



Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

May 2020

Dear Fall 2020 Class,

Congratulations on your acceptance into the Chemistry and Biochemistry Ph.D. program at the University of South Carolina (UofSC)! We are very excited you have chosen to join our department.

Upon arriving at the university this fall, you will start your education by participating in training/orientation to prepare you for teaching and research before classes start. The training will include legal and educational information on being a Graduate Teaching Assistant at USC, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) health and safety regulations, and information on the graduate program in Chemistry and Biochemistry. Below are important arrival dates. Of course, this is an unprecedented year with the Covid-19 pandemic, and these dates are based on the presumption that traveling nationally and internationally and visas for international students will not be a problem. If problems arise, please keep us informed.

International students taking the microlesson English language test need to be here by Monday, Aug. 3, 2020 beginning at 10 a.m. for a week of group microlesson practice.

- **All students need to attend the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry orientation on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020.**
- **Classes begin on Thursday, August 20, 2020.**

The class registration process is relatively straightforward. During orientation, we will provide information about the courses that we offer and recommendations on what courses you should register for. However, your registration could be significantly delayed if you forget some essential steps **before** you arrive. Some of these steps will require you to log in to your Self Service Carolina account. The information for setting this up was sent to you by the UofSC Graduate School and can be found here:

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/division_of_information_technology/end_user_services/available_technology_resources/information_for_students/index.php

1. You must provide **immunization data** before you will be able to register. If you have not had all of the vaccinations, your family physician or local health department should be able to provide them, or you can receive shots from the USC Thomson Health Center when you arrive. Link to the form: https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/medical-services/immunizations/index.php
2. You must complete the **Citizenship Verification Form**. The state of South Carolina requires students attending a public university in the state to provide confirmation that they are a citizen or national of the US or an alien lawfully present in the US. Non-US citizens should contact International Student Services (ISS) at iss@sc.edu. Information on completing the form is found here: http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/residency_and_citizenship/citizenship/index.php
3. If the transcript you provided USC for your application was sent before you graduated, you must send an **official final transcript indicating that you completed your degree** to The Graduate School, USC,

1705 College St, Suite 552, Columbia, SC 29208. An official transcript from every institution where you have received college credit must also be sent.

4. You must have the ETS send an **official GRE and TOEFL/IELTS** (international students only) report. Our institution code is 5818.

The admittance letter you received from the Graduate School states what requirements are still outstanding. They will send you a new letter once all of the required conditions are met. Please try to have all of these steps completed by August 11, 2020 to ensure that you will be cleared to register for courses. If you graduate in May or this summer, you will have one semester to get an official transcript to the Graduate School, otherwise you will not be allowed to register for the Spring 2021 term.

During orientation, you will also have the opportunity to complete the Qualifying Examinations. You will be allowed to choose two tests from the Analytical, Biochemistry, Inorganic, Organic, and Physical ACS examinations. Passing two of these exams is the quickest way to qualify for our Ph.D. program. Your undergraduate textbooks and class notes in these areas will help you to prepare for these exams. If you do not qualify by passing two exams, you will need to make a grade of "B" or better in one core course in two different areas by the end of your second semester. Please do not stress over these exams. We encourage you to study and pass the exams, but there are no negative repercussions for not passing.

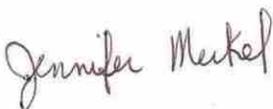
If you are an international student from a country whose first and primary language is not English, you will need to complete testing which evaluates your spoken and written English when you arrive here at USC. The most important portion is the spoken examination. The exam is in the form of a 5-7 minute presentation that you are required to give on a topic of your choice. We have included a sheet with more information on the examination on page three of this letter. This summer you are required to formulate a presentation on a very simple topic. The simplest presentations often work best (lab safety, states of matter, etc.). You should prepare a presentation that even someone with no knowledge of chemistry could understand. We will contact you by e-mail very soon to help you get started. **Beginning in June and continuing throughout the summer**, you are required to practice this presentation with USC linguistic graduate tutors via Skype. There will also be several practice sessions during the first-week orientation process (beginning August 3-7 at USC) for additional practice and feedback on your presentation. Please note that I-20 regulations allow you to travel to the U.S. up to 30 days before the start date indicated on your I-20. We also urge you to practice your English in your home country whenever possible to help you prepare.

You will find all pertinent departmental **Information for All Entering First Year Graduate Students** at this link: http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/chemistry_and_biochemistry/study/graduate/first_year_grads/. If your contact information (e-mail, phone, etc.) changes this summer, **please immediately** contact our graduate office via phone at 800-868-7588 or e-mail chemgrad@mailbox.sc.edu to **update the information**. This is likely to happen since e-mail accounts at undergraduate institutions are usually inactivated after a student graduates. Keep in touch over the summer! We look forward to meeting you this August!

Sincerely,



Sheryl Wiskur, PhD, Director of Graduate Studies



Jennifer Merkel, Graduate Student Program Coordinator

Note: If you are an international student whose speaking subscore on the TOEFL is 26 and above, or a speaking subscore of 7.0 or higher on the IELTS, you do not need to participate in microlesson practice or take the microlesson test.

University of South Carolina
The Graduate School
International Teaching Assistant Assessment
coordinated by The Graduate School & English Programs for Internationals
Microlesson Assignment

Candidates are to prepare a "microlesson" to teach to their group. (For this activity, each candidate will be assigned to one of several groups, determined by discipline as much as possible.) This is a very important activity. Please prepare for it accordingly.

TOPIC:

The topic of your microlesson should be related to your field, something you would ordinarily teach to a group of undergraduates at or near the beginning of a course offered by your department. (One possibility could be to present an introduction to a concept or a review of a homework problem. You should choose to teach a small teaching point, something that could be addressed in 5 minutes. Remember that your targeted audience is undergraduates, so be sure to define any technical terms in your presentation.) Make certain that your topic is focused enough to be done within the time limit.

LENGTH: 5-7 minutes (Your presentation will be timed. This time length includes questions from your "class" and your responses to these questions. Your presentation should allow for at least 2 minutes of questions from your "class" and your answers. **Expect for your "class" to ask you questions both during and after your lesson, just as any American student would.**)

AUDIENCE:

Your audience will be composed of your International Teaching Assistant colleagues and instructors from the English Programs for Internationals (EPI). For the initial August ITA assessment, the audience also includes a "veteran" TA, a Linguistics graduate student, and an undergraduate student. They will be playing the role of "undergraduate USC student." Your linguistic performance will be assessed by two EPI instructors who will also consider input from the rest of the assessment team.

You will be evaluated according to the following:

- pronunciation (50%)
- grammar (10%)
- vocabulary (10%)
- general fluency (10%)
- organization (10%)
- cross-linguistic awareness (5%)
- extra-linguistic communicative strategies (5%)

TEACHING MATERIALS:

You may use any of the following: whiteboard/chalkboard, markers/chalk, handouts and/or overhead transparencies (prepared before the session--you need to find and make your own transparencies). A board and overhead projector will be available. **No power point technology is available. Your Graduate Director will be notified in writing about your results on the assessment. Please check with your Graduate Director about your assessment, which will be either "satisfactory" (85% – 100%) or "marginal" (75% – 84%) or "at risk" (74% and below). If your assessment is "at risk," you will not be permitted to teach in a USC undergraduate setting.**

Your lesson will be recorded and kept on file for one year for review.