

# The Graduate Coordinator's Guidebook

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## 2025-2026



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Office of Graduate Studies  
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# Message from the Dean of Graduate Studies



Caroline Vickers, Dean of Graduate Studies, Professor of English

Hello graduate coordinators and welcome to the 2025-2026 academic year. Whether you are a new graduate coordinator or an experienced one, this is your handbook. This handbook is not meant to take the place of the university's Bulletin of Courses (Course Catalog), which will always remain your official resource for procedures. However, the handbook is meant to help clarify your role, serve as a quick reference guide to graduate advisement questions, inform you of important changes to procedures to look for this academic year, and invite you to various events that the Office of Graduate Studies has planned in 2025-2026.

Where other sources are critical to understanding and interpreting policy and procedures, we have indicated these in the relevant section. We hope that you will feel free to share this handbook with others in your program who may find it useful. We also ask that you use this manual and the suggested resources as your first line of inquiry. Our staff is of course always ready to assist you, should you need further answers or explanations. I hope you have an excellent year, and thank you for your willingness to serve our graduate students!



Caroline H. Vickers, Ph.D.  
Dean of Graduate Studies

# Graduate Coordinator Duties, Responsibilities, and Resources

Each graduate program is run by a graduate coordinator. This faculty member's duties are wide-ranging and the workload varies greatly depending on the size of the program, availability of resources and administrative support. The Graduate Council has developed a list of general duties and responsibilities that are common to all graduate programs; however, each program is unique and faces goals and challenges specific to its academic focus, and some departments may require additional duties.

The Graduate Council approved the following duties in 2008:

## Duties and Responsibilities

1. Provides advisement services to students on a range of academic and related issues and serves as a liaison between students and faculty and/or administration, as necessary.
2. Reviews and screens credentials of prospective students and processes applications; interacts with applicants regarding problems or deficiencies in applications.
3. Develops and maintains comprehensive student records and databases; prepares and submits various reports, survey responses, and/or data requests, as required.
4. Ensures that university policies and standards are met in relation to grades, graduation requirements, admissions, withdrawals, and

associated issues.

5. May supervise and/or lead lower graded staff and/or student employees.

Surveys conducted by Graduate Studies (2017) and the Graduate Council (2013-2014) show that most graduate coordinators are also responsible for:

1. Recruiting new students. Note that the Office of Graduate Studies' recruitment specialist, Erma Cross, is here to assist you. We encourage you to collaborate with Erma (74395) or [erminia.cross@csusb.edu](mailto:erminia.cross@csusb.edu) regarding recruitment opportunities for your program.
2. New student orientation and program events.

Each program has established its own procedures for fulfilling the duties described by the Graduate Council. The Office of Graduate Studies is happy to offer support and guidance wherever it can. This handbook is not an attempt to encompass all areas of the position but will instead focus on the instances where the roles of the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Studies intersect.

## Change of Graduate Coordinator

When a new graduate coordinator steps in, the Office of Graduate Studies should be notified.



# Graduate Coordinator Duties, Responsibilities, and Resources, cont.

## Resources

The campus offers many forms of support to help you through your advisement and decision making:

**Support Personnel:** During your tenure as graduate coordinator, you will have access to a large group of administrators, staff, and faculty appointees whose special expertise is important to your advisement role.

**Graduate Council:** This is a standing committee of the Academic Senate and consists of representatives from each of the academic colleges/schools, the Dean of Graduate Studies. Graduate Council members are elected by the faculty.

**Departmental Support:** Your department chair is the primary support for you in your coordinator role. He or she has signature authority in your absence, and provides advisement and fiscal leadership within the department. Your department's graduate committee helps interpret, inform, and decide departmental policy, courses and curriculum, and other related graduate issues.

**Office of Graduate Studies:** The Dean of Graduate Studies and the Office of Graduate Studies staff offer specific expertise related to the major areas of graduate studies. Coordinators are encouraged to stop by the office and become acquainted with the staff.

**Graduate Coordinator Meetings:** See the [Coordinator's Resources pages](#) of the Graduate Studies website for the dates of the meetings. You are strongly encouraged to attend. These meetings provide crucial information for graduate coordinators.

## Guidelines, Manuals, and Forms

**Academic Catalog:** The Academic Catalog may be needed for consultation. This is one of the most critical of your resources. Official policy is recorded here. The current catalog and an archive of past bulletins are available on the [CSUSB website](#).

**Faculty Administrative Manual:** The [FAM](#) is an essential source to understand university policy generally, including policy related to graduate education.

### [A Guide to Thesis, Project, & Dissertation](#)

**Formatting:** Informs you of the formatting guidelines. Deadlines, workshops and formatting resources are available on the thesis/project/dissertation pages of [our website](#) under "Current Students".

**Thesis/Project/Dissertation Committee Policy and Guidelines:** This document which can be found on the [Graduate Coordinator's Toolbox page](#) provides the policy and guidelines for service on thesis/project/dissertation committees including the composition of committees, expectations of committee members, and any changes to thesis/project/dissertation committees.

**Policies and Procedures Web Page:** Located on the [Graduate Studies website](#) under the Current Students tab, this page covers information on university policies and procedures that pertain to graduate students.

**Office of Graduate Studies Forms:** As graduate coordinator, you will often complete forms with graduate students. These forms are available on the [forms pages](#) of the Office of Graduate Studies website.

# Graduate Coordinator Duties, Responsibilities, and Resources, cont.

1. **Discount of Grade Form and Instructions:** Retaking a course and replacing the previous grade with the new grade.
2. **Leave of Absence Form and Instructions:** Missing/declining to enroll for one or more semesters (other than summer).
3. **Simultaneous Enrollment Form and Instructions:** Taking courses with overlapping times at CSUSB (simultaneous enrollment).
4. **Waiver of Program Residency Requirement:** In accordance with university regulations, no more than 9 semester units of credit may be earned outside of residency within the program. In order to request a waiver of this requirement a waiver request must be submitted.
5. **Recertification of Expired Coursework:** This request is required to recertify courses older than the maximum number of years specified by your program. The maximum age limit for a course to be recertified is twelve years since the course was first taken, and only two-thirds of a program can be recertified. For students admitted fall 2020 or after use the [Exception from the Audit](#) (page 9) process to recertify.
6. **Committee Certification Form and Instructions:** Submitting your thesis, project or dissertation for review.
7. **Drop after Census Form and Instructions:** Dropping a class after the census date.
8. **Continuous Enrollment through CEGE and Comprehensive Exam Enrollment through CEGE Forms and Instructions:** Enrolling in a continuous enrollment course to complete a thesis, project, or comprehensive exam; or enrolling in the comprehensive exam through the College of Extended and Global Education.
9. **Transitory Application and Instructions:** Applying for a non-degree program as transitory student.
10. **Newly Admitted Post-Baccalaureate Summer Course Form and Instructions** Summer courses are available to newly admitted post-baccalaureate students. Students can find more

information about summer session by visiting [www.csusb.edu/summer](http://www.csusb.edu/summer)

## [Coyote Graduate Student Guidebook](#)

This guide is primarily a resource for students, but graduate coordinators should familiarize themselves with it. The [guide](#) is available through the Office of Graduate Studies on our website.

## [Cal State Apply Application Guide](#)

As a graduate coordinator, you should read the [Cal State Apply Application Guide](#) on the Graduate Studies website so that you can assist prospective students with the application process.

## [California Code of Regulations \(Title 5\)](#)

It is crucial for you as a graduate coordinator to familiarize yourself with Title 5. Though your program may create policies and procedures, they must in all cases abide by Title 5. Those aspects of Title 5 that are most relevant for graduate coordinators include The Master's Degree, Admission to Graduate Standing, and Academic Notice and Disqualification. All are available on the [Westlaw website](#).

## [Tutorials for Running PeopleSoft and Managing Data](#)

The [Coordinator's Toolbox](#) page of our website contains links to tutorials including How to Run a Query for a List of All Graduate Students in Your Program and How to Run a Query for a List of New Graduate Students.

## [Graduate Enrollment Dashboard](#)

A visualization tool to analyze graduate program application and enrollment data trends by comparing the current term to the previous year. Graduate coordinators will benefit from being able to make data-driven decisions regarding their recruitment and admissions efforts. The [dashboard's data](#) is updated weekly by the Office of Graduate Studies.

## Graduate Coordinator Duties, Responsibilities, and Resources, cont.

### [Graduate Coordinators Meetings](#)

Please attend Graduate Coordinators Meetings for the latest information pertinent to your role as graduate coordinator. The schedule is posted on the [Coordinator's Resources page](#) of our website.

### [Office of Graduate Studies Resources](#)

The dean and staff of the Office of Graduate Studies welcome your personal visit or telephone/e-mail inquiries regarding matters not answered in this handbook and the sources listed. Many of the staff are also available by special arrangement for seminars, workshops and meetings to address graduate issues in their area. Please also refer to the Coordinator's Resources on the Graduate Studies website for forms and instructions.

Dean of Graduate Studies

Caroline H. Vickers [cvickers@csusb.edu](mailto:cvickers@csusb.edu)

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Summer Hours: M-TH 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.



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## Graduate Admissions

All graduate applications (master's programs, credentials, Ed.D program, and second bachelor's degrees) are processed by the Office of Graduate Studies to ensure students meet the minimum university grade point average (GPA) requirements and that the applications are complete (including transcripts and related documents) before sending them to the Graduate Coordinator for a final admission decision.

### [Admission Standards](#)

The CSUSB graduate student admission policies are listed below. The requirements for admission in CSUSB's graduate programs meet or exceed the CSU System requirements and are in accordance with Title V, Chapter 1, Subchapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations.

To be admitted to a graduate program at CSUSB. Applicants must meet the following minimum GPA requirement:

If the applicant holds only a bachelor's degree:

If the cumulative GPA on the bachelor's granting transcript is 2.5 or above, then the GPA is acceptable. If the cumulative GPA is below 2.5, then the GPA will be calculated using the last 60 semester units or 90 quarter units. If the calculated GPA is 2.5 or above, then the GPA is acceptable. If the cumulative GPA and the last 60-semester unit or 90 quarter units GPA are both below 2.5, then an appeal for admission would be required.

If the applicant has 12 or more semester or 16 or more quarter graduate units or has received a higher degree:

If the cumulative GPA from the highest degree is 3.0 or above, then the GPA is acceptable. If below 3.0, then an admission appeal would be required. If no graduate degree has been earned but 12 or more semester or 16 or more quarter graded graduate units have been received, and the GPA is 3.0 or above, then the GPA is acceptable. If below, then an admission appeal would be required.

If the applicant has any CSU graduate units and the GPA is below 3.0, then an admission appeal would be required.

If an applicant has a minimum of 8 graduate units from CSUSB in the graduate program to which the applicant is applying, with a GPA of 3.0 or above, they are admissible.

\*The Office of Graduate Studies performs all GPA calculations on a case-by-case basis and these best practices are meant as a guide. As always, special circumstances arise and not every situation can be listed. If all attempts to achieve an acceptable GPA are unsuccessful, the applicant will be denied and have an opportunity to appeal the admission decision. If the department wishes to pursue the applicant further, then an admission appeal would be required.

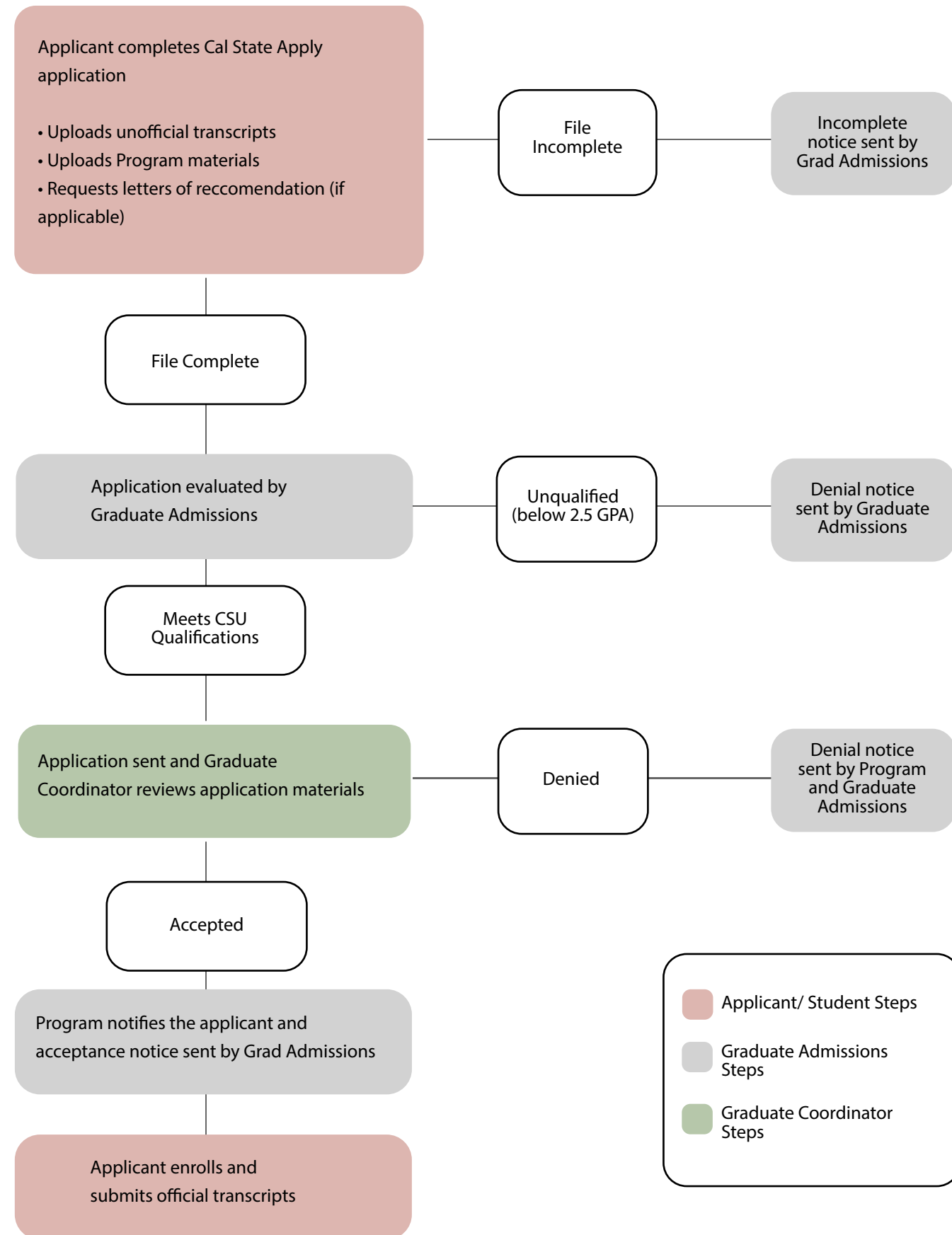
If particular programs have higher GPA requirements than 2.5, the GPA requirement can be tailored to that program's requirements.

Applicants must be in good standing in the last institution attended to be admissible.

Regarding the appeal process, applicants have a right to appeal the decision within 15 days of the denial notification. Applicants must submit a written appeal to the Office of Graduate Studies. Appeals will be reviewed by the graduate program and must be answered before the last day of registration for the term to which the student is applying.

When evaluating applications for admission, some programs look at both the cumulative GPA and the GPA of the last 60 semester/90 quarter units. In addition to the GPA requirement, other criteria may be required, depending on the program (e.g., qualifying exams, writing samples, letters of recommendation, etc.). Some programs may have higher GPA requirements than the minimum university requirement of 2.50.

# Graduate Admissions Process



# Graduate Admissions, cont.

Coordinators can customize the fourth quadrant (“Program Materials”) of WebAdmit to list specific department application instructions (e.g, upload required materials such as writing samples, test scores, supplemental application, etc.). Letters of recommendation are also available in the fourth quadrant at the applicant’s request.

All materials that are part of the application are available to the coordinator in WebAdmit once an application has been officially submitted.

When the application is complete and evaluated, the Local Status will be changed to Ready for Department Review. When graduate coordinators have made an admission decision, they will change the Local Status from Ready for Department Review to Admit Classified, Admit Conditionally Classified or Denied.

Since the applications are only kept on file in WebAdmit for two years, Graduate coordinators should save the pdf application file in a password protected folder for students admitted to their program.

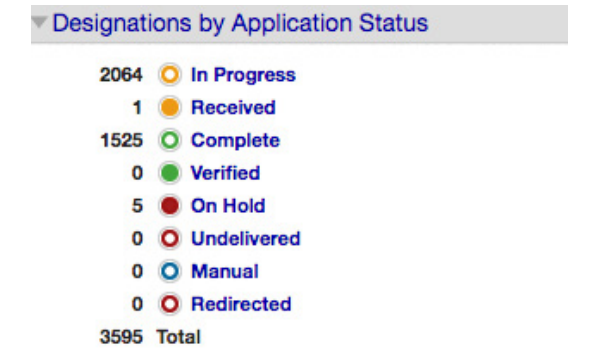
## Admission Process

Applicants must apply for graduate programs online on Cal State Apply. Once the application is complete, Graduate Studies evaluates an overall grade point average to ensure it meets the university’s minimum requirement and verifies that the bachelor’s degree has been awarded from a regionally accredited institution.

## WebAdMIT Training

A required training for Cal State Apply/WebAdMIT users to gain access to their graduate applications. Both new and existing users will benefit from learning more about WebAdMIT’s capabilities and features, the admissions workflows, how to use the dashboard, and how to review the applicant details page.

Applications are sorted by admission status:



## Communication with Applicants

The Office of Graduate Studies communicates with applicants throughout the process. Applicants initially receive a letter confirmation that their application has been received; this communication also includes their Coyote ID and steps for activating their CSUSB email and MyCoyote account. Applicants periodically receive emails informing them of the status of their application. Graduate Studies also informs applicants of the program’s admission decision.

Graduate Coordinators can easily communicate with all applicants. For instance, coordinators might decide to contact “In Progress” applicants to ask if they need assistance completing their applications. Coordinators should also notify students as to whether or not they are admitted to the program. It is important for graduate coordinators to communicate with admitted students to ensure that they enroll in courses in a timely manner.

This communication with newly admitted students is the first advising contact between you, as the coordinator/advisor, and the student.

## Graduate Admissions,cont.

### Contract/Conditional Admission

Graduate Admissions accepts unofficial transcripts for admission consideration. Until a student submits their official transcripts to the Office of Graduate Studies, they will be Contract Admitted. Official transcripts will be required upon enrollment and must be submitted by the first day of class of the first semester attended. If students do not submit their official transcripts by the first day of class of their first semester of enrollment at CSUSB, a hold will be placed on their registration, they will be ineligible for financial aid, and their admission may be revoked for the following semester.

### Categories of Graduate Admission

**Classified:** Students who have satisfied the general requirements for admission may be admitted to a graduate degree program as classified graduate students, if they satisfactorily meet the professional, personal, scholastic and other standards for admission to the program, including qualifying examinations, or if they have addressed requirements or prerequisites in the specified manner while in conditionally classified graduate standing.

**Conditionally Classified:** Students who have not satisfied all of the general requirements for admission, and/or lack prerequisites that can be met by specified additional preparation, including qualifying examinations, may be admitted to a graduate degree curriculum with conditionally classified graduate standing. All unmet requirements must be fulfilled in the specified manner in order for a student to continue in the graduate degree program. Note that the admission GPA is never acceptable as a condition. Applicants are either admitted or denied based on the GPA specified in their application and cannot be conditionally classified contingent on raising the admission GPA.

### End-of-Semester Conditional Classification Review

At the conclusion of each fall and spring semester, the Office of Graduate Studies will run a query to identify students in conditionally classified status. You will receive an emailed list of your students in this category. Please review the list and notify us of any -

- students who have met all program prerequisites and we will update their status to classified.

### Provisional Admission

Campuses are authorized to admit applicants conditionally and to grant conditional registration privileges to such applicants provided that their partial and/or official records indicate a high probability that the applicants will meet CSU admission requirements. The goal of this policy is to ensure that the integrity of the university's admissions policy is maintained while providing admissions officers with sufficient flexibility. The policy is permissive. Campuses are not required to grant provisional admission and registration.

### Change of Program Concentration Process

Continuing students who wish to change program concentration within their current discipline should submit a [Graduate Change of Program Application \(COPA\)](#). The COPA must be signed by the program coordinator. to Graduate Admissions and pay the \$6 processing fee. Graduate Admissions will forward the COPA to the Registrar's Office to update the student's program plan.

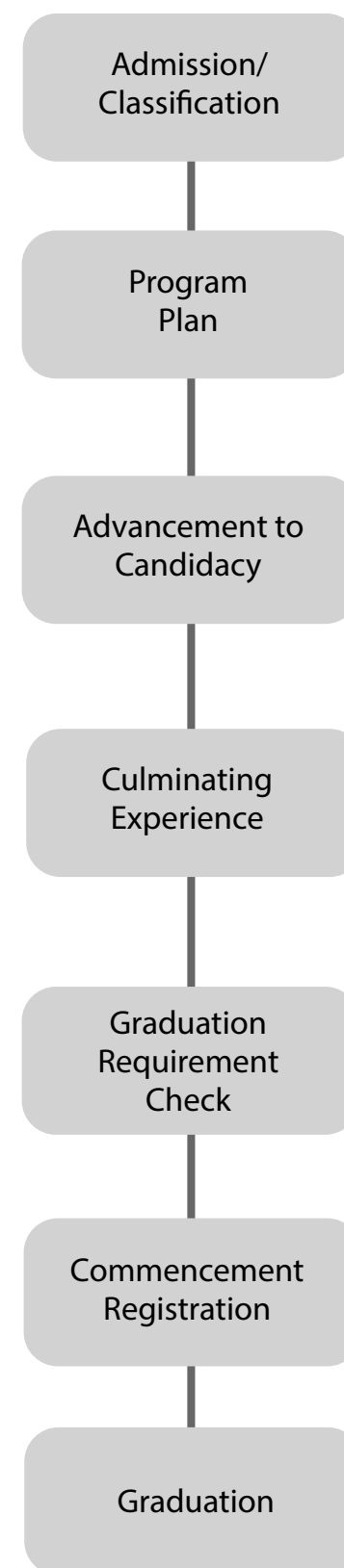
Students who wish to change disciplines entirely need to submit a new application on Cal State Apply and pay the \$70 application fee.

**Changing from Quarter to Semester Catalog:** The coordinator should submit an updated program plan and a COPA (fee waived) to the Office of the Registrar.



## Steps to Completing the Degree

While each program has its own requirements, the basic steps to graduation are the same. Graduate Coordinators play a vital role in moving students forward through the program and can help improve time-to-degree. Some of the steps listed below may overlap.



**Admission/Classification:** Graduate students are admitted in one of the following categories: 1) Classified post baccalaureate standing; 2) Contract Admission; 3) Conditionally Classified graduate standing; 4) Classified graduate standing.

**Program Plan:** The Graduate Coordinator or advisor meets with the student and creates the program plan, listing all required courses. The plan is prepared after the student finishes at least 16 quarter units or 12 semester units.

**Advancement to Candidacy:** Once the program plan is approved by the graduate coordinator and/or academic advisor, the coordinator will advance the student to candidacy using the PAWS - Graduate Exceptions from the Audit (EFA). Students admitted prior to fall 2020 will not have a PAWS and a physical/electronic program plan must be sent to the Office of the Registrar to advance the student to candidacy.

**Culminating Experience:** Programs require either a thesis, project, dissertation (doctorate only), or comprehensive exam as the culminating experience. Students must be enrolled while completing the culminating experience.

**Graduation Requirement Check:** The student files a graduation requirement check (grad check) with the Office of the Registrar at least one semester before their expected graduation date.

**Commencement Registration:** A student's eligibility to participate in commencement is verified by the Graduate Coordinator and the Office of the Registrar.

**Graduation:** Once the culminating experience is assigned a grade and all coursework is complete, the student is graduated.

## Steps to Completing the Degree, cont.

The requirements that must be met to achieve a master's degree include the following 9 items:

1. Programs must include at least 45 quarter or 30 semester units.
2. 70% or more units of coursework must be taken in residence on this campus.
3. Programs may not include more than 30% of total program units in extension and transfer credit from other colleges or programs.
4. The program plan must follow the department curriculum in effect at the time the student is officially admitted.
5. All courses taken to satisfy the requirements for the degree must be completed with a minimum GPA of 3.0 or better.
6. The program must include only courses with grades of "C" or better (Grades "C-" or less cannot be used).
7. The course of study may not include more than 12 units in unclassified status.
8. The program must be completed within a seven- year period.
9. Courses numbered 100-299 and 1000-2999 cannot apply.

### [Calculating Full Time Status](#)

In order for a graduate student to be considered full-time, he or she must be enrolled in at least 6 units of 5000-9999 level courses.

Please refer to the [Office of Student Financial Services](#) for a breakdown of tuition and fees.

### Course Overloading

Any student who would like to enroll in more than 15 units during fall or spring semester must obtain department permission.

### [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#)

To comply with federal and state requirements, California State University, San Bernardino established an Annual Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy. This policy applies reasonable standards for measuring whether a student, who is otherwise eligible for financial aid, is maintaining SAP toward the completion of his/her educational objective.

During this review, which is conducted every summer, a student's academic progress will be reviewed in the following areas:

- Qualitative Standard: Students must maintain good academic standing by meeting the GPA requirements as they are outlined in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.
- Quantitative Standard: Comparing the number of units attempted versus the number of units earned on an annual basis and within time limits to complete a degree on a cumulative basis. SAP policies and a unit calculator are available on the Financial Aid and Scholarship website. Withdrawn courses also count towards qualitative/ quantitative standards and are used in the SAP calculation.

Failure to meet SAP standards in these areas will constitute ineligibility to receive financial aid.

Please note that while students have a maximum of seven years to complete their graduate degree, this timeframe is not reflected in the SAP calculations. Therefore, your students will likely experience a failed academic progress report that will result in a hold on their financial aid disbursement.

Your student will be required to fill out a current program plan with you and submit that along with a SAP Appeal form to the financial aid office for evaluation.

Students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress will be notified via their CSUSB e-mail and by a ToDo item in MyCoyote.

## Steps to Completing the Degree, cont.

### [PAWS and MyCap](#)

As of fall 2020, PAWS and MyCAP is available for postbaccalaureate students. PAWS and MyCAP are both useful tools for program planning. Use the PAWS Exceptions from the Audit (EFA) to Advance to Candidacy, and make other course exceptions. As of fall 2022, all advancement to candidacy must be completed through the PAWS EFA process. The only exception is if the student was admitted prior to fall 2020.

Guides and additional information to the EFA process and MyCAP can be found on the [Graduate Studies - Graduate Coordinator's Toolbox](#) page.

### [Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement](#)

Beginning catalog year of fall 2023 and beyond, the 3-unit upper-division writing course to satisfy GVAR has been updated to apply to baccalaureate students only.

New program coordinators are required to schedule an appointment with April Lane [alane@csusb.edu](mailto:alane@csusb.edu) to schedule PAWS training



## Graduate Approved Program Plan

When creating the student's program plan, it is important to ensure the following: the program plan meets the requirements listed in the University Bulletin in the student's catalog year; the student has met all prerequisites for the program; courses will be offered when they are scheduled to be taken.

A template for your program's program plan should be available in your department office or you may create a program plan in myCAP. Please keep in mind that creating a myCAP does not eliminate the need to advance the to candidacy using PAWS EFA.

### Exceptions from the Audit

1. Students must make the request for a change/course substitution in their graduate department.
2. All exceptions made in a student's program (i.e., any deviations from the catalog) must be approved in the PAWS through the Exception from the Audit (EFA). Guides to the EFA and myCAP can be found on the [Graduate Coordinator Toolbox page](#).

PAWS and myCAP are now available for graduate students admitted fall 2020 or after. PAWS and myCAP are an excellent planning tool for you and your students. If you are unfamiliar with PAWS or myCAP please reach out to [April Lane](#) to schedule a training session. New masters program coordinators, schedule PAWS training with [April Lane](#).

For graduate students with catalog rights 2022-2023 and beyond, paper/electronic program plans will not be accepted by the Office of the Registrar.



### [PREP \(Professional Resource and Engagement Program\)](#)

Please encourage your students to engage in these personal and professional development opportunities, and to take advantage of CSUSB's free access to the e-portfolio platform, Portfolium, where they can highlight their accomplishments and growth as a graduate student at CSUSB.

Students who complete at least five listed activities in any given category are eligible to receive a certificate of completion in that category:

- [Communication and Writing](#)
- [Innovation](#)
- [Financial Well-Being](#)
- [Leadership and Career Development](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Teaching and Mentorship](#)
- [Wellness](#)

These activities must be completed before the student's graduate program is completed in order to receive the certificate.

Students must provide a piece of documentation for each event, and send an email to [gradstud@csusb.edu](mailto:gradstud@csusb.edu) when completed to receive their certificate.

## Culminating Experience and Continuous Enrollment

Students may fulfill the culminating experience requirement by passing a comprehensive exam or completing a thesis, project, or dissertation (doctoral candidates only). Please see the [CSUSB Thesis, Project, Dissertation and guidelines](#).

### Comprehensive Exam

Each program that offers the comprehensive examination for the master's degree shall implement and maintain explicit guidelines in writing that address both content and procedures relating to the examination.

All comprehensive examinations must conform to the following requirement of Title V, Section 40510:

A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination provide evidence of independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained in accordance with the records retention policy of the California State University.

Students must fulfill all department requirements for the written and/or oral comprehensive examinations. Such requirements include, but are not limited to, the date and time for the comprehensive examinations, length of testing, topics covered, and number of questions for the comprehensive examinations.

Students whose program requires a comprehensive examination must declare to their department, at least one semester in advance, their intent to take the exam, obtain department permission, and register for the appropriate comprehensive examination course (Comprehensive Exam 6980) in their major discipline. Those who do not pass the comprehensive examination must fulfill any department, division, and/or college requirements for subsequent enrollments in these examinations.

### [Thesis, Project, or Dissertation](#)

The State of California Education Code (Title V, Section 40510, p. 473) definitions are as follows:

**THESIS:** The written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished project [product] evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation.

**PROJECT:** 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 abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation.

**DISSERTATION:** The dissertation shall be the written product of systematic, rigorous research on a significant professional issue. The dissertation is expected to contribute to an improvement in professional practices or policy. It shall evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale.

The dissertation shall identify the research problem and question(s), state the major theoretical perspectives, explain the significance of the undertaking, relate it to the relevant scholarly and professional literature, set forth the appropriate sources for and methods of gathering and analyzing the data, and offer a conclusion or recommendation. It shall include a written abstract that summarizes the significance of the work, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation.

## Culminating Experience and Continuous Enrollment

### [Submitting the Completed Thesis, Project, or Dissertation for Publication](#)

Once complete, theses, projects, and dissertations are reviewed by Graduate Studies and published on ScholarWorks, the library's electronic repository. Students who are required to defend their thesis, project, or dissertation must do so before submitting the document for publication. Students must also submit a Committee Certification form to Graduate Studies, signed by the committee chair and graduate coordinator; submitting this form indicates that the manuscript is complete, the committee has approved it and provided feedback, and it is ready to be reviewed for formatting and publication.

Programs are encouraged to develop their own internal approval process for all members of the thesis/project/dissertation committee, if applicable.

Theses, projects, and dissertations are reviewed for formatting and checked for plagiarism using Turnitin.com before being published on Scholarworks. Manuscripts are accepted each term, and the submission deadline is typically the 12th week of the semester. The thesis [submission process, deadlines, and formatting](#) requirements are posted on the Graduate Studies website.

### [Thesis, Project, Dissertation Workshops](#)

Submission process and thesis formatting workshops are offered in fall and spring. Graduate Studies has also developed a Thesis Bootcamp to support students through the writing process and encourage them to make progress toward completion of their thesis, project, or dissertation. Please see the [thesis workshops](#) on the Graduate Studies website for more information.

### [Thesis Course Enrollment](#)

Students who are working on a thesis, project, or dissertation must register for the thesis, project, or dissertation course, required in their major discipline for the master's degree. Students

register ONLY ONE TIME for the course. If the thesis, project, or dissertation is not completed in the term in which the student first registered for the course, the student will receive a grade of RP (Report in Progress) for the course for that semester. The RP grade in the course remains until the work is completed and approved by the student's advisor and published by the Office of Graduate Studies, at which time the student's professor will submit a "Change of Grade," replacing the RP grade with a letter grade. Once officially accepted and processed, theses, projects, and dissertations are published on ScholarWorks. Note: Your student can choose to publish on ScholarWorks as Full or Restricted Access. If your students plan to publish the work outside of CSUSB, they should publish as Restricted Access on ScholarWorks.

### [Continuous Enrollment](#)

Students who have completed all coursework but require additional time to complete their thesis/project/dissertation must register every semester for (Continuous Enrollment for Graduate Candidacy Standing) in their major discipline until their degree is granted. Earned units are not degree-applicable. This is a variable unit course. Students may enroll in the zero unit continuous enrollment course through the College of Extended and Global Education at a reduced rate if they are not completing any other course work.

Students completing the comprehensive exam follow a similar policy; while preparing for the comprehensive exam, they must remain in continuous enrollment until their degree is granted.

## Human and Animal Protections

### [Human Participants](#)

[The CSUSB Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) is responsible for protecting the rights of human research participants in research by CSUSB faculty, staff, or students. Ethical principles and federal/state regulations provide the guidelines for committee review of all research protocols involving human volunteers, which may include the use of surveys, interviews, observations or experimentation to obtain information about individuals, or may involve the analysis of previously collected human records, samples, tissues, or other existing or secondary data.

### [Animal Research](#)

Regulated through the CSUSB [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#), animal research may include activities involving live vertebrate animals, or the use of tissues or other samples.

If your research involves human participants or animals, you are required to submit an IRB and/or IACUC research application so that the committee can determine the appropriate level of review.

### [The IRB or IACUC Application](#)

This application is separate and distinct from the Culminating Experience Proposal. The IRB or IACUC application informs the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) how the researcher intends to work with the human volunteers or animal subjects.

The research protocol states:

- The purpose of the research
- A brief review of the academic literature
- Methodology or theory behind the project
- Procedures in which the participants or subjects will engage
- Risks and benefits of the research to the participants or subjects
- Process of acquiring or recruiting participants or subjects
- Process of maintaining confidentiality of the research participants

- Process of obtaining informed consent from human volunteers

### [The Process](#)

IRB or IACUC office staff will determine if your Human Research protocol needs review by the IRB committee or if it can be reviewed administratively by the IRB chair. The office staff will also process the Animal Subject protocols and refer them to the IACUC for review. The review cycle for both human and animal research protocols may take up to 4 weeks, depending on the number of protocols in process at the time, and on how long it takes you to reply to the office's requests for revisions.

[Academic Research—Research Compliance website](#) provides links to important forms, guidelines, online training and information on the protocol review process for both human participants and animal subjects.

Note: You must complete the CITI training before you are eligible to submit a human subjects protocol to the IRB.

### [Contact Information](#)

For inquiries about human and animal protections, please contact the Research Compliance Officer, Michael Gillespie at 909-537-7588 or at [mgillesp@csusb.edu](mailto:mgillesp@csusb.edu).

PLEASE NOTE:

[Under no circumstances](#) may you begin any research activities involving human volunteers or animal subjects without receiving an official approval letter from the IRB or IACUC. The approval letter will arrive by email. Submit a research protocol well ahead of any deadlines for beginning the research. Reviewers may require you to make changes in the protocol before the research can be approved. Be sure to respond promptly to any requests for revisions. If you begin your research before receiving notice of approval, the Human and Animal Protections Office will withdraw your protocol and it will not be approved.

## Grad Check, Commencement Verification and Graduation

[The Graduation Requirement Check \(grad check\)](#) initiates the process of graduating the student. Students must file a grad check through the Office of the Registrar at least one semester before they plan to complete the program. The grad check is also required for commencement eligibility. Deadlines and fees for filing the grad check are posted on the Office of the Registrar website.

Prior to registering for commencement, graduate students must file a grad check. Once the grad check is processed the students will automatically become eligible to register for commencement. Please work closely with your students to be sure they will be eligible to graduate for the term of the grad check.



## Graduate Student Policies

Some policies for graduate study differ from those that govern undergraduate students. The Office of Graduate Studies administers most of these policies and related forms. These include: academic notice and dismissal, leave of absence, repeating a course (discounting a previous grade), and requests for waivers of university regulations. An overview of most policies and required forms are available on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the Graduate Studies website. Please consult the University Bulletin for complete information on all university policies and procedures.

### [Academic Notice and Dismissal Policies](#)

**Academic Notice:** When a student's GPA falls below 3.0, the Office of Graduate Studies will automatically place that student on Academic Notice. Students on academic notice must rectify their grade point deficiencies by the end of the subsequent term of notification of academic notice status, or they will be subject to disqualification. Both the Graduate Coordinator and the student will be notified by an email sent by the Office of Graduate Studies that they have been placed on academic notice, that they are required to meet with their Graduate Coordinator for academic advising and submit evidence of that meeting to the Office of Graduate Studies. Students on academic notice may choose to visit the Graduate Resource Specialist in the Office of Graduate Studies for consultation about the various campus resources that might be useful for them.

### **Disqualification:**

If a student remains on Academic Notice for more than one semester, that student is subject to disqualification. The Office of Graduate Studies' staff member, April Lane (alane@csusb.edu) will query graduate coordinators each term with a list of students who have been on Academic Notice for more than one semester to ask if they intend to dismiss the student. Dismissal is the coordinator's decision. Graduate Studies does not initiate the dismissal process. The coordinator initiates the dismissal letter and sends it to Graduate Studies

for approval. Graduate Studies notifies the student on behalf of the program, copying the graduate coordinator. Keep in mind that graduate students have the option to discount one grade.

To apply for reinstatement to a graduate degree or credential program after disqualification, the student must petition the appropriate program graduate committee. A student who has been disqualified from a master's degree program may be admitted to another program only on the recommendation of the department to which the student has applied and with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Nursing students seeking a second bachelor's degree must maintain a 2.5 grade point average in all work attempted. Students in this category who are dismissed from the university for failure to maintain these standards must petition the dean of Graduate Studies for readmission to the university.

**Administrative Academic Disqualification:** A graduate student may also be placed on academic notice or may be disqualified by appropriate campus authorities for unsatisfactory scholastic progress regardless of cumulative grade point average or progress in the program. Such action shall be limited to those arising from repeated withdrawal, failure to progress toward an educational objective and noncompliance with an academic requirement and shall be consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor. When a program decides to disqualify a student in the category of Administrative Academic Disqualification, the graduate coordinator must immediately contact the Dean of Graduate Studies, who will send the official disqualification notice. Note that graduate coordinators should not send disqualification notices to students.

## Graduate Student Policies, cont.

### [Leave of Absence](#)

Any graduate student (doctorate, master's, credential) who plans to be absent from the university for one semester or more must file a leave of absence to preserve his/her current catalog rights and avoid being discontinued from the university (Title 5, Article 5, Sec. 40401). [The request](#) must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of Graduate Studies. To be eligible, students must be in good academic standing and have completed the first semester of their program. Some leaves may require documentation.

The leave of absence covers medical, personal, planned educational, or military leaves. The military leave policy and forms are available through the Veterans Success Center. Whenever possible, petitions for leave of absence should be filed in advance.

If your student's plans change and they want to return early from their approved leave of absence they will need to send an email to [gradstud@csusb.edu](mailto:gradstud@csusb.edu) and let us know what term they would like to return.

A leave of absence may impact a student's federal loan repayment status and they should contact the Financial Aid Office with questions prior to filing a leave of absence request

### [Discount of Grade \(Repeating a Course\)](#)

The Discount of Grade form is used when a student has repeated a class and would like the grade for the current class to replace the first attempt. When a discount of grade is approved, the original course grade on the student's permanent record will be discounted. Only the last grade earned shall apply to the student's cumulative postbaccalaureate grade point average. The first attempt will show on the transcript with the repeat (discount) noted. Conditionally Classified, Classified and Credential Students may be permitted to repeat one course that was taken for graduate credit. It must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator and Dean of Graduate Studies.

Instructions on completing the [discount of grade form](#) are available on the Graduate Studies website. Graduate students are only allowed one discount of grade in their program.

### [Simultaneous Enrollment](#)

If a student is registering for classes whose meeting times overlap, the student must complete a petition for simultaneous enrollment. Without an approved petition, MyCoyote will not allow the student to register for both classes. Five signatures are required: the student, the two instructors, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Each instructor must explain how the student will make up the missed class time. Instructions for completing the [simultaneous enrollment form](#) are available on the Graduate Studies website.

### [Dropping a Course at the End of the Term](#)

After the 12th week of the semester, students must petition the Dean of Graduate Studies to withdraw from courses. Reasons may include serious personal or family problems, accident, or injury, and documentation must be included. Students are encouraged to consult with the Financial Aid office before withdrawing, since financial aid may be affected. Instructions for completing the [form](#) are available on the Office of Graduate Studies website.

### [Incomplete Grade Extension Request](#)

An incomplete grade must be made up within the calendar year immediately following the end of the term in which it was assigned (or as indicated by the instructor of the course). If it is necessary to extend this time limit, the student must obtain the consent of the instructor and submit an [Incomplete Grade Extension Request](#) to the Office of Graduate Studies.

### [Request for a Retroactive Withdrawal](#)

Complete this [request to withdraw](#) from a previous term. Requests for withdrawal from a previous term will be considered for circumstances involving accident, illness, serious personal or family problems, or military transfer only.

## Graduate Student Policies, cont.

### [Request for a Retroactive Withdrawal](#)

Complete this request to withdraw from a previous term. Requests for withdrawal from a previous term will be considered for circumstances involving accident, illness, serious personal or family problems, or military transfer only. Lack of awareness of the withdrawal dates or procedures is not a justifiable circumstance. Only requests for retroactive withdrawals from students with extenuating circumstances will be approved.

### [Waiver of Program Residency Requirement](#)

In accordance with university regulations, no more than 9 semester units of credit may be earned outside of residency within the program.

To request a waiver of program residency requirement a waiver must be requested and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies

### [Recertification of Expired Coursework](#)

This request is required to recertify courses older than the maximum number of years specified by your program. The maximum age limit for a course to be recertified is twelve years since the course was first taken, and only two-thirds of a program can be recertified.

### [Travel with Students](#)

When traveling with students, please ensure that all students traveling obtain university travel authorization and sign the necessary waivers.



## Annual Events

Graduate Coordinators, faculty and staff are encouraged to join us at our upcoming events. Developed specifically for graduate students, Graduate Studies events are a great way to stay informed and build community.

### [Graduate Student Orientation](#)

August 23rd, 2025, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

The event formally welcomes all new credential, master's, and doctoral students to the CSUSB campus. New students meet colleagues and faculty, learn about resources available on campus, and gain valuable information on university policies and procedures that pertain to graduate education.

You and your students also have access to the updated Graduate Student Orientation Canvas course.

### [Grad Slam: Three Minute Thesis](#)

April 8th, 2026

The Grad Slam is a school-wide TED talk-like competition in which CSUSB graduate students will explain a thesis or dissertation in 3 minutes or less. This competition will help students develop communication and presentation skills, as well as challenge them to showcase their thesis in layperson's terms to a generalized audience.

The Grad Slam is scheduled for April 8th, 2026 as part of Research Week, and information sessions will be available to begin recruiting participants in the fall term.



## Workshops & Information Sessions



Please let your students know about these upcoming events:

### [Thesis Submission and Review Workshop](#)

See website for dates and locations.

This workshop explains the electronic submission and review process, needed forms, deadlines, how Turnitin.com is used to check for plagiarism, and general formatting requirements.

### [California Pre-Doctoral Program Information Session](#)

See website for session dates and additional information.

This CSU program offers financial assistance, research opportunities, and mentorship to those who wish to pursue a doctorate degree and career in teaching and research at a university.

### [Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program Information Session](#)

See website for session dates and additional information

The Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) provides financial assistance for students pursuing doctoral degrees. The program seeks to provide loans to doctoral students who are interested in applying and competing for CSU instructional faculty positions after completion of the doctoral degree. Through CDIP the CSU Chancellor's Office provides assistance in the form of a student loan.

### [CSUSB Cal State Apply Virtual Graduate Application Workshops](#)

[Find Upcoming Sessions](#)

Applicants receive hands-on assistance with the Cal State Apply application and learn to craft a statement of purpose. Please encourage potential students to call Graduate Studies at 909-537-5058 or visit <https://www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies/prospective-students/how-apply/graduate-application-assistance>.

### [Graduate Recruitment Opportunities](#)

Contact Erma Cross [Erminia.Cross@csusb.edu](mailto:Erminia.Cross@csusb.edu) at Graduate Studies for information on upcoming recruiting events and opportunities: 74395 or [gradrecruitment@csusb.edu](mailto:gradrecruitment@csusb.edu)



## Student Resources and Support

As the main point of contact for your graduate program, you will likely receive questions about the kinds of resources available to CSUSB students. Below is a list of resources and contacts you may find helpful:

[The CARE \(Campus Assessment, Response and Education\) Team](#) provides assessment, support and resources to at-risk individuals. The CARE Team should be contacted about individuals who may be exhibiting behaviors of concern in relation to their personal, physical or emotional well-being, or who are behaving in a manner that is intimidating, disruptive, aggressive or violent. The CARE Team is also able to provide referrals for other resources and support. Contact by phone at 909-537-2273 or e-mail [care@csusb.edu](mailto:care@csusb.edu).

[The Career Center](#) offers professional development workshops, resume and cover letter writing assistance, internships, and more to help students and recent alumni meet their personal and professional goals. Contact by phone at 909-537-5250 or e-mail [careercenter@csusb.edu](mailto:careercenter@csusb.edu).

[Center for International Students and Programs](#) offers advising and support for students on F-1 and J-1 visas. Contact by phone at 909-537-5193, or visit their website at [csusb.edu/cisp](http://csusb.edu/cisp).

[The Children's Center](#) provides high quality education and childcare to children aged 3 through kindergarten in a nurturing, developmentally appropriate learning environment. Contact by phone at 909-537-5928.

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers counseling to all enrolled CSUSB students. Some issues commonly addressed by CAPS include anxiety, relationships, drug and alcohol abuse, personal trauma, or loss of a loved one. Contact by phone at 909-537-5040 or e-mail [psychcounseling@csusb.edu](mailto:psychcounseling@csusb.edu).

### [Graduate Student Society](#)

The Graduate Student Society (GSS) is to foster a deeper social and academic bond between the graduate students of CSUSB. GSS is intended to help strengthen the connection of graduate students to one another, across disciplines, to enhance the college experience of this demographic. Additional information about GSS can be found at [csusb.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/tgss](http://csusb.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/tgss)

[Graduate Writing Center](#) consultants work one-on-one with graduate students who wish to improve and refine their compositions. Writing consultants help with clarity, structure, grammar, citations, and all aspects of the writing process. The Graduate Writing Center is located in the College of Education, room 311. Contact by phone at 909-537-3127 or e-mail [WritingCenter@csusb.edu](mailto:WritingCenter@csusb.edu).

[The Graduate Student Success Center](#) located in SMSU South, the Graduate Student Success Center is a multi-room space that includes a lounge, study rooms, computer stations, and a kitchen. Take advantage of this grad student retreat!

[The Obershaw DEN](#) is an on-campus food pantry for students facing food insecurity. It provides meals and hygiene products to currently enrolled CSUSB students in need, as well as referrals to other services. Students must present their Coyote OneCard; confidentiality is maintained at all times. Contact by phone at 909-537-FOOD or e-mail [basicneeds@csusb.edu](mailto:basicneeds@csusb.edu)

[The Office of Student Research \(OSR\)](#) provides opportunities and resources for conducting research and other scholarly and creative activities. Student and faculty grants, student workshops, the OSR Journal of Student Research, and the annual CSUSB Student Research Symposium are just a few of the assets OSR has to offer. Contact by phone at 909-537-3728 or e-mail [osr@csusb.edu](mailto:osr@csusb.edu).

## Student Resources and Support, cont.

[The Student Health Center](#) provides health care services to all registered students. Their medical services include primary care, immunizations, nursing care, health education, a pharmacy and laboratory. For information about hours, immunizations, and available health insurance plans, visit their website or contact them at 909-537-5241.

[The Queer and Transgender Resource Center](#) provides education and advocacy to develop a more equitable and inclusive environment by addressing issues of homophobia and heterosexism throughout the campus community. Contact by phone at 909-537-5963.

[The Recreation & Wellness Center](#) is proud to offer the CSUSB community a wide range of activities and programs to enhance physical fitness, learn new skills, engage in friendly sports competition, and to simply have fun! They welcome all enrolled CSUSB students, staff, faculty, and alumni regardless of age, gender, experience, and ability. Contact by phone at 909-537-2348 or e-mail [recwell@csusb.edu](mailto:recwell@csusb.edu).

[The Undocumented Student Success Center](#) supports the undocumented student population, including those who may or may not qualify for AB 540. The center is located in the Student Union South 102B. Contact by phone at 909-537-5937 or e-mail [Dreamers@csusb.edu](mailto:Dreamers@csusb.edu).

[The Veterans Success Center](#) offers dynamic programs sensitive to the unique needs of service members, including: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) tutoring; SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society; veterans' graduation celebration; complimentary printing; free test taking materials; advocacy and referral; a monthly seminar series; weekly mental health support group; and a military veterans writers group. Contact by phone at 909-537-5195 or e-mail [vsc@csusb.edu](mailto:vsc@csusb.edu).



# Directory

Departments	Phone Number
Office of Graduate Studies	909-537-5058
Office of the Registrar	Registration: 909-537-5200, Option 1 Records: 909-537-5200, Option 2
Financial Aid & Scholarships	909-537-5227
Student Financial Services	909-537-5162
Office of Student Research	909-537-3728

Find program coordinator's contact information by visiting our [Degrees and Department Contacts](#) page and clicking on program type, or scan the QR code.



# Palm Desert Campus



# San Bernardino Campus



Feel free to call, email, or visit the  
Office of Graduate Studies for assistance.  
We are happy to help!

[Office of Graduate Studies](#)  
College of Education, 356  
(909) 537-5058  
[gradstud@csusb.edu](mailto:gradstud@csusb.edu)