

COMPUTING (PHD)

Degree Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy in Computing

The interdisciplinary Doctor of Philosophy degree in Computing integrates coursework and research projects from three related disciplines: computer science, information systems, and information technology. The program emphasizes advanced discovery and the development of solutions to research-focused problems in the areas of cyber assurance, risk assessment, forensics, and data analytics. Ph.D. graduates are eligible for research positions in academia, industry, and government.

The Ph.D. degree is awarded to candidates who have demonstrated a capacity for conducting original research, have made a meaningful contribution to knowledge in the computing discipline, and have successfully defended a dissertation.

Requirements for Admission

To apply to the Ph.D. in computing degree program, please visit the University of South Alabama (USA) Graduate School website.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the USA Graduate School, admission requirements for the Computing Ph.D. program are:

1. A baccalaureate or graduate degree in Computer Science, Information Systems, Information Technology or a closely related field. A graduate degree is not required for admission.
2. An undergraduate minimum GPA of 3.3 (4.0 scale) for all completed post-secondary coursework or a 3.5 overall (4.0 scale) for a completed graduate program.
3. Official scores for the Graduate Records Examination (GRE) including the AW portion.
 - Any applicant with an undergraduate or graduate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution are not required to provide GRE scores.
4. A statement of purpose indicating the student's personal goals and research interests. Because prospective students are matched with a faculty mentor, competitive applications align with the research areas of School of Computing graduate faculty.
5. Three letters of recommendation from persons able to speak directly to the applicant's ability to engage in advanced discovery and contribute new knowledge to the discipline.
6. Curriculum vita.
7. An official transcript from each college or university attended.
8. A completed application for admission to the Graduate School.
9. For international students, an official TOEFL, IELTS, DuoLingo, iTEP, or Pearsons (PTE Academic) score, or an equivalent level of competence as exhibited by a bachelor or graduate degree from a regionally accredited university in the United States is required. See the policy of the Graduate School: <https://www.southalabama.edu/bulletin> (<https://www.southalabama.edu/bulletin/>).

Admission may be granted by the Director of Graduate Studies, when supported by a vote of the Graduate Faculty, in special cases where a holistic evaluation of the applicant's credentials is appropriate.

Admission is competitive and the decision is based on a review of all submitted admission materials. A personal interview may be requested.

Applicants are encouraged to submitted samples of prior work. All admissions materials should be submitted online at:

<https://explore.southalabama.edu/apply/?sr=15732969-d778-4ade-a6c6-4678cd7b7221> (<https://explore.southalabama.edu/apply/?sr=15732969-d778-4ade-a6c6-4678cd7b7221>)

Program Requirements

To qualify for the Ph.D. in Computing, a minimum of 72 semester hours of approved graduate credit is required and the following program of study must be completed with a grade of "B" or better in all course work.

Required Course Work

(18 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
CSC 612	Cybersecurity	3
CSC 626	Advanced Big Data	3
ISC 629	Comp Ecosystems	3
ISC 673	Digital Investigations	3
ISC 675	Information Systems	3
ISC 686	Risk Analysis	3

Total Hours **18**

Electives

(24 Hours)

Student will complete 24 semester hours of 500-level or higher approved graduate coursework. A maximum of 6 semester hours of CIS 694 Directed Study may be counted towards fulfilling the electives requirement. Any student without an academic research background should take CIS 518 (Research Methodologies) or other similar research course as an elective.

Dissertation

(30 Hours)

A primary educational objective of the Ph.D. program is for students to develop the ability to conduct advanced research and contribute new knowledge to the discipline. To that end, the student will complete 30 hours of CIS 799 Dissertation.

Academic Standards

Student must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA in order to be in good standing. Failure to maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA will result in the student being placed on academic probation. The School of Computing Director of Graduate Programs may recommend dismissal of a student who does not maintain good academic standing or is not making sufficient progress.

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available on a competitive basis and are awarded on the recommendation of the School of Computing. Applications are available on-line at: <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/eforms/graduateschool/graduateassistantapptform.pdf>. Applications must be received by April 1st for fall applicants or November 1st for spring applicants.

Comprehensive Examinations

Doctoral students must pass a comprehensive examination. The format of the examination will be determined by the comprehensive examination committee. Normally the examination is based on the

required coursework. Failure to pass the comprehensive examination within three attempts will result in dismissal from the program.

Candidacy

A doctoral student is admitted to candidacy upon successful completion of a comprehensive examination. Candidacy indicates the student has completed the required coursework and is eligible to begin the dissertation research project.

Dissertation Hours and Defense

Doctoral candidacy is required to enroll in CIS 799 Dissertation. At the discretion of the Director of Graduate programs, directed study credit constituting preliminary preparation for the dissertation study may be substituted for CIS 799. While only 30 hours of CIS 799 may be counted toward the degree, a student must continuously enroll in at least 1 credit hour of dissertation during the fall and spring semesters until the dissertation is successfully defended. Failure to enroll continuously without the written approval of the Director of the Graduate program may lead to dismissal from the program.

A doctoral candidate must successfully defend a dissertation prospectus. The final oral defense of the dissertation is scheduled after the dissertation study has been completed and prepared in written form. Revisions to the written dissertation may be required for final approval by the dissertation committee and as a result of a review by the Graduate School.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of 24 semester hours of graduate credit earned at a regionally accredited, or approved, graduate school may be counted toward the Ph.D. program. Transfer credit may be approved after the completion of nine (9) semester hours of credit at the University of South Alabama. Transfer credit must be approved by the School of Computing Director of Graduate programs with the recommendation of the student's advisor.

Time Limit

All requirements for the PhD in Computing degree must be completed within ten (10) calendar years from the date of matriculation as a School of Computing PhD student. This ten calendar year constraint also applies to all transfer credit.

After reaching candidacy, a student has a maximum of 3 years to complete the dissertation. A student may apply to the Director of Graduate programs for an extension to complete the degree.

Graduation Plan

Course	Title	Hours
First Year		
Fall		
ISC 673	Digital Investigations	3
CSC 612	Cybersecurity	3
ISC 629	Comp Ecosystems	3
Elective	Elective	3
Hours		12
Spring		
ISC 686	Risk Analysis	3
CSC 626	Advanced Big Data	3
ISC 675	Information Systems	3
Elective	Elective	3
Hours		12

Second Year

Fall		
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
Elective	Elective	3
Elective	Elective	3
Hours		12

Spring

CIS 799	Dissertation	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
Elective	Elective	3
Elective	Elective	3
Hours		12

Third Year

Fall		
Elective	Elective	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
Hours		12

Spring

Elective	Elective	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
CIS 799	Dissertation	3
Hours		12
Total Hours		72