



GRADUATE SPECIAL MAJOR CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

Prospective students seeking to obtain a master's in Special Major should contact an advisor in one of the departments in which the majority of the coursework will be taken.

What is a Special Major?

A graduate Special Major is a 30-unit individualized interdisciplinary program. Individual students design a program drawing on courses and advisors from at least two departments. The Special Major program is permitted only when an established Sac State degree program cannot achieve the student's goal.

A Special Major is also more complex to plan -

- Since graduate standards from more than one department must be met, Special Majors commonly must complete more prerequisites than students in regular programs.
- All departments in which Special Majors take graduate coursework must agree to the major, as must the three faculty members on the student's Special Major Committee. Since the Special Major involves more than one department, it may take some time for students to become well acquainted with the different programs and to choose the faculty they wish to have for this committee.
- Special Majors do not have the security that the department will offer all courses required for their program. Departments who accept Special Majors take their responsibilities seriously, but course cancellations, sabbaticals or retirements may eliminate courses in the Special Major agreement. In that case, the student and the committee must adjust the program.

What are the requirements for a Special Major?

Special majors must meet the general Sac State requirements for admission as a graduate student, and

- Have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better in their last 60 units and overall.
- Complete any prerequisites for their program with a minimum GPA of 3.5.
- Take a minimum of eighteen (18) units of *regularly scheduled* 200-level courses; an additional nine (9) units may be upper-division courses; three (3) units for project thesis complete the thirty (30) unit program. Special Majors may take 299 (independent study), but those courses do not count toward meeting the 200-level minimum. (3) units of internship or fieldwork may be substituted for one 200-level course.

Interested students should file both the online University Application as well as the Special Major Application by the Special Major deadline. The online application can be found here:

csumentor.edu

More information on Graduate Studies at Sac State can be found online:

csus.edu/gradstudies

Graduate Special Major Program

California State University, Sacramento

Purpose of the Program

The Master's in Special Major provides an alternative for superior students whose special needs and interests cannot be adequately met by any one of the existing master's degree programs of the University. The Special Major consists of a combination of courses from two or more departments and may bridge two or more colleges within the University. The courses must be carefully selected for their applicability to the objective of the proposed major. The program must be compatible with the objectives of the University and supportable by courses already offered in the existing degree programs and by the expertise of members of the faculty.

Eligibility for the Program

The Special Major is restricted to superior graduate students who are eligible for admission to classified standing in one of the existing master's degree programs of the University. Applicants must present evidence of an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better in their last 60 semester units and overall. Applicants must show patterns of undergraduate coursework that will provide the foundation for the advanced degree sought. If undergraduate coursework does not adequately prepare a student for the Special Major, acceptable prerequisite courses as determined by the student's committee will be required prior to classification. Courses taken to fulfill the prerequisite requirement must be completed with a minimum GPA of 3.5, and they may not be counted toward the degree requirements.

The Associate Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies must approve any exceptions to these requirements.

Admission Procedures

1. Complete the attached *Graduate Special Major Application* and *Special Major Declaration* and submit with the University Application. Proposals must have the following characteristics in order to qualify:
 - a. A coherent course program that meets the student's objectives and is academically sound.
 - b. A statement of the rationale for the Special Major that demonstrates in clear language the relationship of the Special Major program to the wider intellectual context of advanced study in the candidate's field.
2. Only six units of coursework taken prior to approval of the program can apply to the degree.
3. Obtain a faculty sponsor who has expertise and interest in the proposed study program.
4. With the assistance of the faculty sponsor, select two additional faculty members (representing the areas in which most of the course work is to be taken) to serve collectively as the graduate committee for advising and for directing the thesis or project. Committee members must normally come from at least two departments and be full time, tenure-track faculty.

5. The student's committee must approve the completed application. The student shall then consult with, and obtain the approval of, the graduate coordinators or department graduate committees (or department chairs, in departments without graduate degree programs) in the departments from which the student's committee is drawn and in those departments in which the student plans to take graduate-level coursework.
6. After obtaining the above signatures, submit the application to the Office of Graduate Studies (River Front Center, Rm. 215). After review by the Associate Dean (or designee), copies of the approved program will be sent to the student and faculty sponsor.
7. Requirements for advancement to candidacy for the Special Major Master's degree are the same as for other degrees, as stated in the Graduate Studies section of the University Catalog. The student must also secure the approval of all three committee members. All general requirements (e.g., GPA, number of units, level of coursework, etc.) applicable to other master's degree programs apply to Special Major Programs. The application for advancement to candidacy is to be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for final review and approval.

Requirements for the Degree

1. Minimum upper division and graduate level units: 30.
2. Of the minimum number of units required for the degree, eighteen (18) must be in regularly established lecture or seminar courses at the 200 level (not to include 299 courses). Where appropriate, 3 units of internship or fieldwork may be substituted for one 200-level course.
3. No more than 3 units may be in Independent Study (299 or similar courses).
4. No more than 6 units shall be in any one or in any combination of:
 - a. approved extension credit or
 - b. transfer credit, for work carrying graduate degree residence credit at another accredited institution.
5. No more than half the units for a Special Major can be in any one department.

Culminating Requirement

A thesis or project (3 units) shall be completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements. The student's committee in consultation with the student will make the selection of the culminating experience topic. The student will enroll for thesis/project credit in the department of the faculty sponsor.

GRADUATE SPECIAL MAJOR APPLICATION

California State University, Sacramento

* All information in areas 1-12 must be typed.

* Completed applications must be accompanied by **two letters**, one from the faculty sponsor and one from another member of the committee. The letters should attest to the academic validity of the proposed program, the appropriateness of all listed courses in the program, the non-duplication of other programs presently offered on this campus, and the preparation and ability of the particular student to succeed in the proposed program.

1. _____
(First name) (Middle Name) (Last Name)

(Mailing Address)

Phone: _____
(Home) / (Business) (Student ID)

2. Colleges and Universities Attended:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>From/To</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Degree Earned</u>	<u>Date of Degree</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Special Honors or Achievements:

4. **Faculty Sponsor:** _____ **Department:** _____

5. **Additional Committee Members:**

Department: _____

Department: _____

6. **Proposed title of Special Major degree (four words or less):**

7. **Proposed title of Thesis/Project (20 words or less):**

10. Describe your academic or professional purposes in undertaking the degree.

11. Specifically identify any related master's degree programs offered on this campus which you have reviewed and found unsuitable for meeting your needs. Briefly indicate why these programs won't meet your needs.

12. In what departments do you plan to take most of your work?

13. I understand that I must be currently attending California State University, Sacramento as a Post baccalaureate of Graduate student.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

(Required approval signatures on next page)

14. I have conferred with this student regarding the proposed program for the Special Major Graduate Degree and agree to act as **sponsor** for the student.

Signature of
Faculty Sponsor: _____ Date: _____

15. I have conferred with this student regarding the proposed program for the Special Major Graduate Degree and agree to serve as a **committee member**.

Signatures of
Committee Members: _____ Date: _____
_____ Date: _____

16. Approval by either the **Graduate Coordinator** or **Chair** in the departments where the student plans to take graduate-level coursework:

_____ Department: _____
_____ Department: _____

17. Approval by **Associate Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies**:

_____ Date: _____

Comment:

SPECIAL MAJOR DECLARATION

I have read the description of criteria for admission and the program proposal for a Master's degree in Special Major. I understand that the degree cannot be conferred unless my program meets these criteria.

If I need to request any changes to my original program as approved by the Associate Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies, I understand that:

- These changes must conform to the program structure of the Special Major as outlined in the catalog.
- Any requests for changes must be presented on the Petition for Exception and must include the recommendation and signatures of each committee member.
- Unauthorized substitutions for coursework will not be allowed and may result in cancellation of my program.

Signature

Date

NOTICE: A Master's degree in Special Major is based upon availability of faculty expertise and appropriate graduate coursework. Please be aware either of these resources could be discontinued at any time, thus leaving your program at risk.

Student: It is your responsibility to make a copy of this document before submitting to the Office of Graduate Studies.