CSLC

comparative studies in literature & culture

University of Southern California

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE
DOCTORAL PROGRAM

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Note on the Recent Edition

THE 2025-2026 CSLC GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK SUPERSEDES ITS PREVIOUS VERSIONS.

THIS VERSION INCORPORATES LANGUAGE REQUIRED BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL SO THAT ALL PHD STUDENTS HAVE ACCURATE AND CONSISTENT INFORMATION THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA SET FORTH BY THE UNIVERSITY AND THE GRADUATE STUDENT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT.

A STUDENT'S CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS ARE LINKED TO THE USC CATALOGUE YEAR AT TIME OF ENTRY TO THE PROGRAM. IN CONSULTATION WITH THEIR FACULTY TRACK ADVISOR, STUDENTS MAY ELECT TO ADOPT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS DETAILED IN LATER VERSIONS WHERE INDICATED. STUDENTS MAY USE EITHER THE REQUIREMENTS FROM THEIR ENTRY YEAR OR FROM A LATER YEAR, BUT THEY CANNOT COMBINE THE TWO.

Purpose of the Graduate Student Handbook

Graduate student success is the result of a collaborative effort among students working at their highest levels, faculty dedicated to high-quality mentorship, and staff who coordinate and advise. One of the most important ingredients in this cooperative effort is a shared understanding about what is required and what resources and supports are available.

This document serves as a roadmap for PhD students. It offers a review of expectations for students and for the faculty and administrative staff who support them. The handbook provides three types of information: 1) guidance on program requirements, including university and departmental policies, resources, and expectations; 2) practical advice for common challenges at USC; and 3) information about relevant support services and professional development opportunities.

We hope that the handbook serves as a valuable resource for PhD success, providing students with the information to complete their programs while maintaining academic momentum and personal well-being. While this handbook provides details on various procedures and policies, please consult with your Faculty Track Advisor if you are unsure about the policy.

The handbook includes policies and practices noted in the university's catalogue, collective bargaining agreement, and other sources. It does not fully address the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, which is available for your reference on the Graduate School's website.

The USC Catalogue, and not this Handbook, constitutes the official document establishing the requirements for your degree. Although the Handbook expands on and supplements what you will find in the Catalogue, the latter remains the document of record for the University and the Graduate School.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Program Welcome

Founded in 2011, CSLC brought together under one administrative roof the long-standing Ph.D. programs in Comparative Literature and French and Francophone Studies. To these were added new Tracks in Comparative Media and Culture and Spanish and Latin American Studies.

Mission Statement

The Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture Doctoral Program provides rigorous training in media studies, literary analysis, and critical theory and fosters independent thinking at the crossroads of these disciplines and methodologies.

CSLC is at the front edge of interdisciplinary research, cultivating the common ground tying Comparative Literature, Comparative Media and Culture, French and Francophone Studies, and Spanish and Latin American Studies while carrying out path-breaking research in each of these disciplines. By design, CSLC challenges the boundaries of these fields while carrying on the very best of their traditions and enlarging what each can bring to the study of the discipline.

Our research community is committed to shaping the future of doctoral education in the humanities by fostering an inclusive network of scholars and teachers across language, media, and regional foci.

2. Introduction to the Graduate School

The mission of the USC Graduate School is to provide a distinguished educational experience at the graduate level for an outstanding and diverse student body, to support and celebrate graduate student achievements, and to lead in establishing and communicating policies, standards, and processes related to graduate education.

3. The PhD at USC

The Doctor of Philosophy at USC is a full-time program. It is a rigorous course of study that requires original research, professional maturity, sustained intellectual focus, and academic discipline. Students are expected to devote full-time study to this degree and not undertake employment or other time-consuming commitments during the academic year, from the end of August through mid-May.

CSLC does not require students to take summer courses, however students may

enroll in graduate seminars or language courses that are offered in summer. Overall, students are encouraged to use the summer to help advance their research by dedicating the time to independent research and writing, studying for exams, or undertaking supplementary activities necessary for their degree progress, such as language study or participation in international conferences and professional meetings.

II.   CSLC Curriculum and Program Milestones

Through the CSLC Doctoral Program, students pursue their degree in one of the three Tracks (for complete descriptions of the requirements in each of these Tracks, see the [Catalogue of Courses](#)):

> Track I: [Comparative Media and Culture](#) (Post 1442)
> Track II: [Comparative Literature](#) (Post 1443)
> Track III: National Literatures and Cultures
> - [French and Francophone Studies](#) (Post 1444)
> - [Spanish and Latin American Studies](#) (Post 1446)

The following sections describe the degree requirements common to all tracks, including the core curriculum and exams, followed by a description of track-specific degree requirements and a chart summary of requirements that students can refer to as they formulate their program of study in consultation with their faculty track advisor.

1. Degree Requirements Common to All CSLC Tracks

A. Core Curriculum

The *CSLC Core Curriculum* consists of:

- **CSLC 501, 502, 503,** and <u>one</u> of the following: **CSLC 601, 602, or 603.** The 500-level courses are offered every year (typically 501 and 502 in the Fall and 503 in the Spring). One 600-level course is offered each year.

- **CSLC 600,** Professional Development I: Publication, and **CSLC 700,** Professional Development II: Writing the Prospectus. These workshops are normally to be taken toward the end of coursework. They are offered on a credit/no-credit basis for 2 units. CSLC 700, offered every Fall, covers preparation for the Qualifying Examination and should be taken the semester of or before this exam is scheduled. CSLC 600 covers academic publishing

in literary and humanities fields, and is normally taken after your Qualifying Exam.

CSLC 701, Professional Development III: Writing the Doctoral Dissertation and CSLC 702, Professional Development IV: Applying for Academic Positions are not required, but are offered to provide support to students in the process of completing their dissertation or applying to academic jobs, respectively. CSLC 702 is typically offered in the spring to ensure that students have their job application materials ready by the start of the next fall semester, when academic jobs are advertised.

B. First-Year Review

A first-year review of all students will be conducted by the Graduate Studies Committee at the end of their second semester in the program. The review will determine whether the student is ready to continue in the doctoral program. This is followed by a discussion between the Faculty Track Advisor and each student at the end of their first year or beginning of the second year.

C. Field Exam

The Field Exam, the procedural designation of the [screening exam](#) in CSLC, is administered before the student completes 24 units (including directed research courses, CSLC 590 and 790). Failure to undertake the screening procedure before the completion of 24 units of course work may jeopardize additional units.

Students must pass this procedure to continue in the PhD program. If students fail the screening procedure, they will be dismissed from the PhD program without a written warning. Students who fail the screening examination are entitled to appeal pursuant to the Academic Dismissal Appeal procedure set forth in Section III of this Handbook.

The Faculty Track Advisor will remain the student's adviser until the student establishes an approved qualifying exam committee.

D. Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination is designed to assess a student's readiness to undertake independent research for their dissertation. It is comprehensive and includes both written and oral parts.

Before taking the qualifying examination, the student must have met all the university and program requirements for the PhD degree, except the dissertation. The student must have a GPA of at least 3.0 on all USC coursework available for graduate credit and the approval of their qualifying exam committee to proceed to the exam.

A successful qualifying exam will demonstrate mastery of the field or fields in which the PhD candidate's dissertation will intervene and establish clear research goals and a detailed outline of the dissertation. Upon successful completion of the qualifying exam, students continue working closely with their advisor and other members of their dissertation committee as they conduct research and draft the dissertation manuscript.

- **GRSC 800: Studies for Qualifying Examination**

If not otherwise enrolled in the minimum 6 units that constitute full-time enrollment, a student must enroll in GRSC 800abz Studies for the Qualifying Examination during the semester in which they take the qualifying examination. Students are allowed to enroll in the GRSC 800abz courses a maximum of three times, first in GRSC 800a, followed by GRSC 800b, and, only if necessary, GRSC 800z.

Because two semesters of preparation for the qualifying examination should be sufficient, students enrolling in GRSC 800z must obtain a D-clearance from the Graduate School. In addition, the student will receive a warning letter from their program outlining academic expectations and a path toward completing the PhD in a timely manner.

- **Qualifying Examination Committee**

The qualifying exam committee is responsible for supervising the student's preparation for the exam and for the fair and timely administration and evaluation of the written and oral parts of the examination.

The qualifying exam committee is composed of five members. The committee chair and at least two additional members must have an appointment in the student's program.

The Appointment or Change of Qualifying Exam or Dissertation Committee form, available on the [Graduate School website,](#) establishes the committee for the qualifying exam. The form requires the signatures of each committee member, the

department chair or program director, the dean or the dean's designee.

The Qualifying Examination Committee is composed of a faculty committee chair and four additional USC faculty members. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the faculty committee chair and the Dean of Graduate and Professional Programs, non-USC faculty may be invited to serve on this committee as a part of the five-person committee. These non-USC faculty may not, however, serve as chairs. At least three members of this committee must hold appointments in CSLC-associated departments, and the committee chair should be tenured or tenure-track faculty within a CSLC-associated department. The student and their committee chair may agree that it is desirable to name a co-chair from inside or outside CSLC, but for administrative purposes, the committee has only one faculty chairperson. At least one of the five committee members must be an outside committee member. This outside committee member, a committee role required by Dornsife College, is a faculty member who is not a specialist in the field(s) in which the student's dissertation project intervenes. The Graduate School requires all members of the committee to be present at the oral Qualifying Exam. The oral portion of the exam may take place through an in-person or online modality.

- **Changes in Qualifying Exam Committees**

The Appointment or Change of Qualifying Exam or Dissertation Committee form, available on the [Graduate School website](#), must be completed whenever there is a change to a qualifying exam committee.

Changes to the qualifying exam committee must be made well in advance of the qualifying examination. Informal substitutions for the qualifying examination's written or oral parts are not permitted. Changes in a qualifying exam committee are not permitted between the written and oral portions of the examination. Modifications made without the prior approval of the dean of the degree program are not recognized and may invalidate the examination.

The examinations must be scheduled when it is possible for all committee members, including the outside member, to participate. All qualifying exam committee members may participate remotely.

A student may not change committee members after failing the qualifying examination the first time. The same faculty must reexamine the student on the same subject matter. If a faculty member is unable to serve on the committee, the dean of the degree program must be notified in writing in advance of the

rescheduled exam to approve the change. The faculty replacement must be approved by the dean of the degree program, and the student must file a change of committee form well in advance of the exam.

- **Outcomes of the Qualifying Exam**

There are three possible results of a qualifying exam:

A.   Pass, and proceed to candidacy based on a favorable vote by a majority of committee members.

B.   Fail, with the option to retake either specific sections of the exam or the whole exam, at the discretion of a majority of the committee. The student should not be required to repeat parts of the qualifying examination passed on the first administration. The retaking of a failed qualifying examination or any portion of a qualifying exam must occur between one and six months from the date of the first examination. If not otherwise enrolled in a minimum of 6 units, the student must be enrolled in GRSC 800abz Studies for the Qualifying Examination in the term in which any portion of the exam is repeated.

C.   Fail, resulting in dismissal from the program. If a majority of the committee concludes that the written portion of the exam is so weak that the oral portion cannot compensate for it, the student does not proceed to the oral portion, and the exam is failed. The committee may provide the option of a retake, but is not required to do so. If a majority of the committee determines that a retake is not warranted, the student will be dismissed from the program.

A student may not take the comprehensive or qualifying examination more than twice and must be appropriately enrolled at USC during the semester in which any such examination is taken or retaken. A student who fails the qualifying examination a second time will be dismissed from the degree program at the end of the semester in which the second examination was taken. No exceptions are permitted.

- **Report on the PhD Qualifying Exam**

Upon the successful conclusion of the qualifying exam, the committee will certify on the Report on the PhD Qualifying Examination that: (1) the exam was appropriately rigorous; (2) the student's performance on the exam was at the doctoral level; and (3) the entire qualifying examination process was fair and in

keeping with USC's academic and ethical standards. The Report on the PhD Qualifying Examination is available to graduate advisers on the Graduate School website in myGradSchool.

- **Advancement to Candidacy**

Graduate students are officially advanced to candidacy for the PhD degree when they have completed the residency requirement and passed the written and oral portions of the PhD qualifying examination.

- **Application for the PhD**

After advancing to candidacy, students must contact their academic department or program to initiate an online degree check that will be transmitted to the Degree Progress Department. Degree Progress counselors will prepare a Degree Audit Report (STARS Report) listing any remaining requirements. Programs must apply all appropriate courses in the Student Information System for the degree to be conferred.

E. Dissertation

A dissertation is an original contribution to knowledge in the field and a demonstration that the PhD candidate has sufficiently mastered the field to pursue independent research and scholarship. A dissertation represents the individual candidate's research and writing.

Dissertations are required to be written in English. Exceptions require the approval of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs or their designee before beginning the work. The exceptions will be granted only when there is scholarly justification.

- **Dissertation Committee**

The dissertation committee is appointed as soon as possible after the qualifying examination has been passed and a dissertation topic approved. The committee must be appointed at least one month before the dissertation defense. The Appointment or Change of Qualifying Exam or Dissertation Committee form, available on the [Graduate School website](), establishes the dissertation committee. The form requires the signatures of each committee member, the department chair or program director, and the dean or dean's designee. The completed form is filed in the student's home department or program, and a signed copy is provided to the student.

The dissertation committee is composed of at least three and no more than five members. The committee chair must have an appointment in the student's program. All committees must have a majority of members from the student's home program.

PhD students may take advantage of the full array of faculty expertise available at USC. This includes the expertise of tenured, tenure-track, and RTPC (i.e., research, teaching, practitioner, clinical) faculty. A USC faculty member from outside the student's home program is referred to as an "outside member." The committee may also include a faculty member from an institution other than USC, referred to as an "external member."

USC Dornsife requires that all PhD qualifying exam and dissertation committees contain an outside member. An outside member is defined as a faculty outside the student's program but internal to USC.

Any faculty member – external, outside, or from the student's home program – who serves on PhD dissertation and qualifying exam committees must have a professional profile that demonstrates academic impact on the field in significant, measurable ways. The judgment about these qualifications will be made using the following guide:

- For faculty within the student's home program at USC and external faculty members (who are professors at universities other than USC), the dean, or dean's designee, of the school that houses the student's PhD program will assess a professor's qualification to serve
- For outside faculty (who are professors outside the student's program but internal to USC), the judgment of qualification to serve will be made by the dean or dean's designee of the school/college of the outside faculty member's primary appointment.

In both cases, the CV of the external member must be uploaded to the Thesis Center along with the appointment of committee form, and will become part of the official record. Judgments of demonstrated impact will be based on evidence: for example, peer-reviewed publications in major journals and presses, grant funding, and exceptionally influential practice in a given field, taking into account the person's total career, current stage of career, and any changes in performance in a more recent period.

Faculty who are evaluated based on criteria other than those noted above will not normally be considered appropriate members of PhD and qualifying exam

committees, except with the explicit permission of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs acting on the advice of the school dean.

Emeriti faculty appointed to a qualifying exam committee when they were full-time faculty at USC may continue to serve on the dissertation committee as "internal" committee members until the student has graduated. Similarly, a former USC faculty member who was appointed to the qualifying exam committee while they were a full-time faculty member may continue to serve on the dissertation committee as an internal committee member until the student graduates.

- **CSLC 794abcdz: Doctoral Dissertation**

Each semester following the completion of the Qualifying Exam, students must register for the CSLC 794 sequence. Although only 8 units of 794 (a,b,c,d) will be counted toward the 60-unit minimum requirement for the degree, students must register in CSLC 794 every semester (fall and spring) until the dissertation is filed and conferred.

- **Dissertation Defense**

After passing all required courses and the qualifying examination, and after meeting all other requirements, the candidate must write and defend the dissertation. The doctoral dissertation must be an original contribution to scholarship or scientific knowledge. The dissertation defense assesses whether this standard has been met.

While the oral examination is open to the general university community, only the members of the dissertation committee have the authority to recommend acceptance of the dissertation. Their recommendation must be unanimous.

For the dissertation defense, some committee members may participate remotely. The committee chair and the student must be present in person, unless the relevant dean and the Vice Provost for Academic Programs provide express written permission for remote participation.

- **Final Approval of the Dissertation**

After the dissertation defense has been completed, and the committee determines that no further edits or revisions are required of the dissertation manuscript, each member of the committee electronically certifies on the *Approval to Submit Defended and Final Copy of Doctoral Dissertation* that: (1) the defense was appropriately rigorous; (2) the student's dissertation makes an

original and substantial contribution to its field of study; and (3) the defense process was fair and in keeping with USC's academic and ethical standards. This includes adherence to departmental formatting requirements. No changes can be made to the manuscript's content after the *Approval to Submit f*orm is complete. The *Approval to Submit* form is electronically available through [Thesis Center](#), the Graduate School's online thesis and dissertation processing system.

The dissertation committee must unanimously agree for the student to pass the defense.

- **Dissertation Submission**

Doctoral dissertation manuscripts must be submitted to the Thesis Center on the [Graduate School website](#). At the time of submission, all manuscripts should be formatted and edited according to the style determined by the student's department or program. Students have three months from the date the committee chair signs the electronic *Approval to Submit* form to complete any required formatting corrections in the Thesis Center. After the Graduate School has approved the dissertation manuscript, a copy is sent to the USC Libraries. All dissertations will be made available digitally via the USC Libraries. Students have the ability to delay availability of their dissertations.

- **Completing the Dissertation**

The Graduate School provides a [schedule for completing the dissertation](#) on its website. Students must submit complete documentation and finish all corrections to the manuscript before the degree can be conferred. Upon completing all requirements, the official USC transcript will serve as evidence of the degree until the student receives their diploma.

4. **Specific Degree Requirements by Track**

In this section you will find a description of degree requirements specific to each track. For the purposes of this Handbook, only the requirements for the **Ph.D. degree** are described. For the minimum M.A. requirements for each Track, consult the USC Catalogue.

A. TRACK I: Comparative Media and Culture

- **Course Requirements**

In addition to the Core Curriculum, **ten** (10) courses, distributed as follows:

- **Three** (3) courses in a non-Anglophone literary or cultural tradition. These would be graduate courses (500- or 600-level) in a USC department such as Classics, French and Italian, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Latin American and Iberian Cultures, and Slavic Languages and Literatures.

- **Seven** (7) courses in fields related to the student's program. At least two of these must be CSLC courses.

- **Foreign Language Requirement**

The foreign language requirement is satisfied by completing the three courses in a non-Anglophone literary or cultural tradition, as outlined above.

- **Field Exam**

i. Description

This is a 6-hour written exam based on the Track I reading list, which is a representative list of works in the field of media and cultural theory. The reading list is intended to provide a focus for the exam questions and is not meant to limit the subject matter on which you may be examined. Student should expect the exam questions to cover issues and texts that range beyond the specific titles in the reading list.

In consultation with the Faculty Track Advisor, each student supplements the general reading list with ten works that are especially pertinent for their program. The Faculty Track Advisor selects three faculty members for the examining committee. These should be faculty with whom a student has taken courses. Students are welcome to consult with these faculty members before the exam.

The exam consists of three broad essay topics, in which the student will have a choice among several questions. Past Field Exams are on file in the CSLC/COLT office, and students are welcome to consult them.

ii.   Timing

The exam is usually taken after the completion of the fourth semester, or second year. The exact date and time will be at the student's and committee's discretion, but customarily it is scheduled toward the end of the summer and before the beginning of the next Fall semester.

iii.   Evaluation

The exam is read and evaluated by the faculty who have written the questions. They may evaluate it as a Pass or Not Passing. The Faculty Track Advisor will meet with the student and review the committee's evaluations. The committee may recommend, in the case of a Not Passing result, that the student be allowed to retake it once. In that case, student must retake the exam, with the same examining committee, before the beginning of the next Fall semester.

iv.   MA Degree

Upon successful completion of the MA degree, student may request the MA degree be added to their student record with the Staff Graduate Advisor.

- **Qualifying Examination**

i.   Description

The Qualifying Exam involves three steps: (1) submission of a dissertation prospectus, (2) a written exam on the general area(s) of your dissertation research, and (3) an oral exam.

ii.   Dissertation Prospectus

The Qualifying Examination process formally begins with the submission of a dissertation prospectus. This should be a 15- to 20-page description of the dissertation topic, including a clear statement of the subject matter, a summary of the scholarship produced to date on the subject, and the nature and goals of the research to be undertaken. The Qualifying Exam committee chair is responsible for approving the final draft of the prospectus for submission to the full committee. Preliminary drafts of the prospectus should be circulated to members of the

committee around four weeks in advance of the date the student intends to take the written component of the Qualifying Exam.

iii. Reading List

In preparation of the prospectus and in consultation with the members of the Qualifying Exam committee, student should also start compiling a reading list that will customarily include primary texts together with critical, historical and/or theoretical works related to the chosen topic. It might be helpful to think of this list as the sum of three or four smaller, conceptually coherent lists, all tending to intersect in the space mapped out for the dissertation.

Student should take special care to solicit approval of the reading list from all five members of the Qualifying Exam committee. The final reading list is to be submitted to them along with the final draft of the prospectus four weeks in advance of the date of the written exam.

iv. Written Examination

The written portion of the Qualifying Examination is devoted principally to questions based on the submitted reading list. Each of the members of the committee will write questions for the exam. Similar to the Field Exam, the written Qualifying Exam lasts six hours. There will be a choice of questions on which to write three essays. The Qualifying Exam committee will evaluate the essays.

v. Oral Examination

If the student's written examination is satisfactory, the student may proceed to the oral portion of the exam. The student must complete the oral portion within 60 days of submitting the completed written portion to the qualifying exam committee. If additional material is to be covered in the oral portion, the committee should notify the student of the content expectations in advance.

The oral exam lasts approximately 90 minutes, though 2 hours are typically blocked. While it allows for follow-up questions on specific points raised in the written exam, it is usually devoted to discussion of the dissertation prospectus.

   vi. Evaluation

See "Qualifying Exam" under Degree Requirements Common to All CSLC Tracks.

   • **Dissertation Defense**

See "Dissertation" under Degree Requirements Common to All CSLC Tracks.

- **Time to Degree**

The following timelines represent optimal progress toward degree for Track I.

     i.   *For Students Entering with a B.A.*

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and 700) and at least ten other courses.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Begin preparing reading list for Field Exam.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue to complete CSLC Core Curriculum and other courses.
	Semester 4	
	Summer 2	Finish preparation for Field Exam. Take Field Exam by the end of the summer.
Year 3	Semester 5	Continue course work.
	Semester 6	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty for Qualifying Exam committee.
	Summer 3	Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit final reading list and dissertation prospectus to your Qualifying Exam committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled written exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 8	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director. Research and write. Recommended registration in CSLC 600.
	Summer 4	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 5	Semester 9	Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 10	

ii.   For Students Entering with an M.A.

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and CSLC 700), and ten other graduate courses.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Prepare Field exam reading list and take Field exam at the end of the summer.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty on the Qualifying Exam and dissertation prospectus.
	Summer 2	Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list.
Year 3	Semester 5	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit preliminary reading list to committee chair. Submit final reading list and dissertation prospectus to your Qualifying Exam committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled written exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 6	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director.
	Summer 3	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 4	Semester 7	Take CSLC 600. Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 8	

B. TRACK II: Comparative Literature

- **Course Requirements**

In addition to the Core Curriculum, **ten** (10) courses distributed as follows:

- COLT 602, CSLC 601, or CSLC 603 and at least two (2) other courses in CSLC, COLT, or comparative fields related to the student's program.

- At least five (5) courses in a first literary tradition. A literary tradition is understood to refer to the full scope of a national literature (e.g., Russian or Japanese), the greater part of two or more national literatures in one language (e.g., several Francophone literatures of Europe, Africa and the Americas; peninsular and Latin American literatures in Spanish), or the full scope of a distinctly bilingual tradition such as Classics (Greek and Latin). In selecting these 5 or more courses, student should try to include all or most of the major periods in the tradition's literary history. Do not concentrate all courses in two closely related periods such as 19th and 20th centuries, medieval, or early modern. Where the tradition includes two extensive national literatures (e.g., British and American), some narrowing of focus to a period such as the 19th and 20th centuries may be unavoidable.

- At least two (2) courses in a second literary tradition. This tradition must be in a different language from that of the first literary tradition.

- At least one (1) course in a third literary tradition. Examination option: In rare circumstances, an examination testing linguistic skill and breadth of knowledge equivalent to an advanced course (400-level or higher) may be substituted for a course in the third language. Permission by the Faculty Track Advisor is required to make this substitution. If, however, the major literary tradition is Anglophone, student must do advanced course work in two other traditions without the option of an examination in the third tradition.

- **Foreign Language Requirements**

The foreign language requirements for Track II are fulfilled by the course requirements for second and third literary traditions or, exceptionally, the examination option, as aforementioned.

- **Field Exam**

    i. *Description*

The Field Exam consists of a six-hour written examination covering the full scope of the first literary tradition.

If the literary tradition is one of those covered by the Track II Reading Lists, then the student is required to use that list. With the approval of the Faculty Track Advisor or another designated faculty member, students may substitute equivalent titles for up to 10% of the titles on the list. Where there is no established reading list for a given literary tradition, student will prepare one in consultation with the Faculty Track Advisor and at least one other faculty member with expertise in the field. In addition, students should consult with the Faculty Track Advisor and one other faculty member with expertise in the field to develop a list of 15-20 theoretical and/or critical texts, drawn in part from the theory list provided in the Appendix below.

The Track II Reading Lists are intended to provide a focus for the exam questions and are not designed to limit the subject matter on which the student may be examined. Student should expect the exam questions to cover issues and texts that range beyond the specific titles on the list.

The exam consists of three broad essay topics, in which the student will have a choice among several questions. Past Field Exams are on file in the CSLC/COLT office, and students are welcome to consult them.

    ii. *Timing*

 See "Timing" under Track 1.

    iii. *Evaluation*

 See "Evaluation" under Track 1.

    iv. *MA Degree*

See "MA Degree" under Track 1.

- **Qualifying Examination**

See "Qualifying Examination" under Track 1.

- **Dissertation Defense**

See "Dissertation" under Degree Requirements Common to All CSLC Tracks.

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- **Time to Degree**

The following timelines represent optimal progress toward degree in Track II:

i.   *6.1 For Students Entering with a B.A.*

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and 700) and at least ten other courses.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Begin preparing reading list for Field Exam.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	
	Summer 2	Finish preparation for Field Exam. Take Field Exam by the end of the summer.
Year 3	Semester 5	Continue course work.
	Semester 6	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty for Qualifying Exam committee.
	Summer 3	Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit final reading list and dissertation prospectus to your examining committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled written exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 8	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director. Research and write.
	Summer 4	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 5	Semester 9	Register for CSLC 794b and CSLC 794c, and CSLC 600.
	Semester 10	Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.

ii. *For* Students Entering with an M.A.

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and CSLC 700), and at least ten other courses.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Prepare Field exam reading list and take Field exam at the end of the summer.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty on the Qualifying Exam and dissertation prospectus.
	Summer 2	Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list.
Year 3	Semester 5	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit preliminary reading list to committee chair. Submit final reading list and dissertation prospectus to your examining committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled written exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 6	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director.
	Summer 3	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for CSLC 794b and CSLC 794c, and CSLC 600. Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 8	

C. **TRACK III: National Literature and Cultures – French and Francophone Studies**
   - **Course Requirements**

In addition to the Core Curriculum, **nine** (9) courses distributed as follows:

- FREN 500 ("Pro-Seminar in French and Francophone Studies), FREN 501 ("Early Modernities"), FREN 503 ("Modernities"). FREN 500 is offered every other fall; FREN 501 and 503 are offered in rotation every other spring.

- Six additional courses in French or, with permission from the Faculty Track Advisor, in a related field; no more than two of the courses may be at the 400 level.

   - **Field Examination**

   i. *2.1*   Description

This is a 6-hour written exam based on the French and Francophone Studies reading list, followed by an oral defense. The written exam consists of three broad essay topics, in which the student will have a choice among several questions. Students must show advanced proficiency in English and in French by selecting one language for the written exam and the other for the oral exam. The student should discuss the Field Examination reading lists with the Faculty Track Advisor well in advance of the exam date. The reading list is intended to provide a focus for the exam questions and is not meant to limit the subject matter on which the student may be examined. Students should expect the exam questions to cover issues and texts that range beyond the specific titles on the list. With the approval of the Faculty Track Advisor, students may substitute equivalent titles for up to 10% of the titles on the list.

As part of the Field Examination, the student is required to submit a syllabus for an undergraduate French course of their own design. The syllabus should be distributed to the committee two weeks prior to the oral examination and is discussed by the examining committee.

   ii.   *Timing*

 See "Timing" under Track 1.

   iii.   *Evaluation*

See "Evaluation" under Track 1.

    iv.   *MA Degree*

See "MA Degree" under Track 1.

- **Foreign Language Requirement**

The foreign language requirement is satisfied either by successfully completing a course at the 400-level or above taught in a language other than French or English or by passing a reading examination in the relevant language. Students confer with the Faculty Track Advisor to decide which option is most appropriate. This requirement must be satisfied at least 60 days before the Qualifying Examination.

- **Qualifying Examination**

See "Qualifying Examination" under Track 1.

- **Dissertation Defense**

See "Dissertation" under Degree Requirements Common to All CSLC Tracks.

- **Time to Degree**

The following timelines represent *optimal* progress toward degree:

i. *For Students Entering with a B.A.*

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and 700), FREN 500, FREN 501, FREN 503, and seven other courses.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Begin work on language requirement
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	
	Summer 2	Finish preparation for Field Exam and sample syllabus. Take Field Exam by the end of the summer.
Year 3	Semester 5	Continue course work.
	Semester 6	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty for Qualifying Exam committee.
	Summer 3	Work on dissertation prospectus and bibliography.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit dissertation prospectus and bibliography to your Qualifying Exam committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled oral exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 8	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director. Work on your dissertation in consultation with your dissertation advisor.
	Summer 4	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 5	Semester 9	Register for CSLC 794b and CSLC 794c, and CSLC 600. Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 10	

ii.   *For Students Entering with an M.A.*

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and CSLC 700), FREN 500, FREN 501, FREN 503, and seven other courses.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Prepare Field exam reading list and sample syllabus and take Field exam at the end of the summer.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty on the Qualifying Exam and the dissertation prospectus.
	Summer 2	Work on dissertation prospectus.
Year 3	Semester 5	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit dissertation prospectus and bibliography to your Qualifying Exam committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled oral exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 6	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director.
	Summer 3	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for CSLC 794b and CSLC 794c, and CSLC 600. Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 8	

D. TRACK III: National Literature and Cultures – Spanish and Latin American Studies

- **Course Requirements**

In addition to the Core Curriculum, students are required to complete ten (10) courses distributed as follows:

- SPAN 501

- nine (9) additional Spanish courses or, with permission, courses in a related field. Students specializing in the medieval and early modern periods are encouraged to take a course in the history of the Spanish language.

- **Field Examination**

    i.   *Description*

The Field Exam consists of a six-hour written examination covering key authors and texts in Spanish and Latin American literature and cinema. The list includes seven modules covering various periods of literature, and one module on cinema, on both sides of the Atlantic. The reading list is intended to provide a focus for the exam questions and is not meant to limit the subject matter on which the student may be examined. Students should expect the exam questions to cover issues and texts that range beyond the specific titles on the list. Students are also required to complete a longer list for one of the eight modules in their field of specialization.

    ii.   *Timing*

See "Timing" under Track 1.

    iii. *Evaluation*

See "Evaluation" under Track 1.

    iv.   *MA Degree*

See "MA Degree" under Track 1.

- **Foreign Language Requirements**

The foreign language requirement is satisfied either by successfully completing a course at the 400 level or above taught in a language other than Spanish or English or by passing a reading examination in the relevant language. Students confer with the Faculty Track Advisor to decide which option is most appropriate. This requirement must be satisfied at least 60 days before the Qualifying Examination.

- **Qualifying Examination**

See "Qualifying Examination" under Track 1.

- **Dissertation Defense**

See "Dissertation" under Degree Requirements Common to All CSLC Tracks.

- **Time to Degree**

The following timelines represent *optimal* progress toward degree.

    i.   *For students entering with a B.A.*

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and 700) and at least ten other courses, including SPAN 501. Complete the language requirement.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Begin preparing reading list for Field Exam.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	
	Summer 2	Finish preparation for Field Exam; take Field Exam by the end of the summer.
Year 3	Semester 5	Continue course work.
	Semester 6	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty for Qualifying Exam committee.
	Summer 3	Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit final reading list and dissertation prospectus to your examining committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled written exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 8	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director. Research. Write.
	Summer 4	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 5	Semester 9	Register for CSLC 794b and 794c, and CSLC 600. Complete your dissertation and dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 10	

ii.   For students entering with an M.A.

Year 1	Semester 1	Begin to complete CSLC Core Curriculum (excluding CSLC 600 and CSLC 700) and at least ten other courses, including SPAN 501. Complete the language requirement.
	Semester 2	
	Summer 1	Prepare Field exam reading list and take Field exam at the end of the summer.
Year 2	Semester 3	Continue course work.
	Semester 4	Complete any remaining required course work. Begin consulting with faculty on the Qualifying Exam and the dissertation prospectus.
	Summer 2	Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list.
Year 3	Semester 5	Register for GRSC 800 and CSLC 700. Submit dissertation prospectus and bibliography to your Qualifying Exam committee at least 4 weeks before scheduled oral exam. Take the Qualifying Exam.
	Semester 6	Register for CSLC 794a. Set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation director.
	Summer 3	Dissertation research and writing.
Year 4	Semester 7	Register for CSLC 794b and CSLC 794c, and CSLC 600. Complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense. Submit paperwork and dissertation to the Graduate School.
	Semester 8	

III. MAKING GOOD PROGRESS

Student progress and success reflect the combined effort of students, faculty, staff, and the university. This section provides information on access to and systems for mentoring and advising, as well as opportunities for professional development and academic expectations.

1. Mentoring

Students work closely with their Faculty Track Advisor to put together their coursework and prepare the Field Exam. Students should expect to meet with their Faculty Track Advisor at least once per semester and maintain regular email contact as they register for classes, finalize their Field Exam reading list, and prepare for the exam.

After successful completion of the Field Exam, students will identify faculty members whose expertise best corresponds to their research interests and approach them to gauge their interest in advising them in various capacities, including as potential chairs or members of their qualifying exam committee, and later of their dissertation committee. In most cases, the chair of the qualifying exam will continue on as chair of the dissertation committee, although students and/or committee chairs can make a case for substitution. PhD candidates work closely with the chair of the dissertation committee, and often with other members of the committee, as they proceed to conduct research and draft the dissertation manuscript. Candidates should expect to meet with their dissertation advisors at least once per year and remain in regular contact about their progress. Once they begin writing, students should prepare to turn in work according to a timeline agreed upon with their advisor, and can expect to receive substantive written feedback in a timely manner.

2. Administrative Structure and Academic Advising

CSLC is administered by a Director and two standing committees: the Steering Committee, made up of the CSLC Director and the chairs of the Program's three contributing departments; and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), made up of the CSLC Director and the Faculty Track Advisor for each of the Tracks. CSLC's administrative support is provided principally by the administrative staff of the Department of Comparative Literature, with additional support from the administrative staff of the two other contributing departments.

2025-2026 Steering Committee

Director, CSLC

- Sherry Velasco, svelasco@usc.edu

Chair, Department of Comparative Literature
- Olivia C. Harrison oharriso@usc.edu

Chair, Department of French and Italian
- Lydie Moudileno, moudilen@usc.edu

Chair, Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures
- Samuel Steinberg, samuelst@usc.edu

2025-2026 Academic Year Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

Faculty Track Advisor for Comparative Media and Culture:
- Jennifer Wild, jjwild@usc.edu

Faculty Track Advisor for Comparative Literature:
- Sherry Velasco, svelasco@usc.edu

Faculty Track Advisor for French and Francophone Studies:

- Edwin Hill, edwinhil@usc.edu

Faculty Track Advisor for Spanish and Latin American Studies:
- Roberto Ignacío Díaz, rdiaz@usc.edu

Administrative Staff of Contributing Departments

Comparative Literature (THH 161)
- Bertha Delgado, Business Manager
  213-740-8135
  delgado@usc.edu

- Katherine Chan Guevarra, CSLC Staff Graduate Advisor & Program Specialist
  213-821-4698
  kguevarr@usc.edu

French and Italian (THH 155)
- Frances Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant I
  213-740-4995
  ffitzger@usc.edu

Latin American and Iberian Cultures (THH 156)

- Tricia Garcia, Program Specialist
213-740-1262
triciaga@usc.edu

- Alice Marcial, Program Assistant
213-740-8296
amarcial@usc.edu

3. Professional Development

Professional development is an integral part of graduate study, and CSLC students are encouraged to make the most of various opportunities for professional development on and off campus.

The CSLC curriculum includes four professional development courses: CSLC 600, Professional Development I: Publication, and CSLC 700, Professional Development II: Writing the Prospectus (both required); and CSLC 701, Professional Development III: Writing the Doctoral Dissertation and CSLC 702, Professional Development IV: Applying for Academic Positions (strongly recommended). CSLC supports conference travel and other professional activities and students have access to other sources of support on and off campus as well (see "CSLC Research, Conference, and Summer Funding" under Funding and Financial Support). In addition, the Dornsife PhD Academy offers workshops and training sessions geared toward professional skills, including time management, leadership skills, networking strategies, navigating the academic and alt-academic job market, and other skillsets that are crucial to a successful graduate and postgraduate career.

4. CSLC Conduct Expectations

Doctoral students in CSLC are trained to eventually assume full responsibilities in a university or college academic department. Apprenticeship as a doctoral student not only occurs in discussion with advisors and in undergraduate student instruction as a teaching assistant or assistant lecturer, but also in the academic activities that extend beyond the classroom, office, or sites of individual research. As a part of this apprenticeship model, students are expected to help sustain the

intellectual life of our university community by attending lectures and colloquia sponsored by CSLC-associated departments. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in other events and affairs of the program and the university at-large to help actively contribute to the life of our academic community.

5. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity depends on our collective commitment as a university community. Reporting academic integrity issues helps reinforce academic standards and preserves the value of USC degrees. If faculty suspect academic misconduct on any work that a student submits (in final or draft form), they are required to submit a report to the Office of Academic Integrity (OAI).

Information about the university's academic integrity policies is available in the USC Student Handbook and from the Office of Academic Integrity.

Because PhD students have already earned a bachelor's degree and are enrolled in advanced academic training, they are held to a higher standard of integrity in all academic work. This standard reflects the heightened ethical expectations of advanced scholarship, the student's potential role as a mentor and instructor to others, and the impact of their conduct on the **broader research** and academic community.

OAI is responsible for investigating and adjudicating academic integrity violations. If OAI determines, by a preponderance of the evidence, that a PhD student has committed an academic integrity violation, there is a presumption that dismissal from the academic program without conferral of the degree is the appropriate outcome. This presumption applies regardless of whether the violation occurred in coursework, research, examinations, or instructional settings.

In such cases, doctoral students are not entitled to a Review Panel under the general disciplinary process. Instead, the findings and determination of responsibility will be referred directly to the student's academic program. The program will issue a decision letter that includes outcomes and any additional information relevant to the student's academic standing. No prior written warning is required to support dismissal under this policy. The program's decision will be provided to OAI for record-keeping, and a transcript notation indicating program dismissal for academic integrity reasons will be entered.

PhD students may not appeal the findings or sanctions through the general academic integrity appeal process. Instead, their sole opportunity to challenge the finding or rebut the presumption of dismissal is through the Academic Dismissal Appeal process described in the Student Handbook.

PhD students are expected to familiarize themselves with the full list of academic integrity standards and examples of violations outlined in the USC Student Handbook, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, falsification, misrepresentation, and misuse of instructional materials. Ignorance of policy or lack of intent is not a valid defense.

In cases where a student has registered for a course on a Pass/No Pass (P/NP) basis and an academic integrity violation has occurred, a penalty letter grade will be assigned when a grading option exists. A Pass or No Pass determination is only issued in these circumstances when a letter grade cannot be issued. A student may not withdraw from a course in which they committed or were accused of committing an academic integrity violation.

6. Satisfactory Progress, Academic Warning, and Dismissal

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress towards their degree. To remain in good standing students should obtain a "B" or higher in their coursework, take exams within the recommended timeframe, pursue research and professional activities suited to their course of study, participate in relevant program activities, and follow best practices in their communications with faculty, staff, and other students. If a student has a question or concern about their progress, they should consult with their faculty advisor or PhD program coordinator.

If a student fails to make satisfactory progress, the department chair, program director, or school/college dean will notify them in writing. Written letters should a) explain how the student is falling short of the satisfactory progress standard and b) include specific benchmarks describing how the student can succeed in the program within a reasonable timeframe. Warning letters are sent as early as possible so the student can take advantage of the recommended actions.

Students who do not meet the established benchmarks may be dismissed.

7. Academic Dismissal Appeal

The USC Student Handbook includes information on how to appeal a dismissal. The Graduate School Dismissal Appeal provides the final consideration of a student's dismissal from a graduate program when the dean of the relevant school has upheld the dismissal. This does not include students who have not met the conditions for continuing registration or those who have violated the Student Code of Conduct. The Graduate School will schedule the appeal once the student provides written verification of dismissal and states in writing that they want to proceed with the appeal within 30 days of the dismissal. For more information, please visit the Graduate School website.

IV. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Unit Requirement

The minimum number of units for a doctoral degree is 60, including at least four units of 794ab Doctoral Dissertation. At least 24 units must be completed at USC (excluding Doctoral Dissertation 794).

2. Enrollment Status

To be considered full-time, a doctoral student must be enrolled in at least six units of 500-level and above coursework each semester. Most students enroll in 12 units to make timely progress toward their degree; 16 units constitute the maximum load. Students wishing to carry more than 16 units must have prior permission from the degree-conferring unit; such permission will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

There are two exceptions to this six-unit requirement:

1. A student who has completed all coursework for the doctoral degree will be considered full-time during the semester in which the student is preparing for the doctoral qualifying examination, provided the *Appointment or Change of Qualifying Exam or Dissertation Committee* form has been completed and submitted to the program and the student is enrolled in GRSC 800abz, Studies for the Qualifying Examination.

2. Doctoral students who have been advanced to candidacy, that is, who have completed all coursework and have passed the qualifying examination, will be considered full-time when enrolled in 794 Doctoral Dissertation.

3. Enrollment Information for F-1 and J-1 International Students

F-1 and J-1 international students on student visas who are not enrolled in either GRSC 800abz or 794 must be enrolled in at least six units or receive authorization from the Office of International Services to enroll in fewer than the minimum units. International student with questions about their registration should consult the Office of International Services.

Immigration regulations require F-1 and J-1 student's physical attendance for classes during each fall and spring semester of their program. If the summer term is the student's first or last semester at USC, then physical attendance for classes is also required.

No more than one online class (up to 3 units) per semester can be counted towards the full course of study for an F-1 or J-1 student. If you only need to be registered in one course to complete your degree program during your final term, it must be in-person.

4. 794ab Doctoral Dissertation

794ab Doctoral Dissertation confers full-time enrollment status on students who have been admitted to candidacy. Students are expected to be enrolled in 2 units of 794 each semester, except summer sessions, for a minimum of two semesters, until all degree requirements are completed.

Students are expected to complete and defend their dissertation in less than five semesters of 794. No more than eight units of 794 will be applied toward the PhD degree.

5. Concurrent Enrollment

If a student is simultaneously enrolled elsewhere, they may not transfer credits to USC without advance permission from the dean of the school that hosts the USC degree program. Failure to obtain permission will invalidate coursework taken during periods of unauthorized concurrent enrollment.

6. Transfer of Credit

The Degree Progress Department in the Office of Academic Records and Registrar

determines whether coursework taken elsewhere is available for transfer credit. The faculty of the student's degree program determines whether such credit is applicable toward a specific graduate degree, subject to approval by the dean of the degree-conferring unit. The faculty will decide by the end of the second year.

7. Continuous Enrollment

Students are considered to be pursuing advanced degrees only when formally enrolled. PhD students must be enrolled at USC for fall and spring semesters each year until all degree requirements have been satisfactorily completed within the time limit.

Summer enrollment is optional for CSLC students. Students should consult with their Faculty Track Advisor to ensure summer enrollment would benefit them.

Enrollment in graduate-level course work is necessary to meet the continuous enrollment requirement. Graduate students who fail to register are no longer considered to be enrolled in a graduate degree program. After an unauthorized absence, formal readmission is required. Students who have been granted an official leave of absence do not need to apply for readmission following the approved leave. However, students who fail to return at the conclusion of any form of leave without obtaining an approved extension violate the continuous enrollment policy.

A doctoral candidate who has passed the qualifying examination must enroll each fall and spring semester in 794 Doctoral Dissertation until the dissertation has been approved. Students are expected to complete and defend their dissertation in less than five semesters.

Some courses with no academic credit, including 794z, require payment of tuition.

8. Grade Point Average Requirement

At no time should the overall GPA drop below 3.0. A minimum grade of C (2.0) is required in a course to receive graduate credit. Work graded C- or below is unacceptable for subject or unit credit toward any doctoral program.

9. Pass/No Pass Coursework

Graduate students may elect to enroll in courses on a pass/no pass basis with department or program approval. However, coursework taken on a pass/no pass basis cannot be applied toward a graduate degree. Students should consult their academic advisors before enrolling in any course on a pass/no pass basis.

10. Incompletes

An incomplete (IN) is assigned when work is not completed because of a documented illness or another emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester (or 12th week equivalent for any course scheduled for less than 15 weeks).

If a student receives an incomplete, the instructor will fill out the *Assignment of an Incomplete* (IN) and *Requirements for Completion* form, which will specify the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date and the weight to be assigned to the work remaining to be done when computing the final grade.

One calendar year is allowed to complete an IN. If the IN is not completed within the designated time, the course is considered "lapsed," the grade is changed to an "IX" and will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 points. Courses offered on a Credit/No Credit basis or taken on a Pass/No Pass basis for which a mark of Incomplete is assigned will be lapsed with a mark of NC or NP and will not be calculated into the grade point average.

Completing the IN within the one-year period should be the student's highest priority. A student may petition the Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP) for an extension of time for the completion of an IN. Extensions beyond the specified time limit are rarely approved if the student has enrolled in subsequent semesters.

In all cases, a petition for an extension of time to complete an IN must have departmental approval and include a statement from the instructor explaining what is needed to complete the course and why the instructor believes the student should be given additional time for completion.

11. Audited Courses

Students who wish to audit a course at USC must register for the course on Web Registration and select the Audit grade option. Audited courses will not receive

credit and will not appear on the USC transcript or grade report. However, tuition is charged, and students should check with their school or program to determine if auditing courses is an option. As noted in the USC Student Handbook, attending a course without being officially registered in it is prohibited.

USC Dornsife does not credit student accounts for audited courses.

12. Time Limit for Degree Completion

Progress is measured from the beginning of the first course at USC applied toward a specified degree, and all requirements for that degree must be completed within a specified time. The university's time limit for completing the doctoral degree is eight years. For students who earned an applicable master's degree within the five years before admission to the doctoral program, the time limit for completing the doctoral degree is six years from the date of admission to the doctoral program. Approved leaves of absence (up to two years or four semesters) are not counted in the time allowed to complete degree requirements.

Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances. If granted an extension, the Dornsife Dean of Graduate and Professional Programs will allow registration for the specified extension period.

13. Leaves of Absence, Sick Days, and Bereavement

Students in good standing and making satisfactory progress toward a degree who must interrupt studies for compelling reasons may petition for a leave for a stated period, usually one semester. A leave must be requested before the drop-add deadline and approved by the dean of the degree program, the committee chair, and the department chair or program director. The request should include a plan for academic progress upon return. During the leave period, a student is not entitled to assistance from the faculty or use of university facilities.

If granted, the leave is recorded on the student's transcript, and the leave period is not counted in the time allowed to complete degree requirements. A leave of absence may be allowed for one semester at a time, up to a maximum of four semesters. Students who fail to apply for a leave of absence or for whom a leave has been denied (or has expired) are subject to policies governing continuous enrollment and readmission.

International students should consult with the Office of International Services

before considering a leave of absence.

14. Parental Leave for PhD Students

PhD students are eligible for a one-semester paid parental leave if they:

- Are pregnant or are the primary caregiver of their newborn child or adopted child under six years of age
- Have completed at least one semester in the PhD program and are making good progress
- Were admitted with a Multi-Year Funding Offer (MYFO) letter that includes a four or five-year "package" consisting of support through any combination of teaching assistantship, research assistantship, and fellowship.
- F-1 and J-1 international students must additionally qualify for a medical reduced course load (RCL) if they plan to remain in the U.S. while taking parental leave

Parental leave may be taken during the semester in which the child is born or adopted, or in the semester immediately following. A student on an approved parental leave will receive tuition, fees, and a stipend. The Graduate School provides the base stipend. Schools and programs provide the tuition, fees, and a top-off the base stipend to the level specified in the student's Multi-Year Funding Offer letter.

Students should enroll in GRSC 804 to ensure continued access to health insurance and the monthly stipend. While on parental leave, students are not eligible for federal financial aid. Students with loans should consult with the Office of Financial Aid before beginning parental leave. F-1 and J-1 international students should consult with the Office of International Services to discuss parental leave and ensure there are no unforeseen issues related to their visa status.

Students interested in taking parental leave should consult with the staff graduate advisor in their department or program. The program will submit a petition to the Graduate School and will be asked to provide a copy of the initial funding letter, a statement as the primary caregiver, and one of the following:

- Verification of pregnancy signed by a US doctor (available at USC Student Health Center), or
- Birth certificate for the infant child, or
- Statement of adoption from an adoption agency

15. Health Leaves for PhD Students

Health Leaves are administered by USC Campus Support and Intervention (CSI) in consultation with the student's program and the Graduate School, pursuant to the university's Student Health Leave of Absence Policy.

PhD students interested in a health leave should meet with a CSI health leave coordinator to develop an individualized health and academic plan. These plans are developed through an interactive process involving the Health Leave Coordinator, the student, the academic unit, and the Graduate School.

F-1 and J-1 international students are eligible to request a health leave. They must meet with an advisor in the Office of International Services (OIS) before finalizing plans for the health leave. Students can either return to their home country or, if a doctor recommends, remain in the U.S. for medical treatment. The student should request the health leave through a CSI health leave coordinator, who works with the student, their healthcare provider, and the Office of International Services (OIS) to determine the necessary steps to approve the leave request.

A paid health leave, including tuition, fees, and at least the minimum stipend, is available for one semester. A second semester covering tuition and fees may be available if necessary. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs must review and approve additional health leaves beyond two semesters.

16. Sick Days and Bereavement Leave

PhD students may use up to five days of sick leave per Academic Year due to illness or to care for a family member. Students may also have up to five days of bereavement leave per Academic Year for the loss of a family member.

Student should contact the CSLC Director for more information.

17. Readmission

A PhD student who leaves the university without obtaining a formal leave of absence, or otherwise violates the continuous enrollment policy, is not automatically readmitted. A student wishing to apply for readmission to a graduate degree program must first obtain the recommendation of the department chair or program director and submit an Application for Readmission to the dean of the

degree program.

If the student's cumulative GPA is below 3.0 or if readmission is sought after more than two years of an unapproved absence, the Application for Readmission must be sent to the Graduate School for approval.

The readmission approval process must be completed by the first day of classes for the term in which the resumption of graduate studies is sought. Approvals to be readmitted are based on the academic merits of the student's request and the likelihood of academic success and completion of the degree. If readmitted, the student will be subject to all of the current University Catalogue requirements for the degree in effect at the time of readmission. Individual exceptions to the Catalogue year require the approval of the dean of the degree program. Students seeking readmission after an absence of more than 10 years may be required to reapply to the university.

A student may not be readmitted into a terminated program of study. The student must either be subject to retroactive enrollment or admission to the new program of study with the corresponding catalog requirements.

V. FUNDING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT
PhD students at USC benefit from fellowships, assistantships, and scholarships administered by the Graduate School and various academic units.

1. Academic Year Support

Upon admittance to the CSLC PhD Program, students receive five-years of financial support (full tuition remission and stipend, at a rate annually set by the University, with health insurance fees). Provided a student remains enrolled full-time, maintains good academic standing, and makes timely progress toward the degree, support will remain uninterrupted.

The most common forms of support are departmental, Dornsife (the College), and Graduate School fellowships; teaching assistantships (in large lecture classes), assistant lectureships in programs such as beginning language instruction, Freshman Writing, or Thematic Option, USC's undergraduate honors program, and research assistantships. The Director of CSLC, in consultation with department Chairs and Directors of various program, decides each spring on the distribution of

graduate assignments for the following year. Every effort is made to ensure that each CSLC student receives both varied apprentice teaching experience during their five years of study, and has the opportunity for fellowships or research assistantships, which carry no teaching obligations. However, the primary responsibility of the Steering Committee is to guarantee support to all students who continue in good standing. This does not always allow for the arrangement of students' ideal assignment nor the ability to offer each student fellowships annually.

Factors determining appointment and reappointment include, but are not limited to, available teaching assistantships, departmental need, student's successful performance of teaching duties, and satisfactory academic progress.

Support beyond the 5th year is not guaranteed and will depend on numerous factors including standing in the program and progress to completion of the degree.

The sections below further describe the types of support that are typical at USC, including funding, tuition, and other benefits.

2. Fellowships

Fellowships provide financial support to PhD students pursuing their degrees. A fellowship is equivalent to a 50% appointment as a Graduate Assistant and includes tuition, fees, and a stipend at or exceeding the university's minimum rate.

PhD students with a fellowship are expected to commit 20 hours per week to their research. PhD students receiving fellowships may not undertake employment or other time-consuming commitments during the academic year from mid-August through mid-May. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs will review exceptions to this policy through the Graduate School's Petition system. Students on fellowships may not receive funding as Graduate Assistants simultaneously.

Beyond the five-year fellowship package, are a few competitive opportunities for dissertation fellowships at USC, such as the Albert and Elaine Borchard Foundation Dissertation Travel Fellowship (for students whose project requires them to conduct research in Europe) and the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute Ph.D. Fellowship.

3. Graduate Assistant (GA)

GA is an overarching term used to describe Teaching Assistants (TA), Research Assistants (RA), and Graduate Assistant Lecturers (AL). GA appointments include

tuition, fees, and a stipend at or exceeding the university's minimum rate. A 50% GA appointment requires an average of 20 hours per week, which is considered "full-time" for a graduate student, as the remaining 20 hours per week should be dedicated to coursework and scholarship leading to the degree. A 33% GA appointment requires an average of 13 hours per week, while a 25% appointment requires an average of 10 hours per week.

GA appointments are confirmed through an official offer letter generated via the university's TARA system or the Dornsife Student Database. The offer letter should be sent to the student at the beginning of the academic year or the start of a semester. These letters must use the standard Graduate School-approved template and detail the length of the appointment, the time commitment, the department's expectations, and benefits. Ideally, the offer letter should include the total stipend the student will receive, including top-offs. The student should sign the letter, which will be shared with the appropriate financial staff and archived by the department or program.

The university requires TAs, RAs, and ALs to be enrolled in a minimum of 6 units every semester or in equivalent full-time courses such as GRSC 800abz or Dissertation 794.

4. **External Fellowships**

PhD students are encouraged to seek external fellowships and support that foster intellectual independence and enhance a student's record. Examples relevant to CSLC include the Josephine de Kármán fellowship, ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) or the Mellon Foundation for the Humanities. The USC Graduate School provides a variety of resources to support PhD students seeking funding, including information sessions, boot camps, and proposal review workshops. Students who receive one of several designated national awards may be eligible for stipend top-offs from the Graduate School.

PhD students applying for external fellowships that are "institutionally limited," meaning that there is a limit placed on the number of students who can apply, or whose applications require the approval of a university official, should contact the Graduate School well in advance of any deadlines.

5. **Tuition Benefits**

A 50% TA, RA, or AL appointment and a fellowship include tuition remission up to 12 units per semester and six units of tuition remission for the summer following

the fellowship.

A 33% TA, RA, or AL appointment includes tuition remission up to 10 units per semester of the appointment and five units of tuition remission for the summer following the assignment.

A 25% TA, RA, or AL appointment includes tuition remission up to 8 units per semester of the appointment and four units of tuition remission for the summer following the assignment.

TAs, RAs, and ALs who wish to use tuition units for coursework outside their home program must obtain written approval from their faculty advisor, program director, and the dean of the school. If students do not have prior authorization, they may be responsible for covering the cost of these units. The tuition allowance is non-transferable from semester to semester and will be applied to the student's account in the amount appropriate for the courses they take.

Students should contact their staff graduate advisor if tuition is not appropriately credited to their account.

6. Tuition Refund Insurance

Web Registration automatically elects all enrolled students into Tuition Refund Insurance. Students should opt out of Tuition Refund Insurance when their tuition is being covered as part of an assistantship or fellowship. If a student has already accepted Tuition Refund Insurance but would like to decline it, they can do so here.

7. Stipend Distribution

The first stipend of the academic year will generally be available in August. To receive the stipend, students must be registered for classes well in advance of the start of the fall semester. Students are encouraged to work closely with the staff in their programs to ensure their stipend is processed appropriately.

Students switching from Graduate Assistant appointments to a fellowship or vice versa should be aware that the stipend schedules and distributions are different. However, they should still receive the university's mandatory stipend for the academic year.

Stipends are processed through Payroll. Students are highly encouraged to sign up for direct deposit through Workday. Instructions on how to sign up for direct deposit can be found here. Students who do not sign up for direct deposit will have their stipends mailed to the current address listed in myUSC. International students must also have an up-to-date Glacier account to receive their fellowship stipend.

Stipends are not processed on the same day every month. Students on fellowship should expect the stipend early in the month, while students receiving stipends for GA appointments will receive the stipend towards the end of the month.
Stipends are not considered late until after the 26th of the month.

8. **CSLC Research, Conference, and Summer Funding**

CSLC encourages students to advance in their program during the summer months. The program seeks to support activities such as, but not limited to, participation in international conferences, workshops, language study, and archival research. If, and when, funds are available, the Graduate Studies Committee considers requests for small grants and summer support. There are normally calls for applications each fall (for conferences or research to be conducted during the academic year) and spring (for summer conferences, research, or stipends). Calls for proposals are circulated several weeks before application deadlines.

The CSLC Director and Graduate Committee will distribute funds on a case-by-case basis. Funding is determined by factors including, but not limited to, progress to degree, justification for the funds, and their anticipated contribution to students' overall professional development.

Travel and professional development grants may also be available through USC's Graduate Student Government.

9. Additional Information on Summer Support
During the summer semester (mid-May through mid-August), students receiving support as Graduate Assistants (RA, TA, and ALs) with a 50% appointment and PhD students with fellowships may work additional hours beyond the 20-hour maximum, up to an average of 40 hours per week in other on-campus or off-campus roles.

Students who have received offers of full-time employment off-campus during the summer semester may not simultaneously hold positions as Graduate Assistants or PhD Fellows.

Students who wish to decline summer support from USC in favor of full-time off-campus employment or internships will be asked to confirm their decision in writing. This information will be archived in the student's Advise USC file.
International students should review the Office of International Services website

for information about <u>Curricular Practical Training</u>.

Students who serve as TAs, RAs, and ALs during the summer receive a stipend and tuition remission proportional to the appointment. The health center fee will also be provided, and the student will have access from the first day of the appointment until the end of the summer. (The spring coverage period for the USC student health insurance includes January through the end of the summer as well.)

Students who are invited to campus for any other sponsored academic purpose, such as a professional development institute, receive access to the student health center from the first day of the academic event until the end of the summer.

10. Mandatory Fees, Health, and Dental Insurance

Graduate Assistant appointments and fellowships include tuition, a stipend at the university's minimum rate or higher, health and dental insurance, access to the student health center, the Student Programming Fee, Norman H. Topping Student Aid Fund Fee, and the Transportation Fee.

Students who will not be in Los Angeles for the fall and/or spring semester should contact the health insurance office to see if they need to register for satellite health insurance. Students can visit the <u>Student Health website</u> for more information about student health insurance.

11. Parking and Transit Benefits

PhD students may participate in USC's Student U-Pass program. USC offers PhD students a limited number of permits for 2 or 3 days a week (partial week permits). These passes are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Permits are subject to availability at either UPC (150 campus permits total) - Shrine, Figueroa, and Grand, or HSC (50 campus permits total) - Valley and Lot 71

12. Other Types of Support

Schools and programs may offer scholarships and awards in addition to the GA appointment or fellowship. Scholarships are distinct from fellowships, as they do not include tuition or fees, and the dollar amount does not need to meet the university's minimum stipend requirement. Scholarships are often merit-based and do not require students to be engaged in research or teaching-related activities. Schools and programs may also provide stipend top-offs to PhDs to supplement the university's minimum stipend or a stipend received from an external funder.

General Awards are credited to students' accounts after all other awards (such as tuition) have been processed. If this creates a credit balance, the excess funds will be automatically sent to the student's bank account, provided they have set up eRefund information in their student account and have no recent checks pending, no ACH payments in process, and no active payment plans. If students have not set up eRefund information, the credit will remain in their account to cover future charges while they remain enrolled. If students do not enroll in the following fall or spring term, once the settlement deadline passes, the university will contact them to verify their mailing address and send a physical check for any remaining balance.

PhD students may occasionally be hired as hourly Graduate Student Workers. The duties of Graduate Assistants (TA, RA, and AL) should be distinct from activities performed by hourly graduate student workers.

13. Collective Bargaining Agreement

Graduate students at USC are represented by the Graduate Student Workers Organizing Committee-UAW Local 872. All graduate students enrolled at USC who are employed as Teaching Assistants, Assistant Lecturers, Research Assistants, or internally-funded Fellows in STEM programs are considered part of the union. The Collective Bargaining Agreement is available on the Graduate School website.

VI. GA APPOINTMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Eligibility

To be eligible to serve as a Teaching Assistant (TA), Research Assistant (RA), or Graduate Assistant Lecturer (AL), students must:

- have been admitted to a graduate degree program with regular graduate standing
- be enrolled full-time
- be in good academic standing with a GPA of no lower than 3.0
- be verified by their home program to be making satisfactory academic progress toward the degree
- have met the university's standards for proficiency in the English language

The university requires TAs, RAs, and ALs to be enrolled in a minimum of 6 units every semester or in full-time equivalent courses such as GRSC 800abz or Dissertation 794.

2. **Types of GA Appointments**

   A. **Research Assistant**

RAs are responsible for the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the research on which they are contributing. The quality of the research reflects on the student, the faculty supervisor, and the university. Deliberate falsification of research results may result in dismissal from the university. RAs must maintain the confidentiality of the faculty mentor's professional activities and research before presentation or publication, in accordance with existing practices and policies in the area of research activity. In the publication and presentation of research produced as an RA, the student must acknowledge the contributions of the faculty supervisor and other members of the research team. RAs should assume responsibility for making proper use of the intellectual, instructional, and physical environment in which they are conducting research. The nature of some research projects may require that the RA be available during holiday periods or semester breaks. Students and their faculty supervisors should discuss expectations and time off before the appointment is accepted.

   B. **Teaching Assistant**

The responsibilities of TAs are carried out under the established supervision of the departmental faculty. The duties of TAs may include the following: reading course texts and materials, assisting during lectures, leading discussion sections or lab meetings, holding office hours each week, responding to student concerns, grading course assignments and exams, leading and monitoring lab exercises, participating in regular meetings with supervising faculty and other TAs, designing and leading review sessions, serving as a liaison between the instructor and students, upholding the university's policy on academic integrity, and assisting with the management of the course details. The Center for Excellence in Teaching is a good resource for support and information.

As with faculty at USC, TAs are evaluated by their students. TAs should review evaluations at the end of each semester, after grades have been submitted. TAs are encouraged to keep a record of student feedback for their teaching portfolio.

USC Dornsife requires that all students entering their first semester of teaching assistantship complete the Teaching Assistant Orientation before the start of the Fall semester and enroll in the 500-level teaching practicum course. Additional information is provided by the Staff Graduate Advisor and the assigned

department.

C. Graduate Assistant Lecturer

ALs teach in the Freshman Writing Program, language programs in the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, the American Language Institute (ALI), and other programs approved by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Assistant lecturers may serve as instructors of record.

ALs assigned to these programs may have training and a pedagogy course as a part of their responsibilities in addition to teaching.

3. Expected Effort

A graduate student's first responsibility is to their doctoral research and studies. For this reason, GA awards cannot exceed 20 hours per week for a 50% appointment or 10 hours per week for a 25% appointment, averaged over a semester. Students receiving a 50% GA appointment may not undertake employment or other time-consuming commitments during the academic year from mid-August through mid-May. Students receiving a 25% GA appointment during the academic year may be eligible for part-time, off-campus employment. F-1 and J-1 International students with a 25% GA appointment may be eligible for part-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT), if they meet the CPT eligibility requirements, and if academic department signs off on the CPT request. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs reviews exceptions to this policy through the Graduate School's Petition system.

4. Appointment Periods

Semester	Approximate Start Date	Approximate End Date
Fall	August 16	December 31
Spring	January 1	May 15
Summer	May 16	August 15

5. Financial Support

All TA, RA, and AL appointments include tuition units, health insurance, access to the student health center, and a stipend. Each year, the Provost sets the base stipend for TAs, RAs, and ALs. Schools, programs, and PIs may offer appointments

with higher amounts.

6. Tuition Remission

The tuition allowance is non-transferable from semester to semester and will be applied to the student's account in the amount appropriate for the courses s/he takes. Students should contact the program of appointment if the tuition is not credited to their account.

- A 50% TA, RA, or AL appointment includes tuition remission up to 12 units per semester of the appointment and six units of tuition remission for the summer following the assignment.
- A 33% TA, RA, or AL appointment includes tuition remission up to 10 units per semester of the appointment and five units of tuition remission for the summer following the assignment.
- A 25% TA, RA, or AL appointment includes tuition remission up to 8 units per semester of the appointment and four units of tuition remission for the summer following the assignment.

7. Payroll Set Up and Direct Deposit
Domestic students should make an [appointment with the USC Dornsife Welcome Center](#) and present [I-9 documents](#) at that time to complete the Workday Onboarding steps.

In addition to the steps above, International students should prepare to update their [Glacier Information](#). The USC Dornsife Welcome Center should be able to assist with this process.

8. GA-related Warning and Dismissal
PhD students serving as a GA may be disciplined, suspended or discharged for absenteeism; lateness; failure to adhere to stated course or research deadlines; failure to aid in the preparation of course or research materials; failure to hold sections, labs, or office hours; failure to grade, failure to perform assigned lab duties, willful abandonment of teaching or research assignments; failure to comply with applicable policies. Students and their faculty supervisors should discuss expectations and time off before the appointment is accepted. Discipline will only be for just cause and each case will be taken very seriously, recognizing that the Collective Bargaining Unit also may need to be involved.

When possible, a conference meeting will be held with the student and their supervisor before a suspension or discharge. The student may request to have Union representation present at the conference meeting. The University will notify the student and the Union in writing of the issuance of discipline or any investigative leave.

VII. TAX INFORMATION

1. Taxable Income and Withholding

General tax information for PhD students is available on the Student Financial Services website. USC staff cannot provide tax advice. We strongly advise students to contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or consult with a tax professional for tax-related questions.

2. International Student Considerations

International students may wish to consult the Office of International Services (OIS) website, which offers general information about tax exemptions, tax-related forms, and access to Sprintax, a tax preparation software. OIS cannot advise on tax-related issues. Students should consult with a qualified tax professional for individual assistance.

3. Graduate Students Supported by Fellowships

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides information regarding the tax treatment of fellowship awards. The IRS also provides information regarding the 1098-T form. Some education-related items that are included in your fellowship may not be taxable, for example, tuition remission. Other items, such as living expenses including room and board, transportation, and entertainment, are generally considered taxable.

While receiving a fellowship, domestic students will not receive a W-2 form. However, according to the IRS, you must report all taxable amounts, whether or not you received a Form W-2. If you have taxable income from your fellowship, you may need to make estimated tax payments. For more information, see Pub. 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax, and the IRS help on estimated taxes. International students (non-resident aliens for tax purposes) on fellowship receive their stipends through University Payroll Services. The stipend may be treated as taxable income by the IRS. Therefore, the university may be obligated to withhold income taxes. The amount of this tax withholding depends on the individual's

circumstances, including their total stipend and the status of the tax treaty between their home country and the United States. Tuition remission provided to an international student on fellowship is not taxable.

4. Graduate Students Supported by Graduate Assistantships

The stipends provided via the University Payroll Services to domestic and international students who are serving as TA's, RA's, and AL's are treated as taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service. Therefore, the university may be obligated to report the income and withhold income taxes. The amount of this tax withholding depends on the individual circumstances of the student, including the total stipend, the instructions provided by the student on Form W-4, and, if an international student, the status of the tax treaty between their home country and the United States, as well as Form 8233. Tuition remission provided to a TA, RA, or AL is not reportable or taxable.

5. Students Hired as Graduate Student Workers (Hourly)

The payment that domestic and international students receive as hourly graduate student workers is treated as taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service. The amount of this tax withholding depends upon the individual circumstances of the student, including the total amount paid per pay period, the instructions provided by the student on Form W-4, and, if an international student, the status of the tax treaty of their tax residence country and the completion of IRS Form 8233.

VIII. HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH CENTER ACCESS

The Engemann Student Health Center website provides information about the USC health insurance, on-campus medical services, student counseling services, and wellness. Students can also make appointments through the website. The Engemann Student Health Center is used primarily by students based at UPC.

The Eric Cohen Student Health Center website provides information about the USC health insurance, on-campus medical services, student counseling services, and wellness. Students can also make appointments through the website. The Eric Cohen Student Health Center is used primarily by students based at HSC.

IX. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

1. **Holidays**

PhD students with graduate assistantship (GA) appointments will observe the academic holiday schedule. If a student serving as a GA is unable to observe a holiday due to the obligations of their appointment, they will be provided with an alternative day off instead of the missed holiday during the same semester, with the advance agreement of their designated faculty supervisor and, as needed, the Director of Graduate Studies.

X. RESOURCES, SUPPORT, AND PROBLEM RESOLUTION

1. **Child Care Fund**

A childcare subsidy of up to $1,800 is available per semester for each child under the age of six. The subsidy is considered taxable income and is subject to reporting on the appropriate forms. The student is solely responsible and liable for any tax liability resulting from the subsidy provided to the student or their dependent.

If a student has a loan, particularly Direct Loans, the Child Care grants could reduce the student's loan eligibility. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office to confirm.

International students should note the following:

- To remain eligible for this grant, students must maintain valid F-1 or J-1 status, and their dependents must maintain F-2 or J-2 status.
- This grant cannot be used as proof of funding for bringing dependents (spouse and/or children) to the U.S. under F-2 or J-2 status. Information regarding proof of funding for dependents is available on the Office of International Services website.
- J-1 students who receive this grant must request a new DS-2019 with updated funding information by submitting a Financial Update Request through the [Trojan International Portal](Trojan%20International%20Portal). Once processed, a new DS-2019 will be issued.
- Students in F-1 status on post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) or STEM OPT Extension, as well as J-1 students on post-completion Academic Training, are not eligible to apply for or receive this grant.

2. **Child Care Fund Eligibility Criteria**

The student must be a graduate student worker in the union bargaining unit in the

semester in which the provider expense was incurred. Applicants must furnish supporting documentation as reasonably requested by USC. Eligible childcare providers include:

- A licensed childcare center
- A licensed family childcare provider
- A licensed after-school program
- A daytime summer camp program
- An in-home provider with a Social Security or Tax I.D. number. An in-home provider cannot be a spouse, relative, child under age 19, or anyone who lives in the same household as the student. Nannies and nanny shares are covered if the caregiver has a valid Social Security number or Tax ID Number.

Funds are not available for overnight camp, team registration fees, extracurricular activities, or club sports. The program's primary intent must be to provide childcare while the parent is working. Summer programs can be considered a childcare program if they meet the requirements above.

Applications are processed in the order received. Applications will not be accepted or processed when funds for the academic year have been exhausted. More information is available on the [Graduate School Website](#).

3. **Short Term Hardship Grant**
Short-term hardship grants are available to students with dependents. Grants are subject to a cap of $2,500 per graduate student worker per semester. Grants may not be used for expenses that are covered by another fund or account. The grant is taxable income and is therefore subject to taxation and reporting on the appropriate forms. The student is solely responsible and liable for any tax liability resulting from the grant.

4. **Short Term Hardship Eligibility**
The student must be a graduate student worker in the bargaining unit in the semester in which the provider expense was incurred. The student must have a dependent, and they must furnish supporting documentation as reasonably requested by USC.

Hardships may include, but are not limited to, events resulting from a sudden or

unexpected illness, imminent loss of housing, loss of property due to natural disaster, or medical, dental, and vision expenditures not covered by any other source.

If the dependent is covered by a health insurance plan, unanticipated emergency or short-term out-of-pocket expenses are not covered by the insurance plan. If the dependent is not covered by a health insurance plan, unanticipated emergency or short-term out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred by the Graduate Student Worker.

Applications are processed in the order received. Applications will not be accepted or processed when funds for the academic year have been exhausted. More information is available on the [Graduate School Website](#).

5. **Resources for International Students**

The Office of International Services (OIS) supports F-1 and J-1 international students, helping them maintain immigration status, navigate complex immigration regulations, and succeed academically and personally. Key services include immigration advising, travel advising, and guidance on employment rules, such as on-campus work, CPT, and OPT.

With expertise in F-1 & J-1 immigration regulations, OIS advisors collaborate with government agencies and university departments to ensure students comply with their visa requirements while at USC.
For more information, please visit the OIS website at ois.usc.edu.

OIS advisors are available for [one-on-one meetings](#) daily via Zoom - no appointment is necessary :

- Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays: 1 PM-3 PM
- Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10 AM-12 PM
- J-1 advisors are available Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays

6. **Lactation Support**

PhD students have access to spaces for expressing and storing breast milk. Rooms on the UPC and HSC campus are listed [here](#).

7. American Language Institute

Many international students are from countries where English is not spoken as a native language. The American Language Institute (ALI) provides classes and other resources to assist international undergraduate and graduate students in improving their English and adapting to an American university program. Before they can be cleared to begin teaching at USC, all international Teaching Assistants are required to take part in a training program run by ALI.

8. Center for Excellence in Teaching

The Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) is the university's think tank for innovative teaching. As a faculty-led initiative, CET draws upon the talents of experienced faculty to promote a commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship. CET provides training and resources to improve teaching at USC, including supporting faculty and Teaching Assistants as they devise new courses and develop enriching out-of-class activities. CET offers seminars and lectures throughout the semester on a variety of topics and provides a training session at the beginning of each semester for Teaching Assistants.

9. Library Resources

Accessibility Training for Teaching Assistants at USC

Organized and developed by a collaboration between the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), Graduate Student Government (GSG), and USC Libraries as a resource for accessibility training for teaching assistants.

10. Accommodations

The University provides reasonable accommodations to PhD students who are disabled or become disabled and need reasonable accommodations to perform the essential functions of their job. More information is available from USC's Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).

11. Graduate Student Government

The mission of GSG is to enhance the graduate and professional student experience by serving as the face of the student body. GSG is responsible for managing student resources efficiently, providing a voice for the student community, building a community that fosters interdisciplinary exchanges, and informing students about their rights, resources, and opportunities. Elected

officers, senators who represent all schools and departments, and special interest committees tackle issues specific to graduate and professional students and provide venues for interaction beyond the academic realm. An Executive Board of 29 officers is selected every spring by the GSG senators and outgoing executive board members. The Executive Board oversees the daily operations of GSG and works closely with the Senate to promote graduate and professional student interests within the USC administration and academic departments.

More information is available from the [Graduate Student Government](#) website.

12. Other Support
Campus Support and Intervention (CSI)
CSI connects with members of the USC community when they need support in achieving their academic, professional, and personal goals.
(213) 740-0411
uscsupport@usc.edu

USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity
KCLC offers outreach, programming, and individual coaching services to USC students and departments to promote a campus-wide understanding of learning differences and their potential to facilitate creativity and academic excellence.
(213) 740-7884
kortschakcenter@usc.edu

Office of the Ombuds
Available to faculty, staff, and students experiencing University-related concerns, conflicts, or challenging situations.
(213) 821-9556 (University Park Campus)
upcombuds@usc.edu
(323) 442-0341 (Health Sciences Campus)
hscombuds@usc.edu

Counseling and Mental Health
Provides counseling and support for all students.
(213) 740-9355 (WELL)

Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)
Provides support services for individuals with disabilities.

(213) 740-0776 (University Park Campus)
(323) 442-1000 (Health Sciences Campus)
osasfrontdesk@usc.edu

XI. POST-GRADUATION

1. Accessing Your Dissertation

The dissertation manuscript will be available for search and download from the USC Digital Library shortly after completing all of the steps in the Thesis Center, or after any requested restriction expires.

2. Official Transcripts and Diploma

The Registrar's Office oversees the distribution of university diplomas and transcripts, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Most diplomas are mailed to the permanent address on record six to eight weeks after a degree is conferred. More information is available on their website.

Appendices

I. Administrative Routing

Department of Comparative Literature
Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture Doctoral Program

Work Routing

- Budget matters
    - Balances..Bertha
    - Graduate awards...Bertha
    - Travel..Katherine
    - eMarket/PO..Katherine
    - Speakers...Katherine
    - Reimbursements...Bertha/Katherine
- Commencement... Katherine
- Course scheduling
    - Academic year scheduling ....Bertha
    - Changing classes/adding/deleting..Katherine
    - Permanent classroom change...Katherine
- Curricular issues... Bertha/Katherine
- Event coordination, including announcement/FWD distribution...................Katherine
- Grades..Katherine
- Social Media/Website... ....Katherine
- Photocopies..Student Office Assistants
- Room reservation for unscheduled meetings (review sessions, etc.)............Katherine
    (*provide date, start/end time, capacity, building preference*)
- THH 160 Library reservations ....Katherine/Bertha
- Technical support..DTS (x02775)
- Textbooks/desk copies ....Bookstore/Katherine
- Graduate advising
    - Awards... Bertha

    - Classes, d-clearance, exam scheduling, committee............ Katherine/Bertha

Mailing Address:
Department of Comparative Literature
3501 Trousdale Pkwy
THH 161, MC 0353
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0353
Main Phone: 213-740-0102

Bertha Arce
Department Business Administrator
delgado@usc.edu
213-740-8135

Katherine Chan Guevarra
Program Specialist
kguevarr@usc.edu
213-821-4698

II.   University Support System

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 - 24/7 on call
http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours - 24/7 on call
https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX – (213) 740-5086
https://eeotix.usc.edu/
In summer 2020, the Office of Equity and Diversity and Title IX combined resources to enable centralize reporting, investigation and resolution procedures to EEO-TIX. Direct reports of any instances of harassment or discrimination based on certain protected characteristic to this office.

Office of Professionalism and Ethics - (213) 740-5755
https://report.usc.edu
A centralized resource that reviews and investigates incidents concerning a broad range of issues, from safety and security issues (non-emergency), harassment and/or discrimination in the workplace, code of conduct and compliance breaches, theft and/or fraud, as well as unprofessional conduct and conflict of interest violations.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

USC Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556
https://ombuds.usc.edu

Provides resources to deal with any university-related conflict. Services include individual consultations, mediation between two or more parties, conflict and communication coaching, as well as conflict management presentations.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776
https://osas.usc.edu/
Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is the unit at USC responsible for ensuring equal access for students with disabilities in compliance with state and federal law. OSAS serves undergraduate, graduate and professional students; on-ground and on-line students; and students in all credit-granting courses and programs of study.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710
https://uscsa.usc.edu/
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
https://diversity.usc.edu/
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
http://dps.usc.edu/, http://emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
http://dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.