

**Senate Policy 25-21**  
**Policy on Advancement to Candidacy for Graduate Students**

Motion: To approve the Policy on Advancement to  
Candidacy for Graduate Students

Passed at the May 4, 2026 meeting of the Academic Senate

Approvals:



[Christina Smith \(Jun 13, 2026 10:35:35 PDT\)](#)

06/13/2026

Christina Smith, PhD  
Chair, Academic Senate

Date



Sue Andrzejewski, PhD  
Interim President

06/22/2026

Date



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS POLICY MANUAL

**Division of Academic Affairs**

**Policy Number: SP 25-21**

**Approved By: Academic Senate**

**Effective Date: Fall 2026**

**DATE: May 4, 2026**

**Total Pages: 2**

**Approved By: Sue Andrzejewski, Interim President**

## Policy on Advancement to Candidacy for Graduate Students

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this revision is to update the language of SP 09-08 to reflect current graduate program structures and requirements. The previous version focused on thesis-based master's programs and did not address other culminating experiences or doctoral programs. The revised policy expands the language to include more culminating experiences for both master's and doctoral students and adds procedural guidelines for consistency and timely advancement to candidacy across all graduate programs.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Graduate Studies Council (GSC) reviewed SP 09-08 and found the previous policy focused on a thesis-based pathway and did not account for other culminating experiences or for doctoral programs. The GSC collaborated with the Student Academic Policies and Procedures Committee to introduce more inclusive language to reflect currently offered culminating experiences and provide procedural guidelines to support consistent and systematic implementation across graduate programs.

### **POLICY:**

#### **Applicability:**

This policy applies to all California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) graduate students in master's or doctorate degree programs that require a thesis, project, comprehensive examination, or dissertation.

#### **Policy Text:**

Advancement to candidacy recognizes that the student has demonstrated the ability to operate at and sustain a level of scholarly competence that is satisfactory for successful completion of the degree requirements. In graduate programs that require a thesis, a project, or a dissertation, candidacy permits the student to enroll in courses that provide thesis, project, or dissertation

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supervision. Students must be enrolled in the semester in which they apply for advancement to candidacy. Advancement to candidacy must occur at least one semester prior to the anticipated completion of the program. Students seeking candidacy status in the Fall semester may apply in the preceding Spring or Summer term, depending on their program structure: in programs with a summer term, students may apply in either Spring or Summer; in programs without a summer term (including those with an optional or no summer term), students are expected to apply in Spring; however, Summer applications may be permitted if the program confirms that faculty are available to review and evaluate requests during that term. For students who have completed the minimum required units (e.g., 6 units), applications must be submitted only after final grades have been officially posted to verify eligibility. Before submitting the Advancement to Candidacy form, students must consult with the graduate program director or chair after demonstrating appropriate scholarly competence and completing degree requirements according to their degree program's policies.

Eligibility for Advancement to Candidacy is as follows:

- have completed the minimum 6 units of program requirements as well as program prerequisites (if applicable), and any other program requirements for advancement to candidacy.
- have maintained a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average.
- have resolved incomplete grades, if applicable.

The Advancement to Candidacy form should be submitted by the student and routed electronically for the necessary signature(s). Final approval is granted by the program director or a designee(s). If denied, the program director or chair will inform the student of the reasons and the steps required to meet candidacy requirements prior to resubmission. The Registrar's Office shall officially record students' candidacy status.

### **EXHIBIT(S):**

None.