eligible for admission following comprehensive evaluation of documents.

International applicants with twelve years of pre-collegiate education, a three-year bachelor’s degree followed by a post-graduate diploma or an honors bachelor’s may be admissible to graduate programs at SF State.

Required Educational Documents
Applicants educated outside of the U.S. must submit official or university-attested and sealed copies of all original academic documents in the original language of issue. Copies must be certified by the appropriate university official. Required documents include: the complete official academic record showing all courses or subjects; dates of enrollment and grades/marks received; official degree(s), diploma(s), or certificate(s) awarded. Official word-for-word English translations must be submitted in addition to the original language documents.

English Language Proficiency Requirement (TOEFL/IELTS/PTE)
All graduate, credential, second baccalaureate, and certificate 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. According to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (Section 41040), to be admitted to a campus as a post-baccalaureate or graduate student, applicants whose native language is not English must receive a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or 80 on the internet-based (iBT) test. Students who have taken the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as an alternative must obtain a 7.0 overall band score. Students taking the Pearson Test of English (PTE) must post a minimum score of 65. Accountancy, Business Administration, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) graduate programs have higher TOEFL score requirements. Applicants who have earned degrees outside of the U.S., even if they have completed course work in English, should contact Graduate Studies to determine if they are required to take TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE. TOEFL score reports should be sent to SF State Division of Graduate Studies, Institution Code: 4683.

Applicants who do not meet SF State TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE standards are encouraged to apply to the American Language Institute at SF State to prepare for full admission to SF State graduate programs. Contact the American Language Institute (http://ali.sfsu.edu) for information.

Admission Decisions
The University reserves the right to select its students and deny admission to the University or any of its programs. Review the University Right to Select Students section of this Bulletin.
Notice of Admission or Denial

After review of all application materials, department or program admission committees notify the SF State Graduate Admissions office of their admission recommendations. Applicants are then formally notified of their admission status on receipt of the official SF State Graduate Admission Notification Letter issued by the SF State Division of Graduate Studies. Letters of admission from the department or program received prior to the official SF State Admission Notification Letter are not valid. Applicants who are denied by either the University or the academic department or program will receive notification of denial from the Division of Graduate Studies.

Admission Contingent on Award of Degree

If a student is admitted to the University before the final award of the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate degree, an official transcript with degree award notation must be submitted before the end of the fourth week of the first semester of enrollment. Students who are admitted to a graduate program contingent on award of the undergraduate degree must maintain a 3.0 GPA in all work completed before the degree is earned or admission status may be rescinded. Any student who does not submit documentation of completion of an undergraduate degree by the end of the fourth week is subject to one or more of the following actions: cancellation of admission and registration, automatic reclassification to undergraduate status, loss of all units taken for post-baccalaureate credit, and disciplinary action if appropriate.

Expiration of Admission Offer

Admission will be cancelled if an applicant is accepted by SF State for a given semester and does not enroll in that semester. Applicants who let their admission offer expire must file a new CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply) application, pay a new application fee, and meet the requirements for admission in effect for the new term to which they are applying. Readmission to a future semester is not guaranteed. An offer of admission may also be withdrawn by the graduate program if the applicant has not indicated their intent to enroll by the program deadline or has failed to meet a condition of admission set by the program.

Admission Categories

Graduate Conditionally Classified

Most students are admitted to the University in conditionally classified standing. Admission conditions are determined by the program and must be met within the specified timeframe set by the program. Programs admit students in this category to evaluate progress toward degree completion. This admission category does not impact Financial Aid eligibility. Students admitted in this category will be moved to classified status after submission and approval of the Advancement to Candidacy Form (ATC).

Graduate Classified

Very few students are admitted directly to this category. Most students advance to this status after submitting an approved Advancement to Candidacy Form (ATC).

Post-baccalaureate Classified

Students admitted to a credential or second baccalaureate program will be admitted as post-baccalaureate classified. Admission in this status does not constitute admission to, or assurance of consideration for admission to, any graduate degree program. Contact the Credential and Graduate Services Center for further information on credential programs. Students seeking admission for administrative or special education credentials should contact the departments directly. Second baccalaureate students should maintain close ties with the Department Advisor to ensure prerequisite or a second bachelor’s degree coursework is completed according to submitted plan.

Post-baccalaureate Unclassified

Students who have earned an undergraduate degree and are admitted to a graduate or undergraduate certificate program are admitted to this category. Certificate students should contact the department offering the certificate program for information about the application process. Not all certificate programs are Financial Aid eligible.

Transfer Credit from Other Institutions

Graduate courses taken at another university are not automatically transferable to an SF State program. At the discretion of the department faculty, with support of the dean of Graduate Studies, a maximum of six 6 semester units, including any combination of transfer units or coursework through the College of Extended Learning, may be used to meet the requirements of a 30 unit program, or proportionally more for a program requiring 45 or more units. Students requesting transfer of units should confer with the department chair or graduate coordinator and the Division of Graduate Studies after notification of admission.

Departments/programs have the authority to determine which transfer courses will be accepted for use on the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form. (Review the Advancement to Candidacy section of this Bulletin for more information). Courses accepted for transfer credit by the department must meet the following minimum University requirements, but higher requirements may be stipulated by the department:

- The course content clearly meets the program’s curricular requirements stipulated in the SF State Bulletin.
- The course was taken at a regionally accredited (or international equivalent) institution of higher education.
- The course was not used to meet the requirements for an undergraduate or graduate degree awarded (excess units) at SF State or at another institution.
- The course was completed after earning the baccalaureate degree.
- The course was either an excess upper division or a graduate course at the institution at which it was taken and must be acceptable to that institution’s advanced degree program.
- The course(s), if taken through an extension program, must be acceptable as a degree course at that university. Some extension courses are not acceptable. Check with Graduate Studies for transfer assessment.
- The course was not taken any earlier than seven years from the date the student is planning to graduate. Transfer courses become invalid when they no longer meet the seven-year condition.
- The student earned an acceptable grade (C or better) in the course. A grade of C will be calculated into the student’s ATC GPA which cannot be lower than a 3.0. Most departments require a grade of B or better for transfer courses.
- Quarter units will be converted to semester units (i.e. a three-unit quarter course is equivalent to two semester units).
- Credits earned at recognized foreign universities may be transferable if course content, credit hours and grades are determined equivalent to SF State coursework. An official academic record and certified translation must be on file in the Division of Graduate Studies.
It is the obligation of the student, the student’s advisor, and the graduate coordinator to determine that the proposed transfer course meets all of the conditions for eligibility for inclusion on the ATC form.

A student requesting to have a course taken at another institution included as part of his/her graduate program should do the following:

- Obtain the approval of his/her graduate advisor and graduate coordinator on the Request for Graduate Program Transfer Unit Evaluation form (http://grad.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/forms/transfer-unit-evaluation.pdf).
- Submit the official transcript from the transfer institution with the Request for Graduate Program Transfer Unit Evaluation form to the Division of Graduate Studies for signature by the dean or designee.
- If approved, the course may be included on the ATC. Departments may deny transfer courses.
- Transcripts which have been submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies become the property of the University and are not returned or copied for distribution.

Credit by Examination

Credit by examination is seldom granted unless a student shows a high level of prior competence in the content area of the course being challenged and passes all course requirements through formal examination. An example of a student granted credit by examination is a highly skilled nurse who is able to pass the didactic and practical sections of a nursing course final examination.

To earn credit by examination, a student must obtain approval from the department chair and graduate coordinator. Grading options will be the same as that available for the course being challenged. The examination is to be comprehensive and include whatever activity, test, or demonstration is deemed appropriate for evaluating the skills, understanding, or knowledge required by the objectives of the course. Students must be regularly enrolled during the semester they earn credit by examination. Units earned via credit by examination are counted as part of the total units registered for a given semester and appropriate fees must be paid. Grades received as a result of the examination will be recorded on the student’s permanent record and appropriate grade points assigned.

Credits Taken Prior to Admission to a Graduate Program at SF State

- Credit through Open University, College of Extended Learning (CEL): No more than six units or 20 percent for required units for degree (proportionally more for larger unit degree programs) taken in CEL through Open University may be counted toward a graduate degree.
- Credit for Graduate Courses Completed as an Undergraduate: Up to nine units of upper division or up to 12 units of graduate work (not to exceed a total of 12 units) completed as an undergraduate may be counted toward a graduate program ONLY if the work was taken in the final semester before the bachelor’s degree was earned.
- Credit from Certificate Programs during Post Baccalaureate Classified Status: When a student enrolls in a certificate program prior to admission to a related master’s program, no more than 12 units taken in Certificate status may be applied to a certain master’s degree. Any double counting of units must be approved by the department and the Division of Graduate Studies. Not all programs permit double counting of degree and certificate units.
- Credit Completed during Second Baccalaureate and Unclassified Graduate Status: The Chancellor’s Office has restricted access to these classifications due to budget issues. Admission to either status requires review by the dean of the Division of Graduate Studies. A specific plan of coursework must be approved by the dean. Students not following the plan of coursework will be administratively disqualified.
- Credit Completed before Admission: Applicants to post-baccalaureate study must file an application and be accepted to each program to be eligible to earn a degree, certificate, or credential. Retroactive admission and/or award of degree or certificate is prohibited for students who complete coursework in a program to which they have not been admitted.

Graduate Courses Taken as an Undergraduate Student at SF State

Courses taken prior to the award of the baccalaureate degree at SF State are considered undergraduate courses. However, students who have completed all courses toward the undergraduate degree and who have applied formally for admission to an SF State graduate program, may request on the Application for Award of Baccalaureate degree that up to 12 units of upper division undergraduate or graduate work taken in the final semester before the award of the undergraduate degree be granted provisional post-baccalaureate status. Units to be applied toward a graduate degree may not be counted toward the undergraduate degree. Only units that are B or above and are acceptable to the graduate program may be petitioned for use toward the graduate degree. Inclusion of units on an Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) taken as an undergraduate must have approval of the department/program admission committee or graduate coordinator and the Division of Graduate Studies. The number of upper division undergraduate units must not exceed the total number of undergraduate units permitted on the ATC.

If the baccalaureate degree is not completed at the end of the term expected, the provisional post-baccalaureate status for specified courses may be voided.

If units were not specified for graduate standing when applying for award of the baccalaureate degree at SF State and the units were not used for the baccalaureate degree, students should submit a Petition for Waiver of Graduate Program Regulations to the Division of Graduate Studies.

Concurrent Study for Two Different Master’s Degrees

Students seeking admission for concurrent enrollment in a second graduate degree must meet the following criteria:

1. be in good standing in their current master’s degree program,
2. must have completed at least 15 units of their current master’s degree program,
3. must formally apply and be admitted to the new master’s degree program and
4. may not use the same coursework nor complete the same culminating experience for both programs. For concurrent degrees with a common core, faculty of the programs must determine alternative core courses for the second degree.

Students studying for concurrent masters degrees may not use the same coursework, nor complete the same culminating experience, for both programs. For concurrent degrees with a common core, faculty of the programs must determine alternative core courses for the second degree.
Concurrent Study for Master’s Degree and Credential

Contact the College of Education, Credential and Graduate Services Center for information on current admission policies for entry into a credential program. Students intending to secure both a master’s degree and a California basic teaching credential may, in some programs, pursue these objectives concurrently, although some departments do not allow the same courses to be used for both objectives. Check with the department and Credential Office (College of Education) for the policy. If allowed by the department, no more than 12 units taken in credential status may be applied to a master’s degree.

Readmission

Readmission to a graduate program is not guaranteed. Students reapplying for admission are reviewed with all other applicants during that application period. Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) status is automatically voided after two consecutive regular semesters of absence have occurred and when no formal planned educational or health-related leave of absence has been granted. A leave of absence can only be taken prior to enrolling in the Culminating Experience. The Leave of Absence request form (http://grad.sfsu.edu/sites/sites7.sfsu.edu.grad/files/assets/forms/leave-of-absence-request.pdf.html) is found on the Graduate Studies website. Upon readmission, a new ATC that meets current curricular requirements must be completed and filed. Review the Continuous Enrollment Requirements (bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/registration/#conenreq) and Progress Toward Degree (bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/academic-policies-procedures/#PTD) sections of this Bulletin for information.

SF State graduate students must reapply for admission to the University and the department/program if:

1. they did not enroll in the first semester of admission;
2. they have been absent for two consecutive regular (spring/fall) semesters as a matriculated student; and/or
3. they have attended another college in any interval of their absence.

In order to be considered “in attendance” for any semester, the student must be enrolled in at least one class through the end of the twentieth day of instruction.

Applications for readmission and all supporting materials must be filed in the Division of Graduate Studies in accordance with current requirements and procedures. In order for previously matriculated SF State graduate students to be eligible for readmission, they must have earned a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all coursework attempted in graduate status and, if applicable, all coursework attempted at other colleges during their absence. If a student has attended any other educational institutions following attendance as a matriculated student at SF State, transcripts must be submitted for all academic work undertaken since the student last attended SF State. Students applying for readmission must have been in “good standing” at SF State and must have been making continuous progress toward degree before leaving their SF State program. Students wishing to re-enter with a GPA lower than 3.0 must improve their GPA by taking courses through CEL Open University before reapplying.

Courses Taken to Improve GPA

Courses taken to improve the GPA prior to admission to a graduate program or following academic disqualification should be selected to improve academic preparation for graduate coursework. Students may not enroll in non-degree related courses in Open University or lower division courses to improve a deficient GPA. Coursework taken to improve the GPA may not be applied toward their graduate degree.