

# USC Progressive Degree Program

## Program Eligibility and Application Instructions



A Progressive Degree is a highly individualized program that allows a student to begin work on a master's degree while completing the requirements for the bachelor's degree. Applications for Progressive Degree require approvals from both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

### **Program Eligibility**

- Applicants to the progressive degree program may apply once they have at least 64 total units of undergraduate course work completed, excluding AP, IB, or transfer units earned prior to graduation from high school.
- Applicants may apply in their junior or senior year, but no later than the semester prior to beginning graduate work.
- Applicants do not need to submit GRE, GMAT or other graduate entrance exam scores but should have at least a 3.0 cumulative USC GPA at the time of application. Please note that some academic programs have higher GPA requirements.

### **Application Requirements**

- Students must complete all necessary sections on the *Application for Admission to a Progressive Master's Program* form. Admission requires approval from the program/department chair and the dean of the student's undergraduate major, and by the program/department chair and the dean of the master's degree program at USC. The completed application form must show all signatures required for approval.
- Students must complete a *Progressive Degree Program Proposed Course Plan* form as part of the application process. This is necessary to determine how future terms of registration apply to remaining undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. Course work taken to fulfill degree requirements will show on the Course Plan, as will an indication of whether the course work fulfills undergraduate or graduate degree requirements.
- Students may be required to submit letters of recommendation and other supplemental materials at the discretion of the academic program.

### **Instructions to Students and Departments:**

#### 1. Program Selection

Students identify a master's degree that is of interest and consult with the Graduate Advisor or Admissions Officer of the program to determine the availability of the Progressive Degree option. The department or school that offers the master's program determines whether to offer the Progressive Degree option.

The master's program need not be from the same department as the student's undergraduate major, but typically the two programs are at least loosely related. Students may also pursue a master's program based on an associated minor program at the undergraduate level.

#### 2. Proposed Course Plan

The Progressive Degree Program application requires a Proposed Course Plan that incorporates all of the remaining requirements for the student's undergraduate major(s) and minor(s), and the intended master's program. The Proposed Course Plan should be constructed in consultation with advisors for both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The course plan must include all remaining undergraduate course requirements and at least two-thirds of the graduate program requirements. All coursework for the undergraduate program(s) must be completed.

3. Letters of Recommendation  
Students may be required to submit letters of recommendation and other supplemental materials at the discretion of the academic program.
4. Undergraduate Approvals  
The Application for Admission to Progressive Master's Program form and the Proposed Course Plan form each require signed approval from:
  - a. The student's current undergraduate department chair
  - b. The student's current undergraduate program dean
5. Graduate Approvals  
The Application for Admission to Progressive Master's Program form and the Proposed Course Plan form each require signed approval from:
  - a. The student's proposed master's program department chair
  - b. The student's proposed master's program dean
6. Application Submission  
Students should submit their complete application to the office of the master's program in which they hope to enroll. If final approval is granted by the master's program, the graduate program department will submit a copy of the approved Application for Admission and Proposed Course Plan to Degree Progress for final review, entry of the master's degree Program of Study on the student's record, and designation as a Progressive Master's student.  
  
If the graduate program department does not admit the student to the requested program, the department will communicate the decision to the student and retain the application for record keeping. Denied applications should not be forwarded to Degree Progress.
7. Recorded on USC Record (if admitted)  
The Master's department should forward the approved Application for Admission and Proposed Course Plan to: [degreeprogress@usc.edu](mailto:degreeprogress@usc.edu)  
Degree Progress will retain a copy of the Proposed Course Plan and the Application for Admission through graduation, and the student's master's program should retain the original application in the student's file.
8. Course Plan Changes  
If the student's course plan needs to be changed at any point during the Progressive Degree Program, an updated Proposed Course Plan must be submitted to Degree Progress with all appropriate signatures. Updates to the STARS report cannot be completed without an approved revised course plan.

## **Program Requirements**

1. Progressive degree program students must fulfill all specified degree requirements for both the bachelor's degree and the master's degree with a minimum two-thirds of the units required for the master's degree at or above the 500 level.
2. Progressive degree students are classified as undergraduate students, until they attain one of the following conditions, *whichever comes first*:
  - a. up to and including the semester they complete 144 units \*(see top of next page);
  - b. their first bachelor's degree is conferred; or
  - c. they receive a research or teaching assistant award.

\*Transfer units, including AP and IB units, and all units completed at USC, including both undergraduate- and graduate-level coursework during any semester, count toward the 144-unit limit. If applicants transferred pre-matriculation units, including AP or IB units, they should request a Progressive Degree Status Check to determine how many undergraduate units remain before they transition to graduate status. In rare cases, transfer course work that does not count toward subject requirements, electives or the bachelor degree program's minimum unit requirement **may** increase the 144-unit threshold. Again, upon completing 144 units a student transitions from undergraduate to graduate status.

3. Progressive degree program students are subject to undergraduate academic progress standards while in undergraduate status and to the master's academic progress standards while in graduate status.
4. While classified as undergraduates, students are assessed the undergraduate tuition rate, and their enrollment status and financial aid eligibility are determined by undergraduate standards. Undergraduate-level progressive degree students maintain their eligibility for Federal Pell Grants, Federal SEOG Grants, Cal Grants, Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans, Direct Parent PLUS Loans, and any applicable eligibility for USC Merit Scholarships or USC University Grants, as long as they are enrolled in courses that are required for, or that can be applied as an eligible elective credit toward, their undergraduate degree. The Registrar's Office determines when a student has completed their undergraduate degree and manages the process of posting degrees to a student's record. The Financial Aid Office relies on the Registrar's determination of the applicability of a course to a degree program and the completion of the bachelor's degree.
5. While classified as graduate students, progressive degree students are assessed the graduate tuition rate, and their enrollment status and financial aid eligibility are determined by graduate standards. Graduate students are not eligible for federal, state, or university need-based grants. Graduate-level progressive degree students are eligible to borrow Direct Unsubsidized Loans and Direct Graduate PLUS Loans, up to the maximum yearly amounts established for graduate students.
6. The bachelor's degree may be awarded separately, but the master's degree will not be awarded before the undergraduate degree.
7. The time limit for completing a progressive degree program is 12 semesters (6 years) beginning from the first term of college enrollment. Transfer students whose transfer coursework extends beyond this timeline may have their coursework evaluated for semester-equivalency by the admitting master's program. The admitting program will determine a completion term as part of the application process and list this term on the proposed course plan.
8. Students may complete only one master's degree as part of the progressive degree program.



## USC Progressive Degree Program Application for Admission to Progressive Master's Program

*Submit this application to the graduate department to which you are applying with the following: 1) Proposed Course Plan; 2) Two letters of recommendation; and 3) a current USC STARS report. Check with the department for additional requirements. Failure to comply with these instructions will delay processing of your application.*

### To be Completed by the Student

Printed name of student (Last)	(First)	(Middle)
USC ID Number	Email address	Phone Number
USC GPA	Units Completed	Current Major/Minor

### Proposed Master's Program

Degree:    M.A.    M.S.    Other \_\_\_\_\_      Proposed Admit Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/School: \_\_\_\_\_      Expected Graduate Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

*I hereby apply for admission to the Progressive Master's Degree. My Proposed Course Plan is attached and has been approved by the Chairs and Deans of the respective departments/schools.*

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### To be completed by the Undergraduate Program

Major Department/School	<input type="checkbox"/> Recommended	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Recommended
Dean's Signature	Printed Name	Date
Second Major Department/School (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Recommended	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Recommended
Second Major Dean's Signature	Printed Name	Date

### To be completed by the Master's Program

Approved to Begin (Semester/Year) \_\_\_\_\_       Denied      Date of Approval/Denial \_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_      Master's Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Proposed Course Plan has been approved and a copy is on file in the student's master's program department.*

Master's Program Chair's Signature	Printed Name	Date
Master's Program Dean's Signature	Printed Name	Date

**The department should forward the approved Application for Admission and Proposed Course Plan to:**  
[degreeprogress@usc.edu](mailto:degreeprogress@usc.edu)



## USC Progressive Degree Program Proposed Course Plan

*Enter all remaining requirements for the bachelor's degree and all master's degree requirements chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor. This information will be used to create your master's program STARS report if your application is accepted. In addition to the master's courses identified on the course plan, all other requirements for Master's degree completion must be satisfied/waived on the STARS report.*

(Please type or print)

Printed name of student (Last) (First) (Middle)

USC ID Number Email address Phone Number

Bachelor's Program Master's Program

- This is the original course plan submitted with the program application       This is a REVISED course plan for an existing approved program
- List courses and units to be taken to fulfill degree requirements. **Exact** courses must be listed for each master's core requirement; electives may be listed as "graduate degree elective". Elective coursework can be decided later by the student with approval from their graduate program advisor.
  - Begin with the current semester. If this is a revised course plan, begin with the term in which the first master's course was or will be completed.
  - Check "UG" for courses to be taken to fulfill bachelor's requirements; check "GR" for courses to be taken for the master's degree.  
**Only ONE box (UG or GR) should be checked for each course.**

Semester/Year	Dept / Course #	UG	GR	Course Title	Units
<b>Total Units</b>					

Semester/Year	Dept / Course #	UG	GR	Course Title	Units
<b>Total Units</b>					

Semester/Year	Dept / Course #	UG	GR	Course Title	Units
<b>Total Units</b>					

Semester/Year	Dept / Course #	UG	GR	Course Title	Units
<b>Total Units</b>					

Proposed Course Plan (continued)

Semester/Year	Dept / Course #	UG	GR	Course Title	Units
				<b>Total Units</b>	

Semester/Year	Dept / Course #	UG	GR	Course Title	Units
				<b>Total Units</b>	

Total units *required* for the master's program: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/Year in which 144 total units will be completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Total units *to be completed* in the master's program: \_\_\_\_\_

Total semesters of registration after completion of 144 units: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester and Year of first College Coursework: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester and Year of Progressive Degree Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Proposed Course Plan must be approved by the student, and by  
the Chairs and Deans of *both* the Undergraduate and Master's Departments**

**Course Plan Approval**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**To be completed by the Undergraduate Program**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Undergraduate Department Chair's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Undergraduate Department Dean's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**To be completed by the Master's Program**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Master's Program Chair's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Master's Program Dean's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# USC Progressive Degree Program Recommendation Form



*Instructions for student:* Fill in the top portion of this form and present it to your recommender.

*Instructions for faculty:* Return this form to the department coordinator listed below.

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Department coordinator for application \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinator's email address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please type or print)

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Printed name of student (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_ (Middle) \_\_\_\_\_

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Department to which you are applying \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

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- I waive my right to inspect the contents of the following recommendation.
- I do NOT waive my right to inspect the contents of the following recommendation.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Recommender Section:** Please write candidly about the student's qualifications and potential to pursue advanced study in the field specified.

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Admission to Progressive Degree Program is:

- Strongly recommended       Recommended       Recommended with reservations       Not recommended

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# USC Progressive Degree Program Recommendation Form



*Instructions for student:* Fill in the top portion of this form and present it to your recommender.

*Instructions for faculty:* Return this form to the department coordinator listed below.

Department coordinator for application

Coordinator's email address

(Please type or print)

Printed name of student (Last)

(First)

(Middle)

Department to which you are applying

Email address

- I waive my right to inspect the contents of the following recommendation.
- I do NOT waive my right to inspect the contents of the following recommendation.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommender Section:** Please write candidly about the student's qualifications and potential to pursue advanced study in the field specified.

Admission to Progressive Degree Program is:

- Strongly recommended       Recommended       Recommended with reservations       Not recommended

Signature

Printed Name

Date