

The Masters of Arts Degree Program in Education

**Making a Difference In The Lives
Of Those Who Teach And Learn**

**School of Education
California State University, Chico
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The Master of Arts Degree in Education

Program Mission and Goals:

The mission of the graduate program is to confront educational challenges in the belief that its faculty, students, and educational partners will indeed make a difference in the lives of those who learn and teach. The program instills respect for educational research and applications, and a commitment to contribute to the heritage of scholarship in the field. The graduate program strives to improve the quality of education at all levels, to promote equality of opportunity for all learners, and to enhance the contribution that education can make to local communities and society in general.

Implied in the mission statement are the major goals of the program.

- Goal 1** **To prepare informed and confident professionals who**
- are aware of education's past;
 - confront the complex issues and educational challenges of the present, and;
 - participate in determining the future of education.
- Goal 2** **To provide a rigorous course of study based on competent and current scholarship that**
- advances the knowledge and skills of educators at different stages of professional development;
 - develops and demands skills of disciplined inquiry, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving, and;
 - prepares educators to be intelligent and informed consumers able to appropriately utilize and contribute to the heritage of educational scholarship.
- Goal 3** **To prepare educational leaders who**
- recognize and implement that which is legally necessary, ethically imperative, and morally sound;
 - are empowered with the knowledge and skills required to make a difference in the lives of those who learn and teach, and;
 - select to pursue more advanced study that may include the doctoral degree.

These goals enable the School of Education to meet the diverse needs of educators by providing opportunities that include professional development, professional preparation, and the Master of Arts degree.

- **Professional development:** Graduate courses are open to practitioners updating their credentials, enhancing their capabilities to meet the demands of a new position, or developing essential competencies to meet the needs of changing student populations. (If appropriate, these courses could later be used for the graduate degree.)
- **Professional preparation:** Graduate coursework through advanced credential and certificate programs. These include administration, library-media, reading/language arts, and special education.
- **The Master of Arts degree:** Graduate coursework for educators in various areas of specialization within the field. These include administration, linguistically and culturally diverse learners, curriculum, library-media, reading/language arts, and special education.

Basic Program Requirements

1. Literacy Requirement:

Students are required to demonstrate writing proficiency as a requirement for graduation. The literacy requirement is a three-step process involving different faculty. At any point in the process, students may be required to take appropriate steps to improve their writing skills (e.g., going to the writing center, taking a writing course). Students admitted as conditionally classified are required to submit a Preliminary Program Plan during their first semester in the program. This must be accompanied by a rationale for the proposed M.A. degree program. This is submitted to the Graduate Coordinator and Program Coordinator/ Advisor for their review. Prior to being advanced to classified status, all students are required to take EDMA 610 – Introduction to Inquiry in Education (3 units). One course requirement is a written research paper. This will also be reviewed by the program option as part of the assessment of writing proficiency. Before advancement to candidacy, students are required to have a proposal for their thesis or project approved by all members of their Graduate Advisory Committee. This is also reviewed as a sample of the candidates' writing.

2. Completion of an Approved M.A. Program:

All requirements established by the Graduate School, School Graduate Committee, School of Education and Graduate Advisory Committee must be completed. These include an approved program consisting of 30 units of courses at the 500/600 level.

- a. At least 18 units in Education
- b. At least 18 units in 600-level courses
- c. Not more than 9 units of transfer/extension credit
- d. Not more than 15 units taken before advancement to classified status.
- e. At least 9 units completed after advancement to candidacy.
- f. Not more than a total of 10 units of Independent Study (697/698) and Master's Study (699) combined. No more than 6 units of EDMA 399 may be taken.

3. Compulsory Coursework:

The M.A. Degree Program requires all graduate students to take 12 units of obligatory coursework. These courses are:

- a. EDMA 610 Introduction to Inquiry in Education (3 units)
- b. EDMA 611 Research Seminar in Education (if thesis or project option) (3 units)
Or
EDMA 696 Synthesizing Experience in Education (if examination option) (3units)
- c. One course in the foundations series EDMA 600-608 (3 units)
EDMA 603 Foundations of Bilingual Education
EDMA 604 Seminar in History and Philosophy of Education
- d. EDMA 699 Master's Study (Thesis or Project). This is normally taken for 3 units. The university catalog stipulates that 699s may be assigned 1-6 units.
Or
EDMA 697 M.A. Special Education Examination Option

4. **Thesis/Project Requirement:**

Completion and final approval of a thesis or a creative project--as specified by the student's graduate advisory committee and the Department's Graduate Coordinator--is required of all students. (Students in the Education Examination Option have requirements that substitute for the thesis/project.)

5. **M.A. Oral Examination:**

An M.A. oral examination in the field of study is required of all candidates in the program. Satisfactory completion of the oral examination is reported to the Graduate School on the Final Progress Sheet submitted by the chair of the candidate's Graduate Advisory Committee.

6. **Final Approval:**

Approval by the Department's Graduate Committee (normally through the Graduate Coordinator) and the Graduate Council on behalf of the faculty of the California State University, Chico.

Some Questions and Answers

In this section some of the questions most frequently asked by graduate students are addressed.

Q. What are the grading requirements that apply to coursework in the M.A. Program?

All courses included on the M.A. Degree program must be taken for a letter grade. The only exceptions are as follows:

- EDMA 698 Independent Study
- EDMA 699 Master's Study
- Coursework specifically approved by MA Committee

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average in all coursework on the approved Master's Degree Program as well as in all coursework taken subsequent to admission to conditionally classified status.

Q. What courses may be included on my program plan?

Only courses at the 500- and 600-levels may be included as part of an M.A. Degree Program, although graduate students may enroll in courses at any level. Courses at the 500-level are acceptable toward either a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. However, the same course may be applied toward only one degree.

Q. Will I receive transfer credit for coursework taken at other institutions?

A maximum of 9 semester units of transfer credit may be applied toward the degree. This includes coursework taken at other institutions as well as specialist and services credential coursework taken prior to admission into the program. (Students in Special Education are allowed to bring in up to 15 units. Students required to take up to 12-units of graduate-level coursework to qualify for admission into the program will need approval from the Graduate Coordinator).

Q. *May I include courses taken through web-based instruction as part of my program?*

Courses offered through web-based delivery may be included as part of an M.A. degree program. Only those courses meeting all other requirements for inclusion on the program may be included, and there may be limits to the total number of units accepted (e.g., Open University, extension courses). Graduate students are encouraged to check the distance learning schedule each semester for specific course offerings. A number of School of Education courses are regularly offered via web-based delivery.

Q. *Will the courses I need be offered during summer session?*

The availability of courses during summer session depends in part on the student's area of specialization. Not all summer session courses are state supported. This means that course offerings are subject to student interest as well as faculty availability. In the last few years, classes in administration, special education, curriculum, reading/language arts, educational research, and other areas have been offered on a regular basis during summer session. Some courses have been offered periodically; others only during the academic year. Check with your program coordinator or advisor regarding the scheduling of courses you are interested in taking.

Q. *How many units should I take each semester?*

Defining what is an appropriate course load for a graduate student is an individual matter determined by a number of factors (e.g., work status, finances, family obligations, time limits). However, University policy dictates that graduate students may not register for more than 16 units of work in any semester without the written permission of the Graduate Coordinator. Undergraduates taking graduate-level coursework in their last semester prior to graduation must petition to ensure that these may be included in their M.A. degree program. (This is a fairly simple process handled through the Graduate School.)

Q. *How many courses can I take through Open University enrollment?*

It is the policy of the departments in the School of Education that students may not enroll through Open University for more than one semester. (If there are no transfer courses included on the program plan, a maximum of nine units of coursework through Open University may be included.)

Q. *What is the University's continuous enrollment policy?*

University policy requires that all students maintain continuous enrollment after admission into the Master's Degree program. When this requirement is not satisfied by taking regular coursework, a fee must be paid through the Office of Continuing Education for enrollment in the continuous enrollment course. Students are advised that they will be charged a late fee if they fail to follow this policy in a timely manner. (For additional information, contact the Graduate School, Tehama 209.)

Q. *When should I enroll in EDMA 699 Master's Study?*

Students should enroll in EDMA 699, Master's Study, just prior to the semester when work is in progress. EDMA 699 must be completed within the program time limit.

Q. *How many years do I have to complete my M.A. Degree Program?*

All requirements for the M.A. degree must be completed within seven years. If coursework taken prior to admission is included on the program plan, the seven years will begin with the oldest course applied toward the degree. Students are advised to keep this in mind when listing coursework on their program plans. This may also affect calculation of the student's g.p.a.

Q. *What is required to graduate with distinction?*

M.A. degree candidates who maintain a 3.9 grade point average on all approved program coursework and attain high standards of quality on a thesis or project or examination option are eligible to graduate with distinction. Recommendation for graduation with distinction is made by the candidate's graduate advisory committee on the Final Progress Sheet that is submitted to the Graduate School.

CHECKLIST

FOR ADMISSION TO CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED STATUS

Date Completed

REQUIREMENT

1. Application to the Graduate School for Admission
(by the published deadline)

2. School of Education Recommendation
 * Acceptable B.A.
 * Satisfactory g.p.a. (see University catalog)
 * Basic Credential (normally required in most areas of specialization for K-12 but may not be required for those who wish to work at the community college level.)
 * Conditions for admission (if any): _____

_____ Verification: Letter from Graduate School

3. Preliminary Program Plan
To meet this requirement: Submit a preliminary program plan approved by the Program Coordinator/ Advisor to the Graduate Coordinator within the first semester of admission to the program.

4. Rationale
To meet this requirement: Submit one copy of your rationale to the Graduate Coordinator and another copy to the Program Coordinator/ Advisor approving your preliminary program plan.

5. Guide
To meet this requirement: Purchase a current edition of *A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, and Format* (Graduate School) or download from the University's website.

6. Handbook
To meet this requirement: Purchase a current edition of the Master of Arts Degree Program in Education handbook: *Making a Difference in the Lives of Those Who Teach and Learn* at the A.S. Bookstore.

It is IMPORTANT that you remember the following!
 Unless otherwise specified, it is the student's responsibility to complete and submit all documents correctly and on schedule.
 The student is also responsible for securing all required signatures and approvals.

CHECKLIST

FOR ADVANCEMENT TO CLASSIFIED STATUS

Date Completed

REQUIREMENT

1. **Completion of 9-15 units of approved coursework.**

2. **Formation of graduate advisory committee and approval of program plan.**

To meet this requirement: Submit the complete and approved program plan form to the Graduate Coordinator. Check with the Graduate Coordinator for confirmation that the program plan has been approved.

Verification: Goldenrod copy sent to student by the Graduate School

3. **Completion of EDMA 610 Introduction to Inquiry in Education (3 units)**

4. **Request for advancement to classified status.**

To meet this requirement: Submit the required form to the Graduate Coordinator for approval and submission to Graduate School

It is IMPORTANT that you remember the following!
Unless otherwise specified, it is the student's responsibility to complete and submit all documents correctly and on schedule.
The student is also responsible for securing all required signatures and approvals.

CHECKLIST

FOR ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Date Completed

REQUIREMENT

- | | |
|-------|---|
| <hr/> | 1. Completion of one-half of the approved M.A. degree program |
| <hr/> | 2. Classified status (see #4 on previous page) |
| <hr/> | 3. Completion of EDMA 611 Research Seminar in Education (3 units) or EDMA 696 Synthesizing Experience in Education |
| <hr/> | 4. Completion of a proposal for a thesis or project with signed approval from all members of the graduate advisory committee

<u>To meet this requirement:</u> Submit a copy of the proposal (with a Proposal Approval Sheet) to the Graduate Coordinator. |
| <hr/> | 5. Request for advancement to candidacy.

<u>To meet this requirement:</u> Submit the required form to the Graduate Coordinator for approval and submission to the Graduate School |

It is IMPORTANT that you remember the following!
Unless otherwise specified, it is the student's responsibility to complete and submit all documents correctly and on schedule.
The student is also responsible for securing all required signatures and approvals.

CHECKLIST

FOR GRADUATION

Date Completed

REQUIREMENT

1. Application for Graduation

To meet this requirement: Complete Graduation Clearance Form and other Graduate School documents by deadline dates.

2. Enrollment in Master's Study EDMA 699 (or EDMA 697 for Special Education Option) within the first two weeks of the semester in which the work is to be completed.

To meet this requirement: Submit the required form to the appropriate Department Office with the signature of your graduate advisory committee chair. If your work involves human subjects, university approval for the study must be obtained in advance. Non-print media projects also require special university approval.

3. Satisfactory completion of EDMA 699 (or EDMA 697 for Special Education Option)

To meet this requirement: Submit the completed and approved thesis or project to the Graduate School by the deadline date for the semester in which you plan to graduate. You must have an approval page with all required signatures and any copyright permissions that may be required. The Special Education Option is coordinated by the program coordinator.

4. Successful completion of oral defense of thesis/project

Verification: Satisfactory performance will be verified on the Final Progress Sheet provided by the Graduate School to the chair of your graduate advisory committee. This must be requested by the chair and returned to the Graduate School after all requirements have been satisfied.

It is IMPORTANT that you remember the following!
Unless otherwise specified, it is the student's responsibility to complete and submit all documents correctly and on schedule.
The student is also responsible for securing all required signatures and approvals.

The Graduate Advisory Committee

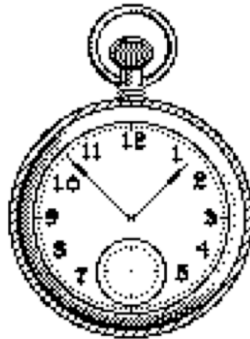
In Education, the student's Graduate Advisory Committee is composed of two or three faculty members. University policy dictates that the chair and second member must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members. These are faculty with a terminal degree in their field (i.e., a Ph.D. or Ed.D.). If you look in the catalog or on a School directory, these faculty are identified as Assistant, Associate or Professors. University policy also states that your committee chair must be a faculty member within the School of Education.

To achieve classified status, you must submit a program plan. Part of this process involves your creating a Graduate Advisory Committee to assist you in planning this program - reviewing and formally approving the coursework you propose to take - and then in guiding you through the Master's study. You begin by inviting a member of the faculty to serve as chair of your committee. This person will be the member of the committee you will work with most closely. This decision is yours. You should choose a faculty member who has expertise in your particular area of interest. The chair should also be someone you can work with comfortably. It is advisable to consult with the chair on the selection of the other member or members of your committee. You want to put together a "team" that offers the range of expertise you need to assist you with your thesis or project.

It is important to keep in mind that you are responsible for the coordination of your graduate advisory committee throughout the major steps of completing your Master's study. You need to ensure that all members are kept informed and provided with copies of your work in a timely fashion. You should also assist with scheduling the M.A. oral examination.

Remember that faculty service on your committee is defined by the University schedule. The Graduate School dates for completion of M.A. degree requirements are your deadlines. If your work progresses more slowly than anticipated, or if you are at the end of your time limit, do not try to compensate by making unfair demands of your committee chair and members. Although many faculty have done so willingly, they are not obligated to work with you on weekends, throughout the summer and intersession, or when they are on sabbatical. It is unreasonable to assume that they must set everything else aside for your benefit.

A word to the wise:



Manage your time well.

This will be most appreciated by your chair, graduate advisory committee, formatter, family, colleagues, students, and friends. It will also be reflected in the quality of your completed thesis or project. As a professional courtesy, bound copies of your thesis or project should be provided to the chair of your committee. Depending on their involvement with your thesis or project, consider providing other committee members with an unbound copy. Their willingness to serve on your Graduate Advisory Committee represents a significant commitment to your professional growth, a reflection of their belief that our program's graduates will indeed "make a difference in the lives of those who learn and teach."

Preparing a Program Plan

All students in the M.A. degree program must complete an approved program consisting of 30 units of graduate coursework. To be approved, your program plan must adhere to certain requirements. After developing your program plan, ask yourself the following questions:

- *Does the program have the required 30 units of coursework?*
- *Are the core requirements included?*
 - EDMA 610?
 - EDMA 611? or EDMA 696?
 - EDMA 697 (or EDMA 697 Special Education Option)?
 - One foundations course in the series EDMA 303-307?
- *Does the program include at least 18 units in Education in the 30-unit total?*
- *Does the program have a minimum of 18 units of 300-level coursework?*
- *Does the program have no more than a total of 9 semester units transfer?*
- *Does the program have no more than a total of 10 units combined of Independent Study (697/698), Master's Thesis (699T)/Master's Project (699P), or other approved Credit/No Credit coursework?*
- *Does the program have no more than 6 units of Master's Thesis (EDMA 699T) or Master's Project (EDMA 699P) or 3 units of EDMA 697 for the comprehensive examination in the Special Education Option?*
- *Does the program identify the topic or area for a thesis or project?*
- *Is it possible to complete the program within the seven-year time limit?*
- *Is the program plan typed so that it is legible and clean?*
- *Is the graduate advisory committee chair a Professor, Associate Professor or Assistant Professor in the School of Education?*
- *Is the second committee member a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at CSU, Chico?*
- *Have all committee members reviewed and approved/signed the program plan?*
- *Have I signed the program plan myself?*

When the answer to all of these questions is YES, submit your program plan to the Graduate Coordinator for approval. Once approved, your completed program plan will be forwarded to the Graduate School.

Thesis/Project Checklist

This checklist has been prepared to assist you in the planning of your work on a thesis or project, and to facilitate its completion in a reasonable length of time. Remember that you are expected to assume the initiative for scheduling regular meetings with the chair and members of your graduate advisory committee and to communicate with them in a timely manner on all important issues related to your thesis or project. Assume that several drafts will be required before final approval is granted.

Stage One: PROPOSAL

DATE	TASK
_____	Successfully complete EDMA 610 Research Seminar in Education. It is to your advantage to consult with members of your graduate advisory committee as you prepare the proposal you submit to satisfy course requirements.
_____	Meet with your graduate advisory committee (individually or as a group) so that faculty can review the proposal, determine whether the thesis or project is acceptable, and recommend changes.
_____	After making the revisions required by your graduate advisory committee, submit the final written proposal to all members of the committee for their approval.
_____	If your thesis/ project involves human subjects, apply for a Human Subjects in Research Clearance from the Graduate School office.
_____	If your project involves non-print media, see the chair of the Non-print Media Review Committee for the required clearance forms.
_____	Follow all policies, procedures and format requirements in the <i>Guide to Graduate Studies</i> (available from the Graduate School).
_____	Follow style and format guidelines for referencing, tables and figures in the <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Ed.)</i> .
_____	Submit a copy of the approved proposal and a signed approval sheet to the Graduate Coordinator.
_____	Sign up for EDMA 699 Thesis or Project (1-6 units) with your committee chair. A special form for 699s is available through the Department Office. You will need to add the course during the Add/Drop period the first two weeks of the semester.

Stage Two: WORK IN PROGRESS

DATE	TASK
_____	Develop a working timeline, listing all required tasks and anticipated dates of completion. Be sure to allow time for faculty to review drafts of your work, for your formatter to prepare the manuscript, etc. Ask your chair and committee members to review your timeline.
_____	Meet on a regular basis with your chair and other committee members.
_____	Allow time for your graduate advisory committee to review <u>several</u> drafts of your work.
_____	Make arrangements for a formatter to prepare the manuscript if you are not doing this yourself. The Graduate School has a list of formatters available on request.

Stage Three: COMPLETION OF THE THESIS OR PROJECT

DATE	TASK
_____	At the beginning of the semester in which you plan to complete all requirements for the degree, check deadline dates for submitting your graduation clearance, for completion of M.A. oral examinations, and for submitting the completed thesis or project or project to the Graduate School. (Failure to meet these deadlines will delay the semester in which the degree is awarded. This can result in additional fees, problems with the program expiration date, etc.)
_____	If you plan to format your own thesis/project, contact the Thesis Editor to arrange a preliminary edit early in the semester.
_____	Submit your final draft of the completed Master's thesis or project <u>at least one month</u> before the date of your oral examination. This will allow sufficient time for any revisions that may still be required prior to your oral.
_____	Arrange for the scheduling of your oral defense (coordinate time, place, participants, etc. well before the semester deadline). Let your chair know if you would like to suggest the name or names of other faculty who might be invited to attend as faculty monitors.
_____	Be sure that you have attended to details such as copyright permissions.
_____	Verify completion of all required paperwork for the Department and Graduate School.
_____	Review the section on the "M.A. Oral Examination" in this handbook and be prepared to demonstrate your <u>"breadth of knowledge in the discipline, your depth of knowledge in specific areas, and your ability to integrate that which has been learned."</u>
_____	At least two weeks <u>prior to</u> your scheduled oral examination, submit a copy of the final draft of your thesis or project to the Graduate Coordinator for review and approval. The Graduate Coordinator's signature is required on <u>all</u> theses and projects.
_____	Upon successful completion of your oral examination, request signatures from

members of your committee. If changes or revisions are required, make arrangements for obtaining them. (If your oral examination is scheduled near the deadline date for submission of the thesis or project, check with committee members and the Graduate Coordinator regarding their availability.)

_____ Obtain all necessary signatures on the final formatted copy of the approval page.

_____ Submit the completed thesis or project (with all required signatures, forms, permissions, etc.) to the Graduate School for approval by the Thesis Editor prior to the semester deadline.

Congratulations!.....It's time to CELEBRATE!

The M.A. Oral Examination

An oral examination is required of all candidates for the Master of Arts Degree in Education. It is the culmination of a demanding M.A. degree program.

Purpose:

The purpose of the M.A. oral examination is:

- * To provide an opportunity for the candidate to defend the research done in a Master's thesis or the product created in a Master's project
- * To examine the candidate's knowledge in the area of specialization defined in the Master's thesis or project
- * To evaluate the candidate's understanding of research and theory in the area of specialization and his or her ability to support positions related to major issues in the field
- * To assess the candidate's ability to concisely and clearly articulate the value of the Master's thesis or project, its applicability to educational practice and its significance as a professional contribution
- * To assist the candidate in career planning by examining professional goals following completion of the Master's degree
- To solicit feedback from the candidate regarding the Master of Arts Degree Program in general, and his or her experience in particular

Time:

Everyone involved should allocate at least one hour for the oral examination. There should be no interruptions or early departures.

Expectations:

The oral examination is designed to provide the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate what he or she has learned. Oral examinations are scheduled when the chair and other committee members believe that the candidate is fully prepared to explain and defend his or her work. Candidates are reminded, however, that it is possible to fail the oral examination if they are not adequately prepared or if the committee believes that the thesis or project does not meet university standards. Even candidates whose performance in the oral examination is satisfactory may still need to make changes in their thesis or project. Faculty may require revisions that are major or minor in nature. Full committee approval may be delayed until all recommended changes have been made.

Procedure:

While the agenda for the M.A. oral examination may vary, the general procedure will be as follows:

1. The M.A. Committee Chair initiates the sessions by introducing everyone present.
2. The candidate gives a 15-20 minute presentation on his or her Master's thesis or project. This presentation includes:
 - * A statement of the rationale for selecting the thesis or project topic
 - * Highlights of the most significant and relevant literature in the field
 - * An overview of the research questions or hypotheses, methods, findings and conclusions of a study
 - * An overview of the procedures and processes involved in a project and its special applications
3. The chair and committee member(s) will ask the candidate to
 - * expand upon, explain or defend specific aspects of the work
 - * share plans for dissemination or implementation of the results of the study or project
 - * assess the effects of the M.A. program experience in terms of personal and professional growth and relate completion of the M.A. degree to future career plans
 - * provide feedback regarding their M.A. program experience and share insights as to program strengths and areas for improvement

At the end of the oral examination, the candidate and any visitors present are asked to leave the room while the Graduate Advisory Committee and faculty monitor evaluate the candidate's performance. The candidate is then recalled to the room. It is the chair's responsibility to advise the candidate that the examination has been successfully completed or to report on deficiencies identified in the oral. If the candidate has not passed the oral examination, the chair will make arrangements for a subsequent examination.

ATTACHMENTS: Required Forms and Approvals
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- A. Master's Degree Rationale and Preliminary Program Plan
- B. Master's Degree Program Plan
- C. Advancement to Classified Status

- D. Advancement to Candidacy
- E. Proposal Approval Sheet and Instructions for Thesis/Project Submission
- F. Master's Study – EDMA 699 Form
- G. Graduation Clearance Packet
 - 1. •Graduation Filing Instructions
 - 2. •Application for Graduation
 - 3. •Graduation Initializer Card
 - 4. •Graduation Clearance Worksheet
 - 5. •Graduation Clearance Form
 - 6. •Graduate School Deadline Calendar
 - 7. •Thesis/Project Approval Notice
- H. Signature Page (thesis/project)