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# The USC Graduate School

The USC Graduate School is responsible for those academic and professional affairs of the university that relate to the degree programs offered through the Graduate School. The Graduate School also participates in general university affairs relating to graduate and professional education and research.

### Administration

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### History

Graduate studies had their formal beginnings at the University of Southern California in 1910, and 1923 marked the official constitution of the Graduate School of the university.

### Mission

The Graduate School values the contribution of every graduate student. Its mission is to promote a distinguished Ph.D. educational experience, to support and celebrate all graduate student achievements and to provide leadership in the establishment and communication of policies, standards and processes

related to graduate education. Through its Provost's and Annenberg Graduate Fellowship program, the Graduate School partners excellent students with excellent faculty across the spectrum of disciplines and awards fellowships to incoming students who show outstanding promise for academic careers in research and teaching, and who serve to increase the representation of under-represented groups in their disciplines.

The vice provost for graduate programs has academic oversight responsibility for all graduate programs at the university. Excellence in graduate and professional education is critically dependent on the exchange of scholarly ideas among an increasingly diverse community of faculty and students. The values that characterize these interactions include dedication to excellence, mutual respect, fairness, collegiality, honesty and integrity.

The Graduate School, which confers all the university's Ph.D. degrees, several professional doctorates and many master's degrees, adheres to that vision and those values. Graduate students at USC are key members of the university's community of scholars, contributing diverse viewpoints and fresh insights that are poised to make their mark on the theories, systems, innovations, public policy and creative work of the 21st century.

Common threads in all Graduate School activities are: promoting academic excellence; advocating on behalf of graduate students; and the fostering of the sense of community (composed of students, faculty, staff, alumni and administrators) that characterizes graduate education at USC as a place for students of all backgrounds. Facilitating the participation of under-represented groups in all areas of research and graduate studies is critical to the mission.

## Graduate School Policies and Requirements

### Admission

Admission to degree or certificate programs in the Graduate School is processed through the USC Office of Graduate Admission, which receives and processes all applications, evaluates credentials and issues notification letters. Only a letter from the office of Graduate Admission grants official admission to a graduate degree objective in the university. The Graduate School establishes and monitors the standards under which students are admitted for study in degree programs under its jurisdiction. Admission to the university, under the standards of the Graduate School, is determined by the Office of Graduate Admission on the recommendation of the appropriate academic department. The following are the basic requirements: (1) a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from an accredited college or university, comparable in standard to that awarded at USC; (2) satisfactory scores on the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE); (3) intellectual promise, including evaluation of grade point averages (GPA) that indicates an ability to do acceptable graduate work; (4) strong personal qualifications, including good moral character. Credentials for admission must include a complete record of all previous college or university work.

It must be stressed that while every student must be qualified for admission to the Graduate School, the fact of qualification does not guarantee admission. Consequently, the higher an applicant's qualifications, the better the prospects of securing a place will be.

Admission documents are reviewed by the applicant's prospective department. Applicants are advised that individual departments may establish additional admission standards, such as requiring the submission of the appropriate GRE Subject Test and letters of recommendation from professors in their major field to the chair of the appropriate department at USC. The applicant should contact the department in which graduate work is to be done for information on supplementary documents required. See the departmental sections of this catalogue or visit the departmental Website.

### *The Graduate Record Examinations*

As a supplement to other evidence of an applicant's preparation for successful graduate study, the General Test of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) is an integral part of the admission procedure. Individual departments may also require the appropriate Subject Test.

The analytical portion of the GRE now requires a writing sample. The results are conveyed to any institution requesting an applicant's test results. Applicants should take the package of General Interest measures containing the Mathematical Reasoning or Quantitative Reasoning Test as appropriate for their intended program.

Test scores on the GRE that are more than five years old at the time of application are not accepted. Students are advised to repeat the GRE if they have not taken the test within five years.

### *Deadlines and Notification*

The completed application for admission and all required supporting documents should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admission based on the published deadline for the program of interest. In the case of a student enrolled in the last semester of the baccalaureate program, all credentials, including evidence of work in progress, should be submitted.

Some departments only admit graduate students to begin study in the fall semester and require completed applications as early as November 15. Departmental deadlines are listed on the departmental Websites. Priority consideration for Ph.D. student funding will be given to those applicants who submit all application materials by December 1. The university will continue to accept and consider applications submitted after December 1. Those who wish to submit applications after the deadline should check with the intended major department first to insure that applications will be accepted. Applications received subsequent to closing dates will be considered for the next available semester.

Notification of an admission decision depends upon the method of application review used in each department. Some departments send an informal notice of departmental recommendation for admission; official notice of admission, however, is sent only by the USC Office of Graduate Admission. For federal financial aid deadlines, please see Financial Aid for Graduate Students in the Graduate and Professional section on page 82.

*Correspondence with department chairpersons or individual faculty members does not constitute admission. Only a letter from the Office of Graduate Admission grants official admission to a degree objective in the university.*

#### *Acceptance with a Degree Objective*

Students will be admitted with a specified degree objective. Admission to a degree objective and permission to enroll does not imply that the student is or will be automatically guaranteed the right to continue in a degree program or to be a candidate for an advanced degree.

#### **Classification of Admission Status**

##### *Full Graduate Standing*

Students who have been accepted for admission, have met all the basic admission requirements and filed all relevant documents with the Office of Graduate Admission are considered admitted to full graduate standing. Occasionally, applicants for admission may lack one of the qualifications listed above or may have difficulty producing appropriate documentation; such students may be conditionally admitted.

##### *Conditional Admission*

Conditional admission is a status for those students who have not yet met all requirements for admission to full graduate status or who have not filed all relevant documents with the office handling graduate admission. See page 80 in the Graduate and Professional Education section for policies governing enrollment as a conditionally admitted student. Full graduate student standing is not granted until all conditions have been met within the time limit given.

##### *Limited Status Students*

Some students may wish to enroll in graduate-level courses for personal satisfaction or professional enhancement without at the same time wishing to seek a graduate degree. Other students may be permitted to enroll with permission from the department. Such students should obtain a special Limited Status form from the Office of Academic Records and Registrar at the time of registration. This will permit them to register in the classification limited status. See page 33 in the Academic Policies section for policies governing limited status enrollment. Limited status enrollment is not to be construed as admission.

#### *Doctoral Admission with Advanced Standing*

Students can be admitted with Advanced Standing (entry with an appropriate completed graduate degree from an accredited institution) to all programs in which the Ph.D. degree is conferred by the Graduate School at USC with approval from the vice provost for graduate programs. See page 85 in the Graduate and Professional Education section under "Transfer of Course Work" for more information.

#### *Advancement to Candidacy*

Admission to graduate study does not imply advancement to candidacy for an advanced degree and gives no right or claim to be so admitted. Candidacy is determined after the student has demonstrated, by work done at this university, the ability to do graduate work with originality and independence.

#### **General Requirements for Graduate Degrees**

The foundation for the master's degree or for the Ph.D. degree is a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent comparable in standard to that awarded at USC from a regionally accredited college or university. Many doctoral students, of course, will already have received a master's degree.

University policies governing unit, grade point average and time limit requirements are stated in the Academic Policies section of this catalogue (see page 29). Graduate students should also consult this section for policies on transfer of credit, concurrent enrollment, continuous enrollment, leaves of absence, readmission, and waiver and substitution of course requirements.

#### *Unit Requirements*

The course of study for the master's degree must include at least 24 units in required and elective courses. In addition, students in a program requiring a thesis must register for four units of 594ab Master's Thesis.

A minimum of 60 units of course work beyond the baccalaureate is required for the Ph.D. degree, including research courses and four units of 794ab Doctoral Dissertation. No more than 8 units of 794 may be received or applied toward the degree.

A minimum of 36 units of course work beyond the first graduate degree, exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation, is required for doctoral degree students admitted with Advanced Standing. Additional course work may be required if deemed necessary by the student's faculty.

#### *Residence*

Residence is a period of intensive study completed at USC. For the master's degree a minimum of 20 units of course work applicable toward the degree must be completed on the University Park and/or Health Sciences campuses and/or at one of the university's approved off-campus study centers.

For the Ph.D. degree a minimum of 24 units applicable toward the degree, exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation, must be completed on the University Park and/or Health Sciences campuses. Internships, fieldwork and other off-campus experiences do not count toward residency.

It is not intended that the Ph.D. degree be conferred as a certificate of residence, however faithful or extended, or as a certificate of the satisfaction of unit requirements, which are to be regarded as largely preliminary. It has been found that the scholastic requirements for the degree cannot be completed in less than the equivalent of three full years of work devoted wholly to graduate study and research with appropriate facilities and under university supervision.

#### *Communication Skills Requirement*

All candidates for advanced degrees awarded by the Graduate School must demonstrate the ability to communicate and transfer knowledge. The specific method(s) for satisfying this requirement will be established by each individual academic unit.

#### *Exception to Graduate School Policy*

Requests for exception to certain policies and procedures governing Graduate School degree programs will be considered upon the submission of a petition stating the specific request, supported by adequate reasons and information. The signatures and recommendation of the faculty advisor or committee chair and department chair are required. The petition is available on the Graduate School's Website at [www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool).

#### **General Requirements for Progressive Degree Programs**

A progressive degree program enables a USC undergraduate to begin work on a master's degree while completing requirements for the bachelor's degree. The degree may be in the same or different departments but should be in a similar field of study. See page 86 in the Graduate and Professional Education section for detailed information.

### Departmental Requirements

The requirements and regulations set forth in this portion of the catalogue are to be construed only as minimal requirements established by the Graduate School. In addition, the student is obligated to meet all the requirements established by the individual department as described in the departmental sections.

#### *Advisement and Program of Study*

Academic advisement of entering graduate students will be provided by a designated faculty member in the student's home department. Ideally, during the first semester of graduate enrollment a formal program of study should be developed and agreed upon in writing. This academic plan should include: (1) the sequence of required and elective courses, with a diversity of faculty instruction and a reasonable balance between course work and directed research appropriate for the degree; (2) evaluation of available transfer credit for application toward the degree; and (3) the schedule and procedures for departmental evaluation of the student. The program of study should be on file in the student's department and may be modified in keeping with the student's progress toward the degree objective. This should become the responsibility of the student's guidance committee when it has been established.

#### *Foreign Language/Research Tool Requirements*

Although the Graduate School does not require a foreign language examination, some departments do have specific language requirements for their graduate programs.

The foreign language requirement is determined by the individual departments or schools, subject to approval by the University Committee on Curriculum. For the Ph.D. student, these requirements should be met well in advance of the qualifying examination.

When proficiency in a foreign language or a research tool is required, the evidence attesting to proficiency may not be more than five years old. This regulation applies regardless of the form of the evidence.

For specific information, see Foreign Language/Research Tool Requirement under the appropriate department and program sections of this catalogue.

#### *Academic Warning and Dismissal*

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 so 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.

### Theses and Dissertations

#### *Submission of Theses and Dissertations*

Candidates are required to submit their manuscripts to the Graduate School electronically as one PDF file for review by the thesis editor. Permission to submit electronically will be granted by the thesis editor after all required documentation is first submitted in person to the Graduate School by the deadline date and time. Once the paperwork is reviewed and is complete, the candidate is cleared to submit the manuscript electronically and must do so by the deadline date and time.

Manuscripts submitted electronically without Graduate School permission will be rejected. Only electronic PDF versions of the manuscript will be accepted for review. The university does not provide copies of theses and dissertations.

The following items must first be submitted to the Graduate School before a candidate will be cleared to upload the manuscript: Approval to Submit Defended and Final Copy of Doctoral Work form or the Approval to Submit Final Copy of Master's Thesis form; Signature Page; Documentation Review form; Survey of Earned Doctorates (*Ph.D. candidates only*); receipt for paid publication fee; copy of the latest Appointment or Change of Committee form (*for candidates whose degrees fall under the jurisdiction of the Graduate School*) and the Ph.D. Exit Survey. A final form which is not required for the submission of the manuscript, but which is required before a candidate will be cleared to graduate, is the Verification of Completion of the Requirements for the Doctoral Degree form or the Verification of Completion of the Requirements for the Master's Degree form. This form can either be submitted with the original packet of graduation paperwork or within three weeks of the date that a candidate is cleared to upload the manuscript.

Candidates have three months from the date the committee chair signs the Approval to Submit Defended and Final Copy of Doctoral Work form or the Approval to Submit Final Copy of Master's Thesis form

to complete all their corrections required by the thesis editor. If the thesis/dissertation is not approved by the thesis editor within three months, a late submission fee of \$100 will be assessed for each month thereafter. Manuscripts are reviewed and graduation paperwork is processed in the order that they are received. Candidates are strongly urged to submit their paperwork and manuscript as soon as possible after their manuscript has been approved by their committee.

Candidates wishing to avoid registration in 594, 794 or the equivalent (provided that they have complied with the minimum registration requirements) must first submit their completed and signed graduation paperwork to the Graduate School and then, once cleared, upload their manuscript to the Graduate School by the Add/Drop date of the fall or spring semesters. Registration in 594, 794 or the equivalent is required in each term (excluding summer) until the candidate completes, defends, makes any post-defense revisions and submits the thesis or dissertation to the thesis editor. Candidates who do not submit all their graduation paperwork and upload their manuscripts before the Add/Drop date for the fall and spring semesters must register for 594, 794 or the equivalent for that semester.

International students must check with the Office of International Services to confirm their eligibility.

#### *Acceptance by the University*

The university must accept all theses and dissertations in an approved, final and electronic form before the degree can be conferred. The candidate's committee must have approved all documents before submission to the Graduate School. After complying with the submission process described above, the student must remain in contact with the Graduate School during the corrections process.

At the time of submission, all manuscripts should be formatted and edited according to a recommended style manual and strict adherence to the *Guidelines for Format and Presentation of Theses and Dissertations*, available from the Graduate School Website. The university thesis editor reviews the final electronic copy for conformance to university regulations, which takes precedence over all other style formats and issues. The editor does not function as a proofreader or copy editor.

The final electronic version of the thesis or dissertation must comply with university guidelines, which are established to meet publication standards at ProQuest and at the USC Libraries. Candidates with manuscripts that have not been proofread and/or do not conform to university regulations will be notified via email that their manuscript is not accepted and that they must format the manuscript in compliance with university guidelines and resubmit it.

If the manuscript requires corrections, the candidate must make the corrections and upload an entirely new PDF version of the manuscript in the time allotted by the thesis editor. Candidates will not be permitted to simply mail or email a corrected version. A manuscript that has been electronically submitted for a second review is also edited in the order in which it is received. No more than two reviews will be granted per semester, and when time constraints prevail at each deadline, the number of reads possible will depend upon the availability of the thesis editor. Therefore, all candidates must allow adequate time to make any and all corrections, and these corrections must be approved by the thesis editor before a thesis or dissertation will be accepted by the university for the candidate's graduation.

Once a manuscript has been approved by the thesis editor, candidates are expected to upload an exact copy of the final PDF version of the manuscript to the USC Libraries.

#### *Schedule of Deadlines*

The Graduate School provides a schedule of specific dates for completing the thesis or dissertation submission to qualify the candidate for the master's or Ph.D. degree in the corresponding semester. These dates are published on the Graduate School's Website. Regardless of the date of submission, a candidate must complete all corrections to the manuscript as specified by the thesis editor, as well as all verification of graduation paperwork, before the degree can be conferred. Not until all the requirements of the entire submission process are completed will the thesis or dissertation be approved by the editor and Degree Progress (where the degree will then be verified and finally posted) notified. Deadlines are strictly enforced. No exceptions will be made. Thus, a candidate may not always graduate in the semester in which he or she first submits the thesis or dissertation. Upon completion of all requirements, the official USC transcript will serve as evidence of the degree until the diploma is received.

#### *Publication*

All theses and dissertations electronically submitted and approved will be made available at ProQuest and the USC Libraries.

#### *Thesis/Dissertation Fees*

All thesis-option master's and doctoral candidates must pay a fee as part of the final requirements for the degree. The doctoral candidate's fee, currently \$115, includes ProQuest, USC Libraries and Graduate School processing fees. Master's candidates currently pay a fee of \$105 for ProQuest, USC Libraries and Graduate School processing fees. Both fees are paid at the Cashier's Office on the University Park or Health Sciences campuses, prior to submitting the manuscript to the Graduate School.

#### **General Requirements for the Master's Degree**

##### *Course Requirements*

The Graduate School confers the master's degree upon the satisfactory completion of a carefully planned curriculum. A comprehensive examination or summative experience may replace a thesis in certain departments. A student must enroll in GRSC 810 during the semester in which the comprehensive examination is to be taken if not otherwise enrolled. Consult the appropriate departmental section of this catalogue for specific course requirements.

For those master's degrees not conferred by the Graduate School, the degree-conferring school determines if a thesis, comprehensive exam or other summative experience is required.

When the summative experience is not a thesis or comprehensive examination, the nature of the summative experience needs to be explicitly defined including the method by which the student's performance will be assessed and how the results of that assessment will be recorded. The summative experience requirement will often be satisfied by passing a course designed specifically for this purpose.

See Transfer of Course Work, page 85, for the maximum number of units of transferred course work that may be applied toward a master's degree. Except in formally designated dual degree programs, this same policy regulates the number of credits that may be applied toward a master's degree from an advanced degree previously completed at USC.

##### *Guidance Committee*

The student's program of study and thesis and/or comprehensive examination are under the direction of a guidance committee composed of three tenure-track faculty members. At least two of the members, including the thesis chair, must be from the student's home department and first be approved by the chair of the student's home department.

All members must then be approved by the dean of the degree program. Those departments which allow a comprehensive examination in lieu of thesis and administer that comprehensive examination on a departmental, rather than an individual basis, may substitute a single advisor for the three-person guidance committee.

##### *Application for the Master's Degree*

At least one semester preceding the one in which the student expects to receive the degree and prior to registration in 594a Master's Thesis, the student should ask the academic department to request an online degree check from Degree Progress. Application is made online by the academic department and then transmitted to the Degree Progress Department following approval of the program of studies by the student's home department. Degree Progress will prepare a Degree Audit Report (STARS Report) reflecting course work and requirements completed and those remaining to be met. A copy of the Credit Summary is sent to the student and the home department.

##### *Master's Examinations*

A student who fails the master's examination may be permitted, at the discretion of the faculty, to take it a second time. The retaking of a failed master's examination must be completed before the end of the second consecutive semester (excluding summer session) following the first examination. Requests for exception must be approved by the department chair. A student may not take the master's examination more than twice and must be appropriately enrolled at USC during the semester in which such an examination is taken or retaken. A student who fails the master's examination a second time may not continue in the degree program after the end of the semester in which the second examination was taken. No exceptions are allowed.

##### *Master's Thesis*

The thesis is supervised throughout its preparation by the student's guidance committee. It is desirable for the student to have a conference with each committee member promptly following the approval of the topic. Thereafter, thesis work is normally under the immediate supervision of the committee chair. *Final acceptance is based upon the unanimous recommendation of all members of the committee.*

A student who is required to write a thesis must submit a satisfactory outline and comprehensive bibliography for the proposed thesis and demonstrate a mastery of the subject satisfactory to the guidance committee. The student's thesis or guidance committee is responsible for the content and bibliographical consistency of the thesis.

During the five-year time limit allowed for completion of the degree and following the completion of all course work, the student must enroll in 594 Master's Thesis for two semesters and for each semester thereafter, excluding summer, until the thesis has been approved and the approval of the master's thesis form has been signed by the student's guidance committee. Registration for the thesis in two semesters, excluding summer, is the minimum requirement entitling the student to the thesis supervision by the guidance committee. No more than four units of credit in 594 may be received regardless of the number of semesters the student may be required to be enrolled. Students may enroll in 594 during one summer session but may not register for more than two units of 594 during a given semester; individual exceptions require the approval of the dean of the degree program.

Students who find it necessary to be excused from registration in 594 for a semester must request a leave of absence by petition to the dean of the degree program prior to the beginning of the semester. See Leave of Absence on page 88. Approval of the committee chair, department chair and dean of the degree program are required. During a leave of absence students will not be entitled to assistance from the guidance committee or to the use of university facilities. Considerations for approving a leave of absence include the student's progress to date in meeting the time schedules for the completion of degree requirements.

#### *Master's Thesis Submission*

Please refer to the Theses and Dissertations section on page 100 for information on the submission process.

#### **General Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree**

Qualified students will be received as applicants for candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in departments which are adequately equipped with staff, library and laboratory facilities to furnish the necessary training and opportunities for original research.

#### *Screening Procedures*

A screening examination or other procedure designated by the department or program is to be administered before the student has taken more than 24 units (including research courses). Passing this procedure is prerequisite to continuation in the doctoral program. Students who fail the screening procedure will be advised that they are not recommended to continue in the Ph.D. program and that any additional work may not be counted toward the degree. Failure to undertake the screening procedure before completion of 24 units of course work may jeopardize additional units. Ideally, a faculty member will be

appointed to serve as the student's administrative advisor until the student establishes an approved guidance committee.

#### *Course Requirements*

The subject or field of concentration is called a major. The major is usually a departmental major, although several interdepartmental majors have been authorized.

Undergraduate prerequisite and graduate course work will be required in accordance with the regulations of the major department or program and the recommendation of the student's guidance committee. Consult the appropriate departmental section of this catalog for specific course requirements.

#### *Guidance Committee*

The student's program of studies is under the direction of a guidance committee. The guidance committee should be established within the home department (program of study) at least one semester prior to taking the qualifying examination. An appointment of committee form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Website, should be used to establish the guidance committee. The program of study initiates the paperwork, which includes the signatures of the department chair or the program director and the dean. The signed form is filed in the student's home department.

The guidance committee is composed of at least five members; a minimum of three, including at least one tenured member and the committee chair, must be from the student's home department. In the case of schools which are organized into several departments (e.g., business, education, music), but for which a single Ph.D. program is authorized, the outside member must be from outside the school. The vice provost for graduate programs is an *ex officio* member of all guidance committees.

Normally, all members of the guidance-dissertation committee must be the rank of assistant professor or above in departments offering the Ph.D. degree at USC. In exceptional cases, faculty in departments or schools not offering the Ph.D. degree; research, adjunct and emeritus faculty; and faculty from other universities may be acceptable as members of guidance committees. Such exceptions should be rare and must be approved on an individual basis by the dean of the degree program. Approval will be based on the special expertise and academic relevance afforded the individual student's research. A current curriculum vitae of the proposed member must be submitted to the dean of the degree program with a letter from the student's committee chair citing the particular academic merits of the requested

appointment. Such a member must meet the standards of academic training and research experience expected of faculty members serving on such committees. A specially approved member may serve as co-chair of the committee but may not serve as the outside member representing the vice provost for graduate programs.

The outside member must hold the rank of assistant professor or above. The outside member is defined as a person from a discipline different from that of the student's department and whose own department affiliation is different from that of the student. A faculty member who holds a joint appointment in the student's department may only serve as an outside member when the primary appointment is in a department or school outside of the student's degree objective. The outside member serves as the representative of the vice provost for graduate programs. As such, the outside member determines if the qualifying examination and dissertation processes are conducted at a level that warrants awarding the Ph.D. degree. The outside member also ensures that the student is justly and fairly treated by a committee and department.

When the student and the guidance committee have determined that the qualifying examination can be taken, the Request to Take the Qualifying Examination form should be downloaded from the Graduate School Website. When completed and signed, it indicates that the student has been given permission to take the formal qualifying examination. Ideally, the signed form should be filed with the department chair or the program director's office not later than 30 days before the beginning date of the examination.

The guidance committee has the responsibility for supervising the student's program of studies and preparation for the qualifying examination, and the administration and evaluation of the written and oral parts of the qualifying examination. The committee continues to serve until the qualifying examination has been passed, the dissertation topic approved, and the student is advanced to candidacy.

#### *Changes in Guidance Committees*

A Change of Committee form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Website, must be completed whenever a change is made in the guidance committee. All such changes *must be made in advance* of the qualifying examinations. Informal substitutions for either the written or oral parts of the qualifying examination are not permitted. Changes in the guidance committee are not permitted between the written and oral portions of the examination. The examinations must

be scheduled at times when it is possible for all members of the committee, including the outside member, to participate. Changes made without the prior approval of the dean of the degree program are not recognized and may result in the invalidation of the examination.

A student may not change committee members after failing the qualifying examination the first time. The student must be reexamined by the same faculty on the same subject matter. If a faculty member is unable to serve on the committee (for example, due to serious illness, retirement, or transfer to another institution), the dean of the degree program must be notified in writing in advance of the rescheduled exam in order to approve the change. The faculty replacement must be approved by the dean of the degree program and the student must file a change of committee form well in advance of the exam.

#### *Qualifying Examination*

The examination qualifying a student for candidacy for the Ph.D. degree is comprehensive in nature, partly written and partly oral, designed, at least in part, to test the student's fitness to undertake independent research. Prior to taking the qualifying examination, the student must have met all of the departmental requirements for doing so and have the recommendation of the guidance committee. The qualifying examination should be taken no later than during the fifth semester.

To be eligible to take the qualifying examination, the student must have completed at least 24 units applicable toward the degree in residence at USC; must have achieved a GPA of at least 3.0 on all USC course work available for graduate credit; and must have the assurance that the guidance committee has determined readiness to take the qualifying examination. Students with a master's degree in the same or very similar field may be approved to take the qualifying examination after the completion of 12 units and successful passage through the screening process; the GPA and guidance committee approval requirements are the same as for students without a prior master's degree in the field of study. If not otherwise enrolled, a student must enroll in GRSC 800 during the semester in which the qualifying examination is to be taken. Students are strongly encouraged to take the qualifying examination during the first semester in which they are enrolled in GRSC 800, and should not enroll in more than three semesters of GRSC 800 before taking the qualifying examination.

All portions of the examination, both written and oral, should be completed within 60 days. Postponement of the examination after permission has been granted must have approval of the dean of the degree program.

The written examination will be prepared, administered on campus and read by the guidance committee. In a few departments there will be a department-wide committee examining all doctoral students. When the student's written examination is satisfactory, an oral examination is given on the topics discussed in the written examination and/or touching upon additional material. If additional material is to be covered, the student should be notified of the content expectations in advance. A student must pass both the written and oral portions of the qualifying examination in order to pass the examination. The fact that a student has done well on the written examination is not to be construed to mean that the oral examination is to be a *pro forma* exercise.

The oral examination is a serious and integral part of the qualifying procedure and is administered on campus. Remote participation of a committee member requires approval from the vice provost for graduate programs. If on the written examination the judgment of the committee is such that an oral examination cannot counterbalance a poor performance, the committee is not obliged to give an oral examination and the report to the Graduate School will be one of failure. In the case where the written examination is marginal, the committee may use the oral examination as an opportunity to confirm or alter its judgment of the student's performance.

The examination may not be reported as being passed if there is more than one dissenting vote. Ph.D. examinations cannot be passed conditionally. A pass on the examination cannot be made contingent upon other factors such as the completion of additional course work, the preparation of extra research projects, etc.

During the oral examination, all members of the guidance committee must be present and must render a judgment on the student's qualifying examination. Only the guidance committee may participate in the oral portion of the examination.

A student who fails a qualifying examination may be permitted, at the discretion of the faculty, to take it a second time. The student may not be required to repeat parts of the qualifying examination which were passed on the first administration. The retaking of a failed qualifying examination must be scheduled at a time mutually satisfactory and not

less than six months from the date of the first examination.

The second examination must be completed before the end of the second consecutive semester (excluding summer session) following the first examination. Requests for an exception must be approved by the vice provost for graduate programs. A student may not take the qualifying examination more than twice and must be appropriately enrolled at USC during the semester in which such an examination is taken or retaken. A student who fails the qualifying examination a second time may not continue in the degree program after the end of the semester in which the second examination was taken. No exceptions are allowed.

#### *Advancement to Candidacy*

Graduate students are officially advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree when they have completed the residency requirement and passed the written and oral portions of the Ph.D. qualifying examination upon the favorable recommendation of the guidance committee to the Graduate School. All Ph.D. candidates are required to engage in original research.

#### *Application for the Ph.D.*

After being advanced to candidacy, students must contact their academic department to initiate an online degree check which is transmitted to the Degree Progress Department. Degree Progress counselors prepare a Degree Audit Report (STARS Report) for each student listing any remaining requirements. The requirements will not be checked or the degree conferred if the student has not applied.

#### *Dissertation Committee*

As soon as possible after the qualifying examination has been passed and a dissertation topic approved, the dissertation committee should be appointed. This must take place no later than one month before the dissertation defense. The dissertation committee must consist of at least three members, upon the approval of the dean of the degree program. Two committee members must be from the home department, at least one of whom must be tenured, and one of the three members must be a faculty member from outside the major department. The committee chair must be from the student's home department. An appointment of committee form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Website, should be used to establish the dissertation committee. The program of study initiates the paperwork, which includes the signatures of the department chair or the program director and the dean. The signed form is filed in the student's home department.

The dissertation committee should be appointed as soon as possible after the student has passed the qualification exam. Until a dissertation committee has been appointed, the guidance committee will take responsibility for the student's program of study.

Refer to the Guidance Committee section for additional membership requirements. The vice provost for graduate programs is an *ex officio* member of all dissertation committees.

Special permission for a member of the research faculty to serve as chair of a Ph.D. student's dissertation committee may be granted by the dean of the degree program or his or her nominee, on an individual case basis upon the written request of the department chair establishing that (1) the person has a research appointment in the student's home department; (2) no tenure-track faculty in the department has the necessary knowledge or expertise required; and (3) the researcher has demonstrated special expertise in the particular area of the proposed dissertation. The dissertation and its defense, or final oral, must have the unanimous approval of the dissertation committee.

#### *Doctoral Dissertation*

A dissertation is an original contribution to current knowledge in the field and a demonstration that the Ph.D. candidate has achieved sufficient mastery in the field to pursue independent research and scholarship. A dissertation represents the individual candidate's research and writing. In fields where collaborative research has become the norm, the candidate is the sole author of the dissertation and specifies his or her contribution to the research and also delineates colleagues' contributions.

Dissertations are expected to be written in English. Exceptions require the approval of the vice provost for graduate programs or her nominee prior to beginning the work and will be granted only when there is strong scholarly justification.

The student is expected to be enrolled in 794 Doctoral Dissertation each semester, except summer sessions, after admission to candidacy until all degree requirements are completed. Registration for 794 for the two semesters (excluding summer sessions), immediately following admission to

candidacy, is the minimum requirement entitling the candidate to dissertation supervision by the dissertation committee. Enrollment in 794 prior to admission to candidacy is not permitted and such registration is invalid. If the dissertation is not completed and accepted within two semesters the candidate must continue to register for 794 each semester thereafter until the dissertation has been approved and the approval of the Ph.D. dissertation has been signed by the dissertation committee. Students are expected to complete and defend their dissertation before they have enrolled in no more than five semesters of 794. Students may enroll in 794 during one summer session but may not register for more than two units of 794 during a given semester; individual exceptions require the approval of the dean of the degree program. No more than eight units of credit in 794 may be received regardless of the number of semesters the candidate may be required to be enrolled. Department approval is required for registration in 794.

A candidate who finds it necessary to be excused from registration in 794 for a semester must request a leave of absence by petition to the dean of the program of study prior to the beginning of the semester. See Leave of Absence, page 88. Endorsements from the dissertation committee chair and department chair are required. During a leave of absence the candidate will not be entitled to assistance from the dissertation committee or to the use of university facilities. Considerations for approving a leave of absence include the student's progress to date in meeting the time schedules for the completion of degree requirements.

#### *Defense of the Dissertation*

After passing all required courses and the qualifying examination, and after meeting all other requirements, the candidate must write and defend the dissertation. The doctoral dissertation must be an original contribution to scholarship or scientific knowledge and must exemplify the high degree of scholarly advancement and power of investigation demanded by the university for final recommendation to the doctorate. The dissertation defense is the culminating activity in the assessment of whether this standard has been met.

While the oral examination is open to the general university community, only the members of the dissertation committee have the authority to recommend acceptance of the dissertation. During the oral defense, all members of the dissertation committee must be present and must give a judgment on the student's defense. The recommendation must be unanimous.

If the defense is satisfactory, the committee then signs the Approval to Submit Defended and Final Copy of Dissertation form. If additional work is required, the form must be signed only on full completion. Departments differ concerning the time of the defense of the dissertation. The student's dissertation committee is responsible for the content and bibliographical consistency of the dissertation.

#### *Dissertation Submission*

Please refer to the Theses and Dissertations section on page 100, for more information on the submission process.

#### **Diploma in Innovation Program for Ph.D. Students**

The USC Diploma in Innovation Program is a signature program designed to enable current USC Ph.D. students to become agents of change in their respective disciplines. This selective program is offered free of charge to current USC Ph.D. students in good standing from all disciplines. Students who successfully complete this supplement to their graduate study will be awarded a Diploma in Innovation.

Applications for program participation should be submitted to the USC Graduate School by the last day of classes in the spring semester preceding enrollment. Please see the Graduate School Website at [www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/iDiploma/index.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/iDiploma/index.html) for more information on the application requirements and process.



## Courses of Instruction

### GRADUATE STUDIES (GRSC)

The terms listed are *expected* but are not *guaranteed*. For the courses offered during any given term, consult the *Schedule of Classes*.

**GRSC 596 Internship for Curricular Practical Training (1, FaSpSm)** Part-time or full-time, practical work experience in the student's field of study. The internship must be located at an off-campus facility. Students are individually supervised by faculty. May not be taken until the student has completed at least one semester of enrollment in the graduate program with a cumulative 3.0 GPA. Graduate standing. Graded CR/NC.

**GRSC 610 The Innovation Process: Development, Diffusion and Leadership (4, Fa)** Exploration of general principles and evolution of innovation, theoretical perspectives on the innovation process, organizing and leadership for innovation, and practical tools for innovation development, diffusion, market acceptance, and business planning. Open only to doctoral students.

**GRSC 612 Legal Issues and Financing of Innovation (4, Fa)** Exploration of legal issues of innovation as well as issues surrounding financing the development and commercialization of innovation. Open only to doctoral students.

**GRSC 615 Disciplinary Perspectives on Innovation (4, Fa)** A deeper understanding of the innovation process via a survey of various disciplines' approaches to the subject. Open only to doctoral students.

**GRSC 800 Studies for the Qualifying Examination (0, FaSpSm)** *Prerequisite:* permission of the Graduate School. Graded CR/NC.

**GRSC 810 Studies for Master's Examination (0, FaSpSm)** *Prerequisite:* completion of all course work for the master's degree. Permission of the Graduate School. Graded CR/NC.

**GRSC 850ab The Professoriate: Preparing for the Future (2,2,FaSp)** Preparation for academic careers: various methodologies and approaches to teaching, learning, assessment, and research; statements of research and teaching philosophies; creation of online academic portfolio. Graded IP/CR/NC. Open only to doctoral students.

