

# COMMONLY USED PHRASES AND ABBREVIATIONS AT UOFSC

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## **ACADEMIC BULLETIN**

The Academic Bulletin provides a list of undergraduate academic programs and their requirements, course descriptions, and university policies and regulations.

## **ACADEMIC RELIEF/MEDICAL LEAVE**

Students who have a significant medical, psychiatric, or psychological problem that has substantially interfered with their ability to complete academic responsibilities may utilize academic relief, which potentially provides an opportunity to delay exams, take a grade of incomplete on a course, or withdraw from the university.

## **ACADEMIC YEAR**

At the University of South Carolina, the academic year includes a fall semester beginning in August, a spring semester beginning in January, and multiple summer sessions beginning in May.

## **ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE**

An academic degree granted after a two-year course of study at a community college, technical college, or vocational schools. The degree can be an Associate of Arts (A.A.), usually awarded after study in the humanities and social sciences fields, or an Associate of Science (A.S.), usually awarded after study in applied scientific, technical, and professional fields of study.

## **AUDIT**

Students can audit a class, which means they attend a class informally and do not receive academic credit. A student may choose this option if they are interested in simply taking a class for enjoyment and do not want to earn course credit. However, students who audit courses still pay fees and tuition as though the course was being taken for credit.

## **BACCALAUREATE OR BACHELOR'S DEGREE**

An academic degree given by a college or university to students who complete the undergraduate curriculum as prescribed by their school or college in the Academic Bulletin. The degree can be a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Bachelor of Music (B.M.), or Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.), depending on the major program.

## **BLACKBOARD**

Blackboard is an online course management platform that allows students to check their grades, download syllabi, participate in online discussion boards, submit assignments online, and receive important messages from instructors. Students log in with their network username and password.

## **CAROLINA CORE**

All University of South Carolina undergraduates complete the Carolina Core, which is a set of liberal arts and sciences courses designed to serve as an academic foundation for students.

### **CLASS STANDING**

Class standing is determined by the total number of course credits a student has earned and decides whether the student is classified as a first-year, sophomore, junior, or senior. First-year students who come in with dual enrollment, advanced placement or international baccalaureate credits are still considered to be first-year, since they earned those credits while still in high school.

### **COGNATE**

The cognate is a coherent set of courses equating to twelve (12) credit hours that support the major.

### **COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

Institutions have various colleges and schools that consist of academic programs and areas of study. USC has 13 colleges and schools that are devoted to specific areas of study including the College of Arts and Sciences, the Darla Moore School of Business, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computing, the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management, the Arnold School of Public Health, the College of Information and Communications, the School of Music, the College of Nursing, the College of Pharmacy, the College of Social Work, the South Carolina Honors College, and Palmetto College.

### **COMMENCEMENT**

Commencement is the graduation ceremony where students who have completed their degree will be recognized by name and congratulated by the president and the dean of the graduate's college or school. Commencement ceremonies are held in both May and December each year.

### **CO-REQUISITE**

A course that is required in conjunction with another course so that both courses must be taken at the same time. You can find out corequisite requirements by checking the academic bulletin for your program of study or by meeting with an Academic Advisor.

### **COURSE REGISTRATION**

The process of selecting and enrolling in desired courses. Students register for courses on Self-Service Carolina using the course registration number (CRN) of the courses they would like to take. Students register at a pre-assigned time that is based on the number of credit hours they have earned. Students must have met with their academic advisor before they are eligible to register for classes.

### **COURSE REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN)**

This is the unique identifying number for each section of a course and is found on Self-Service Carolina. Students input these numbers when they are registering for classes.

### **CREDIT HOURS**

This is the unit used to measure academic course completion. Each academic course has a designated number of hours that are earned when a student completes it. For example, in a three-hour course, students accumulate three credit hours for taking that course. Students must earn a certain number of credit hours in specific areas to earn a degree. Credit hours usually equate to the number of hours a student spends in class each week.

## **DEAN**

A Dean is a senior academic administrator in charge of a specific college or school of study in the larger institution. The Dean of Students heads the out-of-class experience.

## **DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Degree requirements include specific courses and credit hours needed to complete a certain degree.

## **DOCTORATE**

Doctorate is the highest degree awarded by a graduate school or other approved educational organization. Ph.D.'s are a common example of this type of degree.

## **DROP/ADD**

During the class registration period and up until a designated point of the semester, students can add or drop classes on Self-Service Carolina. Once that period ends, students can still withdraw from a course on Self-Service Carolina but will receive a "W" grade, which is not counted when calculating the G.P.A. If a student withdraws from a course after a designated point in the semester, usually around the mid-point, they will receive a "WF" grade, which counts the same as an "F" when calculating the G.P.A.

## **FACULTY**

Faculty is the teaching staff at a university or college.

## **FINALS**

Finals are the exams, papers, or projects that are completed at the end of a course. The week-long time period at the end of a semester is usually referred to as "Finals," and occurs following the last day of classes.

## **FREE ELECTIVE**

A free elective is a course that a student chooses to take that does not fulfill requirements for their major, minor, or Carolina Core. Electives will count toward the total number of credit hours that must be earned by each student.

## **GRADUATION WITH LEADERSHIP DISTINCTION (GLD)**

Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD) is an honor recognizing beyond-the-classroom efforts. Students may obtain GLD through five pathways: Professional and Civic Engagement (internships and peer leadership), Community Service, Global Learning (study abroad), Diversity and Social Advocacy, and Research.

## **GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)**

A student's grade point average or GPA is the cumulative average of grades earned in the courses they have completed. In college, the GPA is typically on a 4.0 scale.

## **GRADE FORGIVENESS**

Undergraduates who earn grades of D+, D, F, FN, or WF may take up to two undergraduate courses for a second time, on the USC Columbia campus or a USC Palmetto College campus, for grade forgiveness. When a student uses grade forgiveness, the second grade earned is used in computing the USC GPA instead of the original course grade. Both grades will appear on the USC permanent record.

## **GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Graduate school is a division of a university that offers advanced degrees beyond the bachelor's programs.

### **HOLD**

A hold is placed on a student's account for reasons including unpaid fines, failure to attend an academic advising meeting, and failure to submit immunization records. When a hold is placed on a student account, the student is unable to register for classes, request transcripts, or receive their diploma.

### **HONOR ROLL**

Students who earn exceptional Grade Point Averages for a semester are eligible to be on the honor roll list. Typically, schools' honor rolls consist of a **Dean's List**, **President's List**, or both. Each school has designated GPA cut-offs that must be met to either earn a spot on the Dean's List or the President's List. At USC, the President's Honor List recognizes undergraduate students with a 4.00 grade point average earned on a minimum of 12 credited semester hours. Students qualify for the Dean's Honor List if they earn a grade point average of 3.50 or higher as upperclassmen or 3.25 or higher for first-year students on a minimum of 12 credited semester hours.

### **INDEPENDENT STUDY**

Students can gain in-depth expertise of an area of study and receive course credit by completing an independent study. In this course, student learning is supervised directly by a faculty member. Students complete extensive reading, writing, and other assignments to learn a particular area not covered in an available course at the school.

### **MAJOR**

A program of study or group of selected courses required for an academic degree in a particular subject area.

### **MAYMESTER**

Maymester is an academic term usually lasting for the last three weeks in May where students can take courses on a shortened schedule. Many Maymester courses are study abroad experiences.

### **MID-TERMS**

Mid-terms are the exams or assignments that typically occur around the middle of the semester.

### **MINOR**

A group of courses that students are required to complete to pursue a subject of interest in addition to their major. A minor typically requires fewer courses or credit hours than a major.

### **NETWORK USERNAME**

A student's network username is a combination of their first, middle, and last names, initials and/or numbers. Students use their username to access their university email, the wired and wireless networks, Blackboard, and some departmental systems.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Professors designate certain hours during the week that they are on campus, in their office, and available to meet with students. Students may drop in to a professor's office during these times to ask questions or get additional assistance without making an appointment. A professor's office hours can usually be found listed on their syllabus.

### **PASS/FAIL**

Students may choose to take free elective courses outside of their major field of study on a pass/fail basis, which means the course is not graded on a typical letter grading scale; rather, the student will either pass or fail the class depending on their performance. Students may take no more than 8 such courses during their undergraduate career.

### **PRE-REQUISITE**

A pre-requisite is a course that is required prior to taking another course.

### **PROVOST**

The provost serves as the chief academic officer of the University of South Carolina. As such, the provost oversees the schools and colleges of the USC Columbia campus.

### **READING DAY**

Reading Day is a designated day before the start of final exams when faculty members are not allowed to hold class or schedule exams or due dates for other assignments. Reading Day serves as a free day for students to prepare for their upcoming final exams and assignments.

### **RECITATION**

Recitation is a smaller class, usually taught by a teaching assistant, which is taken in conjunction with a larger course such as chemistry or calculus that is taught by a professor in lecture style. It provides more time with an instructor to work on concepts from the course.

### **REGALIA**

Regalia include the garments worn during graduation. It's also known as "cap and gown." Regalia are distinctive to each institution and get more elaborate with each progressive degree. The custom regalia worn by USC degree candidates bears the school seal and is sold exclusively by the University Bookstore in the Russell House.

### **REGISTRAR**

The registrar's office is responsible for all university records. This is the place for students to go if they need to update records, make major changes, or drop classes.

### **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Federal regulations require universities to set and enforce standards, known as Satisfactory Academic Progress, that monitor a student's academic performance. To be eligible for any financial aid, undergraduate students at the University of South Carolina must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA. Undergraduate students must complete their degree within 180 attempted and transfer hours and are expected to earn 67% of all hours attempted at USC, including accepted transfer hours.

### **SEMESTER**

A semester is approximately a 16-week period when school is in session. For students, it begins on the first day of class and ends on the last day of final examinations.

### **STUDY ABROAD**

Students may choose to study abroad, taking classes for course credit at the University of South Carolina in another country. Study Abroad programs vary in length as well as the number of courses taken. Some programs last a month while others last a full academic year.

### **SYLLABUS**

A syllabus is a document that instructors create for their course and distribute to the students who are taking that course. Within the syllabus, students can find the grading policy, attendance policy, course schedule, assignment descriptions, exam dates, instructor's office hours, and instructor's contact information.

### **TERMINAL DEGREE**

A terminal degree is the highest degree awarded in a given field. The most common terminal-level degree is the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), but other terminal-level degrees include Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.), Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.), Juris Doctorate (J.D.), and Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.).

### **TRANSCRIPT**

A transcript is the official university document that highlights a student's courses taken, dates of attendance, major, type of degree awarded, cumulative grade point average, and all honors received while attending the institution. Students may have to request an official copy of their transcript when applying to graduate school or certain jobs. A transcript request can be made through the University Registrar.

### **UNDERGRADUATE**

An undergraduate is a student at a college or university who has not previously earned a bachelor's degree or the equivalent.

### **UPPERCLASSMEN**

Term used to describe junior (third-year) and seniors (fourth-year and beyond), and in some cases sophomores (second-year) in college.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Withdrawal may refer to a student's need to withdraw from a course, multiple courses, or the university. **Course Withdrawal** occurs when a student wishes to be removed from a course in which they are enrolled. After the add/drop deadline passes, students may still formally withdraw from a class but will receive a **grade of "W"** on their transcript for this course. If a student withdraws from a class after a designated date in the semester, usually around fall break, they will receive a **grade of "WF"** on their transcript, which counts the same as an "F."