

coursework may be applied to a 30-unit master's degree program and a maximum of 12 units of *CR*-graded coursework may be applied to a 60-unit program. Some departments allow no *CR*-graded courses to be counted toward fulfillment of their degree requirements.

8. With approval of the graduate program coordinator, postbaccalaureate/graduate credit allowed for work taken prior to the granting of the baccalaureate degree may be applied toward a master's degree. However, the amount of post-baccalaureate credit used toward the master's degree may not exceed one-third of the student's entire approved program. (See *Postbaccalaureate Credit*.)
9. Courses may not be included on the advancement to candidacy form if they do not fall within the 5-year limit for the completion of all master's degree requirements.
10. Refer to catalog section concerning Independent Study.
11. A minimum of 70 percent of the courses in a student's program for the master's degree must be graduate-level courses numbered in the 200 series. Most programs require more than the minimum.
12. Substitutions for regular departmental requirements must be accompanied by written justification appended to the advancement form.

### Program Adjustments

It is the student's responsibility to complete the specific courses listed on his or her Petition of Advancement to Candidacy. Once a program has been approved by the University Graduate Committee, it may be changed only on the written request of the student and his or her department or college/school adviser and with the approval of the dean, Division of Graduate Studies. Program Adjustment Request forms are available in the Division of Graduate Studies Office.

### Culminating Experience

A culminating experience is required for each master's degree. Acceptable culminating experiences include thesis (299), project (298), or comprehensive examination. Individual departments permit one or more culminating experiences described in this section. Students who have enrolled in

thesis or project units will not be permitted to change to another culminating experience after the initial semester of such enrollment.

1. A thesis is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It clearly identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, and accurate and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis will be required.
2. A project is a significant undertaking of a pursuit appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It must evidence originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It must be described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.
3. A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination must evidence independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained.

**Criteria for Thesis and Project**

No academic distinction is made between a thesis and a project. Either one is equally acceptable as a means of fulfilling the requirements for the master's degree. Specific departmental instructions or requirements should, however, be ascertained by the candidate before enrollment in courses 298 or 299. The instructor of record for thesis or project must issue a letter grade on the Master's Degree Clearance form through the Division of Graduate Studies.

Whether a student is preparing a thesis or a project, it should be noted that quality of work accomplished is a major consideration in judging acceptability. The finished project must evidence originality, appropriate organization, clarity of purpose, critical analysis, and accuracy and completeness of documentation where needed.

Critical and independent thinking should characterize every project. Mere description, cataloging, compilation, and other superficial procedures are not adequate. The quality of writing, format, and documentation must meet standards appropriate for publication in the scholarly journals of the field, or be consistent with the dictates of an authorized stylebook.

1. To be eligible to enroll in thesis or project units, students must have
  - a. been advanced to candidacy for the master's degree;
  - b. maintained a *B* (3.0) overall, Fresno State and program grade point average;
  - c. completed at least 9 units of their approved program on the Fresno campus;
  - d. completed any course in research techniques required by their major department;
  - e. for the thesis, secured a committee (a chair and at least two other members); for the project, met individual departmental requirements; and
  - f. for the thesis, secured approval of their thesis plan from the division or department graduate committee and filed an official thesis committee assignment form with the Division of Graduate Studies.
2. Enrollment in thesis units may be processed any semester after the requirements listed in [1a] through [1f] have been met or special permission for exceptions has been granted. If, however, a student fails to enroll within one semester (excluding summer sessions) after his or her official acceptance by a thesis committee, the committee chair has the option of dissolving the committee, in which case a new committee must be appointed and new forms filed before registration can be processed. A student planning to register for thesis after a break in regular session attendance must be readmitted to the university. Parallel rules apply to project enrollment.
3. Students who plan to extend their thesis work over more than the semester in which they first enroll may select one of