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Welcome to Cal Poly. We hope your time with us will challenge you to grow professionally and enrich your life personally. We look forward to supporting you in this process and hope this handbook will provide answers to your questions.

– Dean of Graduate Education

CAL POLY GRADUATE EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

Achieve excellence in practice-oriented professional graduate programs which place graduates into the workforce with advanced knowledge and the leadership skills necessary to prosper in an increasingly competitive global economy. Inspire students to innovate and achieve excellence in their educational and professional career objectives.

INTRODUCTION

The California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, CA has more than 35 graduate programs. These programs offer Master’s degrees, Post-baccalaureate Credentials (Education), and Graduate and Professional Certificates. For more information about Cal Poly’s Graduate Education programs, please visit our website: [www.grad.calpoly.edu](http://www.grad.calpoly.edu) or contact us via email: [grad@calpoly.edu](mailto:grad@calpoly.edu).

This handbook is intended to help guide you through the many policies and processes that you must follow to complete your graduate studies. It contains many of the official rules and regulations that govern the Cal Poly campus; a complete set of regulations can be found in the University Catalog. This handbook should serve to answer many of the questions that faculty, staff, and students encounter as they map out their path to degree completion. If you have any recommendations for additions or corrections to this handbook, please contact the Graduate Education office at [grad@calpoly.edu](mailto:grad@calpoly.edu).

Keep in mind that students themselves are ultimately responsible for the successful completion of all of the steps and documents required for graduation. This includes submitting all forms in a timely manner and adhering to university, college, and department requirements related to their degree program. This also means maintaining continuous enrollment until the completion of their degree. This handbook will assist students in achieving these goals and successfully completing their plan of study in a timely fashion.
GRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISING

Each graduate program has a designated Graduate Coordinator who advises and assists students in developing a Formal Study Plan and can help guide students through the detailed steps required to complete their degrees. For a list of current Graduate Programs and designated Graduate Coordinators, go to: http://grad.calpoly.edu/about/coordinators.html.

General questions regarding Graduate Education can be emailed to the Graduate Education Office grad@calpoly.edu, or an appointment can be made by calling (805) 756-2328. The Graduate Education office is located in Building 52, Room D27. Our normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Master’s students should make an appointment with their graduate advisor during their first quarter of enrollment in that program to develop a Working Formal Study Plan (WFSP) for their Master’s degree. The Working Formal Study Plan is an agreement between the student and the university on the specific coursework that must be completed in order to fulfill the requirements for the Master’s degree. The Working Formal Study Plan also serves as the Advancement to Candidacy and indicates that a program of study has been started, a culminating experience selected, the Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR) completed, and that the student has demonstrated the academic potential for success. The WFSP must be submitted to the Graduate Education Office for review by the end of the 1st quarter of starting your Master’s program at Cal Poly. It is understood that changes may occur to this plan as students make progress toward their degree completion. Changes in the Working Formal Study Plan do not need to be submitted to the Graduate Education Office. However, students must also submit a Final Formal Study Plan within the first 3 weeks of the quarter in which they expect to graduate. This Final Formal Study Plan must accurately reflect the courses that have been completed and will satisfy their program requirements. Each Master’s degree program has specific prerequisites; deficiencies in prerequisites must be defined by the Graduate Coordinator in the conditional acceptance offer, and the Graduate Coordinator is responsible for verifying prerequisite compliance prior to the submission of the Final Formal Study Plan. Pre-requisite courses normally do not count toward fulfillment of the unit requirement for the degree. Departmental faculty advisors and Graduate Coordinators share the responsibility for advising Master’s degree students throughout their graduate career. Students are urged to maintain a personal file of transcripts and other records of all undergraduate and graduate work undertaken, and to make this file available whenever they seek advising.

ADMISSIONS

An application for admission to a Master’s program at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo is available through www.calstate.edu/apply. The Cal State Apply system allows students to browse through general information about all of the CSU’s twenty-three campuses. They can view multimedia campus program offerings, send and receive electronic responses to specific questions, and apply for admission and financial aid.

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

The CSU advises prospective students that they must supply complete and accurate information on the application for admission, residence questionnaire, and financial aid forms. Importantly, applicants must submit official transcripts of all previous academic work associated with receiving their bachelor’s degree. Transcripts must be sent directly from the issuing institution to the Cal Poly Admissions Office. Do not send transcripts to the Graduate Education Office, Program College or Department Offices or directly to your Graduate Coordinator/Director. Failure to complete, accurate, and authentic application documents may
result in denial of admission, cancellation of academic credit, suspension, or expulsion (Section 41301, Article 1.1, Title 5, California Code of Regulations).

Be sure to set up your Cal Poly Portal when you receive access from the Cal Poly Admissions Office by email. Be sure to review your “To Do List” on your Cal Poly Portal, and check it periodically as this is how the Admissions Office will communicate with you and also let you know if anything is pending (Official Transcripts, for example) for your application to be complete.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applicants for graduate programs should contact the Cal Poly Admissions Office www.admissions.calpoly.edu for program specific deadlines. Please note that applicants must have all their supporting documents (transcripts, letters of recommendation, test scores, etc.) submitted to Cal Poly by the application deadline. Extension to the application deadline will only be considered for the following three reasons: 1) personal medical issues, 2) military deployment, and 3) student-athletes with extenuating circumstances.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for admission to a master’s program at Cal Poly, an applicant must meet CA state requirements (Title 5), California State University requirements (Chancellor’s Office), Cal Poly University requirements (Catalog) and other criteria as prescribed by each graduate program.

California State Requirements

Title 5. Education

Division 5. Board of Trustees of the California State Universities

Chapter 1. California State University

Subchapter 3. Admission Requirements

Article 8. Admission of Post-Baccalaureate and Graduate Students

An applicant may be admitted to a campus as a classified graduate student if the applicant satisfies the requirements of each of the three following numbered subdivisions:

1. The applicant holds an acceptable baccalaureate degree earned at an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association, or the applicant has completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by the appropriate campus authority; and

2. The applicant has satisfied any one of the following three lettered conditions:
   a. The applicant has attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 in an acceptable earned baccalaureate degree,
   b. The applicant has attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 in the last 60 semester units (90 quarter units) attempted;
   c. The applicant holds an acceptable post-baccalaureate degree earned at an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association;

3. And the applicant was in good standing at the last institution of higher education attended.
California State University Requirements

https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/graduate/getting-into-the-csu/Pages/admission-requirements.aspx

The minimum requirements for admission to graduate or post-baccalaureate studies at a CSU campus are in accordance with university regulations as well as Title 5, chapter 1, subchapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations. Specifically, you will qualify for admission if you:

- have completed a four-year college course of study and hold an acceptable baccalaureate;
- are in good academic standing at the last college or university attended;
- have attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 in an acceptable earned baccalaureate degree;
- have attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 (A = 4.0) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units attempted;
- meet the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards for graduate study, including qualifying examinations and specific course and/or grade prerequisites, as appropriate campus authorities may prescribe.

In unusual circumstances, a campus may make exceptions to these criteria.

Graduate students must apply to the university AND to a specific graduate program.

English Language Requirements

All graduate and post-baccalaureate applicants, regardless of citizenship, whose preparatory education was principally in a language other than English, must demonstrate competence in English. Those who do not possess a bachelor’s degree from a postsecondary institution where English is the principal language of instruction must receive a minimum score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). (Some campuses require a higher score.) Applicants taking the computer-based TOEFL must present a score of 213 or above. (Some campuses or programs require a higher score.) In the case of graduate admissions, the CSU minimum for the internet (TOEFL iBT) version of the TOEFL is 80.

Cal Poly Requirements

Graduate and post-baccalaureate admission requirements are detailed in the Cal Poly catalog: http://catalog.calpoly.edu/graduateeducation/#thesisorprojectreportrequirements

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

Specifically, a student shall at the time of enrollment:

1. Have completed a four-year college course of study and hold an acceptable baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association, or shall have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by appropriate campus authorities.
2. Be in good standing at the last college or university attended.
3. Have attained an overall grade point average of at least 2.5 (A = 4.0) from the institution that granted your bachelor’s degree.
4. Satisfactorily meet the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards for graduate study, including qualifying examinations, as appropriate campus authorities may prescribe. Have your GRE results reported to Cal Poly Admissions (Institutional Code 4038), and self-report the results in your application.

A student who meets the requirements for graduate and post-baccalaureate studies may be considered for admission in one of the four following categories:

- **Graduate Classified:** To pursue a graduate degree, applicants are required to fulfill all of the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards, including qualifying examinations, prescribed by the campus.

- **Graduate Conditionally Classified:** Applicants may be admitted to a graduate degree program in this category if, in the opinion of appropriate campus authority, deficiencies can be remedied by additional preparation.

- **Post-Baccalaureate Classified:** Admission to an education credential program. Persons wishing to enroll in a credential or certificate program will be required to satisfy additional professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards, including qualifying examinations, prescribed by the campus.

- **Post-Baccalaureate Unclassified:** To enroll in graduate courses for professional or personal growth. Admission in this status does not constitute admission to, or assurance of consideration for admission to, any graduate degree or credential program. Only the Admissions Office can determine if an applicant can be admitted in this category.

Most Cal Poly graduate programs require applicants to complete the general GRE. However, exceptions may be granted to specific programs; check with the Graduate Education website for requirements for each program [http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/find.html](http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/find.html). Applicants who earned a Cal Poly bachelor’s degree within the last seven years may be granted an exemption from the GRE requirement; however, specific programs may waive this exemption and require the GRE for all applicants. Please keep in mind that any applicant (external or Cal Poly undergraduate) with an undergraduate GPA of 2.5 or lower will be required to take the GRE and demonstrate results that are at the 50-percentile or higher (Quant, Verbal & Writing) to be considered for admission.

Requirements FAQs

- Do applicants who have a previous master’s degree need to take the GRE?
  
  Yes, unless the master’s degree is from Cal Poly.

- If I have a Cal Poly bachelor’s degree from a program that is different from my master’s degree objective (e.g. BS materials engineering & MS biomedical engineering), do I need to take the GRE?

  No. Unless the Graduate Coordinator for your master’s degree program requires it. Please check with your Graduate Coordinator.

**EXEMPTIONS FROM GRE REQUIREMENTS**

Graduate programs wishing to request an exemption from the GRE requirement must have a memo from their College Dean requesting this exception sent to the Dean of Graduate Education along with a rational for supporting the request.
CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

Conditional acceptance (graduate conditionally classified) to Cal Poly can only be based on identifying 12 or less units of undergraduate courses that must be taken at Cal Poly in addition to the 45 units required for the master’s degree. These conditional courses must be taken for academic credit at Cal Poly, but are not counted as part of a student’s Formal Study Plan. It is up to the graduate coordinator to verify that conditional courses have been successfully completed. If more than 12 units of undergraduate courses are necessary, then the applicant should be advised to complete these courses and then re-apply once they are completed.

TUITION

The costs of attending Cal Poly can be estimated using the tools available on the student accounts website: https://afd.calpoly.edu/fees/. This includes tuition, fees, housing, dining and parking.

RESIDENCY

The laws of California distinguish between residents and nonresidents for tuition purposes. Tuition and fees are subject to state budget approval. Current fees, including non-resident tuition, can be found at: https://afd.calpoly.edu/fees/. State requirements to establish residency for tuition purposes are independent from those of other types of residency.

A resident for tuition purposes is someone who meets the requirements set forth in the California Educational Code, Section 68000-68084 and 68120-68134, and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, sections 41901-41915. Residency is determined after the student has been accepted for admissions, or upon request for a residency reclassification. The process for determining residence for tuition purposes is detailed on the admissions website: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/mycalpoly/resinfo.html.

If you have any additional questions please contact the admissions office.

APPLICATION PROCESS

All master’s degrees, education credentials, and graduate certificate programs require that students follow the directions given on the Graduate Education website (www.grad.calpoly.edu) for admission to Cal Poly. In general, students are required to complete their application on or before April 1st for Fall admission for each academic year. However, each graduate program has their own admission deadline and details regarding admission deadlines can be found at the Admissions Office website www.admissions.calpoly.edu. It is important to carefully follow the instructions on the Graduate Education website and note that all documents must be submitted by the application deadline in order to be considered for admittance.

Applicants for master’s degree programs may only apply to one program at a time, and the application cannot be transferred to another program. If students are denied acceptance to one program, they cannot apply to another program until 1 quarter following their initial application.

Applications cannot be deferred from one quarter to another for any reason.

Students must have completed their bachelor’s
degree requirements by the beginning of their first quarter at Cal Poly and provide official transcripts verifying this by the end of their first quarter at Cal Poly or they will be dismissed.

The application process for graduate students is summarized below:

- Visit the Cal Poly Graduate Program website and locate the degree you are pursuing; review your program specific requirements and deadlines.

- Review Cal Poly’s catalog for course descriptions and requirements for degree completion. Discuss any insufficiencies in academic background with your Graduate Coordinator and identify if any courses are required for “conditional admittance.”

- General application deadlines are as follows: Fall Quarter (April 1), Winter Quarter (November 1), and Spring Quarter (February 1); however, check with individual programs as specific deadlines can vary for each program.

- Submit your online application through Cal State Apply. After your application is received and processed, you will be emailed instructions on accessing your personal Cal Poly portal: MyCalPoly. Applicants should access MyCalPoly to view further requirements specific to their program. Status of pending items required to complete your application will be identified on your To Do List. Note that official transcripts and test scores must be submitted directly to the Cal Poly Admissions Office, by the application deadline.

- It is required that ALL requested information is uploaded to Cal State Apply under ALL four Sections (quadrants): Personal Information, Academic History, Supporting Information and Programs Materials. This will enable Graduate Coordinators to begin assessing qualifications for admittance. Be sure to upload a statement of purpose in quadrant #4 (Program Materials) that is specific to your graduate program. Be sure to identify the individuals who will provide your letters of recommendation (evaluations) and follow up with them to be sure they have submitted their evaluations by the application deadline.

- Once the application is completed, a Graduate Coordinator will be able to review your qualifications and decide on recommending or denying your application to the Graduate Education Office. The Graduate Education Office will verify that you meet all of the CSU and University requirements for admission and then forward a recommendation for admission to the Admissions Office at Cal Poly. The Admissions Office will confirm receipt of official transcripts and verify residency status.

- Only after ALL of your documents have been verified, you will be notified by email of your admission status by the Cal Poly Admissions Office. Note that all official acceptance notifications can ONLY come from the Admissions Office via an email signed by the Dean of Graduate Education. Any communication from your Graduate Coordinator is for informational purposes only. Graduate Coordinator’s do not have the authority to grant admission to your graduate program.

- If your undergraduate overall GPA is less than 2.5, then you are not eligible for admittance to Cal Poly. An exception can be considered by the Dean of Graduate Education ONLY if the applicant provides
general GRE scores that are at or above the 50-percentile ranking for Quant, Verbal and Writing skills. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

- The CSU advises prospective students that they must supply complete and accurate information on their application for admission along with certified transcripts of all previous academic work attempted. Failure to report accurate and authentic 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).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International applicants include those who hold U.S. visas as students, exchange visitors, or those in other non-immigrant classifications. As part of the California State University (CSU) system, Cal Poly must assess the academic preparation of international students and use separate requirements to confirm English language proficiency. International applicants, unless from one of the exempt countries, must satisfy the English language requirement by submitting either TOEFL or IELTS exam scores with an acceptable score (minimum internet-based TOEFL score of 80 or IELTS of 6.5). It is recommended that International students complete their application 30-days before the deadline in order to facilitate a timely completion of your transcript evaluation.

There are no conditional admittances for international students. International students cannot be admitted to Cal Poly and later prove their English proficiency. Your international credentials must be evaluated by Cal Poly or one of these agencies: AACRAO, ACEI, WES, or IERF. An automatic waiver of TOEFL or IELTS will be given to graduate applicants who have earned an undergraduate degree from a U.S. institution of higher education. Proficiency in English must be demonstrated by taking TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) within the last 2 years with an internet score of 80 or greater or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) must be taken within 2 years with a score of 6.5 or greater. TOFEL or IELTS is required to issue an I20 visa.

For more information on international applicant requirements visit the following link:
http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international/toefl_ielts.html

If a graduate program is open for Fall, Winter or Spring applications, then we admit international students for any quarter. The Fall International Application deadlines are the same as those listed on the Cal Poly Admissions website and vary by program. For Winter the application deadline for international students is 9/1 and the Spring application deadline is 12/1. Due to the extra time involved in assessing international transcripts, it is recommended that international applicants submit their documentation 30-days previous to published deadlines.

In general, Cal Poly requests that your international credentials be evaluated by World Education Services, Inc. (WES). Please note that your international university must be recognized by the International Association of Universities (http://www.whed.net/home.php) in order to be considered for admission to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

In India, the Institution must be 1) an accredited institution by India’s National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with a grade of A and 2) the degree must have earned a Division I classification score. Please note: this equivalency applies only to institutions accredited by the NAAC. It takes into consideration the relative standing of a university as reflected by the NAAC grade and the individual degree holder’s performance as indicated by the classification score (standard grading system).

Middle East: University degree requires four years of study.
Canada: Three-year bachelor’s degree from Quebec, four-year bachelor’s degree from other provinces.

Latin America: University degree requiring four years of study.

Philippines: Four-year bachelor’s degree.

Asian countries: University degree requiring four years of study.

African countries: Four-year bachelor’s, bachelor’s with honours, or maîtrise

In order to study in the United States as an international student, you must document that you have sufficient financial resources to complete your course of study. You must prove that you have enough funds to cover all the costs associated with your first year of full-time study. Each CSU campus determines the typical costs for international students. This budget includes registration fees, housing, books, other living expenses and miscellaneous costs.

As an international student you will need to have your financial institution provide a certification that you have at least the amount required available, or that funds are available from a reliable source. International students should not expect to work to cover the cost of their education in the United States.

Federal/state financial aid is not available for international students. Campus or private scholarships may be available for international students but are not sufficient to cover all expenses.

RETURNING STUDENTS

Students who left Cal Poly prior to degree completion in good academic standing (3.0 or higher) and who wish to resume their former program at Cal Poly within 2-years can return to their program after submitting a paper CSU application and transcripts from any institutions attended after leaving Cal Poly. A returning student is one who has no enrollment record for 3 consecutive regular terms (Fall, Winter, Spring). If you have missed 2 terms, you may enroll without completing a returning student application. Once you have missed 3 terms, you must complete a returning graduate student application.

The first step is to contact the Registrar’s Office and request that they complete a former Returning Student Evaluation to assess your status towards degree completion requirements.

The second step is to contact your Graduate Coordinator and begin a dialogue about satisfying any requirements before submitting the application. Approval from the graduate program for a student to return is documented by the completion of a Petition for Special Consideration, found on the Graduate Education website. The Petition for Special Consideration must be delivered to the Graduate Education Office with all required signatures completed.

The third step is to follow the process outlined on the Admissions website: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/returning
Applications for returning students are accepted according to the following deadlines:

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<td>Fall Quarter</td>
<td>July 1st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter Quarter</td>
<td>October 1st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Quarter</td>
<td>February 1st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Quarter</td>
<td>Closed</td>
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Former graduate students who would like to return to their program after an absence of 2 or more years are encouraged to review the continuous enrollment policy and the 7-year completion policy found in this **Graduate Education Handbook**. Contact the Office of Graduate Education if you suspect you will not be able to complete your degree within 7 years from beginning your program.

**STUDENT ATHLETES**

Cal Poly has approved special consideration practices for the admission of sponsored athletes who can enhance the university community. In support of this goal, the Graduate Education and Admissions Offices will work closely with the Athletic Department to enable academically qualified athletes to be admitted in a timely manner to our master’s degree programs. All graduate applicants must be recommended for admission by the program’s Graduate Coordinator/Director and must meet all the acceptance standards outlined in the Graduate Education Handbook. Application deadlines may be extended when approved by the Dean of Graduate Education.

**ADMISSION TO GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

All applicants to a Graduate Certificate must file a complete application through Cal State Apply. Participants in Graduate Certificate programs must be matriculated into the University. Follow the process detailed in the Application Process section above. Note that applicants cannot be conditionally admitted to a Graduate Certificate program. Also, only 4 units can be transferred from another school to count towards a certificate. In general, Certificate Programs are not eligible for financial aid.

**ADMISSION TO PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

Applicants to Professional Certificates do not apply through Cal State Apply. They are not officially matriculated into the University. All Professional Certificate programs are managed by the Extended Education Office. To apply following the links listed on the Graduate Education webpage next to each Professional Certificate program. Again, **you do not apply through Cal State Apply**. Applications can be completed any time throughout the year. Check with Extended Education for enrollment deadlines. Applicants must supply complete and accurate information along with un-official transcripts of all previous academic work attempted. Contact the Cal Poly **Extended Education Office** if you have questions about the application process. Extended Education does not guarantee that Professional Certificate courses will be offered unless adequate enrollments are realized.

Please note due to the Federal Higher Education Act 2008 online course registrations from students residing in some states may also be subject to review based on the ongoing changes in distance education regulations. Please contact the Extended Education Office for further details.
APPEALS OF ADMISSION DECISIONS

Cal Poly carefully reviews all denied applications. Therefore, for an appeal to have merit, it must bring to light new academic information as well as information pertaining to extenuating circumstances that were not present in the original application. This information must clearly show that the applicant has stronger qualifications than had been earlier evidenced. Neither grades received in the current academic year nor mistakes made by the applicant on the application are a basis for an appeal or the reversal of a decision.

Submitting an Appeal

1. Send a signed letter to the Dean of Graduate Education requesting that he reconsider your application. The letter must come from you (the applicant) and be postmarked no later than 15 days after receipt of your original admission decision. Note: letters submitted via email are not acceptable and will not be considered. Be sure to identify the graduate program you applied to and your student identification number.

2. Your letter must clearly outline your reasons for appealing the initial decision. The information you present should be new and compelling. Your letter should not simply repeat information that had already been presented in your application.

3. Official GRE scores should be sent directly to Cal Poly Admissions and can provide a basis for consideration beyond your undergraduate GPA.

4. Letters of recommendation, personal statements or essays cannot be submitted as part of your appeal.

It is our usual practice to respond to appeals within 30 business days of the date we receive them. While all appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the rate of a decision being reversed based upon an appeal has historically been very low. All appeal decisions are considered final.

All appeals should be addressed to:

Cal Poly State University
Graduate Education Office
1 Grand Avenue.
Building 52-D27
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407 U.S.A.
Attn: Admission Appeal

SECOND MASTER’S DEGREE

A student can earn only one Master’s degree in any one of the Colleges at Cal Poly. A student who wishes to complete a second Master’s degree in another discipline, or two Master’s degrees simultaneously, must complete all requirements for both degrees. No double counting of units is allowed. Existing concurrent programs in Engineering Management and Transportation Planning are the exceptions to this policy. To add a second Master’s degree, a student must complete a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective form and secure all of the required signatures from both Master’s degree programs. The student must then submit the Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective to the Graduate Education Office. Note that separate Formal Study Plans and Culminating Experience forms must be completed for each Master’s degree program.
ADMISSION TO A BLENDED PROGRAM: BACHELOR’S + MASTER’S DEGREES

Blended Programs provide an accelerated route for a student to achieve their academic goals with the simultaneous conferring of both a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree at the culmination of the Master’s degree program. Blended Programs provide students with the possibility of applying 4XX/5XX level courses completed during their senior year to their graduate Formal Study Plan (if those courses are not part of their undergraduate requirements). Blended programs also allow students to seamlessly progress from undergraduate to graduate status without having to apply through Cal State Apply (thereby eliminating the need to pay the $55 application fee).

Undergraduate students should meet with their target Graduate Program Coordinator once they reach junior status (before they have completed 164 degree applicable units) to discuss and outline a Working Formal Study Plan. A Blended Programs Application Approval Form must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Education Office (follow the directions on the grad.calpoly.edu website). Note that you are not officially accepted into a Blended Program until this form has been approved by the Graduate Education Office. Students can be accepted into Blended Programs during any Quarter of the Academic Year.

Once a student has been approved by the Graduate Education Office and their target Master’s program to participate in a Blended Program, they should submit a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective form (PBCO) to the Graduate Education Office during the quarter they complete 164 degree applicable units (assuming you are registered to complete 16 units in your current quarter). Students must have a minimum of a 2.5 cumulative SLO GPA in order to be accepted to a Blended Program. Note that once students are admitted to graduate standing, they must maintain a 3.0 GPA or better in courses counting toward their graduate degree Formal Study Plan.

In addition, a student must be at graduate status for a minimum of 2-quarters before they can graduate. See the section in this handbook on Blended Programs for more information.

COORDINATORS: TRACKING APPLICANTS

Graduate Coordinators can track the status of applicants through both the WebAdmit and GradAdmit portals. Details on how to utilize these portals can be obtained thru training programs offered by the Graduate Education Office. Once an application is complete (all information requested by Cal State Apply is entered, $55 fee paid, official transcripts received by Cal Poly, and test scores required are received by Cal Poly), then the application will be available to the Coordinator for review and recommendation.

Once a recommendation has been made then the Graduate Education and Admissions Offices will verify that all university and state requirements have been met and an offer of admission or denial will be made to the applicant.

Note - If the applicant has not been assigned a recommendation by the Coordinator by the recommendation deadline for that program, the applicant will be denied.

COORDINATOR: DEADLINES

Application deadlines vary for each graduate program. They can be found on the Admissions website: http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/graduate/deadlines.html

The Application Deadline establishes the last day that an applicant can complete their application through Cal State Apply. In addition, ALL documents must be received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office by the application deadline including transcripts, test scores and letters of recommendation. Note that there is NO
“file complete” deadline that is 30-days after the submission of an application through Cal State Apply. ALL documents must be received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office by the deadline for each program.

Requests to accept applications after the deadline must be made by the Graduate Coordinator directly to the Dean of Graduate Education. Exceptions will only be considered for personal medical reasons, military service, or to accommodate athletes recruitment.

The Recommendation Deadline establishes the last day that a Graduate Coordinator/Director can make a recommendation to admit an applicant through WebAdmit or GradAdmit. Any applicants who have not been recommended for admission by the recommendation deadline will be automatically denied admission.

COORDINATORS: STATUS OF APPLICANTS

Once an application is complete, the student’s information from Cal State Apply is transferred into PeopleSoft which is Cal Poly’s data-base of record. All of the applicant’s data can then be viewed in Student Administration (Admissions Inquiry). A weekly tracking report is issued by Admissions and migrated into PolyLearn by the Graduate Education Office so that Coordinators/Directors can see the status of each application. Program action codes indicate the status of each applicant. For example, once an applicant has been notified of admittance, their status will change from DDEF to ADMT.

Program Action Reason Codes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Action</th>
<th>Program Action Rsn</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPL</td>
<td>APPL</td>
<td>Application submitted through CS Apply and entered into PeopleSoft database; no recommendation from Coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDEF</td>
<td>RECM</td>
<td>Recommended for admission by Coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENY</td>
<td>DENY</td>
<td>Denied admission by Coordinator, Graduate Education or Admissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATR</td>
<td>MASS or Manual</td>
<td>Matriculated and term activated so applicant can enroll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAPP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applicant withdrew their application after they were admitted; early July.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADMT</td>
<td>CLAS</td>
<td>Admitted to Cal Poly and notification sent by Admissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCLS</td>
<td>CLAS means classified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>CCLS means conditional classified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FSM means former same major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WADM</td>
<td>MDL</td>
<td>Applicant was withdrawn from the system by Admissions; normally due to file not complete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COORDINATORS: ROLLING ADMISSIONS

Graduate Coordinator should check their WebAdmit or GradAdmit sites to see how their applicant pools are developing. They can recommend an applicant at any time. We strongly urge Coordinators to review applicants as they arrive and not to wait until the end of the application cycle. High quality applicants often apply early and need to make acceptance decisions as early as possible. Applications will be accepted up to the deadline listed for each program. A deadline for receiving recommendations from Coordinators is also provided. Some programs may elect to receive applicants for Fall, Winter and Spring quarters. International
applicants will be accepted for Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters. Importantly, we cannot re-open the Cal State Apply admissions portal or accept any applicants beyond the deadline.

Each week the Graduate Education Office checks WebAdmit/GradAdmit to identify applicants who have been recommended for acceptance by Graduate Coordinators. If recommended and the applicant meets all of the Cal Poly and CSU requirements, then the recommendation is processed by the Admissions Office.

The Admissions Office must verify final transcripts, GPA requirements and residency status before an official acceptance notification can be sent to the applicant. All communications regarding acceptance must come from the Admission Office. Once an applicant’s documentation has been verified by Admissions, an email message indicating ADMIT or DENY will be sent to the applicant signed by the Dean of Graduate Education.

If the recommendation from the Coordinator is to DENY the applicant, then a reason for the denial must be provided thru WebAdmit, in the “comments” field. The reason for denial will not be shared with the applicant.

Applicants that have not provided all required documentation by the Application Deadline will be administratively withdrawn (Program Action: WADM)

Graduate Coordinators should keep in mind that the Cal Poly allocation for SUG funds is determined by 3/1 each year and the funds are not separate between undergraduate and graduate applicants (all the SUG funds are in one pool). Graduate students may not be considered for SUG funds if they have not been admitted by 3/1. It is possible that all of the available SUG funds may be allocated to undergraduates by 3/1. So if possible please try to admit graduate students by this date.

COMMUNICATIONS: ADMIT, INTENT-TO-ENROLL, DEPOSIT & REGISTRATION

ONLY the Graduate Education Office can communicate with students regarding their admission status, intent-to-enroll, deposit and registration process.

Once a notification of admittance has been sent to the applicant, then the applicant will be setup in the Graduate Education Office CRM system to receive a series of communications covering intent-to-enroll, deposit and registration.

First message will include a congratulations along with a reminder that the applicant should respond within 30-days and notify the Graduate Education Office of their intention to enroll (or not) in their graduate program. If the applicant intends to enroll then they must notify the Graduate Education Office via email (grad@calpoly.edu). If they do not intend to enroll the applicant should send an email directly to the Admissions Office (admissions@calpoly.edu) and ask them to withdraw their application. The applicant must communicate their intentions directly to either the Graduate Education or Admissions Offices. The applicant’s intentions cannot be communicated indirectly through the Graduate Coordinator/Director, Dept/College Offices, or faculty advisor.

Second message will direct the applicant to make a deposit of $250 to secure their registration appointment. This deposit will be applied towards their first quarter’s tuition. There are no partial payments and financial aid will not cover the deposit. It is a non-refundable deposit and will not be returned if the applicant does not register for classes in the quarter they are accepted. The deposit must be received by the following dates depending on the first quarter of enrollment: Fall: 7/1, Winter: 12/15 and Spring: 3/15.

Third message notifies new graduate students of their timeline for registration. It advises them to begin developing a working formal study plan and to contact their graduate coordinator for academic advice on curricular matters. New students are invited to attend a Graduate Student Orientation session and to visit the
Graduate Education website to learn more about financial support opportunities, professional development workshops, and policies and procedures that they should review in order to successfully navigate to degree completion.

Please note that ALL communications regarding admittance, intent-to-enroll, and registration deposit MUST be through the Graduate Education Office. Graduate Coordinators, College and Department Offices, and Faculty Advisors should direct all of their new students to communicate directly with the Graduate Education Office on these matters.

CAL STATE APPLY

All applications to Cal Poly graduate programs must be submitted through Cal State Apply. For an application to be complete ALL four Quadrants of information must be supplied by the applicant. Keep in mind that Quadrants #1-3 (Personal Information, Academic History, and Supporting Information) are the SAME for all 23 California State University Campuses and are for both undergraduate and graduate applicants. Only Quadrant #4 (Program Materials) is specific to Graduate Education at Cal Poly.

APPLICATION PROCESS

CS Apply opens to receive applications for Fall quarters on October 1, for Winter quarters on June 1, and for Spring quarters on August 1.

- Quadrant #1 – Personal Information
- Quadrant #2 – Academic History
  - Universities attended
  - Transcript entry: should only enter courses in progress; courses completed are part of official transcript(s)
  - GPA (self-report)
  - Standardized Tests (self-report)
- Quadrant #3 – Supporting Information
  - Professional Experiences: work experiences
  - Achievements: awards, honors, presentations, publications, scholarships
  - Documents: none required
  - Statement of Purpose: 500 word personal statement
- Quadrant #4 – Program Materials
  - Home: program specific requirements
  - Documents: resume, supplemental materials
  - Evaluations: letters of recommendation (1 minimum)
  - Cal Poly specific questions
For your application to be complete and submitted to Cal Poly for consideration, **ALL four quadrants of information must be completed.** And your official transcripts and test scores must be received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office.

**EVALUATIONS (LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION)**

To be considered for admission applicants will need to request a recommendation to be submitted by up to three people. Please check your program’s site for how many recommenders will be needed: [http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/find.html](http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/find.html). Note that ALL recommendations must be submitted through Cal State Apply. Do not send letters of recommendation directly to the Admissions or Graduate Education Offices or your Graduate Coordinator.

Once you have requested an electronic evaluation, an email request will automatically be sent to the evaluator on your behalf. Please advise your evaluator to look for this email in their inbox, as well as their spam or junk-mail folder, as emails do occasionally get filtered out.

What the Requester Receives

Dear **Reviewer,**

**Student** has requested that you provide an online recommendation as part of their application to the CSU.

**Access the Cal State Apply Recommendation Portal**

To help you create and submit this important information for the applicant, please follow these steps:

1. Navigate to this URL: [https://recommendations.liaisoncas.com/recommendation/ui/login](https://recommendations.liaisoncas.com/recommendation/ui/login)
2. If this is your first time accessing the Evaluator Portal, you will need to create an account.
3. If you have previously created an account, use the login information previously established to log back in and complete this evaluation.

After logging into the Recommendation Portal, you’ll be taken to an account page where you add your details and contact information, then you will be able to Accept or Decline the recommendation request.

If you accept the request, click the Accept button, then click the applicant’s name to open the recommendation form.

If you have technical questions about this recommendation request, please contact Liaison Student Support at 857-304-2087.

Sincerely,

Cal State Apply

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**Cal State Apply Recommendation Portal - Letters by Liaison**

Graduate Likert Scale Evaluation Reference

- **Relationship Questions**
  - *How long have you know the applicant?*
• Response - Drop down:
  • Less Than 1 year
  • 1-2 years
  • 2-3 years
  • 3-5 years
  • 5-10 years
  • More than 10 years

• Required

• In what capacity do you know the applicant?
  • Response - Drop down:
    • Employee/Supervisor
    • Colleague/Coworker
    • Instructor/Professor
    • Advisor
    • Internship/Job Shadowing
    • Other

• Required

• Likert Analysis
  • REQUIRED - Include the following categories:
    • Communication skills: Oral
    • Communication skills: Written
    • Technology skills
    • Initiative
    • Maturity
    • Creativity
    • Ability to work with others
    • Self-Confidence
    • Intellectual potential
    • Present academic performance
    • Motivation for the proposed program of study
• Potential for graduate work

• Overall Recommendation
  • Recommendation Concerning Admission:
    • Response - Drop down:
      • Highest
      • Without Reservation
      • With Reservation
      • Do not Recommend
    • Required

• Evaluator Comments
  • Please provide a narrative describing your professional or scholarly relationship with the applicant and your assessment of the applicant’s preparation and ability to be successful in this program. You may type your letter here or copy-paste from a different program.
    • Response - Text box - up to 2500 characters - display max characters
    • Required

CAL STATE APPLY FAQS
• Does an applicant have to enter GRE or GMAT scores in Quadrant #2 (Academic History) if they are having them sent from the testing service?
  
  YES, you should self-report GRE/GMAT test scores in Quadrant #2.

• In Quadrant #2 (Academic History), should graduate applicants manually enter all their undergraduate classes?
  
  You should NOT enter all your undergraduate coursework manually. Only enter any course that you are currently taking to complete your bachelor’s degree. Your transcript will reflect all of the courses you have already completed.

• In Quadrant #3 (Supporting Information), applicants may, or may not, have Experiences, Achievements or any specific documents to upload.

• In Quadrant #3 (Supporting Information), you should be specific about your academic interests in your Statement of Purpose, even though the application recommends to keep it general.

REGISTRATION
Registration for classes is completed through a student’s Cal Poly Portal, and the process depends on if the student’s program is classified as state-support or self-support. Only the following programs are self-support: MPS Dairy Products Technology, MS Fire Protection Engineering, MS Accounting, MS Taxation, MS Business Analytics, MS Economics, and MS Packaging Value Chain. All other programs are state-support.
STATE SUPPORT PROGRAMS

State-support programs pay tuition based on a CA state subsidized model. There is a fixed tuition for taking 6 units or less and a set tuition for more than 6-units.

For State-Support Programs: your enrollment time periods are listed on the Registrar’s website: https://registrar.calpoly.edu/enrollment-appointments

You will register for classes through your Cal Poly portal – Student Center.

SELF-SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Self-support programs do not receive any CA subsidization, and tuition is based on the number of units taken for the program. Self-support programs have a business model that requires a certain number of students in order for the program to be financially viable.

For Self-Support Programs: your registration time-lines are different, and you must register through the Extended Education Office. Go to this website for more information: http://extended.calpoly.edu/

Typically, continuing graduate students register during Spring quarter, and new graduate students register during August for Fall enrollment. For questions or assistance with registration, please contact the Registrar’s Office.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The following conditions and academic requirements are common to all Master’s degrees:

- All graduate students must satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement (EO 665) before the end of their first quarter of enrollment (before Advancement to Candidacy).

- All graduate students must submit an approved Working Formal Study Plan to the Graduate Education Office with a minimum of 45 quarter units (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.2.) before the twelfth unit of graduate study is completed (before end of first quarter of enrollment). The Working Formal Study Plan also documents that the student has completed their Advancement to Candidacy requirements.

- All graduate students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (grade of B on a scale where A = 4.0) or better based on all courses listed in their Formal Study Plan. A course in which a ‘CR’ is assigned shall not be used in computing the grade point average. (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.4.) Only individual graded courses with C- (1.7) or higher can be included on their Formal Study Plan.

- All graduate students must maintain satisfactory scholarship and professional standards. Only
those graduate students who continue to demonstrate a satisfactory level of scholastic competence and fitness, as determined by the appropriate university authorities, shall be eligible to continue in their graduate studies. Students whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory by the authorities of the University may be required to withdraw from all graduate degree curricula offered by the University.

- All graduate students must successfully complete a culminating experience (thesis, project, and/or comprehensive examination). (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.3.) Requirements for a graduate program’s culminating experience are detailed in the Cal Poly catalog.

- All graduate students must complete all degree requirements within seven years (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.2.) of being matriculated. Even if a student is admitted conditionally into a Master’s degree-seeking program, their matriculation date serves as the beginning of their seven-year period.

- All graduate students may elect to meet the Cal Poly Catalog graduation requirements in effect at the time the student was admitted to graduate standing (conditional or classified), provided that continuous enrollment was maintained (AS-692-09). Or they can follow the requirements detailed in the Catalog at the time of their graduation.

- Graduate student may be required to make substitutions on their Formal Study Plan for discontinued courses. All substitutions must be approved by their Graduate Coordinator/Director.

- Graduate level courses (500-level) must make up no fewer than 60% of the units required for their degree (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.2.B.); note that 50% will be allowed until Fall 2019 per AS-825-17.

- No less than 73% of a graduate student’s coursework must be taken while in-residence. For a 45 unit program that means 33 units must be taken while in-residence. In residence courses include:
  - Cal Poly undergraduate (4XX) courses that are not applied to a Bachelor’s degree.
  - Cal Poly graduate (5XX) courses.
  - Cal Poly Special Session (S) courses.
  - Cal Poly Summer Term courses.

- No more than 27% of a graduate student’s coursework can be taken while non-resident. For a 45 unit program that means no more than 12 units can be taken while non-resident. Non-resident courses include:
  - Cal Poly Open University (P) courses.
  - Courses taken at another university before being admitted to Cal Poly; these courses must not have been counted towards their Bachelor’s degree.
  - Credit by exam units.

- No more than 12 units can be taken at another university and transferred to a student’s Formal Study Plan; these courses must not have been counted towards a student’s Bachelor’s degree.

- No more than 12 units can be taken through Cal Poly Open University (P) and transferred to a student’s Formal Study Plan.

- No more than 12 units of Cal Poly undergraduate (4XX & 5XX) courses can be applied to a student’s Formal Study Plan. These units must not have been applied to their Bachelor’s degree requirements.
• No more than 24 units of Special Session (S) or Open University (P) courses that are part of a Cal Poly Certificate program can be applied to a Master’s degree Formal Study Plan.

• No more than 9 units of student teaching can be applied to a student’s Formal Study Plan.

• No more than 9 units shall be allowed for a thesis and/or project (Title 5, Article 7, b.2.C.) culminating experience.

• Thesis/project courses must be completed while matriculated and cannot be completed through Open University (P) or Continuous Enrollment (GS597).

• Some programs/departments set limits on the number of units allowed in independent study courses. Typically there is a 12-unit combined (400/500) maximum of independent study units allowed on a Formal Study Plan.

COURSES TAKEN BY UNDERGRADUATES FOR GRADUATE CREDIT

Cal Poly undergraduates may take courses in the 400 or 500 series for graduate credit while still matriculated as undergraduates. If they subsequently enter a Cal Poly Master’s, credential, or academic certificate program, they may have such course credit applied toward that program, only if the units were not used for the baccalaureate degree. Students must list these courses taken as an undergraduate in the appropriate place on the Formal Study Plan. No more than 12 units of Cal Poly undergraduate work is allowed on the Formal Study Plan. Cal Poly’s Office of the Registrar will validate if Cal Poly undergraduate courses listed on the Formal Study Plan were not needed to meet any undergraduate degree requirement. However, students who want to use undergraduate courses from another institution must provide Cal Poly’s Office of the Registrar with an official letter from the other regionally accredited institution indicating that the coursework was not needed to meet any undergraduate degree requirement.

TIME LIMIT FOR DEGREE COMPLETION

The time allowed to successfully complete all Master’s requirements, including the Master’s culminating experience, is 7 years (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.2.) from the time the student is matriculated (classified or conditionally classified) into their Master’s degree program.

The University, at its option and in exceptional cases, may extend the 7-year time frame. Students who wish to extend the 7-year limit must submit a Petition for Special Consideration form to Graduate Education. The petition must include:

• An explanation of the reasons why the extension is necessary.

• Evidence to support the student’s currency in the field of study.

• A copy of the student’s Final Formal Study Plan that indicates any additional coursework that needs to be completed as part of the petition and which of those courses will be over seven years old at the proposed time of completion.
  • If the extension is necessary for completion of the culminating experience, list the specific experience being used (thesis, project, or comprehensive exam).
  • Indicate the current progress made on the culminating experience and when final degree requirement completion is expected.

The seven-year rule cannot be extended indefinitely; the student must specify in the petition what quarter...
and year they will be completing all degree requirements, thus indicating precisely how far the seven-year rule would be extended.

**PROCESS TO DEGREE COMPLETION**

**REGISTRATION & FULL-TIME STATUS**

For graduate students, full-time status is 8 units per quarter. However, graduate students may enroll in up to 16 units during their Cal Poly registration rotation period and up to 22 units (maximum) per quarter during open registration.

**POLYPLANNER**

PolyPlanner is not currently setup to track graduate courses. Monitoring degree applicable units and degree completion progress requires each graduate student to utilize their Working Formal Study Plan to track their progress to degree completion.

**STEPS TO GRADUATION: CHECKLIST & FORMS**

Students can utilize the following checklist to help ensure they are following all the steps required to complete their program:

- **☑ Checklist**
  
  1. Attend **Graduate Education Orientation** meeting Fall Quarter.
  2. Meet with Graduate Coordinator and select a faculty advisor.
    - Determine culminating experience: Thesis, Project, or Exam.
    - Identify members of evaluation committee if necessary.
    - Evaluate core curriculum and electives needed to achieve academic goals.
  3. Submit **Working Formal Study Plan**
    - Must be submitted by end of 1st quarter in the program.
    - Complete Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR) by end of 1st quarter. If Blended Program, complete before filing Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective.
    - Signifies Advancement to Candidacy (Title 5, Article 7, 40510a & 41011) and recognizes that the student has sufficiently demonstrated the ability to sustain a level of scholarly competence that should enable them to successfully complete degree requirements.
  4. Submit **Application for Graduation**
    - Must be submitted one quarter prior to the quarter that you plan to graduate. For example, if you plan to graduate in Spring quarter, you must submit this form by the end of Winter quarter. For graduation in Fall, please submit your form by the end of previous Spring quarter.
    - A **Graduate Programs Exit Survey** must be completed in order for your application to be processed. Student identity will be kept confidential. Only aggregate responses will be used to
assess program performance.

5. Submit **Final Formal Study Plan**
   - Must be submitted within the first 3 weeks of the beginning of the quarter in which you plan to graduate.
   - Must accurately list all courses that will count toward degree completion (see section on Degree Requirements).

6. Submit Master’s Culminating Experience Approval Form
   - There is a separate form for a thesis, project, or exam.
   - Will only be accepted in the quarter in which a student graduates.
   - Must be submitted by the last day of the quarter (end of final exam week) in which you intend to graduate.
   - If submitting a thesis, refer to the Master’s Thesis Submission Process at grad.calpoly.edu and below for more details.

**NOTE:** Each of the forms identified in the checklist should be downloaded directly from the Graduate Education website at grad.calpoly.edu to ensure they are the most current versions. All non-DocuSign forms must be turned into the Graduate Education Office in Science Building 52, Room D27.

**THE FORMAL STUDY PLAN**

Each student should make an appointment with their Graduate Coordinator/Director during their first quarter of graduate study to develop a Working Formal Study Plan for their Master’s degree. A Formal Study Plan is an agreement between the student and the college on the specific coursework to be completed in order to fulfill the curricular requirements for the Master’s degree. The student should always consult with their advisor to ensure that only approved courses are selected, since departmental requirements vary and some courses are excluded or may not be offered. A copy of the study plan must be submitted to Graduate Education Office for review and final approval.

Courses below the 400-level may not constitute any part of the approved units on a Formal Study Plan (AS-313-89). However, in those programs where specific courses below the 400-level may be essential for a student’s success, the student may be conditionally admitted to the program contingent upon completing those courses.

Do not list any prerequisite courses on the Formal Study Plan.

It is understood that changes may occur to the Working Formal Study Plan as students make progress with their studies; changes do not need to be submitted to the Graduate Education Office. However, students must submit a Final Formal Study Plan within the first 3 weeks of the quarter in which they expect to graduate. This Final Formal Study Plan must accurately reflect ALL the courses that have been completed that will count toward the completion of their degree requirements.

**ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY**

Advancement to Candidacy (Title 5, Article 7, 40510a & 41011) recognizes that the student has to date sufficiently demonstrated the ability to operate at a level of scholarly competence that should be satisfactory
for successful completion of the degree requirements. The student has identified their culminating event as a thesis, project, and/or comprehensive examination and established a faculty advisor. The student has also satisfied the Graduation Writing Requirement.

Advancement to Candidacy is part of the Working Formal Study Plan, and a student’s signature on the form signifies understanding of the overall 3.0 GPA requirement and compliance with the Continuous Enrollment Policy.

FULL-TIME GRADUATE STUDENT STATUS

A full-time graduate student is defined as one taking 8 or more units in a quarter. Students receiving financial aid may need to meet different requirements to be considered full-time and should consult with the Financial Aid Office. Normally students are not permitted to enroll in more than 22 units in any one quarter.

ENROLLMENT IN GRADUATE COURSES

To enroll in a 500-level graduate course, a student must have post-baccalaureate standing, graduate standing, or the permission of the instructor. Undergraduate prerequisites are waived for 500-level courses. Note, prerequisites are not waived for 400-level courses; you may need to get a permission number from your Graduate Coordinator or department administrator to enroll in 4XX classes. The maximum number of independent study units are defined by each program/department and are listed in the Cal Poly catalog; typically, the maximum is 12 units.

COURSES COUNTED TOWARD GRADUATION AND CREDIT/NO CREDIT GRADING

Only those letter-graded courses in which an A, B, or C is earned (C- is acceptable) count toward satisfying the total unit requirement for a graduate degree. Courses which are offered only on a credit/no credit basis also satisfy the unit requirement if a credit grade is earned. The equivalent of an A or a B is required to earn credit in such courses. Graduate students may elect to take courses that are not part of their formal program of study on a credit/no credit basis. Every class in the Formal Study Plan must have a grade of C- or higher. There can be no classes on the Formal Study Plan with a D+, D, or D-. If a student receives a D grade in a required class, the course can be retaken and both grades will be averaged into the Formal Study Plan GPA. There is no grade forgiveness for Master’s students. However, if a course is not required, it can be removed from the FSP and replaced with a suitable alternative.

GRADUATE PROGRAM EXIT SURVEY

This assessment will provide the Graduate Education
Office with some metrics for assessing the quality of a student’s Master’s degree program experience. It provides data that feeds into program fitness reports that are tied to program reviews for WASC accreditation. This survey is entirely confidential.

Graduate Program: ____________________________

Type of comprehensive experience: (You may indicate more than one type, if appropriate.)

☐ Exam
☐ Project
☐ Thesis

Assessment of Program

Circle the score (1 poor, 2 fair, 3 adequate, 4 good, and 5 excellent) that reflects your assessment of the criteria given below:

1 2 3 4 5 Learning outcomes for my program were clearly articulated.

1 2 3 4 5 Curriculum provided me the opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes.

1 2 3 4 5 Culminating experience demonstrated that I have achieved the learning outcomes associated with this degree.

1 2 3 4 5 Adequate mentoring was provided throughout my graduate experience.

1 2 3 4 5 Rate the support provided by your Graduate Coordinator.

CULMINATING EXPERIENCES: THESIS, PROJECT, AND/OR EXAM

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

All graduate students must successfully complete the culminating experience required by their specific program (thesis, project, and/or comprehensive examination) to be granted a Master’s degree (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.3.). The quality of work accomplished including written expression is the major consideration in judging the acceptability of the thesis, project, and/or comprehensive examination. Importantly, the degree award date is based on the submission date of the Master’s Culminating Experience Approval Form to the Graduate Education Office. The form must be submitted by the end of business hours on the Friday of a quarter’s final’s week in order for the degree to be awarded in that quarter.

ARCHIVING CULMINATING EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTATION

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Offices provide guidelines for retention and disposal of student records pertaining to post-baccalaureate culminating experiences. They recommend that evidence of completion be archived for 7-years. Theses are permanently stored in the Cal Poly Library Digital Commons. Project reports must be kept by the advisor who approves the report. Exams both written and oral must be kept by the faculty who certifies that the experience was passed. Oral exams must be recorded and digitally stored.
EXPORT LAW COMPLIANCE

The Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) will work with all faculty advisors of thesis and projects to ensure that Cal Poly is in compliance with federal export laws. Under Federal Law, access to export controlled information or materials to those in the U.S. on a visa is considered to be an export (even though occurring within the U.S.), potentially requiring an export license, unless a particular authorized license exemption applies. The types of equipment and information involved in graduate research (laboratory or thesis) determines the potential likelihood of being subject to export restrictions (especially Engineering, Science/Math, Agriculture). Faculty should consult with ORED to make this determination.

Graduate student advisors in categories with a high likelihood of export restricted material/equipment should work with their College Dean’s Office and ORED to determine if students should be allowed to work on impacted activities. The goal is to not adversely impact research or thesis activity, but to assure that the campus takes proper steps to comply with federal export law (e.g. licenses, if necessary)

THESIS FORMAT

A thesis must be a cohesive document that defines an area of study along with its relevant background, theory for a solution, methods utilized to proving the theory, and a detailed discussion of results and conclusions. It must be an integrated document with chapters and sub-headings that support a continuous flow, complete with references that are consecutively numbered throughout the document. There must be enough detail in the methods section to replicate the work. A thesis is not a collation of separate articles each with their own introduction, methods, conclusions, and separate references.

THESIS ADA COMPLIANCE

The thesis author should work with the Cal Poly Kennedy Library to make sure that their work is ADA compliant. Making your thesis ADA accessible allows those using screen readers and other assistive computer technologies to read your thesis. This means that more people will be able to read your thesis online, therefore increasing the size of your audience and potential citations for your paper. To check your thesis, project, or dissertation for accessibility, it is recommended that you use Word 2010 or Word 2013. These versions have a built-in accessibility checker. You can learn about the accessibility checker from the Microsoft accessibility checker page (https://support.office.com/en-us/article/use-the-accessibility-checker-to-find-accessibility-issues-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US). Microsoft also has how-to guides for creating accessible Word documents (https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-word-documents-accessible-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US).

After you have validated that you fixed all issues detected by the Word accessibility check, save your page as a PDF. Go to Adobe Acrobat Pro and check for accessibility. Adobe has created a how-to guide to create and verify PDF accessibility (https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html).

Once all edits required by a thesis committee and/or a faculty advisor are complete, the final version of the thesis must be uploaded to the Digital Commons. All Master’s theses must go through the Graduate Education’s thesis formatting and review process, wherein an editor reviews and provides the student with needed corrections. It is imperative that students respond in a timely matter to requests for modifications to bring their theses into compliance. Upon completion of any corrections required by the editor, the thesis is approved and posted to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly, a digital archive for the University. A thesis is not posted to the Digital Commons until all edits requested are completed.
THESIS REQUIREMENTS

A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers conclusions or recommendations. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required. A thesis must be authored by one and only one student. (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.3.A.)

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written report that includes the project’s significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. A project may be completed by a team of students, but each student must write an individual report that reflects their contribution to the project and how it meets the standards of a Master’s thesis as described above. A project may be evaluated by oral defense, which must be documented. A project must be approved by a faculty advisor from the student’s program. A project may also utilize a committee to evaluate the student’s undertaking, and the committee should meet the same standards as a thesis committee. (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.3.B.) Project reports will not be reviewed by the Graduate Education office’s thesis editor, do not have to comply with the thesis formatting guidelines, and will not be posted to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly.

THESIS OR PROJECT ADVISOR

The faculty member who serves as a graduate student’s thesis or project advisor must meet the University’s standards for teaching graduate courses. Graduate courses are normally taught by tenure/tenure track faculty who demonstrate mastery of the topic by possession of the appropriate terminal degree.

THESIS/PROJECT COMMITTEE

The following are requirements for the members of a thesis or project committee: 1) that the graduate student have a thesis/project advisor (committee chair) who is a permanent full-time faculty member from the student’s program or from another closely-related program; 2) that the thesis/project advisor and the student recommend a thesis/project committee comprised of at least three members; 3) that the other two members may be from the student’s program or from another department or college within Cal Poly. One of the two committee members (not the committee chair) may be from an organization that sponsored the thesis/project undertaking. Please note that a project does not require a committee; it is optional and should be decided by the student and their project advisor.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

A comprehensive examination is one of the possible culminating experiences for a Master’s degree and assesses the student’s ability to integrate knowledge, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrates a mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination should provide documented evidence of these abilities and achievement. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained by the Graduate Coordinator/Director for the program. It is the responsibility of the academic department supporting the graduate program to ensure that the comprehensive exam assesses all of the learning outcomes identified for the program. (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.3.C.).
THESIS DEFENSE CHECKLIST:

☑ Checklist


2. Complete a draft of your thesis and submit to your advisor for review and feedback at least 1-quarter before the quarter you plan to graduate. Be sure to check the Master’s Thesis and Project Formatting Guidelines available on the Graduate Education website, [grad.calpoly.edu/policies/thesis.html](http://grad.calpoly.edu/policies/thesis.html).

3. Edit your thesis based on your advisor’s feedback and submit a copy to your committee members at least 2 weeks before your defense.

4. Schedule your defense date/time and reserve a conference room.

5. Complete your oral defense and collect all edits/feedback from your committee and update your thesis. Make sure to download, print, and complete the Master’s Thesis Approval Form and have your committee members sign it. Remember to indicate on the form if you wish to restrict access to your thesis. Refer to the Master’s Thesis Submission Process on the Graduate Education website for more detailed instructions.

6. Obtain a Cashier’s receipt for the Digital Archiving Fee (thesis only) from the Administration Building Cashier’s Office and attach it to the Master’s Thesis Approval Form. You may also pay the archiving fee online (refer to [grad.calpoly.edu/policies/thesis.html](http://grad.calpoly.edu/policies/thesis.html)) and attach a copy of your confirmation email to the form. Turn in the form with attached receipt to the Graduate Education Office. The Graduate Education staff will review the form and verify that all required documentation has been submitted. The form is then forwarded to the Office of the Registrar (Evaluations) for review. The Registrar’s Office makes all final decisions regarding granting of a degree and will notify the student when their degree is awarded.

7. Upload your thesis to the Digital Commons Library Archiving website. Refer again to [grad.calpoly.edu/policies/thesis.html](http://grad.calpoly.edu/policies/thesis.html). Once your thesis has been uploaded, an automatic notification will be sent to the Graduate Education thesis editor. After the editor has reviewed your thesis, you will be contacted with any necessary formatting edits. When all of the suggested edits have been made, the thesis editor will post (publish) your thesis to the Cal Poly Digital Commons.

**Note:** students must submit a Master’s Thesis Approval Form and upload the final version of their thesis to the Digital Commons by end of business hours on the following dates in order to be considered eligible to graduate in the quarter specified below, assuming all other academic requirements for the degree have been satisfied.

### Deadlines for Theses Submissions via Digital Commons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>12/14/18</td>
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<td>Winter 2019</td>
<td>3/22/19</td>
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<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>6/14/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>9/5/19</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**THESIS AUTHOR’S RIGHTS**

As the author of the thesis, you retain all rights to the work, granting the university a non-exclusive license upon deposit in the DigitalCommons@CalPoly. The license confirms that you, as the creator and contributor of your work, grant the university permission to share your work in an open-access digital environment, which is intended for educational purposes.

You and any co-authors retain all intellectual property rights to your work. If you submit material for which you do not own copyright, you must certify that you have obtained permission from the copyright owner to make your materials available online.

You are giving the university permission to make your work available to all users and to migrate it to accessible formats as necessary. Requests for use of your work for purposes other than education will be referred back to you as copyright holder.

Authors who wish to share their work for specific purposes while retaining their copyrights may do so by using an appropriate Creative Commons License.

For more information about author rights and sharing your research with other scholars, please see the Library’s web pages on scholarly communication and copyright. No proprietary information should be included in a thesis.

[http://lib.calpoly.edu/collections/theses/](http://lib.calpoly.edu/collections/theses/)

**DIGITAL COMMONS: RESTRICTED ACCESS TO THESIS**

Two levels of electronic distribution are available. A student, in concert with the advisor, may choose the level which fits the situation. Open Access (Worldwide) distribution is the first option and is recommended by the University and Library to make the information freely available worldwide. It should be noted that this Open Access option may be viewed by some book or journal publishers as publishing the work.

The second option is to embargo (restrict) the thesis for patent, proprietary, or data sensitivity reasons. The student, with the written approval of his/her advisor, may select “restricted access” distribution for the thesis. During the submission process, the student will have the ability to indicate the initial embargo time period. Theses holding the status of “Restricted Access” will receive a bibliographic record in the Library Catalog, and a brief bibliographic display will be available in the DigitalCommons@CalPoly. “Restricted Access” status is designed to secure the work, even disallowing access to the Cal Poly community. This procedure addresses situations such as when a patent application is planned or when proprietary or security interests are at stake. A thesis under the “Restricted Access” status will be placed on a secured server, but the file will not be made visible or available. Only the descriptive data (author, title, abstract, and basic information about the submission) will be publicly visible.

The status of “Restricted Access” will lapse after 1 or 3 years depending on the restriction initially determined by the student and his/her advisor. The student may contact the Graduate Education Office to obtain an extension before the expiration of the initial restriction. After the restriction expires, the document will be moved into Open Access (Worldwide) distribution unless an exception has been granted by the department and/or college/school.

Please note: Kennedy Library’s Interlibrary Services Department (ILS) receives national and international borrow requests for Cal Poly Theses & Projects. Open Access designated theses will be distributed to satisfy relevant borrow requests. Restricted Access theses will not be distributed through ILS until the restricted access time period lapses.
RESEARCH INVOLVING SPECIAL CONDITIONS

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

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a direct violation of intellectual and academic honesty. Although it exists in many forms, all plagiarism refers to the same act: representing somebody else’s work as one’s own. The most extreme forms of plagiarism are the use of a paper written by another person or obtained from a commercial source or use of a paper made up of passages copied word for word without acknowledgment. Paraphrasing another author’s ideas or quoting even limited portions of their text without proper citation is also an act of plagiarism. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this academic community. It will result in a failing grade for the assignment, exam, or task. It may result in a failing grade in the course. See the Cal Poly Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities for further information on plagiarism and disciplinary actions that may be taken. See the Academic Programs website: Academic Policies Cheating & Plagiarism, along with Academic Senate Resolution AS-722-10, Campus Administrative Manual, and Section 684.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Cal Poly has over thirty-five separate Master’s degree programs, and with the inclusion of specializations, there are a plethora of degree paths offered by the University. A complete listing of all of the graduate programs is maintained by the Graduate Education Office.

BLENDING DEGREE PROGRAMS

The academic objective of a Blended Program is to provide an accelerated route to achieving your degree objectives by simultaneous awarding both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Blended Programs provide students with the possibility of applying 4XX/5XX level courses completed during their senior year to their graduate Formal Study Plan (if those courses are not part of their undergraduate requirements). Blended Programs also enable students doing a thesis/project for their Master’s degree to extend their capstone senior project into a Master’s culminating event.

Cal Poly received permission from the CSU Chancellor’s Office (AA-2012-01) to offer Blended Programs that award a Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree at the same time. The Blended Programs started in 1998 and completed their Pilot Period in 2005. The Academic Programs and Graduate Education Offices at Cal Poly have approved several majors to be eligible to pursue a paired Bachelor’s and Master’s degree. Please contact the Graduate Education Office to confirm if your degree objectives fit into one of these paired programs. Graduate Programs that want to request that a pairing of a Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree be eligible as a Blended Program must work with the Academic Affairs and the Graduate Education Offices to establish approval. The following table identifies the currently approved paired Blended Program offerings:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENG</th>
<th>Master’s Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aerospace Engineering</td>
<td>Aerospace Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Computer Engineering, CPE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Materials Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Civil &amp; Environmental</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Environmental Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Science, CSC</td>
<td>Computer Science, CSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Engineering, CPE</td>
<td>Software Engineering, SE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Engineering, CPE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Materials Engineering, MATE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Aerospace Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engineering w/ Integrated Tech Mgmt</td>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Environmental Engineering</td>
<td>Manufacturing Engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAED</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Architectural Engineering</td>
<td>ARCHE</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS Polymers &amp; Coatings</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Materials Engineering, MATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFES</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS Agriculture w/ Food Science</td>
<td>Food Science w/ Advanced Food Science</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Food Science w/ Applied Food Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Admission to a Blended Program

Students may be admitted to a Blended Program in their third or fourth year of undergraduate study. Recommendation to be admitted is determined first at the program level with final approval from the Dean of Graduate Education. The student must submit a Blended Programs Application Approval Form to the Graduate Education Office. Specific requirements for admission are set by the Master’s program with approval by the Graduate Education and Registrar Offices. Once accepted, students may take graduate-level courses that can be applied toward their Master’s degree requirements, as their schedules permit, provided they have the course prerequisites.

Transition to Graduate Standing

Students admitted to a Blended Program will maintain their undergraduate status until they have completed a minimum of 164 degree applicable units (assuming they are enrolled in 16 units in their current quarter). During the quarter the student will complete 180 units (164 complete + 16 in-progress), they must submit a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective (PBCO) requesting the addition of the Master’s degree objective that is paired with their Bachelor’s degree. The signed PBCO must be submitted to the Graduate Education Office by the end of 4th academic week of that quarter. This will enable the student to register as a graduate student for courses offered in the next quarter. The student’s status will also change to graduate standing in the next quarter. For example, if a student has been accepted to a Blended Program and will reach 180 degree applicable units by the end of Spring quarter, they should file a PBCO by the 4th week of the Spring quarter. The student will then be able to register for graduate classes in the Fall quarter and will transition to graduate standing in the Fall quarter, thereby incurring the appropriate increase in tuition fees beginning in the Fall.

The student must have completed their GWR requirement before filing the PBCO and submitted a Working Formal Study Plan to the Graduate Education Office.

Degree applicable unit counts are reported each quarter after the quarter’s census date (typically 3rd week of the quarter).

If you have completed more than the maximum number of units required for your Bachelor’s degree (180 units for most programs, but some CENG programs offer Bachelor’s degrees that require as many as 196 units), then you will not be allowed to transition into a Blended Program.

Double Counting Units

A student may apply any units that are in excess of the 180 undergraduate degree minimum requirements towards both their undergraduate and graduate degree requirements, up to a maximum of 9 units (double counted units). However, neither senior project nor Master’s thesis/project units can be double counted.

Senior Project Requirements

Students in a Blended Program must complete all undergraduate requirements, including senior project requirements as detailed in the Cal Poly Catalog. A student can align the objectives of their senior project with the objectives of their Master’s thesis/project, if a thesis/project is the approved culminating event for the program. A Master’s thesis/project does not satisfy, replace, or substitute for the undergraduate senior project requirement. Senior project requirements must be completed before a student begins their Master’s thesis/project requirements.
Impact on Financial Aid

Students should check with their financial aid program to see if transitioning to graduate status will impact their eligibility for financial aid.

Progress-to-degree on Cal Poly Portal

Note that once students transition to graduate status they will lose access to their Degree Progress Report on their portal.

Co-Op Experiences

Blended students cannot file Leaves of Absence or leave for a Co-op during the first quarter they have reached graduate standing. If a student does not enroll in regular coursework during their first quarter at graduate standing, Cal Poly’s system discontinues them as “no shows.”

Graduate Status for minimum of 2-Quarters

Note that students MUST be at graduate status for at least 2 quarters before they are eligible to graduate.

Academic Units Required for Completion

Under Title V, a minimum of 225 total units are required (Bachelor’s 180 + Master’s 45) for receiving a combined (Blended) degree. A Blended Program can allow double counting equal to the number of units greater than 180, but not to exceed 9 units.

Process to Award Both Degrees

Students must submit the following forms to Graduate Education with the indicated approval signatures: Working Formal Study Plan, Application for Graduation, Final Formal Study Plan, and a Master’s Culminating Experience Approval Form (Thesis, Project, or Exam). When all requirements have been met for both degrees, the Office of Records re-opens undergraduate matriculation (secondary), posts the undergraduate degree, then completes graduate matriculation (primary). Both degrees are awarded at the same time and recognized at a graduation ceremony. If a student fails to complete their Master’s requirements but completes all of their undergraduate degree requirements, the undergraduate matriculation can be re-opened in order to grant the Bachelor’s degree. The student must submit a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective and change their degree objective back to their undergraduate program. Graduate Coordinators should advise students to ensure that their study plans include completion of all undergraduate degree requirements, including required senior project courses. Any research work should be directed so that a student could submit a senior project report even if the effort does not result in a Master’s thesis. Every effort must be made to enable students to satisfy their undergraduate requirements in the event that they choose not to complete their Master’s degree.

Cross Disciplinary Blended Applicants

Some Blended Programs may want to admit students that have an undergraduate degree that is not from the same department as their graduate degree. Only students from approved degree pairings may apply to Blended Programs. Note that all Blended Programs must adhere to the CSU Coded Memorandum (AA-2012-01) objective of providing an accelerated pathway to a Master’s degree. Accordingly, the combined
program must not require any additional units than those required by the primary degree path. For example, any student accepted to a Blended Program must not be required to take any additional courses other than those identified in the Cal Poly Catalog for each degree. An undergraduate degree that is not in the same department as the graduate degree might not provide all of the pre-requisite requirements of the graduate courses. Pre-requisite requirements may be satisfied by taking electives that are approved by the undergraduate curriculum advisor and part of the normal unit count for completion of the undergraduate degree.

Returning Blended Students

If a Blended student becomes discontinued and wants to return to complete either their Bachelor’s and/ or Master’s degree, then they must return into their undergraduate program. Once their Bachelor’s degree requirements are satisfied, they can petition to transition to graduate standing using a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective. Note: Discontinued Blended students cannot return as graduate students; they must first return as undergraduate students and then reapply for the Blended Program: [http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/returning/](http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/returning/)

If upon returning the student enrolls in 599 or graduate level courses, they are responsible for paying continuous enrollment fees (GS597) for the period they were absent. If they enroll in undergrad courses ONLY, they are not required to pay continuous enrollment fees.

REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR A NEW BLENDED PROGRAM

If an existing Master’s degree program wishes to offer a Blended path option to students, then the Graduate Coordinator must work with the Department Chair/Area that oversees the undergraduate program to write a memo requesting the pairing of degrees.

All of the information described below should be included in the memorandum. The memorandum should be sent to the Dean of Graduate Education and Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs & Planning. The title of the memo should be “A Proposal for a new Blended Program in XXX from the College of YYY.”

1. Faculty from the Department proposing the new Blended Program must document both undergraduate and graduate curriculums that a student would complete and explain how the combined degrees would provide an accelerated path for students to achieve their professional objectives.

   a. Outline a typical graduate curriculum flowchart; indicate total number of units required (45 min.); identify the core required (23 units min.) and elective courses; be sure the Department is willing to offer sufficient courses to meet the requirements; if electives are from other departments, you must get a concurrence memo for those departments. Note that the number of 5XX courses required to be taught by the home department is a minimum of 27 units.

   b. The combined units that a student must complete for both undergraduate and graduate degrees should not exceed the unit totals listed in the Cal Poly catalog for both degrees. (e.g. if the undergraduate degree is 180 units and the graduate degree is 45 units, then the Blended Program should not exceed 225 units).

   c. Verify that all undergraduate requirements will be completed even if the graduate requirements are not completed.
d. Define the Master’s culminating experience: thesis, project, or exam. If a thesis or project, then identify the faculty in the department who are willing to support the required research and serve as advisors. Indicate the sources of funding for supporting the research.

e. Define the acceptance criteria for admitting students and how applicants will be reviewed.

f. Indicate the number of anticipated enrolled students in the program for a typical academic year along with a projection for the next 3 academic years.

g. Identify a Graduate Coordinator/Director along with a commitment from the Department to provide assigned time for the role.

h. Identify the quarter/academic year that is being requested for the start of the Blended Program.

2. Departments supporting both undergraduate and graduate degrees must review and agree with the memorandum. The memorandum must be approved by the Department Chair/Area supporting the Bachelor’s degree, the Department’s curriculum committee, and College curriculum committee.

3. The College Dean must review and sign the memorandum. Please indicate if this Blended Program will have any impact on the college budget.

4. If there are any Course Modifications or New Course Proposals associated with the program, then the ASCC must review these per standard practices.

5. The Graduate Coordinator/Director must organize a meeting to review the proposal which includes representatives from each of the following administrative offices: 1) Academic Programs & Planning, 2) Graduate Education, 3) Office of the Registrar, 4) Admissions, and 5) Financial Aid.

6. Once the proposal is reviewed and approved by the Dean of Graduate Education and Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs & Planning, then it will be sent to the Provost of Academic Programs & Planning for review.

7. Final approval of the Blended pairing will rest with the Provost, President, and/or CSU Chancellor’s Offices as appropriate.

GRADUATE SPECIALIZATIONS

Specializations are defined as an aggregate of courses within a graduate degree program designed to give a student specialized knowledge, competence, or skill. As outlined in E.O. 283, a specialization must be related to an approved graduate degree major program on campus by a common core requirement of at least 23 units. Completion of a specialization will be noted on the graduate student’s transcript and will be shown on the diploma.

One Degree Title—One Curriculum—One Code

Campuses are to maintain the degree requirements associated with a degree program approved by the Chancellor’s Office, and substantive curricular changes are to be approved by the campus curriculum approval process. To ensure the integrity of degree programs, each approved degree title is to be associated with only one set of curricular requirements. Requirements in addition to the core curriculum may be achieved through use of subprogram (a specialization) as noted in Executive Order 1071. The program core shall represent the majority (>50%) of required units so that the program’s student learning outcomes can be
achieved by all enrolled students, regardless of subprogram pursued.

DE-ACTIVATION & RE-ACTIVATION OF A GRADUATE PROGRAM

In the event that a College wishes to request the de-activation (stop admitting new students) of a graduate program, the Dean of the College must write a memo to the Dean of Graduate Education explaining the reason(s) for de-activation, such as 1) lack of enrollment, 2) inability of a department to offer adequate 5XX level courses, and/or 3) inability of faculty to support thesis research. Please specify the quarter/year that the de-activation should begin. The following approvals should be included in the memo: Graduate Program Coordinator, Department Chair, and College Associate Dean. The memo will serve to let all relevant parties know of the request for de-activation so they can evaluate the impact of this decision. The Dean of Graduate Education will make the final decision on approving or not approving the de-activation, and all impacted departments and offices will be notified (Admissions, Extended Education, and Vice Provost of Academic Programs). De-activation of a program means that no new applicants will be admitted to the program. The program is responsible to “teach out” any remaining students. The fact that the program is de-activated will be updated in the current Cal Poly Catalog.

To request re-activating a graduate program, the Dean of the College must write a memo to the Dean of Graduate Education indicating how the factor(s) that led to the programs de-activation have changed along with a projection for enrollments for the next 3-years. Note that a program will not be re-activated until the Dean of Graduate Education has received approvals and comments from all of the involved parties. The Provost will make the final decision to approve or not approve re-activating any program.

DISCONTINUATION OF A GRADUATE PROGRAM

Per Cal Poly AS-552-00 resolution, all graduate academic programs must be reviewed at least once every 6-years. During each review the graduate program must supply enrollment data for the previous years. If any program produces less than 6 Master’s degrees each academic year, then the program should be suspended and discontinued by the end of the next review cycle (per CSU AP 71-32).

In the event that a College wishes to discontinue a graduate program, then the procedures outlined in CSU AAP91-14 and EP&R 79-10 should be followed. The campus President must then inform the CSU Chancellor who will review and provide comments.

TEACH OUT GUIDELINES

Once the decision is made to not accept any new applicants (de-activation) into a Master’s program, a teach-out plan must be developed that ensures the last student admitted will be able to complete all degree requirements. The “teach out” will be implemented and monitored by the College Associate Dean and Dean of Graduate Education and shall include the following:

1. Preparation by Registrar’s Office of an official list of students enrolled in the program at the time of the discontinuation.

2. Departmental notification that the program is being discontinued by email to all students on the list (with copies to the College Dean and Dean of Graduate Education).

3. Students must be able to graduate under degree requirements stated in the Cal Poly Catalog for the year they entered Cal Poly, the year they began the program, or the year the program discontinuation was made.
4. Students who withdraw or take a Leave of Absence will be removed from the list of students completing this program. They will be notified by the Registrar of their change in status.

5. Careful academic advising must be provided to all students to assist them in completing the program in a timely manner.

6. Identify substitute courses on campus or include those of other universities that will be acceptable, especially those delivered online, to complete the degree.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

A Certificate Program offers post-baccalaureate coursework leading to a specific, applied, and focused set of learning outcomes. It may be interdisciplinary and should have some professional application (e.g. enables professional licensing).

There are two different types of certificate programs offered by Cal Poly: **Graduate Certificates** and **Professional Certificates**. Both include courses that must be approved by the Academic Senate and are awarded with academic credit that is documented on a Cal Poly transcript. The main difference is that Graduate Certificates require students to be matriculated and Professional Certificates do not require matriculation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES</th>
<th>GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A set of individual courses that can be taken in any sequence and provides expertise required in a professional field of employment.</td>
<td>• is compromised of a set of courses that build upon each other to develop a deeper level of expertise in a field of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students must follow all of the guidelines for Special-Session or Open University courses (CSU EO-1047)</td>
<td>• Students must follow all of the guidelines as described in AS-726-11 and AS-774-14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approval Process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Approval Process</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A Professional Certificate must be approved by the Extended Education Office and does not require approval by the Academic Senate or Provost.</td>
<td>• The Graduate Certificate Program must be submitted through the Curriculum Management electronic workflow approval process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional Certificates will not be listed in the Cal Poly Catalog.</td>
<td>• The program must be approved by the Academic Senate and the Provost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They will be promoted through Extended Education and may be included on College/Department websites.</td>
<td>• Graduate Certificate Programs will be listed in the Cal Poly Catalog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Self-Support Data Form will be set up with Extended Education to launch the certificate</td>
<td>• The Self-Support Data Form will be set up with Academic Programs should be utilized to launch the new program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is no CSU Program Degree Code or CIP code.</td>
<td>• There is a CSU Degree Program Code &amp; CIP Code.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A Certificate Program declares that a student has satisfactorily completed a sequence of advanced academic courses that provide instruction in a stand-alone, coherent body of specialized knowledge. It is designed to meet requirements for professional competence, expand access to specialized knowledge, or meet occupational needs for advanced interdisciplinary work. It consists of 12-24 quarter units (3-6 courses) and may be provided via Special Sessions (self-support) through Extended Education (see Executive Orders 1047 & 1099).

Graduate Certificate

is comprised of a set of courses that build upon each other to develop a deeper level of expertise in a field of study. Students must follow all of the guidelines as described in AS-726-11 and AS-774-14. The Graduate Certificate requires that a student be matriculated through the Cal Poly Admissions office to enroll in classes, and the certificate the student receives is awarded by the Registrar's Office.

Professional Certificate

is a set of individual courses that can be taken in any sequence and provides expertise required in a professional field of employment. Students must follow all the guidelines for Special-Session or Open University courses (CSU EO-1047). The Professional Certificate does not require a student to be matriculated, and courses are offered through the Extended Education Office. The Professional Certificate is awarded by the Extended Education Office.

AS Resolution AS-726-11 March 8, 2011

Specific Requirements for Certificate Programs:

- Admission to a Graduate Certificate program requires a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution with a major in a relevant field of study. The applicant must have earned a GPA of at least 2.5 in the last degree completed.

- Admission to a Professional Certificate program requires consent of the instructor, and students must apply through Extended Education. All Professional Certificate applicants must complete an application by following the links provided on the Graduate Education website. Applications can be completed anytime throughout the year. Students can be concurrently matriculated in a Master’s degree program at Cal Poly and a Professional Certificate program.

- A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for successful completion of either a Professional or Graduate Certificate program. Students may not elect to take courses required for the certificate as credit/no credit. A certificate program must be completed within three years.

- Students who are enrolled in either Certificate programs are exempt from the continuous enrollment requirement for graduate students.

- There is no GWR requirement for either Certificate program.

- There are NO conditional admissions for either Certificate program.

- If either Certificate program utilizes online courses, international students must satisfy Cal Poly’s English Language requirements, even if they do not need an F1 VISA to attend courses on campus.

- Students in either Certificate programs are not eligible for financial aid through Cal Poly.

- Students in a Graduate Certificate program must submit both a Final Formal Study Plan and an
Application for Graduation to the Graduate Education Office to receive a certificate.

- For Graduate Certificate courses, no more than 30% of the course units can be taken while not matriculated (EO 1099).
- Only 4 units can be transferred from another school to count toward either certificate program.
- No more than 24 units from certificate(s) can be applied toward a Cal Poly Master’s degree program.

CONCURRENT, DUAL, AND JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS

**Concurrent Degrees:** two different degree programs from the same campus are coupled by the university for the purposes of offering complementary learning experiences; students enroll simultaneously in both programs and are awarded two separate degrees upon completion of the required curriculum.

**Dual Degree:** two or more institutions collaborate to provide a single degree program curriculum, the completion of which results in two or more degrees being awarded, one by each participating institution.

**Joint Degree:** multiple institutions collaborate to offer the curriculum required to earn a single degree that is awarded jointly by the partner institutions.

Cal Poly only offers two Concurrent Degrees Programs: 1) Engineering Management (which is combination of an MBA degree and an MS in Engineering with a specialization in Integrated Technology Management) and 2) Transportation Planning (which is a combination of a Master in City & Regional Planning and an MS in Civil and Environmental Engineering).

ELEVATING A SPECIALIZATION TO FULL DEGREE PROGRAM

A specialization may be elevated into a stand-alone Master’s program by submitting a request to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and the Dean of Graduate Education. After review at the University level, the request must then be approved by the Chancellor’s Office. An implementation proposal is required to elevate a formal specialization to a full degree program.

Each proposal must include, at a minimum:

1. A well-supported rationale for elevating the specialization to a full degree program;

2. Side-by-side comparison of the existing Master’s degree that the specialization is part of along with the proposed new major, showing the catalog number, title, and number of units for all required and elective courses; the new major must have a significantly different set of course requirements (greater than 50% of the units) than the existing primary Master’s degree; and

3. Evidence of a significantly greater campus/college commitment to the program than was required to establish it as a specialization area.

The elevation process requires department, college, and university-level review and approval. To merit approval, the new degree program must not have significant overlap with the requirements of the existing degree program from which it was derived. Executive Order No. 1071 http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-1071.pdf sets system wide policy on establishing options, concentrations, and other subprograms (specializations).
ACADEMIC STANDING

It is expected that all Cal Poly students are enrolled for serious educational pursuits and that they conduct themselves so as to preserve an appropriate atmosphere of learning. It is also expected that all students who enroll at Cal Poly are willing to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in the campus community. Association in such a community is voluntary, and students may withdraw from their graduate programs any time they consider the obligations of membership disproportionate to the benefits. While enrolled, students are subject to campus authority that includes the prerogative of dismissing those whose conduct is inimical to the aims of an institution of higher education. While enrolled, students are subject to the regulations governing discipline stated in Education Code Section 66017 and in Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 41301–41302, and to such rules and regulations as have been approved and promulgated by authority of the University President. Students are subject to other applicable regulations contained in the Cal Poly Catalog, Campus Administrative Policies, Standards for Student Conduct, Rights and Responsibilities, and in other official university publications, including the Cal Poly website.

GRADES

Report in Progress (RP) Grades: The grade of RP is used in connection with courses that extend beyond one academic term. It indicates that work is in progress and has been evaluated and found to be satisfactory to date, but assignment of a grade must await completion of additional work. Work is to be completed within a time period stipulated by the instructor. The RP symbol shall be replaced with the appropriate final grade within one year for all courses or it will convert to an F for graded courses or NC for CR/NC-only courses.

There is an exception for graduate degree thesis or project courses (539/596/598/599) for which the time may be up to seven years, but may not exceed the overall time limit for completion of all Master’s degree requirements (AS-647-06). Failure to complete the assigned culminating experience work will result in the RP, only in these courses, being converted to an NC (AS-443-95).

Earned D+ or Lower: If a student earns a D+ or lower, the course can be retaken with the permission of the courses instructor. Both grades will then be averaged into the Formal Study Plan. Alternately, if the course is not required, it can be removed from the Formal Study Plan and replaced with a suitable alternative.

Repeating a Course: Students may enroll in a course for credit more than once only if the catalog course description states that the course may be repeated for credit. An exception to this policy allows the repeating of a course in cases where a grade of D or F was received. Unlike for undergraduates at Cal Poly, a graduate student repeating a course cannot qualify for the removal of a lower letter grade from the overall GPA calculation on the student’s transcript. See the Earned D+ or Lower section above for more information.

Credit/No Credit Grading: Courses which are offered only on a credit/no credit basis also satisfy the unit requirement if a credit grade is earned. The equivalent of an A or a B (including a B-) is required to earn credit in such courses (AS-8-76). Graduate students may elect to take courses that are not part of their Formal Study Plan on a credit/no credit basis.
GRADE POINT CALCULATION FOR GRADUATE DEGREE

Satisfaction of the GPA requirement for the conferring of the Master’s degree requires a GPA of 3.0 or more in the courses taken in the Formal Study Plan. Repeating a course does not remove a lower letter grade from the overall GPA calculation on the student’s transcript.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student who is enrolled in a graduate degree program in conditionally classified or classified standing may be placed on academic probation for failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (grade of B on a scale where A = 4.0) in all courses in the Formal Study Plan for the degree.

A student who has been admitted as post-baccalaureate classified in order to pursue a credential program shall be subject to academic probation for failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in all units taken in the credential program.

A post-baccalaureate unclassified student (one who has not been admitted to either a credential or graduate degree program) shall be subject to academic probation for failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 in all units attempted subsequent to admission to post-baccalaureate standing.

ACADEMIC DISQUALIFICATION

A graduate or post-baccalaureate student who has been placed on academic probation may be disqualified from further attendance in a program by action of the Dean of the College (or the Dean’s designate) in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Education for any of the following reasons:

1. The conditions for removal of academic probation are not met within the period specified.

2. The student goes on administrative probation while on academic probation.

3. The student is subject to administrative probation for the same or similar reason for which the student has been placed on academic probation previously, although not currently in such status.

When such action is taken, the student is notified by email from the Dean of College (or the Dean’s designate). The notice should include an explanation of the basis for the action. Disqualification may be either from further registration in the program or from further enrollment at the University as determined by the Dean of Graduate Education.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBATION

A graduate student may be placed on administrative probation by action of the Dean of Graduate Education for any of the following reasons:

1. Withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of a program of study in two successive quarters or in any three quarters. (Note: a student who is on an approved Leave of Absence is not subject to administrative probation for such withdrawal.)

2. Repeated failure to make progress toward the stated degree or program objective when such failure appears to be due to circumstances within the control of the student.

3. Failure to comply, after due notice, with a CSU or university regulation which is routine for all
students or a defined group of students (for example, failure to complete a required campus training or failure to comply with professional standards appropriate to the field of study).

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

ADMINISTRATIVE DISQUALIFICATION

A graduate student who has been placed on administrative probation may be disqualified from further attendance in a program by action of the Dean of Graduate Education in consultation with the Dean of College for any of the following reasons:

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

When such action is taken, the student is notified via email from the Dean of Graduate Education; the notice will include an explanation of the basis for the action. Disqualification may be either from further registration in the program or from further enrollment at the University as determined by the Dean of Graduate Education.

DISMISSAL FROM UNIVERSITY

This is an administrative action that prevents students from enrolling at Cal Poly for any future quarters. Dismissal may result from academic disqualification, administrative disqualification, or from a disciplinary action. The Registrar’s Office handles dismissal from the university and will notify the student.

ENROLLMENT & PREREQUISITES

To enroll in a 500-level graduate course, a student must have post-baccalaureate/graduate standing or the permission of the instructor. Note, prerequisites are not waived for 400-level courses; a graduate student may need to get a permission number from the instructor teaching a 400-level course.

FULL-TIME STATUS

A full-time graduate student is defined as one taking 8 or more units in a quarter. Students receiving financial aid may need to meet different requirements to be considered full-time and should consult with the Financial Aid Office. Graduate students are not permitted to enroll in more than 22 units each quarter.

DISCONTINUATION

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

In addition, if a student has been discontinued for more than 2 years or was not on good academic standing
when they left the university, then they must submit a petition for special consideration to the Graduate Education Office.

A graduate student who has been discontinued, but has completed all required degree requirements except for their culminating experience (thesis, project, and/or exam) may be able to return to Cal Poly to receive their Master’s degree without reapplying to their Master’s program. The student is encouraged to speak directly with the Graduate Education Office for more information.

**Application Deadlines for Returning Students**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>APPLICATION POSTMARK DEADLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Quarter</td>
<td>July 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Quarter</td>
<td>October 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Quarter</td>
<td>February 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Quarter</td>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADUATION WRITING REQUIREMENT**

The Board of Trustees of the California State University has mandated that all students earning undergraduate or graduate degrees in the CSU must be certified as proficient in writing (EO 665-11). All Cal Poly students who are seeking a degree, including Master’s degrees and teaching credentials, must fulfill the Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR). This degree requirement must be fulfilled before a diploma can be awarded.

Graduate students seeking a Master’s degree or credential should fulfill the GWR during their first quarter at Cal Poly. Students who do not complete the GWR will not be Advanced to Candidacy. Also note that Blended Program students must satisfy the GWR before they transition to graduate standing.

Post-baccalaureate students may want to meet with an academic advisor before attempting to satisfy the requirement in case they meet alternate criteria for GWR substitution. For example, postbaccalaureate students who earned an undergraduate degree at an institution within the CSU or UC systems may request that their profile be updated (contact the University Writing & Rhetoric Center Office). Additionally, graduate students who earned an undergraduate degree at a university outside the CSU or UC systems may be eligible for a GWR substitution based on alternate criteria. Post-baccalaureate students who have completed the GRE or GMAT exams in the last 2 years and earned a score a 4.5 or higher in the Writing section can request a GWR substitution. Please note: Currently we do not accept passing scores on the CBEST, CSET, or TWE as substitution for the GWR. Contact the Writing & Rhetoric Center for more details: [https://writingcenter.calpoly.edu/](https://writingcenter.calpoly.edu/)
Graduate students who cannot submit materials suitable for GWR substitution should review their program requirements and determine which of the following GWR completion pathways is appropriate:

1. Pass the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE). Details can be found on the Writing & Rhetoric Center’s website: https://writingcenter.calpoly.edu/content/gwr/wpe/wpe

2. Earn both a grade of C or better (C- does not qualify) and a certification of writing proficiency based on a 500- to 800-word, in-class essay in a GWR-approved course selected from the eligible classes listed on PASS.

   • Note: Although students can take the course on a CR/NC basis, they are discouraged from doing so because the student must then earn a B- or better instead of a C or better in order to earn GWR and course credit.

Further information on the GWR may be obtained from the Writing & Rhetoric Center at 805.756.2067 or on their webpage at http://www.writingcenter.calpoly.edu/.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

Effective Fall Quarter 2009, graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrollment from the time of first enrollment in a graduate program until completion of the degree (AS-692-09). Continuous enrollment is defined as being enrolled during Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters each year. All graduate students must be enrolled during the quarter in which they graduate. Therefore, a student graduating Summer quarter must be enrolled during the Summer. Students can maintain continuous enrollment by being enrolled as regular students; obtaining approval for an Education or Medical Leave of Absence prior to the quarter when such a leave would begin; or registering in a special course designated for this purpose during quarters in which they are not regularly enrolled. The special course, GS 597, is listed in the University catalog and is taken through Cal Poly Extended Education. GS 597 is a one-unit course, offered credit/no credit. Credits in GS 597 do not count toward meeting degree requirements. Students who fail to fulfill this continuous enrollment requirement will not be permitted to graduate—even if all degree requirements have been completed—until payment has been made for all quarters of non-enrollment. This requirement is not retroactive to terms prior to Fall 2009.

There is no maximum (or cap) on the number of quarters that students will be responsible for maintaining continuous enrollment. Enrolling in one unit of GS 597 each quarter entitles students to use of the library, access to their Cal Poly portal, use of their Cal Poly email account, and access to their thesis advisor and committee members. In addition, they can procure a Cal Poly ID card and extracurricular services like the fitness center. The GS 597 fees are used to support graduate programs at Cal Poly.

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

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

A Leave of Absence is granted if a student meets one of the eligibility factors (see below) and submits a Leave of Absence form with the required signatures and documentation to the Office of the Registrar. A Leave of Absence (LOA) means that a student is not discontinued and remains active in the university. For graduate students, the LOA excuses the necessity for continuous enrollment, but it does not extend the 7-year rule for degree completion. If a student was discontinued but not granted a LOA, then they must re-apply to return to their program using the Returning Graduate Student admissions process (contact the
Admissions Office) in order to register for classes again. The maximum length for a LOA is one academic year. Students should check in with the Student Advising Center https://advising.calpoly.edu/advising-centers and can request a one academic year extension on their LOA.

- Eligibility factors for LOA
  - Educational: co-op, internship, study abroad
  - Medical: treatment of medical condition by doctor
  - Military: deployment documentation required
  - Personal: care of elder, child-birth

**THE 7-YEAR RULE**

The time allowed to successfully complete all Master’s degree requirements is seven years (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.2.) beginning at the time of first matriculation in a graduate program.

The University, at its option and in exceptional cases, may extend this time frame. Students who wish to extend the seven-year limit must submit a Petition for Special Consideration form to the Graduate Education Office. The petition must include: 1) an explanation of the reasons why the extension is necessary, 2) evidence to support the student’s currency in the field of study and 3) a copy of the student’s Final Formal Study Plan. The petition should indicate any additional coursework that needs to be completed and which of those courses will be over seven years old at the proposed time of completion. If the extension is necessary for completion of the culminating experience, list the specific experience being used (thesis, project, or comprehensive exam). Indicate the current progress made on the culminating experience and when final degree requirement completion is expected. The seven-year rule cannot be extended indefinitely; the student must specify in the petition what quarter and year they will be completing all degree requirements, thus indicating precisely how far the seven-year rule will be extended.

**COMMENCEMENT**

A student planning to participate in commencement must file an Application for Graduation with the Graduate Education Office the quarter before the student intends to participate in the appropriate commencement ceremony (either in December or June). A student cannot graduate without completing this form. It is available at www.grad.calpoly.edu. Keep in mind that it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all of their necessary forms have been signed and approved before submitting them to the Graduate Education Office.

Students can confirm that they will appear on the bookstore list (which allows them to purchase a cap and gown) and the Commencement Bulletin by checking their status on Poly Profile only after all of their paperwork has been received and processed by the Office of the Registrar. On Poly Profile, under the Career Program Plan section and the Post-baccalaureate Graduate career, students will see an “Expected graduation is…” notation once their paperwork has been processed. Corresponding deadlines for these items are communicated to students via email from Graduate Education.

Note that, despite participation in commencement ceremonies, students are not official Cal Poly graduates until they have completed ALL degree requirements satisfactorily and have received a ‘Congratulations’ email from the Office of the Registrar, Evaluations Unit.
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Master’s degree candidates who are academically in the top 10 percent of their program and are recommended by their Graduate Program Coordinator are eligible to be recognized for Academic Excellence. Nominations must be approved by the appropriate College Dean (or designee). If approved, the student will be permitted to wear “honor cords” at commencement. Note that Latin honors (summa, magna, cum laude) are only for undergraduate degrees.

GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION

Graduation with Distinction will be determined by the Registrar’s Office after a student’s Final Formal Study Plan has been reviewed and approved. It will NOT be awarded at the December or June Commencement Ceremonies. The designation will appear on a student’s final transcript and diploma. The criterion for graduation with distinction is defined on the Office of Registrar’s website and in the Cal Poly catalog: “a student whose grade point average is 3.75 or better may upon the recommendation of the College Dean be designated as ‘Graduating with Distinction’.”

OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS (JUNE ONLY COMMENCEMENT AWARDS)

Each Graduate Coordinator/Director can recommend one student from their program. Nominations must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Education by May 1st each Spring Quarter. Nominations from Coordinators/Directors are based on a letter of recommendation that addresses each the following criteria:

1. Academic Excellence
2. Creative Achievement
3. Scholarly/Professional Potential
4. Service to the University Community
5. Notable or outstanding characteristics which make the nominee exceptional.

Nominations will be reviewed by a sub-committee of the Graduate Coordinators and scored using an evaluation rubric. Finalists may be asked to provide additional information. Results will be communicated by the Graduate Education Office to the nominees before the June commencement ceremony and awards will be presented at the Graduate Student Reception held during the Spring quarter.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Check out the cost of attending Cal Poly (https://afd.calpoly.edu/fees/) and look over the many types of financial aid that are available: https://financialaid.calpoly.edu/

In addition, the university has several financial support opportunities that students can apply for to receive financial support towards their educational goals. Students should contact their Graduate Coordinator or the Graduate Education Office to determine which program will provide the maximum benefit to their academic goals and support a timely completion of their degree.

- TA/GA Appointments
- Resident Tuition Waivers
• Non-resident Tuition Waivers
• Graduate Equity Fellowships
• Conference Presentation Awards
• California Pre-Doctoral Program
• Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program

The expected outcomes of our financial support program are as follows:

• Enable top quality students to join and remain at Cal Poly by providing necessary financial support.
• Support the teacher-scholar model by enabling students to do creative works that are either published or presented at an appropriate conference.
• Enable graduate students to develop teaching skills and encourage them to enter the teaching profession at institutions of higher education.
• Provide an experience that deepens the student’s mastery of their field of study through the learn-by-doing experience.

Criteria for receiving awards:

• Appointment will improve your time-to-graduation.
• Must have filed a Working Formal Study Plan with the Graduate Education Office.
• TA/GA Appointments are limited to maximum of 3-quarters in any one academic year.
• TA appointments are paid a stipend according to Academic HR rates ($/WTU) and collective bargaining agreements.
• GA appointments are stipends of $2,000/quarter based on pay rate of 8 hours of work per week; note that the total collective work hours for a student cannot exceed 20 hours/week.
• Certificate and Credential Programs are not eligible for TA/GA appointments.
• Self-support programs are not eligible for TA/GA awards.
• Student must be enrolled on a full-time basis for each quarter they receive funds. Full-time status for graduate students is 8 units/quarter.
• Blended program students are not eligible until they complete their PBCO and transition to graduate status.

Students (newly admitted and currently enrolled) can apply for financial support by following the steps outline on the GradEd website: http://grad.calpoly.edu and click on Financial Resources tab.

TEACHING ASSOCIATE APPOINTMENTS

Cal Poly has a program, funded by Student Success Fees, that awards appointments for Teaching Associate (TA) positions. The Graduate Education Office works directly with Department Chairs to identify courses that could be taught by a graduate student. The Department makes all decisions on hiring a TA. Graduate students interested being a TA for a course should speak directly with the Department offering the course.
TA Appointments: All TA appointments are determined by the department hosting the position. If selected by the department hosting the position, then the Graduate Education Office will make arrangements to fund the position within the hosting department. Note that TA positions are part of the Unit 11 UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement. Details of the contract can be found on the Cal Poly Academic Personnel Website: www.academicpersonnel.calpoly.edu/content/policiesprocedures. Students are paid by the number of WTUs that they teach. A TA position requires that the student be assigned to a specific class as the instructor of record.

CSU Coded Memorandum HR 2005-30: The Teaching Associate classification provides currently enrolled or admitted CSU graduate students with part-time employment offering practical teaching experience in fields related to their advanced study. They teach university courses and may also assist faculty or teaching staff with various professional and technical activities. Work assignments are closely associated with their program of study or the academic department in which they are enrolled.

Range A represents the salary range for CSU graduate students who (1) are currently enrolled or admitted to Master’s degree programs and (2) usually teach credit-bearing courses.

The Teaching Associate classification is distinguished from the Graduate Assistant and Student Assistant classifications by assignments that primarily involve classroom and laboratory instruction. Responsibility for a course may be vested in the Teaching Associate under the direct supervision of an appropriate faculty member.

Teaching Associates typically are responsible for providing classroom and/or laboratory instruction, giving assignments to students, preparing course materials, administering examinations, assessing student performance, tutoring students, and determining course grades. Also, incumbents may assist faculty with field experience, supervision, simulation exercises, and/or research projects. Normally, incumbents in Range A are designated to teach courses at the lower division level.

Qualifications: Knowledge of the subject matter of the discipline to which the individual is assigned. Ability to relate well to others within the academic environment and ability to instruct and evaluate students. Evidence of satisfactory achievement in previous academic work. Equivalent to or completion of the requirements for a bachelor’s degree and concurrent admission to or enrollment in a graduate degree program of the university that is related to the discipline to which the individual is assigned.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPOINTMENTS

Cal Poly has a program that awards appointments for Graduate Assistant (GA) positions. Funds for the graduate student GA program are provided by Student Success fees managed through the Provost Office.

GA Appointments: provide research or instructional support for a specific faculty member. A student (newly admitted or currently enrolled) can apply for a position through the GradEd website: http://grad.calpoly.edu/financial-resources/ga-program.html Applications are accepted through the academic year. GA
applicants must have a recommendation from a faculty advisor or Graduate Coordinator/Director and are evaluated and ranked by their corresponding College Associate Dean. The Graduate Education Office will make the final decision on all appointments. Typically, GA appointments are for an entire academic year.

CSU HR 2005-29: Under immediate supervision, the Graduate Assistant supports a regular faculty member with various professional and/or teaching duties associated with the subjects or programs in which the assistant is doing graduate work. This work should not take precedence over the student’s successful completion of their graduate degree program.

The Graduate Assistant is distinguished from those classifications used for undergraduate student help in the instructional program (ISA) (e.g. those who perform clerical or other routine tasks such as grading examinations, recording grades, etc.), by the following:

- Graduate Assistants are provided part-time employment and practical experience in fields related to their advanced study.
- Graduate Assistants provide research assistance to faculty members.

Graduate Assistant work may involve supervising students in a classroom, workshop, or laboratory (where final responsibility for the class is vested in a member of the faculty); training students in the use of equipment or other resources; assisting faculty with research and preparation of course materials; participating in the evaluation of students’ work; tutoring students; and other related work. Graduate Assistants are not responsible for the instructional content of a course, selecting student assignments, planning of examinations, determining the term grade for students, instructing the entire enrollment of a course, or providing the entire instruction of a group of students enrolled in a course. Graduate Assistants may not be employed to assist in a course in which they are enrolled, nor should they be consulted regarding the grading of their peers.

Qualifications: Knowledge of the subject matter of the discipline in which assigned. Ability to relate well to others within the academic environment. Ability to supervise, assist, and train undergraduate students. Ability to assist faculty in the completion of special projects or research within the discipline. Students enrolled in credential programs are not eligible for this position.

CSU GUIDELINES FOR HIRING GA AND TA POSITIONS

There are two different kinds of student employees: academic student employees and student assistants. An academic student employee is a student who is hired to do work that is academic in nature; that is, their primary work assignment must be related to a program of study offered in their University. There are three categories of academic student employment: Teaching Associates, Graduate Assistants, and Instructional Student Assistants. All other student employees (besides TAs, GAs, and ISAs) are simply student assistants (SAs).

A Teaching Associate is a graduate student hired to teach a course or laboratory in the same department in which they are enrolled in graduate study. (There may be exceptions to this for students in interdisciplinary programs, who may be hired to teach in disciplines related to their graduate studies.) The TA is the instructor of record, and has primary responsibility for the course, including grading. They work under the supervision of a faculty member, but are expected to have the expertise and independence to teach the (introductory-level) course. A TA must be admitted to or enrolled in the graduate program in which they teach.

A Graduate Assistant is a graduate student hired to assist one or more faculty members with professional or technical duties. This may include holding discussion sections related to a faculty member’s course(s), holding office hours, providing tutoring, proctoring exams, running laboratory exercises, grading papers, serving as
a research or laboratory assistant, and so forth. As with the TA, a GA’s work assignment must be related to their graduate studies; however, the requirements of this classification are slightly looser. The GA may work in a department in which he or she is not enrolled in graduate studies, provided that the work they are hired to do is closely related to their own studies. For example, a student who is enrolled in mathematics may work as a GA in physics, and a student studying computer information systems might be hired to assist in a computer graphics course in the Art department. Similarly, a GA may be hired in an interdisciplinary department, even if that department does not offer a graduate degree program. In every case, however, the GA’s work assignment should be related to their graduate study, and the GA must be enrolled during every quarter in which they work as a GA.

An Instructional Student Assistant is any student (graduate or undergraduate) who is hired to assist in an academic setting; ISAs may be hired to teach (though not to be an instructor of record for a course), grade, tutor, help out in laboratories, mentor other students, and the like. Unlike TAs and GAs, ISAs are not restricted in terms of the subject matter they are studying—that is, any student may be hired as an ISA in any department, provided that their work assignment is academic in nature and they are enrolled in some degree program during the term(s) in which they work as an ISA.

1The ‘admitted to’ simply allows a department to hire an incoming student as a TA on their way into the program. Once hired, a TA is expected to be enrolled in the graduate program during each quarter in which they work as a TA.

Classification Codes, Salary, and Work Hours: A classification code is a four-digit number that identifies the type of employee within the CMS (“PeopleSoft”) system and on the Employee Transaction forms. Most classification codes have defined “classification standards” associated with them—these standards help you to determine whether or not a prospective employee qualifies for employment into this classification. The standards for a GA and a TA are defined by the Chancellor’s Office (CO). Those standards can be found on the CO’s website under Unit 11 (the bargaining unit for academic student employees). It is highly recommended that you bookmark this page: http://www.calstate.edu/HRAdm/Classification/index.shtml

If you click on the pull-down menu under Unit 11, you will see options for Graduate Assistant and Teaching Associate (as well as Instructional Student Assistant). These classification standards will tell you the minimal qualifications required (e.g., admission to or enrollment in a degree-granting graduate program is required for both GA and TA employees). At the top of each classification standard, there are several classification codes—these will be the codes that you use to hire employees into these classifications.

The vast majority of Graduate Assistants will be hired into classification code 2355. GAs are typically hired to do a certain amount of work per week (e.g. 20 hours/week or less). Thus, a 20 hour/week assignment will be half-time. Note that “hours/week” is the anticipated average over the course of the quarter. A GA should expect to put in more hours during exam-grading periods and less in some other weeks. The Graduate Coordinator (and/or the department chair) responsible for hiring the student employees should provide a
realistic estimate of the time required to do the tasks assigned to the GA and appoint them accordingly.

Most Teaching Associates will be hired into the 2354 classification code; in this classification, range1 indicates a TA enrolled in a Master’s degree-granting program and range 2 indicates a TA enrolled in a doctorate program. Teaching Associates will generally be hired for a certain number of Weighted Teaching Units (or WTU), as they are assigned as instructors of record and each course they are assigned will have WTU associated with it.

**Supervision and other Regulations:** Both TAs and GAs are expected to work under the supervision of a faculty member. The supervisor is responsible for overseeing the work of the student employee (including attention to such issues as whether or not the GA or TA is performing all required duties in a satisfactory manner, as well as serving as a mentor to the student employee with regards to such matters as appropriate grading standards, classroom management, avoidance of discrimination/bias towards students, etc.). At all times, the supervisor and the student must keep in mind that a student employee is to be a student first and foremost. Appointment as a GA or a TA should further, not hinder, a graduate student’s training. For this reason, supervisors should pay attention to whether or not a student’s employment is compatible with satisfactory progress in the degree program.

**RESIDENT TUITION WAIVERS**

A limited number of resident tuition waivers are available for graduate students who are legal residents of the State of California. The waiver applies to CA state tuition only and does not cover University fees. Application for waivers should be completed through the Graduate Education website. The waivers are for graduate students enrolled in state supported graduate programs only, not for self-support (MPS Dairy Product Technology, Fire Protection Engineering, Accounting, Tax, Business Analytics, Economics, Packing Value Chain) graduate programs. The criteria that should be addressed in the application include:

- Scholastic achievement including GPA, standardized test such as GRE, GMAT, etc., and honors/awards (only students with at least a 3.0 GPA overall will be considered).
- Significant accomplishments such as published research work.
- Recognition of excellence in your field by receipt of academic awards and activities in professional societies.
- Recommendation by your graduate program coordinator.

Tuition waivers will normally be for three consecutive quarters, beginning with the first term of enrollment. Recipients must be engaged in full-time studies toward their degree, which means enrollment in a minimum of 8 units per quarter. Recipients of CA State University Grants (SUG) are not eligible for a Tuition Waiver. Applications are accepted anytime during the academic year.

**NON-RESIDENT TUITION WAIVERS**

A limited number of non-resident tuition waivers are available for graduate students. The waiver is defined as a reduction in tuition fees for non-resident students to the resident rate. The waivers provide financial support for highly qualified applicants from outside the State of California. Application for waivers should be completed through link provided on the Graduate Education website. The criteria that should be addressed in the application include:

- Scholastic achievement including GPA, standardized tests such as GRE, GMAT, etc., and honors/awards (only students with at least a 3.0 GPA overall will be considered).
• Significant accomplishments such as published research.

• Contribution the student would make to the program (e.g., bring ethnic, gender, geographical diversity, or unique background and skills).

• Significance of the waiver in the student’s decision to enroll: e.g., financial need, personal circumstances, competitive offers.

Tuition waivers will normally be for three consecutive quarters, beginning with the first term of enrollment. The waivers are for graduate students enrolled in state supported graduate programs only, not self-support graduate programs. Recipients must be engaged in full-time studies toward their degree, which means enrollment in a minimum of 8 units per quarter. Applications must be submitted by April 1st each year for awards to be available toward the following academic year.

GRADUATE EQUITY FELLOWSHIPS

This program seeks to increase the diversity of students completing master’s degree programs in the CSU. It provides fellowships for economically disadvantaged CSU students, especially from groups that are underrepresented among graduate degree recipients in their areas of study.

Applications for this fellowship should be submitted online through the link provided on the GradEd website. A letter of recommendation from the Graduate Program Coordinator is required. The application cycle is May 1st through October 1st each year. Your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must have been filed 2 weeks before your application to the Grad Equity Fellowship to ensure that the results are available for consideration for this fellowship.

Academic Qualifications: You must either be making progress toward a master’s degree or have been accepted to a master’s program at Cal Poly and have satisfied all criteria for admission. For details concerning admission requirements, consult the current Cal Poly Catalog, or contact the graduate coordinator of your specific program. As a fellowship recipient, you will be required to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher, and to engage in full-time studies toward your degree, which means you must enroll in a minimum of eight units per quarter of 400/500 level courses.

Residency: You must qualify as a California resident by meeting the CSU requirements for payment of in-state fees.

Financial Need: You must demonstrate financial need and you do so by filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Additional information can be obtained from the Cal Poly Financial Aid Office. You must also comply with all standard requirements for receiving financial aid at Cal Poly.

Duration: The typical grant period for this award is 2 academic quarters in the same academic year of the application cycle. The award is normally distributed during the Winter and Spring quarters.

GRADUATE PRESENTATION AWARDS

The Graduate Presentation Award provides financial support for graduate students who are presenting their thesis or research at a professional conference. This award is to help support conference registration fees, airfare, or lodging costs of up to $500 per student per academic year. The student must be enrolled in at least 1 course at Cal Poly at the time of application. Travel must occur within the same academic year as the application is submitted.
Qualifications

- Must be a full-time graduate student at Cal Poly.
- For conferences within the U.S. only, not international.
- Must be listed as an author on the paper/poster to be presented (not for just attending the conference); submit abstract.
- Travel covered: airfare, hotel, conference registration (no auto mileage or food).
- Submitted all travel claims to program department administrator.
- Email of approval from faculty thesis advisor.

Application Instructions

Applications for the Graduate Presentation Award should be submitted through the link on the Graduate Education website.

STATE UNIVERSITY GRANTS

These grants provide need-based awards to cover a portion of the State Tuition Fee for eligible undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate students who are California residents or are otherwise determined as eligible. Systemwide, the priority is to award a SUG at least equal to the amount of the State Tuition Fee ($5,472 for undergraduates, $6,348 for teaching credential and $6,738 for graduate and post-baccalaureate students) to eligible students who apply for financial aid by March 2nd, who have an expected family contribution (EFC) of $4,000 or less, and who are not receiving a Cal Grant or other award designated to cover fees. Funding for this program is limited. Students must reapply for consideration every year. State University Grant awards are limited based on the number of units a student has earned and published length of their academic program.

All graduate students who receive State University Grants, effective 2013 by CSU mandate: Master’s level students who have earned more than 125% of units toward completion of their program/degree at the post baccalaureate level are no longer eligible to receive a State University Grant (SUG). For example, if the minimum units for your graduate program are 45, then a student may receive SUG funding for up to 57 units. Please note that the number of units subject to this 125% limitation includes any units that are part of conditional admittance requirements. Please contact your graduate coordinator to determine the number of conditional admit units (max 12 units) that you are required to take as part of your matriculation into your graduate program. Any questions regarding the terms of your financial aid should be directed to the Financial Aid Office (Administration Building, Room 212) or call 805-756-2927.

CALIFORNIA PRE-DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The California Pre-Doctoral program is designed to increase the diversity of the pool from which the California State University draws its faculty. It does so by supporting the doctoral aspirations of CSU students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages. A special emphasis is placed on increasing the number of CSU students who enter graduate programs at one of the University of California campuses.

Each of the applicants selected will be designated a Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholar and will work closely with a CSU faculty sponsor to develop an overall plan which leads ultimately to enrollment in a doctoral program. The plan should be tailored to the specific goals and career objectives of the student.
In addition the program provides: Travel Funds ($3K) for the student and a faculty sponsor to visit U.S. doctoral-granting institutions and/or to attend a professional meeting appropriate to the student’s development. Other related activities, such as student membership in professional organizations and subscriptions to journals, graduate school application and test fees, GRE preparation, and the cost of minor research materials.

A Summer Research Internship opportunity at a University of California campus or other major research university, fully funded (~$7K) by the Pre-Doctoral Program, so that the Scholar can participate in doctoral-level research prior to enrolling in a Ph.D. program.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Applicants to the California Pre-Doctoral program must be upper-division (seniors) or master’s degree students who are enrolled at a CSU institution during Spring Quarter of the year of application and who will also be enrolled at a CSU campus for at least two quarter terms of the next academic year. Applicants will be selected on the basis of three major criteria: 1) potential for success in completing a doctoral program; 2) probable effectiveness of the student/faculty plan; and 3) level of economic and educational disadvantages.

All applicants must be either U.S. citizens or permanent residents at the time of application. Current or previous Pre-Doctoral Scholars are not eligible to re-apply. Each applicant must have a faculty sponsor from the student’s home campus who will be available for the duration of the plan specified in the application. The program is designed for students interested in obtaining research doctorates. Students interested in obtaining professional degrees (law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, or an MBA degree) are not eligible.

If you wish to apply to this program, follow the instructions given on the GradEd website www.grad.calpoly.edu. Applications are typically due February 1st and should be sent directly to the Dean of Graduate Education. Additional details can be obtained at www.calstate.edu/predoc/

CHANCELLOR’S DOCTORAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM (CDIP)

This program provides student loans (up to $30K) to a limited number of individuals pursuing full-time doctoral degrees at accredited universities throughout the United States. After participants receive their doctoral degrees and obtain a qualifying position in the CSU, a portion of their loan from this program will be forgiven every year.

Applications are typically due by February 1st and should be sent directly to the Dean of Graduate Education. More information can be found at: http://www.calstate.edu/hr/dcdip/

OPEN UNIVERSITY

Open University allows non-matriculated individuals paying self-support fees to enroll in state-supported course offerings on a space-available basis, after reasonable steps have been taken to provide full enrollment opportunity to eligible state-support matriculated students. (Title 5 section 40202; EO 805) Keep in mind that non-matriculated students
do not have access to the Cal Poly Health Center or Recreation Center and cannot receive state or federal financial aid.

Self-Support fees: instruction offered through Open University is typically $349/unit for graduate level (5XX) courses. More details can be found at: http://www.openuniversity.calpoly.edu/fees-policy/fees-policy.html

**ACADEMIC RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Cal Poly is committed to creating and maintaining an intellectual community designed to promote educational goals. In this community, students are entitled to a classroom environment where they have the academic freedom to express their ideas and opinions freely, to learn from competent and professional faculty, and to build critical thinking and reasoning skills. For a full statement of the policy regarding academic rights, see the section entitled Student Academic Rights & Responsibilities within Policies on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

The value of an academic degree is based upon the reputation of the university. Tolerating academic misconduct ultimately harms that reputation. The Standards for Student Conduct require that students who witness academic dishonesty notify their instructor, Department Chair, or the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities. Disciplinary sanctions can be imposed for “encouraging, permitting, or assisting another to do any act that could subject him or her to discipline” [Title 5, Article 2, Section 41301 (b) (20)].

Academic integrity is essential to the educational process. Traditional academic practices require that faculty members address cases of academic dishonesty in the classroom. Executive Order 1073, Article III, K, Cases Involving Academic Dishonesty, insists that, in addition, CSU faculty members report any infractions to a central location so that a student can be held accountable for multiple academic violations, and the campus can recognize any patterns of misconduct.

The resolution of academic dishonesty cases seeks a balance between encouraging a student’s professional development and upholding the standards of the academic community. The faculty member can recommend that OSRR either provide a written warning to the student or file formal charges. OSRR ultimately evaluates the merits of the allegation according to the student conduct process and determines appropriate sanctions, if warranted, based on the specific facts of the case.

**CAL POLY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY**

More details can be found at www.research.calpoly.edu/policyIP.html.

**Purpose:** The University is committed to providing an intellectual environment in which all members of the academic community—whether they are faculty engaged in life-long professional development, students pursuing educational objectives, or staff dedicated to their own career goals—learn to the fullest extent possible. The University also recognizes and values creativity and innovation as part of this learning process. Similarly, the University recognizes the importance of, and wishes to encourage, the transfer of new knowledge, generated in the University, to the private sector for the public good. At the same time, as a publicly funded institution, the University must be a good steward of the public resources provided to it, and must safeguard against the use of public funds for private gain.
Scope: This policy addresses the rights to, interest in, and protection and transfer of intellectual property created by University faculty, staff, and students. Issues not directly considered in this policy, including disagreements concerning its application or interpretation, will be addressed and resolved consistent with applicable law and collective bargaining agreements. In the event of a conflict between this policy and the collective bargaining agreements, the bargaining agreements shall prevail. Policies affecting the use of the University’s names or symbols are covered elsewhere.

Governing Principles: The following principles underlie this policy and should guide its application and interpretation: Academic Freedom and Pre-eminence of Scholarly Activities. The missions of teaching and scholarship have preeminence over that of the transfer and commercialization of research results. The University’s commitment to its educational mission is primary, and this policy does not diminish the right and obligation of faculty members to disseminate the results of research and creative activity for scholarly purposes.

Equity and Fair Play: This policy sets forth general principles and procedures, and it has not been designed to address every conceivable circumstance. Under principles of fair play, the inventor(s)/creator(s) and the University mutually operate so that no one will unfairly exploit inadvertent errors or omissions in the written policy. If the need for corrections or exceptions to this policy is identified, appropriate recommendations shall be made to the President.

Mutual Trust and Goodwill: Throughout all phases of the creation and implementation of this policy, it is assumed that all members of the University community will be guided by a sense of mutual trust and goodwill. In the event of future controversies regarding the rights to intellectual property, the commercialization of particular property, or in the interpretation of this policy, all parties should recognize that mutual trust and goodwill were fundamental tenets in the forging of this policy.

Faculty shared-Governance and Review: University faculty, through the Intellectual Property Review Committee (see 3A.2), shall play a primary role in the establishment and periodic revision of this policy, and in the review and recommendation of resolutions to disputes arising under it. This committee shall have a majority of members who are faculty without administrative appointments, and shall be chaired by a faculty member.

Transparency: The principle of transparency promotes both the disclosure and avoidance of actual and apparent conflicts of interest associated with external commercial activities.

Reasonableness in Licensing: When the University owns intellectual property under this policy, the inventor or creator shall normally play an active role in the entire licensing process, including consultation and/or approval of licensing decisions, particularly where the inventor/creator has no financial interest in the licensee. Otherwise, such participation shall be consistent with conflict of interest regulations or University policy.

Policy Application: This policy takes effect immediately and supersedes all prior intellectual property policies.

CAL POLY’S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

At Cal Poly we believe that academic freedom, a cornerstone value, is exercised best when there is understanding and respect for our diversity of experiences, identities, and world views. Consequently, we create learning environments that allow for meaningful development of self-awareness, knowledge, and skills alongside attention to others who may have experiences, world views, and values that are different from our own. In so doing, we encourage our students, faculty and staff to seek out opportunities to engage
with others who are both similar and different from them, thereby increasing their capacity for knowledge, empathy, and conscious participation in local and global communities.

In the spirit of educational equity, and in acknowledgment of the significant ways in which a university education can transform the lives of individuals and communities, we strive to increase the diversity at Cal Poly. As an institution that serves the state of California within a global context, we support the recruitment, retention, and success of talented students, faculty, and staff from across all societies, including people who are of historically and societally marginalized and underrepresented groups.

Cal Poly is an inclusive community that embraces differences in people and thoughts. By being open to new ideas and showing respect for diverse points of view, we support a climate that allows all students, faculty, and staff to feel valued, which in turn facilitates the recruitment and retention of a diverse campus population. We are a culturally invested university whose members take personal responsibility for fostering excellence in our own and others’ endeavors. To this end, we support an increased awareness and understanding of how one’s own identity facets (such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, social class, and nation of origin) and the combinations of these identities and experiences that accompany them can affect our different world views.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding graduate programs at Cal Poly, please contact the Graduate Education Office at grad@calpoly.edu or call 805-756-2328 during weekday business hours of 9AM to 4PM Pacific Time.

GENERAL

- **What is the cost (tuition & fees) to attend Cal Poly?**

  *Check out the cost of attending Cal Poly and look over the many types of financial aid that are available: [https://afd.calpoly.edu/fees/](https://afd.calpoly.edu/fees/)*
• How is my residency determined?

The process for determining residence for tuition purposes is detailed on the Admissions website: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/mycalpoly/resinfo.html

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Admissions Office.

• When and how do I register for my classes?

In general, first time new graduate students who are starting in Fall quarter will register in early August.

Programs that pay state tuition, which are the majority of our graduate programs, will register through CPReg on your Cal Poly portal: https://registrar.calpoly.edu/registration-overview

The following programs are run on a self-support tuition model: MPS Dairy Technology, Fire Protection Engineering, Accounting, Business Analytics, Economics, Packaging Value Chain, and Taxation.

Students in these programs should go to the Extended Education website to register: http://extended.calpoly.edu/

• What courses should I register for during my first quarter?

Contact your Graduate Coordinator/Director to discuss the courses you should take in your first quarter. You can find your Graduate Coordinator’s contact info on the Graduate Education website: http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/coordinators.html

It is also advisable to review your curriculum requirements detailed in the Cal Poly Catalog: http://www.catalog.calpoly.edu/

• Will there be a new graduate student orientation?

The Graduate Education Office will host a new graduate student orientation prior to the beginning of the Fall quarter. The Fall 2018 orientation will take place on September 19, 2018 (the day before classes begin).

Please look for an RSVP email in your Cal Poly email account in early August.

• What is AlcoholEdu/Haven training, and am I required to complete it?

All students at Cal Poly, including graduate students, are required to complete mandatory AlcoholEdu/Haven training before beginning their courses.

For more information about this training, please visit the following site: https://hcs.calpoly.edu/pulse/students

ADMISSIONS

• What is the application deadline for my program?

Application deadlines by program can be found at the following site: http://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/graduate/deadlines.html

Make sure you complete all of the required information on time; send your transcripts directly from the institution granting your Bachelor’s degree to the Cal Poly Admissions Office.
• On the Cal State Apply application in the Academic History section, do I need to list all of the undergraduate courses I have taken?

Graduate applicants will only enter classes manually that are in progress, or classes that you plan to complete before you receive your Bachelor’s degree. You will NOT need to enter coursework manually for any courses that have already completed towards your Bachelor’s degree and are listed on your transcript.

• Where do I send my transcripts?

You should have an official set of transcripts sent to the Cal Poly Admissions Office. Do not send transcripts to the Graduate Education Office, Graduate Program Coordinator/Director, or your program’s College or Department’s Office. Your transcripts must be received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office by your program’s application deadline. Check your MyCalPoly portal (Check List) to verify if the university has received your transcripts.

For Winter 2019 and Spring 2019 applicants ONLY, you will also need to upload an unofficial copy of your transcripts to your Cal State Apply application.

• Do I need to take the GRE?

Most programs require you to complete the GRE General Test. Please have your test scores (Quantitative, Verbal, & Writing) sent to Cal Poly (Institutional Code 4038). Some programs have been granted an exception and do not require the GRE; please check for your program requirements: http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/find.html

GRE scores are valid for 5-years. Your test scores must be received by Cal Poly by your program’s application deadline.

Also note that if your Bachelor’s degree overall GPA is lower than 2.5, you MUST complete the GRE. To be considered for admittance, you must obtain a score at or above the 50-perentile level for Quantitative, Verbal, and Writing.

• Do I have to take the GRE if I completed my undergraduate degree at Cal Poly?

Normally, students who are currently matriculated at Cal Poly or completed their undergraduate degree at Cal Poly do not need to take the GRE. However, some programs do require all applicants to take the GRE; contact your Graduate Coordinator/Director to determine the specific requirements of your program.

• What do I do if my undergraduate overall GPA is 2.5 or lower?

For your application to be considered for admittance, you must take the GRE and score at the 50-precentile or higher in all three categories: Quantitative, Verbal, and Writing. Your GRE results must be received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office by your program’s application deadline.

You should also discuss your academic standing with your Graduate Coordinator/Director, develop a formal study plan, and research any prerequisite courses that will enable you to succeed at Cal Poly. Cal Poly requires a 3.0 in your formal study plan in order for you to be awarded a Master’s degree.

• What are my chances of being admitted?

Your Graduate Coordinator/Director can provide the best feedback on how well your qualifications fit their program’s requirements and just how many students they will be admitting.
Please keep in mind that even if a Graduate Coordinator/Director recommends you for admission, you must still meet all of the University and California State University requirements. All final admissions decisions are made by the Dean of Graduate Education.

- **When will I get a decision on my application?**

You can be admitted any time after your application is COMPLETE and all of your transcripts, test scores, and letters of recommendation are received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office. Some program Coordinators/Directors make recommendations on a rolling-basis, and others wait until all applications are received (application deadline) to make recommendations. Once a recommendation is made by your program’s Graduate Coordinator/Director and IF ALL of your documentation is received by the Cal Poly Admissions Office (check your To-Do List on your Portal), then it typically takes 10-12 working days to process your application. You will receive an email from the Cal Poly Admissions Office signed by the Dean of Graduate Education when an official decision has been made.

- **Where do I send my letters of recommendation?**

All Letters of Recommendation (LOR) must be submitted electronically through the Cal State Apply application (Quadrant #4 – Program Materials/Evaluations) portal. You should identify the individuals who will send in your LORs. Your recommender’s LORs must be uploaded electronically to your application. Do not send LORs directly to Cal Poly’s Admissions Office, Graduate Education Office, Graduate Coordinator/Director, or College/Department Offices.

- **Once I receive an offer of admittance, how do I indicate my intent to enroll and attend Cal Poly?**

Keep in mind that you must receive an official offer of admittance from the Dean of Graduate Education. In your letter will be some instructions on how to respond to your offer. Please send an email to grad@calpoly.edu indicating your intention to accept your offer and enroll. If you do not intend to attend Cal Poly, please send an email to admissions@calpoly.edu indicating that you wish to withdraw your application.

- **What should I do if I do NOT intend to attend Cal Poly?**

If you no longer plan to attend Cal Poly, please send an email to admissions@calpoly.edu indicating that you wish to officially withdraw your application.

CURRICULUM

- **What courses are required in my program?**

You should contact your Graduate Program Coordinator/Director with any questions regarding the courses that are part of your program and what prerequisites might be required.

You can find contact information for your program’s Graduate Coordinator/Director on the Graduate Education website: [http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/coordinators.html](http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/coordinators.html)

It is also advisable to review your curriculum requirements detailed in the Cal Poly Catalog: [http://www.catalog.calpoly.edu/](http://www.catalog.calpoly.edu/)
• What is the culminating event for my program: thesis, project, or exam?

You should contact your Graduate Program Coordinator/Director with any questions regarding the culminating event requirements for your program.

You can find contact information for your program’s Coordinator/Director on the Graduate Education website: http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/coordinators.html

• I have questions regarding my academic background and if I am qualified for a graduate program at Cal Poly. Would I need to take any prerequisite courses?

Please contact your Graduate Coordinator/Director with any questions regarding prerequisites courses that you might be required to take in order to be considered for acceptance.

BLENDDED PROGRAMS

• What is the difference between a Blended Program, BMS/BMA, or a 4+1 Program?

Blended Program, BMS/BMA, and 4+1 are different names for the same degree objective. Toward the end of his/her undergraduate degree at Cal Poly, a student can apply to pursue a Blended Program (this is the correct name to use) in which the student seamlessly transitions from undergraduate (Bachelor’s) to graduate standing (Master’s) without having to apply through Cal State Apply. Once the student has completed all degree requirements for BOTH the undergraduate degree and the graduate degree, BOTH degrees are then conferred at the same time. PLEASE NOTE: Not all majors on campus are eligible to pursue a paired Bachelor’s and Master’s degree (see Graduate Education website for eligible degree pairings).

• Will I be able to complete all degree requirements for a Blended Program in 5 years?

Not necessarily. There is no guaranteed 4+1 time-frame. Consult with your Graduate Coordinator and develop a Working Formal Study Plan. You will receive your Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees when you have completed all degree requirements for both degrees. This often takes longer than 5 years to accomplish, particularly if your program requires a thesis.

• I want to apply to a Blended Program: What should I do?

If you are interested in applying for a Blended Program, there are three steps you will need to complete:

1. Speak directly with the Graduate Coordinator of your program of interest. All Blended Program pairings have their own criteria for admittance and application processes. All Graduate Coordinator contact information can be found here: http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/coordinators.html

2. File a Blended Programs Application Approval Form with the Graduate Education Office. You should only file your approval form once your program of interest has officially accepted you as a Blended student. PLEASE NOTE: You must also file a Postbac. Change of Objective to transition to graduate standing once you have completed 164 degree applicable units (assuming you are registered to complete 16 units in your current quarter). The Blended Programs Application Approval Form does not replace the Postbac. Change of Objective.

3. File a Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective with the Graduate Education Office the quarter
BEFORE you would like to transition to graduate standing. For instance, if you would like to transition to graduate standing in the Spring quarter, you will need to submit your Postbac. Change of Objective to the Graduate Education Office by the fourth week of the Winter quarter. PLEASE NOTE: You can only transition to graduate standing once you have completed 180 undergraduate degree-applicable units (164 units completed and currently enrolled in the remaining 16 units), successfully completed the Graduation Writing Requirement, and submitted a Blended Programs Application Approval Form to the Graduate Education Office.

- **Can I apply for any Blended Program on campus?**

  No. Only certain majors on campus are eligible to pursue a paired Bachelor’s and Master’s degree. To determine if your undergraduate program is paired with a corresponding approved Master’s degree, view the current paired program offerings listed on the Graduate Education website.

- **Can I be conditionally admitted into a Blended Program?**

  No. There are no conditional admittances into any Blended Programs. Students who are accepted into Blended Programs should not be required to complete any additional courses other than those identified as required for the Bachelor’s and/or Master’s degrees in the Cal Poly catalog.

- **If I am accepted into a Blended Program, do I still need to complete my senior project?**

  Yes. All Blended Program students must also complete all senior project requirements identified in the Cal Poly catalog for their respective undergraduate program.

- **I have completed more than 180 undergraduate degree-applicable units; can I still apply for a Blended Program?**

  You must apply to a Blended Program BEFORE you have completed all undergraduate degree-applicable units required for your specific major. Most undergraduate programs require 180 units, but some programs in the College of Engineering require as many as 196 units. Check with the Cal Poly Catalog to be sure: [http://www.catalog.calpoly.edu/](http://www.catalog.calpoly.edu/)

  Also keep in mind that you must be matriculated at graduate standing for a minimum of two academic quarters before you graduate. If you are matriculated at graduate standing for less than two academic quarters, the Office of the Registrar will be unable to grant your Master’s degree.

- **Do I need to complete the Graduation Writing Requirement before I apply for a Blended Program?**

  Yes. You must successfully complete the Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR) before your Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective will be approved. This means you cannot transition to graduate standing before you have successfully completed the GWR.

- **Will I still have access to my Degree Progress Report once I transition to graduate standing?**

  No. Unfortunately, you will lose access to your Degree Progress Report once you transition to graduate standing. You must run your final Degree Progress Report before your Post-baccalaureate Change of Objective is processed.
• I want to apply to a Blended Program, and I have already completed most of my graduate-level courses. How many quarters must I be matriculated at graduate standing?

  Blended Degree students must be matriculated for at least two academic quarters at graduate standing before they can graduate. If you are matriculated at graduate standing for less than two academic quarters, the Office of the Registrar will be unable to grant your Master's degree.

• Will transitioning to graduate standing impact my tuition rate?

  Yes. Transitioning to graduate status will increase your tuition. PLEASE NOTE: Transitioning to graduate standing may also impact your financial aid status. Speak directly with the Financial Aid Office for more information.

• As a Blended student, how many units do I need to complete to satisfy both my undergraduate and my graduate degree requirements?

  Under California Code of Regulations, Title V, a minimum of 225 total units are required (Bachelor's 180 + Master's 45) for receiving a Blended degree. A Blended Program can allow double counting equal to the number of units greater than 180, but not to exceed 9 units.

• I have just been accepted into a Blended Program—is there anything else I need to do right now?

  You should submit a Working Formal Study Plan to the Graduate Education Office before you have completed 12 units of applicable graduate work. In other words, you should submit a Working Formal Study Plan before the end of the first quarter you are officially matriculated in your graduate program.

• I have been accepted to a Blended Program, but I want to participate in a Co-op or internship during the first quarter I will be matriculated at graduate status. What should I do?

  If you will be gone for a Co-op or internship during the first quarter of your Blended Program (the first quarter you are matriculated at graduate standing), you must either:

  1. Enroll in an approved Co-op course, or

  2. Apply for GS 597 through the Extended Education Office BY THE FIRST DAY OF THE QUARTER IN WHICH YOU WILL BE GONE. For instance, if you will be absent from Cal Poly in Fall, you must enroll in GS 597 by the first day of the Fall quarter. All graduate students at Cal Poly must be actively enrolled the entire time they are completing their degree requirements. To maintain Continuous Enrollment, you must enroll in a 1 unit, credit/no credit course run through the Extended Education Office (GS 597). For more information about Continuous Enrollment, visit the following link: http://grad.calpoly.edu/students/continuous.html

• I was accepted as a Blended student, but I had to leave Cal Poly and was discontinued as a student. I would like to return to Cal Poly to complete my degree. What should I do?

  Returning to Cal Poly as a Blended student can be extremely challenging. The first step is completing a Former Student Evaluation Request with the Office of the Registrar: https://registrar.calpoly.edu/registrar_forms
Once you have received a response from the Office of the Registrar, contact the Graduate Education Office directly before re-applying to Cal Poly. Our office will be able to assist you with this complicated process.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

• When does Cal Poly admit international students?

If a graduate program is open for Fall, Winter, or Spring applications, then we admit international students for any quarter. The Fall International Application deadlines are the same as those listed on the Cal Poly Admissions website and vary by program. For Winter, the application deadline for international students is September 1, and the Spring application deadline is December 1.

• What type of financial aid do you offer specifically for international students?

The Cal Poly International Center provides a list of financial resources including scholarships, grants, awards, and loans for international students to explore on their website: http://www.international.calpoly.edu/students/financialaid.html

You should also visit Cal Poly’s Financial Aid website: https://financialaid.calpoly.edu/

The Graduate Education Office does offer some non-resident tuition waivers. You can find more information on the Graduate Education website: http://grad.calpoly.edu

• Where do I send my transcripts?

All official transcripts must be sent directly to the Cal Poly Admissions Office. You can find more details on the Cal Poly Admissions website: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international

• Do I need to provide a certified English translation of my transcripts?

If any of your education was completed outside of the U.S., unless the transcript is in English, your official transcripts must be submitted in the native language and accompanied by a certified English translation. The translator must be certified by one of the following: Institute for International Education (IIE), Amideast, Saudi Arabian Education Mission, United States embassy or consulate. Directions can be found on the following website: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/graduate/transcripts.html

• Is my institution considered accredited by Cal Poly?

Your international university must be recognized by the International Association of Universities in order to be considered for admission at Cal Poly: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international/evaluation.html

If you have any additional questions, please contact: international-admissions@calpoly.edu

• Should I take the TOEFL or IELTS, and what is an acceptable score?

You can take either the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) to satisfy the English language proficiency requirement of Cal Poly. Cal Poly’s institution code is 4038.

You must have taken either test within the last 2 years; for TOEFL, the minimum acceptable score is 80 (internet based); for IELTS, a minimum score of 6.5 is required.
• Can the GRE substitute for TOEFL?

No. A GRE score cannot satisfy the TOEFL requirement.

• What other steps can I take to be granted a language waiver?

Please consult the Cal Poly Admissions website for more details:
https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international

This requirement may be waived if your country of citizenship is listed on the following website:
https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international/toefl_ielts.html

• For an on-line program, do I need to satisfy the English language requirement?

Yes. You must satisfy the English language requirement for any Master’s degree program offered by Cal Poly, no matter what the mode of instruction may be.

• If I attended a university in the United States and took some courses (through a Study Abroad Program, for example), does that waive my English language requirement?

No. A waiver of the TOEFL or IELTS requirement will only be given to applicants who have earned an undergraduate degree from a U.S. institution of higher education.

This requirement may be waived if your country of citizenship is listed on the following website:
https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international/toefl_ielts.html

• How old can my TOEFL or IELTS scores be and still be acceptable by Cal Poly?

2 years

• What is the process for getting an I-20 VISA issued?

Student applicants need to complete the Visa Information Form for Degree Students through the International Center at: http://intlservices.calpoly.edu/?go=VisaInfoForm

If you have additional questions, email intlservices@calpoly.edu

• Does Cal Poly accept students from 3-year institutions?

In general, Cal Poly follows WES accreditation policies. If a WES evaluation establishes equivalency to a U.S. Bachelor’s degree, then we will accept your application. Contact the Cal Poly Admissions Office for any questions regarding the process for obtaining a WES evaluation: international-admissions@calpoly.edu

• How does my GPA get converted to a Cal Poly 4.0 GPA scale?

Your transcripts will be automatically evaluated and converted to a Cal Poly 4.0 scale as part of the application process.

For any questions regarding the conversion of an international GPA to the Cal Poly 4.0 scale, please contact international-admissions@calpoly.edu

• How do I satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement?

For any questions regarding the Graduation Writing Requirement, please contact the Cal Poly Writing & Rhetoric Center: https://writingcenter.calpoly.edu/content/gwr/index
• Once I am admitted, when do I register for classes (state and self-support)?

**In general, first time new graduate students who are starting in Fall quarter will register in early August.**

Programs that pay state tuition, which are the majority of our graduate programs, will register through CPReg on your Cal Poly portal (https://registrar.calpoly.edu/registration-overview).

The following programs are run on a self-support tuition model: MPS Dairy Technology, Fire Protection Engineering, Accounting, Business Analytics, Economics, Packaging Value Chain, and Taxation. Students enrolled in these programs should go to the Extended Education website to register: http://extended.calpoly.edu/

• I have questions regarding my academic background and if I am qualified for a graduate program at Cal Poly. Would I need to take any prerequisite courses?

Please contact your Graduate Coordinator/Director for any questions regarding prerequisites courses that you might be required to take in order to be considered for acceptance.

You can find contact information for your program’s Coordinator/Director on the Graduate Education website: http://grad.calpoly.edu/program/coordinators.html

• On my To-Do-List (CP Portal), what is an “International Academic Evaluation”?  

The requirements for an international academic evaluation are given on the Cal Poly Admissions website: https://admissions.calpoly.edu/applicants/international/evaluation.html

If you have any further questions, contact: international-admissions@calpoly.edu

• What type of housing is available for international students?

Contact the University Housing Office for on-campus information: http://www.housing.calpoly.edu/

For off-campus housing, visit the International Center website for some helpful ideas: http://www.international.calpoly.edu/students/new/housing.html

In general, there is a shortage of affordable housing in San Luis Obispo, CA, and on-campus housing is reserved mainly for undergraduates. You should use the information found on the websites listed above to find and secure housing as soon as possible.

• As an international student, who can I connect with once I arrive on campus?

Once you arrive in SLO, it would be best to contact both your Graduate Coordinator/Director and the International Center and setup an appointment to meet with them and get acquainted with our campus.

The International Center staff is available to meet with international graduate students once they arrive on campus. Students may come by the International Center in Building 52, Room E32 for a check-in meeting with advisors.

The International Center also offers opportunities for new international students to connect with domestic and international students through the International Welcome Ambassadors Program: http://international.calpoly.edu/students/ambassadors.html.

Students can also get involved in the International Club through ASI: http://international.calpoly.edu/students/internationalclub.html.
Finally, students can connect with Cal Poly faculty and staff through the International Poly Hosts Program: [http://international.calpoly.edu/students/iphp.html](http://international.calpoly.edu/students/iphp.html).

- **Do international students have orientation programs?**

  Yes. There is mandatory online orientation and an in-person orientation every quarter. Visit the following site for more information: [http://international.calpoly.edu/students/new/orientation.html](http://international.calpoly.edu/students/new/orientation.html)

  Direct all questions to intlservices@calpoly.edu

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES**

- **What types of financial support are available to me as a graduate student?**

  We have a variety of financial support programs that are specifically geared toward graduate students including Graduate Assistantships, Tuition Waivers (Resident and Non-Resident), Presentation Awards (to help fund Professional Conference costs), Graduate Equity Fellowships (based on financial need), the Diverse Education Scholarship, the California Pre-doctoral Program, and the CSU Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program.

  Learn more about these opportunities at our website: [http://grad.calpoly.edu](http://grad.calpoly.edu)

  The Graduate Education Office recommends that you also visit Cal Poly’s Financial Aid website: [https://financialaid.calpoly.edu/](https://financialaid.calpoly.edu/)

**HOUSING**

- **Who can help me to find housing in SLO?**

  Housing can be difficult to secure in San Luis Obispo, CA as it is a small coastal town and not a major metropolitan area. Please visit these websites to find more information about housing opportunities:

  [http://www.international.calpoly.edu/students/new/housing.html](http://www.international.calpoly.edu/students/new/housing.html)
  [http://www.housing.calpoly.edu/](http://www.housing.calpoly.edu/)

  In general, there is a shortage of affordable housing in San Luis Obispo, CA, and on-campus housing is reserved mainly for undergraduates. You should use the information found on the websites listed above to find and secure housing as soon as possible.

  If you are beginning your graduate program in Fall (September), you should begin looking for housing months in advance.
**UNIVERSITY CONTACTS & INFORMATION RESOURCES**

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<th><strong>Financial Aid Office</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:international-admissions@calpoly.edu">international-admissions@calpoly.edu</a></td>
<td>(805) 756-2927</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:grad@calpoly.edu">grad@calpoly.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>(805) 756-1281</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:health@calpoly.edu">health@calpoly.edu</a> • Bldg. 27</td>
<td><a href="mailto:library@calpoly.edu">library@calpoly.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>(805) 756-1211</td>
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<td>(805) 756-2501</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:pacslo@calpoly.edu">pacslo@calpoly.edu</a></td>
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<td>(805) 756-1267</td>
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<td>(805) 756-0327</td>
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