



USC Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

A Supplement to the Graduate Student Handbook for AY25-26

Who's Who

Department Chair: Prof. Colleen McQuillen (mcquille@usc.edu)

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Prof. Thomas Seifrid (seifrid@usc.edu)

Director of Undergraduate Studies and Director of the Basic Language Program: Prof. Evgeny Dengub (dengub@usc.edu)

Academic Program Specialist and Staff Graduate Advisor: Deborah Russo (russod@usc.edu)

The Academic Year: Arrivals and Departures

On the academic catalogue website, you will find links to critical information that you are responsible for knowing such as the [academic calendar](#), which shows registration dates, the start and end of classes, and exam periods. Before you make your travel plans, including conference travel, you must consult the calendar. You should also take into consideration the dates of your own MA and PhD qualifying exams, if applicable, which are typically held at the end of a semester.

If you are a TA or AL you should be in Los Angeles **at least one week** before the start of classes. This holds true for both fall and spring semesters. As we have seen repeatedly in recent semesters, flights get cancelled or delayed at the last minute and these interruptions can prevent you from fulfilling your responsibilities as a student and instructor. Your official offer letter for the teaching position indicates the dates during which you are "on the job." You should be present in Los Angeles during the time period indicated. When you sign this letter, you are indicating that you accept the conditions outlined in the letter and will abide by them. If you have an unavoidable schedule conflict that prevents you from being in Los Angeles for the entire time period and interferes with your ability to teach classes in person, you must contact the department chair and the language program director to discuss how to handle the situation.

See the QR code in the Appendix for the Academic Calendar.



Mandatory Graduate Student Meeting

On the second Friday of the fall semester, the department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies will hold a mandatory meeting for all graduate students. Please watch for emails regarding time and location each year.

English Language Exams for International Students



International students who have not fulfilled the [requirements](#) for demonstrating English language proficiency at the application stage will need to take the [International Student English \(ISE\) Exam](#) offered by USC's American Language Institute before beginning their first semester of study. Students should plan to register as soon as possible for these exams, as slots closer to the beginning of the semester tend to fill up quickly.

Beginning ALs/TAs are also normally expected to pass an additional exam, the International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Exam, before starting to teach. Please review the [information from the American Language Institute](#) and register for the exam accordingly.

 American Language Institute	 Handbook for TAs and ALs
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Website Profiles

Graduate students are expected to update their [profiles](#) on the department website at the start of each academic year. Instructions for updating your profile can be found [online](#). Students' profiles must be updated to be eligible for Professional Development Funds.

 Form for Professional Development Funds	 Instructions for Updating Online Profile
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APPENDIX

Time to Degree

The following timeline represents optimal progress toward the

Year 1

Semesters 1 and 2 – Coursework

Summer 1 - Begin preparing for the Master's Exam

Year 2

Semester 3 - Continue coursework.

Semester 4 - Continue coursework. Arrange for and take the Russian proficiency exam (a prerequisite for the Master's Exam); schedule and take the Master's Exam at the end of the semester.

Summer 2 - Language study; begin working through the Qualifying Exam Reading List.

Year 3

Semester 5 - Continue coursework.

Semester 6 - Complete any remaining required coursework. Complete Foreign Language requirements; begin consulting with faculty for Qualifying Exam Committee and file the Appointment of Qualifying Examination Committee form.

Summer 3 - Work on dissertation prospectus and Qualifying Exam reading list; language study.

Year 4

Semester 7 - Register for GRSC 800; submit the dissertation prospectus to the Qualifying Exam Committee; prepare for the Qualifying Exam.

Semester 8 - Register for GRSC 800. After Qualifying Exam, form your Dissertation Committee by filing a new Appointment of Committee form; set up a schedule for completion of the dissertation with your dissertation advisor.

Summer 4 - Dissertation research and writing.

Year 5

Semester 9 - Register for two units of CSLC 794a and CSLC 700. Research, write.

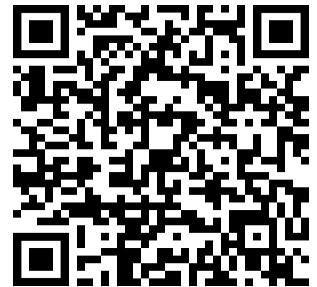
Semester 10 - Register for two units of CSLC 794b and CSLC 600; complete your dissertation and the dissertation defense.

Summer 5 - Submit the required form and dissertation to the Graduate School.

Useful QR Codes



Dissertation Submission
Timelines



Thesis Center



Academic Calendar



Office of the Registrar

Your comments, questions, and suggestions on how to make these guidelines more useful are welcome. Send them to the Director of Graduate Studies, Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literatures.