

# GRADUATE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

All graduate students are subject to the academic policies, regulations, and academic standards of both The Graduate School and the department, school and/or college in which enrolled. Graduate programs may have more stringent standards and additional regulations and requirements than that of The Graduate School. Program academic policies, regulations, and standards are available from the graduate director of the program. Contact information for academic programs is available on the website of The Graduate School.

It is the responsibility of all students to be aware of USC academic standards and their own academic record. At the very least, students should check their Record of Academic Work in Self Service Carolina ([https://ssb.onecarolina.sc.edu/BANP/twbkwbis.P\\_GenMenu/?name=homepage](https://ssb.onecarolina.sc.edu/BANP/twbkwbis.P_GenMenu/?name=homepage)) at the conclusion of each semester. The academic record will list any academic or registration issues or probationary status that requires attention by the student.

Graduate students are bound by the academic policies, regulations, standards, and degree requirements found in the Graduate Studies Bulletin (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/>) in effect at the term of enrollment. With approval of the academic program in which enrolled and the dean of The Graduate School, a student may elect during the course of a program of study to change to standards, regulations, and requirements found in a subsequent Graduate Studies Bulletin. However, the student may not pick and choose from different Bulletins, but must select one Graduate Studies Bulletin during the period of the student's graduate enrollment and conform to all policies, regulations, and degree requirements of the selected Bulletin.

Graduate students in Master's, specialist, and certificate programs have a period of six years, inclusive and continuous, in which to claim the rights of a specific Graduate Studies Bulletin. Doctoral students have a period of 10 years. Any student whose admission lapses for three years loses the right to claim a previous Bulletin and becomes bound to the Bulletin in force when readmitted.

Students are advised that there are no guarantees that a particular course or program of study can be delivered by the University at a time convenient for every student. Unforeseen circumstances may interfere with the scheduling of any given course or degree offering. Students must be prepared for such occurrences even if students experience delays in fulfilling academic goals or require modification of those goals. Academic units and The Graduate School will work closely with students to resolve academic issues.

**Note:** For detailed information on Degree Requirements (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/degree-requirements/>) see that section of the *Graduate Studies Bulletin* which is arranged by certificate or specialist degree requirements, Master's degree requirements, and doctoral degree requirements.

## Academic Personnel Policies

### Graduate Faculty

Faculty members holding the Ph.D. or other terminal degree in a discipline are, upon appointment to a tenure-track position at the University of South Carolina, Columbia campus, eligible to become members of the Graduate Faculty. Specifically, The Faculty Manual

(<http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/#current>) defines those eligible to be regular members of the graduate faculty on the Columbia campus as 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.

Nominations of eligible faculty for such appointments are made by the appropriate academic unit (college, school, or department) to the dean of The Graduate School. Each academic unit must have on file with The Graduate School the process and criteria (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/G-TAN.term.appointment.nomination.GS58.pdf>) used by the unit to nominate and review faculty for appointment as regular Graduate Faculty. Academic units will notify the dean of The Graduate School when nominations to regular Graduate Faculty status are reviewed and either retained or revoked by the academic unit.

Faculty members and scholars not otherwise eligible for regular 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 faculty, research professors, faculty members at other institutions (including other campuses of the USC system), and others holding an appropriate terminal degree or other credentials. With the approval of the dean of The Graduate School, persons with term appointments to the graduate faculty may serve on, but may not chair, doctoral committees. Nominations to term appoint as graduate faculty are nominated by the chair and dean of the academic unit to the dean of The Graduate School using the Graduate Faculty Term Appointment Form (G-TAN (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/G-TAN.term.appointment.nomination.GS58.pdf>)). The Graduate School maintains a database (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/gfd.asp?page=gf&sub=gfd>) of persons with term appointment to graduate faculty status.

### Teaching and Committee Personnel

All faculty teaching graduate level course work, courses numbered 500 - 899, must be either a regular member of the Graduate Faculty or must hold a term appointment as graduate faculty. Accreditation standards state that faculty teaching graduate courses have earned the terminal degree in the field. Occasionally, a person having extensive and/or specific career experience may, with written justification from the program, be approved by the dean of The Graduate School to teach graduate courses.

Membership on doctoral committees (see Doctoral Degree Requirements), excluding the outside member, is limited to regular members of the Graduate Faculty and those who hold special term appointments with approval to serve as a regular member of a doctoral committee. Only a regular member of the Graduate Faculty may serve as chair of a doctoral committee. Service as an outside member of a doctoral committee requires only the approval of the dean of The Graduate School, not a term appointment as graduate faculty.

Membership on a thesis committee (see Master's Degree Requirements (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/degree-requirements/masters-degree-requirements/>)) is composed of regular graduate faculty of any rank who hold the doctorate or the discipline's terminal degree and tenured faculty at the rank of full professor who do not hold the terminal degree. Research, clinical, and adjunct faculty at any rank who hold the terminal degree may serve on and chair a thesis committee with approval of the program and the dean of The Graduate School. Instructors and lecturers who do not hold the terminal degree may serve as members of

thesis committees with justification from the program and approval of the dean of The Graduate School.

## 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.

## Graduate Assistant

A graduate assistant (GA) is a student enrolled in the Graduate School and a special category part-time employee of the University paid by the University's Payroll Department. Graduate assistants may serve as teaching assistants (GTA or ITA), research assistants (RA), or perform administrative duties (GA). In addition to receiving a stipend, non-South Carolina residents who are graduate assistants are assessed the in-state rate for tuition purposes. Graduate assistants are expected to devote full-time effort to their studies and assistantship responsibilities and are discouraged from having additional employment on or off campus. For the complete text of UofSC Policy on Graduate Assistants, see academic policy ACAF 4.00 (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/acaf400.pdf>).

To be eligible for employment as a graduate assistant, a graduate student must:

1. be enrolled in a degree program and in good standing;
2. be registered for at least six graduate credits during a major semester; and
3. be registered for at least three graduate credits during the summer.

Programs are encouraged to provide competitive GA stipends and tuition remission to attract the most highly qualified graduate students. The maximum stipend amount cannot exceed the amount paid to a first-year postdoctoral fellow in the academic unit. The minimum stipend is \$1,200 for fall or spring semester for not more than 10 hours per week, and \$600 per summer session for not more than 10 hours per week. Appointments for more hours per week should provide proportionately higher stipend.

Graduate assistants may not work more than 20 hours per week. Rare exceptions to the maximum 20 hour per week work limit may be granted by the dean of the Graduate School when justification from the student's academic program demonstrates the student will derive direct academic benefit from the additional time. Exceptions will not be granted for any reason other than academic benefit.

Graduate Assistants must enroll in at least 6 credit hours in the Fall and Spring terms and at least 3 hours in the summer terms. Enrollment load exceptions must be approved by the Graduate School.

Accreditation standards require the University to monitor the quality of instruction provided by graduate assistants hired as teaching assistants (ITA or GTA). In order to perform teaching duties, a graduate assistant (GTA) must attend the University-sponsored teaching skills workshop (TA Training) offered by the Graduate School before the start of the Fall term prior to beginning teaching duties. Students need only attend the workshop once and will be placed in the trained GTA database (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/trained.asp?page=ta>) when all requirements have been met.

In order to teach as an ITA (instructor of record) the student must attend the teaching skills workshop (TA Training) offered by the Graduate School before the start of each Fall term prior to beginning teaching

duties, have at least 18 semester hours of graduate work in the discipline being taught, and must work under the supervision of a faculty member. Graduate teaching assistants must be monitored and regularly assessed for teaching effectiveness by the supervising faculty member and the academic program. Students need only attend the workshop once and will be placed in the trained ITA database (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/TATRAN/tatrained.asp>) when all requirements have been met.

The South Carolina Legislature (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/CODE/t59c103.htm>) mandates that all instructors at the University have adequate proficiency in English. International graduate students for whom English is not the primary language can be appointed as teaching assistants only if oral proficiency in English has been evaluated as satisfactory by the faculty of the English Programs for Internationals (<http://www.epi.sc.edu/>) (EPI). Mandatory for all international students appointed as graduate teaching assistants, the evaluation workshop is held prior to the start of each Fall term, three days before the teaching skills workshop (TA Training) offered by The Graduate School that all prospective GTAs and ITAs must complete. Students who demonstrate sufficient English proficiency and complete all other requirements, including the TA Training workshop, will be placed in the GTA/ITA database (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/trained.asp?page=ta>).

## Academic Credit and Course Policies

The credit value of each course is usually equal to the number of hours the class meets each week in a major term (fall or spring). Courses are required to have 700 minutes of instructional contact time for each course credit hour.

Courses numbered 700-899 are restricted to graduate students; courses numbered 500-699 are open to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students registered for courses numbered 500-699 must complete graduate level course work and will receive graduate credit. The course syllabus for 500-699 courses must differentiate the workload and rigor of assessment for graduate students and undergraduates.

From time to time graduate students may need to enroll in undergraduate courses. The courses will be posted at the undergraduate level on the USC transcript in the manner that the student registered for the course (credit, audit, pass-fail, etc.) and used in enrollment verification calculations.

Graduate students may not enroll for undergraduate credit in courses numbered 500-699 without the permission of their academic advisor and the dean of The Graduate School.

## Distance Education Courses

Many academic programs offer courses and degree programs via distance education using multiple delivery methods, both in synchronous and asynchronous modes. Courses are offered during fall, spring, and summer terms. All courses delivered through distance education are approved by the appropriate academic authority as suitable for distance delivery, are subject to the same academic policies and regulations, and meet the same University standards of rigor, prerequisites, sequence, etc., that are required in residence course work. Students should consult with the individual academic programs for courses and degrees offered via distance education.

## Course Syllabus

The course syllabus is a summary for a specific course which includes an outline of the content to be covered, the assignments and how the student's work will be assessed, and the materials needed for it. Graduate course syllabi are required to contain the title and description of the course, course objectives stated as student learning outcomes, recommended and/or required texts or readings, the instructional delivery strategy, the grading scheme to include weights and scale, course requirements/assignments/exams, a topical outline of content to be covered, and an attendance policy. It is also recommended that a disability accommodation statement be included. The instructor is responsible for assuring that the course syllabus contains all elements required by The Graduate School. Students should receive the syllabus prior to or at the first class session.

**Note:** For 500-600 level courses adequate differentiation between the workload and rigor of assessment for graduate and undergraduate students must be explicitly stated in the syllabus. The instructor is responsible for ensuring that all graduate students meet the requirements for graduate credit.

## Attendance

Students are expected to complete all assigned work, to attend all class meetings, and to participate in class. Instructors should notify students, specifically in the course syllabus, of the attendance policy for the course by the first day of class. Students with special attendance requests (such as observation of major religious holidays or participation in University or professional events) should meet with the instructor early in the term to make arrangements.

Students who are auditing a graduate course are expected to conform to the same attendance requirements as students registered for credit, but must attend at least 75 percent of scheduled class meetings to receive audit credit.

A graduate student registered for courses numbered 500-699, or for any undergraduate course for credit, is required to satisfy undergraduate attendance regulations and conform to the "10 percent rule." The Undergraduate Attendance Policy (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/>) states that absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for such absences.

## Prerequisites

Course prerequisites are listed to inform students about the academic background required for satisfactory course completion. The instructor may approve the enrollment of students who have acquired the equivalent knowledge or skills through other courses or experiences. Special permission from the instructor to enroll should be requested prior to registration. Students without the required prerequisites who do not receive prior permission of the instructor to enroll may be dropped from the course and become subject to any applicable financial penalties.

## Course Enrollment Load

### Special Enrollment (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. This is known as Z-Status. Students seeking an exception to minimum enrollment requirements (Z-Status) should submit a written request to the dean of The Graduate School with acceptable justification 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 ([http://iss.sc.edu/?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=550&Itemid=](http://iss.sc.edu/?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=550&Itemid=)) form 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 or Master's degree requiring a dissertation or thesis 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 thesis (799) or 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 thesis (799) or dissertation preparation (899);
2. the student is working on the dissertation or thesis full-time, or if applicable, at least half-time; and
3. 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 (<http://www.sc.edu/financialaid/>).

### 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 contactor 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.

## Enrollment in Courses Outside Major

Students wishing to enroll in courses outside the area to which they have been admitted should do so only with the permission of their academic advisor and should consult the department offering the course regarding eligibility and prerequisites. An individual who has been declined admission or had their admission cancelled to a program may not continue to enroll in or audit courses in that area without special permission of that program even if the student has subsequently been admitted to another program. Programs have the right to limit enrollment in program courses to students in the program and/or to decline admission to program coursework to a student that has registration eligibility through another program. Issues related to course enrollment or registration eligibility may be referred to the dean of The Graduate School.

## Enrollment in Courses for Audit

A student must be eligible to register as a graduate student and go through the regular registration process to be eligible to audit a graduate-level course. Some departments do not permit auditing at the graduate level, and if space in the class is limited, degree-seeking students always are given priority over students who are auditing. Students wishing to audit graduate courses are advised to obtain permission from the appropriate department chair or graduate director. No record of audit shall appear on a transcript unless a student attends 75 percent of the classes. A course taken for audit cannot be used on a program of study to satisfy degree requirements unless it has been retaken for credit.

Students who have registered for a course on an audit basis and who wish to change their registration to take the course for credit (or who wish to change from credit to audit) must do so no later than the last day to change course schedule or drop without a grade of W being recorded, as published in the Academic Calendar (<http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/5YrCalendar3.stm>).

**Note:** No credit may be earned for an audited course by examination.

## 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 a graduate independent study course, a student must complete a graduate Independent Study Contract form (G-ISC (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/DocLibrary/documents/G-ISC.independent.study.contract.GS50.pdf>)). The approval of the instructor, advisor, and the graduate director of the 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 6 hours of independent study may be used on a Master's program of study and no more than 9 hours of independent study may be used on a doctoral program of study.

## Transfer of Course 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 Certificate of Graduate Study, a master's or doctoral degree. Course work transferred from another institution 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://gradschool.sc.edu/DocLibrary/documents/G-RTC.pdf>)) form.

No more than 12 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into a master's program that requires 30-36 hours; no more than 15 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into a master's program that requires 37-45 hours; and no more than 18 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into a master's program that requires 46 or more semester hours. Only credits with grades of B or better (equivalent to a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) may be transferred from another institution into any graduate degree program. Course work transferred for credit toward a Master's degree, Graduate Certificate or Specialist Program must be from an accredited institution and must be no more than six years old at the time of graduation and coursework transferred into a doctoral degree program must be no more than ten years old at the time of graduation.

## 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 10 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://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/pre.pdf>) must be followed and the Permit for Revalidation Examination (PRE (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/pre.pdf>)) 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.

## Correspondence Course Credit

The University neither offers correspondence courses for graduate credit nor accepts correspondence work as applicable toward any graduate degree.

## Credit by Examination

No graduate credit is offered by examination only.

## Retroactive Graduate Credit

The Graduate School does not retroactively award graduate credit for graduate-level (course number 500 and above) USC courses previously taken for undergraduate, continuing education, or audit credit. The academic policy of The Graduate School also stipulates that no graduate-

level USC course taken for undergraduate or continuing education credit or as an audit may be repeated for graduate credit at a later date.

## Dropping a Course

A graduate student may drop a course using Self Service Carolina.

Beginning with the Fall 2013 term, graduate students will visit Self Service Carolina to drop a course. Courses dropped before the drop/add date found on Academic Calendar (<http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/5YrCalendar3.stm>) (usually within the first week of class) can be dropped without academic or financial penalty.

Courses dropped during the second through the sixth week of a regular semester (see date on the Academic Calendar) are recorded with an academic nonpenalty grade of **W**. After the first six weeks of the semester, any courses dropped will appear on the permanent record with a grade of **WF**. A **WF** is treated as an **F** in the evaluation of the student's eligibility to continue and is computed into the student's graduate cumulative grade point average. Graduate students who stop attending a class without officially dropping it remain on the final grade roll and must be assigned a grade by the professor of record. A grade of **F** is appropriate, unless a higher grade has been earned by partial submission of the required course work, and that assigned grade is included in all calculations and totals. In summer sessions and other shortened terms, the period for withdrawal with a grade of **W** will be 43 percent of the total number of class days (see date on the Academic Calendar (<http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/5YrCalendar3.stm>)). A course cannot be dropped after the last day of classes specified for the session in which the course is scheduled.

Students are responsible for consulting the academic calendar for each term in which they are enrolled for the applicable dates. Students should also consult their academic advisor and graduate director for advisement before withdrawing from course work.

## Dropping a Course for Extenuating Circumstances

A student who wishes to drop a course for medical reasons or other acceptable cause after the session penalty date specified on the Academic Calendar for that term (last day to receive a **W**), may petition for assignment of **W** by submitting a Request for Assignment of **W** for Extenuating Circumstances form (AS-122A) available from the Office of the University Registrar (<http://registrar.sc.edu/html/forms/>) with the appropriate documentation of circumstances, (e.g., a letter from a physician or health care provider). The petition requires the approval of the student's graduate director, the instructor of each course, and the dean of The Graduate School. A request for partial reduction (rather than complete) withdrawal for extenuating circumstances must include evidence (i.e., a written statement from a physician, counselor, or other qualified professional; or other documentation of extenuating circumstances) that a reduction in, rather than complete withdrawal from, student course work is appropriate. Students must be aware that liability for repayment of student loans and other financial obligations may apply.

## Withdrawal from All Courses

A student who wishes to withdraw from all courses should consult their academic advisor and graduate director for advisement before withdrawing from course work. The date of withdrawal affects the grades assigned (**W** or **WF**), as do valid, supported claims of extenuating circumstances (see previous section). If applicable, Form AS-122A available from the Office of the University Registrar (<http://>

registrar.sc.edu/html/forms/) must be approved by the graduate director and a student's instructors prior to withdrawal. Grades assigned to students who withdraw from all courses are determined in the manner described in the previous section. Students who withdraw should be aware of the ramifications of that action with respect to grades assigned, program status, liability for repayment of student loans, and financial obligations to the University.

## Financial Obligations to the University

Any student withdrawing from the University within the scheduled refund period can expect to receive a refund in approximately four to six weeks. If, at the time of withdrawal, the student has any financial obligations to the University, these amounts will be deducted from any refund due. Refunds for students who received and used financial aid to pay academic fees may be applied toward repayment of financial aid.

Students who have received long-term loans through the University must contact the Student Loan Accounting Office for an exit interview. Failure to participate in this exit interview may result in a hold being placed on transcripts.

## Grading Policies

The letter grades **A**, **B**, **C**, **D**, and **F** are employed to designate excellent, good, fair, poor, and failing work, respectively. The grades **B+**, **C+**, and **D+** also may be recorded. Courses graded **D+** or lower cannot be applied to graduate degree programs. The letter grades **S** (satisfactory) and **U** (unsatisfactory) are assigned only in courses that have been approved for Pass-Fail grading or in a standard graded course where the student, with the approval of the dean of The Graduate School, has elected an individual Pass-Fail Option. Courses completed with an **S** may be counted in total credits earned. Grades of **T** (satisfactory progress) or **U** (unsatisfactory progress) are given for thesis (799) and dissertation (899) preparation. Grades of **T** in thesis (799) and dissertation (899) preparation are not computed in the cumulative graduate grade point average. Graduate-level courses completed with the grade of **U** are calculated as an **F** in the cumulative graduate grade point average. In certain circumstances, grades of **I** (incomplete) or **NR** (no record) may be assigned by the instructor.

**Note:** Retaking a graduate course does not delete the original grade.

The grade of **I** (incomplete) is assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, in the instructor's judgment, a student is prevented from completing a portion of the assigned work in a course because of an illness, accident, verified disability, family emergency, or some other unforeseen circumstance. The student should notify the instructor without delay and request an extension of time to complete the course work, but the request for a grade of incomplete must be made to the instructor before the end of the term. The instructor will determine, according to the nature of the circumstance and the uncompleted requirements, how much additional time, up to 12 months, will be allowed for completing the work before a permanent grade is assigned. The justification for the incomplete grade, conditions for make-up, a deadline for completion, and a back-up grade if the course work is not completed by the deadline must be included on the form. Re-enrolling in a course will not make up an incomplete grade. A grade of **I** is not computed in the calculation of a student's cumulative grade point average until the make-up grade is posted.

There is no automatic time period for completion of the work for which a grade of incomplete is given. The instructor should give the student a reasonable deadline, up to one year after the scheduled end of the course,

to complete the work. After 12 months an **I** (incomplete) grade that has not been replaced with a letter grade is changed permanently to a grade of **F** or to the backup grade indicated by the faculty member on the Assignment of Incomplete Grade form. In the rare instance the instructor believes there is justification for an extension beyond the 12 month limit, a request for extension of incomplete time should be submitted to the dean of The Graduate School before the expiration of the 12 month period on the Extension of Incomplete Time Period Authorization (GS-47 (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/eia.pdf>)) form for approval. The Graduate School does not approve the make-up of **I** grades in courses which are already out-of-date for use on a student's program of study or extensions of time without sufficient justification and/or supporting documentation.

Graduate students cannot register for additional coursework if there are 3 or more temporary grades of incomplete (**I**) that have not yet been replaced with a permanent grade on their academic record. Student enrolled in graduate study may not graduate with a temporary grade of **I** on their record, even if that course is not listed on the Program of Study.

**NR** (no record) is a temporary mark on the transcript assigned by the Office of the University Registrar if a grade has not been submitted by the instructor at the proper time or if any grade not approved for a particular course has been submitted. As a temporary mark on the transcript the **NR** must be replaced by a grade. If the **NR** is not resolved or replaced by the instructor with a valid end-of-term grade before the end of the major (Fall or Spring) term following the term for which the grade of **NR** was recorded, a grade of **F** will be assigned.

## Pass-Fail Option

Unless there is an academic program exception explicitly approved by the Graduate Council, a graduate student may elect Pass-Fail grading in a course only if the content is outside the student's major area of study and is not required on the program of study. This option permits enrichment of the student's learning experience and a grade of either **S** (satisfactory) or **U** (unsatisfactory) will be awarded. Courses completed with a satisfactory grade may be counted toward total credit hours earned. A grade of **U** received under the individual Pass-Fail Option will be calculated into the cumulative grade point average as a grade of **F**. Students must have the approval of their academic program advisor and the dean of The Graduate School prior to registration.

## Academic Standard for Grade Point Average

The cumulative grade point average (GPA) is defined as the GPA of all graduate credit courses recorded on the official USC transcript. In-date courses are ten or fewer years old for doctoral students and six or less years old for Master's, specialist, graduate certificate, and nondegree students. Revalidated courses are also included in the cumulative GPA calculation. Grades earned for graduate credits transferred from other colleges or universities are not included in the cumulative GPA.

## Academic Standard for Progression

Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as **C**, but a degree-seeking student must maintain at least a **B** (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) cumulative grade point average. Some programs stipulate that no grade below **B** can be applied to a core course. Programs may cancel a student's registration privilege if the student fails to make adequate progress toward degree as defined by the program's academic policies. A student's registration privileges may also be cancelled for failure to meet academic standards as defined by The Graduate School.

## Academic Standard for Graduation

At the time of graduation, the student's graduate cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00 (B) on a 4.00 scale. 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.

## Academic Suspension Policy

Graduate degree-seeking students whose cumulative grade point average (GPA) drops below 3.00 (B) will be placed on academic probation by The Graduate School and allowed one calendar year in which to raise the cumulative GPA to at least 3.00. In the case of conversion of grades of incomplete that cause a cumulative GPA to drop below 3.00, a degree-seeking student will be placed on academic probation at the end of the semester in which the grade is posted. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum of 3.00 by receiving a grade for a course in which they received a grade of Incomplete will, instead of a one-year probationary period, be granted only one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the registrar in which to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above. Students who do not reach a cumulative 3.00 grade point average during the probationary period will be suspended from graduate study and will not be permitted to enroll for further graduate course work as a degree or a nondegree student.

Colleges, schools, and/or departments may have a more stringent policy than The Graduate School's academic suspension policy. Students are also responsible for knowing program policies.

## Reinstatement After Suspension

The Graduate School's Policy on Academic Probation and Suspension stipulates that when a degree-seeking graduate student's cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.0 the student is placed on academic probation. The student has one calendar year, or in the case of an Incomplete conversion one major term, from the academic probation term to increase his/her cumulative graduate GPA to at least 3.0. Failing to meet this condition will result in academic suspension from all graduate study at the University of South Carolina.

After suspension, reinstatement to graduate study or nondegree enrollment status cannot be granted for one calendar year following the term of suspension. To appeal for reinstatement the student must submit through the student's academic program a completed petition packet to the dean of the Graduate School following the guidelines below. Appeals may be initiated at any point following suspension, but petition packets must be received by the Graduate School at least 45 days before the start of the term for which the student wishes to be readmitted.

A student must contact the academic program and ask for support for reinstatement to graduate study. The department must recommend reinstatement for an appeal to go forward. Only packets containing all of the required letters, documentation, and recommendations and forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School from the graduate director of the academic program will be considered. Appeal packets must contain all of the following:

1. A letter from the student that explains the factors that resulted in his/her academic suspension.
2. An explicit plan written by the student and endorsed by the graduate director showing how the student will overcome the extenuating circumstances noted in the student's letter of appeal (e.g., medical

treatment, change of major, adjustment of work demands, etc.) and raise his/her GPA. Supporting documentation of extenuating circumstances must be included.

3. A feasible projection of what grades will be required in what courses and which semesters to yield the requisite overall cumulative GPA of 3.0.
4. A letter from the appropriate department chair or graduate director to confirm that all materials for this appeal are in order and that the appeal is supported by faculty of the academic program.

Complete packets may be delivered in person, by U.S. mail, or by campus mail to:

The Graduate School  
901 Sumter Street  
Close-Hipp Building, Suite 552  
Columbia, SC 29208

**Note:** Students who have not been enrolled for three or more years must reapply to the Graduate School.

## Academic Forgiveness Policy

The Academic Forgiveness Policy is intended to assist former University of South Carolina graduate students whose cumulative USC graduate grade point average (GPA) is below 3.00 to reenroll in graduate study without having to overcome the burden of previous unsatisfactory academic performance. Any former USC graduate student who has not been enrolled in graduate study for at least 24 consecutive months is eligible to apply for academic forgiveness. Academic forgiveness sets aside all former grades earned as a USC graduate student so that previous grades will not be calculated into the student's cumulative graduate GPA. Once academic forgiveness is granted courses taken during and prior to the term elected cannot be revalidated or count toward the completion of a graduate degree.

A student who seeks academic forgiveness must submit a written petition for academic forgiveness to the dean of The Graduate School. That petition must include:

1. A letter from the student that explains the factors that resulted in the student's previous academic record.
2. An explicit plan written by the student and endorsed by the graduate director showing how the student will address those factors in future graduate study if academic forgiveness is granted.
3. A letter from the appropriate department chair or graduate director in support of granting academic forgiveness and recommending reinstatement.
4. Notice of the specific term for which courses taken during and prior to that term are to be segmented on the student's academic record as forgiven.

Each appeal for academic forgiveness will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If granted, the registrar's office will upon notification from the dean of The Graduate School segment the student's academic record showing all courses and grades to be included in academic forgiveness and will recalculate the USC graduate cumulative GPA accordingly. The courses and grades will remain a part of the student's academic record. A notation will appear on the transcript indicating the student was approved for academic forgiveness.

## Academic Exception Petitions

The academic policies and regulations of The Graduate School and the graduate programs generally serve as purposeful guidelines and standards for graduate students as they pursue graduate degrees. Occasionally, individual students may feel there are grounds to seek an exception from the uniform application of an academic regulation, requirement, or policy and may file a petition for exception.

The Graduate School accepts petitions for exception to an academic regulation, requirement, or policy only with sufficient justification and/or documentation and only if the exception is endorsed by the student's academic advisor and the program's graduate director. A complete petition including the signature of the graduate director and any necessary supporting documentation is sent by the academic program graduate director to the dean of The Graduate School. Once received a petition is reviewed by the dean, who may act on the request or refer the matter to the Graduate Council for review and recommendation.

## Appeal of Academic Decisions

Appeals seeking to reverse or modify decisions made at a lower level of authority should be filed according to the established procedures with the student's academic unit. Students should file appeals with the dean of The Graduate School only after the internal processes for appeals and grievances within the academic program, school and/or college have been exhausted.

The Graduate School will accept appeals on academic matters only. Disagreement with a grade assigned in a course is not a basis for appeal to The Graduate School, but should be directed to the course instructor.

Appeals to the dean of The Graduate School must be submitted in writing and must include the name, student number, the signature of the appellant, and a full description of the circumstances of the appeal. Student appeals for reversal of departmental decisions are only accepted for consideration when questions such as inequitable application of regulations, bias, conflict with regulations, or extenuating circumstances are cited as grounds for appeal.

The dean of The Graduate School will attempt to resolve appeals filed with The Graduate School and will refer unresolved issues to the Graduate Council, whose decision will be the final action taken within The Graduate School. Any further appeal must be directed to the Office of the Provost. Graduate student appeals of disciplinary decisions reached under the Rule of Academic Responsibility procedures of the University must be made to the University Committee on Academic Responsibility.

## Academic Documents and Student Records

Students are responsible for checking the accuracy of their academic records. Students may check their academic record in Self Service Carolina.

University policy ACAF 3.03 (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/acaf303.html>) states that The University of South Carolina complies with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which affords students certain rights with respect to their education records.

1. The right to inspect and review their records.
2. The right to request an amendment of records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent (outlined in the Annual Notification of Student Rights under FERPA.)
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University of South Carolina to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The University of South Carolina has designated the following items as directory information: a student's name, electronic mail address, local and permanent mailing addresses and telephone numbers, semesters of attendance, enrollment status (full- or part-time), date of admission, date of graduation, school, major and minor fields of study, whether or not currently enrolled, classification (freshman, etc.), type of degree being pursued, expected graduation date, degrees, honors, and awards received (including scholarships and fellowships), weight and height of members of athletic teams, and whether the student has participated in officially recognized activities and sports sponsored by the University. The University may disclose any of these items without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Office of the University Registrar (<http://registrar.sc.edu/>) not to release directory information pertaining to the student. The student must submit the written request no later than May 31 in order to prevent disclosure in the student directory.

The University of South Carolina reserves the right to refuse to permit a student to inspect the following records:

1. Parents' financial records.
2. Confidential letters of recommendation requested by the student and filed before November 19, 1974, or letters written after that date for which the student has waived access. Students may request the names of those who have submitted confidential recommendations.
3. Documents revealing non-directory information about other students (such as class rolls).

The University of South Carolina may refuse to release transcripts and verification of records for students who have a financial obligation to the University (ACAF 3.09 (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/acaf309.html>)). Students should contact the Office of the University Registrar (<http://registrar.sc.edu/>) for additional information about official records and/or filing appeals for correction of University records.

## Copy of Student Graduate Admission File

Graduate students who want copies of documents in admission files to which they have not waived access, such as letters of recommendation, should complete the Document Copy Request form (DCR (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/DocLibrary/documents/dcr.pdf>)) available on The Graduate School's website. A fee of \$10 is charged for researching and copying releasable information from a student's file.

**Note:** Test scores and transcripts obtained through this process are considered "unofficial" documents.

## Transcripts

A transcript of a student's record carries the following information: current status; a detailed statement of the scholastic record showing courses taken with semester hours carried, semester hours earned, grades, grade points, grade point average, and system of grading; a permanent record of all failures, incomplete grades, and penalties (such as suspension or probation); cumulative USC grade totals; and references to other college or universities attended, dates attended, and the total



transfer credits accepted by the University of South Carolina. Copies of transcripts are available from the Office of the University Registrar and must be requested in writing by memo or form. Each transcript request must include a written statement of consent to release the transcript, full name or names used, student number, current mailing address, dates of attendance, location of attendance, and date of birth to assure proper identification of the record requested.

Any student who needs a transcript or a certified copy of the end-of-semester grade report should complete a transcript request (AS-25 ([http://registrar.sc.edu/pdf/trf\\_3.pdf](http://registrar.sc.edu/pdf/trf_3.pdf))) form or send a signed and dated letter containing all pertinent identifying information as listed above to the Office of the University Registrar. (<http://registrar.sc.edu/>) Official transcripts may also be requested online through Self Service Carolina. The nonrefundable transcript processing fee is \$12 unless the transcript is for use with a current application to The Graduate School.

With the exception of copies made for internal use, (including the State Department of Education) no copy of a student's permanent record (transcript) will be released to anyone without the student's written consent. No transcript will be issued to a student who is indebted to the University. No partial transcript will be issued. Students may print unofficial copies of their academic record for personal use from Self Service Carolina.

## Other Graduate Credit Courses and Special Undergraduate Programs

### Graduate School (GRAD) Courses

Course	Title	Credits
GRAD 800	The Graduate Student as Instructor	3
GRAD 801	Graduate Student as Scholar	3

### International (INTL) Courses / Study Abroad

Study abroad can provide students with the opportunity to add an international dimension to their education. Contact the Study Abroad Office (<http://www.studyabroad.sc.edu/>) for information.

Course	Title	Credits
INTL 501		
INTL 502		
INTL 503		

### Special Programs

For information on contract courses and degree programs offered by the University contact the Office of Educational Outreach (OEO (<http://www.ed.sc.edu/oeo/>)) administered by the College of Education.

### Accelerated Bachelor's/Graduate Study Plan (G-BGPA)

Admission to an Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Plan allows the student to apply graduate credits to a baccalaureate program. This form is to be completed by the student in consultation with his/her academic advisor and the Graduate Director of the proposed master's program.

Students must have completed at least 90 hours of undergraduate coursework and have a minimum GPA of 3.40 overall as well as in their undergraduate major.

Endorsements should be obtained in the order indicated on the form.

A Bachelor's/Master's Degree Accelerated Plan Course Work Authorization form (G-BMCA) must be processed for all graduate courses at the time of registration, in order for the Registrar's Office to properly enroll the student.

Application of graduate credits earned under the Bachelor's/Master's Degree Accelerated Plan to the student's baccalaureate program should be noted by the student's college dean at the time the student's record is cleared for award of the baccalaureate.

Admission to a the Bachelor's/Master's Degree Accelerated Plan does not require application for nor admission to a master's program, nor does it guarantee admission to the proposed master's program.

The student who wishes to be considered for admission to a Master's program must also submit a completed application (<http://www.gradschool.sc.edu/futurestudents/OnlineApplication.html>) and any additional credentials (GRE scores, recommendations, etc.) which are required by that Master's program.

Undergraduate students participating in Senior Privilege or the Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Plan may opt for only one program. If a student has been approved to participate in one of these programs, he or she is prohibited from applying for, or taking courses under, the other.

### Senior Privilege Coursework

Senior Privilege permits undergraduate seniors in their final semester (who need less than a normal course load to complete their baccalaureate requirements) to earn up to six hours of graduate credit.

Overload enrollment that includes one or more courses under senior privilege is not allowed.

Courses for graduate credit under senior privilege cannot be used toward undergraduate degree requirements.

Undergraduate students must be a senior, have at least a 3.00 overall GPA, and have approval of their undergraduate advisor, the Graduate Director of the relevant program, the dean of The Graduate School, and the instructor for each course to be taken.

Endorsements should be obtained in the order indicated on the form.

Grades earned in senior privilege classes do not affect undergraduate or graduate GPA; the credit is added to the undergraduate record but not the graduate record. A comment is posted to the graduate record.

Undergraduate students participating in Senior Privilege or the Accelerated Bachelor's/Graduate Plan may opt for only one program. If a student has been approved to participate in one of these programs, he or she is prohibited from applying for, or taking courses under, the other.

This form must be processed at the time of registration to permit the Registrar's Office to properly enroll the student for graduate credit.

This form may not be used retroactively for courses already taken or courses in which the student is currently enrolled. That is, the form must be endorsed and on file before the first day of the relevant semester.

Undergraduate students interested in Senior Privilege enrollment or the Accelerated Bachelor's/Graduate program (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/G-BGCA.pdf>) should consult their academic advisor.