Master’s Degree – Procedural Steps
Each of the following steps are sequential and mandatory:

1. **Apply for admission.**
   For information regarding admission to San Diego State University, first read instructions on the program’s web page and contact the program’s Graduate Advisor. After that, review specific departmental admission requirements and deadlines on the Graduate Admissions web site.

2. **Meet with your Graduate Advisor in the first semester about …**
2a. **If admitted “Conditionally”, attain “Classified” standing**
   Students admitted with Classified standing have met all university and department requirements for admission. Classified students are fully eligible to proceed with courses for their graduate program of study, and should not be required to take any prerequisites or meet any additional requirements beyond those listed in the Graduate Bulletin for all students in the program.
   * If you were given Classified status at the time of your admission, skip to next step.

   Students admitted Conditionally have not met all program requirements for admission. Conditionally admitted students are typically required to take prerequisite courses or maintain a minimum GPA during their first 1-2 semesters of attendance. The specific conditions are set by the student’s department and approved by Graduate Affairs. If you have been admitted conditionally, your graduate advisor should inform you of your specific conditions and when they must be completed. Additionally, information can be found in the “Milestones” tab within WebPortal. Students who do not meet their admissions conditions may be dismissed from their graduate program.
   * If you were admitted Conditionally, discuss your requirements for the first year with your graduate advisor.

2b. **Do I have a Degree Evaluation?**
   In certain programs, incoming Master’s students (Fall 2019 and later) have access to a Degree Evaluation (also called the degree audit report). This is a resource for students and advisors to track requirements for graduation. The report includes Program of Study, GPA and Advancement to Candidacy requirements. If your program has access to this feature, you will find it via the ‘Graduate’ tab in WebPortal, where a ‘Degree Evaluation’ menu item is available.

2c. **Will my advisor need to file a Program of Study (POS)?**
   Graduate degrees often have more flexibility in specific coursework requirements than undergraduate degrees. This allows the Graduate Advisor to customize courses based on each student’s needs. The Program of Study (POS) is essentially a contract between the student, the program, and the university. The POS is a list of the specific courses a student will take in order to satisfy the requirements for the degree (as printed in the Graduate Bulletin). Discuss with your advisor what specific courses will be on your POS.

   If you have access to a Degree Evaluation, many POS features are automated for you. If you do not have access to a Degree Evaluation, your advisor must formally file a POS at least one semester before graduation. This will not happen automatically; your graduate advisor must initiate the process. Courses in an approved POS may not be deleted or substituted after they have been completed, regardless of the final grade.
3. Attain Advancement to Candidacy
Within your WebPortal record, your “Student Status” must change from Classified to Advanced to Candidacy before you can complete your degree. A student who has been advanced to candidacy is officially recognized by the university as a candidate for the degree. In order to be advanced to candidacy, a student must have an approved Program of Study (POS) on file, completed a minimum number of POS units, and meet minimum grade requirements. Students are typically nominated for advancement by their department, and reviewed for advancement by GRA at the time the POS is submitted.

If you have access to a Degree Evaluation, your advisor must submit the Advancement to Candidacy e-form on the Graduate Affairs website. If you do not have access to a Degree Evaluation, this process will occur when your official POS is submitted and approved.

You must be advanced to candidacy before you can officially appoint your thesis committee, or sit for the comprehensive examination (or participation in fulfilling the department’s culminating experience).

4. Submit an Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee Form (“Plan A” thesis students only)
Once you are advanced to candidacy, obtain the Appointment of Thesis/Project Committee form from the Graduate Affairs Office (SSE 1410), secure the required signatures, and return it to Graduate Affairs for approval.

At the beginning of the semester you will complete your thesis and submit it to the university, obtain the schedule number for Thesis 799A from Graduate Affairs (SSE 1410). You must be registered in Thesis 799A (or Thesis Extension 799B) when your thesis is submitted.

5. Pass your culminating experience
If you are Plan A Thesis student, publication of a Master’s thesis by the university is your culminating experience. After thesis committee approval, you will submit your thesis to Montezuma Publishing for editorial review and publication. Consult your thesis chair, your graduate program advisor, and Montezuma Publishing regarding specific requirements. Deadlines and costs associated with thesis submission and approval are summarized in a flyer on the Graduate Affairs home page.

If you are a Plan B Master’s student, your culminating experience may be a comprehensive examination, project, or portfolio. Discuss the format and expectations with your graduate advisor well in advance of your last semester. Your Graduate Advisor will notify Graduate Affairs after you have passed the exam, project or portfolio.

6. Apply to Graduate
Graduation is not automatic upon completion of degree requirements. You must apply for graduation must be via your WebPortal account. If your WebPortal account does not allow you to apply for graduation, please contact Graduate Affairs: gra@sdsu.edu. Deadlines associated with graduation are summarized in a flyer on the Graduate Affairs home page.

If you do not graduate in the term for which you applied, you will be re-evaluated for graduation in the following semester.