MA Q2S Frequently Asked Questions

This document answers some questions you may have about the change to semesters. For any other questions, please see the graduate coordinator.

Q: So, what's happening?

A: Starting Fall 2020, CSUSB will be on the semester schedule instead of quarters. As such, the requirements to complete your MA degree have changed somewhat.

Q: Can you summarize some of the major changes to the curriculum?

A: Yes. There is a new required course: Math 6000: Communicating Mathematics (2 units), and only two other required courses (Math 6018: Analysis, and Math 6016: Algebra). There is no longer a regular 6000-level geometry course. In addition, we have added the option of taking a set of comprehensive exams instead of completing a thesis (more information on this can be found in the semester catalog). Finally, the two thesis courses (3.25 GPA is required to do a thesis now) account for 6 semester units total, and in this way we have removed the expectation that a student should need to do an independent study course to complete their thesis.

Q: What do I need to do about it?

A: To graduate, you need to meet a collection of requirements; these requirements are different (but roughly equivalent) depending on whether or not you are graduating using the quarter or semester catalog. You first need to decide which catalog you will graduate under (i.e., which set of requirements you will meet).

Q: You mention “forms” a lot... where can I get any forms you mention?

A: We are in the process of making these forms available in the math office and somewhere on the department website.

Q: How do I decide which catalog to choose, quarters or semesters? And once I've made my decision, how do I declare that?

A: This decision is up to you, and there exists a worksheet for either scenario for you to help you see which would be best. You declare which catalog you would like by filling out and turning in the appropriate worksheet.
Q: What about how many credits I’ll get and electives and everything else?

A: Those issues are outlined on the forms. One notable change: the semester thesis units have been adjusted so that it is rare that anyone would need to take any independent study units when completing their thesis.

Q: Do I need to fill out another advancement to candidacy form? Any other forms?

A: Everyone needs to fill out an advancement to candidacy form at around the halfway point of their program. The only reason to redo one is if you filled one out with the intention of graduating under one catalog and will in fact graduate under a different catalog. If you wish to graduate under the semester catalog [and have enrolled in at least one quarter], then you must fill out a Change of Program form (the $6 fee is waived in this case).

The other forms to fill out relate to the culminating experience (thesis/comp exams), and can be found in the math office.

Q: What is the deal with the comprehensive exam option?

A: You may notice that we have added a comprehensive exam option for those wishing to graduate under semesters. You may now choose to either complete a thesis as before or take a series of 3 exams. These three exams are: Algebra (covering Math 6016), Analysis (covering Math 6018), and an elective comprehensive exam that covers material from two elective courses of your choosing (one at the 6000-level), and that exam “must not be predominantly written”. To complete this option, you must enroll in Math 6900, 6916, 6918, each for one unit (exam prep courses), and fill out a Comprehensive Exam Proposal that outlines more information about the exams. You must also enroll in 3 more elective units (at any allowable level), and enroll in the university mandated and zero unit Math 6981 (this course is a placeholder and functions as a way to formally inform the records office as to whether or not you have passed all exams). One enrolls in 6900, 6918, 6916, and 6981 all in the expected final semester of graduation. More information about this is outlined in the semester catalog.

Q: What happens if I flunk one (or several) of the comprehensive exams? How should I prepare for the exams?

A: More information about the nature of the exams will be made available to those taking it. The professor writing and grading the exam will be available in their office hours to field questions you might have (the elective exam is a little different), for example, but it is not intended that they lecture you for hours on end.

Should you not pass any exam, you have the opportunity to take only those exams you did not pass once more. It is generally understood that there would need to be
some sort of rare extenuating circumstances for anyone to be offered a third attempt at any exam. So, while this may be possible, it should not be expected.

**Q: What if my credit count is not quite at the minimum required?**

**A:** Certain state laws prevent someone from obtaining a degree without having completed a minimum number of units, and generally this is not something that can be waived by the department. Beyond that, some requirements can be waived by the department and some can’t. In the event your circumstances seem like such a waiver should be granted, it’s best to plan to take more than what is required, but make a note somewhere on your worksheet indicating what you hope you might be able to do.

**Q: Great! I’m excited to start! What should I do first?**

**A:** Decide which catalog you’ll be finishing under, complete the corresponding worksheet, and turn it in to the math department. Also, fill out the appropriate advancement to candidacy form if you need to, unless you have just started the MA program. Keep in mind that these forms ask you to state which courses you’ve taken and what you plan to take (and when) as well. These should be submitted by May 29, 2020—this deadline is to give the department adequate time to review your worksheet for any errors and inform you in enough time to address any changes that need to happen.