Graduate Programs in Education

Early Childhood Education

Elementary Education

Special Education: Visual Impairment

Faculty/Student Handbook

2011 - 2012

Accredited by the
National Council for the Accreditation of
Colleges of Teacher Education (NCATE)

USC Upstate Graduate Programs in Education
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Director of USC Upstate Graduate Programs

The Director of USC Upstate Graduate Programs is a full-time member of the School of Education faculty and, with the Associate Dean of Education, functions as a Division Chair in the School of Education. The Director of USC Upstate Graduate Programs oversees the masters programs for degree seeking candidates including admission to graduate work, academic progress, and degree completion. The Director is responsible for recruiting graduate candidates and for providing Portfolio Introduction and Training Sessions for each new cohort. The Director recommends and coordinates plans for modification of degree procedures, for the revision of existing graduate programs, and for the development of new graduate courses and graduate programs, and for the maintenance of accreditation. The Director of USC Upstate Graduate Programs reports directly to the Dean of the School of Education.

Graduate Programs Staff

The USC Upstate Graduate Programs division is supported by a full-time administrative coordinator. This individual is responsible for assisting in the development of promotional materials for all degree programs and professional development opportunities. The Graduate Coordinator is also responsible for distributing admission materials, arranging and scheduling graduate courses, completing contracts for professional development courses, submitting hiring and pay documents, and supporting the Director of Graduate Programs in other ways as necessary. The Graduate Coordinator is the frontline contact person for inquiries concerning graduate education and, as such, functions in a significant public relations capacity. The Coordinator is supported by a part-time student assistant.

Admission to USC Upstate Graduate Programs

Degree Candidates

Individuals seeking admission to USC Upstate as degree candidates will be considered for full admission when the USC Upstate Office of Admissions receives all of the following materials:

- Valid teaching certificate
- Application to Graduate Programs
- $40 application
- A state residency status form
- Two letters of recommendation from former professors or employers using the forms provided in the application packet
- Minimum Miller Analogy Test (MAT) score of 390 or Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score of 400 on the verbal section and 400 on the quantitative section
- Official copies of transcripts from ALL previous undergraduate and graduate studies
- A minimum grade point average on all undergraduate course work of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- Proof of immunization for measles (rubeola) and German measles (rubella) if born after December 31, 1956
- A personal interview with a member of the faculty of the USC Upstate School of Education
- Attendance at a regularly scheduled Portfolio Introduction and Training Session
Once the application, fee and residency information have been submitted, candidates are eligible to take up to twelve hours of program courses pending full admission to graduate programs. During these 12 hours candidates will be technically classified as non-degree seeking until all admissions requirements have been met. Non-degree seeking candidates are not eligible for financial aid; consequently, to be eligible for financial aid, candidates must be fully admitted as a Degree Seeking student in graduate programs.

**Admission Decisions**

*Full Admission to Graduate Programs*

When all materials are received by the Admissions Office, including the submission of required test scores, the Graduate Programs Office will make a decision concerning full admission to a masters degree program. If a candidate meets all criteria indicated above, the candidate will be fully admitted and will be notified in writing. If a candidate fails to achieve the required score on the Miller Analogies Test, or the Graduate Record Exam, the candidate will be required to retake either the MAT or GRE in an effort to achieve the designated score. After full admission, the candidate will be assigned an advisor and should set up an appointment to develop a Program of Study.

*Conditional Admission*

Under two circumstances may an individual apply for conditional admission as a degree candidate as long as all other admission requirements have been fulfilled:

* If, after two attempts, the candidate fails to meet the required Miller Analogies Test (MAT) score of 390 or Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score of 400 on the verbal section and 400 on the quantitative section. The attempts must be for the same test. If either test is taken twice, results from both sessions are to be submitted as part of your application to the program.
* If the candidate does not have the minimum grade point average on all undergraduate coursework of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

If candidates fail to meet one of these criteria, candidates may submit a written request for conditional admission to the Director of Graduate Programs.

If candidates fail to meet BOTH of these criteria they are NOT eligible for admission. If candidates are granted conditional admission and achieve a minimum of 3.25 GPA on the initial twelve (12) hours of USC Upstate program coursework, candidates will be fully admitted as a masters candidate. If candidates fail to achieve this grade point average, candidates may not continue in the masters program.

**State Residency Requirements**

The University of South Carolina Upstate assesses fees and tuition on the basis of state residency. Rules regarding the establishment of legal residency in relation to tuition and fees at institutions of higher education are governed by the South Carolina Code of Laws. A copy of this law in its entirety is available from the USC Upstate Office of Admissions. Generally, in order to be a legal resident of South Carolina for the purpose of paying tuition and fees, a candidate must have resided in South Carolina for at least 12 months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the term for which the resident classification is sought. Documentation for residency include: (abbreviated from the SC Code of Laws)

* Statement of full-time employment;
* Possession of a valid SC voter registration card;
* Designation of SC as state of legal residency on military records;
* Possession of a valid SC driver's license;
- Possession of a valid SC vehicle registration card;
- Continuous presence in SC when not enrolled as a candidate;
- Paying SC income taxes during the past tax year; and
- Owning a principal residence in SC

The initial resident status determination is made at the time of admission and prevails until such time that a candidate establishes a proper claim to residency as defined by the laws of South Carolina. Any candidate who is discovered to have been improperly classified as a South Carolina resident will be reclassified as a non-resident and will be required to pay the differences in fees. Persons having questions about residency are encouraged to secure a Residency Application Package from the Office of Admissions. An appointment with the Director of Admissions to discuss residency requirements is also encouraged. If candidates who are non-residents are enrolled in contact graduate courses, the candidate or school district purchasing the course must pay an out-of-state residency supplement.

**USC Upstate Citizenship Verification**

Pursuant to section 59.101.430 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended in 2008, the University of South Carolina has adopted a general enrollment policy effective January 1, 2009. To attend a public University in the state, a student must be a citizen or national of the United States or an alien lawfully present in the United States. This verification process has been adopted to deter and prevent false claims of citizenship by unlawful aliens attempting to evade the eligibility requirements of section 59.101.430.

Students must now provide proof of citizenship before being allowed to enroll in classes at the University. If the Admissions Office can not verify an applicant’s status using information legally available to them, she or he will be asked to present proof of U.S. citizenship. She or he must complete the Citizenship Status Verification form and send it, along with proof of citizenship to a University of South Carolina Upstate Enrollment Services Office.

Proof of Citizenship - One of the following documents can be mailed along with the form:
- Copy of your South Carolina driver’s license if you first became a licensed driver in South Carolina after January 1, 2002,
- Certified Birth Certificate indicating that you were born in the United States or a territory of the United States. A photocopy of your birth certificate is not acceptable.

If proof of citizenship is based upon any of the following documents, you must bring the original document along with the form to the Enrollment Services Office in the Health Education Complex Building:
- Current U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport that has not been expired more than 10 years,
- Certificate of Naturalization, USCIS Form (N.550 or N.570),
- U.S. government issued Consular Report of Birth Abroad,
- Certificate of Citizenship (N.560 or N.561)

If your name has changed since birth, you must present all legal documents (i.e., adoption records, marriage certificate, certificate of naturalization, and court ordered name change)
supporting all name changes from the name which appears on the document presented as proof of citizenship.

If your Citizenship Verification requirement is not satisfied, a hold will be placed on your registration, transcript, and diploma in order to comply with state law.

Disability Services

In keeping with University policy, any student with a disability who requests academic accommodations should contact Disability Services at 503-5195 to arrange a confidential appointment with the Disability Services Coordinator. Students are encouraged to seek an appointment as early in the semester as possible, as accommodations are not provided retroactively. Letters of accommodation must be signed and printed on letterhead from the Disability Services office. It is the student’s responsibility to provide these letters to professors in a timely manner so that accommodations may be put in place.

Valid Period of Admission

Admission to graduate study at USC Upstate is valid for one year. Should a candidate fail to enroll in any graduate courses during this period, the admission lapses. The candidate becomes subject to any new requirements that may have been adopted, and the candidate must reapply for admission.

Candidates who have been admitted to graduate study at the University of South Carolina-Columbia under regulations other than those now in force, and who have not completed any USC courses during a period of three or more years, are required to fulfill current admissions requirements prior to attending USC Upstate for additional graduate work. Upon admission, these candidates become subject to the current graduate regulations. In order to complete a USC Upstate masters degree, candidates must complete a minimum of 24 hours of program courses at the University of South Carolina Upstate.

Readmission

Candidates whose graduate attendance at USC Upstate has been interrupted for any reason for two or more major semesters must apply for readmission. An application fee is not required.

Non-Degree Seeking Candidates

Candidates wishing to enroll in either program courses or professional development courses but who do not wish to pursue a graduate degree at USC Upstate must submit the following admission materials:

- A copy of their initial teacher certification or a letter indicating full-time employment by a school district as a teacher;
- Non-degree application for graduate study
- $10 application fee
- A state residency status form

Candidates may take up to 12 hours in a non-degree seeking capacity. In order to take additional hours, the candidate must repeat the non-degree seeking application process, and obtain written approval by the Director of Graduate Programs.
Candidates with No Baccalaureate Degree

Candidates with no baccalaureate degree, such as some trade and industry teachers and teacher's aides, may participate in graduate courses as required by their employer. The USC Upstate Admissions Office must receive written documentation from the individual's school district verifying their full-time employment status. These candidates will receive recertification credit for participation in a course; however, these individuals are ineligible for graduate credit.

In order to receive recertification credit, the candidate must request in writing that the instructor of the graduate course write to the South Carolina State Department of Education. Using University letterhead, the instructor of the course is to indicate that the non-baccalaureate candidate has successfully met all requirements for the course. A copy of the letter will be sent to the superintendent of the district in which the candidate is employed.

Graduate Candidates Enrolling in Undergraduate Courses

Should a graduate candidate wish to enroll simultaneously in a graduate and an undergraduate course, the candidate's graduate status supersedes. The candidate must register as a graduate candidate and pay graduate fees for all courses.

Supervising a USC Upstate Cooperating Teacher

Individuals who serve as a cooperating teacher for a USC Upstate student teacher are eligible to take a USC Upstate graduate course for a nominal fee any time during the two years following the semester of service. Principals of a school hosting USC Upstate student teachers are eligible for a reduced tuition course as well; at their discretion the principal may transfer the course to one of their teachers. A written request to the Graduate Programs Office is required.

Senior Privilege

A special provision for undergraduate candidates to earn graduate credit is available for USC Upstate undergraduate seniors in their final semester who have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and who need less than a normal course load to complete baccalaureate requirements. Overload enrollment to access this privilege is not allowed nor can graduate courses be used to fulfill undergraduate degree requirements. Certification only candidates are not eligible for this privilege.

Academic Regulations

Portfolio Introduction and Training Session

The development and defense of a Graduate Professional Portfolio has replaced comprehensive exams as the capstone assessment tool both for the assessment of candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions and for the assessment of program effectiveness. The portfolio, arranged according to the core values and dispositions of the USC Upstate School of Education is developed over the candidate's entire program of study. Participation in a Portfolio Introduction and Training Session is required for full admission to USC Upstate Graduate Programs.