

GS-ZS



**REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ENROLLMENT STATUS (Z-STATUS)**

Last Name:		First Name:		MI:	USC ID:
Street:		City:		State:	Zip:
Email:			Phone:		
School:		Major:		Degree:	
Effective Term(s):	Fall Year	Spring Year	Summer Year		
<i>Note: One form may be used for three terms. Limit Special Enrollment to three terms overall unless justification for extension is provided.</i>					
<b>Graduate Director or Major Professor</b>					
Graduate Director or		Major Professor		Full Name:	
Email:			Phone:		
<b>REQUIRED</b> Check all boxes that apply:					
<p>Student has previously been enrolled under Special Enrollment (Z Status).</p> <p>Student is not employed (outside GA responsibility) <b>Or</b> Student is not employed more than half-time (outside GA responsibility).</p> <p>Student is working on:    Thesis    Dissertation                      Full-Time                      Part-Time</p> <p>All coursework on the Program of Study required for the degree (excluding 799, 899, internship or other capstone course) has been completed.</p> <p>Program of Study has been submitted to the Graduate School</p> <p>Student is or will be employed as a Graduate Assistant during the term(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Student is requesting Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and medical document attached.</p> <p>Student is requesting or receiving external financial aid (ie: a student loan guaranteed by the State or Federal Government). If checked, Special Academic Enrollment Release for financial aid (Form 6.2) is also required and must be submitted separately. Contact Office of Financial Aid with questions or to request a copy of the form.</p>					
<b>International Students</b>					
International Students must submit, through the Office of International Student Services (ISS), a Request for an <b>Exemption from Full-time Enrollment</b> . ISS must approve the request before it comes to the Graduate School. This form does not replace this form (GS-ZS) and must be submitted separately to ISS.					
<b>Endorsements (your signature attests the above statements are accurate):</b>					
Student's Signature:				Date:	
Signature of Graduate Director/Major Professor:				Date:	
The Graduate School:				Date:	

INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED

**!! Students must be registered for at least one hour of credit prior to form submission!!!**

Check Self-Service Carolina for Student Status to determine if Special Enrollment has been approved.

## Guidelines for Special Enrollment Status

### Under-enrollment Exception (Z-status)

The dean of the Graduate School, under certain circumstances, may certify that a student's full-time enrollment is less than the normal requirement of 9 hours for graduate students or 6 hours for students serving as graduate assistants. Students seeking exceptions to minimum enrollment requirements should submit written requests to the dean of the Graduate School with acceptable justification in a memo from the student's academic advisor or the graduate director of the academic program. International students must also submit the approved **Exemption from Full-time Enrollment** form from International Programs for Students.

For a student whose need for under-enrollment results from an internship, practicum, or field experience required by the graduate program, a justification indicating the term requested and the nature of the experience should be submitted in a written memo to the dean of the Graduate School by the student's academic advisor or the program's graduate director.

Students nearing completion of a graduate degree may be granted special enrollment status and certified as full-time if the student meets the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) all course work on the program of study has been completed except for thesis or dissertation preparation (799 or 899), internship or other capstone course;
- 2) the student is working on the dissertation or thesis full-time; and
- 3) the student is not employed outside their graduate assistantship or, if applicable, employed no more than half-time if not on a graduate assistantship.

A Z-status request for under-enrollment privilege must be term-specific and is limited to three terms. Z-status for under-enrollment privilege may be extended beyond three terms with the approval of and justification from the academic unit and with the approval of the dean of the Graduate School.

Students who request exemption from full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes must submit the Special Academic Enrollment Release form (F 6.2) from the Office of Financial Aid.

### Family Leave (Z-status)

A graduate student who is the primary child-care provider is eligible to take a one major term of family leave from graduate study the major term during or following the event for the birth of a child or adoption of a child less than 6 years old. The graduate student taking family leave will receive a one year extension of all academic responsibilities, including time to degree, removal of incomplete grades, and course in-date time. During family leave the graduate student will be on special enrollment (Z-status) status and must have health coverage. The student may waive out of University-sponsored health insurance if covered by other insurance or may elect to continue enrollment in the University-sponsored student health insurance plan. The student is responsible for submitting required waivers and/or for contacting the **student health insurance contactor** directly to enroll in the health insurance program and for paying premiums by the deadline. Students should be aware that a graduate assistantship position or other financial support may not be available upon return from family leave.

Note: While this policy does not mandate that programs continue financial support during family leave and/or guarantee student support or resumption of an assistantship after returning from family leave, programs are strongly encouraged to do so whenever possible.

Students contemplating family leave must advise their academic unit of the intention to take family leave and begin the family leave planning process at least six (6) weeks before the leave start date. Once planning has been completed at the unit level, a written petition for family leave with required supporting documentation and signatures must be submitted as a single packet to the dean of the Graduate School for approval at least three (3)

weeks before the start of the leave. The petition must contain evidence of consultation and planning with the student's academic advisor(s) and a memo of support from the academic unit signed by the program's graduate director, a leave timeline, and appropriate documentation. Appropriate documentation for a female student for childbirth includes written certification from the student's health care provider confirming the pregnancy and anticipated due date or the baby's birth certificate and for a male student either certification confirming the anticipated due date or the baby's birth certificate. For adoption of a child less than 6 years old, a written certification of adoption from a certifying individual or agency specifying the date of adoption and the age of the child is the appropriate documentation.

This planning process with the academic unit should also be used to determine if any additional length of time beyond the one year extension of academic responsibilities period will be needed for the student opting for family leave to complete degree requirements. While a one year extension of academic responsibilities will be granted to any student on approved family leave, academic units often have specific timelines for exams, fieldwork, course sequences, etc., which may necessitate extension beyond the one year period. Graduate students with such circumstances may petition the Graduate School for extension of leave time. Academic unit requirements or limitations are a valid justification to petition for the extension. Petitions for extension of time beyond the one year family leave should be supported by the student's academic unit and will be reviewed by the Graduate School on an individual basis.

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Note: Medical complications or other extenuating circumstances are not included in this policy. Such situations are more appropriately covered by the University's current policies regarding course incompletes and withdrawal and/or leave of absence due to extenuating circumstances.

The family leave policy is also intended to allow an international student to be coded as a "special enrollment" student and not affect current visa status. However, immigration regulations might dictate a different definition of enrollment than that defined as "special enrollment" for this policy. The Office of International Student Services is the authority on campus for interpreting current enrollment regulations for international students, so international students contemplating family leave must consult the Office of International Student Services to address proactively any individual or unique visa issues and/or to consider how the latest applicable regulations would affect eligibility for family leave. International students applying for family leave must discuss the intended leave period with the Office of International Student Services at the beginning of the six (6) week planning period and must include a signed memo from the Office of International Student Services detailing immigration status and any consequences of taking family leave in the written petition packet submitted to the student's program graduate director for signature and to the dean of the Graduate School for approval.

Once the family leave has been approved, a memo will be placed by the Graduate School in the student's academic file indicating the leave dates and the extension date for academic responsibilities. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their academic unit while on leave. It is also the student's responsibility to work with faculty and program administrators on arrangements for course completion, achievement of degree requirements, and for continuation of research and/or teaching activities before and following the period of the leave.

**Submit the completed form through your major professor or graduate director, with appropriate attachments if required to the Graduate School.**

**Graduate School  
1705 College Street, Suite 552  
Columbia, SC 29208**

**803-777-4243**