

# Glossary of Terms

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**Academic Dismissal:** If while on Warning a student earns a semester GPA of less than 3.00, the student will be subject to Academic Dismissal. Academic Dismissal is sometimes referred to as 'disqualification' because students who become Subject to Dismissal are ineligible to register at Sacramento State unless they are approved for reinstatement on an academic contract.

**Academic Warning:** Graduates in classified or conditionally classified standing in master's degree programs must maintain a cumulative and semester GPA of at least 3.00 to remain in good standing. A semester GPA of less than 3.00 will result in Academic Warning.

**Academic Year:** The period of formal instruction. In the case of Graduate Studies at CSUS, the Academic Year encompasses Spring and Fall semesters.

**Accreditation:** Approval of colleges and universities by nationally recognized professional associations or regional accrediting bodies.

**Administrative Academic Probation:** Students may be placed on Administrative Academic Probation for the following reasons: withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of their courses in two successive terms or in any three terms, repeated failure to progress toward a degree or other program objective, and/or failure to comply after due notice with an academic requirement or regulation. Students who do not meet the conditions for removal of Administrative Academic Probation may be subject to [Academic Dismissal](#).

**[Advancement to Candidacy](#):** Fully classified graduate students who have completed at least 40% of their program with a minimum 3.0 grade point average may submit a proposed program of graduate study. Students must have been advanced to candidacy and achieved a passing grade on the Writing Proficiency Examination before they can register for a Master's thesis or project.

**Application for Graduation:** Students must apply for graduation in their last semester, using the following deadlines:

- **October 1 for Fall graduation**
- **February 1 for Spring or Summer graduation**

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**Classification:** The process of a student moving from Unclassified or Conditionally Classified status to Fully Classified in their major. A student may also be re-classified if they change their degree objective.

**College:** A postsecondary institution that provides undergraduate education and, in some cases, master's level degrees. College, in a separate sense, is a division of a university; for example, College of Business.

**Comprehensive Examination:** Final examination required for some master's degrees, sometimes in lieu of writing a thesis.

**Concurrent Enrollment:** Students enrolled on any California State University campus may enroll concurrently at another CSU campus if they have completed twelve units at the home campus with a 2.0 grade point average and are in good standing. Concurrent enrollment is approved for a specific term, subject to space availability and registration priority policies at the host campus.

**Conditionally Classified:** Students who have been admitted to the University and/or a specific program of study, conditional upon them completing certain requirements (raising GPA, taking preparatory courses, etc.). They cannot be fully classified in their program until meeting such conditions.

**Continuous Enrollment:** Graduate students who have been advanced to candidacy and who have completed all course work can maintain the required active degree program status without additional University registration by enrolling in "Continuous Enrollment" through Open University. There are no units associated with this enrollment, but a College of Continuing Education fee equal to one unit is required.

**Culminating Experience:** The Thesis, Project, Dissertation or Comprehensive Exam required to complete a Master's or Doctoral degree.

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**Declassification:** Students may be declassified for "Failure to make satisfactory progress" or having too low of a GPA to [advance to candidacy](#). Students who have been declassified must reapply to the University in a subsequent semester.

**Defense (Thesis/ Dissertation):** As the final step toward some Master's degrees or a Ph.D., candidates must pass an oral examination before their thesis or doctoral committee in defense of their thesis or dissertation.

**Degree Conferral:** Upon successful completion of program requirements, degrees are conferred on the last day of the semester (see [Academic Calendar](#)).

**Disqualification:** (See [Academic Dismissal](#))

**Dissertation:** A requirement for the Ph.D., the dissertation is a report of an original investigation carried out under the direction of the candidate's major professor. The dissertation must be the candidate's own work. Although it may be the result of research enterprises in which the candidate collaborated with others, it must reflect the candidate's own style, and a substantial portion must represent the candidate's own creative contribution.

**Doctorate (Ph.D.):** The highest academic degree conferred by a university to students who have completed at least three years of graduate study beyond the bachelor's and/or master's degree and who have demonstrated their academic ability in oral and written examinations and through original research presented in the form of a dissertation.

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**Fee Waiver:** The application fee may be waived for a limited number of applicants for whom payment would be a financial hardship. If you believe you qualify, fill out the Application Fee Waiver portion of the online application. On-line fee waiver requests will be processed immediately

and the applicant will be informed of their fee status at that time. Please note that if your fee waiver request is denied, your application will be placed in incomplete status and will not be processed until the fee is paid.

**Fellowship**: A type of financial aid for graduate students that waives part or all of due tuition in exchange for some type of work or assistance in return.

**FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)**: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Students have the right to review their own educational records, but schools must have written permission from the student to release such information to others.

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**GMAT: Graduate Management Admissions Test**. This is an exam required for most MBA and business school graduate programs. As with the LSAT, it replaces other entrance exams for programs in business.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)**: A system of recording achievement based on a numerical average of the grades attained in each course. The minimum GPA for Graduate Students at CSUS is 3.0.

**Graduate**: A student who has completed a course of study at the university level. A graduate program at a university is a study course for students who already hold a bachelor's degree.

**Graduation Date Change**: [Applications for Graduation](#) include the semester the student will be graduating. If, for some reason, a student unable to graduate in that semester, they must submit a [Graduation Date Change Form](#).

**Grant**: Financial aid awarded to a student based on financial need that does not have to be paid back.

**GRE: Graduate Record Exam.** This exam is required for admission to many graduate programs around the country. There are two elements: general and subject matter. Similar in purpose to the SAT's for undergraduate study, the GRE is an assessment of your knowledge, cognitive abilities and reasoning skills. For info: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org).

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**IELTS (The International English Language Testing System):** A test that measures ability to communicate in English across all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking – for people who intend to study or work where English is the language of communication. Visit <http://www.ielts.org/> for more information. This test is an alternative to the [TOEFL](#).

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**Loan:** An advance of funds to a student for the purpose of financing a college or vocational education. These funds must be paid back (usually after graduation).

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**Master's degree:** Degree awarded upon completion of academic requirements that usually include a minimum of one year's study beyond the bachelor's degree.

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**Nonresident:** A student who does not meet the residence requirements of the state. Tuition fees and admission policies may differ for residents and nonresidents. International students are usually classified as nonresidents, and there is little possibility of changing to resident status at a later date for tuition purposes.

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**Ph.D.:** (See [Doctorate](#))

**Post-Baccalaureate:** Study pursued by students who have completed a bachelor's degree.

**Petition for Currency:** Form used to petition to include an outdated course toward completion of a degree program. The time limit for course currency is seven years for academic degree programs and five years for credential and independent doctoral programs.

**Petition for Exception:** Form used to make substitutions in the courses listed on your Advancement to Candidacy.

**Prerequisite:** Program or course that a student is required to complete before being permitted to enroll in a more advanced program or course.

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**Reinstatement:** Students who have been [Declassified](#) may request Reinstatement by submitting a [Reinstatement Request/Admission Contract](#) form and including a letter detailing the circumstances that interfered with past academic achievement and how these have been remedied.

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**Scholarship:** An award that does not usually have to be paid back. A scholarship is usually awarded to students who demonstrate or show promise of high achievement in an area such as academics, athletics, music, art or other disciplines.

**Seven Year Deadline:** All work toward a master's degree, including transferred credits, course work, and thesis, must be completed within seven years. This time limit is required of all master's candidates at California State University, Sacramento (other institutions of higher education across the country have similar deadlines). Occasionally an extraordinary situation will arise whereby a student will want to challenge the time limit. The burden to establish currency in an expired course (a course completed more than seven years ago) falls to the student. In such a case the [Petition for Currency](#) form would be used to request a one semester extension beyond the limit.

**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 CSUS degree program cannot achieve the student's goal.

**Supplemental Application:** Some departments have their own separate applications that must be completed in addition to the required [University Application](#). Please see the [Graduate Programs](#) page to see which programs require supplemental applications.

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**Thesis:** A written work containing the results of research on a specific topic prepared by a candidate for a bachelor's or master's degree; a work of research culminating the master's degree. The thesis is based on an individual research conducted by you and supervised by your advisor.

**TOEFL:** The Test of English as a Foreign Language. An exam administered by ETS – Educational Testing Services. Scores are often required in order to determine admission status.

**Transcript:** A certified copy (see "Notarization") of a student's educational record.

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**Unclassified:** Students enrolled in Graduate level courses, but not enrolled in any specific program.

**Writing Placement for Graduates (WPG):** The WPG is a timed writing placement exam. Graduate students can satisfy the WPG by completing at least one of the following three options:

1. WPG Waiver (documentation is required for a waiver)
2. Earning a grade of B or higher in a Graduate Writing Intensive (GWI) course in your discipline
3. Take the WPG exam or retake the GRE/GMAT and obtain a score of 4.5 or higher on the analytical writing section

Graduate students must satisfy the WPG requirement before they can Advance to Candidacy.

Please visit: <https://www.csus.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-student-guide.html#gwar> for more information.