THE DEPARTMENT OF
Communication
Sciences & Disorders

Doctoral Student Handbook

2025-2026

Version May 07, 2025

Department of Communication Sciences
ARNOLD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities on the basis of race, sex, gender, gender identity, transgender status, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, protected veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.

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Appendices are located under Important Documents on the Blackboard COMD "Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Student Community" Section:

a. Advisory Program Milestones Documentation
b. Advisory Progress Update Documentation
c. Advisory Committee Form
d. Doctoral Qualifying Exam Verification Form
e. Doctoral Program of Study
f. Statistics and Research Design Course Sequences
g. Prior Doctoral Courses List
h. Student Teaching Evaluation Form
i. Doctoral Committee Appointment Request Form (Used for Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation Committees)
j. Comprehensive Exam Verification Form
k. Dissertation Signature and Approval Form
l. Previous Doctoral Dissertations
m. COMD Student Travel Authorization Request Form
n. Doctoral Student Travel Grant Form (COMD request to apply for Graduate School or ASPH grants)
o. Student Travel Tips

1 Welcome

1.1 Department Chair

Welcome to COMD at the University of South Carolina! COMD offers the opportunity to learn and develop clinical and investigative skills in one of the top 25 graduate speech-language pathology programs in the US. In our program, you will find world class researchers and master clinicians committed to improving the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of communication disorders. Our laboratory research facilities are outstanding, with a high degree of collaboration between research faculty using different methodologies. Access to clinical populations is facilitated through our state-of-the-art clinic space, the Montgomery Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, on the beautiful campus of the University of South Carolina.

This Doctoral Student Manual provides most practical information that you will need to find your way in our PhD Program. More details, forms and information can be found on our website (http://www.sph.sc.edu/comd/), and you should of course always feel free to ask questions to the faculty and staff that are here to help and support you.

If you want an education that will challenge you and develop you to your full potential, we welcome you. We hope that you enjoy reading about us here. I look forward to meeting you in person.

Jean Neils-Strunjas, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Professor and Chair
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
University of South Carolina
ASHA Fellow

1.2 Director of the Graduate Program

Dear Prospective Applicants and Current Students,

We welcome you and thank you for your interest in our Ph.D. program. The focus of our Ph.D. program is to train researchers in Communication Sciences and Disorders who will seek academic employment or post-doctoral study upon graduating. We do not currently offer a clinical doctorate degree, although much of our research is clinical in nature.

For prospective applicants, this handbook provides an overview of our program, opportunities for financial support, and guidance on application and admission procedures. For admitted students, this handbook sets the standards and procedures that will apply to you during your doctoral work. As the Graduate Bulletin notes, “the rules and procedures in place when you enroll in the Graduate School shall apply to you during your graduate work." This handbook also provides information about various university resources that may be helpful to you as you progress in your studies. Your doctoral program advisor will work closely with you and in concert with the department chair, doctoral faculty, and me.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the other faculty members.

Heather Bonilha, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Director of the Doctoral Program
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
University of South Carolina
ASHA Fellow

2 Mission Statements

2.1 University of South Carolina

The mission of the University of South Carolina Columbia is to educate students through outstanding teaching and to provide research, scholarship, and service that drives community and economic impact for the benefit of the state, nation, and world.

2.2 Arnold School of Public Health

The Arnold School of Public Health will improve population health and well-being by fostering innovative education and research that promotes health and healthy environments. The Arnold School will use that knowledge to promote prevention and effective response to disease, disability, and environmental degradation in all communities.

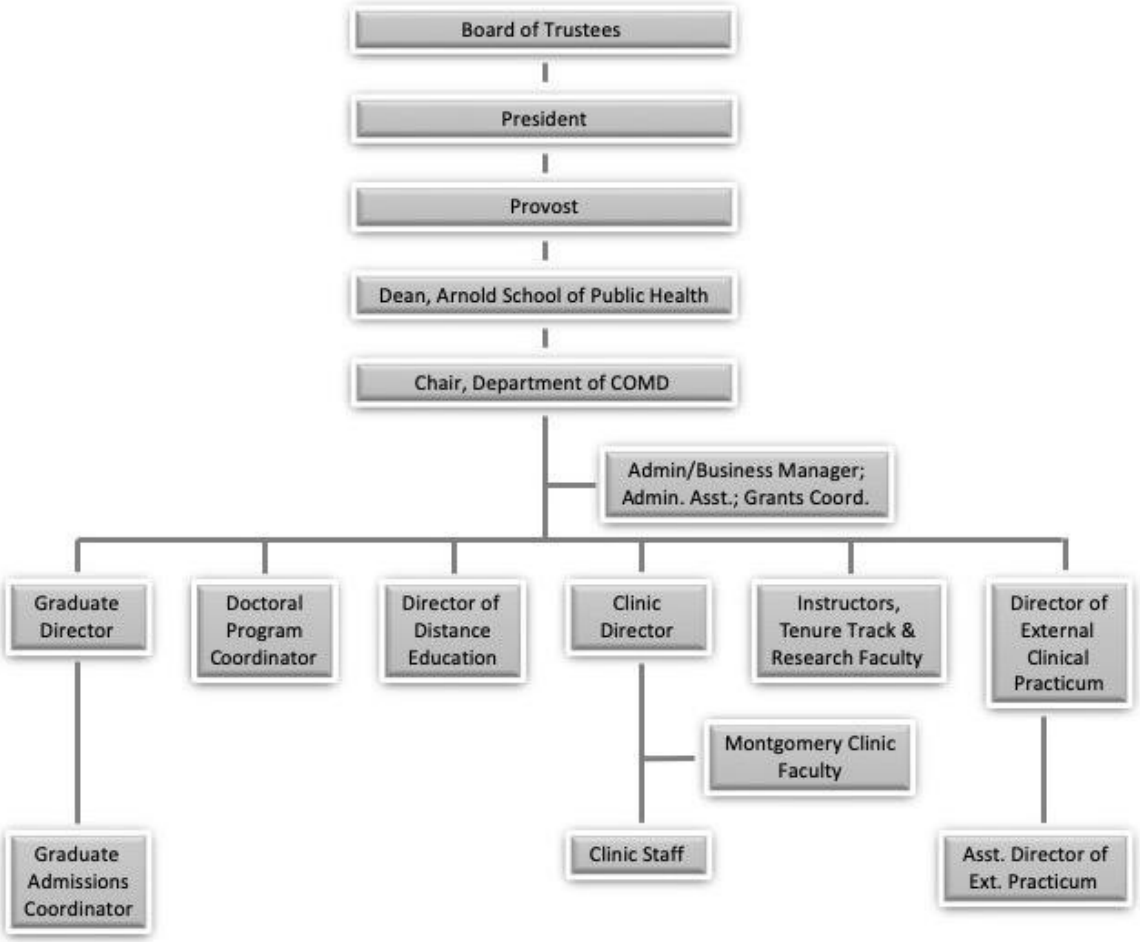
2.3 Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The mission of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to promote and advance knowledge of the nature, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of communicative and related disorders through all stages of the lifespan and across all individual backgrounds. As the leading graduate and research program in communication sciences and disorders in South Carolina and one of the leading programs in the nation, it seeks to prepare students as clinical scientists through excellence in clinical training, scientific research, instruction, and service. The department seeks to fulfill its mandate in providing an open and welcoming environment where all can develop to their highest potential.

2.4 Montgomery Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic

The Mission of the Montgomery Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic is to advance knowledge and skill in the nature, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of communicative disorders. It seeks to educate students who will become leading clinical scientists and researchers in their work settings**.** Through excellence in instruction, research and service, the Clinic seeks to fulfill its mandate as a leading Clinic in communication disorders in South Carolina. The scope of the programming addresses the needs of the diverse community at state, national, and international levels.

3 Organizational Chart



4 Important Contacts and Addresses

4.1 Web Addresses

University of South Carolina (USC)	www.sc.edu
USC Department of COMD	http://www.sph.sc.edu/comd
USC Graduate School	www.gradschool.sc.edu
Tuition and Fees	sc.edu/bursar/fees.shtml
Academic Calendars	www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/academic_calendars/
Distributed Learning Support Services	www.sc.edu/dl/
Office of the Registrar	registrar.sc.edu
Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships	www.sc.edu/financialaid/
Student Health Services	sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/
International Student Services	sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/international_student_services/

4.2 Phone Numbers

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (COMD)	(803) 777-3643
The Graduate School	(803) 777-4243
Office of the Registrar	(803) 777-5555
Tuition and Fees	(803) 777-4233
Student Financial Aid & Scholarships	(803) 777-8134
Student Health Services	(803) 777-3175
International Student Services	(803) 777-7461

4.3 Addresses

Dept. of Communication Sciences and Disorders
University of South Carolina
1705 College Street, 2nd floor
Columbia, SC 29208

Discovery I (Drs. Bonilha, Fridriksson, Den Ouden, Will, Kristinsson, & Matchin) 915 Greene Street, second floor
Columbia, SC 29208

4.4 COMD Doctoral Faculty and Staff

4.4.1 Primary Contacts in Program – Program Administration

Dr. Jean Neils-Strunjas	Department Chair	neilsstj@mailbox.sc.edu	777-8114
Dr. Heather Bonilha	Doctoral Program Director	hbonilha@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5055
Dr. Beth Barnes	Graduate Director	bbarnes@mailbox.sc.edu	919-280-1063
Teresa Boyett	Graduate Admissions Coordinator	tboyett@sc.edu	777-3080
Traci Williams	Human Resources Manager	theresaw@mailbox.sc.edu	777-3643
Carrie Hendrix	Clinic Business Manager and student travel	chendrix@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2630
Jessica Purrington	Business/Grant Manager	purringj@mailbox.sc.edu	777-4813
Kelli Powell	Aphasia Lab Business Manager/Accountant	kelliap@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5051
Dr. Angela McLeod	Montgomery Clinic Director	mcleodan@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2660
Crystal Murphree-Holden	Director of Distance Ed. (MS-DE program)	cmholden@mailbox.sc.edu	777-1170
Juliana Miller	Director External Clinical Practicum (MS program)	miller39@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2628
Joanna Scoggins	Assistant Director of External Clinical Practicum	jscoggin@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2604

4.4.2 Research Faculty

Dr. Suzanne Adlof	language and reading development and disorders	sadlof@mailbox.sc.edu	777-4822
Dr. Meisam Arjmandi	speech science, hearing loss, cochlear implants	meisam@mailbox.sc.edu	777-6574
Dr. Heather Bonilha	voice and swallowing disorders	hbonilha@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5055
Dr. Lisa Fitton	educational outcomes; cultural & linguistic diversity	fittonl@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5050
Dr. Julius Fridriksson	clinical and basic research in aphasia	jfridrik@sc.edu	777-5931
Dr. Abigail Hogan	social communication in autism spectrum disorder	hogan@sc.edu	777-6050
Dr. Jessica Klusek	communication features in autism and fragile-X conditions	klusek@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5049
Dr. William Matchin	neurobiology of language; syntax	matchin@mailbox.sc.edu	777-9240
Dr. Allen Montgomery	speechreading, speech perception, & stuttering	amontgomery@sc.edu	777-3083
Dr. Erin Smolak	linguistic and cognitive development and disorders	esmolak@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5911
Dr. Jean Neils-Strunjas	cognition & communication across the age span	neilsstj@mailbox.sc.edu	777-8114
Dr. Elizabeth Will	developmental disorders and statistical methods	willea@mailbox.sc.edu	777-5676
Dr. Sigfus Kristinsson	aphasia	sigfus@email.sc.edu	553-4689

4.4.3 Clinical and other Teaching Faculty

Dr. Charley Adams	adult neurogenic disorders; stuttering; accent modification	charley@sc.edu	777-2605
Jamy Claire Archer	co-coordinator auditory-verbal therapy program; voice	jcarcher@mailbox.sc.edu	777-1734
Dr. Beth Barnes	communication features in autism and fragile-x conditions	bbarnes@mailbox.sc.edu	919-280-1063
Dr. Gina Crosby-Quinatoa	bilingual language evaluation and interpretation	crosbye@sc.edu	777-2671
Dr. Laura Droege	Audiology	ldroege@mailbox.sc.edu	777-1698
Dr. Nikki Herrod-Burrows	Audiology	herrod@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2669
Dr. Beth McCall	coordinator cochlear implant team	hulveybi@mailbox.sc.edu	777-1698
Dr. Angela McLeod*	child language; literacy; cultural/ linguistic diversity	mcleodan@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2660
Dr. Caryn Melvin	voice; laryngectomy	carynmelvin@gmail.com	413-584-4040, x2264
Catherine Stromberg	Speech Language Pathologist	earnharc@mailbox.sc.edu	777-2622

*Associate Graduate Faculty

5 Applying to the doctoral program

Before you submit your application, it is **necessary** to first contact a research faculty member, to indicate your interest and discuss how your research interest may align with faculty expertise in the Department. A list of COMD researchers and their labs can be found at this link: https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/public_health/research/research_areas/communication_sciences_and_disorders/ It is critical that there is a faculty member available and willing to mentor you in your intended area of research. Before your application can be reviewed, a faculty member must agree to be your sponsor, meaning that a commitment is made to being your advisor should you be admitted to the program, supervising your laboratory work, and directing your dissertation. We only accept **full-time students** and generally provide substantive financial support for them.

Your best sources of assistance in navigating the application process are:

- **Ms. Teresa Boyett**, Graduate Admissions Coordinator for questions about the technical aspects of the online application process
- **Dr. Heather Bonilha**, the Graduate Director for the Doctoral Program, for questions about the admissions process or program requirements

Ultimately, it is the Dean of The Graduate School who admits applicants, on the recommendation of the Department, after an appraisal of the submitted credentials.

5.1 Application materials

Applications go to the Graduate School and must be made online via the general USC Graduate School application portal (*not* through CSDCAS, the Arnold School of Public Health, or other portals).

Your application will need to contain the following to be complete:

- *Curriculum Vitae/Resume*
- *Personal Statement*: The statement should include your research interests, motivation for pursuing a doctoral degree, career goals, and prior experiences that have prepared you to be successful in a doctoral program. See writing prompt in application materials for further details.
- *Three letters of recommendation* from Professors (Note that the late arrival of letters of recommendation is the single most frequent source of delay in completing applications)
- *Transcripts* from ALL schools attended (even if you took just 1 course). If you attended USC, you do not have to get those transcripts)
- *GRE scores* are optional for all COMD applications. If you choose to submit GRE scores, recent *GRE scores* (at least within the past five years) must be sent directly from the Testing Service to the UofSC Graduate School.

5.2 International Applicants

For general requirements and information for international applicants, please visit the Graduate School website for International Students. This includes information on visa applications, etc., for which you are also encouraged to seek help from the office of International Student Services (ISS).

Transcripts from international applicants must be in English or officially translated to English, and the school must provide an official grading scale.

The Department requires a TOEFL score of **90 or higher** for admission of students for whom English is not their native language, which is higher than the minimal requirement of the Graduate School. This is because our program and field are particularly language-oriented, we require our doctoral students to teach, and verbal as well as written communication skills are essential in interactions with clinical populations with language, speech, or communication challenges/disorders. Special circumstances may allow for alternate English testing. Please contact the director of the graduate program.

5.3 Deadlines

We admit students for a Fall semester start. The deadline for applications where department- or college-level financial aid is sought is December 15th. On a case-by-case basis, we can allow for rolling admissions, please reach out to your proposed Faculty Mentor and the Program Director to discuss further. There is no guarantee of financial support for successful applicants, this is a **competitive process**.

5.4 Interview

The application materials will be reviewed and evaluated by the COMD Doctoral Committee. If the application is being considered for admission, the prospective mentor will schedule an interview. The interview will include the applicant, the prospective mentor and at least two other doctoral faculty from USC COMD.

5.5 Upon Acceptance

If you are accepted to the doctoral program, you will receive a letter from the COMD Doctoral Program Graduate Director, offering you a place in our program and outlining the available funding for you, as well as the associated assistantship. If you accept this offer of admission into our Ph.D. program, we must receive a formal letter of acceptance by a deadline specified in the letter of admission.

6 The Doctoral Program

6.1 General overview

Our primary goal is to prepare students to **work in academic settings and to conduct clinical research in communication disorders**. Most of our graduates currently work in higher education. Towards this end, doctoral students will serve as a teaching assistant for at least one master's or undergraduate-level class with a faculty mentor and will work an average of 20 hours a week in at least one active research laboratory (typically with their advisor). Our goal is to give you strong research skills in your chosen area(s) of interest. This involves taking several statistical and technical courses. All doctoral students are expected to have research projects in progress during their entire enrollment in the program. Completing a master's thesis is encouraged, but not required for admission to the program. All doctoral students must have submitted an empirical manuscript to a refereed journal as first or co-author before taking the comprehensive examinations, prior to writing and defending their dissertation.

6.2 Sequence / Timeline

There are many steps in the path from admission to graduation in the doctoral program. A convenient checklist summarizing these steps can be found in Appendix A of this document. You and your advisor are strongly advised to refer to this checklist, each term, to make sure you are on track.

The length of time required to earn a doctorate in Communication Sciences & Disorders will vary from student to student, depending upon interests and previous graduate experiences. Full-time students will complete at least three years of study past the Master's: two years of course work plus one year of full-time research to complete the dissertation. We recommend that you plan for four years of study. This is a full-time program, and no part-time students are accepted. The Graduate School has a **residency requirement** that is fulfilled by enrollment in at least 18 graduate credit hours within three consecutive Fall and Spring semesters (this is not difficult to do). The doctoral degree is not available through distance education, although some courses may be taken online.

After admission, the following requirements appear in chronological order (also see the doctoral program checklist in Appendix A):

Prior to Comprehensive Exams (Years 1-2)

1. **Form a department Advisory Committee.**
   See section 6.4.

2. **Pass the Admission to Candidacy Exam.**
   See section 6.6.

3. **Develop program of study and complete required coursework.**
   See sections 6.3 and 7.1.

4. **Complete research requirement**
   All doctoral students are expected to have on-going research projects during their doctoral study. In addition, students in COMD must complete a more formal research project culminating in a first-authored or co-authored peer-reviewed journal submission before they can take their Comprehensive Examination.

5. **Complete teaching requirement.**
   See section 6.5.

Comprehensive Examination (Year 2 or 3)

6. **Form the Comprehensive Exam Committee.**
   Typically, students will add a fourth member to their Advisory Committee, to form the Comprehensive Exam Committee. See section 6.7.1.

7. **Take the written and oral Comprehensive Examinations.**
   See section 6.7.2.

Dissertation (Years 3-4)

8. **Form the Dissertation Committee.**
   See section 6.8.1, point 1).

9. **Present your prospectus to the Dissertation Committee.**
   See section 6.8.1, point 2).

10. **Register for graduation!**
    See section 6.8.1, point 5).

11. **Defend your dissertation**
    See section 6.8.3.

12. **GRADUATE!**
    Receive approval from the Graduate School, fill out the required forms and arrange to take part in the official graduation hooding ceremony with your advisor. Note that the Arnold School of Public Health also has an unofficial hooding ceremony in May where you may march and receive the hood, and you can participate a few months before you officially graduate. Both ceremonies are optional, but they are very nice experiences for you and your family!

6.3 Course requirements

Doctoral students must complete a minimum of 45 semester hours of graduate coursework plus 12 semester hours of dissertation preparation, for a total of **57 credit hours**. All graduate students in ASPH must take PUBH 700 (3 credits). In addition, students must take the "Teaching-Assistant Orientation" which is not for credit and graded as Pass/Fail. See the Graduate School website for further details about coursework requirements and offerings. Further see the Appendix on Blackboard for a list of courses that prior students have taken.

While we encourage students to meet course requirements in the manner outlined below, we understand that each doctoral student has unique career goals and there may be exceptions to following the coursework as defined. In these cases, alternative courses may be substituted with the approval of your Advisory Committee and documentation of the approved course substitution to be submitted with your Plan of Study.

6.3.1 Core Requirements

(Minimally 8 credits of core coursework within COMD)

The Core courses provide grounding in theory, research, and implementation specific to COMD. While the Survey of Research in COMD course is required, the remaining credits can be satisfied with a variety of COMD courses denoted in the Advanced Coursework section below. The courses for this requirement are not taught every year, so it is recommended to create your plan of study and work with your Advisory Committee to maximize access to these courses.

COMD 811	*Survey of Research in COMD* 1 credit per semester, must enroll for 2 semesters for a total of 2 credits	2 (1x2)
COMD	*COMD Core Science courses* See options in Advanced Coursework section below, must enroll in 2 of these courses for a total of 6 credits	6 (3x2)

6.3.2 Professional Requirements

(Minimally 12 credits)

These required Professional courses include content in Responsible Conduct of Research, Career Development, Science Communication, and Teaching that the faculty has deemed important for preparing you for your future careers.

GRAD 701	*Teaching Assistant Orientation*	Not for credit
COMD 810	*Professional Seminar* *Must enroll for 4 semesters (1st and 2nd Fall & Spring semesters) for a total of 4 credits	4 (1x4)
COMD 890	*Teaching Fundamentals*	1
PUBH 700	*Perspectives in Public Health*	3
COMD 815	*Mentored Teaching in Communication Sciences*	1-3
COMD 812	Scientific Writing: Papers and Grants	3

6.3.3 Statistics/Research Design

(Minimally 12 credits)

A minimum of twelve credit hours of graduate coursework in statistics and research methods is required. At least 3 credits must be in statistics and at least 3 credits must be in research design. It is strongly recommended that students enroll in the COMD Applied Statistics course and the COMD Research Methodology course; however, exceptions can be made by the student's Advisory Committee to fulfill their Plan of Study. Note that a solid statistical foundation (e.g. competition of statistics courses covering basic inferential statistics and regression / ANOVA). Students may complete this statistics and research design coursework within the Arnold School of Public Health (as shown in the example below), or through other colleges and departments, including Education and Psychology. See Appendix on Blackboard for additional course sequences and options. Furthermore, EPID 700 Intro to Epidemiology is encouraged for all Ph.D. students in the ASPH.

BIOS 701	*Concepts and Methods of Biostatistics*	(3)
BIOS 757	*Intermediate Biometrics*	(3)
COMD 791	*Research Methodology**	(3)
COMD 800	*Applied Statistics in COMD**	(3)

*strongly recommended

6.3.4 Electives

(Minimally 13 credits)

Electives can be from any department. Courses can include 800-level COMD classes for independent research studies. No coursework completed as part of a prior degree can be transferred into the doctoral program of study. Up to 9 credit hours of coursework taken outside of a graduate degree program may be acceptable for transfer into the COMD PhD program of study. 700-level courses can be included if the contents are important to your research and study plan, with the approval of your Advisory Committee. 500-Level courses can be counted only with an additional project beyond the course's undergraduate requirements. See the Appendix on Blackboard for a list of courses that prior students have taken.

Here are examples of options within COMD that satisfy the Core Requirements. Additional courses from this list can be taken as Electives.

COMD 820	*Advanced Speech Science*	(3)
COMD 821	*Advanced Hearing Science*	(3)
COMD 822	*Normal Bases of Speech Production*	(3)
COMD 823	*Normal Bases of Language*	(3)
COMD 827	Connections between Oral and Language Literacy	(3)
COMD 714	Gerontology and Communicative Disorders	(1-3)
COMD 760	Cochlear Implants	(3)
COMD 800	Seminar in Speech Pathology (variable topics)	(3)
COMD 801	Advanced Topics in Speech Pathology	(3)
COMD 805	Advanced Study of Language Disorders in Adults	(3)
COMD 827	Connections Between Oral Language and Literacy	(3)

6.3.5 Dissertation
(Minimally 12 credits)

COMD 899	*Doctoral Research and Dissertation Preparation*	(12+)

6.4 Advisory Committee

By the end of the first term of enrollment, the student should meet with their doctoral Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is officially appointed by the department, but in COMD, students typically select their Advisory Committee members with their advisor. The committee will include a **primary advisor** (from the COMD research faculty) and **two other faculty** who are regular or associate members of the Graduate School faculty. The majority of members must be from within the COMD department. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide initial advisement of the student, guide academic planning and research efforts, and construct the **Program of Study** to file with The Graduate School. The Advisory Committee roster does not need to be submitted to the Graduate School for approval. It is expected that the student will meet with members of the Advisory Committee at least once per term (not necessarily in a group).

6.5 Doctoral Teaching Requirement

All doctoral students in COMD must teach at least one course (for 2 or 3 credits), at the MS or Undergraduate level. Prior to their first term of teaching, all doctoral students are required to:

- Participate in the university-wide Teaching-Assistant Orientation (TAO). Note: There are additional requirements for International Students, please check with the Graduate School.
- Complete the requirements for the Center for Teaching Excellence Preparing

Future Faculty program – first semester (https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/graduate_teaching_assistants/preparing_future_faculty/index.php)

- Satisfactorily complete COMD 890 (1 credit hour), Teaching Fundamentals
- Meet with doctoral committee to determine which course(s) the student may be a good fit for the student's teaching experience. Determine if one semester of mentored co-teaching is recommended before independent teaching.

Should the student's doctoral committee decide that co-teaching is recommended before independent teaching, the following procedures should be followed:

- The student will work with the doctoral committee to determine which course is a good fit for co-teaching
- If the student does not have sufficient background in the subject matter of the course to be co-taught, s/he can audit the course on campus or review the Distance Education course to prepare
- The student should participate in syllabus development and updating with the instructor of record
- The student should teach at least 2 lectures/in-class activities, for which they will:
  - Develop lecture materials with mentor feedback
  - Assist with assessment relevant to student-led coursework
- Assist with grading, discussion, and class participation moderation
- Attend at least 80% of course lectures

During the term in which they teach their first course as the sole instructor of record, doctoral students will register for a *Mentored Teaching* course, with the mentor/advisor that will supervise their teaching. The student will register for COMD 800 (2 to 3 credit hours) Mentored Teaching in Communication Sciences and Disorders for this purpose and will register for the same number of credits as the course they are teaching. The mentor will evaluate the student's teaching (see the evaluation form posted on Blackboard) at the midterm and end of the semester and send this evaluation to the Doctoral Program Director.

The Center for Teaching Excellence offers numerous resources to help you develop your teaching abilities, learn strategies for effective teaching, and explore new classroom instruction techniques. After students have taught their first required course, there are often opportunities for doctoral students to teach additional courses as paid instructors. This provides more teaching experience, builds your CV, and may provide a welcome addition to your funding. Discuss the amount of teaching you can and want to do with your advisor, and let the Graduate Director know if you have an interest in teaching more courses. Note that teaching performance in your first course will be considered in providing future teaching opportunities to you in your doctoral program.

Courses that may be independently taught by doctoral students include:

COMD 500 Introduction to Speech Language Pathology
COMD 501 Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech and Hearing Mechanism
COMD 507 Language Theory and Phonetics
COMD 526 Articulation Development and Disorders

COMD 570 Introduction to Language Development

Syllabi for these courses can be found at Blackboard > Organizations > Faculty > Course Syllabi > *semester* > *course name and number*

Tip: Identify semesters that the course(s) you are interested in teaching and request to observe the class before you are assigned as an independent instructor.

Other courses may be taught by doctoral students, at the Chair's discretion, depending on the student's academic specialty and teaching preparedness.

6.6 Admission to Candidacy Exam

During the first semester of enrollment, you will take an Admission to Candidacy Exam (Qualifying Exam). This is required by the Graduate School and in COMD it consists of a written response to a general question. The specific format may vary, but the recommended length is 6-10 pages with at least 5 references, written in APA style. Please consult this APA style handout for formatting suggestions for student papers. Your Advisory Committee or your primary advisor will prepare this for you and inform the Doctoral Program Director and Graduate Admissions Coordinator when it is completed. The Graduate School is then notified that you have passed the doctoral qualifying exam via the Doctoral Qualifying Exam Verification form. This may allow your advisor to see gaps in your knowledge, and more importantly it gives him or her an example of your writing ability.

6.7 Comprehensive Exams (Comps)

6.7.1 Prerequisites

Before initiating the comprehensive exams, the student must:

- Form a 3-person Academic Advisory Committee (your advisor & 2 COMD faculty).
- Pass the *Admission to Candidacy Exam*.
- Submit the approved program of study form to the Graduate Program Coordinator for submission to the Graduate School.
- Complete program of study (or be enrolled in the last semester of courses).
- Submit a data-based paper (as first- or co-author) to a peer-reviewed journal.
- Form a 4-person comprehensive exam committee. This includes four doctoral faculty members, with at least two members from the COMD department and one member from a different department. The student and their advisor may invite and get approval from the three members of the Advisory committee to be included on the comprehensive exam committee or they may include different faculty. The outside member may be a Graduate Faculty member in another department/program at USC or a faculty member at another institution nominated by the academic unit and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Members of the Advisory Committee often serve on comprehensive exam

committees, but changes may occur as students' research interests evolve. The committee has to be approved by the Graduate School, through submission of form G-DCA. If the doctoral dissertation committee will be the same as the COMPS committee (this is often the case, but not necessarily), the same form can be used to request approval for the committee in both roles.

6.7.2 Exam options

Comprehensive exams ("Comps") must include both written and oral components. The purpose of Comps is to confirm that the student has developed a sufficient breadth of knowledge in communication sciences and disorders and sufficient depth of knowledge in their area of focus to proceed with the dissertation. The exact composition of the Comps process is flexible and should reflect the advisor's and student's input. The specific requirements for a student's comprehensive exams should be approved in writing by the comprehensive exam committee prior to the initiation of the comprehensive exams.

NOTE: The comprehensive examination may not be given less than 60 days before the student receives the degree.

6.7.2.1 Written component

Past students have generally chosen from two general options for the written comprehensive exam:

1. Four days of written examinations.
   The comprehensive exam committee prepares questions for each day of the exam. Typically, the student works for 4-5 hours per day to answer the questions from memory. Although the student is provided a computer to prepare answers, they may not access the internet or any outside documents or resources.
2. Written papers, completed during the semester of comprehensive exams.
   The student may prepare **at least two written papers** in response to questions from committee members, or manuscripts that would be suitable for submission to a journal. These papers must be original and not just a summary of the proposed dissertation. They should reflect the student's **independent work**, without much contact with the committee after the exams are initiated. Only after the student has passed the oral comps component (see below) can any comments and suggestions from the committee be incorporated into the final version(s) for journal submission. Co-authorship by committee members that are not the student's principal advisor is typically determined based on their individual editorial contributions to the final papers.

Examples of recent written comprehensive exam questions under each mode are provided on the Blackboard page for COMD doctoral students.

6.7.2.2 Oral component

The oral exam is generally scheduled within two weeks of the written exams, or two weeks

after the written papers are submitted. However, the timeline may be extended under certain circumstances. The oral exam usually lasts between 1-2 hours. The committee will generally focus on the topics covered in the written exam but may ask other questions as they see fit.

6.7.2.3 Outcomes of the Comprehensive Exams

After the oral exam, the committee will rate the student's performance in one of four categories:

1. Pass
2. Pass with conditions
3. Fail with an opportunity to retake the examinations
4. Fail

If the decision falls into category 4, the student will be terminated from the program. If the decision of the Committee falls into category 2, the Committee will inform the student of what must be done before a score of “Pass” is awarded. The condition(s) must be met, and a final decision made within 6 months of the initial Comprehensive Examination. The student's advisor will inform the Graduate School of the decision using the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Verification form from the Graduate School.

6.8 Doctoral Dissertation

6.8.1 Timeline

The timeline for the doctoral dissertation provided here is based on the requirements by the Graduate School, as well as on how we do things in COMD. In all matters where the policies and requirements as published by the Graduate School conflict with what is provided here, we adhere to the Graduate School rules.

1) After passing your comprehensive exam, you should choose your dissertation committee. This committee is often the same as the comprehensive examination committee, but changes can certainly be made to match the committee to your dissertation topic. The committee must include an outside member and at least three other members (the major professor and two or more members from the student’s degree program). If the outside faculty member is not a member of the Graduate Faculty at USC, the Dean of the Graduate School must approve the nomination. Such nominations must be approved separately for the comprehensive exam committee and the dissertation committee, but the same form is used for both. File the committee form GS-48 (G-DCA) with the Graduate Admissions Coordinator for signatures and approval from the Graduate School. See the same form for more detailed information from the Graduate School about requirements and the role of the dissertation committee.

2) Prepare a written prospectus of your proposed dissertation in consultation with your advisor and schedule a prospectus meeting with your committee. See section 6.8.2 for guidelines for the prospectus.
3) Following approval of your prospectus by the committee, complete your dissertation. Note that you must be registered for at least one hour of COMD 899 in all semesters you are working on your dissertation, including in the semester in which you graduate (see section 7.6 on special-enrollment (z-status)).
4) Make yourself familiar with the **formatting guidelines** for your dissertation early in the process. The formatting of your thesis is subject to very specific rules, and you are referred to the Graduate School website and the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guide for detailed information about formatting requirements. Note that it takes time for the Graduate School to approve the final formatted version of your dissertation, so it is important to take this time into account to make your anticipated graduation date. Do not wait with the submission of your proofs/drafts until the last moment, but submit early, so the Graduate School can let you know about things that need to be changed!
5) Make yourself familiar with the **graduation application deadlines** provided on the Graduate School website. Register for graduation early in the semester in which you hope to graduate. If you do not finish in that semester, it is not a problem but sign up in case you do finish.
6) Schedule your defense of the dissertation with your dissertation committee. It is not uncommon for your committee to desire a few changes to the final manuscript, or even additional analyses, before they sign off on the approval of your dissertation defense. For that reason, it is wise not to schedule your defense in the final days of the term in which you wish to graduate; you may need some more time!
7) After a successful defense, your advisor will file the Dissertation Signature and Approval form (G-DSF) with the Graduate School. You will then prepare the dissertation in final form. This is a painstaking, difficult process, as the **formatting requirements are specific and strict**, and the Graduate School website referenced under point 4 is essential for the process.

6.8.2 Guidelines for the Prospectus

The prospectus is the proposal for research that will constitute the student's dissertation. The research proposal is initiated by the student and developed with guidance and feedback from the mentor and committee. The student should have ownership of the direction of the research.

The written prospectus document may take different forms, but traditionally it includes the Introduction (literature review and rationale) and Method for the study. If a student has submitted a grant to fund the work, the prospectus may include the grant application, provided there is sufficient information for the committee to review the rationale, research questions, and study methods.

The prospectus meeting is a working meeting to finalize/approve the research plans. There is no formal grading of the prospectus, but the committee must approve of the plans.

When the prospectus is approved (which may take more than one meeting or revision of the document), the student should have a detailed rationale for the study and clearly outlined study methods. If those plans were followed exactly, they would "pass" that portion of the dissertation defense. However, they still must carry out the data collection (if applicable), analyses, interpretation and writing. In this way, a prospectus is analogous to a pre-registered research study.

In situations where students are collecting new data for their dissertations, they may have pilot data before the prospectus meeting, but they should not have collected most/all of their data. This would negate the committee's chance to provide guidance on the study rationale and methods. In situations where students are using extant data from the mentor's lab, an external database, etc., the analyses should not have been conducted prior to the prospectus meeting.

Should a situation arise where the proposed research must be modified, it is critical that the student communicate with their dissertation committee to ascertain agreement regarding the proposed modification(s) prior to proceeding. The nature and extent of the modification(s) should indicate whether email communication or a live, individual or group, meeting is needed. Agreement on changes should be documented in writing.

6.8.3 Dissertation defense

In COMD, the dissertation defense typically consists of an open session followed by a closed section. In the open section, to which you can invite family, friends, other students and faculty, you give a presentation of your dissertation research, of about 30 minutes (discuss the target duration with your advisor). This is followed by questions from the audience as well as your dissertation committee. After that, all guests who are not members of your dissertation committee are asked to leave the room. This allows the committee to then ask more detailed questions about your work. After all questions have been addressed, the committee will ask you to leave the room, so that they can discuss whether your defense was satisfactory (Pass) and/or whether the committee would like to see some changes or additions made to the final version of your dissertation, which is very common. In some cases, the committee may decide to wait with their final signatures until the changes have been made to their satisfaction. The total duration of the defense session should be no more than 2 hours.

6.8.4 Doctoral Dissertation Graduate School Submissions

The Dissertation Completion Form and the formatted Dissertation manuscript must be submitted to the Graduate School by the required deadline for the semester in which you plan to graduate.

6.8.5 Previous COMD doctoral dissertations

The Blackboard page for COMD PhD students provides downloadable examples of recently defended dissertations. These dissertations are accessible via https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/. It is highly recommended that you elect to have your approved dissertation uploaded to this repository. See the Appendix for a list of

previously defended doctoral dissertations in our program.

6.9 COMD Ph.D. Student Professional Seminar (Prosem)

Students are required to take 4 credits of Professional Seminar, one each in their first two Fall and Spring semesters. The Professional Seminar series serves multiple purposes including promoting community and interactions between COMD doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty members that extend beyond the mentor-mentee lab experience, encouraging progress in the program of study, and preparing trainees for their future careers by covering professional development topics that may not be included within traditional coursework, including that related to the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Ground Rules for Professional Seminar (Prosem) Discussions
The Prosem community includes individuals with different backgrounds (e.g., educational, cultural, clinical, research), experiences, and levels of expertise. Prosem discussions allow us to learn from others' experiences and perspectives. Learning happens through sharing and active listening. We aim to create a safe, respectful, inclusive, and encouraging environment for open and honest dialogue among all members of the COMD Prosem community. In entering discussions for Prosem, we will:

- **Respect different views.** We are all equal with different experiences, values, and perspectives.
- **Respect each other's privacy.** It is a privilege to hear others' stories and learn from them. We do not share others' stories without their permission.
- **Assume good intentions**, and **acknowledge the impact** of words that may hurt others, even unintentionally.
- **Allow everyone an opportunity to share.**

Some Prosem topics may invite discussion of sensitive issues and experiences. Successful and positive discussions can help to build trust and a community of support. For topics where specific individuals or groups may feel vulnerable sharing, we will provide opportunities to submit questions anonymously prior to the meeting.

7 Academic Requirements and Policies

This section outlines academic policies pertaining to the doctoral program in COMD. Please note that in case of contradiction between policies stated in this doctoral-student manual and Graduate School policy, the Graduate School policy takes precedence, except where Department policies are more 'strict' than Graduate School policies. Typically, the Department and Graduate School policies that were in place *when you enrolled in the program* (i.e., at the start of your first term) are the ones that apply to you, but in case of substantial policy changes, you may be offered the option of committing to new policies. For minor changes, this manual is updated annually or whenever necessary, and students are notified of the updates. For details of the Graduate School policies, please see the Graduate Studies Bulletin. For the latest and up-to-date forms that are not specific to the Department of COMD, we refer to the Graduate School Forms Library.

7.1 Program of Study

The Graduate School requires that students complete a Program of Study (POS) in addition to other steps that must be taken as part of their degree program.

The program of study should be developed with and approved by your Advisory Committee. No coursework completed as part of a prior degree can be transferred into the doctoral program of study. Up to 9 credit hours of coursework taken outside of a graduate degree program may be acceptable. It is recommended that a draft of the program of study be submitted to the student's Advisory Committee by midterm of the student's second term of doctoral study, and the final program of study be approved after the third term. Students on assistantships or scholarships are full time with enrollment in six or more hours per Fall and Spring term (three hours for Summer terms). Check the plan of study to be sure you meet the Graduate School's requirement for Residency. Normally this is not a problem for a full-time student, but you need to fill it in on the form. The approved program of study form must be submitted to the Graduate School **before the student takes the Comprehensive Examination** (see section 6.7). Submit the completed, approved form to Graduate Admissions Coordinator, for forwarding to the Graduate Director and the Graduate School. Changes to an approved program of study can be submitted to the Graduate School with a dedicated form, signed by your advisor and the Graduate Director.

7.2 Advisement

It is expected that the student will meet with members of their Advisory Committee at least once per term (not necessarily in a group). Before the course registration window for each term, doctoral students should meet with their principal advisor for advisement. The advisement form (available on the Blackboard page for PhD students) should be filled out, specifying the selected coursework for the upcoming term. Copies are kept by the student as well as the advisor, and the form is then sent to the Graduate Admissions Coordinator (Teresa Boyett) and kept in the student's file.

7.3 Credit Transfer or Substitution

At the time of admission, or no later than the beginning of the first term of enrollment, a COMD student may submit a request to approve a graduate course(s) for transfer credits taken at another institution or substitute credit from within USC as part of the student's graduate program of study. This process must follow the Graduate School's policy for transfer or substitute credit and is subject to approval by the COMD Graduate Director. No more than 9 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into the doctoral program. Only credits with grades of B or better (equivalent to a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) may be transferred from another institution into any graduate degree program. Course work transferred for credit toward a doctoral degree must be from an accredited institution, must be no more than six years old at the time of graduation, and cannot have been used for another degree.

7.4 Course Loads

A graduate student may enroll for a semester load not to exceed 15 graduate hours. A student with a load of 9 or more hours during a fall or spring term is classified as full-time for academic purposes.

Graduate assistants (i.e., students employed by the university as teaching or research assistants) carrying 6 or more hours for graduate credit are classified as full-time students. Graduate assistants are required to carry a minimum of 6 hours of graduate credit during the fall and spring terms and if employed during the summer term (or a shorter summer section) are required to carry a minimum of 3 credits (during the full term, or during the section, depending on what is applicable).

A student must be enrolled for at least 1 credit during any semester in which thesis or dissertation progress is made and such University resources as the library, computer facilities, or faculty time are used.

Students who wish to enroll in more than 15 hours of coursework in a semester must request an overload exception using the Course Overload Enrollment Authorization (CEO) Form. This form must be submitted to the Dean of The Graduate School for approval prior to the beginning of the term for which the exception is requested.

Students seeking enrollment exceptions or Special Enrollment Status (Z-status, see 7.6 below) should contact the COMD Doctoral Program Director for processing.

When determining course load, students should consider other requirements related to their enrollment status such as scholarship and financial aid regulations, and Visa restrictions for international students.

7.5 Special Enrollment Status (Z-Status)

Normal full-time enrollment is 9 hours for graduate students in Fall and Spring terms, and 6 hours in the Summer term. For students serving as graduate assistants, full-time enrollment is **6 hours** in Fall and Spring terms, and **3 hours** in the Summer term. Special Enrollment Status (Z-status) was created for students writing a thesis or dissertation who needed full-time status but were enrolled in less than 6-9 hours. More information can be found in the Graduate Students Bulletin.

A student must be enrolled for **at least 1 credit** during any semester in which dissertation progress is made and such University resources as the library, computer facilities, or faculty time are used. Twelve credits in 899 Dissertation Preparation are required for the COMD PhD degree. While only 12 hours of 899 are required on the Program of Study, candidates may take up to 30 hours.

Students seeking an exception to minimum enrollment requirements (Z-Status) should submit a written request (form GS-ZS) to the dean of The Graduate School, with acceptable justification from the student's academic advisor or the graduate director of the academic program. **In COMD, the GS-ZS form is approved and signed by the Doctoral Program Director and sent to the Graduate School via the Graduate Admissions Coordinator**. International students must also submit the approved Exemption from Full-time Enrollment form from International Programs for Students.

The memo requesting Z-status must indicate that:

- all course work on the program of study has been completed except for dissertation preparation (899);
- the student is working on the dissertation full-time, or if applicable, at least half-time; and
- 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 initially limited to one year**. Z-status for under-enrollment privilege may be extended **for an additional year** 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.

7.6 Family Leave (Z-status)

A graduate student who is the primary child-care provider is eligible to take one major term of family leave from graduate study 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. 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.

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.

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.

For further specifics and details about special-enrollment status for students on family leave, please consult the Graduate Studies Bulletin.

7.7 Policy Regarding Medical/General Leave & Return

Students who have been approved to **withdraw for extenuating circumstances** through the Graduate School (medical reasons or other acceptable causes) do not have to reapply to the program when they return. They can return to the program when it is both the student's and the program's determination that the student is ready to return.

Students who withdraw for other reasons (not approved extenuating circumstances) will have to re-apply to the program if they wish to return. Any student that returns to the program after a withdrawal will be bound by the curriculum that is in place at the time of his/her return to the program.

7.8 Maintenance of Student Records Policy

Academic Records will be maintained for a minimum of seven (7) years.

7.9 Computer Requirements in COMD

All graduate students admitted into the COMD program are required to have daily home access to the Internet with a secure, high speed broadband connection and to a computer that can be used at any time, controlled and configured as required.

7.9.1 *Blackboard*

The link to the *Blackboard* portal with login and information on supported browsers and operating systems is https://blackboard.sc.edu/. If you need help with *Blackboard*, you can call (803) 777-1800 or e-mail bbsupport@sc.edu for assistance.

Students are automatically added to the Department's PhD Student *Blackboard* Community page. This page provides information about Department policies, the Doctoral Student Manual, course sequences, advisement, comprehensive exams, your dissertation, etc., and is also used for communicating with students via announcements and emails. The *Blackboard* page also contains a Discussion Board, which doctoral students can use to discuss and share information with one another.

7.9.2 University Technology Services

The office of UTS is located at 1244 Blossom Street (at the corner of Blossom and Sumter) and is open from 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- http://uts.sc.edu/getconnected.shtml - Link to information on UofSC standards, computer protection, legal issues, software purchase, and more.
- https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/support/help/wirelessinstructions.php - Link to information on accessing wireless on Apple IOS iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch
- http://www.uts.sc.edu/network/docs/android.shtml - Link to information on accessing wireless on Android phone or tablet
- https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/security/sc_technologies/mfa.php - information about Multifactor Authentication
- https://ssb.onecarolina.sc.edu/ - Self Service Carolina (SSC)

7.10 Feedback and Evaluations

Information exchange is a vital component of the doctoral degree program in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. On-going communication and student feedback are not only encouraged but are expected with all students. The information will be used to help monitor, track, and trouble-shoot issues and concerns specific to the program. Students can provide feedback during advisement with their principal mentor, but also outside of these times, they are always welcome to contact the Doctoral Program Director to discuss any issues that may come up. Information from student feedback has been effectively utilized in decisions that have impacted later changes in the program and curriculum.

7.11 Complaints and Grievances

7.11.1 Academic Complaints

Occasionally, students may encounter an issue related to an academic course which they wish to petition or grieve. If this concerns a non-COMD course, please follow the grievance policy for the Department/School that offers the course. Please consult with

your principal advisor and/or the Doctoral Program Director before bringing a petition or grievance forward. If the complaint concerns a COMD course, the first step is to discuss the situation with the course instructor or supervisor. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved in the student's view, the next step is to discuss the issue with the student's principal advisor. If the issue continues to be of concern, the student should submit in writing the petition/grievance to the Doctoral Program Director. If the issue continues to be of concern, the student may submit in writing the petition/grievance to the Department Chair. The Chair will take the issue to the COMD faculty and respond with the faculty's decision to the student in writing.

Should the issue remain a concern after receiving the decision by the Department Chair, the student should follow the guidelines for grievances, appeals an petitions set forth by the Arnold School of Public Health.

If the decision at the School level is not to the student's expectations, the student may complete the *Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Form* on the Graduate School website, following the directions and procedures outlined on the form and the site.

7.11.2 Non-Academic Complaints

Non-Academic Complaints must be initiated within 30 calendar days from the date of the alleged violation. Please see the university policy for further information: http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf627.pdf

7.11.3 Student Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University of South Carolina to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

More information about student rights under FERPA is found here:
http://registrar.sc.edu/html/students/stud_rights.stm

7.11.4 Ombuds

The Graduate School Ombuds serves as a confidential, neutral, informal and independent resource for graduate student concerns and conflicts. The Ombuds strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of graduate students and the consideration of their issues. The Ombuds advocates for fair and equitably administered processes but does not advocate on behalf of the student. For more information, please see the Graduate School website.

7.11.5 Attendance of guests at COMD Faculty/Student Meetings

It is COMD policy that other individuals associated with COMD students (i.e., parents, significant others, friends) will not be included in grievance/petition/advisement meetings between COMD students and COMD faculty members. Any exception to this policy must first be obtained in writing between the student and faculty member prior to scheduling any such meeting and remains fully within the discretion of the faculty member.

8 Funding and awards

8.1 General

We only accept **full-time students** and generally provide substantive financial support for them. If students do not bring their own funding through external grants, they can be funded through the Department or through their principal advisor's research grants. We strive to offer all admitted students similar funding packages, but differences may occur, depending on specific opportunities or restrictions on research grants. As outlined in section 5.3, students who wish to be considered for Department funding should have their complete application submitted by December 15th, for a Summer or Fall term start in that year.

Please refer to the Graduate School website for up-to-date and detailed general information about Tuition and Fees, Financial Aid, Assistantships, Fellowships and Awards, and Travel Grants.

8.2 Elaine Frank Fellowship

Annually awarded fellowship to one doctoral student, in honor of Elaine M Frank, PhD, who served as Chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders from 1999 to 2012, and who passed away in 2016.

The fellowship was established by Dr. Frank's family and is awarded by the Department of COMD. Applicants may apply for The Elaine M. Frank Fellowship by sending: 1) a letter to the Chair of the Department of COMD describing their academic achievements and previous research experiences, if any, and 2) a letter of support from a professor who is knowledgeable about the student's academic and, if applicable, research experiences. Applicants will be rated for overall academic achievement, research accomplishments, and potential as a future assistant professor in Communication Disorders.

Doctoral students interested in this fellowship should provide their letter and letter of support in one PDF to the Department Chair, Jean Neils-Strunjas, PhD (neilsstj@mailbox.sc.edu) and cc Theresa Williams (theresaw@mailbox.sc.edu) by **September 30th**. The amount of the award is $3,000. Please include Frank Fellowship application in the email subject line. A committee of three faculty and two community representatives will review the applications, each year.

8.3 Breakthrough Graduate Scholar Awards

Each spring, the Office of the Vice President for Research names selected graduate students as Breakthrough Graduate Scholars. These graduate students have excellent academic records, have made significant contributions to research and scholarship in their field of study, and have clearly demonstrated the potential to make exceptional professional contributions to research and scholarly activity. The Breakthrough Graduate

Scholar Award recognizes these graduate students for their achievements at USC and celebrates their potential for further success.

The recipients of this non-cash award are featured in a supplement to *Breakthrough* magazine and may be featured on USC websites and other publications. Additionally, they are invited to attend the annual Breakthrough Awards Dinner, held each spring. The award raises awareness of the importance of commitment to research and scholarship both during and beyond graduate study. *Breakthrough* magazine and its supplement are widely distributed to all faculty and administration, peer institutions, program managers, legislative representatives, and selected alumni and donors.

Breakthrough Graduate Scholar nominations are submitted by the Graduate Director. **Each Department can only make one nomination.**

Typically, the deadline for nominations is mid-October, so students pursuing this award should send the following to the Graduate Director by **October 1st**:

- A 10-line motivational statement
- The student's full CV (*curriculum vitae*)

If the Department's selection committee nominates the student, they should prepare the following documents by the nomination deadline (to be determined by the Office of the VP for Research):

- Responses of 4,000 characters or fewer (counting spaces and line breaks), for each of the Nominee Questionnaire prompts listed below. (Nominees will have 4,000 characters per response.) We recommend that nominees draft their responses outside of the system, then copy and paste the responses into the Nominee Questionnaire form inside of the nomination system.
    - Please prepare a personal statement describing your commitment to research and scholarly activity in your field of study since you joined USC.
    - List major fellowships and awards you have received during your time at USC, and the date(s).
    - List significant peer-reviewed publications from your time at USC where you are the author or a co-author.
    - List significant professional presentations, abstracts, exhibitions and/or performances associated with USC.
- A letter of recommendation from the student's direct mentor, no longer than two pages in length.

8.4 SPARC Graduate Research Grants

The Support to Promote Advancement of Research and Creativity, or SPARC, Graduate Research Grant is sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research. The overall objective of the SPARC Graduate Research Grant is to provide support and to encourage outstanding students to pursue exciting research directions during their graduate career at the University of South Carolina. To achieve this end, the SPARC program provides

the opportunity for eligible graduate students to secure funding up to $5,000 to support their research, creative or other meritorious scholarly project. SPARC funds can be used to pay for salary, supplies and other costs essential to completing and promoting funded projects. By completing SPARC's competitive research proposal process, graduate students gain experience that helps prepare them to seek national fellowship and grant awards throughout their academic careers.

8.5 CAPSCD PhD Scholarship

The Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) is committed to addressing the Ph.D. shortage in communication sciences and disorders. To this end, CAPCSD addresses a salient factor influencing the Ph.D. pipeline: time to degree completion. CAPCSD announces a scholarship program for students pursuing a research doctoral degree (i.e., Ph.D.) focused on an academic career in communication sciences and disorders. CAPCSD will fund up to eight (8) scholarships of $20,000 each for successful scholarship awardees. These scholarships are intended for students who have advanced or will be advancing to the candidacy stage of their respective doctoral programs (ABD).

The Department can only submit one nomination. Typically, the deadline for the CAPSCD scholarship is mid-November, so interested students should send the following to the Graduate Director by **November 1st**:

- A 10-line motivational statement
- The student's full CV (*curriculum vitae*)

If the Department's selection committee nominates the student, they should prepare the following documents by the nomination deadline (to be determined by CAPCSD):

- **Summary of the dissertation research plan (1,000-word limit)**
  - Background
  - Specific aims/objectives
  - Methods and outcome measures
  - Anticipated completion date (include timeline related to IRB, data collection and analysis, dissertation defense etc.)
- **Supporting Documents**
  - Cover letter from the applicant with a brief introduction of the research project and stated commitment to an academic position upon completion of their Ph.D. program. The cover letter should include reference to current Ph.D. funding and how a CAPCSD scholarship would facilitate completion of the dissertation research (two-pages; double-spaced; 12-point font; one-inch margins).
  - Citations/References used for your dissertation research
  - Curriculum Vitae
  - Letter of Support from research advisor. The letter should include language verifying the applicant's candidacy status at the time of submission and a

tentative plan for achieving the candidacy status by the May 31 of the following year.
- Advisor's brief Biosketch
- Optional - graphs/tables/charts for the dissertation research plan.

8.6 Travel Funds

Travel funds are available to support students who are presenting their work at conferences. Students who are first author on an oral or poster presentation at an international, national, or state conference are eligible to receive travel funds. Doctoral students should seek travel funds from multiple sources. In addition to mentor funds, there are departmental and college level funds to support doctoral student presentations.

8.6.1 COMD Student Travel Funds

COMD students may be supported with departmental travel funds. Students are eligible for these funds on an annual basis (July 1 – June 30). Funding is for students who are the first author.

The stipend amount is $800 for ASHA (or similar national / international conference) and $600 for SCSHA (specific to SCSHA, to incentivize participation at the state level). Note: the SCSHA amount will be reduced to only cover registration when SCSHA is hosted locally. Funding is typically available for one national / international conference and the SCSHA conference each year. All student travel support is based on the availability of funds.

Please email Carrie Austin for student travel funding assistance and copy the Department Chair, Dr. Jean Neils-Strunjas, the Doctoral Program Director, Dr. Heather Bonilha, and the Department Grant Manager, Jessica Purrington. See **"Student Travel Authorization Request" form** in the Appendix on the Doctoral and Postdoctoral Student Community Blackboard Page under "Important Documents".

8.6.2 ASPH Travel Funds

Funding is available through the Dean's Office of the Arnold School of Public Health (ASPH) with a commitment of matching funds from your mentor or the department. Please see the ASPH website for details.
https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/public_health/internal/current_students/student_travel_funding/
Matching funds are required.
Please submit the **"Doctoral Student Travel Grant" form**, found in the Appendix on Blackboard under "Important Documents" to Carrie Austin and Dr. Heather Bonilha, copying Dr. Jean Neils-Strunjas and your mentor, prior to submitting to the Arnold School.

8.6.3 Graduate School Travel Funds

The Graduate School also offers travel funding. Please see the Graduate School website for details. https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/tuition-funding/travel_grants/

Matching funds from your mentor or department are preferred.
Please submit the **"Doctoral Student Travel Grant" form** to Carrie Austin and Dr. Heather Bonilha, copying Dr. Jean Neils-Strunjas and your mentor, prior to submitting to the Graduate School.

9 General Information and Requirements for Graduate Students at USC

9.1 Address or Name Changes

Your full name and **VIP ID** should appear on all correspondence. **DO NOT** provide your Social Security Number (SSN) as your student ID.

Notify the Graduate School, the registrar, and the Department of COMD ***immediately*** of any name and/or address changes. Do not use your new name on departmental paperwork until it has been officially changed with the University system.

9.2 Verification of Citizenship and Residency

9.2.1 Proof of Citizenship or Legal Residency

The state of South Carolina requires **verification of US citizenship or legal residency** for each incoming student. Students must provide proof of citizenship or legal residency before being allowed to enroll in classes at the University. **You will not be allowed to register until you do this.** For more information and forms, visit:

- http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/rescitizen.asp
- http://registrar.sc.edu

9.2.2 SC Legal Residency for In-State Tuition

Proof of legal **South Carolina residency** is required to receive in-state tuition. (Note: Students with **assistantships** usually qualify for in-state tuition and do not need to submit a form. If you wish, you can still elect to submit the form, so that in-state tuition rates are in place without an assistantship.). Submitting your SC Residency Certification Form is simple:

- Go to http://my.sc.edu
- Sign into Self Service Carolina using your VIP ID and password
- Complete the SC Residency Certification Form
- To complete the form, you will need the following:
  - SC Driver's License Number
  - SC Car Registration Information
  - SC Tax information
- Questions? Contact the Office of SC Residency at (803) 777-4060 or resident@mailbox.sc.edu.

9.3 Registration

1. Students register for classes over the Internet via Self-Service Carolina. For more information, visit http://www.sc.edu/sschelp/studentspage.html
   From this link you will find help with information about general registration, (Office of the Registrar), student accounts (Office of the Bursar) and Financial Aid.
2. If you need directions, go to the Registrar's webpage at http://registrar.sc.edu
3. **Please observe deadline dates for both registration and payment of fees.** Late registration or fee payment is a complicated and time-consuming ordeal and involves the work of many people, so you DO NOT want to allow this to occur.
4. Students should plan to pay term fees at least one week in advance to allow for unforeseen problems**.** This way you will have time to obtain the assistance needed before being dropped from classes and falling behind in course work.
5. **Returning graduate students**, who have not enrolled during the twelve (12) months prior to the returning term, must become eligible again before registration. Contact the Graduate School (777-4243) to avoid computer-registration rejection.
6. **Non-degree graduate students** are approved for a specific number of credit hours depending on the purpose of an individual's enrollment and the policy of the recommended academic department. Eligibility must be authorized by the Graduate School (777-4243) to avoid computer-registration rejection.
7. **Graduate Assistants** are required to enroll for at least six graduate hours during the Fall and Spring terms and three credit hours during the Summer term. For under-enrolled students approved for special enrollment (Z-status), the minimum enrollment requirement is one credit hour per semester. Out-of-state graduate assistants receive the in-state rate for tuition. If you have any question concerning the regulations of graduate assistantships at the University, please refer your questions to the Graduate School at (777-4243).

9.4 Paying Tuition and Fees

1. Information about fees, including due dates for the upcoming term, may be obtained from the Bursar's Office at http://www.sc.edu/bursar/
2. For information about Financial Aid, go to http://sc.edu/financialaid/
3. Payment for tuition and fees **must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on the first day of classes** each term, or earlier when notified by the University of the date fees must be paid. If you do not pay your tuition and fees by this deadline, you will be **dropped from your classes**. You are advised to pay fees at least one week in advance of the start of the term or by the due date provided by the University.

9.5 Learning Differences

Students with learning differences should make direct contact with the Student Disability Resource Center (803-777-6142). The Office works to promote academic success for all students attending UofSC.

9.6 Student Assistance Programs

The Student Success Center offers a variety of resources to assist students at USC in achieving academic success.

Counseling and Human Development Center: The CHDC provides psychological counseling, education, and consultation to the University community (students, faculty, and staff). Their team offers services "that promote social, emotional, physical, and cognitive well-being for people facing developmental or unplanned challenges". The Center is located on the 7th floor of the Byrnes Building (on Sumter Street across from The Horseshoe). Hours are 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday and Sunday 2:00 – 8:00 p.m. (Fall and Spring terms) and 8:30-4:30 (Summer term). Call 777-5223 for an appointment. Walk-ins are available.

Student Health Services: SHS provide a holistic approach to health through comprehensive primary healthcare, disease prevention and wellness programs, and mental health and violence prevention services. For more information, visit https://www.sa.sc.edu/shs/

Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention & Prevention: SAVIP contributes to a Healthy Carolina in a variety of ways, including but not limited to encouraging bystander accountability through the Stand Up Carolina initiative, raising awareness of interpersonal violence issues, promoting healthy relationships, and advocating for survivors of interpersonal violence. For information on how to support survivors, additional on and off-campus resources or to report an act of interpersonal violence, visit: http://www.sc.edu/stopsexualassault.

If you wish to speak with someone in the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention & Prevention (SAVIP) office, please call 803-777-8248 or walk in during business hours. After hours, call the USC Police Department at 803-777-4215, and they will get you in touch with a Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention & Prevention (SAVIP) advocate.

Student Disability Services – Any Student with a documented disability should contact the Student Disability Resource Center at 777-6142 to make arrangements for appropriate accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services is in the Close-Hipp Building, Suite 102.

9.7 Considerations for Graduating Students

9.7.1 Application for Degrees

1. All candidates for degrees and certificates file formal applications with the Dean of the Graduate School during the last academic term before graduation. Applications are to be filed by the third week of the Fall or Spring term in which the degree is to be awarded, or within the first ten days of the first Summer session. Applications submitted after the announced filing deadline will be accepted if supported by a letter from the student's Graduate Director and accompanied by a special processing fee. The graduate student is responsible for contacting the Graduate School to determine this cost. The cost increases by a particular amount each additional month after the initial deadline. If the student is not enrolled during the first Summer session, the application is filed within the first week of the second Summer session in order for the student to graduate at the Summer commencement. Any application received after the deadline, which lacks the supporting letter or processing fee, will be regarded automatically as having been submitted for the following term.
2. Diplomas will not be awarded retroactively.
3. To pursue further study after completion of a graduate degree, a student submits a new application to the Graduate School since the previous admission was specifically for the degree program.

9.7.2 Graduation

1. Students should discuss any Graduate School and Department requirements with their principal advisor and Graduate Director in the Department. **It is the responsibility of the student to see that all requirements for graduation are met**.
2. In **May**, all students who are graduating are invited (and encouraged) to participate in the Arnold School of Public Health's **Hooding Ceremony**, even if they graduate the following August**.** This is a very special occasion for COMD graduates and their families. You will wear your cap and gown and carry your hood. During the ceremony, each department will bring its students forward for Hooding. As you walk across the stage, your name will be announced, and the Department Chair will place your hood over your head. Following the service, the Arnold School of Public Health has a reception for graduates and their families. Traditionally, this ceremony is held in the Koger Center for the Arts.
3. Students also may choose to participate in the UofSC Graduation Ceremony.
4. After graduation in August, **the Registrar's Office will take several weeks** to process the final transcript that verifies the awarding of your doctoral degree.

10 Academic Integrity

10.1 The Carolinian Creed and UofSC Honor Code

Academic ethical behavior is essential for an institution dedicated to the promotion of knowledge and learning. The University of South Carolina is committed to fostering a university environment which exemplifies the values embodied in the *Carolinian Creed* (see also https://www.sa.sc.edu/creed/):

> *The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence. Choosing to join the community obligates each member to a code of civilized behavior.*
>
> *As a Carolinian ...*
> *I will practice personal and academic integrity;*
> *I will respect the dignity of all persons;*
> *I will respect the rights and property of others;*
> *I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;*
> *I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.*

All members of the University Community have a responsibility to uphold and maintain the highest standards of integrity in study, research, instruction, and evaluation; as well as adhering to the ***Honor Code***. The USC *Honor Code* is the University's policy regarding incidents involving academic integrity. It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina Columbia to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this *Honor Code* or who knowingly assists another to violate this *Honor Code* shall be subject to discipline.

University policy regarding academic responsibility and the University of South Carolina Honor Code (Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.25) states:

> *The Honor Code is a set of principles established by the university to promote honesty and integrity in all aspects of a student's academic career. It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty in connection with any academic program. A student who violates, or assists another in violating the Honor Code, will be subject to university sanctions.*
> (http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf)

You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in academic penalty review by the instructor and will result in additional disciplinary measures including referring you to the Office of Academic Integrity. Violations of the University's Honor Code include, but are not limited to

improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. For more information, please see the Honor Code.

Remember that the first tenet of the Carolinian Creed is, "I will practice personal and academic integrity."

Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code.

Two important components of the Honor Code:

- Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.

10.2 Plagiarism and Cheating

Passing off the work of others as your own is a serious academic offense prohibited by USC. The Academic Responsibility Code in the *Carolina Community: USC Columbia Student Handbook and Policy Guide* prohibits "unauthorized use of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of source". **This not only includes copying information from journal articles and books but also from other student's papers and exams, including take-home exams**. Note that use of social media platforms to collaborate on assignments, or to share and get feedback on course assignments is also considered cheating. The penalties for plagiarism and cheating are serious and can include receiving an "F" on the assignment in question, an "F" for the course, an "X" on the transcript before a grade denoting an Honor Code Violation, a written reprimand or letter of warning from the Dean that becomes a part of your permanent record, and/or suspension or expulsion from USC.

Every student is responsible for understanding and avoiding plagiarism.

More information on what constitutes plagiarism can be found here.

The website of UofSC's Office of Academic Integrity provides further information about procedures and sanctions: https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity

11 Library and Information Services

The Thomas Cooper Library, located next to the Russell House on Greene Street, houses the reference tools most useful to graduate and doctoral students in the Department of COMD. In addition to the main campus holdings, students may arrange to use the facilities of the South Carolina State Library, which contains the State's ERIC System (Educational Resources Information Center), the Veterans Administration Library, the School of Medicine Library, and the Richland Memorial Hospital Library.

Periodicals for all departments in the Arnold School of Public Health are located primarily in the Science Library (Level 5) of the Thomas Cooper Library.

The Cooper Technology Lounge in the Thomas Cooper Library strives to enhance the learning experience for its users (currently enrolled students, faculty, and staff) through innovative and effective use of technology. The mission of the Lounge is to create an environment that supports the educational pursuits and a wide variety of professional and personal needs of its users. To ensure that these goals are met, the lab provides quality state of the art software and hardware resources.

Study rooms in the library can be booked at: http://libcal.library.sc.edu/

Online computer searches are available from several electronic indexes. For a master list, go to: http://library.sc.edu/p/Research/ResourcesOverview.

Other **electronic resources** allow access to **encyclopedias**, **dictionaries** and **newspapers**. Periodicals specifically ordered for COMD are listed below. Please note that several are not located in the Science Library but are in the Education Collection (Level 5).

TDNet is an on-line journal database and is also available through the Thomas Cooper Library. It houses approximately 30,000 journal titles on its database.

Periodical holdings in the Thomas Cooper Library for the Department of COMD:
American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology; Aphasiology; Audiology; Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics; Communication Disorders Quarterly; Ear and Hearing; The Hearing Journal; The Journal of Medical Speech-Language Pathology; Journal of Speech-Language-Hearing Research (Education Collection - Level 5); Journal of Voice; Language, Speech, & Hearing Services in the Schools (Education Collection - Level 5);Seminars in Speech and Language; Topics in Geriatric Rehabilitation; Topics in Language Disorders; Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation*
*only through 1990

12 Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the voice of the graduate student community at the University of South Carolina. GSA is dedicated to the advancement and development of graduate and professional students at USC. It serves to advocate on behalf of the interests of nearly 7000 graduate and professional students at the University of South Carolina. The GSA works closely with administrators, faculty and staff to achieve its goals.

The GSA plans events to assist graduate students in achieving their goals. All graduate students are welcome to attend GSA meetings. For more information, visit the GSA website: https://sc.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/gsa