FAQ

Why do I need to submit my thesis, dissertation, or nursing capstone project to the Reviewer of Dissertations, Nursing Capstone Projects, and Theses? (Formerly known as the Graduate Reader)

If you are writing and defending a thesis, dissertation, or nursing capstone project, the Graduate School will not accept your final document unless it has been approved by the Reviewer.

Where do I find the deadlines for completing the final steps to receive my degree?

Go to the Reviewer section of the Graduate School website to find the deadlines. Be aware that there may be additional items due. Check with the Degree Auditor in the Graduate School for additional information. Colleges of Education & Psychology and Arts & Letters click here; Colleges of Health, Nursing, Business, and Science & Technology click here.

Those seeking an MA or PhD in Psychology who will be defending their dissertations or theses before leaving for an internship, should submit all of the following at least 60 days before the scheduled defense date. Contact the Reviewer for more information.

Why do I need to submit the “Contact Graduate Reader form” to the Reviewer?

The Contact Graduate Reader form is used by the Reviewer for three purposes: (1) It supplies the Reviewer with the information needed to review your thesis, dissertation, or nursing capstone project; (2) It supplies her with the information needed to contact you during the Review process or at other times during the semester; (3) It also supplies the information needed to create the doctoral section of the commencement program.

Why does my title page have to be approved before the rest of the document?

You should create your title page using the template found on the Reviewer website. Before creating your title page, be sure that you read the instructions thoroughly. The title page must be approved by the Reviewer so that you can make final (i.e., cotton) copies of it to take to your defense. That way, if your committee is ready to sign off on your document you will have the title pages ready for them to sign. Incorrectly formatted and/or unapproved title pages will not be accepted by the Reviewer. If your title (or anything else) changes before or at defense, resubmit it to the Reviewer for approval before using it. The title page should be emailed to the Reviewer for approval before the published deadline. The Reviewer will reply in a timely manner and the approved version of your title page will be attached to the reply. The Reviewer will provide instructions for the use of the title page when it is approved. The approval process takes place entirely by email.

Please be sure your Graduate Committee form is already on file with the Graduate School. Title pages cannot be approved if this form has not already been approved. If your committee changes at any point you will need to submit an updated form to the Graduate School.

How do I format my thesis, dissertation, or nursing capstone project?

Follow the USM Guidelines. Using your selected style manual and the USM Guidelines format your document. The USM Guidelines always supersede your style manual. The easiest way to format your document is to read the guidelines and use one of the templates on the website. The template is based on the guidelines. If you choose to use the template it eliminates some of the formatting issues that you may encounter if you chose to format your document manually. Be sure you read the guidelines and the instructions for using the template thoroughly before you begin. Note – at this writing the template is not ready to implement, but it won’t be much longer.

How should I complete the review process if I live outside of the Hattiesburg area?

The review process takes place after you have successfully defended. After your committee approves your document you will submit your Word file to Aquila. Since this process is done almost entirely through electronic means, you can live almost anywhere in the world as long as you have access to a computer with a recent version of Microsoft Word and
internet access. A paper copy will need to be turned in after the Reviewer has cleared you for finals, but this can be done using the USM Copy Center here on campus. Contact the Reviewer for more information.

What if my document includes an element that is not covered in the USM Guidelines?
Contact the Reviewer for permission to use the element and/or clarification on how to include the element in your document. The sooner you do this, the better it will be. Please contact the Reviewer with any questions you have as you write and format your thesis, dissertation, or nursing capstone project.

What does the Reviewer check for in my document?
The Reviewer checks to be sure your document has been formatted in compliance with the USM Guidelines and your chosen style manual. The Reviewer also checks to be sure that the document is properly cited and that all citations have a properly formatted reference listed in the Reference section. The Reviewer spot checks grammar and punctuation and will provide general pointers if obvious errors are found. Your committee chair should run your document through Turnitin and then he/she should submit an originality form to the Reviewer. The content of the document is your responsibility and should be checked by you and your committee before it is submitted to the Reviewer. The Review process will be easier and will go faster if you carefully follow the USM Guidelines, your style manual, and if you check to be sure everything is properly cited and referenced before it is submitted to the Reviewer.

What do I do if I realize I am not going to graduate as scheduled?
Contact both the Reviewer (601-266-4372) and the appropriate Degree Auditor (601-266-5136 or 601-266-4181) and notify them that you need to defer your graduation. You will need to submit a deferment form and receipt of payment to the Degree Auditor in the Graduate School. Please be sure you contact both the Reviewer and the Degree Auditor.

What do I do if I want a bound copy of my thesis, dissertation, or nursing capstone project?
Once the Reviewer has approved the final version of your document, she will provide you with instructions for completing the process. The information you will need for ordering your personal copies is included in those instructions.

How do I find out about commencement and reserve a seat for the commencement ceremony scheduled for my graduating class?
There are commencement ceremonies in Spring (May) and Fall (December). Summer graduates participate in one of the Fall ceremonies. To obtain more information about these ceremonies go to usm.edu/commencement – information about the upcoming ceremony will be posted early in the Spring and Fall semesters. Contact the Registrar’s office for further information. No tickets or seat reservations are required for your friends and family to attend.

Which ceremony will I be participating in?
In the Fall there are two ceremonies on the Hattiesburg campus divided by college. In the Spring there are three ceremonies – two in Hattiesburg divided by college and one on the Coast. Doctoral candidates are assigned to a ceremony based on college and department, there are some departments that require their doctoral candidates to participate on the Coast or in Hattiesburg regardless of where they attended classes. Contact the Reviewer for further information.

When will I get my diploma?
Masters candidates – your diplomas will be mailed approximately six weeks after the end of the semester. You will receive a diploma case on stage.

Doctoral candidates – if completing your degree in the Summer, your diploma will be mailed approximately six weeks after the end of the semester. If completing your degree in the Fall or Spring – the Reviewer will notify you about when and where your diploma can be picked up on the afternoon before commencement and on commencement day (diplomas not picked up during that time period will be mailed). You will receive a diploma case and your doctoral hood on stage (both are yours to keep).