

## POIR PROGRAM

### CODE OF PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Adopted September 2011

It is our expectation that, during their years at USC, all POIR students comply with the academic standards and professional norms we specify below. We believe that these standards and norms are important towards your successful completion of the PhD program, and we would like to encourage you to be aware of them (if you are not already). Anyone who has questions should contact the Director of Graduate Studies for clarification of the policies outlined below.

#### Academic Good Standing

The student is expected to remain in good standing in the program. The expectation includes making consistent progress toward completion of the degree. If there are unusual circumstances, students may request a waiver from these requirements from the Director of Graduate Studies. Students must accomplish the following in order to maintain good standing:

#### Good standing benchmarks

- Before completing the 60-unit course requirement, enroll in three courses per semester when on fellowship and at least two courses while working as a TA or RA.
- Maintain a GPA of 3.5 to meet the expectations of the POIR program.
- Meet the continuous enrollment requirement, by enrolling in the fall and spring semesters of each academic year (enrollment is optional in the summer terms). Only in cases where students face extenuating circumstances, can students request an official leave of absence.
- Submit annual activity report by March in the spring semester as part of the screening process. For the 3+ years, submit self-evaluation at the beginning of each academic year.
- Take qualifying exams by the 5<sup>th</sup> semester in the program (under the revised program).
- Prepare the substantive paper before the qualifying exam, and submit the paper to an academic journal approved by the chair of the student's dissertation committee within one year of the exam.
- Defend the dissertation proposal successfully within 6 months (and preferably 3 months) of passing the qualifying exams.
- Perform satisfactorily as a TA or an RA.
- Master the foreign language(s) and research methods necessary to conduct dissertation research. The dissertation research normally starts by the end of one's third year in the program.
- Submit dissertation completion plan to the dissertation committee and the Program Director detailing progress toward completion of the degree.
- Participate in seminars, job talks, professional conferences and professionalization workshops. The students are expected to attend all job talks and professionalization workshops unless there is a specific reason for not attending. Advance PhD students are particularly encouraged to present their research at conferences.

Benchmark Timeline (for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year POIR students: For other years, consult Veri)

**Years 1-2: Complete the Core and Methodology Sequence (3 courses) & Course Requirements for Two Examination Fields (6 courses)**

- 3-course theory and methodology sequence (12 units)
- 3 courses in 2 examination fields (24 units)
- 1 elective course (4 units)
- Language Requirement (if necessary)

**By April of 1<sup>st</sup> Year**

- Screening Committee reviews student's academic performance
- Student identifies the two fields in which s/he will be tested

**End of First semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> Year (i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup> semester)**

- Student appoints Guidance Committee and submits Appointment of Committee form to have committee approved
- After the Guidance Committee has been approved, student submits the form to request to take the PhD Qualifying Exam during 5<sup>th</sup> semester

**First semester during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year**

- At least 14 days before the oral defense, student submits a substantive paper to the Guidance Committee for review and approval
- Student takes the two written exams of the Qualifying Exam within a week
- Student takes the oral exam within 60 days of the first written exam
- Student ensures that paperwork certifying passing of the exams is signed so that the Graduate Advisor can submit it to the Graduate School

**Year 3**

- After passing the qualifying exams, the student constitutes his/her Dissertation Committee and submits an Appointment of Dissertation Committee form for approval
- Within six months from the oral defense of the qualifying exams, the student defends the dissertation proposal
- The student should apply for external funding for either dissertation field research or dissertation write-up
- 3 courses from the third field (12 units)
- 1 advanced methods course (4 units)

**Years 4 & 5 (ABD years)**

- Dissertation field research if needed and write up the dissertation by registering for 794 Doctoral Dissertation (up to 4 units)
- Student should attend professional conferences and present his/her research as approved by the dissertation chair
- Student should try to publish at least one paper (such as a substantive paper or a chapter of the dissertation) in a peer-reviewed journal

- Finally, after receiving permission from dissertation chair, student should schedule an oral defense of the dissertation
- Before the dissertation defense, student must meet with the Graduate Advisor to prepare his or her graduation paperwork. Graduation paperwork must be submitted after a successful defense in order to be able to formally upload the dissertation to the USC Libraries
- Student should be engaged in placement-related (job market) activities by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year and through the summer at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> year

### **Professional Norms**

The student is expected to behave in a professional manner with faculty, staff and students. The following code of conduct lists only the main items that represent the program's expectations. Beyond these, we expect common sense, mature judgment, collegiality and courtesy from all POIR students.

### **Professional conduct**

- Students have to abide by all the bases of professional conduct, including abiding by the law, maintaining personal integrity, and avoiding plagiarism.
- Students are expected to carry out their commitment once they agree to accept a TAsip or RAship. Failure to fulfill these duties after signing the assignment letter is considered a breach of contract and could result in penalties.
- Students are expected to behave in a professional manner toward members of the USC community, whether these interactions take place on and off campus.
- Students who will teach in the classroom must take the anti-harassment training offered by the university.
- Students are expected to be responsive to all the communication with faculty and staff. If a problem arises that prevents one from carrying out these professional obligations, the student must/should communicate it immediately to the Graduate Advisor or the Program Director.

### **Guidelines related to faculty**

- Students are expected to give enough lead time to faculty members to respond to their requests. The requests include advising on their theses and dissertations, writing recommendation letters, and attending the students' committee meetings. It is best to ask individual faculty what amount of lead time he/she would need to complete the tasks that the students request, but the standard lead time for recommendation letters is two to three weeks (longer during vacation time), two weeks for each dissertation chapter, and a minimum of one month for the entire dissertation. All faculty members reserve the right to decline to provide these services if they are not given enough time.
- Students have to respect faculty research time. During the summer (when faculty members are not paid) or during sabbatical or study leaves, a faculty member has no obligation to work on your requests. Please remember that they are generously giving up their precious research time when they help you and respond to you during these times.

- Students should respect the deadlines and schedules they set with the faculty or that are set by the faculty.

Guidelines related to staff

- Students must be considerate and courteous to staff at the university.
- Students are also expected to respect the staff time, and not to impose urgent matters on staff as a result of the student's disorganization.

Guidelines related to your fellow students

- The POIR program seeks to create an environment conducive to learning and the exchange of ideas.
- Students are to treat each other with respect and courtesy. Do not engage in slander or insult, but use constructive criticism and amicable discussion in the event of disagreements.

Note that a student who is in violation these standards and norms will receive a written warning indicating where improvements are needed. The Program Director and faculty advisors will also meet the student in violation to provide guidance. If improvement is not observed, sanctions may be imposed. Severe and repeated violations may result in penalties ranging from suspension of the student's access to conference and summer funding, to academic probation, and in the worst case, to his/her termination.