Introduction

The following document presents the rules and policies to which MBA students in the College of Business are held at The University of Southern Mississippi. Students are expected to understand and adhere to all the conditions necessary to complete a graduate degree in business at USM. Therefore, every student must read this document carefully, and request clarification if needed from the MBA Director. Additional policies are described in detail in the University’s Graduate Bulletin (http://catalog.usm.edu/). Unless otherwise stated, Graduate School policies supersede those stated in the College of Business MBA Student Handbook.

Contact Information

Graduate students are required to keep current contact information, including mailing address, telephone numbers and USM email address, on file in the College of Business MBA Office. Official university correspondence is delivered to the contact address on file, and is considered delivered once sent. Therefore, it is important to that any changes in residential, telephone, or email contact information be promptly reported to the Graduate Programs Advisor.

Course Registration

Students are required to meet with a Graduate Program Advisor for advisement prior to registration each semester. Out-of-college electives must also be approved by the MBA Director prior to registration. Once advised, students can register for classes themselves using SOAR.

Transfer Credit and Non-Degree Courses

MBA students in the College of Business are limited to 12 hours of combined transferred and non-degree credits. A maximum of six hours can transfer from another university. Transfer credits must be from a fully-recognized and accredited graduate program, reflect a B or better, cannot be a pass/fail course, and must be deemed applicable to the student’s graduate program. Credits older than five years cannot be accepted, and the coursework may not have counted toward another degree program. A maximum of 12 hours of non-degree credits taken at USM can be transferred to the program upon admission. If a student is transferring in six hours from another university, only six hours of non-degree coursework is allowed.

The Academic Integrity Policy Statement

Upon registration in a course offered by the College of Business, the student automatically becomes subject to the College of Business Academic Integrity Policy. Students can access the policy directly at http://www.usm.edu/business/academic-integrity-policy.

College of Business students are also subject to the University’s Academic Integrity Policy: https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012.
Grading System for Graduate Courses

A  Indicates excellent work and carries 4.0 quality points per semester hour
A- Indicates excellent work and carries 3.7 quality points per semester hour
B+ Indicates good work and carries 3.3 quality points per semester hour
B  Indicates good work and carries 3.0 quality points per semester hour
B- Indicates good work and carries 2.7 quality points per semester hour
C+ Indicates average work and carries 2.3 quality points per semester hour
C  Indicates average work and carries 2.0 quality points per semester hour
C- Indicates average work and carries 1.7 quality points per semester hour
D+ Indicates inferior work and carries 1.3 quality points per semester hour
D  Indicates inferior work and carries 1.0 quality points per semester hour
F  Indicates failure and carries no quality points
XF Indicates failure due to academic integrity violation and carries no quality points
NA Indicates the instructor reported the student as not attending. The grade is considered as attempted, but no quality points are earned. The grade is calculated as an "F" in the student's grade point average.
I  Indicates that a student was unable to complete course requirements by the end of the term because of extraordinary circumstances beyond his or her control. Poor performance or unexplained absences are not justification for the assignment of an “I.” If an “I” has not been removed by the end of the next semester (excluding summer term), it automatically becomes an F. Students are prohibited from enrolling in any course for which the current grade is “I.”
AW Indicates administrative withdrawal
W  Indicates withdrawn no penalty (No quality points awarded)
P  Indicates a passing grade in courses taken on a pass-fail basis (Does not count in computing the GPA)
Appeals Process

Any action concerning the student’s status as a graduate student may be appealed to the Graduate Committee of the College of Business. All appeals will be reviewed when the College of Business Graduate Committee can be convened or at one of the regularly scheduled meetings. Students will be notified in writing immediately after the meeting.

Scholarship

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is considered satisfactory scholarship. All students must have at least a 3.0 GPA to graduate. A student will be placed on academic probation for the next regular semester of enrollment for the following reasons: the cumulative grade point average (GPA) or program GPA falls below 3.0, a grade of "C-" or lower is awarded; a seventh hour of C+ or C is awarded. Full-time students must increase their GPA to a 3.0 within one semester. Part-time students must increase their GPA to a 3.0 within two semesters. During the probationary semester(s), a student will not be allowed to take comprehensive exams. In addition, a student may not graduate until he/she returns to good academic standing.

Students placed on academic probation are required to meet with the MBA Director, bring their cumulative GPA up to the required 3.0 within the required timeframe and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better until all other degree requirements are completed. Failure to return to good academic standing by the end of the probationary period will result in dismissal from the program.

Repeat Policy

Upon approval by the MBA Director, students may repeat one course to improve a cumulative grade point average.

Withdrawal Procedures

Students finding it necessary to withdraw from the university prior to the deadline to withdraw may begin the process via their SOAR student center with the "Drop ALL Courses" link. Within SOAR, they will view a series of panels that will explain the academic and financial impact in withdrawing from the university at that point in time. If students need further assistance in withdrawing, they should contact the Registrar's office. Withdrawal requests must be submitted by the last day to withdraw found on the Academic Calendars. After this date, students will receive final grades as submitted by the instructor(s).
Graduate Assistantships (GAs)

GAs are awarded on a competitive and comparative basis, and are not given on the basis of financial need. GAs are only awarded to MBA students admitted on a regular basis. Students who are awarded GAs receive a full-tuition waiver during the fall and spring semesters and a monthly stipend to help with living expenses. GAs also gain valuable research experience.

GAs are required to:

1. Attend an orientation session scheduled at the beginning of the fall semester
2. Develop a work schedule with their assigned professor or “staff supervisor”
3. Work twenty hours a week
4. Be enrolled full-time (9 semester hours in fall and spring) during the duration of the assistantship
5. Maintain a 3.0 GPA

Failure to meet the above requirements can result in the loss of the assistantship. GA performance is monitored monthly. In the event a GA is not performing satisfactory work for his/her assigned professor(s), a warning is issued to the student. If the problem persists, the assistant in question would lose the assistantship.

A GA who is placed on probation will not lose the assistantship during the probationary period unless the department chooses to terminate the student. A GA on probation has one semester to return to good academic standing. If at the end of the probationary period the student has not returned to good academic standing, he/she will be terminated from the assistantship and dismissed from the program.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

All students upon graduation from the program will be able to demonstrate that they have the needed knowledge and skills as outlined in the following learning outcomes:

1. MBA graduates will demonstrate knowledge of business concepts and techniques in all relevant functional areas (e.g. managerial accounting, marketing, management, finance and strategy).
2. MBA graduates will demonstrate skills in leadership and team building.
3. MBA graduates will demonstrate the ability to identify and understand ethical and cultural perspectives.
4. MBA graduates will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively.
5. MBA graduates will demonstrate creative critical thinking skills by integrating and applying appropriate concepts, technologies and decision-making techniques to effectively evaluate and manage a business in a global environment.
MBA Course Requirements

All students are required to satisfy advanced course requirements. The following courses comprise the program core requirements, totaling thirty-three (33) hours of advanced course work:

**MBA 600 Organizational Behavior and Leadership.** 3 hours. Analysis of individual and group behavior topics essential to managing people in organizations.

**MBA 605 Marketing Management.** 3 hours. Applications of analytical and communication skills in solving complex marketing problems.

**MBA 610 Analytical Decision Making.** 3 hours. The study and application of quantitative statistical methods to decision making.

**MBA 611 Managerial Accounting.** 3 hours. An analysis of the use of accounting information in managerial decision-making.

**MBA 620 The Global Economy.** 3 hours. An examination of the use of macroeconomics analysis and information in managerial decision-making.

**MBA 640 Financial Management.** 3 hours. Applications of financial theory to solve complex financial problems.

**MBA 650 Global Business Systems.** 3 hours. Examination of the impact of information technology on productivity, quality, service and problem-solving in the global business environment.

**MBA 660 Strategic Management.** 3 hours. Prerequisites: Permission of the MBA Director. An analysis of strategic business planning and implementation from the perspective of top management. MBA 660 is considered the capstone course for the MBA program.

**Electives:** 9 hours of approved electives are required.
Graduation Requirements

To graduate, students must complete all core course requirements with a cumulative GPA of 3.0. In addition, all general requirements of the Graduate School and the College of Business must be met; including the completion of a comprehensive examination which is administered in the MBA 660 course.

Application for graduation must be submitted the semester prior to graduation. Instructions and deadlines are posted online at the Graduate School website (https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/application-graduate-degrecertificate). To complete the application, students must meet with their Graduate Advisor or the MBA Director in advance of the Graduate School deadline, to allow time for delivery of paperwork to the Graduate School.

According to the Continuous Enrollment Policy established by the University, graduating students must be enrolled in classes the semester they plan to graduate. For this reason, it is particularly important to submit the graduation application on time. Late submission of the application can result in significant late fees or can delay graduation until the next semester, which means the graduate applicant will also need to register for at least one credit hour, even if all the required MBA coursework has been completed.

Research and Scholarly Integrity Assurance Program (IAP) Training Requirement

All graduate students must complete Research and Scholarly Integrity Assurance Program (IAP) training modules required by the Graduate School and their departments the first semester they are enrolled in graduate school. The IAP policy and training information are found on the Graduate School web page - http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/integrity-assurance-program-formerly-rcr. Contact the Dean of the Graduate School if you have any questions regarding the policy of training information.