



California State University, Stanislaus
Office of Academic Programs

DEGREE DESIGNATION NOMENCLATURE

To propose a degree title change or addition, the campus must submit a proposal and receive approval from the Chancellor's Office. The proposal must include a rationale for the change and assurance that the campus approvals have been obtained. The rationale may address disciplinary convention, student demand, recruitment issues, employer concerns, or the degree designations commonly used throughout the country. (Of note is that CSU Board of Trustee policy discourages the proliferation of degree titles and degree terminology.)

The following definitions of degrees are provided by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (*WASC Handbook of Accreditation/2001*, pages 121-122), a source that may be useful in determining undergraduate and graduate degree designations for specific programs at CSU Stanislaus.

Degrees:

B.A., B.S.: An undergraduate degree normally representing about four years (120 semester or 180 quarter units) of college study, or its equivalent in depth and quality of learning experience. The B.S. usually implies more applied orientation and the B.A. more liberal education orientation, although these distinctions are not always clear.

M.A., M.S.: A first graduate degree, representing at least one year of post-baccalaureate study (30 semester or 45 quarter units), or its equivalent in depth and quality. The distinctions between M.A. and M.S. are similar to those between B.A. and B.S. Some M.A. and M.S. degrees are merely continuations at a higher level of undergraduate work without basic change in character. Others emphasize some research and may lead to doctoral work.

M.B.A., M.P.A., M.S.W., etc: Professional degrees requiring up to two years of full-time study. Extensive undergraduate preparation in the field may reduce the length of study to one year.

Ph.D.: The standard research-oriented degree which indicates that the recipient has done, and is prepared to do, original research in a major discipline. The Ph.D. usually requires three years or more of postgraduate work including an original research thesis or project.

Ed.D. Psy.D., M.D., J.D., etc.: Degrees with emphasis on professional knowledge. These degrees normally require three or more years of prescribed postgraduate work.