



The Department of Communication

Graduate Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared for graduate students in the Department of Communication to acquaint them with current policies and practices governing degree programs. Information is accurate to the extent that it reflects policies and procedures in effect as of August 2015. Because policies and requirements are subject to continuous review and periodic revision, the material contained in this handbook should be confirmed with the departmental graduate office to ensure that it has not been superseded by more recent faculty action.

This handbook should be understood as a companion to the current University of Utah Graduate School Bulletin. The handbook records all departmental regulations, but not necessarily all Graduate School policies and requirements. A student's program is governed by the regulations operative on the date of initial matriculation unless the student elects for changes occurring at a later date. Interruptions in the continuity of a graduate degree program may require a student to meet the latest requirements. Each graduate student in the Department of Communication is responsible for keeping abreast of any revisions in departmental or Graduate School policy, procedures, or regulations that might affect the individual's academic program or status as a student in good standing.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admissions

Once a year, a cohort of graduate students is admitted to the program, beginning their studies in the fall semester. The cohort admission procedure is designed to build a support group that contributes to the well-being and education of the entire student-faculty community.

Students who are interested in graduate work in the Department of Communication may investigate our courses by applying for "non-matriculated" status through University of Utah admissions. Nine hours of non-matriculated coursework may be applied to the degree upon admission. On rare occasions—for example, exceptional circumstances involving meritorious performance and strong faculty support—applications received from non-matriculated students may be reviewed by the graduate committee for spring semester admission. The graduate committee is responsible to make such determinations. Additionally, a maximum of six credits may be transferred from another institution for inclusion in a program of study, provided that those credits have not been applied toward the completion of another degree. Inclusion of transfer or non-matriculated credit in a student's program of study requires the approval of the supervisory committee.

Graduate Student Orientation

An orientation meeting is scheduled for all incoming communication graduate students prior to the beginning of Fall Semester. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce graduate students and faculty members, review departmental policies and requirements, and provide information about matters of specific concern to new graduate students. Students are further encouraged to meet individually with members of the faculty throughout the first semester of residency in order to discover mutual interests and to discuss individual goals and objectives.

Department of Communication Graduate Committee

A departmental graduate committee is elected each year to review, create and recommend policies and regulations directly related to the department's graduate program. The committee is chaired by the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chairperson serves as a non-voting member of the committee. In addition to policy formation and on-going review of the Graduate program, the Graduate Committee acts on requests for variance from established rules and regulations. The committee also serves as an appellate body for students and faculty members requesting a review of supervisory committee actions or other matters affecting the graduate program in general or an individual student in particular.

Department of Communication Graduate Office

The Director of Graduate Studies administers the graduate program of the Department of Communication, chairs the Graduate Committee, and is responsible for ongoing graduate student evaluation. The departmental graduate office facilitates the implementation of policies and procedures established by the faculty and the Graduate School and assists students in completing graduate program requirements. Most technical questions regarding the graduate program and its requirements are handled by the Graduate Academic Advisor. The Graduate Academic Advisor also maintains all graduate student records; serves as dissertation, thesis, and project librarian; and facilitates the work of the Graduate Committee.

The graduate office handles registration for some departmental course offerings numbered 6000 and above. The Director of Graduate Studies maintains regular office hours for graduate students and is available for consultation regarding all aspects of a student's graduate program.

Graduate Student Representatives

Department of Communication Graduate Student Representatives represent the Department of Communication's graduate population. Each year, the department's graduate student community elects three members to represent graduate student voices in the department as well as the larger university community. Graduate Student Representations also function as the official liaisons between graduate students and faculty, communicating with the graduate office and furnishing input to the faculty on decisions regarding retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT).

GRADUATE ADVISING AND REVIEW

Temporary Advisors

Prior to beginning graduate study in the Department of Communication, each student is assigned a temporary advisor until the student initiates a request for a supervisory committee. Temporary advisors are assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies. Students are expected and encouraged to contact their temporary advisees prior to the beginning of or early in the student's first semester in order to ensure students' appropriate progress and understanding. Across the first year of a student's residency, temporary advisors should work with their temporary advisees to aid them in identifying an appropriate permanent advisor.

Selection of the Supervisory Committee

The Dean of the Graduate School formally appoints supervisory committees. However, each student participates fully in the selection of the committee; moreover each student is responsible for initiating the selection of his or her supervisory committee.

The selection process generally begins during the second semester of graduate study by making arrangements with a faculty member to serve as chair of the supervisory committee. The supervisory committee chairperson should (1) hold a degree or the expertise that is equivalent to the degree being sought, and (2) have demonstrated within the last five years proficiency in the primary research area selected by the student. M.A. and M.S. students who elect a project option should request a faculty member to serve as chairperson who has demonstrated proficiency in the general area of interest through creative production or other recognized activities.

In consultation with the supervisory committee chairperson, the student selects additional faculty as potential members of his or her supervisory committee and personally discusses with each individual the basis for his or her selection and the individual's willingness to serve on the committee. Once this informal process has been completed, the student initiates a "Request for Supervisory Committee," which is submitted to the department's Director of Graduate Studies for approval. This form is available on the Graduate School website. When approval is granted, the form is forwarded to the Graduate School by the department graduate office for final action by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Because students' interests change throughout their graduate programs and faculty members may accept other positions or be absent from campus for extended periods, it is often necessary to request a change in supervisory committee membership. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible to assist in these negotiations as requested by the student or faculty. After informally discussing the change with the committee members involved, a "Request for Change in Supervisory Committee," must be initiated. This form is available on the Graduate School website, prepared by the student, and is submitted to the department's Director of Graduate Studies for approval. The approved request is then forwarded to the Graduate School for inclusion in the student's official university file. Only the departmental "Request for Change in Supervisory Committee" form will be accepted by the Graduate Records Office, and names of committee members listed on the approved form must correspond with all signatures on official candidacy forms, examination reports, and the thesis or dissertation final approval page.

The supervisory committee for master's students consists of at least three faculty members who are selected on the basis of their ability to contribute to the student's graduate program. The supervisory committee for the M.A. or M.S. student should be appointed no later than the second semester of graduate work. At the master's level, there need not be a representative on the committee from outside the student's own department. The program of study for each M.A. or M.S. student should receive preliminary approval by his/her supervisory committee before the completion of twelve hours of graduate credit. Upon completion of 75% of coursework, the plan of study should receive formal approval. The supervisory committee for Doctoral students consists of at least five faculty members, one of whom must be from outside the Department of Communication. The supervisory committee for the Ph.D. should be appointed and the formal program of study approved no later than the third semester of doctoral study. A majority of the doctoral student's committee should approve the formal program of study no later than the first

semester of the second year of study. All regulations covering the Ph.D. degree apply to students pursuing the Master of Philosophy degree.

Committee Responsibilities and Procedures

The importance of the supervisory committee to a student's graduate program cannot be emphasized too strongly. The supervisory committee has responsibility for approving the student's academic program; preparing and evaluating the qualifying (comprehensive) examination; approving the thesis or dissertation prospectus and the thesis or dissertation itself; and administering and judging the final oral examination. Decisions concerning program requirements, examination, and the thesis/dissertation are made by majority vote of the supervisory committee. It is expected that all members of the supervisory committee will be present in order to hold any formal meeting which may result in an official supervisory committee action. Circumstances can exist, however, that make this expectation an unreasonable burden on the candidate or committee. In those cases, the supervisory committee chair will consult with the Director of Graduate Studies to arrange an alternative that still provides for full participation by the majority of the committee.

Graduate Student Review

All graduate students in the Department of Communication are reviewed by the department faculty each year during the spring semester. The purpose of the review is to assess the overall progress of each student in the program, and to identify means by which the faculty can assist each student to achieve success in the program. Prior to the review, each student is responsible for meeting with his or her advisor to discuss particular concerns or areas of difficulty and/or to provide information that can be usefully shared with the faculty at large during the review session. To support the review process, the graduate office will solicit standardized information on research, teaching, and service from each student prior to the graduate review. The faculty as a whole evaluates the student and determines what message the Director of Graduate Studies conveys regarding the student's progress in a letter that the student receives following the Graduate Review.

Research Requirements

Because graduate work involves independent scholarship, all students are expected to be engaged in research activities as advised by the supervisory committee in addition to regular coursework. Each student is held responsible at the annual graduate review for a summary statement of research, creative endeavors, or other scholarly work for the previous twelve months. Further, evidence of original research is considered an essential criterion in assessing a doctoral student's academic progress.

Provisions for the Grade of Incomplete

The grade of "Incomplete" is given when special circumstances intervene to prevent the timely completion of coursework. The work should be completed as expeditiously as possible, no later than one year after the course was taken. To ensure that instructors have sufficient time to review outstanding work and file grades in accordance with the registrar's timeline, students are strongly encouraged to submit their incomplete work to instructors by the middle of the semester for which they hope to have their "incomplete" status rectified. Students who have two or more incompletes

reflected on their records in any semester should supply a plan for the timely completion of that coursework to their advisors and the Director of Graduate Studies.

REQUIREMENTS FOR M.A. AND M.S. DEGREES

The master's degree offered by the Department of Communication is designed as a research degree, furnishing students with theoretical and methodological foundations for study within the discipline. Accordingly, the majority of the Department's master's students go on to pursue doctoral studies upon completion of the degree. The primary distinction between the two master's degrees offered by the Department of Communication is that the Master of Arts degree requires a "standard proficiency" in an approved language. Any coursework taken to reach proficiency in a language may not be counted toward degree course credit. Beyond the language requirement, the distinction between Master of Arts and Master of Science is a matter of personal choice. Some individuals will find benefit in a master's degree that labels them in a certain way. The general university-wide requirements for each master's degree may be found on the University of Utah Graduate School's website.

Minimum Credit Hours

Candidates for the Master of Arts and the Master of Science degrees in the Department of Communication must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours, of which a minimum of 24 hours is represented by content (i.e., topical class or seminar) coursework. Students should understand that some options for degree completion may require much more than this minimum.

Students have three options in completing the requirements for the Master's degree: thesis, project, and non-thesis. The desired option is selected at the time of program of study approval.

Thesis Option

Students electing the thesis option are required to complete a minimum of 24 hours of content coursework, as well as a minimum of six hours of COMM 6970 (Thesis Research-Masters) while completing their thesis. A student will receive an "A" grade for these "thesis hours" following successful defense of his/her thesis.

The student will prepare a thesis prospectus or proposal in consultation with his or her advisor and the supervisory committee. The final prospectus or proposal must be approved by the supervisory committee and be filed with the Department of Communication Graduate Advisor, along with the Masters Prospectus Approval Form, available on the Department website. In light of the compressed timeline for a master's program of study, the prospectus/proposal meeting may be held in conjunction with the program of study meeting, with the approval of the supervisory committee. The prospectus/proposal meeting (or portion of the program of study meeting) for the master's thesis may be open to the faculty and graduate students at the discretion of the candidate and his or her supervisory committee. For further guidance on preparing the prospectus or proposal, consult the section on dissertation procedures described in this handbook; while a master's-level prospectus or proposal is not expected to mirror the length, comprehensiveness, or level of detail expected of a doctoral prospectus, the document nonetheless ought briefly to outline the research problem, provide the justification and purpose of the research, identify literature relevant to the proposed project, and identify the specific procedure for performing the research project itself.

Preparation and writing of the thesis must conform to the Graduate School's *Style and Format Guide for the Preparation and Presentation of Theses and Dissertations*. A copy of the Guide is available for purchase from the Thesis Office.

A public presentation and defense of the thesis is required and should be scheduled before the tenth week of the semester in which the candidate intends to graduate. Copies of the thesis should be delivered to the members of the supervisory committee no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Notice of the presentation and defense must be published no later than one week prior to the defense. Upon successful completion and defense of the thesis, a departmental Master's Thesis or Project Defense Form must be signed by all committee members and filed with the Graduate Advisor. A bound copy of the completed and Graduate-School approved thesis must be filed with the Graduate Academic Advisor.

Non-Thesis Options

As an alternative to the thesis, masters students may elect take a comprehensive examination administered by the supervisory committee; in this case, students must complete a minimum of 33 semester hours of content coursework prior to sitting that exam. Election of the exams option must be made and approved by the supervisory committee prior to the completion of 24 hours of content coursework. The comprehensive examination consists of a six-hour written examination and a two-hour oral examination or defense. The examination will test the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the three proficiency areas claimed by the student including (1) the theoretical foundations of the student's main area of communication inquiry, (2) relevant methodological approaches and (3) the research literature in the candidate's area of specialization. Exam responses should be distributed to supervisory committee members no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Successful completion and defense of exams is recorded on the Masters Proficiency Exam and Approval Form, available on the Department website, which must be signed by all committee members and filed with the Graduate Advisor.

Supervisory committees may approve a variation of the comprehensive exams option: the project option. Final presentation and defense of the project constitutes the examination in this case. Students whose committees approve the project option are required to complete at least 27 hours of content coursework and at least three hours of COMM 6930 (Master's Project) while completing their creative or applied project. A student will receive an "A" grade for these project hours after s/he successfully defends the project and provides a bound, hard copy of the project or final professional practicum report to the Graduate Academic Advisor.

For the project option, students prepare a prospectus that must be approved by the supervisory committee. The prospectus meeting may be held in conjunction with the program of study meeting, with the approval of the supervisory committee. The prospectus meeting (or portion thereof) for the master's project may be open to faculty and graduate students at the discretion of the student and the supervisory committee. The project option may take one of two forms: (1) an artifact such as (but not limited to) a portfolio; a campaign proposal; a broadcast; a recording; or (2) a scholarly article. For (1) the artifact option, a public presentation and defense of the project is required and should be scheduled before the tenth week of the semester in which the candidate intends to graduate. A specific invitation must be issued to the Department Chair. Notice of the presentation and defense must be published no later than one week prior to the defense. For (2), the scholarly article option, the

work must be original; the research question must be generated by the student; single- or first-authored (in the latter case, the student must be responsible for conceptualizing the research question[s], leading the analysis, drafting, and revising the article); and it must be targeted to a specified, peer-reviewed, disciplinary journal, as determined by the supervisory committee. A “revise and resubmit” process, wherein the supervisory committee receives the article in polished draft form and returns detailed “review” feedback several weeks prior to final submission is encouraged. The defense of the scholarly article may be open to the public at the discretion of the advisory committee.

Copies of the final project should be delivered to the members of the supervisory committee no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Upon successful completion and defense of the project, a departmental Masters Project or Thesis defense form must be filed with the Graduate Advisor, along with a hard copy of the completed project.

Program of Study

The graduate curriculum of the Department of Communication is defined as graduate seminars, numbered COMM 6800 and above (with the exception of COMM 6090, the Communication Pedagogy course required of all funded teaching fellows during the first enrolled semester. This does not obviate students enrolling in graduate seminars outside of the department or in Independent Studies (COMM 6910). A student may take a course numbered below 6800 only with the approval of the supervisory committee, which can ascertain that the course coheres with the student’s program of study. Specific course requirements for the master’s degree are established on an individual basis for each student by his or her supervisory committee. Prior to the appointment of a supervisory committee (which is formally constituted upon filing the Masters Supervisory Committee Form, available on the Department website, with the Graduate Advisor), the student should consult with his or her temporary advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies in selecting coursework. A list of courses that constitute the student’s formal program of study should be presented to the supervisory committee for its approval before 75% of the student’s coursework is completed. An MA/MS Program of Study form (available on the Department website) must be signed by all supervisory committee members and filed, along with a hard copy of the program of study, with the Graduate Advisor.

Required Courses and Academic Performance

COMM 7001 (Foundations of Communication I) must be successfully completed by all master’s students, who must register for it each semester of their first year of study. Master’s students are also required to take one methods course, to be determined in collaboration with and approved by the supervisory committee; as a general guide, the method course is ideally determined by the focus of a student’s study and interests developed after his or her first semester and in consultation with his/her advisor and committee. COMM 6910 (Independent Study) courses are limited to 25% of total coursework. Students may take courses outside of the Department offerings with input from their advisors and/or supervisory committees.

Students must receive a B grade or better (Reports of “Credit/No Credit” and “Audit” are not acceptable) for a course to count toward their Program of Study. However, no course will be officially accepted until approved by the student’s supervisory committee. Therefore, students are encouraged to consult with their supervisory committee as early as possible in planning their program.

Time Limit

All work for the Master's degree must be completed within four consecutive calendar years. In rare cases deserving special consideration, the student's committee chair can petition the Dean of the Graduate School for a time extension. However, students taking longer than the four-year period may be required to take additional coursework or repeat the comprehensive examination. Petitions for time extensions are initiated by the student and must be accompanied by written support from the supervisory committee chair (accomplished by the chair's signature on the petition). Petitions are evaluated by the Director of Graduate Studies and, if approved, forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School. Petitions must contain (1) a rationale for the time extension; (2) an explanation of what requirements need to be completed, including any additional measure for evaluating student performance; and (3) a descriptive timeline and final date for completion of all degree requirements, including clearance by the Thesis Editor and the Graduate School.

Coursework Toward the Ph.D. Degree

Although some students enter the master's program with the intention of moving into the doctoral program, admission into the doctoral program for enrolled master's students requires both successful completion of the M.A./M.S. degree and formal approval by the Graduate Committee. Students should not assume that satisfactory performance in a Master's program ensures invitation or admission into the doctoral program.

At the supervisory committee's discretion and with its guidance, any coursework hours earned above the required minimum for completion of the master's degree option selected may be applied toward doctoral coursework, should a student who completes the master's degree in the Department apply to and be admitted into the doctoral program. However, those courses must be "reserved," or held back from the master's degree program of study document, for courses cannot be applied twice for different degrees.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE

The highest degree offered by the Department of Communication is Doctor of Philosophy. It requires advanced scholarly achievement and demonstrated proficiency in independent research. The Graduate School outlines general university-wide regulations that govern the Ph.D. degree, but most of the specific requirements are established by the departmental faculty responsible for administering a specific doctoral program.

Prerequisites for Admission

As a general rule, the Department of Communication requires the successful completion of the Master's degree as a prerequisite for the Ph.D. degree. In those exceptional cases where a student feels that s/he can demonstrate appropriate experience, comprehensive knowledge of representative subject matter, and research proficiencies equivalent to those afforded by the M.A. or M.S. degree, a student lacking one of those degrees may apply directly to the doctoral program, for evaluation by the Graduate Committee.

Core Course Requirements

All students seeking the Ph.D. in Communication are required to enroll in and successfully complete COMM 7001 (Foundations of Communication I) for each semester of their first year of study. Doctoral students are further required to take a minimum of three methods courses during their program of study. At least two of the three required courses must be selected from 7000 level offerings within the Department of Communication.

Program of Study

Students in the Ph.D. program are expected to complete a minimum of 42 hours of content coursework beyond the master's degree; however, the supervisory committee may require more than this minimum. The residency requirement is met by two consecutive semesters of at least nine credits, not including summer semester and regardless of being interrupted by summer semester. Three hours of COMM 7970 (Thesis Research-PhD) will be considered a full load after the residency requirement is fulfilled (for student loan, student housing, and visa purposes). The candidate must complete a minimum of 14 semester hours of COMM 7970 (Thesis Research-PhD) and must be regularly enrolled at the University for three or more credit hours during the semester in which the final oral examination (dissertation defense) is scheduled.

Students must receive a B grade or better (Reports of "Credit/No Credit" and "Audit" are not acceptable) for a course to count toward a program of study. However, no course will be officially accepted until approved by the student's supervisory committee. Therefore, students are encouraged to consult with their supervisory committees as early as possible in planning their programs of study. The graduate curriculum of the Department of Communication is defined as graduate seminars, numbered COMM 6800 and above (with the exception of COMM 6090, the Communication Pedagogy course required of all funded teaching fellows during the first enrolled semester). This does not obviate students enrolling in graduate seminars outside of the Department or in Independent Studies (COMM 7910), although both outside courses and COMM 7910 courses are respectively limited to a maximum of 25% of all coursework. A student may take a course numbered below 6800 only with the approval of the supervisory committee, which can ascertain that the course coheres with the student's program of study. Students may take courses outside of the Department offerings and Independent Studies with input from their advisors and/or supervisory committees.

The Ph.D. degree is defined as the achievement and demonstration of specified proficiencies. The candidate, in consultation with and attendant upon the approval of his or her supervisory committee, establishes the areas of proficiency, outlined in the Program of Study document that will be accepted for completion of the Ph.D. requirements and the work designed to achieve a satisfactory level of proficiency. The Ph.D. Program of Study form (available on the Department of Communication website) should be presented to the supervisory committee for approval in the third semester of doctoral work.

Areas of Proficiency

Although the approval of specific proficiencies for a given student remains the province of the student's supervisory committee, several requirements apply to Ph.D. candidates in the Department of Communication. To begin, each Ph.D. program must consist of at least four claimed areas of proficiency, including one in theory and another in research methodology.

Areas of proficiency must be approved by the supervisory committee at the same time approval is given to the formal program of study. Respective descriptions of and rationales for proficiency shall include a set of objectives and/or a narrative description for each claimed area and the means by which it can be achieved (i.e., adequate coursework to justify the claim). It is the burden of the proposed proficiency statement(s) to demonstrate that adequate support mechanisms exist for a student to accommodate the objectives, and that no institutional or structural impediments would preclude successful completion of the proficiency in the normal pursuit of candidacy. Graduate credits earned at other graduate institutions may be listed as courses that demonstrate additional support in proficiency areas. A departmental “Program of Study Form,” signed by all supervisory committee members and accompanied by a hard copy of the student’s program of study, must be filed in the departmental graduate office at the time approval is granted.

Qualifying Examination

In that the Ph.D. degree is defined in terms of proficiencies rather than completion of a specified number of courses, the supervisory committee examines each candidate on the basis of those proficiencies and not specifically on the program of study. The program of study is a plan of action to prepare the candidate in establishing credentials for claiming proficiencies, rather than an operational definition for those proficiencies. Hence, in structuring the qualifying examination, the supervisory committee is not restricted to only those courses listed in the program of study. In preparation for the examination, the Ph.D. student typically reads widely beyond the material covered in regular coursework. Although each member of the supervisory committee is usually charged with the task of examining the student in a specific proficiency, he or she is not restricted to that specific area in the examination, and questions may range over any or all of the proficiencies claimed by the student. In keeping with University policy, the qualifying examination consists of eighteen hours of written examination and a two-hour oral examination, for a total of twenty hours. The eighteen hours of written exam must be completed within a four-week period. That is, the written exam must be completed within four weeks from the time the Graduate Academic Advisor administers the first question. At the discretion of the supervisory committee, the 18 hours that comprise the written portion of the exam may be completed in different formats: typical format options include (1) “in-house” (closed or open)—a room is reserved for the student within the department in which s/he is to respond to the presented question(s) within the time allotted for the question; (2) open and “at home”—the student is emailed the question(s) at a specified time by the Graduate Advisor and prepares a response that is emailed back at the end of the allotted question time; (3) a completed (with references) essay of reasonable page-length commensurate with allocated question hours (approximate page length must be directed by the supervisory committee at the program of study meeting) written within 2-4 weeks of receiving the question. Different formats may be identified for different questions. Both the written and oral portions of the exam must involve the entire supervisory committee. Exam responses should be distributed to supervisory committee members no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense.

The qualifying examination represents a demonstration of scholarly achievement and is the basis upon which students are formally accepted as candidates for the Ph.D. If a student fails the examination, it may be repeated one time at the discretion of the supervisory committee. In rare instances, a committee may withhold a final decision until the student has corrected a specified inadequacy and successfully demonstrated proficiency through a re-examination or alternative assignment. In such cases, the committee shall file a deferred-outcome report with the Director of Graduate Studies that identifies (a) the areas to be re-examined or otherwise evaluated, (b) the

method of re-examination or assignment for evaluation, (c) the criteria by which the re-examination or assignment will be evaluated, and (d) the date by which the re-evaluation must be completed. This date should be within 90 days of the date of the original oral examination. Students should be aware that reevaluation will delay the official report to the Graduate School on the outcome of the examination. It must be emphasized that no student will be officially “passed” and admitted to candidacy until aptitude in all areas of claimed proficiency has been clearly demonstrated. Successful completion and defense of exams is recorded on the PhD Proficiency Exam Approval Form, available on the Department website; this form must be signed by all supervisory committee members and filed with the Graduate Advisor.

Language Requirement

The Department of Communication does not require a standard proficiency in a language other than English for completion of the doctoral degree.

Preparing the Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus is a proposal for a research project and is essentially a “blueprint” or plan for carrying out the study. The prospectus should be developed only after considerable preliminary investigation of a general problem. The prospectus is a well-detailed document that outlines the research problem, the justification and purpose of the research, the theoretical and research literature leading to the research, and specific procedure for performing the research project itself.

As noted in the section on general Ph.D. requirements, the prospectus must receive formal approval by the student’s supervisory committee. The departmental PhD Prospectus Approval Form, available on the department’s website, summarizes the action of the committee and must be filed in the departmental graduate office along with a copy of the approved prospectus immediately following the prospectus meeting. The prospectus meeting for the doctoral dissertation is open to all graduate students and faculty members. All graduate students are encouraged to schedule a public presentation of the prospectus, such as in a colloquium, prior to asking for formal approval from the supervisory committee. New ideas and suggestions resulting from the presentation are often helpful in the preparation of the final prospectus. Students are encouraged to review approved prospectuses, and copies are available in the departmental graduate office.

If the research projects involve human subjects, either directly or indirectly, prior approval or exemption by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approval of the supervisory committee must be secured before the student may initiate research. A complete discussion of the university’s regulations regarding the use of human subjects and the procedures for requesting project approval are available on the IRB website: www.utah.edu/irb.

A copy of the *Style and Format Guide for the Preparation and Presentation of Theses and Dissertations* is available to all degree candidates when the “Request for Supervisory Committee” form is submitted to the graduate office. The Guide provides comprehensive information and instructions for typing the manuscript, the proper paper to be used, acceptable duplication methods, copyright privileges, release forms required, specific format requirements, etc. The Guide also lists the style manuals that have been approved by the Department of Communication.

Registration

The Ph.D. candidate must register for a minimum of 14 credit hours of COMM 7970 (Thesis Research-PhD), must be regularly enrolled at the University, and must register for three or more credit hours during the semester in which the final oral examination is taken. (See the section of this handbook titled, “Minimum Continuous Registration.”)

Final Examination

A final oral examination (dissertation defense) should be scheduled by the tenth week during the semester in which the candidate intends to graduate. Copies of the dissertation should be delivered to the members of the supervisory committee no less than two calendar weeks prior to the scheduled defense. The final oral examination is open to the public, and notice of the examination must be published no later than one week prior to the examination date.

The dissertation defense should demonstrate to the supervisory committee the student’s understanding of the research project, the concepts related to the project, the contribution the project makes to the field of knowledge, and the adequacy of executing the project. Students must be ready to accept revision suggestions during the oral examination. If revision suggestions are stipulated as conditions for acceptance, the chairperson of the supervisory committee is responsible for overseeing the revisions. A Departmental PhD Thesis Defense form, available on the Department website, must be signed by all committee members and filed with the Graduate Advisor. Upon final approval by the Graduate School Thesis Office, students must submit a bound copy of the completed dissertation to the Graduate Academic Advisor.

Time Limit

Doctoral students must complete the requirements for the Ph.D. degree within eight consecutive years from the date of their admission into the doctoral program. All coursework and the qualifying examinations must be successfully completed within the first five years of the candidate’s program.

In rare cases, the student can petition the Dean of the Graduate School for a time extension. However, students who have not completed their degrees within three years of taking the comprehensive examination may be expected to repeat all or parts of the examination and may be required to complete additional coursework.

Petitions for time extensions are initiated by the student and must be accompanied by written support from the supervisory committee chair (accomplished by the chair’s signature on the petition). Petitions are evaluated by the Director of Graduate Studies and, if approved, forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School. Petitions must contain (1) a rationale for the time extension; (2) an explanation of what requirements need to be completed, including any additional measure for evaluating student performance; and (3) a descriptive timeline and final date for completion of all degree requirements, including clearance by the Thesis Editor and the Graduate School.

MINIMUM CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

From the time of formal admission, each student must maintain minimum continuous registration until he or she completes all degree requirements. Continuous registration can be satisfied by several methods:

Master's degree candidates can maintain minimum registration by:

1. Registering and paying normal tuition and fees for at least three credit hours per semester from the time they are admitted to the Graduate School until they have completed all requirements for the degree.

OR

2. Registering for three credit hours of COMM 6930 (Master's Project) if the candidate is completing a project, COMM 6970 (Thesis Research-Master's) if the candidate is completing a thesis, or COMM 6980 (Faculty Consultation) if the candidate is taking comprehensive exams.

Doctoral students for whom supervisory committees have been appointed must maintain minimum registration until they have been formally advanced to candidacy. This requirement can be met by:

1. Registering and paying normal tuition and fees for at least three credit hours per semester until they are advanced to candidacy.

OR

2. Registering for three credit hours or COMM 7970 (Thesis Research-PhD) during any semester in which they are not otherwise enrolled.

Doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy (usually after completing all course work and passing the qualifying examination) can maintain minimum registration by:

1. Registering and paying the applicable tuition and fees for a minimum of three credit hours of COMM 7970 (Thesis Research-PhD). Candidates who are in residency (i.e., who use University buildings, consult regularly with their supervisory committee, or otherwise use University facilities) and all candidates who defend their dissertation during the semester in question must register under this paragraph.

OR

2. On rare occasions when the student is not in residence and not using University resources such as equipment, facilities, libraries, or faculty time, a student may register for COMM 7990 (Continuing Registration). Registration of COMM 7990 is limited to four semesters.

Graduate Student Leave and Accommodation Policies

The Department of Communication is a family-friendly unit and is fully compliant with Title IX regulations designed to ensure gender equity; moreover, the Department recognizes that various life circumstances, family and otherwise, may inhibit timely progression through the graduate program.

Full-time graduate students who are in good academic standing and are making satisfactory progress toward degree may request a *leave of absence* from the Department's Director of Graduate Studies (subject to the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School) to discontinue their studies for one or more regular semesters for a maximum of one year. Leaves of absence may be granted in the following circumstances:

- Leaves of absence will generally be granted for reasons relating to pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, or other family care needs; illness; unexpected impairment; military service; or residence outside the state of Utah.
- Leaves may also be granted to students who, in the judgment of the Director of Graduate Studies, are engaged in work considered beneficial to their academic goals, such as temporary teaching or professional positions or employment that will ultimately allow the student to complete the degree,
- Leaves for other reasons may be granted when the Director of Graduate Studies believes the leave is in the best interest of both the student and the University.

In the event that a leave of absence is not possible or desirable, the Department also observes an *accommodation policy* that, to the extent possible, works with graduate students to navigate reasonable alternative methods of meeting programmatic and teaching obligations. For instance, an accommodation may be requested if the student's situation is very temporary or not sufficiently taxing of time to warrant a leave of absence but nonetheless impinges on a student's ability to participate as fully as is optimal for a short period of time. The purpose of the accommodation policy is to provide, where and when possible, an alternative to leave of absence request so as not to slow the student's progress through the program and also ensure that, if applicable, student stipend, tuition, and health benefits are not interrupted. Whether a circumstance is eligible for accommodation and what appropriate accommodations might entail must be determined in consultation with and ultimately approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair. Students who experience a medical condition associated with their pregnancy and need accommodations recommended by their medical provider should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator, who will work with the student, cognizant faculty, and administration to determine what accommodations are reasonable and effective.

Summer Session

Continuous registration, for the purpose of this policy, refers only to registration during the regular academic year. Continuous registration is not terminated or interrupted by not registering during summer terms (between the end of Spring Semester and the beginning of Fall Semester). Nothing in this paragraph, however, prevents a student from maintaining registration status, if appropriate, during the summer term.

Tuition

Regular tuition will be imposed for courses numbered 6930-6980 and 7970-7980, but reduced tuition may be charged for course number 7990.

Readmission

Students who do not maintain registration as listed above will be removed from the program

after the “Last Day to Add” deadline has passed for that semester (typically two weeks after regular classes begin), unless the student is taking a leave of absence. To reenter the program, students must follow the normal application procedures for all student applications, including application to the University Admissions Office. A complete list of the application procedures is available on the department’s website.

CRITERIA FOR DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Doctoral students may be dismissed from the program for failure to achieve any of the following:

1. Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0
2. Officially register documentation of a supervisory committee and doctoral advisor by the end of their 5th semester as a doctoral student.
3. Continuously maintain an official advisor and supervisory committee from the time of official registration through completion of the program.
4. Pass qualifying exams by the end of their 6th year in the doctoral program.
5. Make acceptable progress toward the degree as determined by the supervisory committee.

Master’s students may be dismissed from the program for failure to achieve any of the following:

1. Officially register documentation of a supervisory committee and supervisory committee chair by the end of their 3rd semester as a master’s student.
2. Continuously maintain an official advisor and supervisory committee from the time of official registration through completion of the program.
3. Make acceptable progress toward the degree as determined by the supervisory committee.

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Each year the Department of Communication awards a number of graduate teaching assistantships to qualified applicants. These assistantships award a nine-month stipend and a tuition benefit in return for teaching in the department. This consists of four courses in two semesters for Ph.D students and 3 courses in two semesters for Master’s students. Regulations concerning the tuition benefit program are listed on the Graduate School’s website.

Each student who receives an assistantship must successfully complete COMM 6090 (Teaching College Communication), and this course should be completed during their first semester as a teaching fellow.

Graduate assistants are evaluated on the basis of their performance as a fellow and progress toward completion of the degree. Normally, persons holding assistantships will be renewed without a formal faculty review if they meet the following criteria:

1. Maintain a 3.3 GPA.
2. Receive recommendations as adequate teachers from course supervisors.
3. Carry an annual load of classes that will permit completion of the degree in the normal period.
4. Make consistent progress toward the completion of the degree by avoiding excessive incompletes and by moving expeditiously through the various stages of graduate study (chair and supervisory committee selection, program of study, qualifying examination, prospectus, thesis or dissertation preparation).

Students employed by the Department are expected to manage their priorities to demonstrate good progress in meeting the requirements of their degree programs as well as to appropriately discharge all responsibilities of their teaching fellow and other assignments. The department places no restrictions on outside employment but requires that all such employment and the hours involved be declared, and the declaration kept current. Should conflicts arise and good progress cannot be maintained or assignment responsibilities met, students will be required to resolve those conflicts by reducing or ending the outside work. Continued conflict can result in the surrender of the teaching fellow appointment and tuition benefit.

Financial assistance, other than a departmental teaching fellowship, is available to qualified students, and information about this funding can be found on the Graduate School's website.

Master's Program
Recommended Timeline (Consonant with Fellowship Funding Terms)
 Based on Minimum Credit Hours

NOTE: **One method course required**, determined by student in consultation with advisor/committee.

Semester I

COMM 6090*

COMM 7001

Three elective courses (9 hours)

Consult with temporary advisor regarding

- Semester II classes
- Selecting a permanent advisor

*If Teaching Associate (TA). If assignment is as RA the first year, COMM 6090 requirement deferred to Semester III, when TA assignment commences.

Semester II

COMM 7001

Three elective courses (9 hours)

Select Permanent Advisor

Constitute Supervisory Committee

File Supervisory Committee Form with Graduate Advisor

Semester III

Program of Study Meeting and Approval

Three areas of proficiency: theory, method, area of interest

File POS Approval Form with Graduate Advisor

Comprehensive Exams Option:

Three elective courses (9 hours)

Project Option:

Three elective courses (9 hours)

Prospectus Meeting (may coincide with POS meeting)

File Prospectus Approval Form with Graduate Advisor

Check with Graduate Advisor regarding project filing deadlines

Thesis Option:

Two elective course (6 hours)

COMM 6970 (3 hours)

Prospectus Meeting (may coincide with POS meeting)

File Prospectus Approval Form with Graduate Advisor

Check with Graduate Advisor regarding thesis filing deadlines

*Semester IV*Comprehensive Exams Option:

Two elective courses (6 hours)

Write comprehensive exams (6 hours)

Defend comprehensive exams (2 hours)

File comprehensive exams completion paperwork with Graduate Advisor

Project Option

COMM 6930 (3+ hours)

Present project to committee for approval

File project completion paperwork with Graduate Advisor

Thesis Option

COMM 6970 (3+ hours)

Submit thesis to committee for approval

File thesis completion paperwork with Graduate Advisor

Submit thesis to Graduate Advisor *and* Graduate School Thesis Office

Doctoral Program
Recommended Timeline
 (Based on Minimum Credit Hours)

NOTE: **Three method courses required**, determined by student in consultation with advisor/committee

Semester I

COMM 6090*

COMM 7001

Three courses (9 credits)

Consult with temporary advisor regarding

- Semester II classes
- Selecting a permanent advisor

*If Teaching Associate (TA). If assignment is as RA the first year, COMM 6090 requirement deferred to Semester III, when TA assignment commences.

Semester II

COMM 7001

Three courses (9 credits)

Select Advisor

Semester III

Three courses (9 credits)

Constitute Supervisory Committee

File Supervisory Committee Form with Graduate Advisor

Program of Study Meeting and Approval

Four areas of proficiency: theory, method, two areas of interest

File POS Approval Form with Graduate Advisor

Semester IV

Three courses (9 credits)

Semester V

Two courses (6 credits)

COMM 7970 (3 credits)

Write Qualifying Exams (16 hours)

Defend Qualifying Exams (2 hours)

File comprehensive exams completion paperwork with Graduate Advisor

Semester VI

COMM 7970 (6 credits)

Prospectus Meeting

File Prospectus Approval Form with Graduate Advisor

Semester VII

COMM 7970 (3 credits)

Check with Graduate Advisor regarding dissertation filing deadlines

Semester VIII

COMM 7970 (3 credits)

Submit dissertation to committee for approval

File dissertation completion paperwork with Graduate Advisor

Submit dissertation to Graduate Advisor *and* Graduate School Thesis Office

Fellowship Awards and Deadlines

College of Humanities

Details and specific college deadline: <http://humanities.utah.edu/students/scholarships.php>

Ramona W. Cannon Award for Graduate Student Teaching

- Department nomination
- Graduate students in the college who have completed one year as Teaching Assistants at the University of Utah and will teach the following Spring semester
- Amount: \$1000
- *Department Deadline: November*
- *College Deadline: December*

David C. Williams Memorial Fellowship

- Two awards for students committed to studying, writing, and disseminating information about the principles of stewardship and sustainability in the management of public lands
- Nominees must be currently enrolled and in good standing
- Amount: \$6500 (may qualify for half-tuition benefit with Graduate School)
- *College Deadline: February*

Marvin J. Ashton Scholarship

- Awarded either to an undergraduate student graduating from the College of Humanities or to a first-year graduate student in the college
- Amount: \$1000 to \$3000 for tuition
- *College Deadline: February*

Graduate Research Award in the Humanities

- Recognises exemplary graduate student research or creative work published or accepted for publication within the prior two years
- Amount: \$1000
- *College Deadline: March*

Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Scholarship

- Study abroad scholarship for graduate students in Humanities, Fine Arts, Architecture, or Social and Behavioral Science
- Amount: \$4000
- *College Deadline: March*

Johanna and Fritz Kempe Memorial Scholarship

- Awarded to a College of Humanities graduate student 60 years of age or older, preferably a woman
- Amount: \$1500 for tuition
- *College Deadline: March*

Graduate School

Details and specific deadlines: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/graduate-fellowship-opportunities/>

Graduate Research Fellowship

- \$17,000 plus tuition (provided all other TBP criteria met)
- 12-15 awards annually
- For full-time graduate students post successful completion of qualifying exams conducting research or creative projects and pursuing the terminal graduate degree in their departments
- *Department Deadline: December*
- *Graduate School Deadline: January*

Garr Cutler Energy Award

- \$1,500
- One award annually
- Any student enrolled and working toward a graduate degree at the University of Utah
- Recognizes that academic year's paper judged best on energy
- Student must be the paper's sole or principal author
- *Graduate School Deadline: December*

Thomas G. Stockham Medal for Conspicuously Effective Teaching

- Medal and \$1000 cash prize
- One award annually
- Full time graduate students who demonstrate "conspicuously effective teaching"
- Candidates nominated by faculty advisors and mentors
- *Graduate School Deadline: December*

Marriner S. Eccles Graduate Fellowship

- \$16,000 plus tuition
- 5-7 awards annually
- U.S. citizens
- Full-time graduate students pursuing research relevant to . . . humanities and social sciences . . . and their relationships among politics, public policy and the economy

- Renewable for one year
- *Graduate School Deadline: January*

Steffensen Cannon Scholarship

- \$16,000 plus tuition
- 12-15 awards annually
- Humanities students
- Renewable for one year
- *Graduate School Deadline: January*

Excellence Through Diversity Fellowship

- Up to 50% full tuition waiver match
- Department Tuition Benefit match
- Department nomination
- Eligibility
 - Student self-identifies as a member of a historically underrepresented population
 - Accepted into a graduate program at the University of Utah,
 - Full-time master's or doctoral student
 - 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA
 - United States citizen or permanent resident
 - Able to demonstrate sustained personal commitment with and work for historically underrepresented communities in the U.S. and in the academy
- *Graduate School Deadline: March*

Emerging Diversity Scholars Fellowship

- Up to 50% full tuition waiver match
- Department Tuition Benefit match
- Department nomination
- Eligibility
 - Student self-identifies as a member of a historically underrepresented population,
 - Full-time master's or doctoral student
 - Successfully completed first year of graduate program
 - 3.5 or higher cumulative GPA
 - United States citizen or permanent resident
 - Able to demonstrate sustained personal commitment with and work for historically underrepresented communities in the U.S. and in the academy
- *Graduate School Deadline: March*

External Fellowships (deadlines vary)

Comprehensive list of external fellowships:

- <http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/graduate-fellowship-opportunities/>
- <https://gradschool.utah.edu/diversity/external-fellowships/>

Travel Grants

Department of Communication

- Up to \$600 (budget permitting) per fiscal year
- Nonlocal conferences
- Competitive papers or competitively selected panels
- Proof of presentations
- *Deadline: Rolling*

Graduate School Student Travel Assistance Award

- Up to \$500 one-time match of departmental travel funding across degree program
- Proof of presentations
- *Deadline: Rolling*
- <http://gradschool.utah.edu/current-students/graduate-student-travel-assistance-award/>

Associated Students at the University of Utah

The Associated Students at the University of Utah (ASUU) often awards funds to students who will be traveling and presenting at conferences. Funding from ASUU is awarded through a Senate Bill Process that is facilitated by a senate representative for each college. <http://www.asuu.utah.edu/senate-bill-process/>

Helpful Websites/Links

University of Utah

- Department of Communication, University of Utah
 - <http://communication.utah.edu>
- Graduate School, University of Utah
 - <http://gradschool.utah.edu>
- Tuition Benefit Program
 - Important Dates and Deadlines
 - <http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/tbp-minimum-support-amounts-and-deadline-calendar/>
 - Subsidised Student Health Insurance
 - <http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/insurance-information/>
- Thesis Office
 - Deadlines
 - <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/>
 - Handbook for Theses and Dissertations
 - <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/handbook/>

University Support Services

- [Career and Professional Development Center](#)
- [Center for Disability and Access](#)
- [Dean of Students](#)
- [Graduate School](#)
- [Insurance Information](#)
- [International Student & Scholar Services](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [LGBT Resource Center](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#)
- [Personal Money Management](#)
- [Recommendation for Change of Graduate Classification](#)
- [Student Counseling Center](#)
- [Student Health Center](#)
- [Student Success Advocates](#)
- [Tuition Benefit Program Guidelines](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)
- [Women's Resource Center](#)

Professional Organizations

- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
 - <http://www.aejmc.org>
- International Communication Association
 - <http://www.icahdq.org>
- National Communication Association
 - www.natcom.org

- Western States Communication Association
 - <http://www.westcomm.org>

