

Summary of OS PhD Program Requirements for Faculty and Students

- 1) Students are responsible for fulfilling all program requirements including those outlined in the USC Catalogue, the Graduate School's website, the OT Department's website, this document and the OT Department's Student Handbook. Detailed descriptions of all requirements can be found in the resources cited above.
- 2) Students are admitted to the PhD program as full time students only.
- 3) Students are required to maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.

4) Faculty Advisement

When a student is admitted to the program, he or she will be assigned a faculty mentor based on:

- the student's research interests.
- faculty availability and expertise.
- the assignment of the student's research assistantship.

In collaboration with their faculty mentor, students may design an interdisciplinary research experience with another designated program.

By the end of the first year, a decision regarding the appointment of the guidance committee chair will be finalized. In most cases, the mentor will continue as the chair.

5) Evaluation & Performance

Performance is reviewed annually by the graduate faculty, with the student and the Chair completing an academic progress contract. As part of the annual process, students must pass a screening exam during the first year and before 24 units have been completed. Plans for program completion are reviewed. This gives the student and the division the chance to consider whether admission to the program and course plans remain appropriate. Passing the screening exam is a prerequisite to continuation in the doctoral program.

6) Forms

All forms, unless otherwise noted, should be submitted to Graduate Advisor Maddy Zamany. Students fill out their personal information and obtain signatures from their Chair and committee members. Maddy will obtain signatures from Dr. Clark and Dean Sadan. Forms can be downloaded from the Graduate School's website at http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html

7) Guidance Committee

The Guidance Committee oversees the Qualifying Exam, and is composed of five faculty members. Three members of the committee, including at least one tenured member, must be regular faculty from the Division. At least one member must be faculty from outside the Division, and will represent the Graduate School. An outside member can have no more than a 50% financial appointment with the OT/OS Division. The fifth member can be faculty from the student's cognate area. However four members can be from inside the department.

8) An Appointment of Committee

Form must be submitted, identifying members of the guidance committee that oversees the qualifying exam. The form should be submitted at least one semester prior to taking the qualifying exam.

Information regarding the role of the outside committee member can be reviewed

http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/documents/StuServices/Role_of_Outside_Member.pdf

9) Change of Committee

If a student wishes to make a change to her/his committee, it must occur 30 days before the qualifying exam. A Change of Committee form can be downloaded from the Grad School's website.

http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html

10) Qualifying Exam

The Qualifying Exam is required for all PhD students and consists of both a written and oral section.

When scheduling the Qualifying Exam, the student must schedule the written section first. The oral section must be scheduled within a two to six week window following the written portion. Each member of the exam committee is required to submit one question. Each committee member has two weeks to grade his/her submitted question and inform the Chair of the committee of the Pass/Fail+grade. Each member of the committee is also expected to read the answers to all other questions and may ask questions about this material during the oral section.

The passing of the written section (4 out of 5 questions) is required for eligibility to take the oral exam. However the student may be asked to retake the failed question before being allowed to move on to the oral section. A two hour limit is set for the oral, and it is based on the questions from the written exam. The oral exam is not open to the public; however the oral defense of the dissertation itself is open to the public.

The qualifying exam should be taken no later than during the fifth semester. Students may register for GRSC 800: Studies for the Qualifying Exam. Permission to register is granted by the Graduate School. Enrollment is limited to two consecutive semesters of preparation for the qualifying examination.

Students should download and complete the Request to Take the PhD Qualifying Exam form found on the Graduate School website, and submit it to Maddy Zamany at least 30 days prior to the start of the Qualifying Exam. Students need to reserve a room for their exam and inform Maddy of their exam date so she can facilitate completion of the required forms.

At least fourteen days prior to taking the Qualifying Exam, the student must complete and submit the following:

- A publishable paper related to Occupational Science. The expectation is that the paper has been submitted for publication.
- A dissertation proposal.

Maddy will give the Report on the Qualifying Exam form to the Chair several days before the exam. The Chair is responsible for returning the completed form to Maddy no later than two days after the exam, per Graduate School deadlines. The student is not allowed to deliver the form, and the form should not be delivered directly to the Graduate School.

http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html

11) Dissertation Proposal

- The dissertation must be developed in consultation with the advisor.
- It must include a rationale for the dissertation, a concise and incisive synthesis of literature, methods section, and any preliminary data gathered, and publication plans for work that emanates from the dissertation.
- When appropriate, it should be written up in the form of an actual grant proposal.
- The student must check with each reader to determine whether the proposal is to be submitted electronically, or as a hard copy, or both.
- A preliminary version of the proposal must be submitted 10 weeks before the proposal meeting. Written feedback from the committee members must be given to the student 4 weeks after submission of the preliminary version. The revised proposal then must be submitted back to the committee 2 weeks prior to the proposal meeting with a cover letter providing an itemized list of all revisions made.
- The proposal should consist of a minimum of 30 double-spaced pages.

http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_thesis_dissert_04.html

12) Dissertation Committee

Following the Qualifying Exam, a new Appointment of Committee form must be submitted as soon as possible. Some or all members of the Guidance Committee can serve on the Dissertation Committee, though it is not a requirement.

13) Continuous Enrollment

Once a student is admitted to the program (no longer a limited status student, for example), the student must register for at least one course every fall and spring semester until the Approval to Submit Defended & Final Copy of Doctoral Work form have been signed and submitted to the Graduate School. Following the passing of the Qualifying Examination, registration in 794 Doctoral Dissertation is required in each term (excluding summer) until the student completes, defends, makes any post-defense revisions, and submits the dissertation to the Thesis Editor.

14) Leave of Absence

A student may take up to four leave of absences, one semester at a time with the approval of the division. This request must be submitted before the add/drop registration deadline each Fall and Spring semester. After four LOA, the student must obtain approval from the Graduate School by submitting a petition online via myGradSchool.

15) Readmission

If a student fails to register for a semester and is not on a leave of absence, the student must apply for readmission to the department, subject to review by the Graduate School. OT Admissions Director Sarah Kelly will assist with the process.

16) Full time/Part time status

PhD students are considered full time students if they are registered for 6 units or more of 500 level or above course work, or if they are enrolled in 794 a, b, c, d, or z (Doctoral Dissertation) or GRSC 800 (preparing for the qualifying examination), or if they are a TA. If they are a TA, they need to be enrolled for the minimum units required for the TA position. Some lenders require students to be enrolled in at least half time status, which is 3 units, to maintain student deferment status.

17) Required Units

For complete course descriptions, please refer to the USC Catalogue pages 728-731. The PhD program consists of 60 units including the following:

- Required core courses are OT 640 (4), OT 641 (4), and OT 660 (12) for a total of 20 units.
- Required electives are five 600-level OT courses for a total of 20 units.
- Cognate courses are a minimum total of 12 units.
- Dissertation requires 2 units per semester for at least two semesters for a minimum total of 4 units.
- Additional 4 units can include 4 further units of dissertation or cognate.

18) Waivers/Substitutions/Transfer units

A maximum of 25 percent of the stated degree course requirements (exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation) may be approved for waiver or substitution by other USC course work, directed research or transfer course work.

Substitutions and the use of transfer units must be approved by committee chair. The Chair must let Maddy know the substitution or transfer has been approved so that she can apply the credits to the student's degree.

19) Time to Complete Coursework

PhD students are expected to complete the 56 units of coursework in 6 semesters (3 years), which means an average of 10-14 units per semester, depending on whether they have a master's degree. During this time the student should be formulating a research topic through ongoing discussion with a faculty member.

20) Time to Complete Program

If students have completed a Master's degree within 5 years of starting the PhD program, they have 6 years from the date of the first course applied toward the PhD degree. Otherwise, they have 8 years to complete the degree.

21) Thesis Editing Deadlines

If a student submits his/her thesis on the deadline date, it will take about three weeks for the thesis editor to edit it. Students receive email notification of the required changes, and have five days to submit corrections. If there are additional changes required, student is again notified by email and has three days to make any final changes.

22) Final paperwork

Approximately one month before defense, students begin the submission process outlined in the Sequence for Submission of Dissertation and Thesis Paperwork.

http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_thesis_dissert_02.html

Final Paperwork for students includes submission of a bound copy of the dissertation to the Department Chair and Dissertation Chair, and additional paperwork outlined on the Graduate School's PhD Submission Packet web page.

http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_thesis_dissert_04.html

Upon the committee's acceptance, paperwork requiring faculty signatures includes:

- Approval to Submit Defended & Final Copy of Doctoral Work.
- Verification of Completion of the Requirements for the Doctoral Degree.
- Signature Page

Final paperwork as outlined in the Submission Packet web page is approved by Maddy Zamany. Student submits paperwork to the Graduate School. Student uploads dissertation manuscript and works with Thesis Editor to complete final corrected version of dissertation.

Recommended Timeline for Completion of the PhD in four years

- Upon entrance to the program, the student should develop a course plan, which will be revised at the beginning of the second semester and further revised as needed.
- Upon entrance into the program, the student should appoint a committee chair.
- By the beginning of the third semester, student should have completed his or her screening.
- By the beginning of the fourth semester, the PhD committee chair should be appointed
- By the fifth semester, the student should pass the qualifying examination.
- By the end of the sixth semester, the core courses and cognates should be completed.
- By the beginning of the seventh semester, the student should receive IRB approval and begin research for the dissertation.
- By the eighth semester, the student should pass the oral examination.
- By the end of the eighth semester, the student should submit the final dissertation.