Current Status of Graduate Education at Central Washington University

Oversight: Graduate programs currently are overseen by the dean of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research who works hand-in-hand with department chairs and faculty, the other academic deans, and the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council consists of six faculty from the four colleges, one of whom chairs the council, a library faculty representative, and two graduate students. The council reviews and votes on graduate policies and procedures, proposals for new degree programs, all curriculum and program changes, and departmental nominations for graduate faculty status.

Graduate Faculty: Department chairs nominate faculty members for graduate faculty status in one of four categories—regular, associate, special, and retired. These nominations, which must be supported by chairs and college deans, are forwarded to the Graduate Council for consideration and action.

- Criteria for designation as a regular graduate faculty member includes evidence that a nominee’s preparation, experience, and scholarly or creative activity qualifies her or him to perform the duties associated with this status. A regular member holds an earned terminal degree appropriate to her or his field and is expected to have a continuing record of scholarly or creative accomplishment conducted and completed as the principal investigator, writer, or artist defined as at least one category A accomplishment (as defined by colleges and departments) in the last five years. Regular status entitles faculty to serve as chairs of graduate committees.

- Criteria for designation as associate graduate faculty members include scholarly or creative accomplishments and teaching experience that demonstrate a high degree of promise that they will make an important contribution to students’ graduate education. This status entitles faculty to serve as co-chairs or members of graduate committees.

- Criterion for designation as a special graduate faculty member includes professional knowledge and experience that would clearly benefit the graduate student. This status entitles a non-Central specialist to serve on a named student’s graduate committee but not to serve as a committee chair.

- Criteria for designation as a retired graduate faculty member is available for faculty who have retired from Central but whose knowledge and experience would clearly benefit students. Retired faculty may not chair graduate committees.

Student Aspirations: Students pursuing graduate education at Central Washington University either seek the master’s degree as an entree to new professional roles or advancement in current ones, or pursue advanced study beyond the master’s degree.

Degrees Granted: Graduate students at Central Washington University may pursue the master of arts, the master of science, the master of education, the master of arts for teachers, the master of fine arts, the master of music, or the master of professional accountancy in 44 areas of specialization.
Categories of Graduate Work:

- Many of the graduate degrees at Central Washington University are education professional degrees. Three prepare students for professional certificates as school administrators, school counselors, or school psychologists, other students pursue master degrees in their disciplinary area to enhance their ability to teach their content areas in the P-12 schools.
- Graduate students in two programs, I.E.T. and accounting, pursue professional degrees that prepare them for work in those fields.
- Graduate students also pursue degrees in fields that emphasize bench science, including biology, chemistry, and geology.
- Others pursue degrees in the arts and humanities that prepare them for work in those fields.
- A new program in Theatre Studies will be preparing students for doctoral programs.

Formats: Traditional program formats (students enroll throughout the academic year and complete day and/or evening courses in a regular quarter format) predominate. Alternative formats, which accounted for 17% (28) of the 2008 graduate degree recipients included programs that offer online, hybrid and face-to-face instruction, online and summer instruction or summer only instruction. The special format programs have developed to serve practicing teachers and others whose degree work can be concentrated into three summers, individuals wanting a degree program which does not interfere with regular work hours, and departments wishing to extend coursework through online offerings to more than one campus. Alternate format programs for practicing teachers and other working adults have an advantage for the university in that the individual student is more likely to have alternative sources of support for graduate coursework and draws less on tuition waivers and assistantships.

Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Studies: The majority of graduate programs at Central Washington University are disciplinary or specializations within a recognized discipline, for example English, history, psychology, biology, music, geography, painting, and geological sciences. Increasingly, new graduate programs reflect a trend within the university as a whole to encourage and support interdisciplinary efforts. Two popular examples of interdisciplinary masters programs are resource management and primate studies. The resource management program is a member of the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) as a distinctive program. The primate behavior program has submitted an application to WICHE for WRGP status. CWU currently offers degrees in the following disciplinary and interdisciplinary specializations.

- Accounting: M.P.A.
  Masters of Professional Accountancy
- Art: M.A., M.F.A.
  Ceramics, Computer Art, Drawing, Jewelry and Metal-smithing, Painting, Photography, Sculpture, Wood Design
- Biological Sciences: M.S.
  Botany, Stream Ecology and Fisheries, Microbiology/Parasitology, Terrestrial Ecology
- Education: M.Ed.
  School Administration, Master Teacher, Reading Specialist, and Special Education
- Chemistry: M.S.
Biochemistry, Organic, Physical, Analytical, and Inorganic Chemistry
- English: M.A.
  English (Literature), English (TESOL)
- Family and Consumer Sciences: M.S.
  Family Studies, Family and Consumer Sciences Education
- Geological Sciences: M.S.
  Active Tectonics and Geodesy, Geomorphology and Paleohydrology, Environmental Geochemistry, Isotope Geology, Climate Change
- History, M.A.
  Colonial America, Western America, American Woman's History, Modern Europe, Russia, Modern Japan, Latin America, East Africa
- Industrial & Engineering Technology: M.S.
  Engineering Technology
- Mathematics: M.A.T.
  Mathematics Teaching (Summer Only)
- Music: M.M.
  Composition, Conducting, Performance, Performance/Pedagogy, Music Education
- Health, Human Performance and Nutrition
  MS Exercise Science, MS Nutrition, MS Health and Physical Education, MS Health and Physical Education Specialization in Athletic Administration
- Primate Behavior: M.S.
  Behavior, Ethics, Conservation, Captive Management, Stress, Genetics
- Psychology: M.S., M.Ed.
  Mental Health Counseling and Experimental Psychology (General and Applied Behavior Analysis M.S. programs); School Counseling, School Psychology (M.Ed. programs)
- Resource Management: M.S.
- Theatre Arts: M.A.
  Theatre Production (Summer Only) and Theatre Studies

Students: Of students enrolled in graduate study at CWU in the past five years, 80 percent have been in-state residents, 16 percent out-of-state, and 4 percent international. Of these students 14 percent are students of color. Academic criteria vary across the program and range from GMAT scores, GRE scores, writing samples, portfolios to musical performances. Overall, the entering class of 2008 registered average GPAs in their undergraduate experience of 3.45.

Financial Support: During 2007-2008, 162 (68 percent) of the full-time graduate students received financial support in the form of assistantships which provided stipends, health insurance benefits, and in-state and out-of-state tuition waivers as required. Of those, 8 (3.3 percent) were funded from internal university funds and 10 (4.2 percent) were from external grant funding with the remainder coming from state funds.
Appraisal of Current Status of Graduate Education at Central Washington University

Graduate education is well established at CWU. With cooperation and collaboration between the provost, the dean of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, the Graduate Council, other academic deans, department chairs, and the graduate faculty, a diverse array of specializations derived from both regional needs, unique demands, and faculty interests that serve the region, the state, the nation and world are offered to graduate students. The master’s degrees are equally diverse, ranging from M.A., M.S., M.Ed. degrees to M.F.A. and M.P.A. degrees. Graduate education at CWU continues to prepare today’s students for tomorrow’s employment or provide them with the foundation to seek advanced degrees. The university has demonstrated its commitment to graduate education with increasing support of graduate student assistantships, graduate student travel, and research awards, and through its provision of faculty development funds to encourage faculty scholarship and creativity.