

The Cognate and the Cognate Project

The cognate is a 9-unit course of study which students pursue in order to augment or complement their program concentration and M.A. core courses. The three courses cannot be a random set of classes; rather, they must be somehow related to one another and together constitute a coherent course of study.

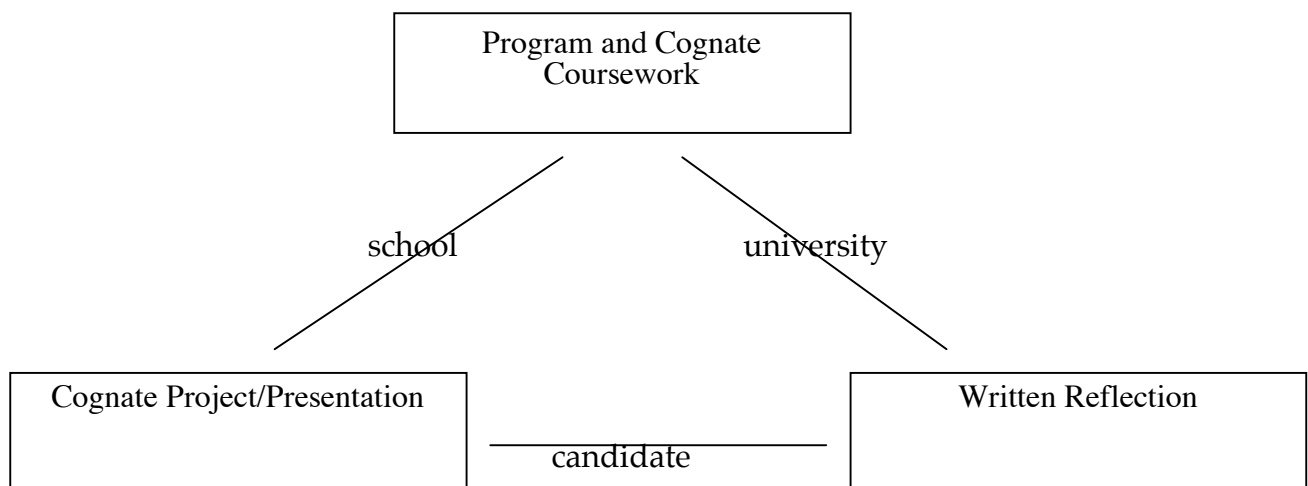
There are many potential cognate courses of study. Often, students use the cognate pathway to take courses in educational fields—such as educational technology—outside their program area of concentration. Students may also choose to take courses in SSU departments outside the School of Education. Students should consult with their program advisor to discuss ideas for their cognate course of study.

The cognate project is a significant undertaking through which students connect their 9-unit cognate course of study with the M.A. core courses, program concentration, and/or field work. Most students who choose the cognate pathway work on projects directly related to their work in the field and which directly contribute their professional growth. The cognate project should take less time to complete than a thesis: it is expected the student will lay the groundwork for the project through the 9-unit cognate course of study. Examples of cognate projects—all of which must be informed by program and cognate courses—are educational websites; inservice videos; professional presentations; creation, analysis, assessment, and/or implementation of curriculum; and other applications of ideas explored in program and cognate courses. A 10-20-page written reflection which includes the theoretical context for the cognate project must accompany the project.

Elements of the Cognate Project

- Ties together candidate's cognate and program area courses
- Illuminates the candidate's theoretical framework
- Includes a written reflection

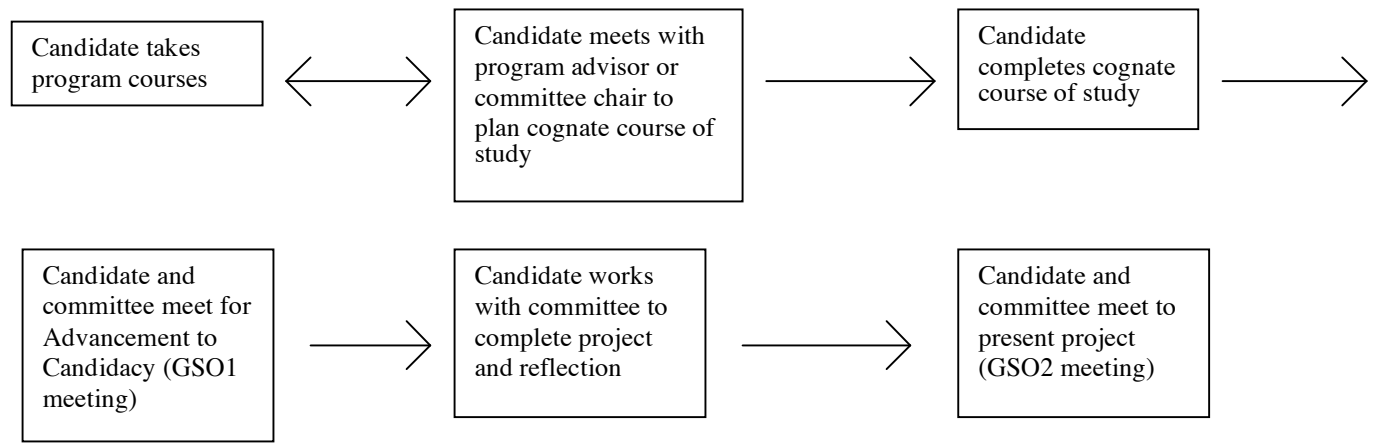
These interrelated elements are key to the Cognate pathway:



Procedures for completing the cognate pathway (see flow chart on next page)*

1. The student meets with committee chair or program advisor after deciding to pursue the cognate option but before registering for any cognate courses.
2. Working with the committee chair or program advisor, the student plans the 9-unit cognate course of study. These courses may be within or outside the School of Education, and they may be upper division or graduate-level, as long as the total number of upper division units in the M.A. degree program do not exceed 12. The cognate course of study must be documented and signed on the M.A. Degree Program Plan form, with a short rationale for this course of study attached to the form. Examples of cognate courses of study include, but are not limited to:
 - educational technology
 - reading and language
 - special education
 - curriculum
 - human development
 - linguistics
 - critical theory
 - content areas of study (mathematics, history, etc.)
 - criminal justice
3. Prior to registering for EDUC 572, the student constitutes the cognate committee and develops a cognate project proposal which he/she presents to the cognate committee, along with the portfolio, the GSO1 (Advancement to Candidacy form), and the Cognate Signature Form. In the proposal, the student must include the following:
 - Rationale for cognate project and connection of cognate course of study to project
 - Goals for the project
 - Description of proposed project
 - Significance of proposed project to the candidate and to local educational context
 - Action plan and timeline for completing the project
4. During the semester when the student is registered for 572, the student meets regularly with the committee chair to discuss progress with the project.
5. While completing the project, the student writes a 10-20 page reflection on the project.
6. When the project and reflection are completed, the student and committee members schedule the cognate project presentation (GSO2 meeting). At this meeting, the student provides an overview of the project and responds to questions posed by the committee and others attending the presentation.

* Candidates pursuing the National Board Certification cognate should read the M.A. Handbook and/or consult with the Director of Graduate Studies regarding special procedures and evaluation criteria.



Directions for evaluating the Cognate Project and Written Reflection:

1. Committee members score cognate project and written reflection according to the criteria listed on the Cognate Project Evaluation Form.
2. Committee members meet to compare evaluations of project and written reflection. If members agree that the project and evaluation are satisfactory, the presentation (GSO2 meeting) is scheduled.
3. The project/written reflection are evaluated according to the six criteria listed on the evaluation form, each receiving a score between 1 (not at all) and 4 (excellent). The total score must be a minimum of 15 points, with no criterion scoring lower than a 2. Therefore, for a project to be satisfactory, at least half the criteria must earn a score of 3 or higher.
4. If the score is unsatisfactory, the chair will meet with the candidate to explain the problems with the project and/or written reflection and to instruct the candidate to revise as needed.
5. Candidates have three opportunities to complete the project and written reflection satisfactorily.
6. Once the committee has determined that the project and written reflection are satisfactory, the committee will meet with the candidate for the GSO2 meeting.

Note: If the project that the candidate has developed is a formal presentation (i.e. inservice, workshop, scholarly presentation), then the committee will evaluate the project at the presentation itself—which could, in some cases, also function as the GSO2 meeting.

Cognate Project Evaluation Form

Candidate Name

Date

Project Title

Committee Member Name

Please score each criterion from 1 (not at all) to 4 (excellent)

Project/Written Reflection:

1. demonstrate candidate's professional knowledge base in the areas addressed _____

2. draw connections between candidate's cognate and program area coursework _____

3. present knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and/or curriculum in a creative way _____

4. demonstrate project's value relative to candidate's work as an educator _____

5. demonstrate the significance of the project to the local educational context _____

Written Reflection:

6. is 10-20 pages and includes a reference list in APA format _____

TOTAL _____

Attach comments and recommendations, as needed.