

**DESIGNATED EMPHASIS POLICY AND GUIDELINES
GRADUATE COUNCIL
UPDATED DECEMBER 2021**

I. Definition of a Designated Emphasis

A designated emphasis is an area of specialization, such as a new method of inquiry, important field of application, or focus that is interdisciplinary. The designated emphasis may exist within one graduate program or more than one program.

The designated emphasis program is organized in a manner that resembles a graduate group and must have bylaws, an executive committee and chair, a curriculum, and an admissions policy, and its faculty will participate in the qualifying examination and as chairs of the dissertation committees.

Completion of the requirements for the designated emphasis and the associated PhD program will result in the notation of the designated emphasis on the doctoral diploma and the student transcript, for example: “designated emphasis in complex biological systems.”

II. Requirements for a Designated Emphasis

1. Admissions

Students must be admitted to the designated emphasis program before the qualifying examination. The admission is processed through the Graduate Division and the Registrar’s Office.

2. Curriculum

The curriculum of the designated emphasis will consist of specified courses that may be independent from, or an integral part of, the doctoral programs with which it is affiliated. The curriculum requirements of the doctoral program and of the designated emphasis must be met prior to the qualifying examination.

3. Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam must include an examination of knowledge within the specialization, and one faculty member from the designated emphasis program must participate in the qualifying exam.

4. Dissertation

The dissertation topic must incorporate study and research within the specialization. The dissertation committee must include a minimum of one faculty member from the designated emphasis program.

5. Program Evaluation

The evaluation of the designated emphasis will be conducted through Graduate Council review.

6. Approval Process

Faculty members submit a proposal for a designated emphasis, which is reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council. Any substantive changes to the designated emphasis must be submitted to the Graduate Council for approval.

III. Proposal Guidelines for the Creation of a Designated Emphasis

Faculty considering development of a new designated emphasis should agree on a definition and description and meet with the graduate dean and associate dean to discuss the nature of the designated emphasis, the mechanism and format for proposal preparation, and the review process.

1. Description of the Designated Emphasis

- a. Provide a description of the academic rationale for the designated emphasis, including recent developments in the field, and the importance of the designated emphasis to students and faculty.
- b. A list of the affiliated doctoral programs that agree to promote the designated emphasis option for their students and whose directors endorse the designated emphasis.

2. Requirements for the Designated Emphasis

Describe the criteria used to determine admission. Describe the curricula, qualifying examination requirements, dissertation requirements, and the designated emphasis conferral process. Provide course descriptions for core courses and list electives. Describe the impact of the designated emphasis on time to degree completion.

3. Graduate Group Administration

Provide a description of how the designated emphasis will be administered and the resources available, such as staff support, student support, and available facilities. List the chair and executive committee of the participating graduate groups. Describe the structure for student advising and the appointment of faculty to the qualifying examination and the dissertation committees.

4. Appendices

- a. Bylaws of the designated emphasis graduate group
- b. Letter of endorsement from the graduate program director of each participating doctoral program and selected letters from faculty who agree to participate in the designated emphasis

- c. Roster of participating faculty (Participating faculty must be Academic Senate members eligible to serve on higher degree committees.)

IV. Joint Programs

Students registered in a joint PhD program with another UC campus whose home campus is UCSF may, with approval from the campus offering the designated emphasis, pursue a designated emphasis offered at either campus.

Students registered in a joint PhD program with another UC campus whose home campus is the other campus may, with approval from the home campus, pursue a designated emphasis at UCSF.