



University Policy Statement

UPS 410.106

ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE DEGREE STUDENTS

I. General requirements for the graduate degree

- A. A master's degree requires a minimum of 30 approved semester units. The EdD degree requires a minimum of 60 approved semester units. The Post-Master's DNP requires a minimum of 36 approved semester units, and the Nurse Anesthesia DNP requires a minimum of 109 approved semester units.
- B. Graduate degree Study Plans for each program are defined in the University's official catalog and are modified through changes in the curriculum governed by university policy. The following restrictions apply to Study Plans:
 1. For the master's degree, at least twenty-one (21) semester units or half the units required by the program, whichever is larger, must be taken in residence as part of the student's degree program.
 - a. For the EdD, at least 48 semester units must be taken in residence.
 - b. For the Post-Master's DNP, at least 30 semester units must be taken in residence.
 - c. For the Nurse Anesthesia DNP, at least 88 semester units must be taken in residence.
 - d. Courses transferred and courses taken through California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) extension are not in-residence units.
 2. A maximum of nine units of extension credit may, with the approval of the departmental graduate advisor, be used to obtain a master's degree, regardless of the number of units required for the program.
 3. All courses on the Study Plan for the master's degree must be at the 400-or 500-or equivalent level. 400-level General Education courses may not be counted toward the Study Plan.
 - a. 400-level courses used on the Study Plan must be approved for graduate credit.
 - b. All courses on the Study Plan for the doctoral degree must be at the 500-or 600-or equivalent level.
 4. The typical academic standard is that at least 70 percent of all Study Plan courses for the master's degree must be at the 500-level. However, with prior approval, upon the recommendation of the Graduate Education Committee, master's programs may permit students to include up to 50 percent of coursework at the 400-level. Such programs should justify a standard of 50 percent in the course of program performance reviews.
 5. The master's degree Study Plan may include no more than nine units of post-baccalaureate work taken at this institution before admission to an approved program.

6. Prerequisite requirements for admission may not be used on a Study Plan.
 7. A limited number of CR/NC graded courses, identified by the respective Department, that are clinical practicum, internship, applied skills, fieldwork, performance, or similar courses may be used on a graduate Study Plan; however, at least twenty four (24) semester units or half the units in the program, whichever is greater, must be coursework with letter grades.
 8. The master's Study Plan may include no more than six (6) semester units of thesis or project work. The EdD Study Plan may include no more than twelve (12) semester units of dissertation. The Post-Master's and Nurse Anesthesia DNP Study Plan may include no more than twelve (12) semester units for the doctoral project.
 9. The Study Plan may include no more than six (6) semester units of Independent Study. The basis for Independent Study courses cannot be another undergraduate or graduate course. Independent Study courses must follow UPS 410.010.
 10. The Study Plan may not include courses that were applied to another degree.
 11. Changes to the Study Plan that are not in the program curriculum are approved by the graduate advisor and the appropriate Provost designee for graduate studies.
- C. The candidate must complete all Study Plan courses within five years (10 consecutive semesters), starting with the earliest course on the Study Plan. Students may petition to extend the time limit to complete the degree to seven (7) years (14 consecutive semesters). Students must retake or validate courses completed more than seven (7) years prior to completing the requirements for the degree. Courses completed more than ten (10) years prior to completing requirements for the degree are not eligible for validation.
1. Degree program coursework is outdated when completed more than five (5) (or seven (7) with extension) years before completing all degree requirements. Validating outdated coursework is allowed by approval of the graduate program advisor, the academic unit offering the subject course, and the appropriate Provost designee.
 2. Validation is accomplished by passing a written comprehensive exam of the materials in the course, oral examination, written report, or paper, or by an equivalent method with prior approval of both the graduate program advisor and the appropriate Provost designee.
 3. Up to nine (9) units of coursework may be validated. Courses completed more than ten (10) years prior to completing the graduation requirements are not eligible for validation. Outdated transfer coursework cannot be validated.
- D. Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment. Continuous enrollment requires enrollment in the fall and spring semesters from admission to the program of study until awarding of the degree. Students enrolled in a program with a mandatory summer semester must maintain continuous enrollment in fall, spring, and summer.
1. The approved Study Plan is valid as long as the student maintains continuous enrollment requirements for their program.
 2. Students not enrolled in courses can maintain continuous enrollment with approved leaves of absence or enrollment in Graduate Studies 700 (GRAD 700).
 - a. Registration for GRAD 700 is restricted to graduate students who have enrolled in all Study Plan coursework, have advisor approval, and the culminating experience is in progress.

- b. International students need International Student Services approval to take GRAD 700.
- 3. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment must re-apply to the University to continue in the program and meet current admissions standards for the re-admitted semester.
- E. Students must be Advanced to Candidacy before the degree conferral. Students may advance to candidacy when they are: (1) in classified status; and (2) have completed at least nine (9) units of coursework in the Study Plan. Advancement to candidacy signals that the student is ready to begin the culminating experience. The graduate advisor approves of the courses in the Study Plan, which will be used for degree conferral.
- F. The candidate must satisfactorily undergo one culminating experience, which may be a thesis, a project, a comprehensive examination, or a dissertation. This experience should be educationally appropriate to the student and the discipline. An oral presentation is strongly encouraged. The Department or program is expected to maintain records indicating the culminating experience, the faculty members involved, and completion results.

II. Admissions Standing for Post-baccalaureate and Graduate Students

- A. Post-baccalaureate students have earned a bachelor's degree and are either not in a degree objective or are in a post-baccalaureate, credential, or certificate program.
 - 1. Post-baccalaureate Standing: Unclassified

To qualify for admission with no degree objective, a student must: (1) hold an acceptable bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution; (2) have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 or 2.5 GPA in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units; and (3) have been in good standing at the last institution of higher education attended.
 - 2. Post-baccalaureate Standing: Classified

To qualify for admission to a post-baccalaureate, credential, or certificate program, a student must: (1) meet the requirements for post-baccalaureate unclassified standing; and (2) satisfy any additional program requirements.
- B. Graduate students are in a master's or doctoral degree program.
 - 1. Graduate Standing: Conditionally Classified

To qualify for admission with a graduate degree objective, a student must: (1) meet the admission requirements for post-baccalaureate unclassified standing; and (2) meet any additional program admissions requirements.

 - a. An applicant who shows promise for success but needs additional coursework to prepare for graduate study may be considered for admission in conditionally classified standing with the approval and recommendation of the graduate program advisor. A student admitted in conditionally classified standing may be granted classified standing once the prerequisite conditions are met. The Department must notify the student of prerequisites or preparation required, including specific course names, grades, and time frame for completion. The time frame for meeting prerequisites should not exceed two semesters (counting fall and spring semesters only).
 - b. Prerequisite courses are needed for sufficient academic preparation for the graduate degree or success in specific graduate courses. Conditional classification should not be used because of lower cumulative GPAs in undergraduate study.

- c. After the two-semester conditional period, graduate advisors should assess progress and either move the student to classified status or discontinue the student from the program if the conditions are not satisfied.
2. Graduate Standing: Classified

To qualify for admissions with a classified standing, a student must: (1) meet the admission requirements for post-baccalaureate unclassified standing; and (2) meet any additional program admissions requirements.

 - a. Classified status signals that the student is ready for graduate study, and no additional courses or prerequisites need to be taken or satisfied.
 - b. Most students should be admitted in classified standing.
- C. A student can make admissions appeals within fifteen (15) days of the admission decision, up to one appeal per semester. Appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Admissions Appeals Committee.

III. Grade point requirements

To earn a graduate degree, a student must earn a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 in:

- A. All graduate-level units attempted subsequent to admission to a degree program and all Study Plan coursework.
- B. A student may request a change in the Study Plan to raise the Study Plan grade-point average to 3.0 by:
 1. Adding no more than six units of approved coursework, or
 2. repeating no more than six units of coursework in which a B- (2.7) or lower was earned, or
 3. a combination of (a) or (b) not to exceed six (6) units.

Requests to add courses to the Study Plan or repeat courses must be approved by the graduate program advisor and the appropriate Provost designee before registration.

IV. Repeated courses

- A. Each course on the Study Plan must be completed with a C (2.0) grade or better. Some programs may have higher standards.
- B. If a student receives a grade less than the minimum grade required by the program for a Study Plan course, the course must be repeated and passed with the minimum grade required by the program for that course, or better. A course may be repeated no more than once.
- C. When computing the Study Plan and cumulative graduate CSUF grade-point average, both grades are included if a course is repeated.
- D. Repetition of a course carries no additional unit credit toward a degree.
- E. In extenuating circumstances, the graduate program advisor may request to add another course to the approved Study Plan, with appropriate Provost designee approval. The added course must have the same unit value as the course with the unsatisfactory grade.

V. Academic Notice and Disqualification

- A. Academic notice is an action which suspends a student's good academic standing and precedes disqualification.

- B. Disqualification removes a student from their program and graduate standing. Further enrollment in courses is not permitted (except through Open University enrollment).
- C. A graduate student enrolled in a graduate degree program is placed on academic notice if the cumulative graduate or the Study Plan grade-point average falls below 3.0.
- D. A graduate student may also be placed on academic notice or disqualified for any of the following reasons: repeated withdrawal; failure to progress toward an educational objective; non-compliance with an academic requirement; failure to demonstrate a level of professional competence or fitness commensurate with the standards of the discipline being studied; or inappropriate behavior as defined in UPS 300.000, Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, and in UPS 300.021, Academic Dishonesty.
- E. With the recommendation of the student's graduate program advisor, the appropriate Provost designee will disqualify a student who is on academic notice.
 1. Master's or DNP student is placed on academic notice if the student does not, or cannot, raise the Study Plan grade-point average and cumulative graduate grade-point average to 3.0 by the completion of the second regular semester following the session in which the cumulative or Study Plan grade-point average fell below the minimum 3.0 standard.
 2. A Post-Master's DNP student will be disqualified if a grade of B- or lower is earned in a course and if a grade of B or higher is not earned in the repeated course, or if the student earns a B- or lower in more than one class during a single semester.
 3. A Nurse Anesthesia DNP student is subject to disqualification upon receiving a grade of B- or below or No Credit in a study plan course. There is no option for repeating courses for Nurse Anesthesia students.
 4. An EdD student is subject to disqualification the second term that the student's grade point average is below 3.0.
- F. The student will be disqualified from a graduate degree program if that student's grade-point average becomes so low that it cannot be raised to 3.0 within the defined probationary period.
- G. If no policy for disqualification appeal is explicitly established at the program level, disqualification appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Disqualification Appeals Committee.
- H. A student who has been disqualified from a master's degree program or a doctoral degree program may apply for readmission to the same program after one calendar year. A re-admitted student must file a new Study Plan that meets current requirements and policies. A disqualified student who wishes to use previous coursework must have it approved by the appropriate Provost designee.
- I. A student who has been disqualified may apply for readmission to a different program. A re-admitted student must file a new Study Plan that meets current requirements and policies. A disqualified student who wishes to use previous coursework from a different program must have it approved by the appropriate Provost designee, up to nine units.

VI. Guidelines for Post-baccalaureate and Transfer Coursework

- A. Post-baccalaureate coursework on a student's graduate Study Plan is governed by the general regulations for all graduate degrees. Approval is required by the program advisor and the appropriate Provost designee.
- B. A master's student may petition for a maximum of nine units of credit for coursework (either 400- or 500-level) taken while the student was an undergraduate at CSUF, if:

1. The coursework was not used to meet any of the University's requirements for the baccalaureate degree (including major, minor, or concentration).
 2. The coursework was taken during the senior year of the student's undergraduate career.
 3. The coursework was completed with a grade of B or better.
- C. Graduate students may apply to use a limited amount of transfer coursework in meeting the requirements for a graduate degree. Use of transfer work on a student's Study Plan is subject to all other policies concerning Study Plan coursework. Further, the coursework being transferred must:
1. Have been taken at a regionally accredited college or University or equivalent;
 2. Have been completed with a grade of B or better;
 3. Be acceptable for credit toward the same graduate degree at the institution where the coursework was taken;
 4. Not have been used in meeting the requirements for another earned graduate or undergraduate degree;
 5. Have been completed within the student's five-year time period required to complete the requirements for the graduate degree at CSUF.

VII. Exceptions

Requests for exceptions to these policies must be submitted in writing by the graduate program advisor to the appropriate Provost designee.

VIII. Terms and Definitions

Certificate

A university approved course of study, either credit or noncredit, that exceeds the requirements of a one-semester course and does not substitute for majors, minors, or credentials. Certificate programs may be offered in either state- or self-support mode. Certificate program policy is found in UPS 410.115.

Credential

Credentials are a state-approved program of courses that are required for teacher certification by the state. Credential program policy is found in UPS 411.400.

Culminating Experience

A master's program must culminate with a thesis, project, comprehensive examination as determined by the program. Culminating experience policy is found in UPS 330.163.

Leave of Absence

Temporary, approved interruption of study that preserves the election of curriculum rights regarding catalog requirements. A leave of absence does not change the time limit for the completion of the degree. Leave of absence policy for graduate and credential students is found in UPS 330.124.

Source: Graduate Education Committee

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 9, 2022
Supersedes: UPS 410.106 dated 7-23-13
and ASD 13-43