DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN BIOKINESIOLOGY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy

School of Dentistry

University of Southern California
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What is Biokinesiology?

**Biokinesiology** – *n.* The study of the biological bases of both healthy and disordered human movement.

The focus of biokinesiology is on understanding how the human body adapts to growth and experience as well as its adapting to injury, disease, and aging. Three fundamental principles provide a rationale for the study of biokinesiology as the foundation science of physical therapy. They are:

1. Human health and quality of life depend on the ability to move skillfully and efficiently.
2. Specific biological mechanisms are responsible for skilled and efficient motor output, and an understanding of these mechanisms is essential to developing better methods for treating disorders that affect movement.
3. Movement is used by humans to accomplish meaningful goals. This means that a behavioral or action-based perspective is therefore essential to understanding the determinants of both normal and dysfunctional movement.

Biokinesiology is inherently interdisciplinary. In order to elucidate the causal mechanisms in movement behavior, research programs are designed to analyze movement across different levels of observation. Biokinesiology integrates the study of movement across three broadly defined hierarchical levels. First, movement is analyzed at the molecular, cellular, organ, and systems levels. This is accomplished by using techniques developed in the life sciences in order to discover the basic structural and physiological mechanisms that account for movement adaptability. These techniques are often invasive and involve animal models and advanced clinical models. Second, movement itself is studied from the outside using non-invasive or minimally invasive techniques for measuring movement trajectories, the forces that produce movement, and the muscle contractions that produce force. Included in this outside-in perspective are psychophysical and behavioral approaches for describing and analyzing the nature of information processing and the course of learning and adaptability. Lastly, clinical investigations are designed to determine the best ways to measure pathologic movement and to test the efficacy of interventions intended to rehabilitate individuals with disorders that affect their movement.
Ph.D. in Biokinesiology
Program Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy in Biokinesiology program prepares graduates to be research scientists in the field of biokinesiology. Ph.D. graduates are academic faculty members and independent scientists who are prepared to establish and lead their own research programs. They are leading scholars and innovators in the field of biokinesiology. The philosophy of the Ph.D. in biokinesiology program is that graduates will be prepared to conduct collaborative, interdisciplinary research. This requires that they are conversant in all areas of biokinesiology and that they are able to conceptualize research questions across several levels of analysis. The curriculum strikes a balance between providing students with a broad exposure to the variety of disciplines within biokinesiology and giving students the advanced skills necessary to excel in a specialized area. Students achieve breadth of knowledge by taking a set of required core courses, and they develop depth by taking elective courses in their areas of concentration. Students complete a dissertation project in which they develop and conduct a unique and significant research investigation with the guidance of a biokinesiology faculty member as research advisor.
Graduate School Policies and Requirements

General Requirements for Graduate Degrees

The work for the master’s degree or for the Ph.D. degree is based upon the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent comparable in standard to that awarded at USC from a regionally accredited college or university. Many doctoral students, of course, will already have received a master’s degree.

University policies governing unit, grade point average and time limit requirements are stated in the University Policies section of this catalogue. Graduate students should also consult this section for policies on transfer of credit, concurrent enrollment, continuous enrollment, leaves of absence, readmission, and waiver and substitution of course requirements.

Unit Requirements

The course of study for the master’s degree must include at least 24 units in required and elective courses. In addition, students in a program requiring a thesis must register for four units of 594ab Master’s Thesis.

A minimum of 60 units of course work beyond the baccalaureate is required for the Ph.D. degree, including research courses and four units of 794ab Doctoral Dissertation. No more than 8 units of 794 may be received or applied toward the degree.

A minimum of 36 units of course work beyond the first graduate degree, exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation, is required for doctoral degree students admitted with Advanced Standing. Additional course work may be required if deemed necessary by the student’s faculty. See Doctoral Admission with Advanced Standing.

Residence

Residency is a period of intensive study completed at USC. For the master’s degree a minimum of 20 units of course work applicable toward the degree must be completed on the University Park and/or Health Sciences campuses and/or at one of the university’s approved off-campus study centers.

For the Ph.D. degree a minimum of 24 units applicable toward the degree, exclusive of 794 Doctoral Dissertation, must be completed on the University Park and/or Health Sciences campuses. Internships, field work and other off-campus experiences do not count toward residency.

It is not intended that the Ph.D. degree be conferred as a certificate of residence, however faithful or extended, or as a certificate of the satisfaction of unit requirements, which are to be regarded as largely preliminary. It has been found that the scholastic requirements for the degree cannot be completed in less than the equivalent of three full years of work devoted wholly to graduate study and research with appropriate facilities and under university supervision.
Communication Skills Requirement

All candidates for advanced degrees awarded by the Graduate School must demonstrate the ability to communicate and transfer knowledge. The specific method(s) for satisfying this requirement will be established by each individual academic unit.

Exception to Graduate School Policy

Requests for exception to the policies and procedures governing Graduate School degree programs will be considered upon the submission of a general petition stating the specific request, supported by adequate reasons and information. The signatures and recommendation of the faculty advisor or committee chair and department chair are required.

Departmental Requirements

The requirements and regulations set forth in this portion of the catalogue are to be construed only as minimal requirements established by the Graduate School. In addition, the student is obligated to meet all the requirements established by the individual department as described in the departmental sections.

Advisement and Program of Study

Academic advisement of entering graduate students will be provided by a designated faculty member in the student’s home department. During the first semester of graduate enrollment a formal program of study should be developed and agreed upon in writing. This academic plan should include: (1) the sequence of required and elective courses, with a diversity of faculty instruction and a reasonable balance between course work and directed research appropriate for the degree; (2) evaluation of available transfer credit for application toward the degree; and (3) the schedule and procedures for departmental evaluation of the student. The program of study should be on file in the student’s department and may be modified in keeping with the student’s progress toward the degree objective. This will become the responsibility of the student’s guidance committee when it has been established.

Foreign Language/Research Tool Requirements

Although the Graduate School does not require a foreign language examination, some departments do have specific language requirements for their graduate programs.

The foreign language requirement is determined by the individual departments or schools, subject to approval by the University Committee on Curriculum. For the Ph.D. student, these requirements should be met well in advance of the qualifying examination. Permission to take the qualifying examination will not be given until the requirements have been met.

When proficiency in a foreign language or a research tool is required, the evidence attesting to proficiency may not be more than five years old. This regulation applies regardless of the form of the evidence.

For specific information, see Foreign Language/Research Tool Requirement under the appropriate department and program sections of this catalogue.
Academic Warning and Dismissal
Faculty advisors and departments take factors other than satisfactory grades and adequate GPAs into consideration in determining a student’s qualifications for an advanced degree. A student’s overall academic performance, specific skills and aptitudes, and faculty evaluations will be considered in departmental decisions regarding a student’s continuation in a master’s or doctoral degree program.
Satisfactory progress toward an advanced degree as determined by the faculty is required at all times. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress will be so informed by their department or committee chair or school dean. The faculty has the right to recommend at any time after written warning that a student be dismissed from a graduate program for academic reasons or that a student be denied readmission.

Theses and Dissertations
Submission of Theses and Dissertations
Candidates are required to submit their manuscripts to the Graduate School electronically as one PDF file for review by the thesis editor. Permission to submit electronically will be granted after all required documentation is first submitted in person to the Graduate School. Once the paperwork is reviewed and is complete, the candidate is cleared to submit the manuscript electronically.

Manuscripts submitted electronically without Graduate School permission will be rejected. Candidates have six months from the date on the approval of the master’s thesis or Ph.D. dissertation form to have their manuscript approved by the thesis editor. If the thesis or dissertation is not approved within the six-month period, a late submission fee of $100 will be assessed for each month thereafter. Manuscripts are reviewed and graduation paperwork is processed in the order that they are received. Candidates are strongly urged to submit their paperwork and manuscript as close to the date on the approval of the master’s thesis or Ph.D. form as possible. Candidates are also advised to submit as far in advance of the Graduate School’s deadline as possible. Only electronic PDF versions of the manuscript will be accepted for review. The university does not provide copies of theses and dissertations.

Acceptance by the University
The university must accept all theses and dissertations in an approved, final and electronic form before graduation can be conferred. The candidate’s committee must have approved all documents before submission to the Graduate School. After complying with the submission process described above, the student must remain in contact with the Graduate School during the corrections process.

At the time of submission, all manuscripts should be formatted and edited according to a recommended style manual and strict adherence to the Guidelines for Format and Presentation of Theses and Dissertations, available from the Graduate School, Grace Ford Salvatori Hall 315, or from the Graduate School Web site. The university thesis editor reviews the final electronic copy for conformance to university regulations, which takes precedence over all other style formats and issues. The editor does not function as a proofreader or copy editor. The final electronic version of the thesis or dissertation must comply with university guidelines, which are established to meet publication standards at ProQuest Information and Learning and at the university library.
Students with manuscripts that have not been proofread and/or do not conform to university regulations will be notified via email that their manuscript is not acceptable and that they must format the manuscript in compliance with university guidelines and resubmit it.

If the manuscript requires corrections, the student must make the corrections and upload an entirely new PDF version of the manuscript in the time allotted by the thesis editor. Students will not be permitted to simply mail or email a corrected version. The student must maintain contact with the Graduate School throughout the entire process to ensure completion. Electronic resubmission of a manuscript for a second review is also reviewed in the order in which it is received. No more than two reviews will be granted per semester, and when time constraints prevail at each deadline, the number of reads possible will depend upon the availability of the thesis editor. Therefore, all students must allow adequate time to make any and all corrections, and these corrections must be approved by the thesis editor before a thesis or dissertation will be accepted by the university for graduation.

**Schedule of Deadlines**
The Graduate School provides a schedule of specific dates for completing the various requirements to qualify the student for the master’s or Ph.D. degree in the corresponding semester. Despite the date of submission, a student must complete all corrections to the manuscript as specified by the thesis editor, as well as all verification of documentation and necessary paperwork before the degree can be conferred. Not until all the requirements of the entire process are completed will the thesis or dissertation be approved by the editor and Degree Progress (where the degree will then be verified and finally posted) notified. Deadlines are strictly enforced. No exceptions will be made. Thus, a student may not always graduate in the semester in which he or she first submits the thesis or dissertation. Upon completion of all requirements, the official USC transcript will serve as evidence of the degree until the diploma is received.

**Publication**
All theses and dissertations electronically submitted and approved will be forwarded to ProQuest Information and Learning and to Doheny Memorial Library for publication and availability.

**Thesis/Dissertation Fees**
All master’s and doctoral candidates must pay a fee as part of the final requirements for the degree. The doctoral candidate’s fee, currently $110, includes ProQuest, Doheny Memorial Library and Graduate School processing fees. Master’s candidates currently pay a fee of $100 for ProQuest, Doheny Memorial Library and Graduate School processing fees. Both fees are paid at the Cashier’s Office, King Hall, prior to submitting the manuscript to the Graduate School.

**General Requirements for the Ph.D.**

Qualified students will be received as applicants for candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in departments which are adequately equipped with staff, library and laboratory facilities to furnish the necessary training and opportunities for original research.
Screening Procedures
A screening examination or other procedure designated by the department or program is to be administered before the student has taken more than 24 units (including research courses). Passing this procedure is prerequisite to continuation in the doctoral program. Students who fail the screening procedure will be advised that they are not recommended to continue in the Ph.D. program and that any additional work may not be counted toward the degree. Failure to undertake the screening procedure before completion of 24 units of course work may jeopardize additional units. A faculty member will be appointed to serve as the student’s advisor until an approved guidance committee is established.

Course Requirements
The subject or field of concentration is called a major. The major is usually a departmental major, although several interdepartmental majors have been authorized.

Undergraduate prerequisite and graduate course work will be required in accordance with the regulations of the major department or program and the recommendation of the student’s guidance committee. Consult the appropriate departmental section of this catalogue for specific course requirements.

Qualifying Exam Committee
The qualifying examination committee has the responsibility for supervising the student’s program of studies and preparation for the qualifying examination, and the administration and evaluation of the written and oral parts of the qualifying examination. The committee continues to serve until the qualifying examination has been passed, the dissertation topic approved, and the student is admitted to candidacy.

The qualifying exam committee should be established within the department at least two semesters prior to taking the qualifying examination. An appointment of committee form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Web site, should be used to establish the qualifying exam committee. Students initiate the paperwork and submit the signed form to the department chair or the program director’s office.

The qualifying examination committee is normally composed of five members, although additional members may be included at the student’s and committee chair’s discretion. The committee chair and at least two additional members must be affiliated with the student’s program. Faculty eligible to serve as committee chairs and members include tenured and tenure track faculty, and non-tenure track faculty of outstanding stature who have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in their field. At least three members of the committee must be tenured or tenure track. Visiting faculty may not serve on qualifying exam committees.

When the student and the qualifying examination committee have determined that the qualifying examination can be taken, the Request to Take the Qualifying Examination form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Web site, is the means by which the student is given permission to take the formal qualifying examination. The signed form should be filed with the department chair or the program director’s office not later than 30 days before the beginning date of the examination.
Changes in Qualifying Exam Committee

A Change of Committee form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Web site, must be completed whenever a change is made in the qualifying exam committee. All such changes must be made in advance of the qualifying examinations. Informal substitutions for either the written or oral parts of the qualifying examination are not permitted. Changes in the qualifying exam committee are not permitted between the written and oral portions of the examination. The examinations must be scheduled at times when it is possible for all members of the committee, including the outside member, to participate. Changes made without the prior approval of the dean of the degree-conferring unit are not recognized and may result in the invalidation of the examination.

A student may not change committee members after failing the qualifying examination the first time. The student must be reexamined by the same faculty on the same subject matter. If a faculty member is unable to serve on the committee (for example, due to serious illness, retirement, or transfer to another institution), the dean of the degree-conferring unit must be notified in writing in advance of the rescheduled exam in order to approve the change. The faculty replacement must be approved by the dean of the degree-conferring unit and the student must file a change of committee form well in advance of the exam.

Qualifying Examination

The examination qualifying a student for candidacy for the Ph.D. degree is comprehensive in nature, partly written and partly oral, designed, at least in part, to test the student’s fitness to undertake independent research. Prior to taking the qualifying examination, the student must have met all of the departmental requirements for doing so and have the recommendation of the guidance committee. The qualifying examination is normally taken not later than during the fifth semester of graduate standing. The student should note the maximum time limit for completing the degree.

To be eligible to take the qualifying examination, the student must have completed at least 24 units applicable toward the degree in residence at USC and must have achieved a GPA of at least 3.0 on all USC course work available for graduate credit, and the guidance committee has determined that the student is ready to take the qualifying examination. A student must enroll in GRSC 800 during the semester in which the qualifying examination is to be taken if not otherwise enrolled. Students are strongly encouraged to take the qualifying examination during the first semester in which they are enrolled in GRSC 800 and, at a minimum, to enroll in no more than three semesters of GRSC 800 before taking the qualifying examination.

All portions of the examination must be completed within 60 days. Postponement of the examination after permission has been granted must have approval of the dean of the degree-conferring unit.

The written examination will be prepared, administered on campus and read by the guidance committee; in a few departments there will be a department-wide committee examining all doctoral students. When the student’s written examination is satisfactory, an oral examination is given covering, in depth, topics discussed in the written examination or touching upon additional material. A student must pass both the written and oral portions of the qualifying examination in order to pass the examination. The fact that a student has done well on the written examination is not to be construed to mean that the oral examination is to be a pro forma exercise.
The oral examination is a serious and integral part of the qualifying procedure. If on the written examination the judgment of the committee is such that an oral examination cannot counterbalance a poor performance, the committee is not obliged to give an oral examination and the report to the Graduate School will be one of failure. In the case where the written examination is marginal, the committee may use the oral examination as an opportunity to confirm or alter its judgment of the student’s performance.

The examination may not be reported as being passed if there is more than one dissenting vote. Ph.D. examinations cannot be passed conditionally. A pass on the examination cannot be made contingent upon other factors such as the completion of additional course work, the preparation of extra research projects, etc.

During the oral examination, all members of the guidance committee must be present and must render a judgment on the student’s qualifying examination. Only the qualifying exam committee may participate in the oral portion of the examination.

A student who fails a qualifying examination may be permitted, at the discretion of the faculty, to take it a second time. The student may not be required to repeat parts of the qualifying examination which were passed on the first administration. The retaking of a failed qualifying examination must be scheduled at a time mutually satisfactory and not less than six months from the date of the first examination.

The second examination must be completed before the end of the second consecutive semester (excluding summer session) following the first examination. Requests for an exception must be approved by the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Programs. A student may not take the qualifying examination more than twice and must be appropriately enrolled at USC during the semester in which such an examination is taken or retaken. A student who fails the qualifying examination a second time may not continue in the degree program after the end of the semester in which the second examination was taken. No exceptions are allowed.

Admission to Candidacy
Graduate students are officially admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree when they have completed the residency requirement and passed the written and oral portions of the Ph.D. qualifying examination upon the favorable recommendation of the guidance committee to the Graduate School. All Ph.D. candidates are required to engage in original research.

Application for the Ph.D.
After being admitted to candidacy, students must contact their academic department to initiate an online degree check which is transmitted to the Degree Progress Department. Degree Progress counselors prepare a degree summary report for each student listing any remaining requirements. The requirements will not be checked or the degree conferred if the student has not applied.

Dissertation Committee
After the qualifying examination has been passed and a dissertation topic approved, the qualifying exam committee shall be known as the dissertation committee, and may be reduced to three members, upon the committee’s unanimous recommendation to the dean of the degree-conferring unit. Two committee members must be from the home department, at least one of whom must be tenured. The committee chair must be tenured and from the student’s home
department. Faculty eligible to serve as committee chairs and members include tenured and
tenure track faculty, and non-tenure track faculty of outstanding stature who have a documented
record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in their field.

An Appointment of Committee form, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Web site,
should be used to establish the dissertation committee. Students initiate the paperwork and
submit the signed form to the department chair or the program director’s office. The dissertation
committee should be appointed as soon as possible after the student has passed the qualification
exam. Until a dissertation committee has been appointed, the guidance committee will take
responsibility for the student’s program of study. Refer to the Guidance Committee section for
additional membership requirements. The Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Programs is ex
officio a member of all dissertation committees.

Special permission for a member of the research faculty to serve as chair of a Ph.D. student’s
dissertation committee may be granted by the dean of the degree-conferring unit or his or her
nominee, on an individual case basis upon the written request of the department chair
establishing that (1) the person has a research appointment in the student’s home department; (2)
no tenure-track faculty in the department has the necessary knowledge or expertise required; and
(3) the researcher has demonstrated special expertise in the particular area of the proposed
dissertation. The dissertation and its defense, or final oral, must have the unanimous approval of
the dissertation committee.

Doctoral Dissertation
A dissertation is an original contribution to current knowledge in the field and a demonstration
that the Ph.D. candidate has achieved sufficient mastery in the field to pursue independent
research and scholarship. A dissertation represents the individual candidate’s research and
writing. In fields where collaborative research has become the norm, the candidate is the sole
author of the dissertation and specifies his or her contribution to the research and also delineates
colleagues’ contributions.

Dissertations are expected to be written in English. Exceptions require the approval of the
Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Programs or his or her nominee prior to beginning the work
and will be granted only when there is strong scholarly justification.

The student is expected to be enrolled in 794 Doctoral Dissertation each semester, except
summer sessions, after admission to candidacy until all degree requirements are completed.
Registration for the dissertation in the two semesters, excluding summer sessions, following
admission to candidacy, is the minimum requirement entitling the candidate to dissertation
supervision by the dissertation committee. Enrollment in 794 prior to admission to candidacy is
not permitted and such registration is invalid. If the dissertation is not completed and accepted
within two semesters the candidate must continue to register for 794 each semester thereafter
until the dissertation has been approved and the approval of the Ph.D. dissertation has been
signed by the dissertation committee. Students may enroll in 794 during one summer session but
may not register for more than two units of 794 during a given semester; individual exceptions
require the approval of the dean of the degree-conferring unit. No more than eight units of credit
in 794 may be received regardless of the number of semesters the candidate may be required to
be enrolled. Department approval is required for registration in 794.
A candidate who finds it necessary to be excused from registration in 794 for a semester must request a leave of absence by petition to the dean of the degree-conferring unit prior to the beginning of the semester. See Leave of Absence. Endorsements from the committee chair, and department chair are required. During a leave of absence the candidate will not be entitled to assistance from the dissertation committee or to the use of university facilities. The granting of a leave of absence will take into account the candidate’s responsibility for meeting the time schedules for the completion of degree requirements.

**Defense of the Dissertation**

After passing all required course examinations and the qualifying examination, and after meeting all other requirements, the candidate must defend the dissertation. This defense will be conducted in such a manner as to determine to the unanimous satisfaction of the dissertation committee that the candidate has attained the stage of scholarly advancement and power of investigation demanded by the university for final recommendation to the doctorate.

While the oral examination is open to the general university community, only the members of the dissertation committee shall have the authority to recommend acceptance of the dissertation. During the oral defense, all members of the dissertation committee must be present and must render a judgment on the student’s defense. The recommendation must be unanimous.

If the defense is satisfactory, the committee then signs the approval of the Ph.D. dissertation form. If additional work is required, the form is signed at a later date. Departments differ concerning the time of the defense of the dissertation. The student’s dissertation committee is responsible for the content and bibliographical consistency of the dissertation.

**Dissertation Submission**

Please refer to the Theses and Dissertation section for more information on the submission process.

**Transfer Credit**

The Degree Progress Department in the Office of Academic Records and Registrar determines whether course work taken elsewhere is available for transfer credit. Faculty of the student's degree program determine whether such credit is applicable toward a specific graduate degree, subject to approval by the dean of the degree-conferring unit. The faculty's decision should be made no later than the end of the first year in a master's program or the second year in a doctoral program.

Credit will only be allowed for courses (1) from an accredited graduate school, (2) of a quality of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale, (3) constituting a fair and reasonable equivalent to current USC course work at the graduate level and (4) logically fitting into the program for the degree. Transfer course work is applied as credit (CR) toward the degree and is not included in the calculation of a minimum grade point average for graduation.

Graduate transfer credit will not be granted for life experience, credit by examination, extension courses not accepted toward a degree by the offering institution, correspondence courses or thesis supervision. Graduate transfer credit will not be granted for course work taken elsewhere.
after a student has been admitted and enrolled at USC unless the student receives prior written approval from the department. Students may not take courses elsewhere as a substitute for courses in which they have received grades which fail to meet departmental or university requirements.

Transfer work must have been completed within seven years of admission to a USC master's degree program (or 10 years for a doctoral program) to be applied toward that degree. Departments have the option of reevaluating transfer work when a student is readmitted to a USC graduate degree program.

The faculty of a degree program may establish limits on the number of transfer credits stricter than those of the university, which follow:

(1) The maximum number of transfer credits which may be applied toward a master's degree, subject to departmental approval is: four units in degree programs requiring 24-32 units; eight units in programs requiring 33-40 units; 12 units in programs requiring 41 or more units. Except in formally designated dual degree programs, the same limits apply if a student wishes to transfer credits from any advanced degree previously completed at USC toward a master's degree.

(2) A maximum of 30 units of transfer credit may be applied toward a doctoral degree.

(3) A maximum of six units of transfer credit may be applied toward a doctoral degree with Advanced Standing. Admission with Advanced Standing is based upon a completed graduate degree. The only course work available for transfer credit is course work taken after completion of that degree.

(4) A maximum of four units of transfer credit may be applied toward an approved dual degree program.

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) must approve policies and procedures for considering individual exceptions within any specific program of study. Program exceptions to the transfer of course work policies require the approval of the UCOC and are listed in the departmental sections of this catalogue. Departments establishing lower maximum limits may waive their own policy (within the university's limits) by approval of the dean of the degree conferring unit.

Application of Previous USC Course Work to a Current Degree

USC course work taken prior to matriculation to a current USC degree program must have been completed within seven years of admission or readmission to a master's degree program (or 10 years for a doctoral program) to be applied toward that degree. Exceptions require approval from the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Programs.

Credit Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to verify all previously earned degrees and may list graduate course work completed at other institutions which is available for consideration toward the USC degree. Students who intend to apply transfer course work toward a USC degree program can request a comprehensive credit evaluation through the Degree Progress Department. Only
courses with a grade of B (3.0) and above are available for transfer. These courses do not apply toward a specific USC degree unless approved by the student's major department and school.

**Concurrent Enrollment**

A student in a Graduate School degree program may not enroll for credit at this university and elsewhere simultaneously without advance permission from the Graduate School. Failure to secure such permission will result in invalidation of course work taken during periods of unauthorized concurrent enrollment.

**Guidelines for Remote Attendance of Qualifying Examination or Dissertation Defense Via Video Link-Up**

The qualifying examination and defense of the dissertation are the two seminal events in a Ph.D. student's degree progression. The guidance committee and the dissertation committee members are carefully chosen by the student for the expertise and content familiarity thought by the student to be essential to the quality of their research. Although ours is becoming a more and more 'virtual world', we retain the belief that it is essential to have guidelines for the remote participation of members at the qualifying examination and dissertation defense, and at a minimum, that the Chair and the outside member must be physically present in the same room as the student for these critical events. This document sets parameters for the remote attendance at the qualifying examination or dissertation defense via video link-up that respect and safeguard the gravity of the event while helping students and their chosen/approved committee members find an examination time most suitable to the student and the committee, without having to either delay the examination or reconstitute a committee due to a member’s serious, legitimate schedule conflicts.

With today’s technology and USC’s commitment to establishing video-conference enabled classrooms, opportunities exist for students to be examined at the qualifying level and dissertation defense level by their committee of choice, regardless of whether a committee member is able to physically attend the examination. In situations where a committee member is on sabbatical or otherwise legitimately unable to be present, the following guidelines should enable a student to be examined by their committee of choice provided that those committee members who attend the examination remotely are able to render an informed and appropriate decision on the proceedings.

Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted under the following circumstances:

1. Permission to conduct a remote-participation defense must be obtained by the dissertation chair from the Vice Provost for Graduate Programs at least two weeks prior to the date of exam. In making this request, the chair must indicate in writing that he/she has read the rules for a remote defense listed below. The defense should be held on the USC campus.

2. USC has 16 studio classrooms across the two USC campuses and Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, and each is equipped with state-of-the-art technology to enable videoconferencing. Use the following link http://tel.usc.edu/teach/studioClassroom.cfm to identify locations that might be scheduled for videoconferencing.
3. The student, committee chair, and outside member should be present at the same campus videoconference location during the entire qualifying or dissertation defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination.

4. Where a committee member is to attend the examination remotely, the committee member should have the appropriate audiovisual equipment to participate in the examination and the examination should be held in an appropriately-equipped room. At a minimum, the remotely connecting committee member must be connected via video link-up and an appropriate audio connection.

5. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances.

6. For the *qualifying examination*, a maximum of two out of the five guidance committee members may attend remotely. For the *dissertation defense*, a maximum of one out of the three dissertation committee members may attend remotely.

7. Specific training in the use of the appropriate technology should be provided to candidates and committee members well in advance of the examination. It is recommended that at least 24 hours prior to the examination, the audiovisual connection should be tested, and not less than one hour before the examination the connection should be tested again. If necessary, skilled operators should be present at one or all sites.

8. In addition to approval of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Programs, written agreements between the student, the committee members (including the Chair of the committee), the Chair of the Department, and the Dean’s office must be secured in order for a committee member to attend remotely. These agreements should be kept with the student’s academic file.

9. Any special arrangements, i.e., specific hardware or software requirements for meeting participation via distance, should be communicated to the student and doctoral committee members well in advance.

10. Given the importance of these examinations to the student, we consider that the responsibility of arranging for the video link-up should reside with the department rather than the student and should be arranged well in advance of the examination.

11. The PhD program must pay for all of the costs of the video teleconferencing arrangements.
Division Requirements for the Ph.D. in Biokinesiology

Important facts

1) 60 units are required for the Ph.D. degree.
2) Students must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA (grades less than “C” are considered failing)
3) If transferring from USC BKN MS program, 36 units beyond that obtained as part of the MS degree is required.
4) To be eligible as a TA or RA you must be enrolled in at least 6 units or 2 units of BKN 794.
5) All Ph.D. students are required to attend the graduate student seminar and BKN survival series (usually held every other Thursday).

Required Courses (24 units required)

- BKN 550 Neurobehavioral basis of movement (4 units)
- BKN 551 Musculoskeletal and Biomechanical basis of movement (4 units)
- BKN 552 Physiological basis of voluntary movement (4 units)
- BKN 790 Research (1-12 units)
- BKN 794abcdz Doctoral dissertation (2-2-2-2-0 units)
- 2 Semesters of Graduate Level Statistics
- 1 Ethics course

Screening Procedure (see document below)

1) Must be taken before the completion of 24 units.
2) Offered twice a year (March and November).
3) Dossiers to be submitted 6 weeks in advance.

Qualifying Exam

See Qualifying Exam document below

Yearly progress report

All Ph.D. students must complete a self assessment of progress following each year of study. Similarly, faculty advisors must complete a student progress report following each year of study. These materials are due to the Director of the BKN program no later than June 15th.
Teaching and Research Assistantships

The Division guarantees a Teaching or Research Assistantship for students enrolled in the PhD program. Assistantships are typically provided for the *nine-month academic year* and provide full tuition support, health and dental insurance and a monthly stipend of approximately $2,500. This level of support will be provided by the Division from the beginning of the Academic year that the student begins the Ph.D. program up to a maximum of 6 academic years. Students who do not matriculate within 6 years, will be responsible for their own financial support.

The Division is committed to the academic progress of its PhD students and expects that their program of study will be completed within 6 years. To facilitate degree completion, Research Assistantships *without* any teaching responsibilities will be extended to students in their final semester (i.e. the semester in which the student defends their dissertation). Requests for a Research Assistantship *without* teaching responsibilities should be made to Division’s Associate Chair at least 4 months prior to the start of the final semester. The semester in which a student receives a Research Assistantship *without* teaching responsibilities will be the last semester of Division support.

**Special Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants**

The academic year *starts 1 week prior* to the first day that the Fall Semester starts. During this week, all funded PhD students are expected to be available to assist in activities related to preparation for the Fall semester. In addition, *all Division Teaching Assistants are expected to attend a mandatory Teaching Assistantship Division orientation the week prior to the start of classes.*

All responsibilities of teaching assistants are carried out under the supervision of the Course Director for the courses assigned by the Director of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program. Teaching assistants’ duties may include the following: reading course texts and materials, assisting during lectures, leading discussion sections or lab meetings, holding office hours each week, responding to student concerns, grading course assignments and exams, leading and monitoring lab exercises, participating in regular meetings with supervising faculty and other Teaching Assistants, designing and leading review sessions, serving as a liaison between the instructor and students, upholding the University’s policy on academic integrity, and assisting with the management of the course details.

International students who are admitted to the Ph.D. program must pass an English proficiency exam before they can be given a Teaching Assistantship. The language examination is administered by American Language Institute (ALI) the summer prior to the first semester of classes (typically mid August). Failure to pass the English proficiency exam will result in a loss of funding from the division. Funding will be restored once the student has met all language requirements.

**Special Responsibilities of Research Assistants**

Division Ph.D. students typically begin with Teaching Assistantships within the Professional Doctor of Physical Therapy program. After 2-3 years, most PhD students make the transition to
Research Assistantships for which they are required to assist with funded research. Research Assistants are paid on the same scale and receive identical benefits as Teaching Assistantships.

At a minimum, a Research Assistantship should be considered a 20 hour per week job. Students usually opt to put in more time, however, depending on the relationship between Research Assistantship duties and the dissertation project, or the likelihood of co-authoring resulting publications. The relation between the Research Assistantship project and the dissertation project will vary depending on the faculty member involved and other circumstances. In some cases, the two projects are the same and you will in effect be paid for doing your dissertation research. In other cases, efforts are made to keep the projects distinctly different. Good arguments can be made for either approach.

Whereas Teaching Assistantships are funded by departments, Research Assistantships typically are funded by research grants. As the name implies, Research Assistants do research, usually directed at the Specific Aims of a grant. The time required is often more than that for a Teaching Assistantship, but this is usually not a burden because the work should be directly relevant to your research training. Research Assistants should assume responsibility for making proper use of the intellectual, instructional and physical environment in which the student is conducting research. The nature of some research projects may require that the research assistant be available during holiday periods or semester break. To minimize the possibility of misunderstanding, the student should inquire about this possibility before finalizing the appointment.

Further details regarding the rights and responsibilities of Teaching and Research Assistants are available in the USC Graduate Assistant Handbook at:

Division Policy Regarding the Transfer or Substitution of Coursework

The transfer of units into the Biokinesiology program requires the following approvals

1) Advisor approval
2) Approval by the Graduate School
3) Approval from the Director of the Biokinesiology program

Similarly, substituting a previously taken course for a required course within the Biokinesiology Program requires the following approvals

1) Advisor approval
2) Approval of the course director
3) Approval of the Director of the Biokinesiology program

In order to substitute a course for a required course, the student must provide evidence (i.e. texts, syllabus, etc.) that the content of the course to be substituted is equivalent in content to the course offered within the division.
Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors

Composed by the Group on Graduate Research, Education and Training
A National Forum consisting of faculty Administrative leaders of Biomedical Ph.D, MD-Ph.D. and postdoctoral programs

Pre-doctoral training entails both formal education in a specific discipline and an apprenticeship in which the graduate student trains under the supervision of one for more investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. A positive mentoring relationship between the pre-doctoral student and the research advisor is a vital component of the student’s preparation to become not only an independent and successful research scientist but also an effective mentor to future graduate students.

Individuals who pursue a biomedical graduate degree are expected to take responsibility for their own scientific and professional development. Faculty who advise students are expected to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor, including the provision of scientific training, guidance, instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research and research ethics, and financial support. The faculty advisor also performs a critical function as a scientific role model for the graduate student.

Core Tenets of Pre-doctoral Training

Institutional Commitment
Institutions that train biomedical graduate students must be committed to establishing and maintaining high-quality training programs with the highest scientific and ethical standards. Institutions should work to ensure that students who complete their programs are well-trained and possess the foundational skills and values that will allow them to mature into independent scientific professionals of integrity. Institutions should provide oversight for length of study, program integrity, stipend levels, benefits, grievance procedures, and other matters relevant to the education of graduate students. Additionally, they should recognize and reward their graduate training faculty.

Program Commitment
Graduate programs should endeavor to establish graduate training programs that provide students with the skills necessary to function independently in a scientific setting by the time they graduate. Programs should strive to maintain scientifically relevant course offerings and research opportunities. Programs should establish clear parameters for outcomes assessment and closely monitor the progress of graduate students during their course of study.

Quality Mentoring
Effective mentoring is crucial for graduate school trainees as they begin their scientific careers. Faculty mentors must commit to dedicating substantial time to the graduate students to ensure their scientific, professional and personal development. A relationship of mutual trust and respect should be established between mentors and graduate students to foster healthy interactions and encourage individual growth. Effective mentoring should include teaching the scientific method, providing regular feedback in the form of praise and constructive criticism to
foster individual growth, teaching the “ways” of the scientific enterprise, and promoting students’ careers by providing appropriate opportunities. Additionally, good graduate school mentors should be careful listeners, actively promote and appreciate diversity, possess and consistently exemplify high ethical standards, recognize the contributions of students in publications and intellectual property, and have a strong record of research accomplishments and financial support.

Provide Skills Sets and Counseling that Support a Broad Range of Career Choices

The institution, training programs, and mentor should provide training relevant to academic, industrial, and research careers that will allow their graduate students to appreciate, navigate, discuss, and develop their career choices. Effective and regular career guidance activities should be provided, including exposure to academic and non-academic career options.

Commitments of Graduate Students

- I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree. I will be committed to my graduate education and will demonstrate this by my efforts in the classroom and the research laboratory. I will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards.

- I will meet regularly with my research advisor and provide him/her with updates on the progress and results of my activities and experiments.

- I will work with my research advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project. This will include establishing a timeline for each phase of my work. I will strive to meet the established deadlines.

- I will work with my research advisor to select a thesis/dissertation committee. I will commit to meeting with this committee at least annually (or more frequently, according to program guidelines). I will be responsive to the advice of and constructive criticism from my committee.

- I will be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of my graduate program, graduate school, and institution. I will commit to meeting these requirements, including teaching responsibilities.

- I will attend and participate in laboratory meetings, seminars and journal clubs that are part of my educational program.

- I will comply with all institutional policies, including academic program milestones. I will comply with both the letter and spirit of all institutional safe laboratory practices and animal-use and human-research policies at my institution.

- I will participate in my institution’s Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and practice those guidelines in conducting my thesis/dissertation research.

- I will be a good lab citizen. I will agree to take part in shared laboratory responsibilities and will use laboratory resources carefully and frugally. I will maintain a safe and clean
laboratory space. I will be respectful of, tolerant of, and work collegially with all laboratory personnel.

- **I will maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate laboratory notebook.** I am aware that my original notebooks and all tangible research data are the property of my institution but that I am able to take a copy of my notebooks with me after I complete my thesis/dissertation.

- **I will discuss policies on work hours, sick leave and vacation with my research advisor.** I will consult with my advisor and notify fellow lab members in advance of any planned absences.

- **I will discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my research advisor.** I will work with my advisor to submit all relevant research results that are ready for publication in a timely manner prior to my graduation.

- **I acknowledge that it is primarily my responsibility to develop my career following the completion of my doctoral degree.** I will seek guidance from my research advisor, career counseling services, thesis/dissertation committee, other mentors, and any other resources available for advice on career plans.

**Commitments of Research Advisors**

- **I will be committed to the life-long mentoring of the graduate student.** I will be committed to the education and training of the graduate student as a future member of the scientific community.

- **I will be committed to the research project of the graduate student.** I will help to plan and direct the graduate student’s project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of the project. I recognize the possibility of conflicts between the interests of externally funded research programs and those of the graduate student, and will not let these interfere with the student’s pursuit of his/her thesis/dissertation research.

- **I will be committed to meeting one-on-one with the student on a regular basis.**

- **I will be committed to providing financial resources for the graduate student as appropriate or according to my institution’s guidelines, in order for him/her to conduct thesis/dissertation research.**

- **I will be knowledgeable of, and guide the graduate student through, the requirements and deadlines of his/her graduate program as well as those of the institution, including teaching requirements and human resources guidelines.**

- **I will help the graduate student select a thesis/dissertation committee.** I will assure that this committee meets at least annually (or more frequently, according to program guidelines) to review the graduate student’s progress.
• I will lead by example and facilitate the training of the graduate student in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as oral and written communication skills, grant writing, lab management, animal and human research policies, and the ethical conduct of research. I will encourage the student to seek opportunities in teaching, if not required by the student’s program.

• I will expect the graduate student to share common laboratory responsibilities and utilize resources carefully and frugally.

• I will not require the graduate student to perform tasks that are unrelated to his/her training program and professional development.

• I will discuss authorship policies regarding papers with the graduate student. I will acknowledge the graduate student’s scientific contributions to the work in my laboratory, and I will work with the graduate student to publish his/her work in a timely manner prior to the student’s graduation.

• I will discuss intellectual policy issues with the student with regard to disclosure, patent rights and publishing research discoveries.

• I will encourage the graduate student to attend scientific/professional meetings and make an effort to secure and facilitate funding for such activities.

• I will provide career advice and assist in finding a position for the graduate student following his/her graduation. I will provide honest letters of recommendation for his/her next phase of professional development. I will also be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals.

• I will provide for every graduate student under my supervision an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment.

• Throughout the graduate student’s time in my laboratory, I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful. I will foster in the graduate students professional confidence and encourage critical thinking, skepticism and creativity.

AGREEMENT:

Your signature indicates that you have read this document and that you agree to the responsibilities outlined above.

Student’s Name________________________________________

Faculty Signature______________________________________ Date________
Ph.D. Screening Procedure

Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

The purpose of the Ph.D. Screening is to assess and determine the progress of the BKN Ph.D. student since admission and whether that progress is sufficient to continue in the Ph.D. Program. The student is expected to review University policies pertaining to the Screening in addition to Division policies delineated below. The University policies can be found in the University Catalog.

The Screening Committee will be chaired by the Director of the Biokinesiology Program and composed of all BKN faculty members. The Ph.D. Screening Procedure will be administered every Fall and Spring semester. At least two-thirds of the BKN faculty must be present to form a quorum for voting purposes.

Students will be scheduled for the Screening Procedure by the Director of the BKN Program before the student has completed more than 24 units. It will be the responsibility of the student to insure that all required information is given to the Director at least 6 weeks prior to the screening procedure. The student must attend the Screening and answer any questions posed by the BKN Faculty. The student will then be required to leave the meeting prior to the Faculty vote.

Required material:

1. A complete transcript covering all courses taken since admission into the BKN program and any previous coursework if the units will be applied toward the Ph.D. degree.
2. The cumulative GPA since enrollment in the M.S. and/or Ph.D. BKN program.
3. A copy of at least one scholarly manuscript completed by the student.
4. All TA evaluations since enrollment in the M.S. and/or Ph.D. BKN program or equivalent documentation.
5. A written statement by the student summarizing his/her research progress since admission into the Ph.D. program. The student may elect to use the format identified in the APTA PODs application.
6. A written statement by the student identifying his/her plan for developing the dissertation proposal.
7. A written statement by the student’s advisor summarizing the student’s progress as an independent researcher.

***Special note for MS students transferring into the Ph.D. Program
The application process will serve as the screening procedure. Transfer applicants will submit a more comprehensive application to include all items above and will have to sit for an oral interview.
The BKN Faculty will consider and make a determination as to whether the evidence is sufficient to indicate the student is prepared, within an appropriate time frame, to develop a dissertation proposal consistent with the mission of the BKN Ph.D. program, and to successfully complete that dissertation.

**Requirements for Passing the Screening Procedure**

1. Cumulative GPA is 3.3 or greater.
2. GPA for BKN coursework is 3.3 or greater.
3. Ability to write effectively as evidenced in one scholarly manuscript (or suitable equivalent, as determined by the faculty advisor) authored by the student.
4. Adequate progress toward development of the dissertation proposal as evidenced in a written statement provided by the student. The statement should also include evidence of progress in any area of weakness identified during previous semester reviews.
5. Adequate progress toward development of the dissertation proposal as evidenced in a written statement provided by at least one faculty member (usually the faculty advisor).
6. Satisfactory performance in teaching documented by TA reviews or an equivalent.
7. An agreement to adhere to the ethics essential in conducting research and publishing scientific literature as evidenced by a signed document provided by the Director of the BKN program.
8. All performance deficiencies identified during the Screening are viewed as minor by the majority of faculty.
9. Faculty vote determines continuance in the Ph.D. program. If 2 or more faculty do not support continuance, the student will be advised by the Director of the BKN Program in accordance with the guidelines of the University Catalogue. Faculty having little or no contact with the student may elect to abstain without impacting the final decision.

Passing the Screening Procedure is a prerequisite for continuation in the Ph.D. program. Students who fail the screening procedure will be advised that they are not approved to continue in the Ph.D. program and that any additional work may not be counted toward the degree.
Ph.D. Qualifying Examination Guidelines

Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

Successful completion of the Qualifying Examination admits a student to official candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. The overriding principles that govern the Qualifying Examination procedures are that 1) students are aware of the breadth and depth of their chosen area of research, 2) the guidance committee plays an important role in the mentoring of the Ph.D. student, and 3) the proposed dissertation represents original investigation with appropriate scientific rigor. The steps leading to successful completion of the Qualifying Examination are as follows:

1. Select an area of research
2. Choose a Qualifying exam committee
3. Work with your Qualifying exam committee in developing your dissertation proposal
4. Pass the Qualifying written examination (Part A)
5. Pass Qualifying examination (Part B) which includes the written proposal and oral defense.

A detailed description of the Qualifying examination procedure follows:

A. **Choosing a Qualifying exam Committee:**
   The purpose of the Qualifying exam committee is to mentor the student in their chosen area of study and assist in the development/completion of the dissertation. In addition, the Guidance committee will conduct the Qualifying examination. The principal advisor serves as the chair of the Qualifying exam committee. See the University catalogue for details regarding the composition of the Guidance committee.

Choosing a committee is an important matter. When thinking of potential committee members, keep in mind that each member should be able to offer content expertise that will provide you with the breadth and depth of your chosen area of research. This will be critical to your future development as an independent researcher. Ultimately, you will develop a close relationship with your Qualifying exam committee that will be of mutual benefit not only during your student days but also throughout your career. Consult with your advisor regarding choice of committee members.

The Qualifying exam committee should be established at least two semesters prior to beginning the Qualifying examination. The *Appointment of Committee form*, obtained from the Division’s Student Affairs Coordinator (Janet Burney) is required to formally establish your committee. This form should be filed with the Student Affairs Coordinator the semester prior to beginning the Qualifying examination. In addition, all committee members should read and sign the *Responsibilities of Doctoral Committees form*. This document outlines the expectations of doctoral committee members as delineated by the Biokinesiology faculty. Copies of the signed form should remain with the committee member and the primary advisor.

Students should consult extensively with each committee member during the development of the dissertation proposal. Regularly scheduled meetings are highly
encouraged. Ideally, each member of the Qualifying exam committee will provide the student with feedback throughout the process. In addition, members of the Qualifying exam committee may recommend readings and/or coursework that will be of assistance in developing content expertise in certain areas. Keep in mind that getting to know the expectations of your committee is important as they will be administering the written and oral components of the Qualifying examination!

B. Qualifying Examination: Part A
In order to sit for Part A of the Qualifying Examination, students must have completed a minimum of 24 units and have at least a 3.0 GPA. It is highly recommended that you complete Part A of the qualifying examination before the start of the 7th semester of graduate work. Ideally, Part A only should be taken after working with your Qualifying exam members for at least a semester. You must file the Request to take the Qualifying Examination form with the Division’s Student Affairs Coordinator at least 30 days prior to taking Part A.

Part A will be an open book/open note exam and will consist of 4 questions; one from each of the Qualifying exam committee members (excluding the primary advisor). If there are more than 5 members on a committee, the advisor will choose which of the 4 will write questions. Committee members will submit their questions to the primary advisor who will review them to ensure appropriate breadth and depth of the exam. The faculty advisor will administer the examination.

You will be given one question at a time, and will have 9 hours to complete your response to each question. The 4 questions will be administered over the course of 5 days (1 question per day with a 1 day break). Any reference or source material can be used to complete the exam. You can ask for clarification from the faculty member who submitted the question, but may not discuss it with anyone else. Specific instructions (i.e. recommended length of answer) may be provided with each question.

Each member of the Guidance committee will grade his/her question on a 1.0-5.0 scale using 0.5 steps if necessary (1.0=poor and 5.0=exceptional). An average score of 3.3 or above will constitute a “Pass”. A score below 3.0 will be considered a “Fail”. The outcome of an exam where the average score falls between 3.0 and 3.3, or when 2 or more questions are graded below 3.0, will be determined by the full committee. Two or more negative votes of the committee will result in failure of the exam. A retake may be allowed at the discretion of the committee. Remediation procedures will be established by the committee. If a retake if permitted, students only will have one chance to remediate the failed exam.

C. Qualifying Examination: Part B
In the semester following the Qualifying written examination Part A, you will complete Part B of the Qualifying Examination. Part B will consist of the written proposal as well as an oral exam. If you are not enrolled in any courses the semester you take Part B, you must register for GRSC 800 (Studies for the Qualifying Examination). If you are taking courses the semester you take Part B, then enrollment in GRSC 800 is not necessary. See the Division’s Student Affairs Coordinator (Janet Burney) if you have any questions.
The proposal will consist of a proposed plan for the student’s dissertation project. The final draft must be given to the committee no later than 2 weeks before the oral exam. The proposal should follow the format outlined below.

The oral exam will be open to committee members only, and will consist of a critical defense of the written proposal. Students should expect questions that relate to any area relevant to the proposal. The oral exam also may be used to assess whether weaknesses that were identified in the written exam have been corrected. You should prepare a presentation of 30-45 min in length and leave the rest of the time for questions and discussion (maximum time is 3 hours). During the oral examination, all members of the guidance committee must be present and must render a judgment on the student’s qualifying examination.

The oral exam should be scheduled with the Guidance Committee. Remember that scheduling a time when all members of your Guidance Committee will be present will require that you contact each member well in advance to insure availability during the period when you plan to take the oral exam.

Some examples of questions asked about proposals during the oral exam may include: specific details of experimental design, the conceptual basis for the hypothesis, scientific and technical basis of methods used, the global significance or health-relatedness of the project, relation of the project to other work in the field, your knowledge of the literature, and your ability to synthesize and summarize ideas.

A student who fails Part B of the Qualifying Examination may be permitted, at the discretion of the faculty, to take it a second time. The retaking of Part B must be scheduled at a time satisfactory to all committee members and not less than six months after the date of the first examination. The second examination must be completed before the end of the second consecutive semester (excluding summer session) following the first examination. See Graduate School Policy and Procedures for regulations regarding the retaking of the Qualifying examination.

Upon passing Part A and Part B of the Qualifying Examination, students are officially admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. The Report on Qualifying Examination Form should be completed, signed by all committee members, and returned to the Graduate School within 5 days of completing Part B. In addition, students should initiate the paperwork to designate the Dissertation Committee (use the Appointment of Committee Form) The Dissertation Committee should be appointed as soon as possible after the student has passed the qualification exam. See the University catalogue for details regarding the composition of the Dissertation Committee.
D. **Suggested Time Frame**

The following time frame should be used as a guide for the successful completion of your Qualifying examination and your Ph.D. studies. Your advisor will assist you in organizing your overall plan of study.

Year 1: Coursework and exploration of Biokinesiology

Year 2: Screening Examination (Semester 3)  
Exploration of potential research areas  
Selection of Guidance committee (Semester 4)

Year 3: Begin discussions of research plan with committee (Semester 5)  
Do Qualifying Examination Parts A & B (Semesters 6-7)

Year 4: Data collection and analysis

Year 5: Data analysis  
Write and defend dissertation
Format For Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal  
Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

Format: 20 pages maximum; 11 font (Arial), 0.5 inch margins

1. Specific Aims (limited to 1 page)
   - State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the IMPACT that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved.
   - List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology).

2. Significance & Innovation (limited to 5 pages)
   - Significance
     - Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
     - Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
     - Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
   - Innovation
     - Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
     - Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
     - Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

3. Preliminary Studies (limited to 4 pages)
   - Succinctly describe the pilot data obtained to support the proposed hypotheses.

4. Research Strategy (10 pages maximum)
   - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
   - Discuss how the expected results will be interpreted with respect to the proposed specific aims.
   - Discuss what you will do if the results do not support your hypothesis (e.g. unexpected results)
   - Discuss potential problems and alternative strategies.

References and Appendices are not included in the page limits noted above.  
All figures should be imbedded within the text.
Ph.D. Final Defense Procedures

Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

The following guidelines will be used for the Ph.D. final defense:

1) Presentation of Dissertation (approximately 40 minutes)
   a. Public welcome
   b. No questions during presentation
   c. Acknowledgments at the end of the presentation should be limited to the recognition of funding sources only.

2) Questions and answers from public audience (approximately 20 minutes)

3) Public leaves

4) Candidate fields questions from dissertation committee (as long as needed)

5) Student leaves

6) Committee deliberates outcome of dissertation defense

7) Student is brought back to receive result and feedback from committee
Division Policy for BKN Doctoral Students
Planning to Walk at Commencement

In order for a Ph.D. student to be permitted to walk at commencement in May, there must be a high probability that the dissertation will be completed, including all corrections required by the dissertation committee, by the following June 30th so that the degree can be posted in August. Generally, this means that the dissertation defense must be held by mid-June at the latest. In order for this to occur, the following deadlines must be met:

**February 1:** The Ph.D. advisor and student must notify the division chair (in writing) of the intention of student to walk at graduation. The advisor should verify that the student will meet all required deadlines.

**April 15:** The student must have submitted a complete and satisfactory draft of the dissertation to their advisor. If a complete and satisfactory draft is not submitted by this date, the student will not be allowed to walk at commencement regardless of any prior plans that have been made.

Failure on the part of the advisor and/or student to meet either of these deadlines will result in the student not being permitted to walk at commencement.
Required Certifications & Health Related Requirements

Students enrolled in the Biokinesiology program are required to maintain the following certifications:

1) Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) certification. This online human subjects education program can be accessed online through the USC website. [http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/oprs/citi](http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/oprs/citi)

2) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) certification. The HIPPA education program can be accessed through the USC Office of Compliance. [http://www.usc.edu/admin/compliance/hipaa_program.html](http://www.usc.edu/admin/compliance/hipaa_program.html)

3) Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillation (AED) certification is required, and must be kept current.

Additional information concerning the roles and responsibilities of student researchers at USC can be found at the following website: [http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/oprs/research/student.html](http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/oprs/research/student.html)

All students are required to have health insurance coverage while enrolled in the BKN program. Immunizations and titeres are required as well as annual TB screenings. All health clearances must be kept current the entire time students are in the program.
Ph.D. Student Self-evaluation

To facilitate your timely progress through your degree program, the BKN committee requires a yearly self-assessment of your progress. The purpose of the committee review is to help you through your program of study, identify obstacles, acknowledge achievements, and prevent unnecessary delays. Please rank yourself using the categories listed below to classify your performance over the past academic year. Include your current GPA as part of your summary. All self assessments are due to Dr. Powers by June 15th!

**Category 1**: Acceptable performance (information on any awards, honors, grants, scholarships, and publications).

**Category 2**: Acceptable performance with certain exceptions listed below. A typical example for this category is that students did not take the qualifying exam on time; another one is that students did research, but progressing slowly.

**Category 3**: Unacceptable performance. (This is the most serious evaluation. Two successive category 3 ratings are considered a basis for dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

**NOTE**: Students who receive a category 2 or 3 rating will be placed on a 6 month review cycle

Please use the following format in preparing your self-assessment

Name:

Academic year:

Category:

Explanation:

Plan of continued study:
Teaching Assistant Evaluation

Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

Teaching Assistant__________________Semester__________ Year___________

Course__________________ Instructor____________________

Please assess whether the teaching assistant exceeded expectations (EE), met expectations (ME), did not meet expectations (NM), or whether the responsibility did not apply (NA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>NM</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend course lectures (specify all or specific ones).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in laboratory teaching for PT_______ (class number).</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with course director weekly.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep office hours, meeting with students individually and in groups.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead student tutorial sessions.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate class supply needs and prepare supply orders.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that the required equipment is operational prior to the laboratory session.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare/set-up equipment for laboratory sessions.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put equipment away and clean up after laboratory sessions.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare laboratory lectures.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the content of practical examinations.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the preparation of written examinations.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proctor examinations.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead examination review sessions.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade laboratory assignments.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in the evaluation of practical examinations.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in grading group projects.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in grading examinations.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare and deliver 1 or more lectures.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare audio-visual aids prior to class.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare handouts.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare readings.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in preparation of the course reader.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in preparation of the laboratory syllabus.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in preparation of the laboratory manual.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments regarding other responsibilities:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Teaching Assistant ________________________________ Date

Signature of Course Director ________________________________ Date

(Check: copy for TA____; copy for student file____; copy for course director____)
Ethics Guidelines For Graduate Study  
Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy

INTRODUCTION
“The scientific research enterprise, like other human activities, is built on a foundation of trust. Scientists trust that the results reported by others are valid. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists to describe the world accurately and without bias. The level of trust that has characterized science and its relationship with society has contributed to a period of unparalleled scientific productivity. But this trust will endure only if the scientific community devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical scientific conduct” (1).

The faculty of the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy has identified three areas of ethical conduct we believe are critical to your development as an independent researcher: 1) faculty and graduate student relations, 2) responsible conduct in research, and 3) the use of human and animal subjects. In an effort to familiarize you with these areas we have organized the following references for your review. Please take time to review these materials and discuss them with your advisor. Once reviewed, please sign the attached signature page. This written assurance of ethical conduct will be kept in your student file for the duration of your tenure as a graduate student in the division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A GUIDE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS
Reference: Student Handbook: USC Office of Student Affairs

ON BEING A SCIENTIST: RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT IN RESEARCH

AGREEMENT:

Your signature indicates that you have read the attached documents and that you agree to adhere to the policies and procedures required for ethical scientific study.

Student’s Name________________________________________

Students Signature______________________________________  Date____________

Responsibilities of Guidance Committee Members
Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy

Thank you for agreeing to participate on a Ph.D. guidance committee for a student enrolled in the Biokinesiology program at USC. You have been identified as a faculty member who has a particular expertise that will contribute to the Ph.D. student’s preparation as a scholar. The faculty of the Biokinesiology program encourages committee members to take an active role in the mentoring process. In particular, it is expected that committee members:

1. Meet regularly with the student during the development of the dissertation proposal.

2. Provide guidance to the student in developing appropriate research question(s) and methodology.

3. Participate in the development of the written research proposal.

4. Provide a question for the written portion of the Qualifying Examination.

5. Provide feedback to the student regarding the written portion of the Qualifying Examination.

6. Provide guidance to the student as the dissertation research is being conducted.

If you have any questions regarding your role as a Ph.D. guidance committee member for the Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy please contact Dr. Christopher Powers at 323-442-1928.

AGREEMENT:

Your signature indicates that you have read this document and that you agree to the responsibilities outlined above.

Student’s Name__________________________________________________________

Faculty Signature_______________________________________________________  Date__________