

# ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Students may obtain a degree following the requirements in force at the time they are admitted to degree candidacy, or under subsequent regulations published while they are degree candidates. However, students are restricted in the choice of requirements to one specific catalog. Students have a period of **six** years inclusive and continuous in which to claim the rights of a specific catalog. Students may request permission to revalidate USC Upstate program courses falling outside the six-year parameter. With the approval of the appropriate graduate administrator, the student will work under the direct supervision of a graduate faculty member to update course content and to demonstrate competency on an examination.

Students are advised that unforeseen circumstances may interfere with the scheduling of any given course or degree offering. Students are required to take such developments into account as they arise, even if doing so means a delay in the fulfillment of some of their academic goals or modification of those goals.

## Advisement

Every candidate admitted for a degree is assigned a faculty advisor with whom to plan a program of study relevant to specific objectives and sufficiently intensive and sequential to assure professional competence and breadth of knowledge. Students have the privilege of requesting a particular advisor, subject to the consent of the faculty member and approval of the appropriate graduate administrator. The advisor should be a specialist in the candidate's major area of study.

## Program of Study

Immediately following admission to the program, every degree seeking student, working with an advisor, must develop and file a program of study in the office of the appropriate graduate program. A program of study is an agreement signed by the student, the advisor and the appropriate graduate administrator. This formal agreement serves a number of purposes to the benefit of both the student and the University. It causes the student and the advisor to engage in early planning with a specific goal in mind; it provides useful information for the planning of course offerings; it facilitates subsequent advisement, and it protects the student in the event of unexpected curriculum or faculty changes. Although formal programs are binding, they can be modified or replaced by new programs if conditions warrant such changes.

## Courses

**Prerequisites.** Prerequisite courses are listed to inform students about the academic background recommended for satisfactory course completion. The instructor may approve the enrollment of students who have acquired the equivalent knowledge or skills through other courses or experiences. Special permission to enroll should be requested from the instructor prior to registration.

**Course loads.** Nine semester hours in the fall and spring semesters and three hours during a summer session are considered full time enrollment. A student may enroll in no more than 12 hours during a fall or spring semester, 3 hours during Maymester, or 6 hours during a single summer session without permission of the appropriate graduate administrator. Forms to request permission for an overload are available on the University's website.

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

**Credit by examination.** No graduate credit is offered by examination.

**Auditing.** Students wishing to audit graduate courses are advised to obtain permission from the appropriate graduate administrator. Arrangements for auditing are duly recorded at the time of registration. No credit may be earned for an audited course, either by examination or otherwise, and no audited course may be repeated for credit at a later date. No record of audit shall appear on a transcript unless a student attends 75 percent of the classes.

**Course Numbering.** Graduate courses shall be numbered from 600 to 799, as appropriate to reflect the level of difficulty of the course. Typically, a 700-level course will be more complex or require additional knowledge or expertise compared to a 600-level course. A 600-level course should not require a 700-level course as a prerequisite.

## Academic Residency Requirement

Students must successfully complete a minimum of 24 semester hours of program courses offered by the University of South Carolina Upstate in order to meet minimum academic residency requirements.

## Dropping a Course

Courses dropped through the late registration period will not be recorded on the student's transcript. A course dropped following late registration through the tenth week of a regular semester is recorded with a non-penalty grade of W. After the tenth week of the semester, any courses dropped will appear on the permanent record with a grade of WF unless documentation is offered which is acceptable to the instructor and the appropriate graduate administrator. A WF is treated as an F in the evaluation of the student's eligibility to continue and in computing the student's grade point average. Students who stop attending class without officially withdrawing have the course recorded with a grade of F, which is included in all calculations and totals. In summer sessions, other shortened terms, and specially scheduled courses, the period for withdrawal with a grade of W is 72 percent of the total number of class days. A course cannot be dropped after the last day of classes specified for the session in which the course is scheduled.

If a student must either drop a course or withdraw from the University for medical reasons or other acceptable major cause after the penalty date (last day to receive a W), the student must submit the form entitled Request for Assignment of W Grade for Medical Reason or Extenuating Circumstances After Penalty Date. This form must be approved by the course instructor and the appropriate graduate administrator.

## Withdrawal From All Courses

All students, both full- and part-time, wishing to withdraw from the University (discontinue enrollment from all courses) must complete an Application for Withdrawal form. Withdrawal applications are available from the Records Office and online. Students must obtain the required signatures before the withdrawal will be processed by the Records Office.

Grades assigned upon withdrawal are determined as described above for dropping courses. The date of withdrawal from the University will be posted on student transcripts.

Any student withdrawing within the scheduled refund period can expect to receive a refund through the mail in approximately six to eight weeks. If at the time of withdrawal, the student has any financial obligations to the

University, these will be deducted from any refund due. Refunds for those students who received and used financial aid in payment of academic fees will be applied toward repayment of financial aid.

Students who have received long-term loans through the University must contact the financial aid office for an exit interview. Failure to participate in an exit interview may result in a hold being placed on transcripts.

## Grades and Credit

**Credit values.** Courses that carry 3 semester hours credit meet a minimum of 2100 instructional minutes.

**Grading system.** The letter grades A, B, C, D and F are employed to designate excellent, good, fair, poor and failing work respectively. B+, C+ and D+ also may be recorded. Courses graded D or lower cannot be applied to degree programs. The letter grades S (satisfactory) and U (unsatisfactory) are assigned only in courses that have been approved for pass-fail grading, or in a regular course where the student, with the approval of the appropriate graduate administrator, has elected an individual pass-fail option (see Pass/Fail Option). Courses completed with an S may be counted toward total credits earned.

The grade of I, incomplete, is assigned at the discretion of the professor when in the professor's judgment, a student is prevented from completion of some portion of the assigned work in a course because of an unanticipated work-related responsibility, family hardship, illness, accident, or verified disability. The student should notify the professor without delay that one of these conditions exists or has arisen; notification must be given prior to the end of the term. The professor will determine, according to the nature of the interruption and the uncompleted requirements, what additional period of time will be allowed for completing the work before a permanent grade is assigned. An Assignment of Incomplete Grade form must then be completed by the professor specifying the justification for the I, conditions for make-up, and deadline for completion. Re-enrolling in a course will not make up an incomplete grade. A grade of I is not computed in the calculation of a student's grade point average.

After 12 months an I, which has not been replaced with a letter grade is changed permanently to a grade of F unless the I was erroneously recorded. If the professor believes there is academic justification for an extension beyond the one year limit, a request for extension should be submitted to the appropriate graduate administrator before the expiration of the year, specifying the justification and specific duration of the extension on the form entitled Extension of Incomplete Time Period Authorization.

NR, no record, is assigned by the Records Office if a grade has not been submitted at the proper time or if any grade not approved for a particular course has been submitted. It is a temporary mark on the transcript, and must be replaced by a grade. If replacement does not occur before the last week of the spring or fall semester following the term from which the grade was recorded, a grade of F will be assigned.

Special make-up work, extra work, or examination to change a grade already recorded is not permitted.

**Academic standards.** Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as C, but the student's average on all courses attempted for graduate credit must be at least B (3.0 on a 4 point system). Additionally, the student's average on all courses numbered 600 or above must be no less than 3.0. Grades earned on credits transferred from other universities do not count in the grade point average.

Degree-seeking graduate students are placed on academic probation if the student's graduate cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below a 3.0 (B) on a 4.0 scale. If a student is placed on academic probation, they will be contacted by email at the end of each term if their cumulative GPA is below a 3.0.

In the case of conversion of grades of incomplete that cause a cumulative GPA to drop below 3.0, a degree-seeking student will be placed on academic probation at the end of the semester in which the grade is posted. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum of 3.0 by receiving a grade for a course in which they received a grade of Incomplete will, instead of a one-year probationary period, be granted only one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the registrar in which to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or above.

Students placed on academic probation should meet with their academic advisor and/or graduate program director their first term on probation to ensure the expectations for removal of the probationary status are understood. The student must submit a Graduate Spartan Success form during their first term on probation, located on Spartan Hub, to the Office of Graduate Studies with their plan to raise their GPA for the following term. When the probation period begins, a registration hold for the following semester will be placed on a student's account. The student must submit the Graduate Spartan Success form by the last day to register or add a course for the second term of probation. If the deadline is missed, the student will be placed on suspension for one calendar year.

Students are allowed one calendar year in probation to raise their cumulative GPA to at least a 3.0. Students who fail to meet the GPA requirement are suspended from graduate study. Students with a GPA between a 2.0 and 2.99 may choose to reapply to pursue a different graduate program unless the student was expelled or suspended due to an academic integrity violation. If suspended for academic integrity violations, the full suspension term for the violation must be served to enroll.

If suspended from a graduate program and admitted into another graduate program, the admission is conditional upon a student earning six credit hours of a 3.0 or higher to continue in the program. If these guidelines are not met, the student will be placed on suspension from all graduate coursework at the university.

Upon suspension from degree candidacy, students must wait a period of one calendar year following the term of suspension to be reinstated or enroll in courses as non-degree seeking.

Appeals for academic suspension must be submitted prior to the start of the term following suspension. The academic suspension appeals process is outlined in the catalog.

**Transfer Credit.** Transfer work from a regionally accredited institution applicable to a master's degree **must be within the six years prior** to USC Upstate degree completion. A maximum of twelve semester hours credit (nine if part of a master's degree at the other institution) may be considered, subject to these additional provisions:

1. the courses must be documented by an **official** transcript mailed to the admissions office by the awarding institution;
2. the transcript must clearly indicate that **graduate** credit was awarded or specifically verified by the institution's registrar or graduate dean;

- the courses must be judged appropriate by the student's advisor, approved by the appropriate graduate administrator, and listed on an approved program of study;
- courses graded lower than B are not transferable;
- USC Upstate provides no revalidation mechanism for courses completed at another institution.

**Transfer Credit for Doctoral program.** A maximum of 6 credits can be transferred into a Doctoral program. Transfer work must be from a regionally accredited and national accredited institution, must be applicable to a Doctoral degree, and must be completed within five years prior to USC Upstate degree completion. Transfer work is also subject to these additional provisions:

- the courses must be documented by an official transcript mailed to the admissions office by the awarding institution;
- the transcript must clearly indicate that graduate credit was awarded or specifically verified by the institution's registrar or graduate dean;
- the courses must be approved by the USC Upstate dean of the college of the student's major;
- courses graded lower than B are not transferable.

## Academic Suspension Appeal Process

Graduate students wishing to appeal for reinstatement to degree candidacy should obtain an appeal form from the University's website. Completed forms must be submitted to the Records Office to be considered prior to the start of the term.

- The Student Services Committee of the faculty may grant graduate students relief from academic suspension only in extraordinary circumstances.
- Decisions of the Student Services Committee may be appealed to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

## Pass/Fail Option

Under certain circumstances, a student may elect pass/fail grading in a course outside the major area. This option permits enrichment of the student's experience without affecting grade point average. A grade of either S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) will be awarded. Courses completed with a satisfactory grade may be counted toward total credit hours earned. Any student interested in this option should consult with the appropriate graduate administrator prior to registration.

## Transcripts

All official transcripts must be requested in writing from the USC Columbia Records Office.

No transcript will be issued to or for a student who is indebted to the University.

With the exception of copies made for internal university use, no copy of a student's record will be released anywhere (including the state department of education) without the student's written consent.

## Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Courses (Senior Privilege)

A special provision to earn graduate credit is available for USC Upstate undergraduate seniors in their final semester who have a minimum GPA of 3.0, and who need less than a normal course load to complete baccalaureate requirements. Overload enrollment, which includes one or more courses under senior privilege is not allowed. Courses for graduate

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

## Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Study Plan (G-ABMP)

Qualified undergraduate students can earn up to 9 credit hours of graduate-level coursework while an undergraduate student through the Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Study Plan.

Admission to an Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Plan allows the student to apply a maximum of nine graduate credits to a baccalaureate and graduate program. Courses numbers 500 and higher can be taken under the Accelerated Plan for both undergraduate and graduate credit. Students accepted under the G-ABMP may use dual credit for Master's programs.

In consultation with a student's academic advisor and the Graduate Program Director of the target master's program, the Bachelor's/Master's Degree Accelerated Plan Course Work Authorization form must be processed for all graduate courses at the time of registration, in order for the Registrar's Office to properly enroll the student.

Students must have completed at least 90 credit hours of undergraduate coursework and have a minimum GPA of 3.2 overall to apply to participate in the Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Study Plan. A student may not participate in both Senior Privilege and a Bachelor's/Master's Accelerated Plan. If a student has been approved to participate in one of these programs, he or she is prohibited from apply for, or taking courses under, the other.

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

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

The student who wishes to be considered for admission to a Master's program must also submit a completed application and any additional credentials (test scores, recommendations, resume, etc.) which are required by that Master's program.

The associated college(s) Deans and the Provost must approve the pursuit of either option.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend all regular class meetings. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason, by the instructor, for requesting the student to withdraw from a course.

Auditors are expected to conform to the same attendance requirements as students registered for credit, but in any case, must attend at least 75 percent of scheduled class meetings.

## Change of Name

A student wishing a name change must present to the Records Office proper legal documentation such as a marriage license, a court order approving a name change, or a divorce decree in which a name change is granted.

## Change of Address

Students are obligated to notify the Records Office of any change of address. Failure to do so can cause serious delay in the handling of

student records and notification of emergencies at home. Returned mail due to an incorrect address will result in a "hold" being placed on a student's record, preventing registration.

## Appeal Policy and Procedure

The University of South Carolina Upstate is committed to judicious, fair and impartial resolution of all conflicts regarding student complaints. The following process is designed to provide an objective review of the student complaints regarding a variety of academic grievances arising out of admissions, readmissions, assessment of academic records, academic standing, a variety of academic policies and/or grading criteria.

### General Guidelines

1. All submissions to all levels of appeal must be submitted in writing and applicable forms must be typewritten or word-processed.
2. All parties concerned must honor all deadlines and timelines.
3. While the appeal process may result in the recommendation of a grade change—only faculty who initiated the grade in question shall implement grade changes.
4. The student may appear before and make presentations to the committee during the appeal process.

### Steps

1. Appeal to the faculty member or initial decision maker.
2. Appeal to division chair or appropriate graduate administrator. Must take place within five days of Step 1 decision.
3. Appeal to the dean of appropriate college. Must take place within five days of Step 2 decision.
4. Appeal to the USC Upstate Academic Affairs Committee.

Within five days of the dean's decision, the student must submit in writing to the chair of the graduate committee his/her intent to appeal. Within 10 working days of receiving the appeal, the Academic Affairs Committee shall gather all relevant material, hold its hearing and make a report to the vice chancellor for academic affairs.

The decision of the USC Upstate Academic Affairs Committee is final.

All decisions regarding grade changes at any step are in the form of recommendations only. Only the faculty member who initiated the grade in question can change grades. Appeals must be initiated before the last day of the following major semester in which the disputed decision was made.

## Applications for Degrees

All candidates for a degree must complete the degree application process. Students may obtain an application for degree from the Records Office. Submission deadlines are listed on the website.

## Financial Aid

College work-study and Federal Family Education Loan Programs, which includes both subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford loans, are available to students fully admitted to graduate programs at USC Upstate. To qualify, students must be admitted to a USC Upstate graduate program of study and be enrolled for no less than six hours each semester. Descriptions of these financial aid programs can be found in the undergraduate section of this catalog.

Eligibility for assistance for federal financial aid is determined by completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used to calculate the amount a graduate student and family can contribute toward the cost of education from reported income and resources. The difference between the cost of education and

the family contribution is the student's financial need. In addition to demonstrating financial need, individual federal aid programs have specific requirements. Program requirements are explained in detail in *The Student Aid Guide* published annually by the U.S. Department of Education and available in the USC Upstate Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

Graduate students are required to make satisfactory progress for receipt of federal financial aid. Graduate students are considered to be making satisfactory progress if they:

1. are admitted and enrolled as advanced degree or certificate students.
2. meet university standards for continued enrollment in an advanced degree or certificate program.
3. maintain a USC Upstate cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher each semester enrolled.
4. complete at least eighty percent of the total number of hours attempted each academic year.

Full-time graduate students will be allowed three academic years to complete the advanced degree. Students enrolled less than full-time will be given the equivalent of six full-time semesters to complete the advanced degree.

Full-time enrollment is defined as nine hours each semester. Half-time enrollment is defined as six semester hours each semester. The hours attempted is defined as the number of hours attempted at the end of the 100% drop period. Incompletes will not be counted as hours passed until a final grade is determined. Repeat courses will be counted as hours attempted in determining satisfactory academic progress.

Students not meeting USC Upstate's satisfactory academic progress standards may appeal to the financial aid committee using the same procedures as undergraduates.

## Notification of Student Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. *The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access.*

Students should submit to the registrar, dean, head of the academic division, or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The university official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the university official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

2. *The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.*

Students may ask the University to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the University official responsible for the record, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing



procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. *The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.*

The University of South Carolina will disclose information from a student's education records only with the written consent of the student, except:

- a. To school officials with legitimate educational interests;
  - i. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position; a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
  - ii. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- b. To officials of other institutions in which the student seeks or intends to enroll provided that the student has previously requested a release of his/her record;
- c. To authorized representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, the Comptroller General of the United States, state educational authorities, organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the University, and accrediting organizations;
- d. In connection with a student's application for, and receipt of, financial aid;
- e. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- f. To parents of dependent students as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, Section 152;
- g. To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency; or
- h. To the alleged victim of any crime or violence of the results of any disciplinary proceedings conducted by the University.

The University of South Carolina has designated the following items as **directory information**: a student's name, electronic mail address, local and permanent mailing addresses and telephone numbers, semesters of attendance, enrollment status (full- or part-time), date of admission, date of graduation, school, majors and areas of concentration, whether or not currently enrolled, classification (freshman, etc.), type of degree being pursued, degrees, honors, and awards received (including scholarships and fellowships), weight and height of members of athletic teams, and whether the student has participated in officially recognized activities and sports sponsored by the University.

The University may disclose any of these items without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Office of the Registrar not to release directory information pertaining to them. Requests will be processed within 24 hours after receipt. Directory information will be withheld from student directories and telephone books only if notification is received prior to the publication of these documents. The electronic directory is updated each weekend; requests for non-disclosure will be honored with the next update after the request is processed by the staff of the Office of the Registrar.

4. *The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.*

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20202-4605. Questions concerning this law and the University's procedures concerning release of academic information may be directed to the Office of the Registrar at 864-503-5220.

## State Residency Requirements

The University of South Carolina Upstate assesses tuition and fees upon the basis of state residency. The rules regarding the establishment of legal residency for tuition and fee purposes for institutions of higher education are governed by the South Carolina Code of Laws. A copy of this law in its entirety is available from the Office of Admissions.

The initial resident status determination is made at the time of admission and prevails until such time that a student establishes a proper claim to residency as defined by the laws of South Carolina. Any student who is discovered to have been improperly classified as a South Carolina resident will be reclassified as a non-resident and will be required to pay differences in fees.

Persons having questions about residency are encouraged to secure a Residency Application Package from the Office of Admissions. Appointments with the director of admissions to discuss residency requirements are also encouraged.