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# Academic Policies

Students are expected to be familiar with university policies and to monitor their own academic progress. They should keep all records of official grades earned, degree requirements met, transfer credits accepted and actions taken on requests for substitutions or exceptions to university policies and regulations.

## Academic Calendar

	<b>Summer Session 2007</b>
May 14-15	Registration
May 16	Classes Begin
May 28	Memorial Day, University Holiday
July 2	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
July 4	Independence Day, University Holiday
August 7	Classes End
	<b>Fall Semester 2007</b>
August 20-24	Open Registration
August 27	Classes Begin
September 3	Labor Day, University Holiday
November 1	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
November 22-24	Thanksgiving, University Holiday
December 7	Classes End
December 8-11	Study Days
December 12-19	Exams
December 20-January 13	Winter Recess
	<b>Spring Semester 2008</b>
January 10-11	Open Registration
January 14	Classes Begin
January 21	Martin Luther King Day, University Holiday
February 18	Presidents' Day, University Holiday
March 17-22	Spring Recess
April 1	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
May 2	Classes End
May 3-6	Study Days
May 7-14	Exams
May 16	Commencement
	<b>Summer Session 2008</b>
May 19-20	Registration
May 21	Classes Begin
May 26	Memorial Day, University Holiday
July 1	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
July 4	Independence Day, University Holiday
August 12	Classes End
	<b>Fall Semester 2008</b>
August 18-22	Open Registration
August 25	Classes Begin
September 1	Labor Day, University Holiday
November 3	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
November 27-29	Thanksgiving, University Holiday
December 5	Classes End
December 6-9	Study Days
December 10-17	Exams
December 18-January 12	Winter Recess
	<b>Spring Semester 2009</b>
January 8-9	Open Registration
January 12	Classes Begin
January 19	Martin Luther King Day, University Holiday
February 16	Presidents' Day, University Holiday
March 16-21	Spring Recess
April 1	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
May 1	Classes End
May 2-5	Study Days
May 6-13	Exams
May 15	Commencement
	<b>Summer Session 2009</b>
May 18-19	Registration
May 20	Classes Begin
May 25	Memorial Day, University Holiday
July 1	Thesis/Dissertation Submission
July 3-4	Independence Day, University Holiday
August 11	Classes End

### Academic Calendars of the Professional Schools

Certain professional schools schedule the academic year according to differing calendars. These differences affect the deadlines for certain student actions (e.g., dropping or adding courses, registering for courses, obtaining refunds of tuition). Detailed information on these academic calendars is available from the individual schools.

#### *Medicine*

Consult the Office of Student Affairs, Keck School of Medicine for the academic calendars of professional medical degree programs. The graduate programs in biochemistry, cell and neurobiology, microbiology, nurse anesthesia, pathology, physiology and biophysics, and preventive medicine follow the university calendar.

#### *Dentistry*

The academic year of the School of Dentistry is divided into three 14-week trimesters. The graduate program in craniofacial biology follows the university calendar.

#### *Independent Health Professions*

Programs in occupational science and occupational therapy and biokinesiology and physical therapy follow the university calendar. However, certain programs require entrance to a post-summer session.

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## Publications

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### The USC Catalogue

The *USC Catalogue* is the document of authority for all students. The degree requirements listed in the *USC Catalogue* supersede any information which may be contained in any bulletin of any school or department. The university reserves the right to change its policies, rules, regulations and course offerings at any time.

### Other University Publications

#### *Bulletins and Viewbooks*

The bulletins and viewbooks published by the schools provide program descriptions and information about other topics of interest to the prospective student. Publications may be obtained by calling the individual schools.

### *Schedule of Classes*

The *Schedule of Classes* lists the courses offered during any given term and provides detailed information on registration procedures. It also includes course descriptions and cross-listed courses. It is available online at [www.usc.edu/soc](http://www.usc.edu/soc) approximately three weeks before the registration period for each session.

### *SCampus*

This annual publication contains both general guidebook information for students and university policies concerning student conduct, administrative procedures, and student rights and responsibilities. Students are responsible for understanding and abiding by policies contained in *SCampus*. *SCampus* may be obtained at the Topping Student Center or on USCweb ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus)).

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## Orientation

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### New Student Orientation

The university strongly recommends that all new students attend Orientation. Attending Orientation is the best way for new students to acclimate themselves to life at USC. Orientation provides students a chance to become familiar with campus, learn about student life, and register for first semester course work. In addition, new students will receive academic advisement and meet current faculty, staff and students. Program descriptions and session dates are mailed to newly admitted students in their Welcome Packet, and can also be accessed online at [www.usc.edu/orientation](http://www.usc.edu/orientation).

Orientation programs offer a variety of orientation sessions for incoming students. On-campus programs for freshman and transfer students are offered in June, July, December and January. In addition, graduate student workshops are offered in August. Freshman and transfer students living in Hawaii may choose to attend the Orientation session in Honolulu in May, and freshman and transfer students living in Hong Kong may choose

to participate in the Hong Kong Virtual Orientation in June. An additional charge to cover meals, refreshments and overnight housing will apply when the Orientation session selected includes meals and/or an overnight stay. Students with financial need may receive a partial fee waiver for their Orientation reservation.

During Orientation, students learn about the university, our wide-ranging student resources and our academic programs and expectations. Students will meet with their academic advisors and plan their first semester's schedules. Parents and family members are invited to attend Orientation to become acquainted with the university. Separate workshops, programs and lectures are offered to address the special needs and concerns of parents and family members.

International student orientation is offered prior to the beginning of each semester. More details can be found on the Orientation Web site at [www.usc.edu/orientation](http://www.usc.edu/orientation).

A number of academic departments and professional schools offer orientation sessions for graduate students, in addition to those offered by Orientation Programs. Visit the Orientation Web site at [www.usc.edu/orientation](http://www.usc.edu/orientation) for a list of department and professional school orientation sessions. Sessions are also available for graduate assistants through the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET). For information about CET's programs, see page 85 or visit [www.usc.edu/cet](http://www.usc.edu/cet). Email [uscet@usc.edu](mailto:uscet@usc.edu) to subscribe to the *Friends of CET* weekly update.

All new entering students are assessed a mandatory one-time orientation fee, payable during their first semester of enrollment, along with tuition charges and other fees. This fee covers special services, programs and publications throughout the student's continued enrollment at USC.

## Registration

### Registration Procedures and Current Course Offerings

The Fall, Spring and Summer *Schedules of Classes* contain details describing registration procedures, including the Web registration process, courses offered, course descriptions, faculty listings, and time and meeting place of classes. The *Schedule of Classes* is available before registration each semester on the Web at [www.usc.edu/soc](http://www.usc.edu/soc). It is recommended that students register as early as possible by use of Web registration to save time and avoid inconvenience. Permits to Register may be obtained at the Office of Academic Records and Registrar in July for new students entering in the fall semester and in December for students entering in the spring semester. Registration appointment times and permit to register information are available to continuing students in October and March on Oasis at [www.usc.edu/OASIS](http://www.usc.edu/OASIS). Open registration for all students continues the week prior to the start of the semester.

### Enrollment Status

A student is considered to be enrolled full time in a semester when the student has registered for 12 or more units as an undergraduate student, eight or more units as a master's level student or six or more units as a doctoral level student. All graduate assistants are classified as full-time students during the semester(s) of their appointments as long as they are enrolled for the minimum units required for their assistantship. The number of courses for which a student has registered is not a basis for determining full-time enrollment status. Units taken for audit do not apply to enrollment status calculation. Other than units, there are additional circumstances which confer full-time enrollment status. These include enrollment in: 594 Master's Thesis, 794 Doctoral Dissertation, GRSC 800 Studies for the Qualifying Examination and GRSC 810 Studies for the Master's Examination, as well as other courses and programs as determined by the Dean of Academic Records and Registrar. Verification of student enrollment status is provided by the Office of Academic Records and Registrar (Hubbard Hall Lobby), [www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/verification](http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/verification). Third party requests for degree and enrollment information are provided by Credentials Inc, [www.degreechk.com](http://www.degreechk.com).

### Extra Units

A normal academic load is 16 units per semester for undergraduate students and 8 units (500-level) for graduate students. The university recommends that undergraduate students register for no more than 18 units and graduate students for no more than 16 units. Permission to enroll in more than 20 units requires written approval from the school or home department of the student's major.

### Declaration of Major

All undergraduate students must record their primary major in the Office of Academic Records and Registrar by the start of their junior year (on completion of 64 semester units). All major and minor programs of study should be recorded in the Office of Academic Records and Registrar three semesters before the intended graduation date. Many academic departments can also perform changes of major for their students.

### Declaration of Minor

Application for a minor must be made to the department or professional school offering the minor, and an appropriate signature must appear on a Change/Addition of a Major or Minor Degree Objective form. Completed forms should be brought or sent to the Registrar's office, Hubbard Hall 104 (MC 0912).

### Classification and Numbering of Courses

The first digit of the course number indicates the year level of the course: 000 — preparatory courses or non-credit, 100 — first undergraduate year, 200 — second undergraduate year, 300 — third and fourth undergraduate years without graduate credit, 400 — third and fourth undergraduate years with graduate credit for graduate students, 500 — first graduate year, 600 — second graduate year, 700 — third graduate year.

Upper division courses (300- and 400-level courses) are generally more sophisticated and demanding. They may have prerequisites or other limitations on enrollment and are usually intended for students who have some preparation, either in the specific discipline or more generally in academic study. They tend to concentrate more narrowly and intensively in scope than lower division courses in the same discipline.

The lower case letters *ab, abcd*, etc., indicate the semesters of a course more than one semester in length. In such courses the *a* semester is prerequisite to the *b* semester, and so on. Courses designated *g* are available for general education credit. Courses designated *m* for multiculturalism meet the diversity requirement. Capital *L* indicates that all or part of the work is supervised laboratory or other work. Courses designated *x* are restricted in some manner. The course description will specify the restriction. Courses designated with a *z* are for repeated registrations for 0 credit, for which two units of tuition are charged.

The following are not available for graduate credit: courses numbered 000-399 and 490, courses designated *g* (general education), Senior Seminar courses, courses designated *x* where the description specifically excludes graduate credit.

### Unit Value

The unit value of courses is indicated for each term of the course by a numeral in parentheses after the course title. All courses are on the semester unit basis. It is the student's responsibility to verify with the instructor that the number of units he or she registered for in any variable unit course is correct. If the units are incorrect, the student must correct them by processing a Change of Program at the Office of Academic Records and Registrar.

### Repeating Courses

Ordinarily, courses may not be repeated for credit. For courses which may be repeated for credit, the maximum amount of credit is indicated after the unit value.

### Appropriate Course Enrollment

It is recommended that students register in courses appropriate to their academic standing — lower division students in courses below 300, upper division students in courses below 500, graduate students in courses numbered 500 or higher.

### Preparatory Courses

Preparatory courses (course numbers below 100) impart the minimum skills required for college-level work. Students completing preparatory course work may receive unit credit toward enrollment status but do not receive degree credit.

### Prerequisites

Prerequisites are courses and/or specific background required of students prior to advancing to the next course in a prescribed sequence of courses. Passage of appropriate examinations or consent of the academic unit offering the course will waive prerequisites. However, a prerequisite course within the same discipline taken after the higher level course has been passed will not be available for unit or grade point credit.

### Corequisites

Corequisites are courses which must be taken at the same time as, or passed prior to, the designated course. Passage of the appropriate examinations or consent of the academic unit offering the course will waive corequisites.

### Recommended Preparation

Recommended preparation indicates course work or specific background that is advisable but not mandatory in preparing the student for the designated course.

### Guaranteeing a Space in a Class

Registration in a class does not by itself guarantee a space in that class. An instructor may replace any student who without prior consent does not attend these class sessions: (a) the first two class sessions of the semester, or (b) the first class session of the semester for once-a-week classes. It is then the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from the course. Any class added, whether by Web registration or in person, after the first week of classes should receive the approval of the instructor.

### Pass/No Pass Enrollment Option

During the first three weeks of the semester (or the third week equivalent for any session that is scheduled for less than 15 weeks), students may elect to take a course numbered below 500 on a pass/no pass basis. All graduate students should contact their academic advisors before enrolling in a graduate course on a pass/no pass basis. Refer to the Pass/No Pass Graded Work section, page 59 (undergraduate) or page 83 (graduate), for details on degree credit restrictions on courses taken on a pass/no pass basis. Students should consult their academic advisor before enrolling in any course on a pass/no pass basis.

### Credit/No Credit Courses

Certain courses have been authorized by the University Committee on Curriculum to be graded Credit/No Credit. Students may not enroll in a course on a Credit/No Credit basis unless the course is listed as being offered as Credit/No Credit.

### Courses Numbered 490x and 390

Many academic units offer courses numbered 490x and 390. These courses are offered on a letter-graded basis only and carry certain restrictions which are uniformly applied throughout the university.

#### *490x Directed Research (2-8, max 8)*

Courses numbered 490x are open to students who have demonstrated the ability to do independent work in the discipline. The courses require consent of instructor and a written contract of course requirements signed by both the instructor and department chair. They are not available for graduate credit and are not open to students with less than 2.0 GPA overall or in any restricted academic status (such as probation, Structured Curriculum Program [SCP] and the like). A student may accumulate a maximum of eight units of 490x in any one department and 16 units toward the degree.

#### *390 Special Problems (1-4, max 4)*

Courses numbered 390 are available only to seniors in their last semester who are made aware of a unit shortage after the enrollment period for that semester has passed. Students notified of a unit shortage prior to the close of the enrollment period are expected to register for regularly scheduled classes. Enrollment in a 390 class is available only by petition to the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP). A 390 is a supervised, individual studies course. The student and instructor must prepare a written contract of course requirements for presentation with the petition to CAPP. The petition must be recommended by the dean of the academic unit in which the student is seeking a degree. Evidence must be provided that the unit shortage was the result of circumstances beyond the student's control. Credit for only one 390 registration is accepted toward the student's baccalaureate degree.

### Audited Courses

Students may elect to audit courses during the first three weeks of the semester (or the third week equivalent for any session that is scheduled for less than 15 weeks). A course taken for audit (V) will be assessed at the current tuition rate. A course taken for audit (V) will not receive credit and will not appear on the USC transcript or grade report.

### Limited Status Enrollment

Limited status enrollment allows persons who have not been admitted to the university to take a limited number of courses at USC.

#### *Eligibility for Limited Status Enrollment*

Students who have not yet completed a bachelor's degree are not eligible for limited status enrollment if they have been denied admission to USC or if they have been

academically disqualified or suspended from any community college, college or university.

At the post-baccalaureate level, limited status enrollment is not available to students who have been denied admission to the department offering the course unless prior approval is granted by the department and the appropriate dean.

#### *International Students*

Limited status enrollment does not fulfill requirements for issuing a student visa. International students (students studying or wishing to study in the U.S. on a non-immigrant visa) must have the approval of the Office of Admission (Hubbard Hall 218A) before registering for classes.

#### *Restrictions on Limited Status Enrollment*

A pre-baccalaureate limited status student may not register for more than 16 units; a post-baccalaureate limited status student may not register for more than 12 units.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered by the Office of Admission for USC employees and for post-baccalaureate students who submit a disclaimer of intent to pursue a USC degree.

Prior approval of the department offering the course is required for all limited status enrollment. If a limited status student is subsequently admitted to regular standing, no more than the first 16 undergraduate or the first 12 graduate units taken through limited status enrollment can be applied toward a degree. Individual exceptions must be approved by the dean of the degree-conferring unit.

### Dropping and Adding Courses

All such changes must be processed by Web registration or through the Registration Department. Failure to withdraw officially will result in the mark of "UW," which is computed in the GPA as zero (0) grade points. A student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty during the first 12 weeks of the semester. If the course is dropped within the first three weeks, it does not appear on the academic transcript; if the course is dropped within weeks four through 12, it will be recorded with a mark of "W." No course may be dropped after the end of the 12th week. A student may not withdraw from a course in which he or she committed or was accused of committing an academic integrity violation. After registering, it is the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from a course if he or she decides not to continue in a course. Courses may be added only during the first three weeks of the semester.

### Registration in Graduate-Level Courses by Undergraduate Students

Exceptional undergraduate students may enroll in a graduate course. In order to do so, students must receive approval of the instructor. Students must have prior approval from the chair of the major department to count the course for undergraduate credit or audit the course. The student's major department will notify the Degree Progress Department regarding the manner in which the graduate course will be used. In no case will a student be allowed to enroll in and receive credit for a graduate course if the student's cumulative USC GPA is below 2.0.

### USC-UCLA Cross-Registration for Graduate Students

As part of an academic resource-sharing program, USC graduate students have an opportunity to take a portion of their program at UCLA. This cross-registration opportunity is only available for courses or seminars not offered at USC and only to selected students. For further information on requirements, contact the USC Graduate School office (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall 315).

Credit (CR) will be granted only for work completed with a grade of B (3.0) or higher. The student's transcript will show that the course was taken at UCLA and also record the name of the course. Units attempted at UCLA are on the quarter system. USC students who complete course work at UCLA will have those units converted to 0.67 semester units for each unit completed at UCLA. Library privileges will be extended at UCLA but other privileges or services cannot be offered.

### Conversion of Non-Degree Option Course Work

A student may file a Request for NDO Course Conversion form with the Registration Department to have USC courses previously taken under a non-degree option (NDO) converted to unit credit and thus appear on the USC transcript. Such a request must include all NDO courses previously attempted; requests for partial conversion will be denied. Conversion for credit requires retroactive registration in the term in which the course was attempted, including payment of the tuition differential between the NDO rate originally paid and the tuition rate in effect at the time of conversion. As in all

USC courses taken in Limited Status, converted courses may not be considered for degree credit at USC unless the student is formally admitted to full standing at the university. Upon formal admission, only the first 16 NDO units taken that are available for credit toward the intended degree may be applied for baccalaureate credit, and only the first 12 NDO units taken that are available for credit toward the intended degree may be applied toward a graduate degree. Degree credit for units beyond the first 16 undergraduate or 12 graduate available units will not be allowed. All courses converted will appear on the USC transcript and will be included in the calculation of the USC GPA, regardless of whether they are being applied specifically toward the degree being pursued.

### Permission to Register at Another Institution

Students who wish to take course work at another institution while continuing as enrolled students at USC will be required to obtain various levels of permission to do so. For details, see the Course Work Taken Elsewhere section on page 55 (undergraduate) or page 80 (graduate).

## University Policies

### Academic Integrity at USC

The university as an instrument of learning is predicated on the existence of an environment of integrity. As members of the academic community, faculty, students and administrative staff share the responsibility for maintaining this environment. Faculty have the primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining an atmosphere and attitude of academic integrity such that the enterprise may flourish in an open and honest way. Students share this responsibility for maintaining standards of academic performance and classroom behavior conducive to the learning process. Administrative staff are responsible for the establishment and maintenance of procedures to support and enforce those academic standards. Thus, the entire university community bears the responsibility for maintaining an environment of integrity and for confronting incidents of academic dishonesty.

Specific guidelines governing academic integrity are described in *SCampus*. Additional information can also be found on the Student

Judicial Affairs and Community Standards Web site at [www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS).

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The University of Southern California maintains the privacy of student education records and allows students the right to inspect their education records as stated in the university's Student Education Records policy, consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The entire text of the university's policy is located in the Office of the General Counsel, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Registrar's Office. A summary also appears in the current edition of the student guidebook, *SCampus*. Additional information regarding FERPA is also available on the Registrar's Web site, [www.usc.edu/ferpa](http://www.usc.edu/ferpa).

Faculty and staff who request access to student academic records in order to execute their normal duties must first review the information found on the FERPA Web site and complete the tutorial before access will be granted.

Students wishing to review or seeking to amend their education records should submit a written request to the university office in which the record is maintained.

At the discretion of university officials, USC may release certain information classified as directory information unless the student requests that such information not be released. A complete listing of directory information is published in *SCampus* in the Student Education Records section and is also found in the FERPA section of the Registrar's Web site, [www.usc.edu/ferpa](http://www.usc.edu/ferpa).

Students wishing to restrict release of directory information may do so by completing the appropriate form provided by the Registrar's Office (Hubbard Hall Lobby). Such requests remain in effect for the academic year. Students wishing only to have their information withheld from the online *USC Student Directory* should contact the Registrar's Office (Hubbard Hall 104).

Recognizing that many students wish to share information from their educational records with their parents and family members, USC has developed an online system that will accomplish the following:

- allow students to grant their parents access to education and medical records in one step;
- allow parents to view elements of the education records that are available in USC's central student information system.

Students may log in to OASIS, USC's Web-based student information system, and use the "Establish Guest Access" feature to grant parents permission to education and medical records. Instructions for logging into OASIS and granting access are provided on the university's FERPA Web site at [www.usc.edu/ferpa](http://www.usc.edu/ferpa).

Parents who wish to gain access to information from the education records of their son or daughter will not be provided the information unless the student has granted access through OASIS or has completed the appropriate release form, authorizing the university to release specific information from their education records to approved individuals. If students grant access through OASIS, parents and family members may access education records information online through the OASIS for Guests Web site. For more information regarding FERPA, including forms and instructions to log in to OASIS or OASIS for Guests, parents and students should visit the university's FERPA Web site at [www.usc.edu/ferpa](http://www.usc.edu/ferpa).

### Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Southern California is committed to full compliance with the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As part of the implementation of this law, the university will continue to provide reasonable accommodation for academically qualified students with disabilities so that they can participate fully in the university's educational programs and activities. Although USC is not required by law to change the "fundamental nature or essential curricular components of its programs in order to accommodate the needs of disabled students," the university will provide reasonable academic accommodation. It is the specific responsibility of the university administration and all faculty serving in a teaching capacity to ensure the university's compliance with this policy.

The general definition of a student with a disability is any person who has "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's activities," and any person who has "a history of, or is regarded as having, such an impairment." Reasonable academic and physical accommodations include but are not limited to: extended time on examinations; substitution of similar or related work for a nonfundamental program requirement; special testing procedures; advance notice regarding booklists for visually impaired and some learning disabled students; use of academic aides in the classroom such as note-takers and sign language interpreters; accessibility for students who use wheelchairs and those with mobility impairments; and need for special classroom furniture or special equipment in the classroom.

### Procedures for Obtaining Accommodations

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services and Programs (DSP) prior to or during the first week of class attendance or as early in the semester as possible. The office will work with the course instructor and his or her department, and the student to arrange for reasonable accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation verifying disability.

### Academic Accommodations

Students seeking academic accommodations due to a physical, psychological or learning disability should make the request to the course instructor prior to or during the first week of class attendance or as early in the semester as possible. Course instructors should require that a student present verification of documentation of a disability from Disability Services and Programs if academic accommodations are requested. The USC Gould School of Law has a unit-specific policy for handling requests for academic accommodations; however, all students with disabilities should register with DSP. Refer to the *Law School Student Handbook*.

For assistance in how to provide reasonable accommodations for a particular disability, course instructors are encouraged to consult with the staff at DSP. Students requesting academic accommodations must have verification of disability.

### Grievance Procedures

Detailed information about processing a grievance is found in the Student Grievance Procedure section of *SCampus*, a guidebook for USC students, and in a brochure available in the Disability Services and Programs office, STU 301.

## Examinations

### Final Examinations Make-up Policy

When a final examination falls at a time that conflicts with a student's observance of a holy day, faculty members must accommodate a request for an alternate examination date at a time that does not violate the student's religious creed.

A student must discuss a final examination conflict with the professor no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date to arrange an acceptable alternate examination date.

### Administrative Examinations

The following administrative examinations are given at USC:

#### Placement Examinations

Placement Examinations determine the student's level of ability in order to establish the appropriate placement level in subjects such as mathematics and foreign languages. No unit credit is available.

Placement tests are administered by the University Testing Bureau in the following areas: math, chemistry, physics and foreign

languages as well as the International Student English Examination. The tests are given for placement and/or counseling and/or subject credit (which may fulfill a required or elective subject area). They are administered on scheduled dates on the USC campus. Both a USC ID and a non-USC ID are required along with proof of USC admission for all placement tests. For additional information concerning these tests, contact the USC Testing Bureau, YWCA 104, (213) 740-7166, ([www.usc.edu/student-affairs/testing\\_bureau](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/testing_bureau)).

Placement in elementary and intermediate foreign language courses is made by the Foreign Language Placement Tests. Transfer courses equivalent to a USC language course fulfill the prerequisite for the next course in the sequence, but students are required to take the USC placement exam. Transfer students may be advised (although not required) to repeat, without additional credit, a semester or semesters of instruction to qualify for the next level in the sequence if their skills are judged insufficient at the time of testing. Questions concerning foreign language placement should be directed to the chair of the appropriate department.

Placements in Mathematics 040x, 108, 116, 117, 118 and 125 are determined by the appropriate tests.

#### *University Writing Examination*

Students who score below the specified level on the verbal portion of the SAT are required to take the University Writing Examination to determine if they must complete preparatory course work before enrolling in Writing 140. Also see the Writing program section on page 457.

#### *Equivalency Examinations*

Equivalency examinations are given at the discretion of the academic unit to determine whether upper division transferred course

work may be applied as subject credit to the major requirements for the degree. Passing the examination does not provide additional unit credit. Contact the appropriate academic unit for specific details.

#### *Subject Credit by Special Examination*

Special examinations for subject credit establish subject credit in a subject area in which the student is sufficiently prepared but in which no previous credit has been accepted or attempted toward the USC degree.

Students who would like to request a waiver from the normal course requirements may request that the chair of the department in which the course is offered allow them to take a special examination challenging the course for subject credit only. The fee for the examination is one half of a unit per examination.

With the permission of the dean of the academic unit in which the student is a degree candidate, the student may file a Request for Credit by Special Examination form in the Grade Department (JHH 106). The following rules apply:

(1) Credit by special examination is available to undergraduate students only.

(2) No more than one special examination may be taken in a given course.

(3) Special examinations will not be allowed in any course for which a student has received a grade or mark on the transcript (e.g., W, UW, IN, IX, F or D) at USC or elsewhere.

(4) A special examination will not be allowed if the course is a prerequisite to or sequentially precedes a course or courses that appear on a college level transcript, unless USC allows similar courses to be taken out of sequence.

(5) Credit cannot be earned by special examination for the Expository Writing requirement, the first three semesters of any foreign language or Mathematics 040x.

(6) Native speakers of a foreign language may challenge only literature or linguistics courses offered through the respective language department.

(7) Results of all special examinations taken for subject credit only will appear on the USC transcript with a grade of "CR" (credit) or "NC" (no credit) and will not reflect unit value.

## Academic Standards

### **Definition of Grades**

The following grades are used: A – excellent; B – good; C – fair in undergraduate courses and minimum passing in courses for graduate credit; D – minimum passing in undergraduate courses; F – failed. In addition, plus and minus grades may be used, with the exceptions of A plus, F plus and F minus. The grade of F indicates that the student failed at the end of the semester or was doing failing work and stopped attending the course after the twelfth week of the semester. Minimum passing grades are D- for undergraduate credit and C for graduate credit. Additional grades include: CR – credit (passing grade for non-letter-graded courses equivalent to C- quality or better for undergraduate courses and B (3.0) quality or better for graduate courses); NC – no credit (less than the equivalent of a C- for an undergraduate and a B for a graduate, non-letter-graded course); P – pass (passing grade equivalent to C- quality or better for undergraduate letter-graded courses and B

(3.0) quality or better for graduate courses taken on a Pass/No Pass basis); NP – no pass (less than the equivalent of a C- for an undergraduate and a B (3.0) for a graduate, letter graded course taken on a Pass/No Pass basis).

The following marks are also used: W – withdrawn; IP – interim mark for a course exceeding one semester (failure to complete courses in which marks of IP [in progress] appear will be assigned grades of NC); UW – unofficial withdrawal (assigned to students who stopped attending prior to the drop deadline but failed to withdraw); MG – missing grade (an administrative mark used in cases when the instructor fails to submit a final course grade for a student); IN – incomplete (work not completed because of documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the twelfth week of the

semester; arrangements for the IN and its completion should be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final exam); IX – lapsed incomplete.

### **Grade Point Average Categories and Class Levels**

A system of grade points is used to determine a student's grade point average. Grade points are assigned to grades as follows for each unit in the credit value of a course: A, 4 points; A-, 3.7 points; B+, 3.3 points; B, 3.0 points; B-, 2.7 points; C+, 2.3 points; C, 2 points; C-, 1.7 points; D+, 1.3 points; D, 1 point; D-, 0.7 points; F, 0 points; UW, 0 points; IX, 0 points. Wherever these letter grades appear in this catalogue or other university documents, they represent the numerical equivalents listed above. Marks of CR, NC, P, NP, W, IP, MG and IN do not affect a student's grade point average.



There are four categories of class level: Undergraduate, Graduate, Law and Other. Undergraduate comprises freshman (less than 32 units earned); sophomore (32-63.9 units earned); junior (64-95.9 units earned) and senior (at least 96 units earned). Graduate comprises any course work attempted while pursuing a master's and/or doctoral degree. Law comprises any course work attempted while pursuing a Juris Doctor or Master of Laws degree. Other comprises any course work attempted while not admitted to a degree program or course work not available for degree credit.

### Grades of Incomplete (IN)

#### *Conditions for Completing a Grade of Incomplete*

If an IN is assigned as the student's grade, the instructor will fill out the Assignment of an Incomplete (IN) and Requirements for Completion form which will specify to the student and to the department the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date and the weight to be assigned to the work remaining to be done when computing the final grade. A student may complete the IN by completing only the portion of required work not finished as a result of documented illness or emergency occurring after the twelfth week of the semester. Previously graded work may not be repeated for credit. It is not possible to complete an IN by re-registering for the course, even within the designated time.

#### *Time Limit for Completion of an Incomplete*

One calendar year is allowed to complete an IN. Individual academic units may have more stringent policies regarding these time limits. If the IN is not completed within the designated time, the course is considered "lapsed," the grade is changed to an "IX," and it will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 points. Courses offered on a Credit/No Credit basis or taken on a Pass/No Pass basis for which a mark of Incomplete is assigned will be lapsed with a mark of NC or NP and will not be calculated into the grade point average.

#### *Extension of Time for Completion of an Incomplete*

Completing the IN within the one-year period should be the student's highest priority. A student may petition the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP) for an extension of time for the completion of an IN. Extensions beyond the specified time limit are rarely approved if the student has enrolled in subsequent semesters.

In all cases, a petition for an extension of time for completion of an IN must have departmental approval and include a statement from the instructor explaining what is needed to complete the course and why the

instructor feels the student should be given even further time for completion.

### Missing Grades

Marks of MG must be resolved before a degree or certificate will be awarded. If a student wishes to graduate and chooses not to resolve the mark(s) of MG, the mark(s) will be defaulted to mark(s) of UW.

#### *Time Limit for Resolution of a Missing Grade*

One calendar year is allowed to resolve an MG. If an MG is not resolved within one year, the grade is changed to UW and it will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 grade points.

### Correction of Grades

A grade once reported to the Office of Academic Records and Registrar may not be changed except by request of the faculty member to the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures on a Correction of Grade form. Changes should be requested only on the basis of an actual error in assigning the original grade, not on the basis of a request by the student or special consideration for an individual student. Students are not permitted to complete course work after the semester has ended.

### Disputing a Grade

The instructor's evaluation of the performance of each individual student is the final basis for assigning grades. Through orderly appeal procedures, students have protection against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. See the student guidebook *SCampus* for details of the procedure.

### Academic Dishonesty Sanctions

When a student is found responsible for a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code standards pertaining to academic dishonesty, the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) will inform the Office of Academic Records and Registrar. In appropriate cases, the Office of Academic Records and Registrar will post the sanction information on the student's academic records. Disciplinary sanctions noted on student records include suspension and expulsion from the university and revocation of admission and degree. Disciplinary grade sanctions (e.g., F in course) are not distinguished on a student's transcript from marks assigned for academic work accomplished. In cases of suspension or expulsion, the student's registration for the current term may be cancelled with marks of "W." More information can be found in *SCampus* in the University Governance section.

### Repeated Course Work at USC

Under certain conditions, a student may repeat a course for grade point credit. In no case will additional unit credit be allowed for repeated courses or duplicated work. No student may repeat a course for grade point credit in which a grade of B- or better was received. A prerequisite course may not be repeated after a student has completed a course for which it is designated a prerequisite. (See prerequisite on page 31.)

Undergraduate students who want to repeat a course in which a grade of C+, C or C- was received and have the subsequent grade calculated in the grade point average must petition the committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP) for permission to do so prior to re-registering in the course. *Post hoc* approval will not be granted.

Graduate students may repeat a course in which a grade of C- or below was received, but both grades will be calculated in the grade point average. Graduate students who want to repeat a course in which a grade of C+ or C was received and have the subsequent grade calculated in the grade point average must petition the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP) for permission to do so prior to re-registering in the course. *Post hoc* approval will not be granted.

A special provision governs the repeat of courses by students who enter USC as a first-time freshman. These students may repeat a maximum of three courses taken during the first two semesters at USC in which grades of D+ or below (including UW and IX) were received, and only the subsequent letter grade, even if lower, will be calculated in the grade point average. The courses must be repeated at USC for a letter grade, and both courses with the grades received will appear on the transcript. The same course may be repeated no more than once for the benefit of substitution of grade. Students must notify the Degree Progress Department if they wish to utilize this provision. Students who have been assigned a grade as a result of a Student Conduct sanction may not repeat the course under this provision.

### Excessive Withdrawals (Marks of W)

An undergraduate student who withdraws (a mark of W) from at least 8 units in one semester or who withdraws from at least 16 units overall, must undergo mandatory academic advisement before the student can enroll in a subsequent semester. Registration for subsequent semesters will be cleared by the academic advisor once advisement has been completed. This advisement is intended to provide students with information and guidance on the negative consequences that excessive withdrawals have on successful and timely completion of degree programs.

### The Dean's List

Any undergraduate student who earns a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on 12 units or more of letter-graded course work in any one semester is placed on the Dean's List for that semester. Grades of IN must be removed before eligibility is determined for that semester. Academic transcripts do not carry the Dean's List notation.

### Probation and Disqualification of Undergraduate Students

An overall USC grade point average (GPA) of at least C (2.0) on course work taken at USC is required for completion of undergraduate degrees.

#### *Academic Probation*

A student whose overall USC GPA falls below 2.0 is on academic probation. Continued enrollment requires clearance from an academic review counselor.

#### *Mandatory Advisement*

A student whose overall GPA falls below 2.0 is required to seek academic advisement prior to course selection each semester. Proof of advisement must be filed with the Academic Review Department before any registration request will be processed. The Academic Review Department will only accept an official Academic Review Advisement Record form with an authorized school signature as proof of advisement. This form may be obtained in JHH, Room 113.

#### *Academic Disqualification*

Students on academic probation who do not raise their overall GPA to 2.0 after two semesters of enrollment, exempting summer enrollment, will be academically disqualified. However, if a student earns a minimum semester GPA of 2.3 in the second or any subsequent probation semester but has not yet reached the overall 2.0 GPA, the student will not be disqualified and will be allowed to enroll for an additional semester.

#### *Readmission after Academic Disqualification*

Petitions for readmission after academic disqualification are initiated by the student through the Academic Review Department. Completion of approved course work from another institution is a requirement for petitioning for readmission. Disqualified students must meet with an academic review counselor before enrolling in courses at another institution. The counselor will provide the Readmission Pre-Approval Form on which both Academic Review and the student's academic department must sign approval.

Before petitioning for readmission, a disqualified student must complete a minimum of 12 semester units of pre-approved, transferable course work applicable to USC degree requirements with a minimum 3.0 GPA. As readmission to the university is never guaranteed, any indication of strong academic performance beyond the 12 units required would strengthen a readmission petition. All grade issues at USC (IN, MG, etc.) must be resolved prior to submission of a readmission petition.

Students must petition for readmission by December 30 for spring semester, by May 1 for summer session and by August 15 for fall semester. Since a student's readmission petition must be reviewed and approved by CAPP before he or she can register, under no circumstances will a petition be accepted after the deadline. A non-refundable fee of \$50 must accompany the readmission petition.

### Academic Warning and Dismissal of Graduate Students

Faculty advisors and departments take factors other than satisfactory grades and adequate GPAs into consideration in determining a student's qualifications for an advanced degree. A student's overall academic performance, specific skills and aptitudes, and faculty evaluations will be considered in departmental decisions regarding a student's continuation in a master's or doctoral degree program.

Satisfactory progress toward an advanced degree as determined by the faculty is required at all times. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress will be informed by their department or committee chair or school dean. The faculty has the right to recommend at any time after written warning that a student be dismissed from a graduate program for academic reasons or that a student be denied readmission. Procedures on disputed academic evaluations are described in *SCampus*.

### Ethics Guidelines for Graduate Study

As participants in an enterprise that depends on academic freedom and integrity, faculty members and graduate students have a special obligation to promote conditions that maintain free inquiry and the highest standards of integrity. USC faculty have developed guidelines to serve as a resource for students finding their way through the often complex academic relationships of a major research university. These guidelines for ethical faculty and graduate student relations are available from the Graduate School.

### Research Involving Human Subjects

Graduate student researchers are required to obtain approval from the USC Institutional Review Boards whenever research, whether funded or unfunded, involving human subjects is proposed. The Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are fully authorized to review all proposals and projects which involve the use of human subjects. "Human subject" means a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains (a) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or (b) identifiable private information. The university IRBs have been established to meet federal regulations. The IRBs are required to assure that: (1) research methods are appropriate to the objectives of the research; (2) research methods are the safest, consistent with sound research design; (3) risks are justified in terms of related benefits to the subjects; (4) subjects' privacy is protected; (5) subjects participate willingly and knowingly to the extent possible; and (6) research projects are "monitored" by the IRBs.

## Exception Procedures

Exceptions to particular university regulations and degree requirements will be considered only if there is no prohibition stated in this catalogue. Where exceptions are specifically prohibited, none will be granted. A student who wants an individual exception must follow the procedure specified in this catalogue for the particular regulation or requirement. If no procedure is specified, it may still be possible to request an exception. Such exceptions, however, are rarely granted.

Requests for exception to established university academic regulations or procedures are generally heard by: (1) the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP); (2) the dean of the academic unit in which the student is seeking a degree; or (3) the dean or director of the office responsible for administering the policy. Students who wish to request an exception should first consult an academic advisor about the appropriate process to follow.

While the university is sensitive to the educational advantages of a flexible curriculum, it is also conscious of a responsibility to ensure equity for all students. Permission to deviate from published regulations is neither automatic nor *pro forma*; each request is considered on its own merits and in light of the petitioner's complete academic record.

### USC Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures

The Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP), a representative group of faculty, students and administrators, reviews or delegates the review of most general petitions. CAPP studies the effects of university academic requirements, regulations and policies; recommends improved student academic policies and procedures; and regularizes policies and procedures so that the number of petitions can be reduced. As part of this charge, CAPP has specific responsibility for oversight and review of the University Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. CAPP also rules through Academic Petitions Committees on requests for exceptions to academic regulations and requirements printed in the *University Catalogue*. In most instances, the Academic Petitions Committee acts as the body with original jurisdiction, but in some cases, delegates authority for approvals to another.

The assumptions and procedures which guide Academic Petition Committee actions are the following:

- The student is responsible for complying with deadlines established in the academic calendar.
- All academic work should be accurately reflected in the student's record. The record is to be faithful to the actual experience. Cosmetic corrections or adjustments are not sanctioned.
- Care must be taken not to establish the petition process as an alternative to being held to the adopted academic requirements.
- Decisions should be focused on the academic basis for petition, rather than the consequences (real or imagined) that may face the student.
- Registration and enrollment related petitions are presented by the registrar's staff.
- Academic petitions are presented by a representative of the student's school.
- The Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures receives reports from the degree progress department, the academic review department and the Academic Petitions Committee.
- The committee reports to the office of the president through the provost.

### Registration-related Exceptions

Requests for exception to published regulation procedures and enrollment deadlines are heard by the Dean of Academic Records and Registrar. Such requests are generated in the Academic Review Department, Hubbard Hall 113. Requests that are not approved by the dean are often referred to a CAPP panel for review.

Any request to change the official registration for a semester retroactively must be submitted within 24 months of the end of the semester in question. The 24-month period starts with the last day of final examinations for the semester in question. If appropriate, the time limit can be waived by the dean of the academic unit in which the student is seeking a degree for a period not to exceed a total of five years. Deans may not request waivers of the two-year time limit rule if the course(s) in question occurred longer than five years previously.

### General Education Petitions

Students may petition to waive individual general education requirements or apply one or more courses not listed in the *USC Catalogue* toward general education requirements. If the course or courses to be substituted were or will be taken at USC, a General Petition may be initiated in the student's home department; if taken at another institution, an Articulation Petition may be initiated in the Degree Progress Department (Hubbard Hall 010).

### Degree Requirement-related Exceptions

Requests for exception to specific degree requirements are generated in the academic unit. Most requests will be forwarded by the advisor to CAPP for review. Some exceptions are made by the dean of the academic unit and are recorded on the Student Academic Record System (STARS) report by the academic department, using the exception process.

### Articulation Petitions

Students who wish to request changes in their transfer credit evaluations should first discuss their request with the Degree Progress Department (Hubbard Hall 010).

A request which cannot be processed by Degree Progress will be forwarded to the Articulation Office for review. Students wishing to appeal the decision may do so using an articulation petition.

### The Graduate School

Requests for an exception to the policies and procedures governing Graduate School degree programs will be considered upon submission of a general petition to the Graduate School stating the specific request, supported by adequate reasons and information. The signatures and recommendations of the faculty advisor or committee chair and department chair are required.

### Graduate and Professional Programs

Requests for exception to the policies and procedures governing graduate degree programs that do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Graduate School should be directed to the dean of the degree-conferring unit.