



# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK – SPECIALIST

2018-2019

Graduate Support Office ~ College of Education ~ University of South Florida

# Specialist Program Handbook

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## Preface

The purpose of the College of Education Graduate Handbook is to assist graduate students to better understand the processes associated with graduate education in the College. This Handbook does not replace University requirements delineated in the USF Graduate Catalog. It is intended to complement the Catalog.

It is the responsibility of the graduate student to be knowledgeable about requirements stipulated in the Graduate Catalog as well as the College of Education (COEDU) Graduate Handbook. Individual programs may have requirements that exceed those listed in these documents. Students are required to meet all University, College and specific program requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: While advisors, directors, department chairpersons and deans are available to help the student meet these requirements, it is the student's responsibility to make sure that he/she has met all degree requirements as specified in the Degree Requirements section of the Graduate Catalog, as well as any College and Program requirements for the degree. The entire USF Graduate Catalog is available online at the USF Office of Graduate Studies' website at <http://grad.usf.edu/>.

The USF Graduate Catalog and information on COEDU policies are available online. Many departments also have handbooks that outline policies and procedures unique to the program. Please refer to these documents for specific information. In instances where University, College, department and program requirements differ, students must meet the highest level of requirements presented. Please note that university, COEDU and program requirements are stated always as minimum requirements.

Students should review official university documents, and collaborate with an assigned faculty program coordinator prior to making academic decisions, since program and/or course requirements are subject to change, per state legislative mandates, Florida State Department of Education program approval standards, and accreditation criteria.

In addition to the University's regional accreditation by the Commission on Colleges of the **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)**, the College is accredited by the **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)** for the preparation of P-12 educators. Its initial certification programs are approved by the Florida Department of Education.

This Handbook has been designed to attain the following objectives:

- to provide information to about graduate program options, requirements, and procedures;
- to inform faculty and staff of degree requirements and procedures, and the respective responsibilities of students and faculty relative to these requirements and procedures;
- to provide a basis for interaction between faculty and students regarding graduate degree programs, and
- to inform faculty of the requirements and procedures of graduate programs and the responsibilities attendant with various faculty roles.

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## MISSION, VISION, GOALS

### COEDU Mission

The USF College of Education envisions itself as a leader in regional, national and international education. Leadership in education encompasses:

- Academic excellence
- Research, scholarship, and inquiry that renews the educational process
- Collaboration that serves communities, institutions, and individuals
- Preparation that builds on academic excellence, scholarship, clinical practice, and collaboration and that contributes to a just and productive society.

### COEDU Vision

To fulfill its vision, the College of Education is committed to:

- offering challenging learning opportunities in a supportive and diverse environment;
- creating and supporting research, scholarship, and inquiry in education;
- preparing the next generation of educators, scholars, and leaders for pK-12 and the professoriate through exemplary undergraduate and graduate degree programs;
- serving the community through collaborative relationships; and working with schools, agencies, and communities to offer programs that prepare professionals who work competently, collaboratively, and ethically to improve educational outcomes for all.

### Goals of Graduate Education

Graduate education at the University of South Florida is an intellectual and professional response to the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities served by the University. It has as a core value a commitment to disciplined inquiry as a basis for generating knowledge and improving professional practice.

The College of Education's graduate programs reflect the University's philosophy of graduate education. The COEDU is a professional school offering degree programs for educational scholars and practitioners. Within a professional school, disciplined inquiry is a process by which information is collected, evaluated, and applied to problems and issues. Skilled, rigorous inquiry contributes to the theoretical and information bases from which educational decisions are made and practices are developed. From this orientation, the following goals are derived for graduate education in the College of Education:

- to create a vigorous community of scholars in the field of education;
- to develop a highly competent community of educational leaders and practicing professionals;
- to foster disciplined and rigorous inquiry about educational practices, theories, and proposals; and
- to promote the development of educational theory and practices.

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## Student Rights and Responsibilities

### Student Rights

- You have the right to considerate and respectful attention with appreciation for individual dignity, protection of privacy and appropriate confidentiality of information.
- You have the right to a prompt and reasonable response to questions.
- You have the right to know what student support services are available in the college and university.
- You have the right to know what rules and regulations apply to your conduct as an education major at USF.
- You have the right to know the identity and professional status of individuals providing educational services.
- You have the right to obtain from your academic advisor accurate and current information concerning your educational status in terms you can reasonably understand.
- You have the right to be informed about the grievance protocols in the College of Education.

### Student Responsibilities

- You are responsible for upholding the ethical standards of the University of South Florida and following the rules and regulations regarding student conduct as published in the university documents, catalogs and handbooks.
  - You are responsible for reading and understanding the information published in the USF and College of Education handbooks and catalogs.
  - You are responsible for treating your peers, support staff and faculty with courtesy and respect.
  - You are responsible for meeting all deadlines.
  - You are responsible for providing accurate and complete information and to report unexpected changes in your status or intentions regarding your planned program.
  - You are responsible for seeing that all needed documents and transcripts are received by the Registrar's Office.
  - You are responsible for making it known if a course of action or expectation is not understood.
  - You are responsible for your actions if you do not follow your recommended program of studies.
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Most frequently used online links:

[College of Education Homepage](#)

[College of Education Student Resources](#) (e.g program of studies, committee forms, etc.)

[Graduate Studies Thesis-Dissertation Deadlines](#)

[Graduate Studies Homepage](#)

[Graduate Catalog](#)

[Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures](#)

[Graduate Studies Forms](#) (University Forms)

[Registrar's Forms](#) (University Forms)

[Innovative Education: Distance Learning](#)

[University of South Florida Admissions](#)

[Graduate Certificates](#)

[University of South Florida Scholarships and Financial Aid Services](#)

[College of Education Scholarships and Financial Aid](#)

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### Graduate Admissions Information

Please consult the Graduate Admissions and Registration and General Information sections of the current USF Graduate Catalog for University requirements for admission to graduate programs. Check also with your prospective program for additional admissions requirements.

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### Time Limit

#### Time Limitations

Ed.S. degrees must be completed within five (5) years from the student's date of admission for graduate study. Courses taken prior to admission to the USF graduate major, for example as non-degree seeking or from other institutions, must be transferred in prior to graduation (preferably before the end of the student's second semester; see Course Transfer Policy).

#### Time Limit Extensions

In the event that a student nears the end of the time limitation as specified above, but the student needs more time to complete the degree, the student may submit a request for an extension using the Time Limit Extension Request Form, available on the Office of Graduate Studies website <http://www.grad.usf.edu/student-forms.php>.

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Requests must include

- the reasons for the delay in completion,
- the anticipated time needed for completion,
- endorsements from the graduate faculty advisor, graduate major, and College Dean or designee,
- a detailed plan of study denoting the pathway to completion and timeline for the remaining requirements for the degree

**Note** - for the time limit extension procedures, if the time limit extension will cause courses taken within the major to be older than 10 years, then a request for course concurrency may be required or the courses may be invalidated toward the degree requirements, per the time-limit policy.

If approved, the time-limit extension applies to courses applied toward the degree, with the exception of those transferred in or from completed degree majors. However, majors may require additional or repeat coursework as part of the condition of the time-limit extension. For requests exceeding a year of additional time, the Office of Graduate Studies will audit the student's progress each semester to ensure that the plan of study is adhered to and that progress towards degree completion is occurring.

Students who exceed the time limitations may have their registration placed on hold until a request for extension has been approved. Only one time-limit extension request is permitted. Students who are temporarily unable to continue the major should submit a Leave of Absence Request, which extends the time limit for the duration of the approved Leave for up to two years (see the section on Leave of Absence in the Enrollment Requirements section.) Note - Time Limit Extensions are valid for a maximum period of two (2) years from the date of request. For more information and guidance, contact the Office of Graduate Studies.

### Course Currency

All courses, with the exception of those approved for transfer of credit, should meet the time limit specified for the degree and be academically relevant as determined by the faculty in the graduate major. Courses used for the graduate degree requirements can be no more than ten years old at the time the degree is conferred.

In the event that course currency is required a [Course Currency Form](#) should be submitted (including original and current syllabi for the course in question) for each course in need of currency.

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## Student Status

### USF Full-Time Student Definition

Students taking a minimum of nine (9) hours toward their degree in the fall or spring semester, or taking a minimum of six (6) hours in the summer semester, will be classified as Full-Time students for academic purposes. Students may take a maximum of eighteen (18) hours in any given semester; exceeding eighteen (18) hours requires a signed program

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of study or written approval from the College. For financial aid enrollment requirements, contact the Office of Financial Aid - <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/finaid/other/enrollment.aspx>.

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### Academic Policies and Regulations

#### Registration Information

##### Registration Information

##### Oasis

To register for classes students must login to the OASIS system. Current course offerings and registration requirements are listed in the Schedule of Classes. Note that some courses may require permits from the department for registration.

Students can access their OASIS account via their MyUSF account, under the "My Resources" tab.

Schedule: <http://www.registrar.usf.edu/ssearch/search.php>

##### On-Time Registration

Student's must register for the upcoming term by 5:00 pm the Friday before semester starts in order for their registration to be considered on time. Registering after this point will result in Late Registration with \$100.00 late fee.

##### New Student Registration Holds

##### Medical Requirements for Registration

**University Immunization Policy:** <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-33-002.pdf>

All students new to USF are required to submit a signed copy of the official USF

- Medical History Form: SIGN the Mandatory Immunization Health History Form
- Measles 1, Measles 2, Rubella (MMR): Vaccination (2 doses after 1st birthday) OR Titer (lab work) Date & Result
- Hepatitis B-1: Vaccination OR Check the declination box OR Titer (lab work) Date & Result
- Meningitis: Menactra/MCV4 vaccination at AGE 16 OR OLDER (if living on campus) OR check the declination (if not living on campus)
- TB Screening: Tuberculosis Screening required for all International Students and U.S. born students residing at an address outside the U.S. at the time of application.

In order to register, this form, including required documentation, must be completed, signed, and returned to:

Student Health Services  
University of South Florida  
4202 East Fowler Avenue, SHS 100  
Tampa, FL 33620-6750  
Fax: (813) 974-5888  
Telephone: (813) 974-4056

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For Frequently Asked Questions on the Immunization requirements go to: <http://www.shs.usf.edu/faqs.aspx>

### Administrative Holds

A student may be placed on administrative hold by failure to meet obligations to the University. When a student is on administrative hold, he/she may not be allowed to register, receive a diploma, or receive a transcript. Settlement of financial accounts must be made at the University Cashier's Office. Each student placed on administrative hold should determine from the Office of the Registrar which office placed him/her in this status and clear the obligation with that respective office.

### Late Registration

Degree-seeking students who do not register prior to the first day of classes may late-register the first week of classes. A late registration fee is charged during this week. To avoid cancellation of registration, fees and tuition are due and payable for all registered courses of record on the fifth day of classes (end of drop/add period). Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their course registration by the end of the drop/add period (i.e. by the fifth day of classes). In the event there are courses incorrectly listed or missing on the record, students should go into OASIS and make the necessary corrections. Course registration not corrected by the end of the fifth day of classes will result in liability of tuition and fees. If courses need to be added or dropped after the fifth day of classes, refer to the Add / Drop sections of the Catalog.

### Graduate Petition

Any changes to the student's registration made after the end of Add/Drop Week will require the use of the [Office of Graduate Studies Graduate Petition](#). This includes adding or dropping courses as well as changing the number of credit hours a student is registered for a course.

### Academic Integrity

#### USF Regulation 3.027

Academic integrity is the foundation of the University of South Florida System's (USF System) commitment to the academic honesty and personal integrity of its university community. Academic integrity is grounded in certain fundamental values, which include honesty, respect and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one's own efforts. Knowledge and maintenance of the academic standards of honesty and integrity as set forth by the university are the responsibility of the entire academic community, including the instructional faculty, staff and students. The final decision on an academic integrity violation and related academic sanction at any USF System member institution shall affect and be applied to the academic status of the student throughout the USF System, unless otherwise determined by the independently accredited institution.

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To read the entire Regulation, go to:

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.027.pdf> or  
<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/current-regulations2.asp>

### Disruption of the Academic Process

#### USF Regulation 3.025

Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Although disruptive student conduct is already prohibited by the University of South Florida System (USF System) Student Code of Conduct and any person may make a direct referral regarding student conduct to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) at any time for a conduct review and possible university wide sanction. This Academic Disruption Regulation provides the steps an Instructor may take to immediately address a student disrupting a class or academic setting including restricting a student from class, assigning an academic sanction or other immediate sanction. This is considered an Academic process and provides for academic sanctions. An Instructor may/must make additional referrals to OSSR for a more comprehensive review and additional conduct sanctions which are considered separate from the Academic process.

To read the entire Regulation, go to:

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.025.pdf>

### Student Academic Grievance

The purpose of this Policy is to provide all undergraduate and graduate students taking courses within the University of South Florida System (USF System) an opportunity for objective review of facts and events pertinent to the cause of the academic grievance.

Review of the facts and events pertinent to the cause of the academic grievance will be accomplished in a collegial, non-judicial atmosphere rather than an adversarial one, and shall allow the parties involved to participate. All parties will be expected to act in a professional and civil manner. These guidelines are meant to govern all colleges (exclusive of the MD and DPT programs within the College of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy to the extent they maintain procedures and processes for issues regarding professionalism). However, USF System institutions may have unique titles and specific administrative levels. Accordingly, each institution shall determine the appropriate levels and titles for review at the time a student initiates an appeal ensuring that if it is determined the matter is an academic grievance there is at least one committee level review and recommendation to an administrator to accept or reject.

In the case of Academic Integrity violations, the appeal or grievance of a decision or academic action regarding Academic Integrity is contained in USF3.027 Academic Integrity of Students.

To read the full procedure, go to

<http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-10-002.pdf>

When a student and an instructor cannot agree on a final grade on an individual assignment or in a course, the student may take the issue to the program coordinator and department chair. If meeting with the department chair yields no resolution, it is within the student's rights to seek a formal grievance with the college.

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In the College of Education, the Graduate Student Academic Grievance Committee will convene to consider academic grievances filed by graduate students, and to make recommendations to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, who represents the Dean of the College in these matters. The Graduate Student Academic Grievance Committee will be comprised of an equal number of faculty and graduate student members: two graduate faculty members and two graduate students.

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### Graduate Catalog

The USF Tampa Graduate Catalog, including college and major requirements, and major and course descriptions, is available on the web at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.php>. Each Catalog is published and in effect for the academic term(s) noted on the title page.

#### Student's major Degree Requirements

In order to graduate, students must meet all requirements specified in the USF Catalog of their choice, except as noted below. As the University is dynamic, changes and updates to the catalog are anticipated. In contrast to major requirements, which are tied to a specific catalog, all students must comply with University policies and procedures that come into effect each catalog year.

- Students cannot choose a USF Catalog published prior to admission (or readmission) or during an academic year in which they did not complete at least two terms. If a student is dropped from the system and must be reinstated, the student's choice of Catalog is limited to the USF Catalog in effect at the time of readmission or any one Catalog published during their continuous re-enrollment.
- If state law or certification requirements change, the student must comply with the most current standard or criteria.
- If the College or Department makes fundamental changes to the major that necessitates changes in the degree requirements of enrolled students, the needs of those students will be explicitly addressed in the proposal for change and scrutinized by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- USF policies and procedures not related to degree requirements such as academic grievance procedures, student conduct code and other procedural processes and definitions may be updated each year and the student will be held to the most current catalog and procedures available.
- USF does not commit itself to offer all the courses, programs, and majors listed in this Catalog. If the student cannot meet all of the graduation requirements specified in the Catalog of choice as a result of decisions and changes made by the University, appropriate substitutions will be determined by the major to ensure that the student is not penalized.

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## Enrollment Requirements

### Validation of Admission

All graduate students must validate their term of admission. Students validate their admission by registering for coursework and maintaining that registration through the first week of the semester. In the event that students do not validate their admission, they will need to defer to a future term of admission. Their application for admission is good for up to one (1) year from their original term of admission.

### Continuous Enrollment for All Graduate Students

All graduate degree-seeking students must be continuously enrolled. Continuous enrollment is defined as completing, with grades assigned, a minimum of 6 hours of graduate credit every three continuous semesters. Courses that receive a "W" grade do not fulfill continuous enrollment requirements. Colleges and majors may have additional requirements. Students on an approved leave of absence are not subject to the enrollment requirement for the time approved for the leave. Students who have been Admitted to Doctoral Candidacy must follow the Dissertation Hour Enrollment in place of the Continuous Enrollment requirement as specified here for all graduate students (not in candidacy). See also the Time Limitations Policy.

### Readmission/Reinstatement Following Non-enrollment

A graduate student who is not registered and enrolled for a minimum of six (6) credits in a 12 month period is automatically placed in non-degree seeking (i.e. inactive) status. Students must be readmitted/reinstated to the degree. Courses that receive a "W" grade do not fulfill continuous enrollment requirements to continue their studies. Readmission/reinstatement is at the discretion of the major and is not guaranteed. Refer to the Readmission Policy in the Graduate Admissions Section for more information.

### Enrollment during Comprehensive Exams

During the term in which students take the comprehensive exams, students must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit. If the exam is taken between semesters, the student must enroll for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit in the semester before or following the exam.

### Enrollment during Semester of Thesis Submission

Students must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) thesis hours during the semester that the thesis is submitted and approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, usually the semester of graduation. Students not enrolled for the minimum requirement will not have the thesis/dissertation approved and therefore may not be certified for graduation.

### Enrollment during Semester of Graduation

Students must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) graduate hours during the semester of graduation.

### Enrollment for Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants

Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants should be full-time students. Exceptions must be approved by the College Dean and the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

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### Leave of Absence (LOA)

Leaves of absence may be granted to students under exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. Students requesting a LOA must specify the reasons for the leave, as well as the duration. Requested LOA may be approved for up to two years. Students requiring less than three (3) consecutive terms of absence do not need an approved LOA if they meet the continuous enrollment requirement.

Students with an approved LOA must be enrolled in the first semester after the leave expires. To request an LOA, the student must complete the form available from the Office of Graduate Studies website. The LOA must be approved by the Major Professor, the Major, the College, and the Office of Graduate Studies, and is noted in the student's record. If the LOA is granted, the time absent does not count against the student's time limit to obtain the degree.

Students returning from an approved LOA must reactivate their status by contacting the Office of Graduate Studies for procedures. Doctoral candidates returning from a LOA must also have their candidacy status reactivated.

### Auditing of Courses

Audit status must be obtained only during the first five days of the term by filing with the Registrar's Office a [Course Audit Form](#) and a date-stamped permit from the college/department on the campus where the course is being offered.

Additional information regarding the deadlines and procedures for auditing of courses can be found at the [Registrar's Office homepage](#).

**NOTE: Audited courses cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.**

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### Transfer of Credit

The Graduate Transfer course form is used to transfer graduate course work into a student's degree seeking program. This includes external or internal coursework.

#### EXTERNAL

May transfer only graduate level structured coursework into their graduate program taken at a regionally accredited institution, including USF system Institutions (USF St. Pete and Sarasota)

#### INTERNAL

May request application of internal credit of graduate level (5000-7999) structured coursework toward their graduate program taken at USF, with the approval of the graduate program, college, and Office of Graduate Studies, for graduate courses taken as:



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- An undergraduate student that were not used as part of the undergraduate degree requirements, except in cases of an Accelerated Degree Program approved through Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council and SACSCOC.
- A non-degree seeking status (including Graduate Certificate Students, INTO students, etc.) May transfer in the total hours taken as part of a completed Graduate Certificate to the graduate degree program with Program approval.
- A degree-seeking student, where the student is approved for a Change of Program to another graduate degree program.

### **Below is the list of additional rules applicable to the Transfer Course Policy**

- May transfer only graduate-level (5000-7999) structured coursework with a grade of B (3.00) or better. Courses with Pass/Fail grades are not eligible for transfer. Grades from courses taken at non-USF Institutions are not calculated in the USF GPA, although the courses are listed on the transcript.
- May transfer in up to 50% of a given graduate degree program's total minimum hours as reflected in the individual degree program listings in the USF Graduate Catalog in effect at the time of initial enrollment for that degree program. For doctoral programs, this percentage is based on the post-baccalaureate minimums. Note – the 50% maximum includes the total of both external Transfer of Credit and Internal Application of credit. Individual Graduate Programs may have more restrictive requirements.
- Must not have been used for a completed degree. For students with coursework from a completed degree, the specific course requirements in common across both degree programs may be waived with the substitution of other approved coursework at the discretion of the program. (not including coursework for PhD application of credit)
- Must not be older than 10 years at the time of graduation or course currency is required.

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## Academic Standards and Grades

### Minimum University Requirements

#### Minimum University Requirements

In Good Standing - To be considered a student in good standing, graduate students must:

Maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in all courses taken as a graduate student, and

Maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in all courses taken in each of the student's degree-seeking majors.

Only courses with grades of "C" (2.00) or better will be accepted toward a graduate degree; no grade of C- or below will be accepted. Students must meet the requirements to be in good standing to graduate. All "I" and "M" grades must be cleared for graduation to be certified. Students who fail to maintain good standing may be placed on probation or academically dismissed.

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### Grade Point Average (GPA)

#### Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA is computed by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of graded (A-F) hours completed. The total quality points are figured by multiplying the number of credits assigned to each course by the quality point value of the grade given. The GPA is truncated to two decimals (3.48) and is not rounded up.

Credit hours for courses with grades of I, IU, M, MU, N, S, U, Q and grades which are preceded by T (Transfer) are subtracted from the total hours attempted before the GPA is calculated. Graduate students are not eligible for grade forgiveness. All grades earned, regardless of course level, will be posted on the transcript. If a student retakes a course, both grades will be used in the determination of the GPA. Courses taken at USF as non-degree-seeking are not computed in the GPA unless the courses are transferred in and applied to the degree requirements. The program and the college must approve such actions.

Grades for transfer credits accepted toward the major will not be counted in the GPA unless the coursework in question was taken as a non-degree-seeking student at USF and meets the requirements stated above (see Institution Based Credit/Transfer of Credit section).

### Satisfactory (S)/Unsatisfactory (U) Grades

#### Satisfactory (S)/Unsatisfactory (U) Grades

Graduate students may not take courses in the major on an S/U (satisfactory / unsatisfactory) basis unless courses are specifically designated S/U in the Catalog. Students may take courses outside of the major on a S/U basis with prior approval of the course professor, major professor or advisor, and the Dean of the College in which the student is seeking a degree. The student may apply a maximum of six (6) hours of such credit (excluding those courses for which S/U is designated in the Catalog) toward a master's degree. Directed Research, Thesis, and Dissertation courses are designated as variable credit and are graded on an S/U basis only. Before a student begins work under Directed Research, a written agreement must be completed between the student and the professor concerned, setting forth in detail the requirements of the course.

### Incomplete (I)

#### Incomplete (I)

Definition: An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. This applies to all gradable courses, including pass/fail (S/U).

Students may only be eligible for an "I" when:

- the majority of the student's work for a course has been completed before the end of the semester the work that has been completed must be qualitatively satisfactory
- the student has requested consideration for an "I" grade as soon as possible but no later than the last day of finals week.

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The student must request consideration for an incomplete grade and obtain an "I" Grade Contract from the instructor of record. Even though the student may meet the eligibility requirements for this grade, the course instructor retains the right to make the final decision on granting a student's request for an Incomplete. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed one semester from the original date grades were due for that course. The instructor must file a copy of the "I" Grade Contract in the department that offered the course and the Office of Graduate Studies by the date grades are due. The instructor must not require students to either re-register for the course or audit the course in order to complete the "I" grade. Students may register to audit the course, with the instructor's approval, but cannot re-take the course for credit until the I grade is cleared. The instructor will be required to complete the I-Grade Contract online when posting the semester grade at the end of the term, identifying the remaining coursework to be completed, the student's last day of attendance, and the percent of work accomplished to this point. This online contract will be automatically copied to the student's email and to the Registrar.

An I grade not cleared within the next academic semester (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract. I grades are not computed in the GPA, but the grade noted on the contract will be computed in the GPA, retroactive to the semester the course was taken, if the contract is not fulfilled by the specified date. When the final grade is assigned, if applicable, the student will be placed on academic probation or academically dismissed (refer to Automated Academic Probation Procedures for information). Students cannot be admitted to doctoral candidacy or certified for graduation with an "I" grade.

### [Missing \(M\)](#)

#### [Missing \(M\)](#)

The University policy is to issue an M grade automatically when the instructor does not submit any grade for a graduate student. Until it is removed, the M is not computed in the GPA. To resolve the missing grade, students receiving an M grade must contact their instructor. If the instructor is not available, the student must contact the instructor's department chair. Courses with an M grade may not be applied to the major requirements. Students with an M grade will not be admitted to doctoral candidacy until the M grade is resolved.

### [Continuing Registration Grades \(Z\)](#)

#### [Continuing Registration Grades \(Z\)](#)

The Z grade shall be used to indicate continuing registration in multi-semester internship or thesis/dissertation courses where the final grade to be assigned will indicate the complete sequence of courses or satisfactory completion of the thesis/dissertation. Upon satisfactory completion of a multi-semester internship or thesis/dissertation, the final grade assigned will be an S. The Office of Graduate Studies submits the change of grade for the last registration of thesis/dissertation courses once the thesis/dissertation has been accepted for publication.

## Specialist Program Handbook

Note: Graduation will not be certified until all courses have been satisfactorily completed. No grade changes will be processed after the student has graduated except in the case of university error. Procedures requiring petitions are processed through the Office of Graduate Studies.

### CF Grade

"CF" indicates that a student was dropped from a course due to non-payment of tuition and fees for the semester. If the course is to be restored, the student must pay the outstanding tuition and fees and complete the Student Accounts Office's Petition for Reinstatement-Non-Payment of Tuition form which can be found [here](#).

### Academic Probation

Any student who is not in good standing at the end of a semester shall be considered on probation as of the following semester. The college or major may also place students on probation for other reasons as designated by the college or major. Notification of probation shall be made to the student in writing by the department, with a copy to the College Dean. At the end of each probationary semester, the department shall recommend, in writing, to the College Dean one of the following:

- Removal of probation
- Continued probation; OR
- Dismissal from the major

Students on probation may only enroll in graduate courses (5000-7000 level) that are part of the approved major requirements as specified in the Graduate Catalog. Students with a GPA below 3.00 for two consecutive semesters will be prevented from registering for courses without the permission of the College Dean. The College Dean will notify the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies in cases of academic dismissal. To be readmitted, the student will need to reapply for admission, meeting the admission criteria in place at the time. For information on the Automated Probation Process go to <http://www.grad.usf.edu/inc/linked-files/probation-procedure.pdf>

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### Graduate Certificates

The College of Education offers a wide variety of graduate certificates in a variety of areas. Graduate certificates are designed to provide you with valuable educational experience in a more accessible, focused format than traditional graduate degree programs.

A certificate is a specialized graduate-level credential reflecting knowledge of the most up-to-date research in the selected field. Once completed, the certificate is notated on your transcripts, and a USF certificate of completion is awarded. Certificate completion increases your competitiveness, enhances your performance, and helps prepare you for the changing nature of your field of specialization.

## Specialist Program Handbook

Certificates generally take one-two years to complete, depending on course load per semester and course schedule offerings. Some certificates can be used to meet some of the requirements of a graduate program, depending on the policies of the degree program and the university. Completion of a certificate does not imply admission to a related program. If a student is going to complete a graduate certificate while in a graduate program they ***must apply separately*** to the certificate program and be accepted in order to earn it. Taking classes for a certificate program does not automatically admit the student to that certificate program.

Certificate programs offered by the College of Education include:

- Academic Advising (fully online)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (fully online)
- College Teaching
- Cybersecurity: Awareness and Education
- Disabilities Education: Severe/Profound (fully online)
- Diversity in Education
- ESOL (fully online)
- Evaluation
- Exceptional Student Education
- Foreign Language Education: Culture & Content
- Foreign Language Education: Professional
- Instructional Technology: Distance Education (fully online)
- Instructional Technology: eLearning Design and Development (partially online)
- Instructional Technology: Florida Digital Educator (fully online)
- Instructional Technology: Multimedia Design (partially online)
- Instructional Technology: Web Design (fully online)
- Post Master's Leadership in Higher Education (partially online)
- Qualitative Research
- Reading (fully online)
- School Counseling Post Master's (partially online)
- Teacher Leadership for Student Learning (fully online)

To learn more about applying for a graduate certificate, visit [USF Innovative Education](#).

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## Offices and Organizations for Governing Graduate Study

### University of South Florida

The development of University policies for graduate work is the responsibility of the USF Dean of Graduate Studies with the assistance and guidance of the University Graduate Council. The membership of the Graduate Council consists of faculty members who represent the various colleges, two graduate students, and the Dean and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. Faculty members serve three-year staggered terms; students serve for one year.

## Specialist Program Handbook

The USF Dean of Graduate Studies and University Graduate Council exercise the right of inquiry and review to ensure the development and maintenance of high academic standards in all graduate programs; review all new graduate courses and programs, as well as modifications to existing courses and programs; and review/recommend policies and procedures pertaining to graduate financial aid.

### [College of Education](#)

The Dean of the College is responsible for all graduate programs. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Dean is assisted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Programs Committee, (GPC).

### [Associate Dean for Graduate Education](#)

While the Associate Dean for Graduate Education is responsible to the Dean, this position has direct administrative responsibility for managing graduate programs. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education is also responsible for program development and serves as the quality control officer for graduate programs within the College of Education. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education is responsible for implementing policies related to credentialing of graduate faculty, appointment of thesis/dissertation committees, allocation of graduate tuition waivers, and exceptions to graduate admission criteria. The Associate Dean serves as an ex-officio member of the Graduate Programs Committee and a member of the COEDU Faculty Council, coordinates the ongoing revisions of the College of Education (COEDU) Graduate Handbook and the COEDU sections of the University Graduate Catalog.

### [Graduate Support Office](#)

#### [Graduate Support Office](#)

The Graduate Support Office's mission is to provide advising and academic support to the College of Education's graduate community and its partners to foster an environment of student success and academic excellence. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies is the graduate certifying officer for the COEDU, is responsible to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and is responsible for developing procedures to ensure the implementation of graduate policies within the COEDU. This position provides information and general advising to prospective graduate and advanced graduate students, and maintains files for all active graduate students in the College of Education.

### [Graduate Programs Committee \(GPC\)](#)

This committee is comprised of faculty members in the College of Education who are elected to represent the academic departments and the School of Physical Education and Exercise Science. It also includes graduate students appointed to represent the student body. This committee is responsible for the review of new and revised graduate level courses and programs, the development of new policies and procedures, and the systematic review of revised policies and procedures that govern the implementation of advanced graduate programs. Recommendations on new and revised programs, courses, and policies and procedures are forwarded from the GPC to the COEDU Faculty Council for approval at the College level. New and revised programs and courses are submitted to the University Graduate Council for university approval after they have been approved by the COEDU Faculty Council

## Specialist Program Handbook

### Credentialed Graduate Faculty

Faculty are credentialed to serve as major professors or outside chairpersons on proposal defenses and final defenses according to criteria developed by the COEDU and approved by the Dean of the College of Education. Recommendations for credentialing status are made by the departments to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Graduate faculty and credentialed faculty serve as major advisors for master's students. They also serve as members of master's committees.

A list of currently credentialed graduate faculty can be found [here](#).

### College of Education Graduate Student Council

A student group whose mission is "to enrich the graduate student experience through fostering college-wide collaboration, promoting excellence in educational research, teaching and student advocacy." For more information, please visit the Graduate Student Council's homepage [here](#).

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## Resources for Funding and Financial Assistance

- COEDU Graduate Assistantships, Tuition Waivers, Scholarships

**Scholarships offered by the College of Education are listed on the COEDU website at:**

<http://www.usf.edu/education/admissions/scholarships-financial-aid.aspx>

Research, teaching, or graduate assistantships are awarded by the individual departments to degree-seeking students enrolled each semester for the number of credit hours specified by the department.

Fellowships, grants and scholarships are funds distributed by the University to students for which no work or repayment is required.

Information on fellowships, scholarships, and other awards are listed online. The [COEDU Student Academic Services Office](#) and the [USF Office of Graduate Studies](#) both circulate information listing current sources of financial support for graduate students.

Limited funds are also available in the USF Office of Graduate Studies (ALN 226) to assist graduate students in special circumstances. Typically, these funds are used to support travel for students who have papers accepted at conferences, to provide research support for out of the ordinary expenses related to the thesis/ dissertation, and emergency tuition assistance. For travel and research costs, the USF Office of Graduate Studies requests students to first approach their department or college for assistance. The USF Office of Graduate Studies will then attempt to match the amounts. Please contact the USF Office of Graduate Studies (ALN 226) for additional information and application forms.

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# Specialist Program Handbook

## Education Specialist (Ed.S.) Degree Description

The Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) is an advanced graduate degree designed to provide professional educators with an opportunity to develop competencies in areas of special needs and interests. This degree consists of a minimum of 36 hours beyond the master's degree and is flexible in its requirements.

### Initial Certification Information

Students seeking initial State Teacher Certification must be admitted to one of the degree programs offered in the College of Education (COEDU) All initial certification programs in the COEDU require an internship or in some programs a practicum. Passing scores on the Florida Teacher Certification Exam (FTCE) are also required for program completion.

Please be advised that program and course requirements are subject to change per state legislative mandates, Florida State Department of Education program approval standards, and accreditation criteria.

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## Degree Programs and Concentrations

### **Approved Programs and Concentrations**

- Curriculum & Instruction: Adult Education
- Curriculum & Instruction: Counselor Education
- Curriculum & Instruction: Higher Education Administration
- Curriculum & Instruction: Instructional Technology
- Curriculum & Instruction: Measurement & Evaluation
- Curriculum & Instruction: School Psychology
- Curriculum & Instruction: Vocational Education
- Educational Leadership



## Specialist Program Handbook

### Change of Program vs. Change of Concentration

#### Change of Degree Program

Students who wish to change from one graduate degree program to another must complete the [Graduate Change of Program Application](#). Students should be mindful of the following criteria for approval when applying for this action:

- Must be currently admitted to USF as a degree-seeking graduate student
- Must have completed one semester of graduate coursework at USF under current program
- Must be in good academic standing with an overall USF graduate grade point average of at least 3.0
- Must request to change to another graduate program at the same or lower graduate level as the student's current program (e.g., from one master's program to another). This includes changing from one type of masters to another (eg. M.A. to M.Ed.) or changing from and doctoral program to a lower degree (eg. Ph.D to Ed.S.). If the student is only changing their concentration they will need to submit a change of concentration form (eg. Changing from an M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction with a Concentration in Instructional Technology to the M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction with a concentration in TESOL). Students desiring to change program levels (such as from a Master's program to Doctoral program) must submit a new application for admission.

The Change of Program form must be signed and approved both by the current program and the new program, after which it must be submitted through the COEDU Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval. If approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, the Change of Program form is forwarded to the Registrar for processing.

The new program may elect to accept some or none of the student's previously earned credits toward completion of the new program's requirements. Students must adhere to the transfer course policy and may only transfer up to 50% of the new programs minimum total of credit hours. No course with missing, incomplete or grades below "B" will be eligible for transfer.

If a Change of Degree program request is approved, a new program of study form for the new program must be submitted and approved. Students who change degree programs must meet the requirements that are in place at the time the change is approved. This includes the time limits on coursework to be used in the new program to fulfill degree requirements.

**NOTE:** Students should check with the new program before completing any paperwork. Some programs may require that the student submit a new admissions application because the Change of Program Request form does not contain sufficient information for them to make a decision. Also, some limited access programs in the COEDU require an interview and other data. For these programs, a change of program form is not accepted.

## Specialist Program Handbook

### Change of Concentration

Students who wish to change from one concentration to another within the same graduate degree program must complete the Graduate Change of Concentration Form. Students should be mindful of the following criteria for approval when applying for this action:

- Must be currently admitted to USF as a degree-seeking graduate student
- Must have completed one semester of graduate coursework at USF under current program
- Must be in good academic standing with an overall USF graduate grade point average of at least 3.0
- Must request to change to another concentration within the same graduate degree program at the same level as the student's current program (eg. Changing from the M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction with a Concentration in Instructional Technology to the M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction with a concentration in TESOL). Students desiring to change program levels (such as from a Master's program to Doctoral program) must submit a new application for admission.

The Change of Concentration form must be signed and approved both by the current concentration and the new concentration, after which it must be submitted through the COEDU Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval. If approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, the Change of Concentration form is forwarded to the Registrar for processing.

While all credits taken under the original concentration will automatically transfer to the new concentration, the new concentration may elect to accept only some of the student's previously earned credits toward completion of the new program's requirements.

If a Change of Concentration request is approved, a new program of study form for the new concentration must be submitted and approved. Students who change concentrations must meet the requirements that are in place at the time the change is approved. This includes the time limits on coursework to be used in the new program to fulfill degree requirements.

**NOTE:** Students should check with the new concentration before completing any paperwork.

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### Faculty Advisors

Upon admission to the degree program, students should meet with the program coordinator in the specialization selected to discuss the process for identifying a major professor and faculty committee, and to develop a program of study. Doctoral students may find the need to take longer than Master's students to submit the program of study form to allow for introductions to faculty members who can serve as committee members. The program of study is unofficial, however, until all appropriate signatures have been obtained approving the proposed plan of study. A program of study should be filed no later than the point at which 50% of the doctoral coursework, excluding dissertation hours, has been completed

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## Specialist Program Handbook

### Planned Program of Study

The Planned Program of Study form is a document that lists all of the courses that students must take to complete their degree programs. This form is also used to approve students for the comprehensive examination and to certify students for graduation. If courses completed and listed on the student's transcript are not consistent with those listed on the Program of Study form, those courses will not be counted towards satisfying degree requirements.

### Completion and Filing of Planned Program of Study Form

A Planned Program of Study form should be completed by the student in collaboration with the program advisor. The form should be signed by the student, program advisor in the program area, and the department chairperson.

Once these signatures are secured, the Academic Program Specialist for the department should forward the form to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) by the end of the first semester after the student's admission to the program, or before 12 hours of graduate coursework have been completed, whichever occurs first. The Graduate Support Office reviews the planned program of study for compliance with College, University, and applicable State of Florida Department of Education requirements. When the program is approved and signed by the Graduate Support Office, a signed copy will be emailed to the department Academic Program Specialist and to the student.

### Change to Course Requirements on an Approved Planned Program of Study

If courses completed and listed on the student's transcript are not consistent with those listed on the Program of Study form, the courses will not be counted as satisfying degree requirements unless an approved request for [course substitution](#) is completed by the program advisor and submitted to the Graduate Support Office.

Please note: the request for course substitution is used when a course on the approved planned program of study is being replaced with a different course taken at USF. To apply courses completed at another institution to the USF planned program of study, please use the [Transfer Course Form](#).

### Appointment of the Ed.S. Committee

#### Major Professor

Upon admission to a Specialist program, the student is required to meet with the department's graduate program coordinator or assigned program advisor during the first semester of study to select a major professor and form a Specialist supervisory committee. The coordinator or advisor will help the student identify a Major Professor who must be a fully credentialed member of the College of Education graduate faculty, and who has knowledge and interest in the area of study chosen by the student. If co-major professors are desired, at least one must be a College of Education graduate faculty member who is credentialed to serve as a major professor, and who has knowledge and interest in the area of study chosen by the student. If co-major professors are desired, at least one must be a faculty member in the College of Education who is credentialed to serve as a major professor; the second co-major professor may be a faculty member in the College of Education or a similarly qualified and special credentialed faculty member from another USF college.

## Specialist Program Handbook

### Establishing an Education Specialist Committee

Education Specialist students will need to complete an appointment form for Advanced Graduate Student Supervisory Committee which names the members of the student's committee. The committee is comprised of at least three members (a minimum of two members in addition to the Major Professor). Advanced Graduate Student Supervisory Committee can be found [here](#).

The members must be credentialed as Associate or Full Members of the College of Education graduate faculty. In special cases, a member(s) outside of the College of Education with special expertise in the academic area in which the major work of the degree will be done and whose academic record meet the criteria for credentialing at the Associate or Full level in the College of education may serve on the doctoral committee.

At least three members of the doctoral committee must come from the academic area in which the major work for the degree will be done. At least one member of the committee must be from outside the student's discipline. One of the committee members should represent the cognate area that is a part of the students program of study.

For a four-member committee, at least two members (the major professor and one member) must be credentialed at the full level in the College of Education. A faculty member from one of the foundation areas (Psychological & Social Foundations, Educational Measurement & Research, or Curriculum and Instruction) may be counted toward the three-member minimum requirement for the academic area in which the major work of the degree will be done.

Below is a list of Credentialed Faculty for the College of Education. In the event that the student wishes to add a faculty member who is not on the Credentialed Faculty List, they will need to contact the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) regarding the process for Special Credentialing.

### [Credentialed Faculty List](#)

Once a student has established a Supervisory Committee, any changes to the committee will need to be made with Change to Advanced Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form. Changes to the committee include adding members, removing members, or changing members' status. The form to request changes to the Advanced Graduate Student Supervisory Committee form is available [here](#).

NOTE: It is in the best interest of the student to form the doctoral committee no later than the time the student has completed fifty percent (50%) of the required coursework (excluding required dissertation hours) for the program.

### Credentialing Non-College of Education Faculty (Special Credentialing)

There will be times when a student may choose to have a faculty member outside the College of Education who is a specialist in their field, serve on their supervisory committee. These instances include faculty from other colleges at USF and faculty from other institutions outside of USF. In these instances these faculty members require special credentialing to serve on the supervisory committee. Faculty can be special credentialed for the following purposes:

## Specialist Program Handbook

- Serving on the doctoral committee of a student
- Serving on the master's committee of a student
- Serving as a Major Professor
- Serving as an Outside Chair

In the event that a student needs to special credential a faculty member for their committee, the Special Credentialing form can be obtained from the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320). The form should be filled out and signed by the student's Major Professor and Department Chair before being returned to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) with a copy of the Vitae for the faculty member being special credentialed.

### Change of Committee Membership

Change of Committee Form: Whenever there is a change made to the Supervisory Committee a [Change to the Advanced Graduate Student Supervisory Committee form](#) should be completed and submitted by the doctoral student to the College of Education Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) for the Associate Dean for Graduate Education's review and approval. Committee members leaving the Committee, being added to the Committee or changing role on the Committee should be listed and the form signed by the Major/Co-Major Professor(s), current and new Committee members. The form must also be signed by the Department Chair. (For the Interdisciplinary Education program, the form must be signed by the Interdisciplinary Program Coordinator.)

At the time of the final oral defense, a current approved Advanced Graduate Student Supervisory Committee form (and change form(s) if necessary) must be on file in the College of Education Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) and a copy in the COEDU Graduate Coordinator's office in order for the student to be cleared for the defense.

### Comprehensive Exam Examination

The comprehensive examination designed to assess the student's general knowledge, understanding and skills in the domain of study, and his or her ability to synthesize and apply critical components of this domain. Prior to clearance for the granting of the degree, candidates must perform satisfactorily on a comprehensive examination in their field. The format used to satisfy the comprehensive examination requirement may vary by department or program. The arrangements for the examination are made at the department level.

### Registration Requirements

All students taking the Comprehensive Exam must be registered for at least two credit hours of coursework in the semester in which the exam is taken, in accordance to [USF Graduate School policy](#)

### Application and Clearance to take the Comprehensive Exam

Each graduate program has their own form of Comprehensive Examination. The student's department will determine the type of comprehensive exam, the dates for taking the exam, and what the eligibility requirements are. Students should check with their program advisor for details regarding their eligibility and time line for taking the comprehensive exam.

## Specialist Program Handbook

### [Submission of Comprehensive Exam Results](#)

The Program Advisor must submit the results of the comprehensive examinations to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) no later than the deadline for submission of term grades in order for the student to meet graduation requirements for that semester: [Verification of Comprehensive Exam Results Form](#).

### [Ed.S. Thesis Option and Ed.S. Project Options](#)

All Specialist degree have a Thesis or Project requirement and will have the benefit of a committee of members of the graduate faculty. Please check with your program to see if thesis or a project is required.

A number of semester hours of thesis or project enrollment will be determined by the degree program. Discussion with the major professor will help the student determine whether the thesis or project option is most appropriate. Students are required to enroll for a minimum of 2 semester hours in the XXX 6971 thesis course or EDG 6975 project course each semester while working on the specialist thesis/project and for 2 semester hours in the thesis or project course during the semester of graduation.

**NOTE:** Once a student has decided on a thesis or project they must continue to register in those hours until the paper is complete. You cannot flip back and forth between thesis hours and project hours as there is a specific process tied to each course.

Electronic thesis and dissertation information and schedule information can be found at the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (EDT) Resource Center

### [Ed.S. Thesis Requirements](#)

#### [Major Professor](#)

#### [Thesis Committee](#)

#### [Thesis](#)

#### [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information](#)

#### [Permission to Conduct Research Involving Human Beings](#)

*For both ethical and legal reasons, USF requires all researchers (including students) who conduct studies involving participation of human beings to have their projects reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to the start of their studies. Virtually all research studies in the College of Education will require approval by the IRB as these studies involve the use of human subjects. Master's students who have chosen the thesis option, must therefore complete the required IRB training and submit an application for approval of their study by the IRB.*

Students will need to submit a Certificate of Approval Form for completed thesis manuscripts from the [Office of Graduate Studies Forms](#) page (Doctoral Students category) and select [Certificate of Approval COA \(DOC\)](#).

See **Appendix I** for a guide for generating ideas and research questions for the Thesis.

## Specialist Program Handbook

### Specialist Project Information

Students Completing a Project will register for credit hours in EDG 6975 with their Major Professor. In the semester that the project is completed the student and their Major Professor must submit the Record of [Ed.S. Project Completion Form](#) and a hard copy of the project 3 week prior to the end of the semester for processing and grade change.

### Enrollment Requirements

#### Enrollment Requirements

Specific requirements regarding student enrollment in courses, including specific requirements for students taking comprehensive and qualifying examinations, students completing thesis and Ed.S. projects, students with assistantships and other funding, students entering doctoral candidacy, and for doctoral candidates completing dissertations.

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## Graduation Requirements

### General Information/Graduation Video Tutorial

A student planning to complete a degree during the current semester must apply for Graduation by the published deadline of the semester during which all degree requirements will be completed. (The deadline is posted on the Registrar's website.) It is recommended that students submit their applications after they have consulted with their program advisor and:

- Have passed the comprehensive exam or its equivalent OR have been cleared to take it in the application semester
- Will have completed all degree requirements by the end of the semester, including the removal of all incomplete (I), missing (M), and continuing (Z) grades.
- Provided currency statements for all courses that have exceeded the University's stated time limits.
- Submit all applicable official test scores must have been received for all degree programs requiring them, (e.g. Florida Teacher Certification Exam, Florida Educational Leadership Examination, etc.)
- Additionally, all students must be registered for at least two (2) graduate credit hours during the semester in which they have applied for graduation.
- Doctoral student must successfully defend their final dissertation and submit all of their relevant ETD Paperwork by the current semester's ETD deadline. See the Defense Deadlines for the current semester's deadlines.

### **Graduation Video Tutorial**

Check out the [Graduation Video](#) provided by the Graduate Support Office

### Applying for Graduate Degree

Students [apply for graduation via their OASIS account](#). When applying, as long as the information regarding your Curriculum Information/Current Program section is correct (in particular, your college, degree and major and concentration if applicable) you can submit the application. You will automatically be sent a confirmation to your USF email account.

## Specialist Program Handbook

Please Note: If you are applying for graduation, we request that you make sure your personal information (i.e. Name, Address, Phone Number, etc.) is up to date with the Registrar's office. The information that they have on file is what will be used when diplomas are generated and mailed. Feel free to contact us if you have any additional questions or concerns.

### Participation in Commencement Ceremony

Commencement is the formal ceremony where students walk across the stage in their commencement regalia (cap, gown, hood). The commencement ceremony is a completely separate process from the graduation process. For more information regarding the commencement ceremonies and registering for this semester's ceremony please visit their [website](#).

### Late Graduation Application

Students who need to file for graduation after the published University deadline for the current semester will be considered late applicants. Late applicants must complete the online Graduation Application via their Oasis account and the [Late Graduate Graduation Application Form](#). The Late Graduate Graduation Application form should be submitted to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320).

Late applicants who want to participate in the graduation exercises should contact the University Office of Special Events and Ceremonies (see the section above on registering for commencement) regarding requirements to participate in the commencement ceremony. However, late graduation applicants should be aware that:

- Their names may not appear in the commencement program
- Academic regalia for participation in the graduation ceremony may not be available to them
- They may not receive their diplomas with those who filed their applications by the stated deadlines
- They may experience a delay in receiving their final transcripts showing degree completion from the Registrar's Office

### Withdrawal from Graduation

A student who has applied for graduation for the semester and needs to delay degree completion should complete and submit the [Graduate Graduation Application Withdrawal Request](#) to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) as soon as possible before the last day of classes for the semester. This action removes the student's name from the official graduation list and the student will not be certified for the final degree for that semester. Once withdrawn, the student must apply for graduation for the next term.

### Certifying Degree Completion

Participation in the graduation ceremony does not guarantee certification for degree. Once final grades for the semester are received, the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) will certify completion of the earned degree (i.e., conduct a final review of the applicants' degree requirements and final transcripts to ensure that all graduation requirements are met). A list of graduation applicants and their final graduation status (i.e. whether they have successfully earned the degrees or not) will be forwarded to the Registrar's Office approximately 4-6 weeks after the graduation ceremony.



## Specialist Program Handbook

### Denial of Degree

In the event that a student does not meet the requirements for the academic program and is denied graduation, the Graduate Support Office will send the student and appropriate department faculty and staff a notice identifying the issues which prevented graduation.

The student must submit a new online graduation application for the new term of graduation by the application deadline for that term. The student should work with the academic department to successfully reconcile the issues which prevented the previous term's graduation.

In addition, the student must be registered for two (2) graduate hours in the semester of re-application for graduation.

### Letters of Completion

A letter of completion verifying satisfactory completion of degree requirements is available to students who request it while they are still waiting for their degree to post to their transcripts. Please complete the [Request for Letter of Completion form](#) and submit it to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320). The Letter of Completion is signed by the student's department, the Graduate Support Office for the College of Education, the Office of graduate Studies for the University, and the University Registrar and receives the university's seal.

Letters of completion requests are processed and completed once the final certification process is completed for the student. For masters students the final certification process will be completed after the current term's grades are released by the registrar (the Friday after commencement). For doctoral and specialists students the final certification process will be completed upon receipt of the ETD Confirmation email from the ETD Coordinator in the Office of Graduate Studies (Barring the student taking any other coursework in addition to dissertation/thesis hours). Once the Letter of Completion has been fully processed it will be mailed to the student at the address provided on the form unless otherwise indicated with a copy of the form emailed to the student as well. Please allow six (6) to ten (10) business days for a request for Letter of Completion to be processed once the final certification is complete for the student.

NOTE: Once transcripts reflect the degree earned a Letter of Completion will longer be available.

### Order Transcripts

Students may order transcripts showing reflecting their degree from the university Registrar's Office. Please note that if you are ordering a transcript prior to the completion of the final degree certification process, check the box asking that your transcript be delayed until the degree has posted. For more information regarding ordering transcripts and the necessary links visit the [Registrar's Office web-page](#).

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

#### Thesis Research Proposal Questions

##### 1.0 Problem and its Context

- 1.1. Describe context of problem.
- 1.2. Has problem been stated clearly?
- 1.3. Has the problem been tied to a theoretical rationale or empirical base?
- 1.4. Does the problem have sufficient value to justify the study?
- 1.5. Has problem been delimited (cut to size)?

##### 2.0. Hypotheses or Research Questions

- 2.1. What are the hypotheses? What are the research questions?
- 2.2. Are the hypotheses stated as directional research hypotheses?
- 2.3. Are they consistent with theory or empirical evidence?

##### 3.0. Definitions and Assumptions

- 3.1. Have unique terms been defined theoretically and operationally as used in the study?
- 3.2. Have relevant assumptions been stated?
- 3.3. Have independent and dependent variables been defined?

##### 4.0. Review of Literature

- 4.1. Is the reviewed literature related to all aspects of the study?
- 4.2. Have relevant, important studies been synthesized? (Watch for non-relevant fillers.)
- 4.3. Has attention been given to agreements - disagreements, consistency of findings, major approaches to studying the problem, main positions?
- 4.4. Does review of literature support need for the study?
- 4.5. Is it possible to identify a theoretical rationale for the study?
- 4.6. Is the review comprehensive?
- 4.7. Does the hypothesis rise from the literature and is it consistent with the literature?

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### 5.0. Procedure - Method (Conduct of Study)

5.1. What type of study? – experimental, survey, case study, ethnographic, etc.

5.2. Describe the design - How does it minimize threats to internal validity? Symbolize the design, if applicable.

### 5.3. Data gathering

#### 5.3.1. Methods (appropriate to questions)

Instruments, Validity, Reliability, Observation (Participant Observer Bias), Interview (Field Test), Available Records (Internal-External Criticism), credibility.

#### 5.3.2. Sampling procedures

Description of population and sample

Description of sampling plans - random, stratified-non-comparable, purposive.

Note selection and assignment

How does sampling affect External Validity and Generalizability of findings?

### 5.4. Data Analysis

#### 5.4.1. Appropriate technique

#### 5.4.2. Identify the model symbolically (if appropriate)

#### 5.4.3. Note assumptions underlying statistical technique

#### 5.4.4. Processing Model

### 6.0. References - Books, Journals, Publications, Periodicals, Primary Sources, Reports, Secondary Sources