

College of Education “LIFELINE”

A Briefing on Issues Most Often Raised by Graduate Students

First Term Enrollment

- **Validating Admission:** Students make their admission official (or “validate”) by registering for at least one course during the semester in which they are formally admitted to the University.
- **Changing Term of Entry:** Students who are unable to enroll in classes during the semester in which admission has been granted should change their term of entry by notifying the Graduate Admissions Office in writing. This request must be made in writing within 12 months of the initial requested entry date and must be received no later than the program’s application deadline for the semester desired.
- **First Day Class Attendance:** Graduate students who are unable to attend the first class meeting should contact the professor so that they are not dropped from the class roll. Students are responsible for dropping undesired courses in these categories by the 5th day of classes to avoid fee liability and academic penalty.
- **Dropping Classes during Add/Drop Week:** After a student has completed his or her registration on the date assigned, he/she may add a course(s) during the drop/add week (i.e. through the fifth day of classes) through the OASIS system. If you decide not to take a class you must withdrawal through your Oasis account. Graduate students are **not** dropped automatically for non-attendance on the first day. If you do not actually withdrawal you could be charged for the class.

Transferring Course Work

- **Transfer of Coursework from Another Institution:** Students may transfer up to 50% of a program’s total credit hour requirement to their USF degrees **if:** 1) the coursework has not been used to fulfill requirements in another degree, 2) the student has earned final grades of at least a B in the coursework, 3) the coursework does not exceed the time limits for the degree as listed herein, and 4) **the transfer of coursework is deemed appropriate by the students’ departments and the College of Education.** Official transcripts from the institution where the transfer coursework was completed must accompany the request. Grades from transfer credit are not calculated into the student’s USF grade point average.
- **Coursework Taken While in Non-Degree Status** at USF would also fall under the transfer course policy and would be included in the 50% limit described above if transferred in combination with coursework from another institution.

Program Advisors and Planned Program of Study Forms

- **Assignment of an Advisor:** All students must have an advisor whose responsibility it is to assist the student in determining an academic course of action, and in completing the planned program. Students should contact their respective departments for guidance in identifying an advisor.
- **Major Professor:** Upon admission to a doctoral 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 doctoral supervisory committee
- **Planned Program of Study:** The planned program of study form lists the coursework that students will take in order to complete the degree. Any changes to this document must be formally reviewed and approved by the academic program and the College. The document is not official until the signatures of the student, the advisor, the department and the College of Education Graduate Support Office have been obtained.

- **Rule of Thumb for Planned Program of Study Submission:** Masters and Specialist students should submit their planned programs of study with the appropriate signatures the semester after their admission to the university. Doctoral students may take a semester or two longer to allow time to adequately formulate the doctoral committee.

Change of Program

- **Change of Program:** Students may file a *Change of Program Form* only after they have validated their admission by completing a course during the semester in which they were admitted and while in good academic standing.

Time Limits

- **Masters and Education Specialist Students:** Coursework used by students pursuing the Education Specialist and Masters degrees can be **no older than five (5) years** at the time of graduation.
- **Doctoral Students :** Coursework used by doctoral students can be **no older than seven (7) years** at the time of graduation.

Grade Policies and Academic Standing

- **Academic Standing:** Students must maintain an overall grade point average (g.p.a.) of 3.00 to remain in good academic standing in their programs. Students must maintain a 3.00 g.p.a. in specialization and a 3.00 overall g.p.a. in order to graduate. Students who do not maintain the required academic standing will be placed on automatic academic probation. Please visit the USF Office of Graduate Studies website for more details: http://www.grad.usf.edu/policies_Sect7_full.php#probation
- **Grade Forgiveness: There is no grade forgiveness at the graduate level.** Students who register for classes and do not drop them during the drop/add deadline will not have these courses deleted from their transcripts. Students who repeat the same course will have the grades from both courses computed into their grade point averages.
- **Incomplete Grades (“I”):** 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, and the student has requested consideration for an “I” grade as soon as possible but no later than the last day of finals week. 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. An I grade not cleared within the next academic semester (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract **Students seeking to remove incomplete grades should not re-register for the course. Instructors must complete the change of grade process to update the final grade once the missing work has been submitted.**
- **Missing Grades (“M”):** The University policy is to issue an M grade automatically when the instructor does not submit a grade for a course. Missing grades which are not cleared within the next academic semester, including summer semester, will be converted to “M/F” grades or “M/U” grades, whichever is appropriate. Letter grades for these courses are computed into the students’ grade point averages.

Graduate Petitions (for late add, drop, and hour changes), Withdrawals, and Course Deletions

- **Graduate Petitions:** Students who have been formally admitted to graduate programs should use a graduate petition for items requiring a petition.
- **Fee Reimbursements:** A *Fee Adjustment Form* is needed in instances in which a student would like to have tuition and fees reimbursed after withdrawing from courses during the semester. A *Late Fee Waiver Request Form* is used if a student wishes to appeal a late fee assessment. Criteria for consideration are listed on each form. The request must be submitted within six months of the semester in question.

- **Course Withdrawal:** Graduate students must use a graduate petition to withdraw from a class after the semester's withdrawal date. Following are some criteria for course withdrawal via graduate petition:
 - a) Illness of the student of such severity or duration to preclude completion of the course(s) as confirmed in writing by a physician (M.D.).
 - b) Death of the student or death in the immediate family (parent, spouse, child or sibling) as confirmed by documentation (death certificate, obituary) indicating the student's relationship to the deceased.
 - c) Involuntary call to active military duty as confirmed by military orders.
 - d) A situation in which the University is in error as confirmed by an appropriate University official.
 - e) Other documented exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the student which precluded completion of the course(s) accompanied by an explanatory letter and supporting documentation.
- **Retroactive Drops and Withdrawals:** *Requests for retroactive actions will not be considered for approval.* This includes petitions to "drop" a course after the last day of classes in the current semester.
- **Course Deletion:** Graduate students may have courses deleted from their transcripts only if they were enrolled in the class through documented University error. Fees are automatically reimbursed upon approval of a course deletion, however, approval is granted only when a university error can be clearly documented.

Readmission

- **Readmission:** Students who are readmitted to their degree programs are bound by the policies and procedures that are in place at the time of the readmission. Students whose status has reverted to non-degree are not guaranteed readmission to their programs.

Internships

- **Internship:** Students whose programs require internships should check with their program advisor regarding internship requirements and deadlines. Some programs require this application up to two or more semesters in advance.

State Test Scores

- **Test Scores:** Some programs require students to complete and pass state tests including but not limited to the GKT (General Knowledge Test), the Subject Area Exam, and the Professional Education Exam. Check with your advisor at least two semesters before applying to graduate to see if any of these are required for your program.

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program Specific Information

- **Internship:** All MAT Programs have a required internship. Students must apply for Internship two semesters in advance. The internship application is accessible at <http://www.usf.edu/education/undergraduate/internship-requirements/index.aspx>
- **Teacher Certification Exam Scores:** All MAT students must take and pass both the state Subject Area Exam and the Professional Education Exam as two of their requirements for graduation. Please contact the MAT program advisor for details.

Specialist Thesis and Project Requirements

- **Choice of Thesis or Project:** Specialist students will choose the appropriate option in consultation with the appointed committee members and in consideration of professional and academic goals.
- **Registration Requirements:** A minimum of 9 semester hours of thesis or project enrollment is required in the Ed.S. degree program. Students are required to enroll for a minimum of 2 semester hours in the 6971 thesis course or EDG 6970 project course each semester while working on the Ed.S. thesis or project and for 2 graduate semester thesis hours in the semester during which the student plans to graduate.
- **Thesis:** The final approved thesis and all required forms and surveys must be uploaded and submitted to the USF Office of Graduate Studies by their deadline. Students who miss the final deadline will not be approved to graduate in that semester and will need to defer to the next semester. For more information on the <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>
- **Project:** Once completed and approved by the committee, a copy of the project and a completed Record of Masters/Ed.S. Completion form which can be found on the College of Education's Graduate Support Office homepage: <http://www.usf.edu/education/graduate/graduate-support-office/grad-stud-resources/thesis-project-specialists.aspx>

Comprehensive Exam

- **Comprehensive Exam:** All Master's and Education Specialist students must take and pass a comprehensive exam in their final year. Check with your program advisor/major professor to find out the application deadlines and additional information regarding this exam.

Qualifying Exam/Doctoral Candidacy

- **Qualifying Exam:** Doctoral Students need to complete the qualifying exam when they have no more than 9 credit hours of coursework (not counting required dissertation hours) left to complete. Students must be enrolled for a minimum of 2 credit hours when they take the exam. Check with your Major Professor to determine which qualifying exam option is appropriate as well as to obtain additional information regarding the exam.
- **Candidacy:** Once a doctoral student has completed their course work and passed their Qualifying Exam, they must apply for Candidacy before they may begin taking dissertation hours. The application for candidacy must be completed either in the semester that the qualifying exam is taken and passed or in the following semester when the qualifying exam results are verified if they take longer. (NOTE: Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 2 credit hours when they apply for candidacy.)

Dissertation/ETD Submission

- **Dissertation Hours:** Once a doctoral student is admitted to candidacy, the student must take a minimum of 2 graduate credit hours in each subsequent semester until he or she has reached the minimum number of required dissertation hours for their program. Please consult with your program advisor or check the Graduate Student Catalog for the required minimum dissertation credit hours for your program.
- **Dissertation Defenses:** All Doctoral Students must complete a Proposal Defense and then a Final Defense of their Dissertation. NOTE: The student **may not** defend the dissertation in the same semester or within 3 calendar months of the date on which they successfully defended the proposal.
- **ETD Submission:** The final approved dissertation and all required forms and surveys must be uploaded and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by their deadline. Students who miss the final deadline will not be approved to graduate in that semester and will need to defer to the next semester. For more information on the ETD process, please visit the following webpage: <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Graduation and Commencement Ceremony Information

- **Enrollment in Final Semester:** Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 2 credit hours of graduate-level coursework in the semester that they apply for and graduate regardless if they have already finished all course work and/or required dissertations, theses, or projects.
- **Graduation Application:** The graduation application is accessible through students' OASIS student information accounts. The application for graduation must be completed before by the end of the fourth week of the semester. Exact application deadline dates for each semester can be found at usf.edu/registrar. NOTE: If you have changed your name while enrolled, you will need to submit a change of name form to the Registrar's Office.
- **Late Graduation Applications:** All applications turned in after the deadline must also have the Late Graduation Form attached explaining the rules and limitations. Students who turn in their application late are not guaranteed to have their name printed in the commencement brochure.
- **Graduation Application Withdrawal Form:** If a student has submitted a graduation application and later determines that they will not be graduating in that semester they will need to submit a withdrawal form to the College of Education Graduate Support Office.
- **Commencement:** If you plan to participate in the graduation ceremony, there is a separate application to complete. The application can be accessed at: <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/commencement/>. Your name as shown in the Commencement Brochure is provided by the University Registrar's Office. For name changes, please contact the Registrar's Office directly.
- **Final Transcripts and Diplomas:** Once all degree requirements have been certified as complete for the semester it will take approximately 6-8 weeks for your diploma to be mailed to you and for your degree to post to your transcripts.

Information in this document has been adapted from the resources listed below. Please visit the following webpages for additional information:

College of Education Website: <http://www.usf.edu/education/>

USF Graduate Catalog: <http://grad.usf.edu/>

New Graduate Student Information: http://www.grad.usf.edu/new_students.php

Office of the Registrar: <http://www.usf.edu/registrar/>

Information verified as of July 17, 2018.