

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Guidelines for Graduation

This guideline is to assist students in completing the requirements needed for graduation. However, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain the required materials, and to understand that any delays can result in not graduating. The following forms are available from the Graduate Secretary.

1. Program of Study

All graduate students must file a program of study form that is approved by his/her advisor, the graduate director and the dean of the graduate school. A program of study is a list of courses that fulfills all the requirements for a degree. The Graduate Director acts as an academic advisor for all graduate students and provides guidance in the selection of courses. When it is approved, the student is assured that this is all that is needed to complete the degree.

2. Graduate Credit Transfer Request

If you have course credits to transfer toward your degree, an official transcript must be in the Graduate School. The Graduate Director will not approve transfer credits without an official transcript from that institution. A maximum of nine semester credit hours of graduate level courses with grades of B or better may be transferred from other institutions. The Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve these credits. Documentation in the form of the appropriate pages of university bulletins and official transcripts must be supplied. The normal time that transfer courses are approved is when the student files the program of study. Courses from other USC departments may be used if the director of graduate studies first approves them. There is a limit of nine hours that can be taken outside the department. Transfer credit is allowed only for courses taken within six (6) years of the expected date of completion of the M.S. program. There is no revalidation process for over-age transfer credits.

3. Application for Graduation

It is the responsibility of all candidates for graduation to file an Application for Degree form, during the last academic term before graduation with the dean of the graduate school. Application for a diploma must be made to the Graduate School early in the semester in which the degree is expected. The precise dates are generally published in the Master Schedule of Classes. Students must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester in which they complete their degree requirements. Diplomas will not be awarded retroactively.

Thesis Proposal: A proposal that outlines the scope of the M.S. thesis must be prepared in consultation with the advisor and thesis committee. An oral presentation of the proposal must be made to the thesis committee. The proposal presentation is open to the public and needs to be scheduled **one week** ahead by turning in a copy of the proposal and a Proposal Scheduling Form to the graduate secretary.

After the committee agrees that the thesis proposed is acceptable, they sign the Thesis Proposal form (CS 3). This proposal is then filed in the student's folder maintained in the graduate office. It is the responsibility of the student to present a thesis proposal by the end of the first semester in which he/she is registered for CSCI 799 in the Research option. For the Project option, the thesis proposal should be presented no later than 4 weeks into the semester.

Selecting a date for the Thesis defense: Copies of the final draft of the written thesis must be submitted to members of the thesis committee at least two weeks before the final oral examination. In addition, a copy of the thesis must be submitted to the secretary of the Graduate Director along with a written request on the Thesis Defense form (CS 4) to set up a date for the thesis defense. The defense must be scheduled to start between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on a day in which the University is in session. The date of the thesis defense will be set no earlier than two weeks from the date of the filing of the Thesis Defense Form. This is necessary to give the committee members and other members of the department adequate time to read the final version of the thesis. The copy submitted to the graduate secretary will be kept in the reading room for public reference. The CS 4 form cannot be filed earlier than at least 60 days after the Thesis Proposal form (CS 3) is filed and two weeks before the scheduled defense date.

Thesis Defense: A final oral examination covering the thesis and relevant course work must be passed. A member of the thesis committee other than the thesis advisor will act as the examination chair. The examination chair is responsible for administering the final exam. After the oral exam has been conducted, the examination chair writes up a report, which is approved and signed by all members of the student's committee. This report will contain a record of the exam and its outcome. In the event that corrections or changes of any kind to the written thesis are required, the report shall indicate in writing the method that will be adopted to complete the work. It is the responsibility of the exam chair to insure that any changes stipulated in the report are made before notifying the Graduate Director that the student has completed his/her final examination successfully. After successful completion of the examination, the student must submit at least three copies of the approved thesis to the Graduate School for binding. The University requires a copy for each of the Thomas Cooper and South Caroliniana Libraries and one copy must be placed in the departmental library. If the student would like a personal copy and a copy for the advisor then this brings the total needed to five. The student must make an appointment at least a week in advance to turn the thesis into the graduate school.

Maximum Period Allowed: A student must complete all degree requirements within a period of six years after being admitted to the program as a regular student. If a student requires more than six years to complete the program, special arrangements will have to be made with the department for revalidation of courses taken by the student more than six years prior to the date of graduation. If a course has changed substantially since the time that it was originally taken then it might not be possible to attempt to revalidate it. Students desiring revalidation must first request in writing that the Graduate Committee approves the proposed plan for revalidation. For more details on revalidation, please refer to the graduate bulletin published by the Graduate School. Transfer credits may not be revalidated.