

CSU Bakersfield
Division of Graduate Studies

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Graduate Program Checklist

A checklist outlining State of California, CSU, EO, and CSUB regulations and policies regarding graduate program culminating experiences and associated requirements for the format, evaluation, and storage/recording for graduate program documentation related to culminating experiences.

Program policy requirements related to Culminating Experience development, oversight, and evaluation:

- ___ Graduate faculty:
 - ___ Criteria are developed for designation of graduate faculty and a policy for periodic review is in place;
 - ___ Graduate faculty are selected from among the tenured and tenure-track faculty from the department/program/unit in which the degree is to be conferred;
 - ___ At the discretion of departments/programs/units and based on their formal criteria and policy for periodic review, emeritus faculty from the department/program/unit in which the degree is to be conferred may also be considered for Graduate faculty standing;
 - ___ Criteria must set minimum expectations for scholarly activity and productivity and may be more rigorous than standard departmental criteria for tenured or tenure-track faculty;
 - ___ Graduate faculty may serve for a limited term (max 5-year) prior to re-evaluation; and
 - ___ Only Graduate faculty may serve as a student's Graduate Committee Chair.

- ___ Graduate Committees:
 - ___ Each student has a Graduate Committee for the development and evaluation of their Culminating Experience.
 - ___ Graduate Committees must be comprised of a **minimum of three members**;
 - ___ Graduate Committee membership must include a **majority of Graduate faculty** from the department/program/unit in which the degree is to be earned;
 - ___ Policy is developed on Graduate Committee member selection:
 - ___ In some programs requiring a culminating thesis or dissertation, students may select the members of their Graduate Committee in consultation with their advisor (provided that individuals meet committee membership requirements), and
 - ___ In some programs requiring a culminating project or examination, Graduate Committee membership may be decided by the program; and
 - ___ Graduate Committee membership must be approved by both the graduate program director and the department chair.

- ___ Culminating experiences must be classified as one of the following products (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Division 5, Chapter 1, Subchapter 2, Article 7, (b), (3)):
 - (1) thesis/dissertation,
 - (2) project, or
 - (3) comprehensive examination.

Culminating experiences checklists:

See individual checklists below for each type of culminating experience. Graduate programs should have policies and procedures in place that meet these requirements.

● Thesis/Dissertation

Proposal development and project oversight:

- ___ Graduate Committee Chair (advisor) is assigned to assist the student with their thesis/dissertation proposal and project.
- ___ A Graduate Committee (**with a minimum of 3 members and a majority of Graduate faculty**) is formally assigned to the student and project, overseeing the development, progress, and completion of the student culminating experience.
- ___ The Graduate Committee is responsible for:
 - ___ determining the feasibility and merit of the proposal/plan;
 - ___ reviewing the proposal/plan;
 - ___ familiarizing the student with university policies concerning the handling of dangerous materials, laboratory and fieldwork safety, and maintenance of standards of quality, ethics, and professional performance;
 - ___ reviewing and approving the methodology and any instrument or questionnaire used in data collection; and
 - ___ ensuring that the student project/proposal is reviewed and approved by the appropriate campus-level committee (e.g., IRB or IACUC).
- ___ Students are only permitted to proceed with their proposed project after approval from their Graduate Committee.
- ___ Policies are in place to **document formal approval of a student's plan or proposal** from the Graduate Committee, signifying that the student has permission to proceed with the study as outlined in the proposal or plan.
- ___ **A copy of the student's approved proposal/plan should be retained by the program.**

Format and content:

- ___ The thesis/dissertation represents a written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It 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(s).
- ___ The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation.
- ___ **The format of all theses/dissertations must meet the technical requirements established by the university as well as any specific program requirements.**

Evaluation and documentation:

- ___ An oral defense and/or public presentation of the thesis/dissertation is required;
- ___ The Graduate Committee shall determine the final approval of the thesis or dissertation;
- ___ The Graduate Committee shall evaluate the adequacy of the bibliography/literature cited to ensure that theses/dissertations adequately represent the state of knowledge on a topic, represent student expertise in their chosen area of specialty, and fairly present the research of others;

- ___ The Graduate Committee evaluates the culminating experience to determine if it meets university standards;
- ___ Successful completion of the culminating experience and the conferral of a program degree are dependent on **majority approval** from the Graduate Committee and may only be conferred with their **documented approval**;
- ___ **Certification for the completion** of the culminating experience must be provided prior to graduation and the awarding of the graduate degree through:
 - (1) designation of culminating experience course credit, or
 - (2) an alternative acceptable form of reporting to the Evaluations Office and the Office of Academic Programs;
- ___ In consultation with the other members of the Graduate Committee, the chair shall determine the final grade and/or assigning of complete credit for the culminating experience. The Graduate Committee Chair is responsible for accurately reporting the grade/completion status agreed upon by the Graduate Committee; and
- ___ **All final and approved theses/dissertations must be formally filed electronically with the CSUB Library.**

● Project

Project development and oversight:

- ___ Graduate Committee Chair (advisor) is assigned to assist student with their culminating project/activity plan;
- ___ A Graduate Committee (**with a minimum of 3 members and a majority of Graduate faculty**) is formally assigned to the student and project, overseeing the development, progress, and completion of the student culminating experience;
- ___ The Graduate Committee, when appropriate and related to the project, is responsible for:
 - ___ determining the feasibility and merit of the proposal/plan,
 - ___ reviewing the proposal/plan,
 - ___ familiarizing the student with university policies concerning the handling of dangerous materials, laboratory and fieldwork safety, and maintenance of standards of quality, ethics, and professional performance,
 - ___ reviewing and approving the methodology and any instrument or questionnaire used in data collection, and
 - ___ ensuring that the student project/proposal is reviewed and approved by the appropriate campus-level committee (e.g., IRB or IACUC).
- ___ Students are only permitted to proceed with their proposed project after a favorable determination has been made by their Graduate Committee;
- ___ Policies are in place to **document formal approval** of a student's plan or project proposal from the Graduate Committee, signifying that the student has permission to proceed with the project as outlined in the proposal or plan; and
- ___ **A copy of the student's approved proposal/plan should be retained by the program.**

Format and content:

- ___ The project demonstrates originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and an academic rationale; and
- ___ **The finished project must be described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and conclusion or recommendation(s).**

Evaluation and documentation:

- ___ An oral defense and/or public presentation of the project is required;
- ___ The Graduate Committee shall determine the final approval of the project;
- ___ The Graduate Committee evaluates the culminating experience to determine if it meets university standards;
- ___ Successful completion of the culminating experience and the conferral of a program degree are dependent on **majority approval** from the Graduate Committee and may only be conferred with their **documented approval**;
- ___ Certification for the completion of the culminating experience must be provided prior to graduation and the awarding of the graduate degree through:
 - (1) designation of culminating experience course credit, or
 - (2) an alternative acceptable form of reporting to the Evaluations Office and the Office of Academic Programs;
- ___ In consultation with the other members of the Graduate Committee, the chair shall determine the final grade and/or assigning of complete credit for the culminating experience. The Graduate Committee Chair is responsible for accurately reporting the grade/completion status agreed upon by the Graduate Committee; and
- ___ **Projects/project abstracts shall be submitted to the CSUB library or retained by the program.**

● **Comprehensive Examination**

Examination preparation:

- ___ Graduate Committee Chair (advisor) is assigned to assist student with their culminating experience planning;
- ___ A Graduate Committee (**with a minimum of 3 members and a majority of Graduate faculty**) is formally assigned to the student and oversees the completion of the student culminating experience;
- ___ The Graduate Committee is responsible for:
 - ___ developing and administering the comprehensive examination, and
 - ___ assisting students in preparation for comprehensive examinations.

Format and content:

- ___ The 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; and
- ___ The results of the examination evidence independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation.

Evaluation and documentation:

- ___ The Graduate Committee shall determine the final approval of the comprehensive examination;
- ___ The Graduate Committee evaluates the culminating experience to determine if it meets university and professional standards;
- ___ Successful completion of the culminating experience and the conferral of a program degree are dependent on **majority approval** from the Graduate Committee and may only be conferred with their **documented approval**;
- ___ Certification for the completion of the culminating experience must be provided prior to graduation and the awarding of the graduate degree through:
 - (1) designation of culminating experience course credit, or

(2) an alternative acceptable form of reporting to the Evaluations Office and the Office of Academic Programs;

_____ In consultation with the other members of the Graduate Committee, the chair shall determine the final grade and/or assigning of complete credit for the culminating experience. The Graduate Committee Chair is responsible for accurately reporting the grade/completion status agreed upon by the Graduate Committee; and

_____ **A record of the examination questions and responses shall be retained by the respective graduate program.**