

Division of Graduate Studies Certificates of Advanced Study Programs & Procedures

Purpose

This document provides definitions, policies and procedures governing the graduate certificate programs that lead to university conferral of the Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) as well as guidance on the relationship between such certificates and other graduate degrees, including masters and doctoral degrees. (It does not include other certificate programs such as Certificates of Completion that may be awarded for completion of a planned educational experience.)

Graduate Certificates

The only university-recognized graduate certificate is the Certificate of Advanced Study. These certificates prescribe formally constructed and approved areas of study designed to meet requirements for professional competence, expand access to specialized knowledge, and meet occupational needs for advanced and interdisciplinary work. The Certificate on its own is considered an alternative credential, rather than a degree program. Certificate programs are shorter in duration than master's or doctoral degree programs. Upon satisfactory completion of the certificate program, a Certificate of Advanced Study is awarded and posted to the student's transcript. Certificate programs can be either "free-standing," meaning there is no related masters/doctoral degree, or they can be "supplementary," meaning that there is a related masters/doctoral degree. All approved CAS programs will be described in the university [General Catalog](#).

The Division of Graduate Studies oversees the development and implementation of Certificates of Advanced Study according to policies and practices that govern all other graduate degrees in the university. Programs are housed within the appropriate academic unit or department and may be offered on the state side, in cooperation with the Division of Continuing and Global Education or with external institutions and organizations. All certificate programs are subject to periodic program review requirements and curriculum approval processes of the university. CAS programs are subject to established university review and standards appropriate to work at the graduate level. These graduate certificates may be offered at the postbaccalaureate, post-master's or post-doctoral level as appropriate to the faculty expertise and resources. Completion of a CAS has no impact on admission to other graduate degree programs or other Certificates of Advanced Study; however, students admitted to a graduate degree program may concurrently pursue additional study through an approved Certificate of Advanced Study. Performance in a certificate program may be considered in the review of applications for admission to degree programs.

Relationship To Other Graduate Degrees

Certificates of Advanced Study can connect with other masters or doctoral degrees through multiple pathways.

First, students can seek to apply all units in Certificates of Advanced Study to an established graduate degree, including an interdisciplinary master's degree, with approval of the relevant program(s) and college(s). In these cases, all degree requirements for the graduate degree, including admissions requirements, the culminating experience, requirements for residency, requirements for coursework at the graduate or doctoral level, all relevant Title V requirements, etc., must be met prior to conferral of the relevant masters or doctoral degree.

Second, programs can also explicitly outline how Certificates of Advanced Study can be combined to help meet the requirements of the relevant graduate degree. In these cases, we encourage working with the Division of Graduate Studies to complete a technical review of the proposed combinations to ensure students complete all graduate degree requirements. In these cases, all degree requirements for the graduate degree, including admissions requirements, the culminating experience, requirements for residency, requirements for coursework at the graduate or doctoral level, all relevant Title V requirements, etc., must be met prior to conferral of the relevant masters or doctoral degree.

Proposing a Program of Study/Certificate Program Requirements

Each CAS program must adhere to the following requirements:

- Contain a minimum of 12 approved postbaccalaureate semester units (Limited to upper-division 100-series courses, graduate 200-series courses, and professional 300-series courses taken at California State University, Fresno), with not less than 50% of the total units in graduate 200-series or 300-series courses. Prerequisite courses are in addition to and not considered to be part of the approved program.
- Traditional letter grades are required in all courses taken. Credit/No Credit courses are allowed but can make up no more than 20% of the total units.
- Courses must be completed through regular or extension enrollment at California State University, Fresno. Transfer work is not acceptable.
- A culminating experience such as a thesis/project is not permitted.
- Students seeking a CAS are expected to meet established admission and exit requirements set by the program/department and the Division of Graduate Studies.

Guidelines for Proposing Certificates of Advanced Study

Following initial discussions with the appropriate academic dean(s) and the dean of Graduate Studies, proposals for new Certificate of Advanced Study programs should be developed by the academic unit(s) housing the program. A formal request should be submitted through the current campus curriculum management system. For consideration by the Division of Graduate Studies, all proposals for new Certificate of Advanced Study programs must contain the following information, which will be included as an attachment to the curriculum proposal submitted through Modern Campus Curriculum System:

- Proposed title of the Certificate of Advanced Study, name(s) of academic units offering the program.
- A statement of the educational objectives of the program and the expected student learning outcomes.
- A discussion of the proposed courses and their connections to expected student learning outcomes, including the proposed course sequence associated with the certificate, providing prefixes, titles and course descriptions both for existing courses and, if appropriate, any new courses that may be developed.
- A discussion for how learning will be assessed, when and how frequently, and how the information will be used to improve the program.
- Academic Administrative Information
 - A description of program information, including admission requirements, certificate completion requirements and any other relevant academic guidance information.
 - Names of the core faculty members associated with or contributing to the certificate program, either by teaching one or more of the courses associated with the program or participating in the design of the course sequence. For adjunct faculty associated with the program, include up-to-date curriculum vitae.
 - The name of the faculty member who will be designated as the coordinator of the program, for purposes of communication with the DGS and signature authority.
 - Per APM 226 and 227, core faculty members for Certificates of Advanced Study must be eligible for appointment as members of the graduate consultative body.
- If the program is interdisciplinary, a consultative approval document with appropriate endorsements (school/college graduate or curriculum committee and dean).
- A *WSCUC Substantive Change* form will need to be submitted, and WSCUC response must be received prior to offering the certificate.

Certificates of Advanced Study that are proposed using courses that are currently part of the general catalog and that do not require additional financial or budgetary resources can be approved via standard curricular processes per APM 222.

In addition, if the Certificate of Advanced Study requires additional financial or budgetary resources for implementation (e.g., new tenure line faculty members, new courses, etc.), proposals are considered new academic programs and go through review via the full Academic Senate and its relevant subcommittees (e.g., University Budget Committee). These proposals must include all relevant information required for new program proposals as outlined by current campus practices. This includes, but may not be limited to:

- A statement of the need for the proposed program and the basis for such a need, supported by either externally or internally derived data.
- A narrative as requested by the University Budget Committee Available from the DGS Web site: <https://academics.fresnostate.edu/dgs/faculty/graduate-dev.html>

If Certificates of Advanced Study operate through Continuing and Global Education, established fees or tuition for self-support programs should be individually determined for each CAS as appropriate. Certificates of Advanced Study that operate through general operating funds shall function according to the appropriate established fees as determined by the college. Fiscal arrangements must address both the expenses and the revenues for certificate programs and be discussed and agreed to by all of the units involved. Flexibility in the methods of funding and delivery of CAS programs is encouraged.

Procedures for Admitting, Advancing, and Awarding Students

General university requirements and policies such as those for admission to graduate study, time limits, program completion requirements, appeals, etc., as established for graduate degree programs also apply to students pursuing a Certificate of Advanced Study. The following specific procedures/notations will apply as well:

- New students applying for admission to Certificates of Advanced Study must submit the Graduate/Postbaccalaureate Application for Admission per the admissions requirements set by the appropriate program.
- Continuing post-baccalaureate students must have a *Change or Add Graduate Degree or Advanced Certificate Objective form* submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies to add or change to a Certificate of Advanced Study.
- An additional CAS program application may be requested by the department. Such information about additional application information will be made publicly available.
- Only students who meet Division of Graduate Studies and University Certificate of Advanced Study program admission requirements for classified post-baccalaureate standing will be considered. This includes submission of acceptable TOEFL scores for international students and potentially other standardized or other test scores as determined by the offering program.
- Upon recommendation of the program faculty, successful applicants to a CAS program will be admitted to *classified post-baccalaureate standing*. Classified

graduate standing status is reserved for students admitted to graduate degree programs.

- Students who seek to apply at least one Certificate of Advanced Study to a masters or doctoral degree, or who leave a CAS program to change to a masters or doctoral degree, will be transitioned to Classified graduate standing once the change is approved. Students must be at Classified graduate standing in order to work towards completing the culminating experience of a graduate program and comply with the definitions laid out in Title V.
- A [Proposed Program for the Certificate of Advanced Study](#) must be on file in the Division of Graduate Studies office immediately following completion of the first semester/term of certificate coursework
- An [Application for the Award of the Certificate of Advanced Study](#) must be filed within the first two weeks of the semester or term in which the program is to be completed.
- Candidates are eligible for the certificate when so recommended by the faculty program coordinator and upon completion of the program within a 5-year period with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (a “B” average) in CAS program coursework. Grades below a “C” and grades of “I”, “RP”, or “RD” are not permitted toward the CAS program.