

Steps toward Earning the Master's Degree

Office of Graduate Studies
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0875

The information presented in this handout is intended to provide a general overview of the processes involved in obtaining a master's degree. If you have questions or require further clarification about any step, you are encouraged to contact the Office of Graduate Studies or your Graduate Coordinator, as applicable. Valuable information on policies, procedures and relevant deadlines is also available from the publications indicated below and the Office of Graduate Studies website at: <http://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/index.shtml>.

Admission

1. Apply to CSU, Chico online at www.csumentor.edu by the [application deadline](#) for your master's degree program objective.
2. Submit official transcripts of your academic records to the Office of Graduate Studies by the application deadline. One (1) official transcript is required from all post-secondary schools attended whether or not any work was completed. Transcripts will be considered official only if they are received directly from the schools attended, or within two years of issue in an envelope sealed by the institution of origin.
3. Submit all required supplementary application materials directly to the Graduate Coordinator for the program to which you are applying. These may include any of the following: letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, portfolio, or writing samples. See [Programs and Coordinators](#) list on the Office of Graduate Studies website for contact information.
4. Once admitted, you will be emailed information about advising for your program and registration in the University.

Enrollment and Progress in the Program

Review the [University Catalog](#) for departmental information specific to your program and general requirements for all graduate students.

1. Review the publication [A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, & Format](#), which can be accessed online from the Office of Graduate Studies website.
2. [Graduate Program Progression](#): If you are admitted to conditionally classified status in the master's degree program, consult your Graduate Coordinator to discuss any deficiencies in your preparation for graduate study. You may enroll to complete any prerequisite courses, fulfill the departmental requirements for classified standing, and begin your program coursework. However, most programs have set a limit on the amount of degree coursework that may be completed before attaining classified standing. Check your departmental section of the [University Catalog](#) to see if there is a limit that applies to your program.
3. Consult your graduate coordinator to develop a plan of study that fulfills the program requirements, your academic objectives and the university degree requirements. Work with the Graduate Coordinator to focus your plan of study, plan your culminating activity, and identify faculty with expertise in your specific area(s) of interest. (Though this is the advising model in most programs, some may follow a different pattern. Your Graduate Coordinator can inform you of the advising process in your program.)
4. Meet with faculty in your area(s) of interest, discuss your culminating activity, and establish your Graduate Advisory Committee.
5. Complete and submit an approved [Master's Degree Program Plan](#) to the Office of Graduate Studies when you have completed 9-12 units of the program coursework.

6. Notify your Graduate Coordinator when you have met all departmental requirements for [advancement to classified and candidate status](#) as outlined in the [University Catalog](#). In addition to any specified departmental requirements, students generally are admitted to classified standing when they are formally accepted by the department for graduate study without any deficiency in preparation. Advancement to candidacy typically takes place after students have completed at least nine units of their proposed program and demonstrated ability and aptitude in the discipline.
7. Complete all coursework required for the degree.
8. If you are completing a master's thesis or project as the culminating activity for your program, follow your departmental guidelines for submission of the thesis/project proposal, and enroll in the appropriate units of Master's Thesis (699T) or Project (699P).

Maintain continuous enrollment in your program. Complete adjunct enrollment in GRST 899 through the [Center for Regional and Continuing Education](#) for any semester that you are not regularly enrolled in courses. (Open University and Special Session enrollments do not meet the continuous enrollment requirement.)

Graduation

1. The information and materials to apply for graduation with your master's degree are available at the following website: http://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/filing_for_graduation/index.shtml. Follow the instructions, and submit both the receipted Graduation Application Form and Graduation Clearance Form to the Office of Graduate Studies by the deadline indicated for the semester in which you plan to fulfill all degree requirements.
2. If you are completing a master's thesis or project and plan to hire a formatter for the final document, schedule this service early in your final semester. A list of established formatters is available online at http://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/documents/thesis_formatters_and_editors.pdf.
3. Schedule your thesis defense, project presentation, comprehensive examination, or other culminating activity in advance of the graduation completion deadline for the semester. Contact the Office of Graduate Studies at least one week prior to the scheduled date so that a [Final Progress Sheet](#) can be sent to your Graduate Advisory Committee Chair.
4. If you are completing a master's thesis or project, review the [Thesis or Project](#) information on the Office of Graduate Studies website. Submit the final approved document in compliance with university specifications to the [Thesis Editor](#) in the Office of Graduate Studies by the graduation completion deadline.
5. Confirm that your Final Progress Sheet is returned to the Office of Graduate Studies by the graduation completion deadline to document your successful completion of the culminating activity for your program.
6. Each April, the previous summer and fall master's graduates, and spring candidates for graduation who have met all degree requirements, will be sent an e-mail invitation via WildcatMail to participate in the Master's Commencement held in May. If you are interested in participating in your Master's Commencement it will be important for you to carefully follow the instructions in the e-mail invitation, and RSVP to participate by the specified date.