

Graduate Studies

Division of Graduate Studies

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Students studying for advanced degrees at California State University, Fresno are a distinctive and valued part of the university. One in five Fresno State students is enrolled at a more advanced level as a postbaccalaureate or graduate student. More than 3,000 such students are enrolled in studies leading to a graduate degree at either the master's or doctoral level, or to the attainment of an advanced credential or a certificate of advanced study.

There are many reasons, both academic and personal, that have drawn these individuals to California State University, Fresno. Some have come in recognition of the excellence of the university's graduate programs, many of which are nationally recognized by external accrediting agencies. Others have been attracted by a sterling group of graduate faculty members who take seriously the requirement to be teacher-scholars and have garnered many awards in teaching and research. Other students have come because of the availability of outstanding facilities that encourage student research and professional development. The natural laboratories of the adjacent Sierra Nevada mountain range and the geography of the large central valley of California provide exciting dimensions for those interested in environmental and ecological research. Collaborative sites jointly operated with governmental agencies and other universities exist in areas such as biomedical research, marine sciences, engineering, agriculture, business, and education. With a campus focus on both applied and theoretical research, students can be more readily assured of an opportunity to match their interests with those of the faculty members.

The Madden Library holdings include one million volumes and nearly 2,600 periodicals and major collections in areas such as music, maps, governmental documents, rare books, and curriculum materials. Library services, such as the interlibrary loan program and electronic database searches, ensure library support for students.

The university also has a history of attracting scholars from many areas of the world. These scholars may join the faculty or present special lectures, and often engage in joint research and publication efforts with Fresno State faculty. Through these scholars, graduate students are exposed to a significant network of nationally recognized colleagues.

Administrative Organization

The Division of Graduate Studies includes all departments and academic units within the university that offer graduate courses and programs leading to advanced degrees. The chief administrative officer of the Division of Graduate Studies is the graduate dean, who has general responsibility for the development, planning, assessment, improvement, and administration of postbaccalaureate and graduate programs offered by the university. Within this charge, the division administers all graduate student record functions, including student academic progress and evaluations; develops opportunities for providing student fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships; and provides support for research and professional scholarship activities for faculty and graduate students.

Housed within the Division of Graduate Studies are the special admission, program, and degree evaluators, and the thesis consultant. They advise both domestic and international students about the requirements and regulations for completion of a graduate degree and other special circumstances that may arise. Staff members in the division provide general information to graduate students.

The responsibilities of the Division of Graduate Studies are complex and decentralized to include the eight academic colleges and schools of the university and the departments within them housing the graduate programs offered by the campus. Each program has a graduate program coordinator who often serves as the initial point of contact for entering graduate students.

The faculty members in the department who constitute the graduate faculty group have initial responsibility for the quality and scheduling of courses (including special topics) and the preparation of course syllabi, examinations, projects, and theses.

As a member of the graduate faculty, the major professor/adviser for a student is responsible for guiding the student in selecting appropriate courses, research problems, and professional experiences. Moreover, the major professor/adviser is important as both a colleague and mentor in facilitating the intellectual development and maturation of the student within the discipline.

The chief consultative body responsible for formulating and recommending policies, standards, and procedures is the university's Graduate Committee. This committee is composed of eight faculty members elected by the faculty, one graduate student member, and the graduate dean.

The Graduate Student Body

The Division of Graduate Studies is proud of the diversity of its graduate student body. Graduate students come from a variety of ethnic, racial, and age groups, and represent many nationalities and countries throughout the world. They present a mosaic of personal values, beliefs, and experiences that enrich the dialogue of campus conversations. Whether these students are recent graduates of bachelor's degree programs or are returning students, they constitute a dynamic group on campus. The diversity of the student body thus presents a very special opportunity for all part-time and full-time graduate students to establish a vast, collegial network.

For those students who make up the graduate student body, success in the pursuit of a graduate degree depends upon active cooperation with their faculty advisers and instructors. Graduate students are expected to develop the ability to critically seek out and analyze facts, sift evidence, master theories and advanced techniques of professional inquiry, and demonstrate these abilities orally and in writing. Moreover, they must risk giving their informed opinions and be ready to accept criticism and advice rendered by faculty mentors and student colleagues. The pursuit of an advanced degree also requires that participants demonstrate an essential degree of independence and self-motivation in acquiring knowledge in their