

# GS-ZS

## Request for Special Enrollment Status

**If you are employed more than half-time, outside of your GA, you are NOT eligible for Special Enrollment Status**

Last Name:  First Name:  M.I.:  USC ID:

Street:  City:  State:  Zip:

Email:  Phone:

School:  Major:  Degree:

Effective Term(s)  Fall Year   Spring Year   Summer Year

**Note:** One form may be used for two terms. Limit two terms unless justification for extension is provided.

Graduate Director **or**  Major Professor (Print Full Name)

Email:  Phone:

### **Check all boxes that apply**

- Student has previously been enrolled under Special Enrollment Status.
- Student is not employed (outside GA responsibility). **or**  Student is not employed more than half-time (outside GA responsibility).
- Student is working on:  Thesis  Dissertation  Full-Time  Part-Time
- All coursework on the Program of Study required for the degree (excluding 799 or 899) has been completed.
- Student is completing an internship or capstone course as the sole remaining requirement for their degree and should be considered full time although enrolled in less than 6-9 hours.
- Student is, or will be, employed as a Graduate Assistant during the term(s) referenced above.
- Student is requesting Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and medical document is attached.
- Student is requesting or receiving external financial aid (ie: a student loan guaranteed by the State or Federal Government). If checked, Special Academic Enrollment Release for financial aid (Form 6.2) is also required and must be submitted separately. Contact Office of Financial Aid with questions or to request a copy of the form.

**International Students** must submit, through the Office of International Student Services (ISS), a request for a Exemption From Full-Time Enrollment Form. ISS must approve the request before it comes to the Graduate School. This form does not replace this Special Enrollment Status Form and must be submitted separately to ISS.

### **Endorsements (your signature attests the above statements are accurate):**

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Graduate Director/Major Professor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Request for Special Enrollment Status

### GUIDELINES FOR USING THE GS-ZS FORM

Special Enrollment Status was created for students in traditional research programs who typically completed their coursework, but needed an additional semester or two to complete their thesis or dissertation. Many of these students received departmental support, some of which included tuition abatements, or external support that required full-time enrollment. While these students were usually working on their thesis or dissertation full-time, they did not need to enroll beyond one hour of thesis or dissertation preparation. However, many of these students received Graduate Assistantships (GA), Fellowships, or external funding that required 6-9 hours of enrollment. Special enrollment status was created to treat these students as full-time even though they were enrolled in less than 6-9 hours. Later, this privilege was expanded to include students in non-thesis/dissertation programs, but with similar capstone experiences, such as internships, field experiences, or practica. Recently, it was further expanded to include students covered under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

This privilege is limited to two terms, but may be extended based upon extenuating circumstances. Depending upon circumstances, students may be eligible for half-time enrollment status that usually meets student loan or deferred repayment eligibility requirements. Since the privilege was created for students, policy restricts access and eligibility. Perhaps the most notable restriction is the exclusion of any student who is employed more than half-time, excluding GAs. In this context, the policy assumes a GA is related, either directly or indirectly, to a student's research and/or other degree requirements.

Students receiving **external** financial aid (e.g., student loans guaranteed by state or federal government) are required to submit **also** the Special Academic Enrollment Release for Financial Aid form (F 6.2). This form is available at the Office of Financial Aid and must be accompanied by the Request for Special Enrollment (GS-ZS) form. The F 6.2 form requires the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Once approved, it is forwarded to the Office of Financial Aid. Funding requiring full-time enrollment will not be released unless the student meets the enrollment requirement or has Special Enrollment status.

Some students receive multiple sources of internal and external funding. For example, a student could have a GA, a USC fellowship, and a guaranteed student loan. USC fellowships require the Student Financial Aid and Scholarship (F 9.5) form. This form allows the sponsoring department to grant financial awards and stipulate the attending enrollment requirement (usually 6-9 hours). If the department doesn't stipulate an enrollment requirement (this is optional), the **default** minimum enrollment requirement is 9 hours. Fellowship funds will **not** be disbursed unless the student meets the enrollment requirement even though they have Special Enrollment status. The department must adjust the enrollment requirement for under enrolled students receiving USC fellowships.

International students are required by the US Citizenship and Immigration Service to be enrolled full-time --9 hours minimum. Generally, international students are not eligible for guaranteed student loans so they should not need Special Enrollment status unless they have a GA and/or USC fellowship. International students with GAs who request Special Enrollment Status to exempt the 6-hour enrollment requirement must submit the Exemption from Full-Time Enrollment Request for F-1 and J-1 Student Visas in addition to the GS-ZS form. This form must be submitted to the Office of International Student Services and, once approved, forwarded to the Graduate School. The exemption form, unlike the GS-ZS form, is submitted only once. The exemption form is available at <http://www.ip.sc.edu/> under Forms.

Special Enrollment Status is posted on the student's academic record, by term, as "Special Enrollment" and reported to the National Clearinghouse which is accessed by lenders and others authorized to receive students' enrollment information. Requests must be term-specific, but may include up to three terms on a single form, although justification is required for Special Enrollment Status for more than two terms. Students requesting Special Enrollment Status beyond 2-3 terms must submit a new GS-ZS form, along with justification for the extension, for each additional (2-3 term) request for Special Enrollment Status.

Typically, this form attests:

- the student has completed all coursework required for his/her degree (except 799 or 899)
- the student is working on his/her thesis or dissertation full-time (or at least half-time)
- the student is not working otherwise (excluding his/her GA)

Students requesting Special Enrollment Status under the **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** must submit the GS-ZS form along with appropriate documentation, including:

For Childbirth

- Written certification from the student's health care provider verifying the student's health condition and impending birth
- Written permission from the student allowing an official of the University of South Carolina to contact the certifying health care provider if necessary

For Adoption

- Certification of child adoption
- Written permission from the graduate student stating that an official of the University of South Carolina may contact the certifying individual or agency, if needed

**NOTE:** International students also are required to submit written authorization from the Office of International Student Services to take advantage of family leave under FMLA.

The GS-ZS form may be completed online, but not submitted electronically. You must submit the completed form through your major professor or graduate director, with appropriate attachments if required, to the Graduate School. Completed forms, with required signatures, may be faxed (777.2972) or sent as an email attachment to the Graduate School at [gradusc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:gradusc@mailbox.sc.edu). If forms are sent as email attachments, please enter "Special Enrollment Status" in the subject line. Also, completed forms may be submitted to the Graduate School at 901 Sumter Street, Suite 304 (Byrnes). Questions about Z Status should be directed to your advisor, major professor, graduate director, or Dale Moore in the Graduate School (777.4827).

**NOTE:** Students employed more than half-time, excluding a GA, are ineligible for Special Enrollment Status.