

# DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

## Doctoral Degree Programs

The University of South Carolina offers the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in many disciplines. The University also offers other doctoral degrees, such as the Doctor of Education, the Doctor of Musical Arts, the Doctor of Nursing Practice, the Doctor of Physical Therapy, and the Doctor of Public Health. Students enrolled in doctoral programs are required to follow the academic policies of The Graduate School. Academic programs may have additional or exceptional requirements.

A complete listing of doctoral degree programs at the University of South Carolina is available:

- Programs A-Z (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/programs/>)

## Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is a research-based degree designed to foster critical inquiry and expand and advance the knowledge of a discipline. Study for a specified time and accumulation of graduate credit hours are not by themselves sufficient to earn the Ph.D. The student must demonstrate scholarly distinction and the ability to advance knowledge through independent research by achieving admission to candidacy and writing a dissertation.

The doctoral degree requires a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours, including 12-30 hours of dissertation preparation (899), beyond the baccalaureate degree or a minimum of 30 graduate hours, including 12-30 hours of dissertation preparation (899), beyond the Master's degree. Students in doctoral programs defined as post-baccalaureate must have on the Program of Study (D-POS ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) a minimum of 60 hours that are in-date, 30 of which must be unique to the University of South Carolina. Students in doctoral programs defined as post-Master's must have on the Program of Study (D-POS ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) a minimum of 30 hours in-date and unique to the University of South Carolina. Programs requiring more than 60 hours post-baccalaureate or more than 30 hours post-master's are restricted by University and departmental transfer policy, but no transfer credit is permitted in satisfying the 30-hour minimum requirement that must be unique to the University of South Carolina. Unless a graduate student successfully completes a master's thesis, a student may use no more than 30 hours combined of thesis preparation (799) and dissertation preparation (899) on the doctoral program of study. Doctoral degree students must complete at least half of the hours on the Program of Study (D-POS ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) in courses numbered 700 or higher. A dissertation of original research is required for most doctoral programs. A period of residency, a foreign language or research methods proficiency, a comprehensive examination, and a dissertation defense or examination are also required. The specific curriculum for the doctoral degree varies with the discipline and some programs require additional credit hours. Students enrolled in a doctoral program have ten years from the first term of enrollment in which to complete the degree.

Information about specific requirements in a doctoral degree program is available from the faculty contact person or the graduate director of

the respective doctoral program. Contact information for programs is available: [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/).

## Other Doctoral Degrees

The general requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree apply to all doctoral programs offered by the University, except for adjustment in those requirements as approved by the Graduate Council and the dean of The Graduate School. Information about specific requirements in a doctoral degree program is available from the faculty contact person or the graduate director of the respective doctoral program. Contact information for programs is available: [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/).

## Course Enrollment Load

A graduate student may enroll for a term load not to exceed 15 graduate hours. Some programs limit their students to a 9 or 12 hour maximum term course load. A student with a term course load of 9 or more hours during a fall or spring term is classified as full-time for academic purposes. The maximum course load in any summer session is 6 hours. A student must be enrolled for at least 1 graduate credit during any semester in which dissertation progress is made and such University resources as the library, computer facilities, or faculty time are used. Students must be enrolled in at least 1 graduate credit during the term of graduation.

## Special Enrollment (Z-status) Under-Enrollment Exception (Z-status)

The dean of The Graduate School, under certain circumstances, may certify that a student's full time enrollment is less than the normal requirement of 9 hours for graduate students or 6 hours for students serving as graduate assistants. Students seeking exceptions to minimum enrollment requirements should submit written requests to the dean of The Graduate School with acceptable justification in a memo from the student's academic advisor or the graduate director of the academic program. International students must also submit the approved Exemption from Full-time Enrollment form ([https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/international\\_student\\_services/immigration/maintaining-your-immigration-status/full-time-enrollment-requirements/](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/international_student_services/immigration/maintaining-your-immigration-status/full-time-enrollment-requirements/)) from International Programs for Students.

For a student whose need for under-enrollment results from an internship, practicum, or field experience required by the graduate program, a justification indicating the term requested and the nature of the experience should be submitted in a written memo to the dean of The Graduate School by the student's academic advisor or the program's graduate director.

Students nearing completion of a doctoral degree requiring a dissertation may be granted special enrollment status and certified as half-time or full-time if the student has completed course work required for the degree except dissertation preparation (899). Eligibility requires verification of three conditions by the student's academic advisor or program graduate director. The memo requesting Z-status must indicate that:

1. all course work on the program of study has been completed except for dissertation preparation (899);
2. the student is working on the dissertation full-time, or if applicable, at least half-time; and

- the student is not employed outside their graduate assistantship or, if applicable, employed no more than half-time if not on a graduate assistantship.

A Z-status request for under-enrollment privilege must be term-specific and is limited to two terms. Z-status for under-enrollment privilege may be extended beyond two terms with the approval of and justification from the academic unit and with the approval of the dean of The Graduate School.

Students who request exemption from full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes must submit the Special Academic Enrollment Release form (F 6.2) from the Office of Financial Aid.

### Family Leave (Z-status)

A graduate student who is the primary child-care provider is eligible to take a one major term of family leave from graduate study the major term during or following the event for the birth of a child or adoption of a child less than 6 years old. The graduate student taking family leave will receive a one year extension of all academic responsibilities, including time to degree, removal of incomplete grades, and course in-date time. During family leave the graduate student will be on special enrollment (Z-status) status and must have health coverage. The student may waive out of University-sponsored health insurance if covered by other insurance or may elect to continue enrollment in the University-sponsored student health insurance plan. The student is responsible for submitting required waivers and/or for contacting the student health insurance contractor directly to enroll in the health insurance program and for paying premiums by the deadline. Students should be aware that a graduate assistantship position or other financial support may not be available upon return from family leave.

**Note:** While this policy does not mandate that programs continue financial support during family leave and/or guarantee student support or resumption of an assistantship after returning from family leave, programs are strongly encouraged to do so whenever possible.

Students contemplating family leave must advise their academic unit of the intention to take family leave and begin the family leave planning process at least six (6) weeks before the leave start date. Once planning has been completed at the unit level, a written petition for family leave with required supporting documentation and signatures must be submitted as a single packet to the dean of The Graduate School for approval at least three (3) weeks before the start of the leave. The petition must contain evidence of consultation and planning with the student's academic advisor(s) and a memo of support from the academic unit signed by the program's graduate director, a leave timeline, and appropriate documentation. Appropriate documentation for a female student for childbirth includes written certification from the student's health care provider confirming the pregnancy and anticipated due date or the baby's birth certificate and for a male student either certification confirming the anticipated due date or the baby's birth certificate. For adoption of a child less than 6 years old, a written certification of adoption from a certifying individual or agency specifying the date of adoption and the age of the child is the appropriate documentation.

This planning process with the academic unit should also be used to determine if any additional length of time beyond the one year extension of academic responsibilities period will be needed for the student opting for family leave to complete degree requirements. While a one year extension of academic responsibilities will be granted to any student on approved family leave, academic units often have specific timelines for exams, fieldwork, course sequences, etc., which may necessitate

extension beyond the one year period. Graduate students with such circumstances may petition The Graduate School for extension of leave time. Academic unit requirements or limitations are a valid justification to petition for the extension. Petitions for extension of time beyond the one year family leave should be supported by the student's academic unit and will be reviewed by The Graduate School on an individual basis.

**Note:** Medical complications or other extenuating circumstances are not included in this policy. Such situations are more appropriately covered by the University's current policies regarding course incompletes and withdrawal and/or leave of absence due to extenuating circumstances.

The family leave policy is also intended to allow an international student to be coded as a "special enrollment" student and not affect current visa status. However, immigration regulations might dictate a different definition of enrollment than that defined as "special enrollment" for this policy. The Office of International Student Services is the authority on campus for interpreting current enrollment regulations for international students, so international students contemplating family leave must consult the Office of International Student Services to address proactively any individual or unique visa issues and/or to consider how the latest applicable regulations would affect eligibility for family leave. International students applying for family leave must discuss the intended leave period with the Office of International Student Services at the beginning of the six (6) week planning period and must include a signed memo from the Office of International Student Services detailing immigration status and any consequences of taking family leave in the written petition packet submitted to the student's program graduate director for signature and to the dean of The Graduate School for approval.

Once the family leave has been approved, a memo will be placed by The Graduate School in the student's academic file indicating the leave dates and the extension date for academic responsibilities. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their academic unit while on leave. It is also the student's responsibility to work with faculty and program administrators on arrangements for course completion, achievement of degree requirements, and for continuation of research and/or teaching activities before and following the period of the leave.

### Right to an Advisor

Every graduate student admitted to a degree program is entitled to an advisor. The academic program graduate director is the default academic advisor for graduate students until another academic advisor is assigned or an advisory committee is formed. Students are urged to consult with an advisor prior to enrollment. Doctoral students should have an Advisory Committee appointed by the program by the end of the first term of enrollment.

### Doctoral Program Committees

Each of the two committees has an assigned function and must conform to policies of The Graduate School on doctoral committee membership. Membership on doctoral committees, excluding the outside member, is limited to regular and associate members of the graduate faculty and those who hold special term appointments with approval to serve as a regular member of a doctoral committee. Each doctoral committee must have no more than one outside member. The two committees may or may not have the same members.

As defined in The Faculty Manual, regular members of the graduate faculty on the Columbia campus shall include the president; provost; dean of The Graduate School; associate deans of The Graduate School;

and chairs of academic departments offering degrees conferred by The Graduate School. Faculty members holding the Ph.D. or other terminal degree in their respective field of study are considered to become regular members of the graduate faculty upon appointment to a tenured or tenure-track position at the University's Columbia campus.

Non-tenure-track USC faculty members and scholars who hold the Ph.D. or other terminal degree may be appointed to associate membership in the Graduate Faculty. Associate Membership appointments to the Graduate faculty are granted upon nomination by an academic unit to the dean of The Graduate School for a period not to exceed 6 years. Associate membership is appropriate for full-time USC clinical faculty, research faculty and other USC scholars holding an appropriate terminal degree. Associate members may teach graduate courses, direct theses and dissertations and participate in graduate student committees.

Faculty members and scholars not otherwise eligible for regular or associate membership on the graduate faculty may be appointed to term appointments. Term appointments are appropriate for USC faculty in the School of Law and the School of Medicine, emeriti USC professors, clinical and research faculty, faculty members at other institutions (including other campuses of the USC system), and others holding an appropriate terminal degree or other credentials that justify appointment as a regular committee member. Persons with term appointments to the graduate faculty may serve on, but may not chair, doctoral committees.

To continue to serve in the capacity as chair or regular member is a special exception. This request (with a valid academic justification) must have the endorsements of the academic program faculty, chair of the department, graduate director, and academic dean. Once these approvals are affirmed, the petition is presented to the dean of The Graduate School for final approval. Otherwise, a change in the committee composition must be presented to the dean of The Graduate School replacing the now ineligible member.

The outside member may be a regular or associate member of the graduate faculty in another department/program at USC, a faculty member from another institution, or a qualified professional from the private or governmental sectors. The outside member is nominated by the academic unit to the dean of The Graduate School. Approval is based on the nominee's qualifications provided on a resume or curriculum vitae and relevance to the student's major field or research as explained in the justification submitted by the graduate director of the program with the nomination. Outside members do not need to have term appointments to serve on the committee.

The Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination Committee administers the oral and written portions of the comprehensive examination.

The Dissertation Committee directs the research and preparation of the student's dissertation, examines the student on the content of the dissertation, directs the student to complete documents required for graduation, and signs forms required for graduation. Other functions may be defined by the program.

### Doctoral Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is appointed by the program by the end of the first term of enrollment and should include two or three faculty from the student's academic program. This purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide initial advisement of the student, guide academic planning and research efforts, and construct the program of study to file with The Graduate School. The Advisory Committee roster does not need to be submitted to the dean of The Graduate School for approval.

Major points that should be noted with regard to committee membership:

- At least half of the doctoral committee composition must be regular or associate members of The Graduate School faculty.
- The majority of each doctoral committee must be regular, associate, or term graduate faculty members in the student's area of research.
- The committee must include no fewer than four members, one of whom must be from outside the student's program.
- The chair of the doctoral committee must be a regular or associate member of the graduate faculty.
- A doctoral committee member whose Graduate School faculty eligibility expires (e.g., emeritus faculty) while a student is still pursuing the degree may continue to serve until the student completes the program or the committee is dissolved.
- To continue to serve in the capacity as chair is a special exception. This request (with a valid academic justification) must have the endorsements of the academic program faculty, chair of the department, graduate director, and academic dean. Once these approvals are affirmed, the petition is presented to the dean of The Graduate School for final approval. Otherwise, a change in the committee composition must be presented to the dean of The Graduate School replacing the now ineligible member.

## Doctoral Program of Study

Every doctoral degree student must file a doctoral program of study (D-POS ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) in The Graduate School for approval by the dean of The Graduate School. A program of study is a list of courses that satisfy degree requirements and is one of the degree audit documents. It allows the student and the advisor to engage in early planning of course work, explore research interests, and discuss requirements for progress toward degree; facilitates subsequent advisement; and protects the student in the event of unexpected curriculum or faculty changes. The doctoral student must file a completed Program of Study (D-POS ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) form within the first 24 months of course work, but earlier if possible. The D-POS must be signed by the chair of the student's Advisory Committee, the graduate director of the program, and the dean of The Graduate School. If necessary, an approved program of study can be modified with a Request for Program Adjustment form ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/)).

All doctoral candidates are required to successfully complete a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation preparation (899), but up to 30 hours of dissertation preparation (899) or 30 hours of a combination of dissertation (899) and thesis (799) preparation are allowed on a doctoral program of study. At least half of the hours on the Doctoral Program of Study (D-POS) must be in courses numbered 700 or higher.

## Concurrent and Dual Enrollment Programs of Study

For dual degree and concurrent degree enrollment, students are required to submit an individual program of study for each degree program. With approval of the program and the dean of the Graduate School, students concurrently enrolled may use no more than 12 credit hours that are common to all programs of study. However, if a student is concurrently enrolled in a master's and a doctoral program in the same discipline, the number of credit hours applicable from the master's program toward the doctoral program is limited to 9 hours. Programs may allow fewer than

12 shared hours or the 9 shared hours for the same discipline concurrent enrollment.

## Transfer Credit

Course work not part of a completed certificate program or graduate degree from USC or another institution may be transferred for credit toward a doctoral degree. A limited amount of course work may be transferred from another institution for credit toward a doctoral degree. The exact number of transfer hours varies by program, but may not constitute more than 50 percent of the hours listed on a program of study, not including dissertation preparation (899) or the equivalent.

The transfer course work must be relevant to the program and have course content and a level of instruction equivalent to that offered by the University's own graduate programs. Approval for acceptance of transfer credit to a student's program of study must be approved and justified by the student's academic program and submitted to the dean of the Graduate School for final approval on the Request for Transfer of Academic Credit (G-RTC ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) form. Only credits with grades of B or better (equivalent to 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale) may be transferred from another institution into a doctoral degree program. Course work transferred for credit toward a doctoral degree must be from an accredited institution and must be no more than ten years old at the time of graduation.

## Transient Enrollment Privilege

A USC graduate student in a doctoral program seeking transient enrollment privilege at another institution should complete and submit the Special Enrollment Request (AS-30) form available on the Office of the University Registrar's Web site to dean of The Graduate School for approval. Before enrolling in graduate courses at another institution, permission to enroll should be obtained from the doctoral student's advisor and the program graduate director to ensure that the credits from the other institution will be approved for inclusion in the student's USC program of study.

## Revalidation of Out-of-Date Courses

Students enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of South Carolina may, with permission of the academic program, request revalidation of USC graduate courses over ten years old for inclusion on the doctoral program of study. Each academic unit will determine whether a course is appropriate for revalidation. All instructions for revalidation ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/forms\\_library/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/forms_library/)) must be followed and the Permit for Revalidation Examination (PRE ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/forms\\_library/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/forms_library/))) form must be completed and submitted to the dean of The Graduate School for approval prior to revalidation. Proof of payment of revalidation fees must be submitted with the Permit for Revalidation Examination form.

**Note:** Coursework taken at other institutions may not be revalidated.

## Independent Study

The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not adequately covered by the regular course structure. Therefore, an independent study course cannot be used to fulfill a core requirement.

Prior to enrolling in an independent study course, a student must complete a graduate Independent Study Contract form (G-ISC ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))). The approval

of the course instructor, the chair of the student's doctoral Advisory Committee, and the graduate director of the academic program is required. Students send an approved copy of the G-ISC to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course.

**Note:** Not more than 9 hours of independent study may be used on a doctoral program of study.

## Professional Development Course Work

Professional development course work is designated on the academic record by a professional development designator. A maximum of 6 hours of professional development graduate course work may be included on a doctoral program of study. The academic program and the dean of The Graduate School must approve the inclusion of professional development graduate course work on a program of study.

## Reduced Tuition Course Work

Course work taken with reduced tuition (usually a contract course) is designated on the academic record by a reduced tuition designation. A maximum of 6 hours of reduced tuition rate course work may be included on a doctoral program of study. The academic program and the dean of The Graduate School must approve the inclusion of reduced tuition graduate course work on a program of study.

## Admission to Doctoral Candidacy for Doctor of Philosophy and Other Doctoral Degrees

Upon nomination from the doctoral program, the dean of The Graduate School considers students for admission to doctoral candidacy only after:

1. the student is fully admitted to the doctoral degree program by the academic unit,
2. passes the qualifying examination, and
3. submits an approved doctoral program of study to the dean of The Graduate School.

No student is admitted to candidacy by the dean of The Graduate School until after completion of all three conditions and written nomination is received from the academic program. The Graduate School will notify the student and the graduate director of the student's program when the student has been admitted to candidacy.

**Note:** Admission to candidacy must be granted at least one full academic year before the awarding of the degree.

## Residency Requirement

The intent of a residency requirement is to ensure that doctoral students benefit from and contribute to the full spectrum of educational and professional opportunities provided by working closely with the graduate faculty and other students of a research university. The membership of the Graduate Faculty of The University of South Carolina subscribe to the position that a residency requirement may be met in a variety of ways, and that these ways may relate to the particulars of different degree programs.

All graduate programs are expected to encourage, design, provide and monitor the means for doctoral students to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values appropriate to their discipline through mechanisms that extend beyond mere course work. Regular attendance in courses to gain experience with specialized equipment and other scholarly

materials and at seminars presented by scholars at The University of South Carolina and other invited guests is a beginning point. Additional experiences may include, but not be limited to, attending and presenting at professional conferences, participation in presentations of scholarly work, assisting with the conceptualization, and development and application for funding of scholarly efforts.

Given the diversity of disciplinary traditions at a major research university, residency requirements may be met in different ways. At The University of South Carolina, residency requirements may be met in one of two ways:

- **Option 1.** Two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment. Full time enrollment is defined as enrollment for 6 hours for students serving as graduate assistants and 9 hours for students who are not graduate assistants; consecutive semesters could be fall/spring, spring/summer, summer/fall, or spring/fall. Programs are expected to provide enrichment opportunities beyond course enrollment to help doctoral students understand and meet the intention of the residency requirements.
- **Option 2.** Program-specific alternative residency plan. Diverse academic traditions and rapidly changing technology are factors that make a single approach to meeting the intention of a residency requirement problematic. Hence, program representatives may propose alternative methods to achieving the residency goals. This proposal would be submitted to the associate dean of The Graduate School for consideration by The Graduate Council.

The student's advisory committee certifies on the doctoral program of study (D-POS ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) form the term dates and courses or other means by which the student satisfies the residency requirement. In the event that unique circumstances arise, it may be possible for a student to meet the residency requirement through an individualized plan. A proposal for an individual residency plan can be submitted to the associate dean of The Graduate School for consideration and action.

## Foreign Language and/or Research Methods Requirement

Language and research methods requirements for the doctoral degree vary from program to program. Satisfying the requirement may entail one or more of the following: successful completion of an intensive reading course in a language approved by The Graduate School (e.g., SPAN 615), successful completion of a course at the intermediate level of language proficiency within ten years previous of the award of the degree, or a passing grade on a language reading proficiency examination administered by the USC Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures ([http://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/dllc/](http://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/dllc/)) (DLLC). Students should contact DLLC for language course and testing information. Programs which directly involve language study may have additional language requirements.

Students have three opportunities to pass the language course or satisfy the reading proficiency examination. The Graduate School must be notified by the graduate director of the student's academic program of successful completion of the language requirement.

In some programs a student is allowed to substitute competency in computer science, statistics, or another research method or competency for a reading knowledge of a foreign language. The requirement may be satisfied by the appropriate course work or examination. Permission for substitution must be approved by the dean of The Graduate School. As with successful completion of the language requirement, The Graduate

School must also be notified of a student's successful completion of a substitution for the language requirement

With approval of the academic program and the dean of The Graduate School, English may be accepted as a foreign language for students whose native language is not English and such students should submit the Certification of English as a Foreign Language (G-CIE ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) form. In cases where it is relevant to a student's research, American Sign Language may be used to satisfy the language requirement.

The student should make arrangements to complete the foreign language and/or research methods requirements at the earliest opportunity. Certification of foreign language and/or research methods competency for doctoral students remains valid for ten years, after which it must be revalidated.

## Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination

Candidates must pass a written and oral comprehensive examination conducted by the student's academic program under the direction of the Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination Committee. This Committee must be comprised of no fewer than four members, at least one of whom must be from outside the candidate's major department. Normally, the comprehensive examination is given after the candidate has completed all course work on the program of study except for courses in which the student may be currently registered. The comprehensive examination may not be given less than 60 days before the student receives the degree.

**Note:** Certification of the comprehensive examination for doctoral students remains valid for five years from the academic term taken, after which it must be revalidated.

## Dissertation

Students enrolled in a doctoral degree program are required to submit an approved dissertation to satisfy part of the requirements for the degree. The dissertation is the ultimate requirement of the doctoral program and becomes a permanent record of the student's independent research or creative effort. The best academic tradition and professional practice require The Graduate School to preserve and share graduate student work with other scholars. To do that successfully means maintaining high standards concerning the form and appearance of the dissertation. The dissertation is based on original research and is completed under the direction of the Dissertation Committee. Dissertation formatting and organization guidelines ([https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/academics/thesis\\_and\\_dissertation/](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/academics/thesis_and_dissertation/)) are available on the website of The Graduate School. No later than five years after passing the comprehensive examination, the student must present a dissertation that has been approved by the student's Dissertation and Dissertation Defense Committee.

Courses numbered 899 in all departments are restricted to dissertation preparation. All doctoral candidates are required to successfully complete a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation preparation (899), but up to 30 hours of dissertation preparation (899) or 30 hours of a combination of dissertation (899) and thesis (799) preparation are allowed on a doctoral program of study. With permission of the student's academic advisor and program graduate director, dissertation preparation hours (899) may be taken in any department if pertinent to the student's research. Any student who uses University facilities or confers with

faculty on dissertation work in any semester must be officially enrolled for at least one hour of graduate credit. It is recommended that the one hour of credit be in dissertation preparation (899).

On the student's academic transcript completion or satisfactory progress in dissertation preparation will be indicated by the grade of T; unsatisfactory progress in dissertation preparation will be indicated by the grade of U. These grades will not be used to calculate the student's grade point average. Programs may establish policies regarding progress to degree and eligibility for continued enrollment that are more stringent than the policies of The Graduate School.

## Dissertation Submission

The dissertation is submitted to The Graduate School through the electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) submission process. Instructions for submission ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/)) should be read thoroughly and followed explicitly, including deadlines for format check and final submission. The preliminary dissertation document will need to be submitted electronically to The Graduate School for a format check not later than five weeks before graduation through the ProQuest/UMI ETD portal. The Electronic Thesis and Dissertation coordinator ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/)) for the academic program will respond with any needed corrections or revisions. At least 20 days prior to graduation, the candidate must submit the final revision of the dissertation through the ETD process. Students will receive notification of receipt of the final dissertation submission from The Graduate School program coordinator.

The dissertation must be reproduced by ProQuest/UMI for archival purposes as per the laws of the State of South Carolina and must be archived by the University library. The dissertation abstract will be published in the dissertation database. Additional information on publication ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/#Embargo\\_option\\_for\\_creative\\_works\\_or\\_intellectual\\_property\\_with\\_commercial\\_implications](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/#Embargo_option_for_creative_works_or_intellectual_property_with_commercial_implications)) and copyright options is available on the website of The Graduate School. Students using previously published articles as dissertation content must submit a copyright release ([http://gradschool.sc.edu/thesisdissertation/dissertation-formatting.htm#B\\_COPYRIGHT\\_RELEASE](http://gradschool.sc.edu/thesisdissertation/dissertation-formatting.htm#B_COPYRIGHT_RELEASE)) from the publisher of the articles.

No paper copies of the dissertation are required by The Graduate School. If the academic program requires students to submit a bound copy of the dissertation, the department and student are responsible for obtaining the copy.

## Dissertation Defense

A dissertation must be successfully defended before the Dissertation Committee. The dissertation defense should be no fewer than 30 days before the date of graduation.

Please consult the graduate director of the academic program for departmental, school, or college specific defense requirements, including scheduling procedures. The Graduate School requires that the dissertation defense be publicly announced.

When the defense has been approved by the Dissertation Committee, the signatures of the committee members must be obtained on the Dissertation Signature and Approval (G-DSF (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/DocLibrary/documents/G-DSF.pdf>)) form. The electronic submission of the dissertation will not have title page signatures; this is to prevent

theft and unauthorized use of signatures that otherwise might occur. The graduate director of the academic program will also be asked to sign the G-DSF form to affirm that the dissertation follows the style manual endorsed by the program.

In addition, the student must complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/))) available on the website of the Graduate School. The G-DSF with signatures and the SED must be delivered to the Graduate School, in person, by campus mail, or electronically to GRADAPP@mailbox.sc.edu.

**Note:** The G-DSF and SED must be received by the final submission deadline in order for the student to be cleared for graduation.

## Application for Graduation and Degree Audit

All students enrolled in a doctoral degree program must file the application for degree/graduation ([http://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/registrar/](http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/)) available on the website of the Office of the University Registrar ([http://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/registrar/](http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/)) with The Graduate School within the first 15 class days of the fall or spring semester in which the degree is to be awarded, or within the first 10 class days of the Summer Session. Although some departments do not require students to provide the academic program with copies of the application for graduation, The Graduate School recommends that students do provide a copy to the academic program to facilitate assessment of degree requirements. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the academic program to confirm that all requirements for graduation have been met.

Applications for graduation submitted after the announced filing deadline will be processed for the following term.

The Graduate School forwards the Application for Graduation form to the Office of the University Registrar to start the degree audit process. In Self Service Carolina, students should view their Graduation Degree Application information to confirm the accuracy of the information submitted and to correct any errors so the diploma is printed correctly. It is also important to check Self Service Carolina to determine if there are any holds that will prevent issue of an official transcript or mailing of the diploma. At the end of the semester, the degree program and The Graduate School both assess for degree audit whether all requirements have been completed, and then forward a recommendation to the Registrar to approve or disapprove award of the degree.

At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00

## Degree Conferral

Upon confirmation of a clear degree audit, the degree will be posted by the Office of the University Registrar to the student's official academic record. The degree award is posted to the student's transcript within 6 weeks after graduation. Degree candidates may wish to check Self Service Carolina to see if the degree is posted. Diplomas will be mailed to the address recorded on the application for graduation via first class mail to U.S. addresses and via registered airmail to international addresses. Graduates may expect to receive the diploma within three months after graduation. Degrees cannot be awarded retroactively.

**Note:** To pursue further graduate study after completion of a graduate degree, a student must submit a new application to The Graduate School.

## Academic Regalia

A special doctoral hooding ceremony and commencement is held two times a year for graduating doctoral students. Attendance at graduation ceremonies is optional. Information on commencement exercises ([http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/](http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/)) is posted to The Graduate School webpage.

Academic regalia worn for the commencement ceremony is sold by the University Bookstore in the Russell House located on Greene Street in Columbia. To place an order for academic regalia to wear for graduation, please telephone the University Bookstore at 803-777-4160 or visit the website at <https://sc.bncollege.com/shop/sc/home> (<https://sc.bncollege.com/shop/sc/home/>).