



# Graduate Student Handbook Education Specialist

Revised for 2023 – 2024

Graduate Support Office – EDU 320

College of Education

University of South Florida

# Education Specialist Student Handbook

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# Education Specialist Student Handbook

## **Preface**

The purpose of the College of Education Graduate Handbook is to assist graduate students to better understand the processes associated with graduate education in the College. This handbook does not replace University requirements delineated in the USF

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You are responsible for being aware of the information published in the USF and College of Education handbooks and catalogs.

You are responsible for treating your peers, support staff and faculty with courtesy and respect.

You are responsible for meeting all deadlines.

You are responsible for providing accurate and complete information and reporting unexpected changes in your status or intentions regarding your planned program.

You are responsible for seeing that all needed documents and transcripts are received by the Registrar's Office.

You are responsible for making it known if a course of action or expectation is not understood.

You are responsible for consequences that may result if you do not follow your recommended program of studies.

### **Most Frequently Used Links:**

#### **University of South Florida Websites**

[2023-2024 USF Graduate Catalog](#)

[2023-2024 Important Dates and Deadlines](#)

[Catalog - General Academic Policies and Procedures](#) – Includes student enrollment requirements, grading system, probation/withdrawal information, and more.

[USF Graduate Admissions](#)

[Office of Graduate Studies Homepage](#)

[Graduate Student Forms](#) – All student forms that are submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and/or the Registrar's Office. Course transfer forms, change of major/concentration forms, graduate petitions, fee adjustment forms, etc.

[Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Resource Center](#) – All students completing a thesis or dissertation will be required to submit their work through the USF ETD website. Includes submission deadlines for the current semester, details about each step of the ETD submission process, and more.

[Graduate Certificate List](#)

[USF Financial Aid Services and Scholarships](#)

#### **USF College of Education Websites**

[College of Education Homepage](#)









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Waive this recommended vaccine through your student OASIS or MyBullsPath account or on the USF Medical History form.

### 3. Meningitis Immunity (Recommended):

Submit proof of Meningitis vaccination administered after 16th birthday or

Waive this recommended vaccine through your student OASIS account or MyBullsPath or on the USF Medical History form.

### 4. TB Screening: Per USF Policy 33-003, Tuberculosis Screening is required for all students who use an international address at the time of application.

Screening must be done within 6 months prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester.

## Late Registration

Degree-seeking students who do not register prior to the first day of classes may register late the first week of the semester. A Late Registration Fee of \$100 is charged during this week (refer to the Registrar's [Important Dates and Deadlines page](#) for specific dates). To avoid cancellation of registration, fees and tuition are due and payable for all registered courses on the fifth day of classes (the end of drop/add week). Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their course registration before the end of the drop/add period. In the event there are courses incorrectly listed or missing on the record, students should go into OASIS and make the necessary corrections. Course registration not corrected by the end of the fifth day of classes will result in liability of tuition and fees.

If students are dropped from courses after drop/add week for financial reasons (non-payment of tuition) and do not wish to make changes to their registration, they may submit a [Re-Add Request](#) to the Registrar's office. Students will have to pay both the \$100 Late Registration Fee and \$100 Late Payment Fee in OASIS before submitting the Re-Add Request. Once all outstanding balances are cleared and the form is approved, students will be added back to their courses. Some courses require instructor approval for students to be re-added. See the Registrar's website for more details. If students need to add/drop credit hours or change their registration in any other way, they will need to file a Graduate Petition.

## Graduate Petition

Any changes to the student's registration made after the end of Add/Drop Week will require the use of the [Office of Graduate Studies Graduate Petition](#). This includes adding or dropping courses as well as changing the number of credit hours a student is registered for a course. Graduate petitions will not be processed if an administrative hold exists on the student's account.

Students will need to complete the petition form with their course and degree information along with a justification statement for their request. The student must obtain signatures from the instructors of courses they are trying to add and/or drop and the Department Chair of the course(s) in question. Once the Department Chair has signed, the Graduate Petition must be submitted to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) for the college's approval and signature. After the Graduate Support Office has processed the petition, it will be forwarded on to either the Registrar's Office or the Office of Graduate Studies as applicable for processing. Students should check their OASIS account for updates on the status of their petition, including final approval or denial by the Registrar's Office.

If students are filing a petition to add or drop individual courses after Add/Drop Week, the petition should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the tenth week of classes. After the end of the semester, students may only file a petition if they need to completely withdraw from all coursework in that

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semester. Students cannot join or withdraw from individual courses after the ten-week deadline. Graduate petitions for complete withdrawal must be submitted within six (6) months of the end of the semester.

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Academic integrity is the foundation of the University of South Florida System's (USF System) commitment to the academic honesty and personal integrity of its university community. Academic integrity is grounded in certain fundamental values, which include honesty, respect and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one's own efforts. Knowledge and maintenance of the academic standards of honesty and integrity as set forth by the university are the responsibility of the entire academic community, including the instructional faculty, staff and students.

Graduate students will be held to the standards provided for Graduate Studies if those students are admitted to a graduate degree program or certificate, or for any student taking graduate level courses. T (i)-0.7 (n5are)-4.9 ( de)-4.8 (gre)-4.8 (e)-4.9 ( pro)-4.7



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Students who change majors must meet the degree requirements of the



### **Validation of Admission**

Graduate students must validate their admission by registering for at least one course during the semester in which they are formally admitted to the University and maintaining that registration through the first week of classes. Students who do not validate their admission may contact the Graduate Director and request a Deferment of Admission. A deferment request must be made in writing within twelve (12) months of the initial requested entry date and before the major's application deadline for the new term. If a request for Deferment of Admission is not activated within the 12 months, students must submit a new admissions application and fee for future consideration.

### **Continuous Enrollment for All Graduate Students**

All graduate degree-seeking students must be continuously enrolled. Continuous enrollment is defined as completing, with grades assigned, a minimum of six (6) hours of graduate credit every three (3) continuous semesters. Courses that receive a "W" grade do not fulfill continuous enrollment requirements. Colleges and majors may have additional requirements. Students on an approved Leave of Absence are not subject to the enrollment requirement for the time approved for the leave. Students who have been Admitted to Doctoral Candidacy must follow the Dissertation Hour Enrollment in place of the Continuous Enrollment requirement. See also the Time Limitations Policy. *Note: the six hours may be taken as 2/2/2, or 3/0/3, or 6/0/0, etc. Take any three sequential semesters and the total for the three must add up to six hours.*

**Enrollment during Semester of Completion of Degree Requirements**

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If students are nearing the end of their time limit for degree completion, they may be required to file a Time Limit Extension request once their application for Reinstatement has been approved. Time Limit Extensions are valid for a maximum of two (2) years from the date of the request.

### **Re-application for Admission**

Students who have exceeded their time limit for degree completion and/or course currency limits (i.e., ten years from their initial admission date in the graduate major) must re-apply for admission. This will require completion of all degree requirements as posted in the Graduate Catalog in effect at the semester of re-admission, including elements such as comprehensive exams, thesis/project work, and internships. Students who have been Academically Dismissed from the University for academic dishonesty may not re-apply to any USF graduate program.

To be readmitted, the application and all supporting materials must be submitted by the Major's posted application deadline as noted in the Graduate Catalog. These materials include:

**Graduate Application:** in order to be considered for readmission, students must submit a new graduate application, application fee, and any required supporting materials by the application deadline for the major.

**Admission Requirements:** Students must meet the Admission Requirements posted in the Graduate Catalog for the Major to which they are reapplying.



## **Transfer of Credit**

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Courses must not have been used for a completed degree. For students with coursework from a completed degree, the specific course requirements in common across both majors may be waived with the substitution of other approved coursework at the discretion of the major.

Unstructured courses and courses with Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grades (such as thesis/dissertation hours, independent study or research, etc.) are not eligible for application of credit. Grades from all courses taken at USF are calculated in the GPA and are noted on the transcript (even if they are not being applied to a current graduate degree).

Courses must not be older than ten years at the time of graduation or course currency is required.

Internal course transfer requests must include a copy of the student's unofficial USF transcript.

Any coursework completed at USF that is applicable to the student's major may be applied in the following situations, pending approval of the graduate major, College, and Office of Graduate Studies.

Only structured graduate courses, with a grade of B (3.00) or better and are applicable to the major, will be transferred in when taken as

an undergraduate student, and were not used as part of the undergraduate degree requirements

a non-degree seeking student, including courses used for a Graduate

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Transfer request to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) for review before it is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval. Any Course Transfer forms must be completed and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the end of the first semester the student is enrolled in the graduate major.

### **Academic Standards and Grades**

Please be advised that the minimum University requirements for degree completion, including the graduate grading scale, may change from one Catalog year to the next. Students will be held to the most recent academic standards and requirements; see the [Catalog website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

### **Minimum University Requirements**

In Good Standing - To be considered a student "in good standing", graduate students must:

- Maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in all courses taken as a graduate student, and
- Maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in all courses taken in each of the student's degree-seeking majors.

Only courses with grades of **"C" (2.00) or better** will be accepted toward a graduate degree; no grade of C- or below will be accepted. Students must meet the requirements to be in good standing to graduate. All "I" and "M" grades must be cleared for graduation to be certified. Students who fail to maintain good standing may be placed on probation or academically dismissed.

### **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

The GPA is computed by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of graded (A-

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at USF and meets the requirements



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- N Audit, grade points not applicable
- S/U Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, grade points not applicable
- W Withdrawal or drop from course without penalty, grade points not applicable
- WC Withdrawal for extenuating circumstances
- Z Continuing registration in multi-semester internship or Thesis/Dissertation courses, grade points not applicable

*\* FF grades appear on the unofficial transcript only; on the official transcript, they display as "F."*

### **Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grades**

Graduate students may not take courses in the major on an S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) basis unless courses are specifically designated S/U in the Catalog. Students may take courses outside of the major on an S/U basis with prior approval of the course professor, major professor or program advisor, and the Dean of the College in which the student is seeking a degree. The student may apply a maximum of six (6) hours of courses taken outside of the major for S/U credit toward a graduate degree. Courses with a final grade of S or U will not be factored into the GPA even if students have successfully completed all course requirements. Directed Research and Thesis/Dissertation courses are designated as variable credit and are graded on an S/U basis only. Before a student begins work under Directed Research, a written agreement must be completed between the student and the professor involved, setting forth in detail the requirements of the course.

### **Incomplete (I)**

An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. This applies to all gradable courses, including Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U).

Students may only be eligible for an "I" when:

- the majority of the student's work for a course has been completed before the end of the semester
- the work that has been completed must be qualitatively satisfactory
- the student has requested consideration for an "I" grade as soon as possible but no later than the last day of finals week.

The student must request consideration for an incomplete grade and obtain an "I" Grade Contract from the instructor of record. Even though the student may meet the eligibility requirements for this grade, the course instructor retains the right to make the final decision on granting a student's request for an Incomplete. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the

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student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed one semester from the original date grades were due for that course. The instructor must file a copy of the "I" Grade Contract in the department that offered the course and submit the initial

**Missing (M)**

The University policy is to issue an M grade automatically when the instructor does not submit any grade for a graduate student. Until it is removed, the M is not computed in the GPA. To resolve the missing grade, students receiving an M grade must contact their instructor. If the instructor is not available, the student must contact the instructor's department chair or other department advisor. Courses with an M grade may not be applied to the major requirements. Students with an M grade will not be certified for graduation until the M grade is resolved.

**Continuing Registration Grades (Z)**

The Z grade shall be used to indicate continuing registration in multi-semester internship or thesis/dissertation courses where the final grade to be assigned will indicate the complete sequence of courses or satisfactory completion of the thesis/dissertation.

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Studies in cases of academic dismissal. To be readmitted, the student will need to reapply for admission, meeting the admission criteria in place at the time.

### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

A student may withdraw from their Major/Program and all current coursework without grade penalty by the semester deadline for withdrawals, available on the Registrar's [Important Dates and Deadlines](#) page. The effective date of the withdrawal will be entered into the student's record by the Office of the Registrar as the last day of the last class that the student attended. Students who wish to withdraw must submit a [Voluntary Withdrawal Form](#), available from the Office of Graduate Studies website. Once processed, the student's status will be changed from Graduate Degree-Seeking to Inactive. Students who withdraw may not continue to attend classes.

The student will remain financially and academically responsible for any course(s) for which they have registered for the semester in which they withdraw from the Major. If the student meets the requirements for a Fee Adjustment, they can file a Fee Adjustment Request for a tuition refund once they withdraw from coursework. See the Graduate Petition section for more about Fee Adjustment Requests.

### **Academic Renewal**

Academic renewal is the process whereby degree-seeking students admitted to a new major/program may request that previously completed courses not be counted in the calculation of their cumulative USF grade point average (GPA). At the graduate level, academic renewal may apply when a student changes majors or degree levels, with the exception that specific graduate programs require every course attempted and grade assigned to the student to be considered in the application process. Only courses that have not been used for a completed degree and have been approved for internal transfer of credit may count toward the requirements of the new major. Non-degree seeking students are not eligible for Academic Renewal.

Academic Renewal will only be applied to the degree-seeking student's record one time per degree level at USF and may affect the student's financial aid, Tuition Assistance, use of Veterans Educational Benefits, or student visa status. The entire academic record will continue to be reflected on the official transcripts even though courses selected for Renewal are not

## Academic Dismissal

Students may be academically dismissed from their graduate major for a variety of reasons. Once processed, the student's status will be changed from Graduate Degree Seeking to Inactive. A change to inactive status could adversely impact financial aid. Dismissal cannot be retroactive. The effective date will be the last day of the term in which the student is academically dismissed, except in cases of academic dismissal due to academic dishonesty or disruption of academic process. Some of the reasons for academic dismissal include\*:

Failure to successfully satisfy requirements to meet Conditional Admission by the deadline established by the major.

Receiving an "FF" grade (Failure due to academic dishonesty)

Failure to maintain "good standing"

Failure to make satisfactory progress

Failure to satisfy clinical or professional standards

*\*Students may be dismissed for other reasons, such as violations of student conduct. Refer to the [USF Policy – 6.0021 Code of Student Conduct](#) for more information.*

Students dismissed for lack of academic progress may be considered for readmission to the original Major or any other Major offered. To be readmitted, the student will need to reapply for admission, meeting the admission criteria in place at the time. Approval of readmission is contingent on Department approval and availability. Graduate students who are assigned an "FF" grade or dismissed for failure to satisfy clinical or professional standards will be academically dismissed from the University and will not be eligible to apply to any graduate major at USF.

## Offices and Organizations for Governing Graduate Study

### University of South Florida Graduate Studies

The development of University policies for graduate work is the responsibility of the USF Dean of Graduate Studies with the assistance and guidance of the University Graduate Council. The USF Graduate Council is an official board (ac)-31(T)-6.lil or di wiT as Council

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programs, as well as modifications to existing courses and programs; and review/recommend policies and procedures pertaining to graduate financial aid.

### **College of Education**

The Dean of the College is responsible for all graduate programs. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Dean is assisted by the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, the Graduate Support Office team, and the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC). R. Anthony Rolle, PhD, serves as Dean of the University of South Florida College of Education.

### **Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs**

The Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs serves as the primary liaison between the Office of Graduate Studies and the College regarding graduate policies, procedures and practice. Dr. Ann Cranston-Gingras ([cranston@usf.edu](mailto:cranston@usf.edu)) serves as the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Education. The Associate Dean is responsible for program development and review and serves as the quality control officer for graduate programs within the College of Education. Additionally, the Associate Dean is responsible for implementing policies related to credentialing of graduate faculty, appointment of thesis/dissertation committees, allocation of graduate tuition (D-4.8 (s)-i)-0.7 (tte)6.so7 (o)-4.7 (n )p.7 (r i)-0tion (D-4.)-ilti a











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second major and receive concurrent degree approval by submitting the Application for Concurrent Degree Form to the Office of Graduate Studies. May share between 0% and 15% of the total combined minimum credit hours. Only structured graduate coursework may be shared. Students must meet all other separate degree requirements (e.g., two theses or final projects, comprehensive exams, etc.), unless the Concurrent Degree was approved with a combined requirement by Graduate Council through the formal Concurrent Degree Curriculum Approval. Must have a minimum of 60 total combined graduate hours after the shared hours are applied for concurrent master's and/or Specialist majors, or a minimum of 102 total combined graduate hours for a concurrent specialist/doctorate program.

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requires a student to be in good academic standing OR new major approves a GPA below 3.00.\*

is up to the discretion of the student's new major (note: some majors may require another admission application to be submitted and reviewed)

may affect the student's financial aid status

will exclude courses taken from the previous major/degree program unless the new program approves the course(s) for application of internal credit toward the requirements for the new major. The GPA will automatically reflect the courses applied to the new major/program. Only courses that have not been used to meet the requirements of a completed degree are eligible for application of internal credit (see Transfer of Credit section for more information).

restarts the degree completion time limit with the admission to the new graduate major.

restarts the Catalog year. Students changing majors must meet the degree requirements of the Graduate Catalog in effect at the time of the change to the new Major. Students who change majors may choose a later catalog as stipulated in the Student's Major Degree Requirements policy.

requires the submission of a [Change of Graduate Major Application](#) and approval by the Office of Graduate Studies.

\*Students not in good academic standing must consult with the Office of Graduate Studies prior to initiating a Change of Graduate Major Application. Students who have less than a 3.00 as required to be in good standing may still be considered for a change of graduate major if the new graduate major is willing to accept them into the degree program.

When requesting acceptance into a major of higher level, e.g., from a Master's-level major to a Doctoral-level major, a student must initiate a new admissions application through the Office of Admissions (the Change of Graduate Major form cannot be used).

Students may view the procedures and obtain the Change of Graduate Major Application Form at <https://usf.app.box.com/file/401428582744?v=change>

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their current Major. The Graduate Director (or designee) will complete Section II before sending the application to the new program's Graduate Director or advisor. If the Change of Major application is approved by both departments, the new program will submit the application to the Graduate Support Office, who will forward it to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval.

Once a Change of Graduate Major request is approved, a new planned program of study for the new program must be approved and submitted to the Graduate Support Office. Students who change degree programs must meet the Graduate Catalog requirements that are in place at the time the change is approved. Please note that courses from the previous major are not automatically transferred to the new major; transferred coursework must be listed on the Change of Graduate Major Application for it to count towards the new program.

### **Change of Concentration**

For students enrolled in graduate majors that contain concentrations, a change to a new concentration within the major requires a [Change of Graduate Concentration Form](#). A change of graduate concentration:

- is NOT possible for graduate students in their first semester of study.
- is permissible only for a continuing graduate student enrolled in a major who wishes to change to another concentration within the same major.
- requires the student to be in good academic standing.
- is up to the discretion of the student.









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Note: The list of Credentialed Faculty will change throughout the year as faculty members receive credentialing. Please contact advisors in your program or department for the most up-to

depending on the program. Discussion with the Major Professor will help the student determine whether the thesis or project option is most appropriate. Students are required to enroll for a minimum of two (2) semester hours in the EDG 6971 thesis course or EDG 6975 project course during each semester they work on the thesis/project, and for two (2) semester hours in the thesis or project course in the semester they submit the thesis/project and apply for graduation.

**Note:** Once a student has decided to complete a thesis or project, they must continue to register in those hours until their work is complete. Students cannot flip back and forth between thesis hours and project hours as there is a specific process tied to each course.

### **Ed.S. Thesis Requirements**

#### **Permission to Conduct Research Involving Human Beings**

For both ethical and legal reasons, the USF Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) requires all researchers (including students) who conduct studies involving participation of human beings to have their projects reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to the start of their studies. Virtually all research studies in the College of Education will require approval by the IRB as these studies involve the use of human subjects. Any Specialist students completing a thesis must complete the required IRB training and submit an application for approval of their study by the IRB.

Certification to conduct human subjects research must take place every three years from the date of initial certification through the CITI Refresher Course, or another USF IRB-approved program listed on the IRB website. Please visit the [USF Research Integrity & Compliance](#) website to access IRB training and for more information about conducting research.

#### **Thesis Title Page Formats**

[Ed.S. Thesis – One Major Professor](#)

[Ed.S. Thesis – Co-Major Professors](#)

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to help graduate students navigate the ETD Process. It is essential that all students who are submitting a thesis become familiar with the registration process, the submission process, and the ETD formatting requirements.

ETD Registration opens on the first day of each semester. It is recommended that students complete ETD registration as soon as possible to avoid delays when submitting their thesis and Certificate of Approval (COA) packet.



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current semester deadlines. If a student applies for graduation and is not approved, a new Application for Degree must be submitted by the deadline in a new term.

It is recommended that students submit their application after they have consulted with their program advisor and have met the following requirements: oowi mensng 67 (t the)- (e)

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Registrar's office. The information that they have on file is what will be used when diplomas are generated and mailed. If you need to update your diploma address, please complete the [Diploma Address Change Request](#) and email it to [graduation@usf.edu](mailto:graduation@usf.edu). If you have changed your name while enrolled and want a different name on your diploma, you must submit a [Name Change Request](#) to the Registrar. No personal information can be updated at Commencement.

### **Registering for Commencement**

Commencement is the formal ceremony where students walk across the stage in their commencement regalia (cap, gown, hood). Participation in Commencement requires a formal RSVP, which can be done after you officially apply for graduation. Graduate students may not participate in commencement exercises until all requirements for their degree have been fulfilled and any outstanding financial obligations have been cleared. For more information regarding the commencement ceremonies and to register for this semester's ceremony, please visit the [USF Commencement website](#).

### **Late Graduation**

Students who need to file for graduation after the published University deadline for the current semester will be considered late applicants. Late applicants must complete the online Application for Degree via their Oasis account, and complete and submit the [Late Graduation Application Form](#) to the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320). Please note that applying late may require your application to be moved to the following term, even if all degree requirements are met.

Late applicants who want to participate in the graduation exercises should contact the University Commencement Office (see the Commencement section above) b-4.9 -4.8 (o)-4.7

that semester. Once withdrawn, the student must re-apply for graduation for the next term.

### **Certifying Degree Completion**

Participating in the formal commencement ceremony does not guarantee that students will be certified for their degree. Once final grades for the semester are received, the Graduate Support Office will certify completion of the earned degree by conducting a final review of the applicants' degree requirements and final transcripts to ensure that all graduation requirements are met. A list of graduation applicants and their final graduation status (i.e., whether they have successfully earned the degrees or were denied) will be forwarded to the Registrar's Office approximately 4-6 weeks after the graduation ceremony. Diplomas are mailed to the student's permanent address approximately 8 weeks after commencement and the conclusion of the student's final semester.

### **Denial of Degree**

In the event that a student does not meet the requirements for their degree program and is denied graduation, the Graduate Support Office will send the student and appropriate department faculty and/or advisors a notice identifying the issues which prevented graduation. The student must submit a new online graduation application for the new term of graduation by the application deadline for that term. The student should work with the academic department to successfully reconcile the issues which prevented the previous term's graduation. In addition, the student must be registered for two (2) graduate hours in the semester of re-application for graduation.

### **Letters of Completion**

If students need verification that they have successfully completed all degree requirements prior to receiving their diploma (often for employment purposes), they may request a Letter of Completion. This letter specifies that the student has finished all the requirements for the degree and lists the date the degree will be conferred on. Students may complete the



