



South Carolina's Flagship University

Institutional Assessment and Compliance

Principles of Accreditation

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Focused Report

**Comprehensive Standard 3.6.1**

**The institution awards academic credit for coursework taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit coursework is equivalent to a designated credit experience.**

**Judgment:** Compliant**Response:**

The content of post-baccalaureate degree programs, as determined by faculty, is progressively more complex and rigorous than undergraduate courses. As indicated in detail in the response to [Standard 3.4.10](#), the Graduate School of the University has oversight of all graduate programs except those of the professional schools of medicine, law, and pharmacy which have their own policies, committees, and accrediting bodies.

**Graduate Programs with Graduate School Oversight**

For those academic units with oversight by the Graduate School, the curriculum committees of the academic units and of the [Graduate Council](#) review curriculum content for graduate-level content and rigor through a formal committee process (see the manual for the [Graduate Council](#), pages 6 – 9). This process assures that that post-baccalaureate programs build upon the foundation established by undergraduate programs and are more complex and rigorous at the graduate level.

In particular, 500/600 level courses are most likely to have both graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in the class. These courses are reviewed on the graduate level by the [Committee on 500/600 Level Courses, Distance Education, and Special Topics Courses](#). Each 500/600 level course syllabus (see [Graduate Level Syllabus Template](#)) must contain an explanation of the differences in requirements for graduate and undergraduate credit. Graduate students are required to complete additional graduate-level work (e.g., a research paper and/or substantive additional reading) for the course and are to be evaluated on a more rigorous basis than the undergraduates. Syllabi lacking such differentiation and rigor are returned to the academic unit for revision and approval is withheld until the appropriate content, assessment, and rigor are specified. In addition, as a reminder and indication of the importance of this differentiation, the Office of the Provost sends out a [memo](#) at the beginning of each term detailing the policy on differentiation in 500/600 courses between graduate and undergraduate work.

Also, each academic unit has published a set of admissions criteria for its graduate programs that clearly reflect recruitment of students capable of building on the undergraduate foundation. Each student in a graduate program is assigned an advisor and develops a program of study to guide their coursework and research. In addition, programs of study are outlined in the Academic Bulletins and the learning outcomes detail what students learn in a program. Each program has an assessment plan in place (see [Standard 3.3.1.1](#)). More advanced degree programs have more advanced learning outcomes as well as different assessment measures and criteria as delineated in the assessment toolbox. Since the learning outcomes are posted on the University website as a link from the Graduate Studies Bulletin, prospective students and the general public may examine the course of study for graduate students.

Graduate programs also place emphasis on inquiry and research (see [Standard 3.6.2](#)). Students are expected to engage in research and often to participate in laboratory work and/or field experiences. All but the professional degree programs require a research- or evidence-based thesis or dissertation. Most professional programs require an alternative capstone experience, such as a professional portfolio or creative production. All graduate programs are required to administer a comprehensive examination or an approved alternative assessment.

The Graduate School regularly collects data on graduate programs, including application and enrollment data, student demographics, and time and progress to degree. Student exit surveys are also conducted. These data can be used by the Graduate School and the academic units for program review. Additionally, the Graduate School monitors the qualifications of instructors of graduate courses and members for thesis and dissertation committee service. Instructors for graduate courses must possess the terminal degree in the discipline. Course instructors who are not members of the regular graduate faculty must be nominated by the academic unit for term appointments to teach graduate courses and/or to serve on graduate student committees. Credentials of nominees are reviewed for appropriate academic degrees and experience before term appointment status is granted. Finally, instructors are evaluated by students each term and many programs conduct faculty peer reviews. The [Center for Teacher Excellence](#) is available to faculty to support and improve graduate level teaching.

Evidence that the academic content is more rigorous for graduate students and that course work is differentiated between graduate and undergraduates is found in the following documents:

- [Graduate Studies Bulletin](#) (select Graduate Bulletin from the drop-down menu)
- Academic policies and procedures of the Graduate School (see [Graduate Directors Policy Manual](#))
- Reports of the Committee on 500/600 Level Courses, Distance Education, and Special Courses in the [Graduate Council minutes](#); see, for example, minutes from [March 22, 2010](#)
- Reports of the Curricula and Courses Committee in the [minutes of the Faculty Senate](#). See, for example, minutes from [April 27, 2010](#) and the detailed Curricula and Courses Committee report for the [April 27th meeting](#) (pages 6, 11, and 12)



SEARCH

 USC  THIS SITE

- Course syllabi
- Learning outcomes and the **assessment plans** for programs

Additionally, many graduate programs undergo specialized accreditation and others are encouraged to undergo **external review** by the Provost. All programs submit academic assessment plans and reports each year which include learning outcomes that demonstrate advanced rigor.

### School of Medicine

The School of Medicine Curriculum Committee is charged with "the development of and oversight of the content, structure, and pedagogy of the curriculum leading to the M.D. degree and for ensuring that students learn the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for the successful practice of medicine" (**Curriculum Committee Handbook**, see pgs. 8-9 for mission and charge); for detailed minutes see (**Curriculum Committee Minutes**). In the late 1990's, school-wide educational objectives were developed by a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee and adopted by the Curriculum Committee (September 1998) using a template subsequently published by the AAMC (**Learning Objectives for Medical Student Education: Guidelines for Medical Schools, AAMC Nov. 2000**). In addition, some courses, clerkships, and vertical curricula have their objectives based on those published by their specialty organizations. Examples of those organizations would include the Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine, the Association of Directors of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry, the Association of Anatomy, Cell Biology, and Neurobiology Chairpersons, the American Academy of Neurology, and the American Geriatrics Society. The objectives are periodically reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, particularly as objectives began being linked to core competencies at the graduate medical education level (**ACGME's General Competencies**). While the USCSM's objectives are not an exact copy of these competencies, these objectives are linked to the specific domains of patient care, medical knowledge, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism and systems-based practice. These objectives are published in the **SOM Bulletin** and are used as a guide to assessment and form the basis for course and clerkship objectives.

The basic science curriculum is structured to expose students to a body of knowledge, life-long learning tools, and basic clinical skills necessary to enter their clinical years and sustain their future practice of medicine. In the clinical years, the clerkships provide opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills essential to all specialties of medical practice through a variety of clinical settings with diverse patient populations. Oversight by the Curriculum Committee ensures that a general professional education is provided.

The present curriculum addresses all content areas required for accreditation by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). Student performance on national examinations is monitored closely. Score distribution is clustered at the mean with the continuum of score intervals between -1 and +1 standard deviation from the mean. The AAMC Graduation Questionnaire (GQ) is examined in detail annually in order to determine the adequacy of the instruction. Four of the past five years, greater than 95% of USCSM students have reported that they agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the overall quality of their education.

In February 2009 the School of Medicine underwent an accreditation site visit by the LCME and in June 2009 the School of Medicine was notified that it had received a full eight-year **accreditation** by the LCME.

A Graduate Curriculum Committee is in place to develop and oversee the content, structure, and pedagogy of the curriculum leading to the M.S., Ph.D., and Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Biomedical Sciences degrees and to ensure that students have a solid knowledge base and skills in Biomedical Sciences. A Genetic Counseling Program Curriculum Committee oversees the M.S. in Genetic Counseling and meets annually to review curricula and incorporate changes based on course evaluations, certification data, and accreditation requirements. The M.S. in Nurse Anesthesia program has a curriculum advisory committee that meets once per semester and oversees course assessment, accreditation issues, certificate exam evaluation, and future issues concerning changing training requirements. The M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling and the Certificate Program in Psychiatric Rehabilitation have a graduate subcommittee that meets on an as needed basis to address academic program issues. In addition an advisory council consisting of the faculty and representatives of partner agencies meet twice a year to provide feedback about the program. These various School of Medicine graduate program curriculum committees then submit curricular proposals through the USC Graduate Council for review and approval.

**Assessment plans and reports** detail the learning outcomes and associated assessments which further demonstrate the advanced content offered through the School of Medicine's programs.

### South Carolina College of Pharmacy (SCCP)

The South Carolina College of Pharmacy offers a professional degree program, the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D.). Admission requirements into the Pharm. D. program do not require an undergraduate degree, so the Doctor of Pharmacy program is not a post-baccalaureate degree program but rather is considered a first professional degree. To be admitted into the SCCP Doctor of Pharmacy program a student must fulfill 66 credit hours of "**pre-pharmacy**" coursework. The South Carolina College of Pharmacy is accredited by the **Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)**. The ACPE has established a series of 30 quality standards that schools of pharmacy must comply with to be fully accredited. The SCCP has achieved **candidate status** as designated by ACPE and will be considered for full accreditation in June 2010.

The Doctor of Pharmacy program builds on the academic foundation established through completion of the pre-pharmacy coursework. Many students in the SCCP complete their pre-pharmacy studies in the USC system and are well prepared for pharmacy education. Students pursuing pre-pharmacy studies are not eligible to take SCCP courses until they have been formally admitted into the Pharm. D. program. The content of the Pharm. D. program is focused on preparing high quality pharmacists and imparts the necessary knowledge, skills, and reasoning specific to pharmacy (see **Vision Statement**). The pharmacy curriculum and course content was created, approved, and implemented by the SCCP faculty. Each year the SCCP submits a "**Blueprint for Academic Excellence**" (which is a strategic plan

that outlines annual educational goals) to the USC Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. The College of Pharmacy provides **learning outcomes** for students (under password protection) and these are an integral part of **assessment**.

### School of Law

The School of Law offers only a post-baccalaureate professional degree program for students seeking a JD degree. The School of Law is accredited by the **American Bar Association (ABA)** and was most recently reviewed in AY 2008-09; please see a copy of the **September 2009 decision** of the ABA Accreditation Committee. Under ABA accreditation standards (**Standard 304, Interpretation 304-5**), the School of Law is allowed to provide degree credit only for work performed after enrollment in the JD program. Accreditation standards (**ABA Accreditation Standard 502**) also require that a student must have completed at least 75% of the work required for an undergraduate degree prior to their admission into the JD program. The School of Law requires that a student have received an undergraduate degree prior to enrollment, with the exception of a rarely used **program** in which a student in the University's Honors College may apply for admission after three years of undergraduate study and later receive both an undergraduate and JD degree. Accreditation standards (**ABA Accreditation Standard 301**) also require that the law school prepare "its students for admission to the bar, and effective and responsible participation in the legal profession."

Under School of Law Faculty By-Laws (**section 3.1**), faculty "have the sole responsibility for formulating and administering the program of the school, including faculty selection, retention, promotion and tenure; curriculum; methods of instruction; admission policies; and academic standards for retention, advancement, and graduation of students." A standing **Curriculum Committee** of the faculty is responsible for considering "all matters relating to the curriculum and curriculum planning" and "all matters relating to the graduation and any degree and program requirements." Curricular changes recommended by the Curriculum Committee must be approved by a majority vote of the full-time faculty in order to take effect.

Consistent with ABA Accreditation **Standard 302**, the JD curriculum is designed to provide progressively more complex analytical skills and understanding of legal doctrine, to develop professional skills, and to instill an understanding of professional values and expectations.

The JD program is structured so as to ensure that degree recipients have a fundamental knowledge across a broad range of substantive doctrines and are able to apply well-developed analytical skills to resolve legal problems; as demonstrated in annual **assessment reports**. Students are required to progress from being able to develop and apply a basic analytical framework at the end of their first year of degree study to being able to analyze and solve complex real world problems by the end of their third year.

Legal writing and drafting skills are taught progressively through a first-year required legal writing and research program and a required upper-level writing experience. In addition, all students must complete at least one professional skills course in either their second or third year of study. That course must provide individual feedback based upon student performance of skills exercises.

The degree program also provides for progressive development of professional values and professional identity. Beginning in Fall 2011, students will receive information in their first semester about the work and role of lawyers in the profession and in society. In their second year, they will continue to receive basic instruction in the rules and law that govern the conduct of lawyers. During their final year, students may take elective courses in advanced study of professionalism and legal ethics as well as a clinical elective that requires the application of professional rules and responsibilities.

The overall curricular objectives were most recently revised in 2008 by the School of Law faculty. Curricular goals and learning outcomes are published in the **Law Learning Outcomes** for the School of Law and are used as the basis for the School's annual academic assessment and planning document submitted to the University. After substantial study and discussion, the faculty approved revisions to the first-year curriculum proposed by the Curriculum Committee **April 6, 2010**.

### Supporting Documentation:

Description	Source
<b>Manuals, Bulletins, and Handbooks</b>	
Graduate Council Manual	<a href="http://gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/docs/2009-2010%20GradCouncilManualrev.pdf">http://gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/docs/2009-2010 GradCouncilManualrev.pdf</a>
Graduate Directors Policy Manual	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradDirPolicyManual.pdf#GradCurric">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradDirPolicyManual.pdf#GradCurric</a>
Graduate Studies Bulletin	<a href="http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php?catoid=4">http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php?catoid=4</a>
SOM Bulletin	<a href="http://bulletin.med.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=22&amp;navoid=2427">http://bulletin.med.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=22&amp;navoid=2427</a>
Law School Bulletin	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/LawGoalsOutcomes.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/LawGoalsOutcomes.pdf</a>
Curriculum Committee Handbook	<a href="http://ca.med.sc.edu/handbooks/CurriculumCommitteeHandbook.pdf">http://ca.med.sc.edu/handbooks/Curriculum CommitteeHandbook.pdf</a>
<b>Assessment and Learning Outcomes</b>	
Learning Outcomes	<a href="http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/toolbox/">http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/toolbox/</a>
Graduate School	<a href="http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php?catoid=9">http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php?catoid=9</a>
School of Medicine	<a href="https://services.aamc.org/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=Product.displayForm&amp;prd_id=198&amp;cfid=1&amp;cfToken=46FC5CD6-A0D9-2112-3CC17433A8029E59">https://services.aamc.org/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=Product.displayForm&amp;prd_id=198&amp;cfid=1&amp;cfToken=46FC5CD6-A0D9-2112-3CC17433A8029E59</a>
ACGME's General Competencies	<a href="http://www.acgme.org/outcome/comp/GeneralCompetenciesStandards21307.pdf">http://www.acgme.org/outcome/comp/GeneralCompetenciesStandards21307.pdf</a>
College of Pharmacy Vision Statement	<a href="http://www.sccp.sc.edu/welcome/vision.aspx">http://www.sccp.sc.edu/welcome/vision.aspx</a>
Assessment Plans	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/">http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/</a>
Graduate School	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/">http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/</a>

School of Medicine	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/">http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/</a>
SCCP Blueprint	<a href="http://www.sc.edu/provost/blueprints/Pharmacy_Blueprint09.pdf">http://www.sc.edu/provost/blueprints/Pharmacy_Blueprint09.pdf</a>
<b>Committees, Councils, and Centers</b>	
Center for Teaching Excellence	<a href="http://www.sc.edu/cte/">http://www.sc.edu/cte/</a>
Graduate Council Committee Process	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilManual.pdf#CurricComm">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilManual.pdf#CurricComm</a>
Committee on 500/600 Level Courses, Distance Ed, and Special Topics	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilManual.pdf#500600">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilManual.pdf#500600</a>
School of Law Curriculum Committee	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchoolFacultyBylaws.pdf#CurricComm">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchoolFacultyBylaws.pdf#CurricComm</a>
Faculty Role in Curriculum	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchoolFacultyBylaws.pdf#FacultyAff">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchoolFacultyBylaws.pdf#FacultyAff</a>
Graduate Council Minutes	<a href="http://gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes/">http://gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes/</a>
March 22, 2010	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilMinutes032210.pdf#Lev500600">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilMinutes032210.pdf#Lev500600</a>
Faculty Senate Minutes	<a href="http://www.sc.edu/faculty/meetings.shtml">http://www.sc.edu/faculty/meetings.shtml</a>
April 27, 2010	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacSenMin042710.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacSenMin042710.pdf</a>
Curricula and Courses Report for April 27, 2010	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacSenAgen062310.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacSenAgen062310.pdf</a>
School of Medicine Curriculum Minutes	<a href="http://ca.med.sc.edu/curriculum_committee.asp">http://ca.med.sc.edu/curriculum_committee.asp</a>
School of Law Curriculum Committee Minutes - April 6, 2010	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchMin040610.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchMin040610.pdf</a>
<b>Accreditation</b>	
Graduate School External Review by Provost	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/ExtProgRevMemo.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/ExtProgRevMemo.pdf</a>
School of Pharmacy	
Accreditation by LCME	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/LCMEAccred.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/LCMEAccred.pdf</a>
Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education	<a href="http://www.acpe-accredit.org/default.asp">http://www.acpe-accredit.org/default.asp</a>
ACPE Status	<a href="http://www.acpe-accredit.org/deans/default.asp">http://www.acpe-accredit.org/deans/default.asp</a>
School of Law	
American Bar Association	<a href="http://www.abanet.org/legaled/approvedlawschools/approved.html?gnav=global_legaled_approvedlawschools">http://www.abanet.org/legaled/approvedlawschools/approved.html?gnav=global_legaled_approvedlawschools</a>
2009 Approval Decision	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/LawAccred.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/LawAccred.pdf</a>
Standard 304, Interpretation 304-5	<a href="http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter3.pdf">http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter3.pdf</a>
Standard 502	<a href="http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter5.pdf">http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter5.pdf</a>
Standard 301	<a href="http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter3.pdf">http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter3.pdf</a>
Standard 302	<a href="http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter3.pdf">http://www.abanet.org/legaled/standards/2009-2010StandardsWebContent/Chapter3.pdf</a>
<b>Coursework</b>	
Memo Differentiating Between Undergrad And Graduate-Level Work	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/Crse500600Memo.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/Crse500600Memo.pdf</a>
Graduate-Level Syllabus Template	<a href="http://gradschool.sc.edu/DocLibrary/documents/GC_SyllabusGuideline.pdf">http://gradschool.sc.edu/DocLibrary/documents/GC_SyllabusGuideline.pdf</a>
"Pre-Pharmacy" Coursework	<a href="http://www.sccp.sc.edu/students/prepharmacy/index.aspx">http://www.sccp.sc.edu/students/prepharmacy/index.aspx</a>
Law School Curriculum Revisions	<a href="http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchMin040610.pdf">http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchMin040610.pdf</a>
Honors College Pre-Law Opportunity	<a href="http://schc.sc.edu/thehonorsexperience/academics/prelawopportunities.aspx">http://schc.sc.edu/thehonorsexperience/academics/prelawopportunities.aspx</a>
<b>Other Standards</b>	
Standard 3.4.10	<a href="#">CS_3.4.10.html</a>
Standard 3.3.1.1	<a href="#">CS_3.3.1.1.html</a>
Standard 3.6.2	<a href="#">CS_3.6.2.html</a>

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