Director’s Welcome

Welcome to the School of Psychology! We are pleased that you have decided to complete your graduate training at The University of Southern Mississippi and hope that you will find your experience with us challenging and rewarding! The information contained in this handbook has been assembled as a brief introduction and resource for School policies. However, the material contained herein is not intended to substitute for or otherwise modify regulations contained in the Graduate Bulletin or any other official University document. Please also note that each emphasis area has its own handbook that may contain more stringent and detailed guidelines than are printed here. Students are encouraged to become familiar with this handbook, their training program’s handbook, as well as all other university policies and procedures. Copies of other policies and procedures documents such as the Graduate Bulletin and university publications dealing with student rights are available in the School Director’s office, the college dean’s office, the Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs, and/or the Provost’s Office. If you should ever have difficulty in obtaining information related to policies or procedures, you should contact your major professor, the director of training for your area, or the School Director.

It is important to remember that University, School, and Program policies are subject to change. While we will make every attempt to inform students of any policy changes, it is ultimately students’ responsibility to keep abreast of such changes.
One of three major universities in the state, The University of Southern Mississippi is a comprehensive doctoral and research institution founded in 1910. Programs offered to approximately 15,000 Southern Miss students are distributed strategically on the main campus in Hattiesburg, as well as on the Gulf Coast campus in Long Beach, MS. Ranked as a Carnegie Comprehensive Doctoral University, Southern Miss is the only comprehensive university to have been awarded dual campus status by the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. The majority of students are enrolled on the Hattiesburg campus, and a second, growing campus is located on the Gulf Coast. The student body is diverse with ethnic minorities constituting approximately 28% of the Hattiesburg student body. The University of Southern Mississippi is one of the few universities nationwide, and certainly the School of Psychology is one of the very few units nationwide, currently granting degrees in three APA-accredited programs (Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychology), a doctoral level Psychology degree with an emphasis in Brain and Behavior, and MS degrees in Psychology (emphasis in Applied Behavior Analysis) or Counseling Psychology.

Among the assortment of campus activities available to interested students and community members are concerts, lectures, movies, plays, recreational and intramural sports, and spectator participation in varsity sports associated with The University of Southern Mississippi’s membership in Conference USA. The Payne Wellness Center, available to faculty, staff, students, and alumni, houses racquetball courts, an indoor jogging track, exercise equipment, an indoor pool, and locker facilities.

THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
The School of Psychology is administratively housed in the College of Education and Human Sciences and is located in the Owings-McQuagge (OMH) building near the center of the campus. The School offers advanced degrees in: Clinical, Counseling Psychology (MS; PhD), Brain & Behavior, School Psychology, and Applied Behavior Analysis. The School, Clinical, and Counseling Psychology doctoral training programs are fully accredited by the American Psychological Association. The master’s program in counseling is accredited by the Master’s in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council. The School is composed of XX full-time, tenure-track faculty members, two non-teaching track faculty, and 3 faculty on one-year visiting contracts. Four faculty members’ primary appointment is at the Gulf Coast campus.

The faculty at USM generally have an open-door policy. We strongly encourage students to get to know their faculty, both within and outside of their emphasis area. Much mentoring and learning occurs outside the classroom in other formal as well as informal interactions with faculty. Such opportunities, however, cannot occur if a student only attends required classes and meetings and is rarely on campus.

Please visit: www.usm.edu/psychology for a listing of current faculty and staff.
Student Resources

School Research Facilities
The School aims to provide adequate research facilities to support faculty and graduate student research. There are several active laboratory facilities which engage faculty, graduate students and undergraduates in research. Clinic facilities and local agencies may, at times, be used as research sites, and more general research needs may be accommodated in faculty labs located in OMH. Graduate students are expected to maintain high professional standards when working in these research facilities. The faculty member overseeing the lab will establish rules and procedures which are expected to be followed at all times. Failure to remain in compliance with established policies regarding use of research facilities will likely result in restrictions on the use of this space. This includes keeping the lab locked at all times and maintaining the security of research materials. See the faculty member if there are questions about expectations. Research space is to be used for research or other academic activities only and is not available for personal use.

Technology Resources & Email
Students have access to some of the major statistical software packages (e.g., SPSS) in computer labs (IBM-compatible and Macintosh compatible) located throughout campus and in research labs. Computers are linked to the Internet, and the Office of Information Technology (iTech) provides accounts for the entire university community, including graduate students. Students have access to Internet services and personal email accounts, as well as Microsoft Office software. Wireless access to the University server is available. Additional information regarding computing services may be found at the iTech website at www.usm.edu/itech.

Free email accounts are offered to each student. Students are required to obtain an email address and to use the university (@usm.edu) account for all correspondence. You can set up your USM email account to forward all email to another personal email account at your preference – please see iTech personnel for assistance with establishing this account. The School maintains a listserv for graduate students, psygrad. Please join this listserv as important information is frequently communicated in this manner. To join the listserv, go to mailman.usm.edu/mailman/listinfo/psygrad, and follow the onscreen instructions for Subscribing to psygrad.

It is expected that you will check your email daily and respond promptly (e.g., within 24-48 hours) of receiving an email during normal business hours.

Libraries
University Library resources and services are provided through the library’s extensive website and at facilities located in Hattiesburg and the Gulf Coast. University Libraries’ collections include print, microform, and audiovisual items and online access to electronic journals (including all APA journals), books, and databases (including PsychInfo). Services and resources provided by University Libraries include classes and workshops in the use of the library, online reference, self-paced online tutorials, Turnitin plagiarism detection software, electronic reserves, and online delivery of library materials for students enrolled in distance education classes. Additionally, Cook Library provides over 150 student use computers, checkout of laptop computers, and access to teacher education materials in the Curriculum Materials Center. Students also have access to the University of Mississippi Medical Center Library in Jackson.

Private research carrels are available to doctoral students on a space-available basis for a rental fee. Additional information regarding the university libraries and available services for students may be found at www.lib.usm.edu.
Housing
The Hattiesburg area offers a wide selection of off-campus housing. Housing lists in the community may be obtained through real estate agents or from local papers. Current graduate students are also a good source of information about possible housing. Compared to urban areas in other parts of the U.S., Hattiesburg housing/utility costs are at a moderate level. Additional information is available through the Chamber of Commerce and/or the Hattiesburg web site at www.hattiesburgms.com.

USM Office of Disability Accommodations
The primary function and mission of the Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA) is to provide services necessary to assure equal educational opportunities to all students pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you feel you have a disability that qualifies for accommodations, please contact ODA, at 601.266.5024. ODA is located at 114 Bond Hall. Additional information may be obtained at www.usm.edu/oda. Requests for accommodations must come through ODA and cannot be separately negotiated with faculty.

Health Services & Graduate Health Insurance
The USM Student Health Services Clinic offers students, faculty, and staff with general medical services including laboratory testing, x-ray, pharmacy, dietary counseling, and educational services. The clinic is staffed by several physicians and nurse practitioners and is located on the Hattiesburg campus. All students registered for classes at The University of Southern Mississippi are eligible to use the Student Health Services. Spouses of eligible students, who are not students themselves, and dependent children above the age of 12 may receive health care at Student Health Services on a fee-for-service basis. Students must present their student ID at time of service. Additional information may be obtained at www.usm.edu/student-health-services.

All students receiving funding support from the University (i.e., internal and external assistantships) must enroll in the student health insurance plan. Students who maintain coverage through an independent provider are allowed to opt out of this coverage by providing annual proof of coverage. More information about the health insurance policy can be found at http://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/ga-ra-international-student-information.

Personal Counseling
Numerous services are available in the areas of personal, social, and marital counseling, and psychotherapy. On-campus services include the University Counseling Center, which is located in Room 200 of Kennard-Washington Hall. Off-campus facilities include Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources which is a publicly supported mental health facility located about three miles from campus at 103 S. 19th Street, as well as a number of private practitioners in psychology and psychiatry. The psychology faculty members and the clinics available in the School do not accept graduate students as psychotherapy clients because of the dual relationship such might create.

Child Care
College policy prohibits students from bringing children to class. The USM Center for Child Development provides facilities for children ages 6 weeks through 5 years old. The program consists of planned activities, educational programs, hot meals, and snacks. There is a long waiting list, so apply early and directly to the Center. There are other child care providers in the community, and many of these also have a waiting list. If you have dependent children, we recommend that you begin to make your child arrangements well before you arrive on campus.
Special Interest Organizations & Diversity Resources
There are many student organizations at USM designed to address special interests or diversity among the student body. The Office of Student Activities, located in Room 110 of the Hub, will be happy to provide additional information on these organizations. Phone: (601) 266-4403. Go to their website at www.usm.edu/student-activities for a list of registered student organizations.

Colloquia & Seminars
The School department and individual training programs sponsor speakers, colloquia, and seminars throughout the year. The School hosts bi-weekly Friday “Lunch Bunch” research presentations by School faculty and outside speakers. All graduate students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of other opportunities for learning and professional development.

Financial Aid & Assistantships

Assistantship Funding
Master’s students are typically funded outside of the School and should consult with these graduate assistant (GA) supervisors regarding polices regarding funding.

We hope that each student admitted to the doctoral programs in psychology will be offered financial assistance in the form of a graduate assistantship and/or by a research grant or externship.

Current GA stipends are $7200 (9 months) plus a tuition scholarship which covers 9-13 credits of tuition for fall and spring semesters. Tuition scholarships are often applied after the first week of the semester; please check SOAR for details. GAs are encouraged to monitor their financial aid via SOAR to ensure their tuition scholarship has been applied correctly. Although not guaranteed, tuition scholarships are typically offered for a limited number of summer hours for students who were funded on a GA position during the academic year immediately prior to the summer semester. Credits not covered by the tuition scholarship are the financial responsibility of the student. All fees are the responsibility of the student.

We aspire to fund doctoral students for a maximum of 4 years. Students who either choose or must stay on campus beyond these timelines will be funded only to the extent that such funding is available. The School will make every effort to secure funding for students, but students should realize that such funding is not automatic or guaranteed. Students must complete the financial aid application packet through the Office of Financial Aid at The University of Southern Mississippi and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (Box 5101, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5101; www.usm.edu/financialaid/; www.fafsa.ed.gov) by March 15th annually to qualify for a full range of assistance that might include assistantship and loans.

Background checks are required for all university employees and are administered through USM Department of Human Resources. Students who fail a background check are not permitted to receive a graduate assistantship and may be dismissed from the university.

Types of Assistantships and Responsibilities
There are two types of assistantships available to students: regular assistantships paid from School funds, and assistantships that are paid from externally funded projects. All assistantships are half-time (20 hours per week). School-funded GA positions are funded for the academic year (9-months); limited summer funding may be available. If you are on a GA, you must maintain a full-time course load (9 credits each Fall & Spring) during the period of the appointment.
Work assignments for School-funded assistantships may involve research, clinic duties, teaching, teaching support (Teaching Assistant), or some combination of these. GAs are assigned to one or more faculty members for specific time allotments, and these faculty members are responsible for supervising their work.

Students who are funded with external projects typically spend up to 20 hours/week on that project. Funding for these projects may be for 9- to 12-months or longer, depending on the availability of funding and may include summers. If you are on an externally funded GA position, you must also maintain a full-time course load (9 credits each Fall & Spring).

Students are responsible for consulting with their immediate supervisor(s) as soon as they receive their assignment. If your assistantship assignment requires a workspace to complete your duties, the School will assign a work area to you. Upon recommendation of your supervisor, and upon the approval of the School Director, you may be assigned to work in a laboratory or office and/or issued a building key (if necessary for performing your duties). Key assignment, when approved, is coordinated by the School administrative specialist or his/her designate. Please return keys promptly after your assignment is complete. You may be charged for lost keys or keys that are not returned. Under no circumstances should School-issued door keys be duplicated or shared with others.

From a training perspective, GA positions provide students with an opportunity to develop and demonstrate important professional behaviors. Your performance on assistantship will be evaluated and will be included as part of your annual evaluation. You are expected to demonstrate exceptional professional behavior which includes: arriving on time, completing assignments on time, responding promptly to student/faculty email, maintaining respectful and supportive communication with students, peers, faculty and staff, adhering to the expectation of confidentiality regarding research and/or student academic performance, and submitting high quality work products. Failure to maintain exceptional work behaviors will likely result in a re-assignment of your duties and/or a cancellation of your graduate assistantship including a loss of funding and tuition scholarship.

**Making the Most of Your Assistantship Experience:**
The following guidelines will assist you in making the most of your assistantship experience.

1. Set up a specific work schedule with your assigned supervisor at the beginning of each semester.

2. Discuss your work responsibilities and expectations. Be sure that you maintain frequent communication with your supervisor to avoid misunderstandings. Check your email often!

3. Notify your supervisor ahead of time if you cannot keep the schedule and must be away from work on a specific day or time. In cases of emergency or illness the supervisor or the School Director’s office should be called as soon as possible.

4. The work period covers the entire term from registration through final exams and may include breaks between semesters and dates in which classes are not scheduled (e.g., Mardi Gras). Please check with your assigned supervisor regarding your time commitments and make arrangements with your supervisor any time an exception is to be made.

If you have any questions about these procedures, please feel free to discuss them with your director of training or your major professor.
Graduate Assistant: Instructor of Record

Doctoral graduate students with 18 or more hours of coursework at the graduate level may have the opportunity to teach undergraduate classes at USM (note: upper division courses have more stringent requirements and may require completion of a master’s degree). Psychology students may enroll in PSY 702 (Practicum in Teaching Psychology) during the semester in which they teach (as determined by their program of study). Student instructors should be supervised by a Psychology faculty member throughout the semester they are teaching and should be observed teaching and receive a written evaluation of their teaching from their teaching supervisor; evaluations should be filed with the Director’s office. All syllabi should be approved by the teaching supervisor prior to submitting to students. All correspondence should be done using your university email account (@usm.edu), and Canvas is the only approved method for online or supplemental online instruction (e.g., posting slides, grades). Discuss these expectations with your supervisor (PSY 702 Instructor of Record) prior to beginning the semester. Some programs may also require students to take PSY 701 (Seminar in Teaching of Psychology) in advance of being approved to teach. Please consult your program handbooks for specific requirements.

[Adapted from the School of Psychology Faculty Handbook]

Expectations for Quality Instruction

The School of Psychology acknowledges the importance of instructor involvement in quality classroom instruction. As such, the School maintains high standards related to instruction. Courses should be regularly updated and revised based on developments in the field of psychology and with respect to pedagogical improvements. Instructors are encouraged to develop challenging courses which are grounded in scientific research and emphasize sound critical thinking skills. Consistent with the university Quality Enhancement Plan, active learning is especially encouraged.

Syllabi

Instructors are expected to develop syllabi which are detailed in nature, and include information related to course grades, textbook and reading requirements, assignment deadlines, a course schedule, and university policies (e.g., drop dates, disability statement, academic dishonesty, etc.). See the School’s Syllabus Guidelines and refer to the Provost’s website for updates to syllabus statements and for references to best practices: https://www.usm.edu/provost/guidelines-syllabi. Instructors are required to adhere to their syllabus throughout the semester and to provide, in writing to their students, any revisions to the syllabus as they occur. A syllabus should be made available to students at the first class meeting. Instructors are asked to electronically submit syllabi to the Director’s office prior to the start of the semester and (when applicable) during Annual Evaluation. Instructors are expected to meet class regularly, to begin class promptly at the assigned meeting time, to dismiss class at the end of the designated meeting time, and to administer final exams according to the University schedule. Missed classes due to travel, illness or other emergency should be coordinated with the Director’s office. Advanced notice is recommended via email to alert students of any changes to the regular meeting pattern. Further, instructors are expected to be present during office hours, are expected to promptly respond to student emails as appropriate, and to be available by appointment to students when scheduled.

Submitting course grades for all students is the responsibility of the graduate student instructor. Graduate students are required to maintain an electronic gradebook and to submit this gradebook to the faculty supervisor at the conclusion of the semester. Graduate student instructors will be required to submit course grades via SOAR and ensure they have been finalized and submitted on time. According to university policy, final exams should be retained for 1 year and gradebooks should be retained for 5 years (see: http://www.lib.usm.edu/spcol/collections/uarchives/studentgs.html). Student instructors are required to shred all other documents at the conclusion of the semester (see shredding machine in the main office) and file final exams (marked clearly with a “dispose by” date) with the administrative assistant in their area.

Course evaluations should be incorporated into graduate student annual evaluation and will be used to
determine eligibility to teach additional courses. Numerical student evaluations are expected to fall within one SD of the School average and student comments should be generally positive.

**Additional criteria relevant to online instruction:**
- Active and consistent use of Canvas to facilitate class activities
- Lectures are prepared in advance and include some audio component, when applicable
- Online office hours are used regularly

**Outside Employment**
Due to the demands of graduate study, the training programs have policies regarding part-time employment outside of the organized training program. In general, students are discouraged from both holding a GA position and maintaining outside employment. Students who wish to obtain outside employment in response to unexpected financial or personal crises should consult with their major professors or training directors. Please refer to individual training program handbooks for program policies regarding outside employment.

**STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

**Background Checks Required for Admission & Continued Enrollment**
All graduate students admitted to the School of Psychology must complete a background check coordinated through the College. Requirements for admission include the absence of a felony conviction(s) or misdemeanor conviction(s) involving moral turpitude and/or convictions suggesting the applicant is not of good character or reputation. Concerns noted will be discussed with the student. Given the connection between such convictions and subsequent employment and/or licensure eligibility, applicants failing this background check will not be permitted to enroll and will be dismissed from the program. The School of Psychology reserves the right to request additional background checks at any point prior to receiving the degree. Students are subject to dismissal should they fail a background check after already enrolled. Costs associated with the Castlebranch background check are the responsibility of the applicant/student. This background check is in addition to the background checks conducted by Human Resources as part of hiring Graduate Assistants.

**Adherence to the Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct of APA**
You will be governed by the applicable principles of the current version of the American Psychological Association’s [Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct](https://www.apa.org/ethics) during the time you are in graduate school. It can be obtained online from the following website: [www.apa.org/ethics](https://www.apa.org/ethics). Hard copies of the new Code are also available from the APA Order Department, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. Students enrolled in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program are also governed by Behavior Analysis Certification Board ®’s [Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts](https://www.bacb.org). It can be found at [www.bacb.org](https://www.bacb.org). Failure to adhere to the APA (or associated) code of conduct may be cause for dismissal.

**Liability Insurance**
The university maintains a liability insurance policy which is associated with particular courses taught in the applied training programs (i.e., all programs except the Brain and Behavior program). Students are expected to pay all course fees associated with liability insurance prior to the start of the semester. Proof of payment is required each semester. Additionally, the applied programs may require students to maintain personal liability insurance through APA Trust ([https://trustinsurance.com/Products-Services/Student-Liability](https://trustinsurance.com/Products-Services/Student-Liability)) prior to engaging in practicum training/ internship. Students should consult their program-specific handbooks for information about these expectations.
Academic Integrity
Plagiarism is scholarly theft, and it is defined as the unacknowledged use of secondary sources. More specifically, any written presentation in which the writer does not distinguish clearly between original and borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Because students, as scholars, must make frequent use of the concepts and facts developed by other scholars, plagiarism is not the mere use of another’s facts and ideas. However, it is plagiarism when students present the work of the other scholars as if it were their own work. Plagiarism is a serious offense.

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

1. Cheating (including copying from others’ work)
2. Plagiarism (representing another person’s words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
3. Falsification of documents
4. Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student
5. Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members’ involved
6. Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
7. Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of “XF” for the course, which will be on the student’s transcript with the notation “Failure due to academic misconduct.” For more details, please see the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

To ensure that students understand the nature of plagiarism, students must complete the tutorial found at www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php and have the results of the quiz emailed to your program director by September 1 of your first year in the program.

Unauthorized Use of School Resources
School of Psychology computers, copy machines, long distance telephone lines, supplies and other resources, are to be used only for official School of Psychology business (e.g., when required as part of your graduate assistantship) and then only when specifically authorized by the School Director or your immediate supervisor. School of Psychology work spaces are designed to support graduate students’ academic work; please do not socialize in these areas and disturb others. In most cases, School office supplies are not used to support research. Please seek clarification before using these resources to support research (especially when making a large number of copies of research protocols). Given limitations to budgetary resources, large scale copies for classes are discouraged. Please distribute class materials via Canvas, when possible.

Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom
Student use of laptop computers is permitted in class insofar as they are used for note-taking and in compliance with course syllabi and instructor guidelines. The use of laptops for other purposes (e.g., instant messaging, video chat, playing games, Internet browsing), except as explicitly authorized by the course instructor, constitutes unprofessional behavior. The use of other electronic devices during class is prohibited. Students misusing laptops or using other electronic devices during class (e.g., texting on cell phones) may be dismissed from class and may receive other disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the instructor and/or the director.
of training. Professional behavior constitutes an important domain in faculty evaluation of student performance.

Social Networking Sites
Students should be mindful of how the use of social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty and other professionals. As such, students should make every effort to minimize material that may be deemed inappropriate. Additionally, students should set all security settings to private and should avoid posting information that may jeopardize their professional image. Students should consider limiting the amount of personal information posted on these sites. Students should never include clients or undergraduate students for who you served as an instructor, as part of their social network. Graduate students are encouraged to limit new social networking contacts to those you personally know to avoid the potential for boundary crossing.
SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

ACADEMIC RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS
The University requires students enrolled in doctoral-level training programs to establish academic residency. The School of Psychology defines academic residency for its doctoral students as 2 consecutive terms of 12-hours each. As noted in the Graduate Bulletin, this is not residency for tuition purposes. Some programs have additional residency requirements; please check your program’s Handbook for these requirements.

After one year of residency, students may apply for state residency (for tuition purposes). While the tuition scholarship covers all out-of-state fees, students may find that petitioning for residency will help avoid any out-of-state fees associated with credits not covered by the tuition waiver.

COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS
Completion of a graduate degree program in psychology requires a significant commitment for full-time study. The amount of time a student is enrolled will vary based on previous course work and the requirements of individual training programs. However, the following general rules apply to all full-time on-campus students.

During the period of full-time study, students are expected to:

1. Carry a course load of nine (9) - thirteen (13) credit hours per semester during the academic year; summer enrollments will be addressed annually with your training director.

2. Participate in a variety of credit and non-credit School activities that may include professional seminars, practicum experiences, research activities, individual case work, or other related professional activities.

Course load requirements listed above represent the maximum number of hours a graduate student can take without requesting permission for an overload (13 hours maximum in the Fall and Spring). Overload requests should be directed to the student’s training director who will then forward the request to the training committee. The training committee will recommend to the School Director and graduate dean that a student be permitted to enroll for a course overload. Please note that overloads are granted only in rare instances and under extenuating circumstances. Please be aware that, if approved, students will be assessed a fee for credit hour overloads per university policy.

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE COURSES FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS
Pursuant to University policies, a maximum of six (6) semester hours of graduate credit from other accredited institutions may be transferred to your program of study at USM, if such course work is within the time limitations that the University allows for a degree. If you believe that a required course taken at another institution is equivalent to the one required for a graduate training program at USM, you should provide your training director with a copy of the transcript on which that course grade appears, a copy of the course syllabus, and any other available materials that you believe will be helpful in determining whether the course in question is equivalent to the one required at USM. The material will be furnished to the USM instructor who usually teaches the course. That person, in turn, will make a recommendation to the training director regarding course equivalence. This recommendation will be reviewed for possible approval by individual training programs.

Please note that some training programs do not allow for transfer of previous graduate course work to replace program-specific course work. Some programs may allow students to waive courses as well. These policies are addressed in individual program handbooks.
CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT POLICY

Doctoral students who have finished all coursework and applied experiences (if required) must enroll in at least 1 hour of PSY 898 (or internship credit) each semester until the degree is completed. Although enrolling in 1 hour will meet the standard of continuous enrollment, financial aid requirements may differ across lending institutions. The student is responsible for understanding the details of their loan repayment plans and should discuss concerns with registration with their training director and/or major professor. Please be aware that students must register for 1 hour of PSY 898 during the semester in which they defend the dissertation and complete all document specialist requirements. If the defense occurs at the conclusion of a semester, the student will be expected to enroll in additional thesis/dissertation credits until the revisions required by the document specialist are completed. If the defense occurs after the graduation defense deadlines for a given semester, the student will be unable to graduate until the following semester and will be required to maintain enrollment. Failure to meet the continuous enrollment policy may result in the student having to re-apply to the graduate school, pay a re-application fee, and associated fines. Circumstances vary, so students are encouraged to consult with the Director of Training for more information about continuous enrollment.

GENERAL TIMELINES FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION

The University standards for program completion are 5 years for master’s programs and 8 years (6 years for coursework; 8 for completion of the dissertation) for doctoral programs. Please consult your individual training program handbooks for deadlines for program completion. Please note that failure to complete the degree within these time periods will result in the student being placed in an inactive status by the School and university. Reinstatement will necessitate a re-application to the program. If granted, the core faculty of the respective program may require re-validation of courses, completion of another comprehensive examination and/or other training experiences as deemed appropriate and beneficial. In cases of reinstatement, the core faculty will designate a final deadline for program completion.

Doctoral students who have completed all of the program requirements except for the dissertation proposal and/or defense (ABD) must demonstrate continuing progress toward completion of the dissertation (and the doctorate) to remain in an active status. As a minimum, ABD students must:

a. Register for one hour of PSY 898 each semester/term until the degree is completed (as per Graduate Bulletin requirements). Students must enroll in one hour of PSY 898 in the semester in which the dissertation is defended.

b. File a written plan for degree completion (including time lines) with the Director of Training immediately following the semester in which all course requirements (and the internship, if applicable) are completed; and

c. File written progress reports with the Director of Training each January 1 and July 1 until the dissertation is defended.

An ABD student who does not comply with a., b., or c. above and/or who does not demonstrate progress toward completion of the dissertation during any semester will receive a grade of a “U” (unsatisfactory) and will be placed on probation. Failure to remediate the probationary status by the next reporting period will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

EDUCATIONAL LEAVE POLICY

A student who experiences personal or health problems of such nature and extent that would prevent timely progress toward degree completion may petition their training faculty for a specified leave period and/or extension to their program completion deadline. The petition must be filed prior to or concurrent with the initiation of the presenting problem, and documentation must be provided that substantiates the nature and
impact of the condition on degree completion. When approved by the training committee, leave is usually granted for one academic year. Requests for an extension of a leave of absence must be submitted in writing before the current leave of absence expires. Leave extensions will be granted for no more than one academic year at a time. A student may not have access to university facilities and support during the period of leave. At the end of the specified leave period, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the School of his/her intention to remain in the program. A student who fails to so notify the School will be considered to have voluntarily left the program.

**CHANGING EMPHASIS AREAS WITHIN THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

The *Graduate Bulletin* states the following regarding admission requirements:

> “Since applicants must always be admitted to a specific program within the Graduate School, all applicants for admissions to the Graduate School are closely reviewed and must be approved by the faculty and the chair of the department in which the student intends to study and by the college dean.” (Italics for emphasis.)

The Graduate Bulletin intends the term “specific program” to refer to the School of Psychology, rather than “programs” housed within the School. The Graduate School considers programs housed within the School “emphasis areas.” Each emphasis area may have entry criteria more stringent than the minimum required by the Graduate School, college, and school. Each emphasis area may have a cap on number of admissions as well.

Students are admitted to the School of Psychology to be trained in a specific emphasis area (Clinical, Counseling, Brain & Behavior, School) or MS program based on the recommendation of a committee consisting of members from that emphasis area and contingent on the review and approval of the program director and graduate dean. After admission, students in good academic standing who wish to pursue training in an emphasis area different from the one to which they were originally accepted must again formally apply to the specific emphasis area within the School of Psychology by the established deadlines. Students who have been discontinued from the School may apply for another emphasis area, and, if accepted, may be admitted on a conditional status. Applications from students wishing to receive training in a new emphasis area will only be reviewed in accordance with the emphasis area’s admission procedures.

**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY GRADE POLICY**

Graduate students are required to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0. An overall GPA of < 3.0 will result in a review of the student’s status by program faculty. Additionally, as is summarized in the table below, a grade of C (including a C+) will result in a letter from the Director of Training warning of risk for termination. A second C, or a grade of D at any time will result in a termination review by the program faculty, and the student will be placed on probation. A written letter will be provided to the student instructing the student about the rationale for the probation status and a plan for remediation. No more than 2 grades of C+ or below across six credit hours is allowable in any coursework attempted. Students earning three Cs, lower grades (C + D, 2 Ds), or an F will be recommended for dismissal to the Graduate School. Grades below a C are not counted toward graduation. A grade of “U” is awarded on thesis/ dissertation credits where the student failed to meet research expectations. Per Graduate School policies, the student will have one semester to remediate the “U” or will be dismissed from the university.
Students placed on probation will be required to have a remediation plan that is developed with and has the approval of their program faculty.

In most cases, termination from the School on the basis of grades will occur at the end of a semester, after grades are assigned. However, the School and individual programs may recommend a student for immediate dismissal (i.e., at any point during a semester) for egregious violations of program, School, university, or APA policies/ethical standards.

Programs may have more restrictive grade policies. This policy also does not preclude an emphasis area from requiring a student to retake any course considered essential to their training program. However, retaking a course will not result in the removal of the original grade from a student’s record.

**Students are reminded that they have the right to appeal academic decisions. These rights are discussed in the Grievance of Due Process section of this handbook.**

### ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

Program faculty will provide written evaluations of all students in their respective emphasis areas at least once per academic year. The primary purpose of student evaluations is to provide a mechanism through which students can be made aware of their progress as judged by their program faculty. Through this mechanism, satisfactory progress is noted, performance exceeding satisfactory progress is commended, and concerns regarding less than satisfactory performance are identified and a remediation plan developed. In addition, the evaluation process is intended to ensure program faculty are aware of the progress of the students in the program. After all students have been evaluated, each student will be informed of the results of the evaluation in writing. The student’s signature will be obtained to document that evaluation information has been shared with the student. The signed evaluation form will be placed in the student’s program file. Students may appeal the evaluation results in writing.

### CURRICULUM PLANNING AND ADVISEMENT

Curriculum planning and advisement occurs in each of the emphasis area programs. Please consult with your training director regarding advisement times and general curriculum plans. School policies governing all students, regardless of program of study, are discussed below.

Doctoral students are admitted with the expectation that they will complete the doctoral degree program. Post-bachelor's degree students first complete a Master's degree, including an empirical thesis, en route to the doctorate. Pending satisfactory progress on course work and the thesis, students can expect to continue to the doctoral degree plan. Students may also be admitted to the doctoral programs at the post-master's degree level.

Students admitted to the terminal master’s program in counseling psychology are admitted with the expectation that they will complete all degree requirements. After completing coursework and successfully passing a comprehensive exam, students participate in a one-semester master’s internship. Students are approved for graduation upon completing the internship.
Students admitted to the terminal ABA program are admitted with the expectation that they will complete all degree requirements. After completing coursework, completing either a thesis or mentored research project, and successfully passing a comprehensive exam, students will earn the Masters of Science in Psychology degree and be prepared to sit for the BACB® exam. Students are expected to then either enter the workforce as certified and/or licensed behavior analysts or enter into doctoral-level training.

When students enroll in their respective programs, students will receive a degree plan which outlines the requirements for degree. Modifications in the student’s coursework may be made when deemed necessary by the Director of Training for an emphasis area and/or by recommendations from the student’s training area faculty. Such revisions may follow completion of comprehensive and/or qualifying exams (if required) and/or when a student’s evaluation reflects the need for additional training.

It is important to note that a doctoral student entering with a non-thesis master’s degree, although admitted by the University at an advanced graduate student status, may be tracked differently within their individual programs until a thesis equivalent project is completed (see Theses and Dissertations below).

TRAINING EXPERIENCES OUT OF STATE
In order for students to participate in training experiences out of state, the student needs to ensure that the Director of Training and School Director have been in consultation with the Compliance Officer. See: https://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics/state-authorization. This includes internship experiences and can include research data collection. Educational experiences out of state may require special approvals by the university due to state reciprocity agreements for distance education.

EXAMINATIONS
Consistent with the Graduate School’s policy, the School requires both master’s and doctoral comprehensive examinations. Some programs may require doctoral qualifying examinations as well. These examinations must be administered during standard administration times determined by the programs. Please consult program-specific handbooks for the nature and timing of the examinations. A student who fails an examination on the first attempt is granted a second attempt to pass the exam, in accordance with University policies. Failure to pass an exam on the second attempt will result in termination from the School.

RESEARCH TRAINING
An important component of the training programs at The University of Southern Mississippi is the opportunity provided to develop research competency. In recent years, a significant proportion of students have completed research projects that have resulted in journal publications and/or convention presentations resulting from the student's thesis or dissertation research, or other research projects associated with their lab. This type of development is encouraged through:

a. Research courses and practica, which are normally completed early in the program of study. These courses typically require the development of research proposals, which may set the stage for subsequent research.

b. The opportunity to engage in non-credit, independent research activities with faculty members and other students. These studies often allow students to participate in joint authorship of publications and may serve as a stimulus for dissertation research.

c. An expectation that completed dissertations and theses will be written in a style that facilitates submission to a professional journal.
All research completed by a graduate student requires the supervision of a faculty member. While students may develop increasing autonomous roles within the research team, all student-led research should be supervised by a member of the faculty. A supervising faculty member must be named on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or IACUC application for any student-led projects. Students may not directly submit these applications to the respective review board. Routing order is as follows: Graduate Student → Supervising Faculty → School Director → IRB (or IACUC).

All graduate student researchers are expected to comply with all research guidelines and policies. These include use of SONA and Qualtrics (see Appendix for details). Failure to comply with SONA and/or Qualtrics policies will result in the student being barred from these school-supported resources.

Qualtrics
Graduate students have access to Qualtrics to conduct online survey research. Graduate students wishing to utilize Qualtrics will need to obtain an access code from their Director of Training. The access code is necessary for access to all system features, so after logging into Qualtrics, please upgrade the account with the correct access code.

Responsible Conduct in Research (CITI Training)
The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to promoting, supporting, and educating relative to the ethical and responsible conduct of research on our campuses. To achieve this goal, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has authorized mandatory education in the RCR. The RCR curriculum is intended to follow the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) November 2009 update on its requirement of training in the RCR and the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) execution of the America COMPETES Act. The online tutorial and quizzes are organized into modules. Your Director of Training will assist you in being sure you complete the required modules for your research area. More information about RCR training can be found at www.usm.edu/research/responsible-conduct-research-q. RCR trainings must be completed by the end of the first semester of graduate training and a copy of the certificate should be filed in the student’s program file. RCR training is a requirement of all IRB proposals and a completion certificate is required for registration in the Spring semester.

For directions to access and enroll to the CITI web site and USM’s required courses for graduate students, follow this link: http://www.usm.edu/research/program-requirements and navigate to the bottom of the page for the link.

THESES AND DISSERTATIONS
Doctoral students who enter with a bachelor’s degree must complete a master’s thesis under the direction of a three-member committee. Students who are admitted with a master’s degree that did not include an empirical thesis must complete an equivalent project under the direction of a faculty member (major professor) and according to the guidelines established by the individual training programs. Students in both the Counseling Psychology Master’s program and the ABA Master’s program have the option of completing a thesis, if approved and accepted by a faculty member. We encourage all students to become involved with research activities outside of research requirements and during their first year of graduate school. Collaborative research projects with faculty and fellow students often result in conference presentations and/or journal publications.

The University of Southern Mississippi’s Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve all research involving human subjects. The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) must approve all research involving non-human subjects. Information regarding the procedures for these review processes is available from the Office of Research and Economic Development.
Formation of Committees

Please consult with your respective training director regarding the appointment/selection of a major professor. A thesis committee consists of at least three faculty members and a dissertation committee consists of at least four faculty members. The majority of each of these committees is comprised of program faculty, although faculty from outside a training program as well as the School may be included on a committee. Committee members from outside the university must be approved as Associate Graduate Faculty following the guidelines set forth by the Graduate School (see www.usm.edu/graduate-school for details regarding this process). When the student selects his/her committee, it is imperative that he or she considers its composition and what each member may contribute to the research. Please consult your individual training program handbook for any restrictions and specific requirements for the formation of thesis and dissertation committees.

Once the student has selected members for the committee, all faculty who will serve on the committee must sign the Committee Request form. It is the student’s responsibility to acquire and file the necessary paperwork with the program and the Graduate School.

Thesis/Dissertation Process

The specific timetable for the thesis or dissertation process and completion will vary for each student and across programs. However, the overall sequence of events is identical. Each student works with his/her chair to develop a research proposal. Once the proposal is complete, the student may schedule the proposal meeting, per individual program guidelines. The scheduling of the meeting, the room, and any equipment arrangements are the responsibility of the student.

Once the proposal is approved (file appropriate thesis prospectus approval forms with the Graduate School), and if required, the student must submit his/her proposal to the USM Institutional Review Board - Human Subjects Review (for research with human participants) or the USM Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for research using non-human subjects). If IRB approval is required, no data may be collected until the research is approved. It is important to note that the approved proposal represents an agreement between the student and the committee. Any subsequent changes in procedure, design, method, or any other part of the project must be brought to the entire committee for approval. The process for the defense of the final project is analogous to the proposal meeting process. The student and chair work together on drafts. Once the chair determines the document is ready for committee review, it is sent out to the committee per program guidelines. The student is responsible for scheduling the final defense. Please consult your program handbook for specific policies regarding defenses. As with the prospectus, with committee approval, the student schedules the defense of the final project.

Thesis and Dissertation courses are now graded using an “S” (Satisfactory) and “U” (Unsatisfactory) grading scale. Students are encouraged to work with their Major Professor to establish the criteria needed to obtain a Satisfactory grade each semester a student is enrolled in thesis or dissertation credits. Consistent with the Graduate School policies, any grade of “U” will result in probationary status and one semester to remediate the concerns. More than one U grade will result in dismissal. Students will receive a “P” (Pass) the semester that they successfully defend the thesis/ dissertation and complete all document specialist edits. Students are strongly encouraged to work quickly to finalize the defense document and to seek approval from the Major Professor and committee to submit the document to the Graduate School in the same semester as the defense occurred. Failure to do so may result in needing to enroll in additional thesis/ dissertation credits the semester following the defense.
For the exact deadline you must meet for graduation for your master’s or doctoral degree, you should consult the appropriate Thesis and Dissertation Calendar, which may be obtained from the Graduate School and may be found at www.usm.edu/graduate-school. Please consult individual program handbooks regarding policies on summer defenses.

Form and Style of Theses and Dissertations
The document entitled Student Manual for Preparing Theses and Dissertations is available from the Graduate School at http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/reader-dissertations-nursing-capstone-projects-theses-formerly-graduate-reader, and it should be reviewed prior to commencing the thesis or dissertation. That document contains details pertaining to the format of the thesis and dissertation as well as the requirements pertaining to margins, type, style, elements, paper, submission procedures, binding, and stylistic concerns.

Thesis/ Dissertation forms and paperwork can be found here: http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school. Please note that some forms now are only accessible by faculty.

Thesis/ Dissertation TurnItIn Check
TurnItIn is now required for all final drafts of the Thesis or Dissertation prior to being submitted to the Document Specialist. It is suggested that students make final edits following the defense meetings and then upon approval from the Major Professor, take the following steps to check for plagiarism. It will be the student’s responsibility to provide the Major Professor with the final document and the Originality Report from TurnItIn prior to submitting the initial thesis or dissertation document to the graduate school. The Major Professor should determine what, if any, action needs to be taken after reviewing the Originality Report. The steps for the Student and the Major Professor are described below. Contact bonnie.nicholson@usm.edu if you encounter any problems.

Students:
1. Prior to submitting the final draft of the thesis or dissertation to the Document Specialist, the student will be responsible for generating an Originality Report on TurnItIn
   a. Go to: www.turnitin.com
   b. Log in using your e-mail and password (if you have not previously used turnitin, please create an account)
   c. Click the tab “Enroll in a Class”
   d. Log in using the class ID and Enrollment password pictured below.
   e. Find the Assignment labeled: Thesis/ Dissertation & submit your thesis or dissertation file as a Microsoft word document.
   f. Wait until the “Similarity” section changes from “Processing” to a bar with the % similar reported.
   g. Click “View” and upon receiving the Originality Report, print and/or send to your Major Professor (On the bottom left of the Originality Report, click the printer symbol. You can choose to download a PDF to save to your computer to e-mail to your major professor).
Major Professors:

2. The Major Professor should receive the Originality Report in an email and review the report. Bibliographic references and quotes have been excluded. Please do not simply refer to the percentage noted on the first page. It is important to review the entire document. Take whatever action may be necessary at this time to finalize the document for submission. Students can be required to submit the document again if changes are required. Resubmission follows the same steps as outlined above. Note: the documents do not become part of the TurnItIn repository.

3. When the major professor is satisfied with the final product, they should send the originality report to the Document Specialist (Documentspecialist@usm.edu) and note that the committee has accepted all changes to the document. At this point the student can be instructed to submit their final draft to the Document Specialist via Aquila: https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/instructions-and-videos.

GRIEVENCE AND DUE PROCESS

Dismissal Procedures

Except in the case of automatic dismissal based on violations of the School grade policy, the counseling psychology faculty use the procedure described in this section in deciding to dismiss a student from the program. Dismissal can be for academic or non-academic reasons. Dismissal may follow unsuccessful remediation after the probationary semester; however the faculty reserve the right to dismiss students from the program without opportunity for probation if the concerns are sufficiently serious or if the student’s academic performance was such that probation is unlikely to be successful. As often as possible, students are encouraged to resign from the program rather than being dismissed and advised into more appropriate career paths and programs.

Protocol for Dismissal of a Student from a Graduate Program

The following are some reasons for dismissal of a student with regular status from a graduate program:

- The student did not return to good academic standing following probationary semester(s).
  - A GPA of 3.0 was not achieved. (Some programs have more rigorous standards).
  - The student did not earn the required improved grade on a retaken course.
  - The student failed to meet other remediation criteria.
- The student earned grades that made it impossible to return to good academic standing, thus rendering graduation impossible.
  - The student earned a grade of C- or below that could not be retaken because the one allowable retake was used to replace a prior low grade.
  - The student earned the 7th hour of C+ or below that could not be retaken because the one allowable retake was used to replace a prior low grade.
- The student failed to show acceptable improvement in research/scholarly progress after a probationary semester.
- The student exceeded the time limit for the degree program without completing the degree.
- The student was proven to have committed academic/research misconduct or other ethical violation.
- The student violated the Code of Student Conduct and required disciplinary action. (In this case dismissal follows review by the Dean of Students).
- The student failed to demonstrate professional competency and/or exhibited conduct inappropriate to the profession.
- The student failed a qualifying exam, comprehensive exam, or defense twice.
- Other (Schools may have discipline-specific policies which stipulate reasons for dismissal).

Dismissals will normally be initiated at the end of a semester following the posting of grades unless the dismissal is a result of academic misconduct or unethical/unprofessional behavior.
Dismissal must be initiated using the following protocol:

1) The student’s advisor and/or School Director will schedule a termination review with the student. The purpose of this meeting is to communicate the justification for dismissal with the student and to allow the student to provide written documentation of any extenuating circumstances that should be considered in a decision to dismiss. This meeting should be conducted face to face if possible. If the student cannot meet face to face, the meeting should take place via telephone, videoconference, or conference call. Email is acceptable but should be used only if personal communication is not possible.

The Director of Training will notify the student one week prior to the faculty meeting where dismissal is being considered. The student will be permitted to provide written documentation of any relevant extenuating circumstances which they believe may have inhibited their performance might aid the faculty in making a decision to retain or dismiss a student. The Director of Training will meet with the student and provide a written account of the decision as soon as possible following the dismissal meeting. Decisions are subject to the same appeals procedure as documented elsewhere in this handbook.

2) If the School chooses to move forward with a dismissal following a termination review, the following items must be submitted to the dean of the Graduate School either electronically as a pdf with electronic signatures or as a hard copy with original signatures:
   a. A letter addressed to the student articulating the reason(s) for dismissal.
   b. A completed dismissal form indicating the reason(s) for dismissal and signed by the advisor, School Director, and the college dean.

3) Upon receiving notice of the dismissal, the dean of the Graduate School will send the student a formal letter of dismissal along with a copy of the letter of rationale from the School as an attachment. The dean’s letter will inform the student of the following:
   a. That scheduled classes (including current semester classes and future classes for which the student is pre-registered) must be dropped using the withdrawal process within seven (7) working days of receiving the dismissal letter from the dean of the Graduate School and that if he/she does not withdraw from classes the Graduate School will initiate the withdrawal.
   b. The impact of dismissal on a graduate assistantship, insurance, and tuition.
   c. The student’s right to appeal the dismissal and instructions for filing an appeal.

The letter will be sent to the student by certified mail through the U.S. Postal Service and by email using the student’s official USM email address.

Appeal Procedures
If the student chooses to appeal a dismissal, the following protocol will be applied. This procedure follows the Grievance and Appeals Procedures included in the Graduate Bulletin and gives the student due process.

1. School Level. The student will submit a signed letter to the director within fifteen (15) working days of notification of dismissal from the Dean of the Graduate School or other action that prompts a grievance or appeal. The letter must state the action for which the student is filing an appeal or grievance and explain the basis of the appeal or grievance. The director will review all pertinent material, interview the student and relevant faculty member(s), and render a decision on the appeal/grievance, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal/grievance. The decision of the director will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School.

2. Dean of the College Level. If the student chooses to appeal the School’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the school decision to the dean of the college. The dean will review the appeal and render a decision on the appeal, normally
within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the college dean will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the Dean of the Graduate School.

3. Dean of the Graduate School Level. If the student chooses to appeal the academic dean’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the academic dean’s decision to the dean of the Graduate School. The graduate dean will convene a Graduate School Appeals Committee (made up of faculty who are members of the Graduate Council and one graduate student) which will review all pertinent materials and hold an official hearing on the appeal. Normally, the hearing will be held within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the written appeal as long as the university is in session or within ten (10) working days of the university beginning a session. The student may attend the hearing and a representative of the school may also attend the hearing or respond to the appeal in writing. The Appeals Committee will submit a letter detailing their decision to the dean of the Graduate School. The dean will send the student a letter indicating the Committee's decision via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account.

4. Provost Level. If the student chooses to appeal the Graduate School Appeals Committee’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the committee’s decision to the Provost. The Provost will review all appeal materials and render a decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Provost will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School.

5. President Level. If the student chooses to appeal the Provost’s decision, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) working days of the emailed notification of the Provost’s decision to the President. The President will review all appeal materials and render a final decision on the appeal, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the President will be submitted to the student via certified mail and the student’s official USM email account. This correspondence will also be copied to the dean of the Graduate School. The decision of the President is final.

Grievance: General Guidelines

Students may file a grievance if experiencing difficulties with other students, faculty members, staff members, or supervisors; or with program/school rules or procedures. Because graduate students may serve in several roles, University rules and regulations for resolving complaints or grievances may vary with the circumstance.

Due process ensures that decisions made about a student’s academic performance or academic standing in a graduate degree program are not arbitrary or personally based. Due process requires that decision-making procedures be fairly applied to all students, appeal procedures are available to all students, and that students may challenge a decision without prejudice.

As part of due process, students may appeal any decision that is made by the university faculty or administration. Students also have the right to file a grievance regarding actions taken by the university or its representatives (e.g., faculty, administrators). Appeals and grievances are separate processes. There may be instances that involve both an appeal and a grievance, but the two actions will be handled separately. The School faculty strives to achieve fair and equitable resolution of complaints or grievances at the earliest possible time and at the lowest possible level. Thus, students who wish to appeal a decision or seek action on a matter of grievance are usually encouraged to seek clarification and review in consultation with their major professor, the Director of Training, or the School Director. Students are encouraged to consult with the Director of Training and/or the Major Professor before bringing concerns to the attention of the School Director or Dean.

Appeal of Grades

Grade appeals are governed by University policy. A description of the formal process may be found at
If a student wishes to formally appeal a grade that has resulted in program/School termination, the School may opt to wait until the University grade appeal process is concluded before conducting appeals for School or program dismissal.

### University Grievance Policy

The University Grievance Policy is available here: [https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook/university-grievance-policy](https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook/university-grievance-policy).

### Sexual Harassment & Discrimination Policies

Sexual Harassment policies can be found here [https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook/aaeeo-policies](https://www.usm.edu/student-handbook/aaeeo-policies). A student who believes she or he has been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, color, race, religion, national origin, disability, or Vietnam-Era veteran status by a university employee may file a complaint with the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity. Specific procedures are outlined at [http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo/aaeeo-complaint-procedure](http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo/aaeeo-complaint-procedure).

### Consensual Relationships Policy

There are special problems in any romantic or sexual relationship between individuals where one party possesses direct academic, administrative, supervisory, evaluative, counseling, or extracurricular authority over the other party. Please find the Consensual Relationship Policy here: [https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/policy-regarding-consensual-relationships](https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/policy-regarding-consensual-relationships).

## GRADUATION PROCEDURES

The Graduate School has a series of forms that must be completed at each step of your graduate training. These forms can be found at [https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school](https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school). Some forms are only accessible by faculty. Please see your Director of Training or refer to your program-specific handbook for how these forms are managed within your program. To avoid unnecessary delays or unexpected financial charges, it is important that you carefully follow the Graduate School policies and be mindful of deadlines. If you have any questions, feel free to ask your major professor, training director, or the Graduate School.

### Graduate Degree Auditor

The Graduate School degree clerk is housed in the Graduate School. As you prepare your degree applications for review, please note the following:

1. Dissertations are graded using a S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory) grading system. A grade of a P (Pass) is awarded the semester the dissertation is defended and graduate reader document specialist edits are completed.
2. Only 9-12 hours of dissertation credit and 3-6 hours of thesis credit will count toward the degree (even if many more hours have been taken).
3. Only six hours of transfer work is allowed toward both the master’s and doctoral degrees combined. Programs may maintain more stringent policies regarding transfer credits.
4. A grade-point average of 3.0 or better is required for graduation.
5. It is the responsibility of the student to file the graduation application in time for graduation.
6. An I (Incomplete) is awarded only in rare circumstances. A completion plan should be established with the instructor and Director of Training. An “I” becomes an “F” the semester following graduation if the work remains incomplete.
Important University Services & Contact Information

Financial Aid
- David Williamson, Director of Financial Aid
  Kennard Washington Hall, 101; 266.4774
- www.usm.edu/financialaid/

ID Card
- Photo Services, Thad Cochran Center Lower Level; 601.266.4149

Institutional Review Board and Animal Care and Use Committee
- Jo Ann Johnson, IRB Administrator & Compliance Officer
- McLemore 315; 266.5997; www.usm.edu/irb/

iTech
- iTech Help Desk; Cook Library, Room 209; 601-266-HELP (4357)
  helpdesk@usm.edu
- www.usm.edu/itech/

Office of Disability Access
- 114 Bond Hall; 266.5024, TTY 266.6837
- www.usm.edu/oda

Graduate School
- Dr. Karen Coats, Dean
- McCain Library; 266.4369
- www.usm.edu/graduate-school

Payne Center & Recreation Services
- Free to all students; 266.5405
- www.usm.edu/recsports

Student Health Services
- Kennard-Washington Hall; 266.5390
- www.usm.edu/healthservice/

Parking Management
- Parking zones in effect from 7:30 am - 4:30 pm
- Located in First Floor Lobby, McLemore Hall; 266.5447
- www.usm.edu/parking/
SONA Researcher Guidelines

Please adhere to the following rules:

1. Online studies are worth 0.5 credits for every 30 minute block.

2. Lab studies are worth 1.5 credits for every 30 minute block.

3. If you violate the credit/time rule, your study may be removed from SONA.

4. The SONA administrator (Lucas Keefer) is not responsible for assigning credits. The researcher (You) is responsible for assigning credit. Please let participants know about this.

5. Once participants have started signing up for a study, researchers should not change the study description (e.g., adding restrictions to participation eligibility) in such a way that would disqualify those who have already signed up. If a researcher is using flexible eligibility criteria (e.g., Qualtrics quotas, maintaining a running count of demographic categories), students should be informed of this in SONA. For example, something like the following could be added to the study’s description: “The study will close as soon as a sufficient number of students have participated, so those who want to participate are encouraged to sign up soon.”

6. If the study has active sign-ups and is canceled by the researcher, the researcher is obligated to give a justifiable reason. If the reason for cancellation is due to anything other than a university approved excuse, the researcher is required to award the credits to the participant. If a researcher realizes that his/her study has active sign-ups but they do not need any more participants, the researcher has to award the credits.

7. We can’t penalize subjects, unless we provide alternatives for extra credit. See HHS guidelines here: http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/january-08-2010-letter-to-dr-justin-fidler/index.html

8. A clear case when we can give zero credit is if the participant does not show up and does not provide valid justification for his/her absence, or does not even start the experiment (say an online study). You have to specify in your instructions if you are giving credit only if the study is completed. If you fail to include this information, you have to give full credit even if the participant does not finish the study. Zero credit can be given also in cases when a participant in an online study fails quality assurance checks.

9. Please award all credits by the semester deadline at the latest. If you award it later, it causes a logistical nightmare for instructors to account for those new credits. As a neglectful researcher, you are creating a bind between instructors and participants, and creating extra work for your colleagues.

10. The SONA administrator sends an official credit report 2 days after participation has been closed for a given semester. Please use this credit report as the official proof of credits. Any other report that the students show you may allow for double-dipping, as students can reassign credits to another course after the official report has been issued.

11. No advertisement of individual SONA studies is permitted in the classroom, on bulletin boards, listserves, email, or via social media.

12. Study credits can be used only once, and students cannot transfer them from previous semesters.
13. If you are an instructor please tell your students that they have to assign credits to the courses of their choice before the semester deadline. Credits can be split among several courses, but the same credit can be used for only one course.