


University Degree Requirements

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Degree Requirements

The following sections describe the University [minimum](#) requirements established by the Office of Graduate Studies for the Master's, Education Specialist, and Doctoral degrees. However, individual majors and colleges may establish additional or *more stringent* requirements.

Student Responsibilities

The University of South Florida and all colleges, departments and majors therein establish certain academic requirements that must be met before a degree is granted. These requirements concern such things as curricula and courses, majors and minors, and academic residence. Faculty and graduate [program](#) directors are available to help the student understand and arrange to meet these requirements, but the student is responsible for fulfilling them. At the end of a student's course of study, if all requirements for graduation have not been satisfied, the degree will not be granted. For this reason, it is important for students to acquaint themselves with all regulations and to remain currently informed throughout their college careers. Courses, majors, and requirements described in the catalog may be suspended, deleted, restricted, supplemented, or changed in any other manner at any time at the sole discretion of the University and the USF Board of Trustees.

Graduate Faculty Definition

The University of South Florida recognizes Graduate Faculty and Affiliate Graduate Faculty. Only Graduate Faculty, and Affiliate Graduate Faculty approved for such purposes, may serve as the Instructor of Record for graduate level courses.

Graduate Faculty is defined to consist of all tenure-track or tenured faculty appointed at the Assistant, Associate, or Professor rank, who holds a terminal degree or equivalent in their discipline. Graduate Faculty members are eligible to teach graduate courses and may direct and serve on masters, specialist, and doctoral level committees. To chair a doctoral level committee, a Graduate Faculty member must engage in current and sustained scholarly, creative, or research activities, such as publications, performances, exhibitions, patents, inventions and research grants.

Affiliate Graduate Faculty membership may be granted by the Office of Graduate Studies Dean/[Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs \(or designee\)](#) to individuals whose skills or expertise meet criteria established by the College. Affiliate Graduate Faculty membership is in effect for a specified period of time and specific purposes. Affiliate members may be eligible to serve on masters, specialist, and doctoral level committees, to direct master's and specialist's level committees, and to co-direct doctoral level committees, at the discretion of the College. Affiliate Graduate Faculty can only serve as the Instructor of Record when they have a terminal degree in the discipline and are approved to teach graduate courses in that field. Emeritus Professors and retired or recently resigned professors may also be appointed as Affiliate Graduate Faculty with the approval of the College and Office of Graduate Studies Dean/[Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs \(or designee\)](#).

Graduate Faculty Approval – Graduate faculty is defined as noted above; Colleges and Departments may have additional requirements. The Office of Graduate Studies will maintain a list of Graduate Faculty along with approval guidelines from the Colleges and Departments. Also reference USF Policy 10-115 – Faculty Credentials for Teaching Undergraduate and Graduate Courses - <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-10-115.pdf>. For a current list of Graduate Faculty and Affiliate Graduate Faculty in any major contact the graduate director or coordinator.

Master's Degree Requirements

Minimum Hours

A minimum of thirty (30) hours is required for a master's degree, at least sixteen (16) hours of which must be at the 6000 level or above; the remaining hours must be at the 5000 level or above.

At least twenty (20) hours must be in formal, regularly scheduled structured course work. Lower level undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy master's course requirements but may be taken to meet specific prerequisites. All graduate and undergraduate courses taken as a graduate

student will be included in the computation of ~~count in~~ the overall GPA, whether or not they count toward the minimum hours for the degree. Graduate students may not enroll for more than 18 hours in any semester without written permission from the College Dean. The minimum number of credit hours required for each individual master's major is noted in the degree requirements section of the Graduate Catalog for that major listing. Majors with formally approved concentrations must have core major requirements that all students must successfully complete.

Institutional Enrollment Requirement

~~At least 50% of credits toward a graduate degree must be earned through instruction offered by the home institution (e.g., USF Tampa, USF St. Petersburg, USF Sarasota Manatee) granting the degree.~~ For information about the minimum number of credit hours required for the major refer to the curriculum requirements in the catalog listing for that major. Students are responsible for consulting with their Graduate Director for information on courses that may be taken outside their graduate major, as well as the Transfer of Credit Policy for course transfer eligibility requirements. Although equivalent courses may be offered at other institutions ~~including within the USF System~~, they may not satisfy degree requirements.

Students must matriculate for at least one semester following admission to the University before graduation may be approved. Students who want to change majors following admission into the University, must wait one semester before submitting the Change of Major request.

Students who change to a lower degree level (e.g. change from doctorate to master's), in the same major, may graduate the same semester that the change is approved, provided that it is not the first semester following admission to the University.

Time Limitations

Master's and 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 Currency Link](#)). Master's and Ed.S. degrees (including concurrent degrees) that require course work in excess of 50 credit hours may be granted a longer time limit by the University Graduate Council.

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> (Tampa); <http://www.usfsp.edu/grad> (St. Petersburg), or [http://sar.usfsm.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policies-regulations/time-limit-extensions/\(Sarasota\)](http://sar.usfsm.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policies-regulations/time-limit-extensions/(Sarasota))

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 [also](#) applies to courses applied toward the degree, with the exception of those transferred in or from completed 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.~~

Enrollment Requirements

Refer to the [Academic Policies](#) Section

Major Professor

The Major Professor serves as the student's advisor and mentor. Students should confer with the academic area to confirm the internal process and timeline for the selection and appointment of the Major Professor. The student must identify a major professor from the student's academic area, approved by the student's Department/School (or College if a College ~~administered~~[administered](#) major), and receive that person's agreement to serve as major professor. The selection of the Major Professor must be approved and appointed as soon as

possible, but no later than the time the student has completed 50% of the major. Students must have a major professor in order to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

If a major professor cannot be identified or in the event a major professor is unable or unwilling to continue serving on the student's committee, the student is responsible for finding another major professor from the Department (or equivalent). Students who are unable to find a replacement major professor should confer with the Graduate Director for available options (including converting to a non-thesis option if available.) If no other options exist, the student may be requested to voluntarily withdraw from the major or may be honorably withdrawn in good academic standing. The student and major professor should plan a program of study which, when completed, will satisfy the degree requirements specified. A copy of this program of study, signed by the student and professor, must be maintained in the student's department file.

Major Professors must meet the following requirements:

- ~~Be from the student's academic area~~—Be graduate faculty*, as defined by the University, from the student's academic area.
- Be engaged in current and sustained scholarly, creative, or research activities and have met departmental (or equivalent) requirements
- Have been approved by the student's Department Chair (or equivalent) to serve as a Major Professor or Co-Major Professor

**Affiliate Graduate Faculty may serve as a Co-Major Professor with a graduate faculty from the student's department. Co-Major Professors may be two graduate faculty or one graduate faculty and one approved Graduate Affiliate Faculty*

The membership of graduate faculty will be based upon criteria developed within the appropriate major or department and approved at the college level. These criteria must be forwarded to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

In the event a Major Professor leaves the University (i.e., for an appointment at another university, due to retirement, etc.) and the Major Professor is willing and able to continue serving on the student's committee, the Major Professor then becomes a Co-Major Professor on the Committee and another graduate faculty from the student's Department is appointed as the other Co-Major Professor. In the event that the other Co-Major is Affiliate Graduate Faculty, the faculty leaving the University may remain as a member, with another graduate faculty from within the student's Department appointed as the other Co-Major Professor. To ensure that the student can make satisfactory progress, one of the Co-Major Professors must be accessible on the University campus for the student to make satisfactory progress on the thesis/dissertation. In the event a Major Professor is on temporary leave (e.g. sabbatical, research, etc.); the Major Professor shall coordinate with the Graduate Director to facilitate the needs of the student. In some instances, a student may choose to have two professors serve as Major Professor. In this situation the faculty are approved as "Co-Major Professors" and jointly serve in that role. Consequently, both faculty must sign approval on paperwork pertaining to the student's processing (i.e., committee form, change of committee form, etc.)

(Co-) Major Professor(s) of the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Responsibilities

Approved by the Graduate Council on May 15, 2000; revised August 26, 2013:

- Approving and submitting the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form to the Program, and if necessary, the College
- Approving and submitting the Admission to Candidacy Form.
- Specifying the style manual to be used for the thesis/dissertation before the student begins writing the manuscript. The style manual should be appropriate to the discipline.
- Students should not be told to follow other theses/dissertations.
- Referring students to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines (<http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>) to obtain information on University Format Requirements.
- Verifying by signing the Certificate of Approval, that the student's thesis or dissertation is ready to be submitted to the OGS for publication.
- Verifying, by signing the Request for the Ph.D./Ed.D. Final Oral Examination Form, that the student is ready to defend the dissertation.
- Verifying, by signing the Successful Defense of the Ph.D./Ed.D. Form, that the doctoral student has successfully defended the dissertation.
- Reading and approving the final copy of the thesis/dissertation for content and format prior to signing the Certificate of Approval.

Thesis Committee

Students working toward a thesis degree will have the benefit of a committee of members of the graduate faculty. The committee will approve the course of study for the student and plan for research, supervise the research and any comprehensive qualifying exams, and read and approve the thesis for content and format.

Composition

The committee will consist of either:

- the major professor and at least two other members or
- two co-major professors and at least one other member

Committee members should be from the general research area in which the degree is sought. (Colleges and Majors may require additional committee members and specify characteristics.)

Member Definition

All graduate faculty, as defined by the University and the College/Department, and approved by their department and college, are assumed by the Office of Graduate Studies as qualified to be a member of and/or supervise a committee. Persons desiring to serve on a Graduate **C**ommittee who are not defined as Graduate Faculty (i.e. visiting faculty, professionals, etc.) by the

University and the College/Department must submit a curriculum vitae (CV) and be approved by the Department, College, and, as needed, the Office of Graduate Studies, for each committee.

Committee members must meet the following requirements:

- Be graduate or affiliate graduate faculty, as defined by the University
- Have the background and expertise that contributes to the success of the student.

In addition to the requirements specified in the Graduate Faculty definition, committee membership will be based upon criteria developed within the appropriate major or department and approved at the college level. These criteria must be forwarded to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

Approval

Once a committee has been determined, a Supervisory Committee Form needs to be completed by the student and submitted to the Committee Members for original signatures. Check with the College for instructions and forms. The original appointment form and two (2) copies should be submitted to the College Associate Dean's office for approval. A copy of the approved form should be kept in the student's file. An approved and current Committee Form must be on file in the major/college before graduation may be certified. Committee forms need to be processed as early in the major as possible, but no later than the semester prior to graduation. (Colleges and departments may institute additional requirements for membership on Supervisory Committees.)

Changes to Committee

Changes to a Supervisory Committee must be submitted on a Change of Committee Form. Check with the College for instructions and forms. Original signatures of faculty being added to the Committee, along with the approval signature of the (Co-) Major Professor(s), must be on the form. Faxed signatures are acceptable. Faculty who are removed from the Committee are not required to sign the form, provided that the (Co-) Major Professor(s) has signed. In such instances the signature of the (Co-) Major Professor(s) indicate(s) approval of the change, as well as acknowledgement and approval of the change by the removed member. Any non-faculty being added to a committee must submit a Curriculum Vitae (CV) for college approval. Change of Committee Forms should be submitted for approval as soon as the change takes place. Changes to a Committee are official only once approved and filed by the major and college.

Masters Comprehensive Examination

Prior to clearance for the degree, candidates must perform satisfactorily on a comprehensive examination or an alternative method designated by the academic unit to measure student competency in the major area. The Comprehensive Exam, or designated alternative method, must be completed while in residency (i.e. current active student) at USF, administered by USF faculty, covering content for the USF major. Students must be degree-seeking and enrolled for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit during the semester when the comprehensive

examination is taken. If the exam is taken between semesters, the student must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit in the semester before or following the exam.

Thesis

If a thesis is required, it must conform to the guidelines of the University. Refer to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines, available on the web at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php> (Tampa); <http://www.usfsp.edu/grad>; (St. Petersburg); <http://sar.usfsm.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policies-regulations/thesis/> (Sarasota) for complete information about requirements, procedures, and deadlines. *For enrollment requirements, refer to the [Academic Policies](#) section.*

Thesis Format

The University accepts the standard format for the discipline of the major. Formats must be consistently applied and follow national standards for the discipline.

For the preliminary pages, which follow a standard University format, refer to the ETD website - <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Directed Research

Directed Research hours may satisfy up to 50% of the thesis hour requirement.

Manuscript Processing Fee

USF Regulation USF4-0107, <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf4.0107.pdf>

Students participating in the thesis/dissertation process are required to pay a processing fee. More information is available on the Thesis and Dissertation website.

Exchange of Thesis for Non-Thesis Credit

If a student changes from thesis to non-thesis during a semester and is currently enrolled in thesis credit, the current thesis credits may be exchanged without academic penalty if an Office of Graduate Studies Petition is filed with the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the last day to withdraw ~~without Academic Penalty~~ (see [Academic Calendar](#) for applicable dates). If a student enrolled in a thesis required major has taken thesis credits but elects to change to a non-thesis

track [or program](#), the accumulated thesis credits may not be exchanged or converted to another non-structured credit. The thesis hours will remain on the transcript and will retain the "Z" grade.

Thesis Defense

Policies and procedures for the thesis defense are handled within the College and Major. Contact the College and Major for requirements.

Thesis Final Submission Guidelines

Information on requirements for submission of the finished and approved manuscript copy^{ies} is available online at the Thesis and Dissertation website: <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php> . Students who fail to submit the final copy of a thesis by the posted submission deadline will be considered for graduation in the following semester and must therefore apply for graduation by the posted deadline, enroll in a minimum of two (2) thesis hours for that subsequent semester, and meet the submission requirements as posted on the [ETD Thesis/Dissertation](#) website. Only after the Office of Graduate Studies has approved the manuscript can the student be certified for the degree.

Mandatory Electronic Submission

Students are required to submit the thesis in an electronic format (ETD). Requirements and procedures are available at the Office of Graduate Studies website <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Submission for Official Publication and Archiving

All theses/dissertations will be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies designated System for official publication and archiving.

Changes after Publication

Once a thesis is approved and accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies for publication, it cannot be changed.

Release of Thesis Publications

The University recognizes the benefits from collaboration with sponsors on research projects but also recognizes the possibility of conflicts of interest in the disclosure of the results of the collaborations. While the sponsor's economic interests in the restriction of disclosure should be considered, the University has a primary mission to extend knowledge and disseminate it to the public and the broader academic community. The University's "Statement of Policy Regarding Inventions and Works" ([USF Policy 0-300: http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-300.pdf](http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-300.pdf)) acknowledges the possible need for delays in publication of sponsored research to protect the sponsor's interests, but it provides no definite guidelines for the restrictions of publication beyond the statement: "Disclosure delays mutually acceptable to the

Inventor, the Vice President for Research, and the sponsor, if any, are authorized in order to allow patent applications to be filled prior to publication, thereby preserving patent rights..." (April Burke, "University Policies on Conflict of Interest and Delay of Publications," Report of the Clearinghouse on University-Industry Relations, Association of American Universities, February, 1985.)

To protect the University's primary goal from un-due compromise, the University has adopted the following guidelines:

1. The recommendations of sponsors, regarding publication of research results should be considered advisory rather than mandatory.
2. In support of academic discourse and the mission to promote and share academic works, Theses will be released for worldwide access once submitted to and approved by the USF Office of Graduate Studies. In the event that a patent or copyright application provides reason to delay the release of the Thesis, a petition to request a one-year delay may be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration. Such requests must be received by the format check of the thesis.
3. Students should not be delayed in the final defense of their theses by agreements involving publication delays.

Duty to Disclose New Inventions and Works

USF 0-300 <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-300.pdf> and USF 12.003 <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf12.003.pdf>. For information about the requirements of this policy contact the Division of Patents and Licensing at (813) 974-0994.

Thesis Change of Grade

In the semester in which the final manuscript has been received, reviewed, and certified for permanent filing in the University Library, the Office of Graduate Studies submits the change of grade from "Z" to "S" for the last registration of thesis courses/[hours](#) to the ~~office~~[Office](#) of the ~~registrar~~[Registrar](#) when all grades are due at the end of the semester.

Conferring a Master's Degree for Student in a Doctoral Degree Program

Doctoral Degree Programs that admit students with Bachelor's degrees may choose to award a Master's degree during the completion of the requirements for the Doctoral degree. In this case, a student making satisfactory progress in a Doctoral, program and who meets all of the Master's degree requirements, may be eligible to be awarded a Master's degree in the same discipline.

Students must:

- Complete at least twenty (20) hours of formal, regularly scheduled structured coursework.

- Meet the specific curriculum requirements for the requested Master's Degree, as specified in the Graduate Catalog posted at the time of the request.
- Perform satisfactorily on a comprehensive examination or an alternative method designated by the academic unit.
- Complete the requirements of the thesis or non-thesis option, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. Master's degree programs that require a thesis must conform to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines. If the student chooses the thesis option, he/she must register for thesis hours and complete the thesis before Admission to Doctoral Candidacy and registration of dissertation hours.
- Register for a minimum of two (2) graduate credits in the semester the Master's degree will be awarded.

The two degrees are not considered part of a formal "concurrent degree" program and, therefore, are not subject to the policies governing concurrent degree programs. However, the College must identify which courses are used to meet each of the Master's and Doctoral degree requirements.

The Master's degree requirements may not be fulfilled using from credits from a previously earned Master's degree.

Requests for conferring a Master's degree for a student in a Doctoral Degree Program require approval from the Department, College Dean or designee, and the Office of Graduate Studies Dean or designee.

Education Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) Requirements

Ed.S. Thesis

Students who are required to submit an Ed.S. Thesis must meet all of the requirements for the thesis, as specified in the Master's Degree section of this publication. For specific major information, refer to the [College of Education](#).

Ed.S. Project

Students who are required to submit an Ed.S. Non-Thesis project must meet all of the requirements as specified by the College of Education. A project does not need to meet the requirements of a thesis and is not submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval and archiving.

Doctoral Degree Requirements

The doctoral degree is granted in recognition of high attainment in a specific field of knowledge. It is a research degree and is not conferred solely upon the earning of credit, the completion of courses, or the acquiring of a number of terms of residency, but also the successful completion of

scholarly work. The length of residency and the requirements below are minimums; majors/colleges may elect to establish more rigorous requirements. The degree will be granted after the student has shown proficiency and distinctive achievement in a specified field, has demonstrated the ability to do original, independent investigation, and has presented these findings with a high degree of literary skill in a dissertation. A major professor will be appointed as soon as possible but no later than the time the student has completed 50% of the major. The advisor will advise on any specific subject matter deficiencies and assist in the choice of a major professor and area of research.

Responsible Conduct of Research

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) is a critical element in training for scholarship. USF has information about RCR available online at: www.grad.usf.edu/rcr.php

Effective Spring 2013, Office of Graduate Studies requires all new doctoral students to have basic RCR training by completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) module most relevant to the student's program of study. The CITI modules have been designed to introduce researchers to various elements of research conduct ranging from research misconduct to data management to mentoring. As this is a minimum requirement, specific doctoral majors may require training that goes beyond the basic components introduced in this module. Graduate Majors that have received Office of Graduate Studies approval for rigorous RCR training consistent with disciplinary standards and practices may exempt their students from the CITI requirement. Students must complete the module, or provide evidence of previous qualified RCR training to their Major Director and Office of Graduate Studies, in the first semester enrolled in a doctoral major. Previous RCR training should have been completed within the past year. Students will be unable to register for courses in a future semester until successful fulfillment of this RCR requirement. Once the training is completed, the Registration hold will be lifted.

Doctoral Minimum Hours

The doctoral degree is earned on the basis of advancement to doctoral candidacy status and satisfactory completion of the dissertation. *Note- for professional doctorates (e.g. Au.D., D.N.P., Dr.P.H., D.P.T., M.D.), a dissertation may not be required. Refer to the major listing for more information.* The minimum number of credit hours to earn the doctorate is 72, post-bachelors, including dissertation (or project). The minimum number of credit hours required for each individual doctorate major is noted in the degree requirements section of the Graduate Catalog for that major listing. Some graduate majors may require more than 72 hours. Majors with formally approved concentrations must have core major requirements that all students must successfully complete.

Students must comply with general enrollment requirements and also institutional residency requirements. All doctoral students must have at least one gradable (A-F) graduate course taken at USF to satisfy the GPA minimum requirements. No undergraduate course may be used to satisfy the gradable minimal course requirement for the doctoral degree. Lower level undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy doctoral major requirements, but may be taken

to meet specific prerequisites. All graduate and undergraduate courses taken as a graduate student count in the overall GPA, whether or not they count toward the minimum hours for the degree.

Time Limitations

Doctoral degrees must be completed within seven (7) years from the student's original date of admission for doctoral study. All courses applied to the doctoral degree must be completed within ten (10) years, including courses taken

1. prior to admission to the USF doctoral major,
2. taken as non-degree seeking, or
3. transferred in from other institutions.

There is no time limitation for courses from a completed master's degree used toward a doctoral degree. For students who are readmitted, see [Readmission Policy^{\[RB1\]}](#). Typically, a student will reach candidacy within four years, but this may vary per discipline.

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>.

Requests must include

- the reasons for the delay in completion,
- the anticipated time needed for completion,
- and 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 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.

Enrollment Requirements

See [Academic Policies](#) Section

Institutional Enrollment Requirement

The majority of credits toward a graduate degree must be earned through instruction offered by ~~the home institution (e.g., USF Tampa, USF St. Petersburg, USF Sarasota Manatee) granting the degree~~USF. For information about the minimum number of credit hours required for the degree refer to the degree requirements in the major listing. Students are responsible for consulting with their graduate coordinator for information on courses that may be taken outside their graduate major, as well as the [Transfer of Credit Policy](#)^[RB2] for course transfer eligibility requirements. Although equivalent courses may be offered at other institutions ~~(including within the USF System)~~, they may not satisfy degree requirements.

Conferring a Master's Degree for Student in a Doctoral Degree Program

Doctoral Degree Programs that admit students with Bachelor's degrees may choose to award a Master's degree during the completion of the requirements for the Doctoral degree. In this case, a student making satisfactory progress in a Doctoral program, and who meets all of the Master's degree requirements, may be eligible to be awarded a Master's degree in the same discipline.

Students must:

- Complete at least twenty (20) hours of formal, regularly scheduled structured coursework.
- Meet the specific curriculum requirements for the requested Master's Degree, as specified in the Graduate Catalog posted at the time of the request.
- Perform satisfactorily on a comprehensive examination or an alternative method designated by the academic unit.
- Complete the requirements of the thesis or non-thesis option, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. Master's degree programs that require a thesis must conform to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines. If the student chooses the thesis option, he/she must register for thesis hours and complete the thesis before Admission to Doctoral Candidacy and registration of dissertation hours.

- Register for a minimum of two (2) graduate credits in the semester the Master's degree will be awarded.

The two degrees are not considered part of a formal "concurrent degree" program and, therefore, are not subject to the policies governing concurrent degree programs. However, the College must identify which courses are used to meet each of the Master's and Doctoral degree requirements.

The Master's degree requirements may not be fulfilled using from credits from a previously earned Master's degree.

Requests for conferring a Master's degree for a student in a Doctoral Degree Program require approval from the Department, College Dean or designee, and the Office of Graduate Studies Dean or designee.

Major Professor

The Major Professor serves as the student's advisor and mentor. Students should confer with the Department (or equivalent) to confirm the internal process and timeline for the selection and appointment of the Major Professor. The student must identify a major professor from the student's academic area, approved by the student's Department/School (or College if a College administered major), and receive that person's agreement to serve as major professor. The selection of the Major Professor must be approved and appointed as soon as possible, but no later than the time the student has completed 50% of the major. Students must have a major professor in order to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

If a Major Professor cannot be identified or in the event a Major Professor is unable or unwilling to continue serving on the student's committee, the student is responsible for finding another Major Professor. Students who are unable to find a replacement Major Professor should confer with the Graduate Director for available options. If no other options exist, the student may be requested to voluntarily withdraw from the major or may be honorably withdrawn in good academic standing. The student and Major Professor should plan a program of study which, when completed, will satisfy the degree requirements specified. A copy of this program of study, signed by the student and professor, should be maintained in the student's department file.

Major Professors must meet the following requirements:

- Be from the student's academic area -- Be graduate faculty*, as defined by the University, from the student's academic area
- Be engaged in current and sustained scholarly, creative, or research activities and have met departmental (or equivalent) requirements
- Be active in scholarly pursuits as evidenced by at least one refereed publication in the last three years.
- Have been approved by the student's Department Chair (or equivalent) to serve as a Major Professor or Co-Major Professor.

**Affiliate Graduate Faculty may serve as a Co-Major Professor with a graduate faculty from the student's department. Co-Major Professors may be two graduate faculty or one graduate faculty and one approved Graduate Affiliate Faculty*

The membership of graduate faculty will be based upon criteria developed within the appropriate major or department and approved at the college level. These criteria must be forwarded to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

In the event a Major Professor leaves the University (i.e., for an appointment at another university, due to retirement, etc.) and the Major Professor is willing and able to continue serving on the student's committee, the Major Professor then becomes a Co-Major Professor on the Committee and another graduate faculty from the student's Department is appointed as the other Co-Major Professor. In the event that the other Co-Major is Affiliate Graduate Faculty, the faculty leaving the University may remain as a member, with another graduate faculty from within the student's Department appointed as the other Co-Major Professor. It is important that one of the Co-Major Professors be accessible on the university campus for the student to make satisfactory progress on the thesis/dissertation. In the event a Major Professor is on temporary leave (e.g. sabbatical, research, etc.); the Major Professor shall coordinate with the Graduate Director to facilitate the needs of the student. In some instances, a student may choose to have two professors serve as Major Professor. In this situation the faculty are approved as "Co-Major Professors" and jointly serve in that role. Consequently, both faculty must sign approval on paperwork pertaining to the student's processing (i.e. committee form, change of committee form, admission to candidacy, etc.)

(Co-) Major Professor(s) of the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Responsibilities

Approved by the Graduate Council on May 15, 2000; revised August 26, 2013:

- Approving and submitting the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form to the Program, and if necessary, the College
- Approving and submitting the Admission to Candidacy Form.
- Specifying the style manual to be used for the thesis/dissertation before the student begins writing the manuscript. The style manual should be appropriate to the discipline.
- Students should not be told to follow other theses/dissertations.
- Referring students to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines (<http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>) to obtain information on University Format Requirements.
- Verifying by signing the Certificate of Approval, that the student's thesis or dissertation is ready to be submitted to the OGS for publication.
- Verifying, by signing the Request for the Ph.D./Ed.D. Final Oral Examination Form, that the student is ready to defend the dissertation.
- Verifying, by signing the Successful Defense of the Ph.D./Ed.D. Form, that the doctoral student has successfully defended the dissertation.

- Reading and approving the final copy of the thesis/dissertation for content and format prior to signing the Certificate of Approval.

Doctoral Committees

Some Colleges have a Graduate Committee comprised of graduate faculty, who advise the student from admission up to doctoral candidacy, when the formal Doctoral Dissertation Committee is formed. As soon as an area of research is determined and a major professor is selected, a Doctoral Dissertation Committee will be appointed and approved for the student. The Department will request approval of the Doctoral Committee from the Dean of the College and, as needed, the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

Role of Doctoral Committees

Depending on the College, either the Graduate Committee or the Doctoral Dissertation Committee is responsible for

- approving the student's course of study
- grading the written comprehensive qualifying examination

Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Doctoral Dissertation Committees will,

- approve the plan for research
- supervise the research
- read and approve the dissertation, and
- conduct the dissertation defense.

Member Definition

All graduate faculty, as defined by the University and the College/Department, and approved by their department and college, are assumed by the Office of Graduate Studies as qualified to be a member of and/or supervise a doctoral committee. Persons desiring to serve on a committee who are not defined as Graduate Faculty (i.e. visiting faculty, professionals, etc.) by the University and the College/Department must submit a curriculum vitae and be approved by the Department, College, and Office of Graduate Studies, for each committee.

Committee members must meet the following requirements:

- Be graduate or affiliate graduate faculty, as defined by the University
- Have the background and expertise that contributes to the success of the student.

In addition to the requirements specified in the Graduate Faculty definition, committee membership will be based upon criteria developed within the appropriate major or department and approved at the college level. These criteria must be forwarded to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies.

Composition

The Doctoral Dissertation Committee will consist of at least four members:

- the Major Professor must be from the student's academic area-- two additional members must come from the academic area (i.e. discipline) of the student
- at least one external member (from outside the Department, School, or equivalent, hosting the doctoral major, but may be within the academic discipline)
- Faculty holding joint or adjunct appointments in the degree-granting academic unit (i.e. Department or equivalent) cannot be external members on a student's committee.

Approval

Once a committee has been determined, a *Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form* needs to be completed by the student and submitted to the Committee Members for original signature. Check with the College for instructions and forms. To insure uniformity of excellence across the colleges, the (Co-)Major Professor(s) of Doctoral Dissertation Committees will need to submit a current curriculum vita (equivalent to an NIH Bio, approximately two pages long with the last three (3) years of scholarly activity included) with the committee appointment form to the College Dean or designee. This approval is in addition to the approval from their department chairperson. (Colleges and departments may institute additional requirements for membership on Doctoral Dissertation Committees.) Once approved, the original form and the approved Curriculum Vitae (CV) are placed in the student's file. An approved and current Form must be on file in the major/college before graduation may be certified. *Doctoral Dissertation Committee Forms* need to be processed as early in the major as possible, but no later than the semester prior to graduation.

Changes to Committee

Changes to a Doctoral Dissertation Committee must be submitted on a *Change of Committee Form*. Check with the College for instructions and forms. Original signatures of faculty being added to the Committee, along with the approval signature of the (Co-) Major Professor(s), must be on the form. Faxed signatures are acceptable. Faculty who are removed from the Committee are not required to sign the form, provided that the (Co-) Major Professor(s) has signed. In such instances the signature of the (Co-) Major Professor(s) indicate(s) approval of the change, as well as acknowledgement and approval of the change by the removed member. Any non-faculty being added to a committee must submit a CV for approval. If a faculty member is being added as a Co-Major Professor, or if there is an appointment change to the Major Professor position, a CV must be included for the faculty member who is being added to that position. Change of Committee Forms should be submitted for approval as soon as the change takes place. Changes to a Committee are official only once approved and filed by the major and college. An approved

and current *Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form* must be on file before graduation may be certified.

Doctoral Qualifying Examination

As soon as the substantial majority of the course work is completed, the student must pass a written Qualifying Examination covering the subject matter in the major and related fields. This Examination may be supplemented by an oral examination. The Qualifying Exam must be taken while in residency (i.e. current active student) at USF, administered by USF faculty, covering content for the USF major. Students must be degree-seeking and enrolled a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit in their discipline at the time they take the Qualifying Examination. If the Exam is taken between semesters, students must be enrolled for a minimum of two (2) hours of graduate credit in the semester before or following the Exam.

Admission to Candidacy

In order to be admitted to doctoral candidacy, students must meet the following requirements at USF:

- admission to a doctoral major
- appointment and approval of a Doctoral Committee,
- attainment of an overall and major Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.00 at USF at the time of candidacy. All "I" and "M" grades, including "IF" and "MF", must be cleared before candidacy may be finalized.
- successful completion of a qualifying examination
- certification by the Doctoral Committee that the above qualifications have been successfully completed
- must meet enrollment requirements for completion of the exam and submission of the form (See Enrollment Requirements^[RB3])

The Admission to Candidacy form should be submitted for approval during the semester that the Qualifying Exams were completed, but no later than the semester following the successful completion of the Exam. The form will be approved by the Dean of the College and forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval. Doctoral Candidacy is effective in the semester following processing and approval by the Office of Graduate Studies. At this time, the student's status changes to 6C. For procedures and processing deadlines refer to the Office of Graduate Studies website at www.grad.usf.edu.

Once candidacy status is approved, students with approved candidacy are eligible to enroll in dissertation hours (7980) in the semester that immediately follows the semester in which the Candidacy form is submitted and approved. For example, students approved during the Fall approval window may enroll in the Spring. Students approved during the Spring approval window may enroll in the Summer and students approved during the Summer approval window may enroll in the Fall. **Students may NOT enroll in dissertation hours prior to being admitted to doctoral candidacy.**

Each major has a required number of dissertation hours for completion of the degree. Departments, with College approval, may apply Directed Research hours toward the total number of dissertation hours required. Directed Research hours shall not exceed 50% of the dissertation hour requirement. No directed research hours will be converted to dissertation hours (i.e. a directed research course dropped and a dissertation course added) prior to or during the approval window. *For more information, refer to [Enrollment Requirements](#) in the Academic Policies section.*

Dissertation

Dissertation requirements are for the academic degrees of Ph.D. and Ed.D.; and for students in professional doctorate programs (e.g. DNP, DBA, Au.D., DrPH., DPT) who choose to complete a dissertation. Students in professional doctorate degree programs may choose to complete a doctoral project instead of a dissertation. Please contact the professional school for doctoral project requirements.

Dissertation Format

The University accepts the standard format for the discipline of the major. Formats must be consistently applied and follow national standards for the discipline. For the preliminary pages, which follow a standard University format, refer to the ETD website. <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Directed Research

Directed Research hours taken with the (Co) Major Professor(s) prior to approval to doctoral candidacy by the Office of Graduate Studies may satisfy up to 50% of the dissertation hour requirement, with program approval.

Manuscript Processing Fee

USF Regulation USF4-0107, <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf4.0107.pdf>. Students participating in the thesis/dissertation process are required to pay a processing fee. More information is available on the website at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Doctoral Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Examination)

Scheduling and Announcement

After the Doctoral Dissertation Committee has determined that the final draft of the dissertation is suitable for presentation, the Committee will request the scheduling and announcement of the Dissertation Defense (also called Final Oral Examination or Oral Defense.) A copy of the announcement should be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies, preferably two weeks in advance of the defense date. The announcement must also be posted in a public forum for a minimum of

twenty-four hours to comply with statute requirements for a public meeting. The College and Department may specify additional procedures for this process.

Attendance

It is desirable for all members of the final oral examination committee to be present physically during the entire examination. If this is impossible, video conferencing may be approved by the College Dean and the Office of Graduate Studies. If video conferencing is approved, the student, the Major Professor (or, if Co-Major Professors, at least one), and the Outside Chair for the defense must be physically present. Other faculty members and graduate students may physically or virtually attend the examination.

Video Conferencing

Graduate programs must adhere to the following if the final oral examination involves video conferencing. Departments can enforce stricter guidelines. Video conferencing may not be ideal in all circumstances.

Facilities and Support Requirements

The video conferencing room must allow the candidate and all members of the examination committee to see and hear one another during the entire examination. There must be appropriate software/hardware available for the transmission of any text, graphics, photographs, or writing referred to or generated during the examination.

Audio-only communications are not permitted.

Prior to the defense, the student must agree to the video conferencing set-up. The student and Major Professor must confirm in advance that the video conferencing setup is satisfactory. On the day of the defense, if the video conferencing capabilities differ significantly from the initial agreement as noted on the Request for Defense Form, then the student may cancel the examination without penalty.

Any technical support staff required to operate equipment must observe strict confidentiality.

The video conference must be scheduled for a three and a half hour time period to allow for any delays resulting from technical issues during the dissertation defense.

Should a technical failure arise, the Outside Chair in consultation with the Major Professor and other committee members will determine if the examination should continue. If the examination is cancelled, the examination will be rescheduled and there will be no penalty to the student.

All committee members must record their vote on the Successful Defense form. Off-site committee members must sign a copy of the Successful Defense form (completed within the College) and send it back to the Major Professor as soon as possible, but no later than a week after the defense date.

Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair

The Doctoral Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Examination) shall be presided by

- an external committee member from outside the Department, School, or equivalent, hosting the doctoral major, but may be within the academic discipline.
- OR,
- a non-committee member (a.k.a. Outside Chair), (Refer to the individual Program's Degree Requirements in the Graduate Catalog for information). If the Chair is from another institution, this individual must be approved for Affiliate Graduate Faculty status.

The Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair's role includes overseeing the proceedings as well as serving as the student's advocate, by ensuring fairness of the process. Faculty holding joint, courtesy, or adjunct appointments in the degree-granting academic unit (i.e. Department or equivalent) cannot serve as the Defense Chair.

Procedures for Conducting the Doctoral Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Examination)

1. The Doctoral Dissertation defense (final oral examination) should be conducted within a timeline to allow for the student to make any necessary corrections following the defense and still meet the final copy deadline for turning in the Dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. The presentation should be considered an important function in the Department and all graduate students and faculty be encouraged to attend.
3. The presentation and defense are open to the public and as such, must meet the requirements of the Sunshine Laws for the State of Florida. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee deliberation is not public.
4. The room selected for the examination should have adequate seating with an alternate room selected in case of problems.
5. It is required that all members of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee be present for the examination unless an absence is approved prior to the defense taking place by the Office of Graduate Studies Dean. In the event that a member cannot attend in person, participation maybe permissible via video conference with approval from the Office of Graduate Studies. The student and Major Professor must be in attendance in person and may not participate via remote access. A minimum of three members, including the Major Professor is required to proceed with the defense. If a non-committee member (Outside Chair) chairs the Defense, this individual does not count as one of the three required members in attendance. If an unforeseeable situation arises, that would prevent compliance with this requirement the Major Professor or Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair should contact the Office of Graduate Studies for guidance and approval to proceed with the defense.
6. The length of the examination period will generally not exceed three hours. Throughout this time, the Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair is to be in charge of all proceedings and, ideally, is expected to play a balancing role between advocacy and contention.
7. The Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair, at any time during the course of the examination, may request all visitors to leave.

8. Presentation

- The Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair should open the proceedings by introducing the candidate and the Doctoral Dissertation Committee.
- The examination should begin with a presentation by the candidate designed to summarize the dissertation.

9. Questions

Following the presentation, the Defense may be moved to a different setting for the main examination. The College determines the order of the proceedings described below:

- The examination will consist of questions about the research by the Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair and the Doctoral Dissertation Committee. All committee members are expected to participate fully in questioning during the course of the examination and in the discussion of and decision on the result.
- It is suggested that questioning should be limited to about 15 minutes for each Doctoral Dissertation Committee member with subsequent rounds of questioning as necessary.
- Questions from the faculty-at-large and/or the public may be allowed following the presentation. It is suggested that questioning from the general audience be limited up to 5 minutes per person.

10. Deliberations and Voting

Following the completion of these proceedings, the Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair

- will ask all visitors and the candidate to leave and will reconvene the Doctoral Dissertation Committee only.
- will preside over the deliberations and voting of the Committee (Note: if a non-committee member (Outside Chair) is used he/she will not participate in the voting)
- is responsible for tallying the votes and informing the candidate of the final decision. The voting is to be limited to "pass" and "fail" votes. *The vote of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee must be unanimous.* If unanimous agreement cannot be reached, the Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair notifies the student's Department Chair (or appropriate equivalent) who will endeavor to resolve the dispute in an expedient fashion.
- records the vote on the Successful Defense Form and conveys the decision of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee (Successful Defense Form) to the Department/College Graduate Office to be kept in the student's file.

11. Approval of the Final Dissertation

All committee members must approve the final version of the dissertation via the Certificate of Approval Form. If the Committee is unable to **unanimously** approve a final draft of the dissertation, the student's Department Chair and College Dean will work with the Doctoral Dissertation Committee to seek an equitable resolution.

Dissertation Final Submission Guidelines

Information on requirements for submission of the finished and approved manuscript copies is available online at the Thesis and Dissertation website at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>. Students who fail to submit the final copy of a dissertation by the posted submission deadline will not be considered for graduation. The student may be considered for graduation in

the following semester and must therefore apply for the degree (graduation) by the posted deadline, enroll in a minimum of two (2) dissertation hours for that subsequent semester, and meet the submission requirements as posted on the Thesis/Dissertation website. Only after the Office of Graduate Studies has approved the manuscript can the student be certified for the degree.

Mandatory Electronic Submission

Students are required to submit the dissertation in an electronic format (ETD). Requirements and procedures are available at the Office of Graduate Studies website at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php>

Submission for Official Publication and Archiving

All theses/dissertations will be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies designated System for official publication and archiving.

Changes after Publication

Once a dissertation is approved and accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies for publication, it cannot be changed.

Release of Dissertation Publications

The University recognizes the benefits from collaboration with sponsors on research projects but also recognizes the possibility of conflicts of interest in the disclosure of the results of the collaborations. While the sponsor's economic interests in the restriction of disclosure should be considered, the University has a primary mission to extend knowledge and disseminate it to the public and the broader academic community. The University's "Statement of Policy Regarding Inventions and Works" ([USF Policy 0-300: http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-300.pdf](http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-300.pdf)) acknowledges the possible need for delays in publication of sponsored research to protect the sponsor's interests, but it provides no definite guidelines for the restrictions of publication beyond the statement: "Disclosure delays mutually acceptable to the Inventor, the Vice President for Research, and the sponsor, if any, are authorized in order to allow patent applications to be filled prior to publication, thereby preserving patent rights..." (April Burke, "University Policies on Conflict of Interest and Delay of Publications," Report of the Clearinghouse on University-Industry Relations, Association of American Universities, February, 1985.)

To protect the University's primary goal from un-due compromise, the University has adopted the following guidelines:

1. The recommendations of sponsors, regarding publication of research results should be considered advisory rather than mandatory.
2. In support of academic discourse and the mission to promote and share academic works, Dissertations will be released for worldwide access once submitted to and approved by

the USF Office of Graduate Studies. In the event that a patent or copyright application provides reason to delay the release of the Dissertation, a petition to request a one year delay may be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration. Such requests must be received by the format check of the dissertation.

3. Students should not be delayed in the final defense of their dissertations by agreements involving publication delays.

Duty to Disclose New Inventions and Works

USF 0-300 <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-300.pdf> and USF 12.003 <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf12.003.pdf>
For information about the requirements of this policy contact the Division of Patents and Licensing at (813) 974-0994.

Dissertation Change of Grade

In the semester in which the final manuscript has been received, reviewed, and certified for permanent filing in the University Library, the Office of Graduate Studies submits the change of grade from "Z" to "S" for the last registration of dissertation courses to the ~~office~~ Office of the ~~registrar~~ Registrar when all grades are due at the end of the semester.

The Use of "Ph.D." in Credentials and Publication

Students may only use the credential of "Ph.D." after degree conferral is granted. It is inappropriate to use the credential until it is officially and formally granted. The use of the abbreviation "Ph.D." in university publications, correspondence, etc., including websites and other electronic media, shall be upper case "P", lower case "h" followed by a period, an upper case "D" and another period. It shall not be used in the format of all upper case letters without periods, as in "PHD".

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