

Graduate Handbook

2024-2025

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University of Arizona
Department of Communication**

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Disclaimer: You are a student at the University of Arizona. Hence, you are subject to all of the policies and procedures of the University of Arizona graduate college, registrar's office, bursar's office, police department, and so forth. We cannot list all of those policies here, but they are on the relevant websites. Before you do anything unusual (adding classes late in the semester, protesting a campus ordinance, telling a student to appeal a grade) you should check the relevant campus policies. Failure to do so could, for instance, cost you money. We do our best to keep this handbook up to date with UofA policies. However, if anything in this handbook appears to conflict with a UofA campus-level policy, chances are the campus policy will win. Please let us know if you find any such inconsistencies.

I. THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

The Department of Communication at the University of Arizona offers advanced study leading to the MA or the PhD degree. Currently the department serves approximately 25 graduate students and more than 1,000 undergraduate students. The department's strong commitment to quality teaching and research has earned the program national recognition and won its faculty and graduate students numerous research and teaching awards.

The MA degree in communication prepares students for the pursuit of the PhD, for work in an academic/educational setting, or for work in the private sector.

The PhD is a research degree that develops students' research expertise in their chosen area of study, leading to careers in teaching and research-related specialties.

Concentrations of Study

The department offers a broad range of coursework and educational research opportunities, with specializations in interpersonal, media, and health. The faculty in the department focus on the following:

<i>Communication Processes...</i>	<i>in Communication Contexts...</i>	<i>using Communication Methods</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social influence and argumentation• Message effects• Nonverbal and discourse processes• Information processing• Deception• Conflict management• Social cognition and person perception• Relationship development and decline• Stereotyping and identity• Communication and aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health• Mass media• Social media• New technology• Small group• Political• Marital, family and close relationships• Intercultural/intergroup• Organizations• Communication networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiment• Survey• Dyadic interaction analysis• Content analysis• Meta-analysis• Interviews/focus groups• Grounded theory• Observation

Expected Learning Outcomes for UA Communication Graduate Programs:

- 1. Apply:** Apply empirical research methods in communication to specific scientific questions with appropriate methods.
- 2. Produce:** Produce rigorous empirical research and effectively present the research in both oral and written forms.
- 3. Demonstrate:** Demonstrate deep understanding of the major communication theories, their associated empirical literatures in at least two areas of the discipline (i.e., interpersonal, mass, social influence, health), and develop hypotheses or research questions based on those theories.
- 4. Teach:** Teach college-level communication classes in an expert and fully professional manner.*

*does not apply to the Accelerated Master's Program.

Communication Faculty

JENNIFER STEVENS AUBREY (PhD, University of Michigan), *Professor of Communication & Director of Graduate Studies*. Media effects, adolescence and childhood.

LEILA BIGHASH (PhD, University of Southern California), *Assistant Professor of Communication*. Organizational communication, communication and technology, communication networks.

JOSEPH BONITO (PhD, University of Illinois), *Professor of Communication*. Small group communication, computer-mediated communication, language and social interaction, research methods.

CAROLYN SMITH CASERTANO (MA, Gonzaga University), *Associate Professor of Practice*. Public relations.

KORY FLOYD (PhD, University of Arizona), *Professor of Communication*. Interpersonal communication, relational communication, affection.

JAKE HARWOOD (PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara), *Professor of Communication*. Intergroup communication, communication and aging, communication and music, research methods.

SUSAN HOLLAND (MA, Gonzaga University; MA, University of San Francisco), *Associate Professor of Practice*. Public relations.

KATE KENSKI (PhD, University of Pennsylvania), *Professor of Communication*. Political communication, social influence, media, research methods, public opinion.

MATTHEW LAPIERRE (PhD, University of Pennsylvania), *Associate Professor of Communication*. Health communication, children and media, media effects, persuasion.

RAIN WUYU LIU (PhD, Michigan State University). *Assistant Professor of Communication*. Public relations, intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, persuasion, research methods, communication campaigns.

MARGARET PITTS (PhD, Pennsylvania State University), *Associate Professor of Communication, Senior Associate Dean of Graduate College*. Interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, qualitative research methods.

STEVE RAINS (PhD, University of Texas at Austin), *Professor of Communication*. Communication technology, health communication.

CHRIS SEGRIN (PhD, University of Wisconsin), *Professor of Communication, Department Head*. Social skills and mental health problems, family communication, nonverbal communication, research methods.

KYLE TUSING (PhD, University of Wisconsin), *Professor of Communication & Director of Undergraduate Studies*. Relational communication, social influence.

BO YANG (PhD, University of Maryland), *Assistant Professor of Communication*. Health communication, media effects, persuasion, social influence, risk communication, communication campaigns, research methods.

Department Faculty Affiliates

MELISSA CURRAN (PhD, University of Texas at Austin), *Professor of Family Studies and Human Development*. Attachment, family systems, interdependence, and commitment theories; adult romantic relationships and families; impact of illness on romantic and family relationships.

JEFF GREENBERG (PhD, University of Kansas), *Professor of Psychology*. Attribution processes, self-focused attention, emotions, cognitive dissonance.

MATTHIAS MEHL (PhD, University of Texas at Austin), *Professor of Psychology*. Social and personality psychology; naturalistic person-environment interactions, social interactions, coping, and health; research methods.

II. ACCELERATED MASTER'S DEGREE

The Accelerated MA Program (AMP) in Communication is designed to enable outstanding University of Arizona undergraduates to complete both the BA and MA in Communication in five years of study. This program is intended for students interested in enhancing their skillset and competitiveness on the job market and/or in admission to professional graduate programs (e.g., law school). The AMP is not ideal for students wanting to pursue research careers, entry into research-based PhD programs, or teaching positions. For those students we recommend our two-year MA degree program.

AMP Standards and Requirements

Eligibility:

- Completion of a minimum of 75 undergraduate credit hours is required at the time of application; a minimum of 90 undergraduate credit hours of enrollment is required at the time of entry into the AMP. If the student's GPA falls below 3.3 at the time they have completed 90 units, the student will not be admitted into the program. Courses taken for audit may not be included in the total number of units counted for eligibility or admission. (Note: Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate coursework.)
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 on a minimum of 12 units of undergraduate BA in Communication.
- Completion of at least 12 earned undergraduate credits in their major at the University of Arizona's main campus. Units still graded Incomplete, units graded Pass/Fail or units taken as audit will not count toward the requirement of the 12 undergraduate units.
- Completion or near completion of general education requirements.
- Submission of a graduate application and payment of a graduate application fee.
- Demonstration of the maturity necessary for success in an accelerated, highly competitive program.
- Expectation to complete the undergraduate degree within four years. The undergraduate degree requirements must be completed before the student is eligible to be admitted to the graduate college (which happens at the end of the first year).

AMP Degree & Tuition Policies

- Students will be considered undergraduates until they complete their undergraduate requirements, which should be no later than the end of the fourth year.
- Students entering with Advanced Placement Credit and/or who attend summer school may complete their Bachelor's degree in the junior year.
- Students must complete at least 12 of their graduate credits while in graduate status.
- During years 1-3 (or approximately 0-90 credits) students will be taking undergraduate coursework and charged at the undergraduate rate.

- Once admitted to AMP, during the senior (or transition year), students may take up to 12 units of graduate coursework which may apply toward both the Bachelor's and the Master's degrees. Students will be charged at the undergraduate rate and retain eligibility for undergraduate scholarships.
- Students classified as seniors who have not yet completed a bachelor's degree may enroll in 500-level courses following the Graduate Credit for Seniors Policy. Courses numbered at the 600, 700 and 900 levels are not open to undergraduates.
- After completion of all Bachelor's requirements, students will be granted graduate status, be charged at the graduate rate, and be eligible for graduate assistantships. The student won't be eligible to graduate nor will they be eligible for assistantships until all Bachelors' requirements are completed. While an undergraduate, students are required to keep their graduate coursework cumulative GPA at 3.0, or higher if required by the graduate degree offering unit, to be admitted to the Master's program.
- In April of the senior year, the student will be evaluated by their advisor and graduate course instructors for their recommendation on whether the student should be admitted to the graduate college. This will happen before the student is formally admitted to the Master's program.
- Should a student have completed 12 graduate credits, but not yet completed the undergraduate degree, they will be considered a graduate student for financial aid and tuition purposes and coded as 'graduate' in UAccess. They will no longer be eligible for undergraduate scholarships, nor will they be eligible for graduate assistantships.
- At least 12 graduate credits must be taken while in graduate status, after completing all degree requirements for the Bachelor's.
- AMP students are encouraged to complete their undergraduate requirements as soon as possible, but not later than one semester before receiving their Master's degree. Students finishing their undergraduate requirements later than one semester before receiving their Master's degree will no longer be eligible for undergraduate scholarships, nor will they be eligible for graduate assistantships. Neither degree will be awarded until the undergraduate requirements are completed along with the Master's requirements.

Advisor: AMP students will be assigned a graduate advisor, typically the Director of Graduate Studies, upon being accepted in the program. The AMP advisor provides guidance about which graduate courses to take and signs the Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Courses form (<https://grad.arizona.edu/forms/gsas>) to enroll in 500-level courses during the student's senior year. AMP students should request signatures for the enrollment form when the enrollment period opens.

Course Requirements

- 1) Core Courses: All students must complete all *three* of the following core courses.
 - 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication
 - 561: Research Methodologies I
 - 571: Research Methodologies II
- 2) Theory Courses: All students must complete at least *two* of following theory seminars but may take additional theory courses as electives.
 - 609: Mass Communication Theory
 - 610: Interpersonal Theory

- 620: Theories of Social Influence
 - 669: Health Communication Theory
- 3) Comprehensive Exams: During the last semester of their program, AMP students will enroll in 1 credit of COMM 599 (comprehensive exams).
- 4) Electives: Remaining units are to be fulfilled by electives approved by the committee.
- Only 3 units of independent study can be counted toward the 34 unit minimum upon advisor's approval.
 - Students can take 3 units of internship credit toward their 34 unit minimum. The internship needs to be approved by the student's AMP advisor, and the student must produce a paper analyzing how they applied communication theory/research to the internship experience.
 - Students may take up to 3 elective units outside the department upon advisor's approval.

Plan of Study Requirements

All coursework must be approved by the advisor by the end of the second semester (at the end of the senior year). At this time, students are to prepare a "Plan of Study" form and submit to Graduate Student Academic Services (GSAS) through GradPath, using a link found on the UAccess Student Center. Only coursework *required* for the degree should be listed on the "Plan of Study" form (see [Appendix A](#) for Communication Course Rotation). Courses with a 'D' or lower cannot be included on the Plan of Study and do not count towards the degree. The Plan of Study form will be routed to the department's graduate program coordinator first, then to the student's advisor and Director of Graduate Studies for approval, before receiving final approval by Graduate Student Academic Services. Once approved by all parties, the student will receive a notification email from GSAS. If changes occur after the Plan of Study has been submitted and approved, the student must submit new Plan of Study to Graduate College. Resources for navigating the GradPath system are available here: [GradPath | UArizona Graduate College](#)

AMP Comprehensive Exam & Committee

AMP students will take common comprehensive exams during a scheduled examination period along with MA students on the non-thesis track. The comprehensive exams include both a written and an oral portion. There will be one comprehensive examination committee each year comprised of the members of the department graduate committee and possibly other outside members (at the graduate committee's discretion). The members of the committee must be members of the graduate faculty. Please see Appendix B for Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for the Graduate Programs in Communication.

After the Plan of Study is approved and before the student defends comprehensive exams, a "Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form" form must be submitted via GradPath. This should occur no later than the first three weeks of the fall semester in the student's second year in the MA program. This form is routed to the department's graduate studies director and then directly to GSAS. Once the advisor and committee composition paperwork has been submitted and approved, any change in the committee requires the approval of the advisor and the involved faculty, or a majority of the committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies if they are experiencing problems or are seeking an alternative advisor. Changes in committee composition will require student to submit a new Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form to the Graduate College.

Written Exams

- Written exams take place over a 2-week period and are written "in-house" (i.e., in a designated room with a departmental laptop administered by the Graduate Program Coordinator in most cases). Students will receive questions in advance but will not be allowed to bring any materials into the

exam room. The dates and schedule vary by year, but the typical timeline appears below. Each “in-house” exam is 2 hours long. All AMP students take their written exams at the same time. If a student fails any portion of the written exam, a second exam will be scheduled at the discretion of the comprehensive examination committee.

Written Exam	Student Receives Question	In-house Exam Date
Research Methods & Statistics	First Monday after Spring Recess	First Wednesday after Spring Recess
Theory	First Friday after Spring Recess	Second Monday after Spring Recess
Elective	Second Wednesday after Spring Recess	Second Friday after Spring Recess

Oral Exam

- If the student passes the written exams, the oral exam will take place at least 3 weeks after the conclusion of the final written exam. All AMP students and the comps committee members will meet for oral exams on one single day.
- The first part of the defense will be comprised of broad questions reflecting on the entire graduate program. Example questions might address the definition of communication, the role of communication in the student’s future occupational aspirations, and the role of theory in relation to communication research. The second part of the defense will include specific, follow-up questions about the written exams, in the areas of research methods and statistics, theory, and the elective topic.
- Students should expect the oral exam to last approximately 60 minutes.
- Once all of the students have completed the oral exam, the comps committee will discuss the results of the exam and will inform the students.
- If a student fails any portion of the oral exam, a second exam will be scheduled at the discretion of the comprehensive examination committee.
- Oral exams are comprehensive. Students might be asked to explain or expand an answer provided in the written exams, but students will also be asked new questions in the core areas to determine mastery.

Procedures and Preparation for Written and Oral Comprehensive Exam

- In the beginning of the spring semester of the student’s final year of their MA/AMP, they will submit their preferences for the topics they would like to cover on their comprehensive exams. In all cases, the comprehensive exams will include COMM 561 and COMM 571, one theory course, and one elective/theory content area. The methods exam is not negotiable, but students may select their theory and elective topics.
- Comprehensive exams will be scheduled during the second semester of the second year.
- Each exam will typically consist of approximately 1-3 questions to be completed within a 2-hour period. The comps committee will select questions from an existing test bank. Students will be given their questions 48 hours in advance of writing their exams.
 - Students MAY NOT discuss exam questions or answers with other students during the two-week examination period.
 - Students MAY NOT bring any materials with them to the exam.
- Students will turn in their completed exams to the graduate coordinator, who will distribute them to the appropriate evaluation committee at the conclusion of each exam via email.
- To prepare for the written comprehensive exam, students should study readings, notes, and coursework in the comps topic areas. The reading lists for the comprehensive examination will be the syllabi for the classes selected for the exams. For example, for the methods exam, the syllabi for COMM 561 and 571 will serve as the reading list.

- Written responses will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. The MA comps committee will grade students' exams. Any disagreement over a grade will be settled and determined by that committee. The committee must supply their evaluations to the student's advisor and to the graduate coordinator within two business weeks after the last exam. The student will be notified of results within 3 business days of the committee submitting their evaluations.
- Comps committee members might provide written feedback to students. Students should use that feedback to assist them in preparing for the oral exam.
- Failure in any area requires re-examination on new questions in the area. Comps committee members should return a decision on a re-examination no later than two weeks after the completion of the exam. Results of the second examination are final.
- Comps committee members' copies of the student's written exam (with written comments or otherwise) will not be returned to the student.
- In the event of a failing grade on the oral exam, the examining committee has the option of recommending re-examination or voting not to recommend a re-examination. The latter decision terminates the student's MA program. Results of the second examination are final.
- Upon successful defense of comprehensive exams and completion of all degree requirements (including all required courses) the department's program coordinator submits the MA completion confirmation to GSAS.

So You're Planning a MA Comprehensive Exam Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is a big accomplishment to be done with your written comps!

Before the defense:

2. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form and Plan of Study submitted and approved. You might not have yet done the Appointment of MA Committee form. If not, get that submitted right away.
3. The graduate program coordinator and director of graduate studies will work with the graduate committee to make sure that the oral defense is scheduled at least three weeks after the written exams are submitted.
4. Your committee chair (usually the director of graduate studies) will confirm whether you have passed your written exams approximately one week before your scheduled defense. If you have not heard by that time, please check in with your committee chair. If you need to re-write any exam, your committee will communicate next steps.

At the defense:

5. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email a Qualtrics Survey called Oral Comprehensive Exam Rating/Quality form to your committee. Each committee member will need to complete the survey after the oral defense.

After the defense:

6. The committee chair will communicate the results of the oral defense with you over email, usually the same day as the defense. The graduate program coordinator will enter in the results on the Master's Completion Confirmation form on GradPath. If you need to have another oral defense, your committee chair will communicate next steps.
7. Confirm with the graduate program coordinator the submission of your last GradPath form: The Master's Completion Form. You do not need to initiate that form; it should be initiated and submitted by the GPC.

Summary AMP Unit Distribution

	Requirement	Units
A	Departmental Core (500, 561, 571)	9
B	Required Theory Courses (609, 610, 620, or 669)	6
C	Electives	18
D	Comprehensive Exam Prep (599)	1
	TOTAL	34

Required Core Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication • 561: Research Methods I • 571: Research Methods II 	9 credits	total of 34 credits required minimum overall graduate level GPA 3.0* * A grade of D or lower will not be accepted minimum overall undergraduate level GPA 3.3
Theory Courses (selected from COMM 609, 610, 620, and 669; one course is offered per semester, and students will often take both courses offered in the second year of their program; one in Fall and one in Spring)	6 credits	
Communication Electives (3 credit hours of electives can be graduate level courses from outside of the Communication department; 3 credit hours can be an internship; or 3 credit hours can be an independent study)	18 credits	
Comprehensive Exam Prep (Comm 599)	1 credit	
TOTAL	34	

Sample AMP Timeline

Semester	Courses/Units Taken
Semester 1 (undergraduate senior year)	<u>6 credits</u> : 500, 561
Semester 2 (undergraduate senior year)	<u>6 credits</u> : 571, 500-level elective, faculty evaluation, recommendation to graduate college
Semester 3 (graduate year)	<u>12 credits</u> : electives and theory class
Semester 4 (graduate year)	<u>9 credits</u> : electives and theory class <u>1 credit</u> : comprehensive exams (Comm 599)
Total	34 credits

These courses also count toward the undergraduate degree and are taken during the undergraduate senior year

III. MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

The MA degree offers training in communication theory and research that can serve as a foundation to achieve a variety of career objectives. Students who wish to earn an MA in communication may pursue either a thesis option or a non-thesis option. The thesis option prepares students to seek placement in highly competitive PhD programs in communication, including our own. This option emphasizes theory, research design, problem conceptualization, research methodology, and the ability to conduct empirical research, culminating in the MA thesis. The non-thesis option (while emphasizing the same content areas as the thesis option) is designed to provide students with the communication-based background necessary for advanced professional performance in such areas as business, media, government, or in teaching at the community college level. This option culminates in a final written and oral comprehensive exam (i.e., comps).

MA Standards and Requirements

Advisor: Faculty must have at least a .51 appointment in Communication in order to advise a thesis for our MA program. Faculty who have at least a .49 appointment in Communication or in another unit with an adjunct or joint appointment in Communication may co-advise a thesis in Communication if the other co-advisor has at least a .51 appointment in Communication. Advisors may be changed based on discussion between the student, the current advisor, and the potential future advisor.

Coursework: MA students electing either the thesis or non-thesis route must successfully complete a minimum of 34 units (core, theory, electives, and research team) to complete the degree. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required. Courses with grades of 'C' or lower do not count toward the degree. All coursework must be approved by the advisor by the end of the second semester. At this time, students are to prepare a "Plan of Study" form and submit to Graduate Student Academic Services (GSAS) through GradPath, using a link found on the UAccess Student Center. Only coursework *required* for the degree should be listed on the "Plan of Study" form (see [Appendix A](#) for Communication Course Rotation). The Plan of Study form will be routed to the department's graduate program coordinator first, then to student's advisor and Director of Graduate Studies for approval, before receiving final approval by Graduate Student Academic Services. Once approved by all parties, the student receives a notification email from GSAS. If changes occur after the Plan of Study has been submitted and approved, the student must submit a new Plan of Study to the Graduate College. Resources for navigating the GradPath system are available here: [GradPath | UArizona Graduate College](#)

Course Requirements

- 1) Core Courses: All students must complete all *three* of the following core courses.
 - a. 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication
 - b. 561: Research Methodologies I
 - c. 571: Research Methodologies II

- 2) Theory Courses: All students must complete *two* of the following theory seminars but may take additional theory courses as electives.
 - 609: Mass Communication Theory
 - 610: Interpersonal Theory
 - 620: Theories of Social Influence
 - 669: Health Communication Theory

- 3) Research Team: All MA students must participate on a research team (COMM 900) for one credit per semester (see Research & Teaching section of this handbook). Exactly 4 research team credits are required for the degree.
- 4) Electives: Remaining units are to be fulfilled by electives approved by the committee.
 - Only 3 units of independent study can be counted toward the 34 unit minimum.
 - Thesis students should enroll in 3 units of thesis credits toward the 34 unit minimum. The 3 thesis units will involve more time and intellectual investment than 3 units of regular coursework.
 - Students may take up to 3 elective units outside of the department.
 - Additional electives may be taken beyond the minimum degree requirement.

MA Committee (Thesis Option)

The MA committee should consist of the advisor and at least two additional faculty members from the department. All members of the thesis committee must be members of the graduate faculty; see Appendix B for Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for the Graduate Programs in Communication. After the Plan of Study is approved and before the student defends their thesis or comprehensive exams, a “Master’s/Specialist Committee Appointment Form” form must be submitted via GradPath. This should occur no later than the first three weeks of the fall semester in the student’s second year in the MA program. This form is routed to the department’s graduate coordinator and then directly to GSAS.

- Once the advisor and committee composition paperwork has been submitted and approved, any change in the committee requires the approval of the advisor and the involved faculty, or a majority of the committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies if they are experiencing problems or are seeking an alternative advisor. Changes in committee composition will require student to submit a new Master’s/Specialist Committee Appointment Form to the Graduate College.

MA Comprehensive Exam & Committee (Non-Thesis Option)

There will be one comprehensive examination committee each year comprised of the members of the department graduate committee and possibly other outside members (at the graduate committee’s discretion). The members of the committee must be members of the graduate faculty. Please see Appendix B for Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for the Graduate Programs in Communication. After the Plan of Study is approved and before the student defends their thesis or comprehensive exams, a “Master’s/Specialist Committee Appointment Form” form must be submitted to GSAS via GradPath.

MA students pursuing the non-thesis option will take their comprehensive exams during a scheduled examination period. The comprehensive exams include both a written and an oral portion. There will be one comprehensive examination committee each year, and it will typically be comprised of the Department’s Graduate Committee.

Written Exams

- Written exams take place over a 2-week period and are written “in-house” (i.e., exams will take place in a designated room on campus with a departmental computer and are administered by the Graduate Program Coordinator in most cases). Students will receive their questions 48 hours in advance in order to prepare, but will not be allowed to bring any materials into the exam room. The exact dates and schedule will vary year to year, but the timeline for the written comps appears below. Each “in-house” exam is 2 hours long. All MA students take their written exams at the

same time. If a student fails any portion of the written exam, a second exam will be scheduled at the discretion of the comprehensive examination committee.

Written Exam	Student Receives Question	In-house Exam Date
Research Methods & Statistics	First Monday after Spring Recess	First Wednesday after Spring Recess
Theory	First Friday after Spring Recess	Second Monday after Spring Recess
Elective	Second Wednesday after Spring Recess	Second Friday after Spring Recess

Oral Exam

- If the student passes the written exams, the oral exam will take place at least 3 weeks after the conclusion of the final written exam. All MA students and the comps committee members will meet for oral exams on one single day.
- The first part of the defense will be comprised of broad questions reflecting on the entire graduate program. Example questions might address the definition of communication, the role of communication in the student's future occupational aspirations, and the role of theory in relations to communication research. The second part of the defense will include specific, follow-up questions about the written exams, in the areas of research methods and statistics, theory, and the elective topic.
- Students should expect the oral exam to last approximately 60 minutes.
- Once all of the students have completed the oral exam, the comps committee will discuss the results of the exam and will inform the students.
- If a student fails any portion of the oral exam, a second exam will be scheduled at the discretion of the comprehensive examination committee.
- Oral exams are comprehensive. Students might be asked to explain or expand an answer provided in the written exams, but students will also be asked new questions in the core areas to determine mastery.

Procedures and Preparation for Written and Oral Comprehensive Exam

- Toward the end of the fall semester, students will submit their list of graduate courses taken to the Graduate Program Coordinator to determine the topics of the comprehensive exams. In all cases, the comprehensive exams will include COMM 561 and COMM 571, one theory course, and one elective/theory content area. The methods exam is not negotiable, but students may select their theory and elective topics.
- Comprehensive exams will be scheduled during the second semester of the second year.
- Each exam will typically consist of approximately 1-3 questions to be completed within a 2-hour period. The graduate faculty will submit questions in their areas of expertise. The comps committee will select questions from an existing test bank. Students will be given their questions in advance.
 - Students MAY NOT discuss exam questions or answers with other students during the two-week examination period.
 - Students MAY NOT bring any materials with them to the exam.

Students will turn in their completed exams to the graduate coordinator, who will distribute them to the appropriate evaluation committee at the conclusion of each exam via email.

- To prepare for the written comprehensive exam, students should study readings, notes, and coursework in the comps topic areas. The reading lists for the comprehensive examination will be the syllabi for the classes identified. For example, the syllabi for Comm 561 and Comm 571 serve as the reading lists for the methods and statistics comps.
- Written responses will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. The MA comps committee will grade students' exams. Any disagreement over a grade will be settled and determined by that committee.

The committee must supply their evaluations to the student's advisor and to the graduate coordinator within two business weeks after the last exam. The student will be notified of results within 3 business days of the committee submitting their evaluations.

- Comps committee members might provide written feedback to students. Students should use that feedback to assist them in preparing for the oral exam.
- Failure in any area requires re-examination on new questions in the area. Comps committee members will be urged to return a decision on a re-examination no later than two weeks after the completion of the exam. Results of the second examination are final.
- Comps committee members' copies of the student's written exam (with written comments or otherwise) will not be returned to the student.
- In the event of a failing grade on the oral exam, the examining committee has the option of recommending re-examination or voting not to recommend a re-examination. The latter decision terminates the student's program of study. Results of the second examination are final.
- Upon successful defense of comprehensive exams and completion of all degree requirements (including all required courses) the department's program coordinator submits MA completion confirmation to GSAS.
- In the event that the full comprehensive examination committee cannot be present at the oral defense, the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate College must be consulted.

So You're Planning a MA Comprehensive Exam Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is a big accomplishment to be done with your written comps!

Before the defense:

2. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form and Plan of Study submitted and approved. You might not have yet done the Appointment of MA Committee form. If not, get that submitted right away.
3. The graduate program coordinator and director of graduate studies will work with the graduate committee to make sure that the oral defense is scheduled at least three weeks after the written exams are submitted.
4. Your committee chair (usually the director of graduate studies) will confirm whether you have passed your written exams approximately one week before your scheduled defense. If you have not heard by that time, please check in with your committee chair. If you need to re-write any exam, your committee will communicate next steps.

At the defense:

5. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email a Qualtrics Survey called Oral Comprehensive Exam Rating/Quality form to your committee. Each committee member will need to complete the survey after the oral defense.

After the defense:

6. The committee chair will communicate the results of the oral defense with you over email, usually the same day as the defense. The graduate program coordinator will enter in the results on the Master's Completion Confirmation form on GradPath. If you need to have another oral defense, your committee chair will communicate next steps.
7. Confirm with the graduate program coordinator that he/she submits your last GradPath form: The Master's Completion Form. You do not need to initiate that form; it should be initiated and submitted by the GPC.

MA Thesis

Proposal

The thesis is a rigorous, empirical research project that addresses an important question in communication. The student must successfully defend his/her thesis proposal before formal work on the thesis can begin. The proposal is a formal description of the Master's thesis research. It normally includes: (a) Introduction/Literature Review, (b) Hypotheses, and (c) Method and Analysis plan. Complete references and full appendices of materials (questionnaires, stimuli) also are expected. Students should plan to defend the proposal in the fall of their second year in the MA program. The proposal must be submitted to the committee a minimum of *two weeks* before the requested defense date. Any thesis proposal involving human subjects must first be approved by the Human Subjects committee (see [Human Subjects Protection Program | UArizona Research, Innovation & Impact](#)) before any data collection occurs. The "Proposal Defense Form" (Appendix C) must be signed by the student and all committee members and submitted to the graduate coordinator immediately following the proposal defense. Please refer to the grad college webpage <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses> for updated policies, sample pages, formatting guides, and archiving instructions.

Scheduling Your Defense of the Thesis Proposal

Once the thesis proposal is completed and approved by the advisor, the student is ready to defend the research plan to the committee. At this time, the student should reach out to their committee members to schedule the defense. Although it is tempting to schedule a likely defense date in the far-off future, the student should wait until the thesis is approved by the advisor before scheduling the defense. This will make it easier for the whole committee to make their plans.

So You're Planning a MA Thesis Proposal Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is a big accomplishment to have written your thesis proposal!

Before the defense:

2. Send an electronic copy of your thesis proposal to your committee and schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to send an email to your committee members to get the defense scheduled. Most students use doodle polls to do this. The defense should be scheduled for two hours and should occur at least two weeks after the proposal is submitted. (Because the proposal defense does not have to be reported to the Grad College, you don't need the extra week for Grad College processing.) Then let the Graduate Program Coordinator know the date.
3. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form and Plan of Study submitted and approved. You might not have yet done the Appointment of MA Committee form. If not, get that submitted right away.
4. A couple days before the scheduled defense, confirm the defense date and location with your committee. Reminders are always a good idea!
5. Talk to your advisor about what you can expect at the defense and how to prepare.

At the defense:

6. Bring the Proposal Defense form to the defense. It's in Appendix C of this handbook, and it's also available here: <https://arizona.app.box.com/file/709497284015>

After the defense:

7. Work with your advisor to plan revisions to the proposal and the date by which the final thesis will be defended. This information must be reported on the Proposal Defense form before submitting it to the graduate program coordinator.
8. Complete your revisions. The best practice is to do your revisions right away because it is easy to forget what the committee was asking for after you get into the data collection and final write-up stage. At the very least, make sure those revisions are done before you send the final thesis to the committee.

Preregistration of Your Thesis

Preregistration of research studies is becoming more common in our discipline, as well as in other social sciences. Preregistration is the practice of documenting your research plan at the beginning of your study and storing that plan in a read-only public repository such as [OSF Registries](#). At this time, we are not requiring preregistration, but we are *recommending* it. The appropriate time to do this would be after your proposal defense, when you are certain that your committee members are satisfied with your proposal, and before you start collecting data. Not only will preregistering your study impress your editor and reviewers, if you plan to publish your thesis research, but also it is an excellent habit to establish early on in your research career because it seems likely that preregistration will increasingly be the norm for publication in the near term.

Final Thesis & Scheduling the Defense

Once the thesis is completed and approved by the advisor, the student is ready to defend the research to the committee. At this time, the student should reach out to the committee members to schedule the defense. Although it is tempting to schedule a likely defense date in the far-off future, the student should wait until the thesis is approved by the advisor before scheduling the defense. This will make it easier for the whole committee to make their plans.

During the defense, the student presents and defends the research to the committee. The student must provide a final copy of the advisor-approved thesis to all committee members at least *three weeks* prior to the defense. Students should consult with their advisors about how to prepare for the defense.

- Upon successful defense of thesis and completion of all degree requirements (including any major thesis revisions indicated and all required courses), the department's graduate program coordinator submits the MA completion confirmation to GSAS.
- After completion, students must archive their thesis: see Graduate College site for information in this regard. <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses>

The thesis defense results in three possible outcomes: (1) Pass with no/minor revisions to be supervised and approved by the advisor; (2) Pass with major revisions, requiring the committee to evaluate the revisions; (3) Fail. The thesis should be successfully completed and defended by the end of the second year of the program.

So You're Planning a MA Thesis Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is a big accomplishment to have written your thesis!

Before the defense:

2. Schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to send an email to your committee members to get the defense scheduled. Most students use doodle polls to do this. The defense should occur at least three weeks after the thesis is submitted to them. This is a tentative date because it will only happen if the committee votes to move forward with the defense (i.e., the written document is acceptable). Then, let the Graduate Program Coordinator know the date.
3. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form, Plan of Study, and Appointment of MA Committee form submitted and approved.
4. Approximately one week before the defense, your advisor should communicate the results of the committee's votes (e.g., Pass/Fail). If you have not heard back, check in with your advisor. If you pass the written stage, confirm the defense date and location with your committee. Reminders are always a good idea! If you need to make revisions before re-submitting the thesis to your committee, your advisor will discuss next steps with you.
5. Talk to your advisor about what you can expect at the defense.

At the defense:

6. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email a Qualtrics Survey called Quality of Thesis/Dissertation form to your committee. Each committee member will need to complete the survey after the defense.

After the defense:

7. If you pass, work with your advisor to determine the revisions that need to be completed before your thesis is final. Keep in mind the Grad College deadlines for submitting your thesis in time for your graduation date. If you do not pass, your advisor will discuss next steps with you.
8. Your thesis should have a signature page. Fill in your name and thesis title. Then, send the signature page to the graduate program coordinator, who will route it to your committee members via Adobe Sign for their signature. [Sample Pages | UArizona Graduate College](#)
9. Archive your thesis with the Grad College. Please make sure it adheres to the Grad College Formatting Guidelines. <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses>
10. Confirm with the graduate program coordinator that he/she submits your last GradPath form: The Master's Completion Form. You do not need to initiate that form; it should be initiated and submitted by the GPC.

Satisfactory Academic Progress in the MA

Benchmarks for satisfactory academic progress in the MA:

- COURSEWORK: Coursework should be completed no later than the end of 4th semester (see timeline below).
- COMPS: Comps should be completed no later than the end of the 4th semester.
- THESIS:
 - The thesis proposal defense should occur no later than the end of the 3rd semester. If the thesis proposal is not defended by one week after the start of the spring semester (barring extenuating circumstances), the student will be scheduled for MA comprehensive exams. If necessary, the student’s advisor can appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies for an exception.
 - The final thesis defense should occur by the end of the 4th semester.
- The student will maintain appropriate standards of professional and collegial behavior.

Continued departmental funding will be contingent upon satisfactory progress. If a student does not meet these benchmarks (barring extenuating circumstances):

- A warning letter will be issued by the Graduate Committee.
- Loss of departmental funding and *dismissal from the program* (“academic disqualification”) will occur if satisfactory academic progress has not been achieved after one semester, or earlier if quicker action is deemed appropriate by the graduate committee acting in consultation with the department head. Further details regarding satisfactory academic degree progress can be found in the section titled “Academic Progress and Graduate Evaluation” below. Additional important information concerning the MA program is provided in Section V of this handbook. Students should also be familiar with Graduate College Procedures and University procedures (<http://catalog.arizona.edu/> & <https://grad.arizona.edu/funding/ga>).

MA Unit Distribution

	<i>THESIS</i>	<i>NON-THESIS</i>
A Departmental Core (500, 561, 571)	9	9
B Required Theory Courses	6	6
C Electives	12	15
D Research Team (900)	4	4
E Thesis (910)	3	0
TOTAL	34	34

Sample MA Timeline

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500, 561, 1 unit of Research Team (900) 	7		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 571, 1 required theory course, 1 elective • 1 unit of Research Team • Select/confirm advisor and committee members 	10		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit approved “Plan of Study” form via GradPath • Submit “Master’s/Specialist Committee Appointment” form to Graduate College via GradPath • 2 electives, 1 required theory course • 1 unit of Research Team • THESIS OPTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write thesis proposal and submit to your committee for approval ○ Thesis proposal meeting ○ Submit human subjects paperwork • NON-THESIS OPTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submit selections for comps exams (theory and elective) to graduate program coordinator 	10		
4	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>THESIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 elective • 3 thesis units • 1 unit of Research Team • Write thesis • Check with Graduate College concerning filing deadlines • Submit thesis to your committee for approval • Schedule final defense of your thesis • Once successfully defended and Graduate College notified, finish requested revisions and submit thesis to Grad College for archiving </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>NON-THESIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 electives • 1 unit of Research Team • Written and oral comprehensive exams • Once defended, program coordinator notifies Graduate College of Completion of Degree Requirements </td> </tr> </table>	<p>THESIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 elective • 3 thesis units • 1 unit of Research Team • Write thesis • Check with Graduate College concerning filing deadlines • Submit thesis to your committee for approval • Schedule final defense of your thesis • Once successfully defended and Graduate College notified, finish requested revisions and submit thesis to Grad College for archiving 	<p>NON-THESIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 electives • 1 unit of Research Team • Written and oral comprehensive exams • Once defended, program coordinator notifies Graduate College of Completion of Degree Requirements 	
<p>THESIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 elective • 3 thesis units • 1 unit of Research Team • Write thesis • Check with Graduate College concerning filing deadlines • Submit thesis to your committee for approval • Schedule final defense of your thesis • Once successfully defended and Graduate College notified, finish requested revisions and submit thesis to Grad College for archiving 	<p>NON-THESIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 electives • 1 unit of Research Team • Written and oral comprehensive exams • Once defended, program coordinator notifies Graduate College of Completion of Degree Requirements 			
= 34 units				

Procedure for Advancement from MA to PhD

Admission into the PhD program in the Department of Communication is not automatic upon successful completion of the MA degree. Rather, MA students wishing to pursue a PhD in the department must apply for admission into the PhD program. Review of these applications will coincide with the department’s established deadline for receipt of graduate application materials. Typically, the appropriate time for MA students to apply for admission into the department’s PhD program would be by the deadline for graduate admissions in the student’s second year. Students who will complete their MA degree in the fall semester should consult with the department’s Graduate Program Coordinator and/or Director of Graduate Studies

about applying to the program.

Communication MA students applying for the PhD program follow the same application procedures as applicants outside of the Department and must pay the application fee. However, some of the materials and information required for the application are already on file in the Department and need not be re-submitted. See the Graduate Program Coordinator for clarification on required submissions. The graduate committee will evaluate these documents and consult with the student's advisor prior to rendering a decision. In making determinations regarding admission to the PhD program, the committee has the right to: (1) designate a date by which all requirements for the MA degree must be completed, and/or (2) postpone decision until the successful completion of the MA degree. Admission into the PhD program is contingent upon successful completion of the MA degree requirements, including submission of a complete and final MA thesis to the department in cases where the candidate is exercising the thesis option (admission to the PhD program is unlikely for a student writing MA comps). The decision to admit an applicant into the PhD program will be based on the merits of the application and the applicant's ranking relative to other applicants.

Please note that students cannot teach in the summer (as GTAs) if they are not pre-enrolled full time in the fall semester. That means that MA students who do not complete their MA thesis in the Spring, but who wish to pursue their PhD in our program (and are provisionally accepted) will need to enroll in the fall as an MA student, at the MA rate if they wish to receive summer teaching assistantships. Students who do not complete their MA thesis before the summer deadline and who are admitted into the PhD program with an assistantship will begin the MA program as a graduate teaching assistant at the MA rate

IV. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The PhD in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona is principally a research degree. The goal of the program is to prepare students to be well-rounded scholars and researchers with the skill and ability to succeed in top research institutions.

A student in the PhD program will, at minimum, be expected to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter in at least two substantive areas (their major and minor areas) in addition to demonstrating methodological proficiency. It is expected that the student will develop additional competencies beyond these minimal requirements. Specifically, students will develop a sophisticated understanding of research practices, internalize sound scholarly values, and begin to develop a record of published research and conference presentations. Most PhD students will additionally receive training and experience in teaching.

Typically, the Department of Communication does not accept PhD students on a part-time basis. PhD students are expected to fulfill degree requirements in a full-time manner which means: (1) enrollment in full graduate course load until completion of requirements, (2) half-time teaching and/or research assistantship, and (3) active research team participation. The majority of the student's time is devoted to coursework, advanced scholarship, instruction, research, and preparation of the dissertation.

PhD Standards and Requirements

PhD Advisor

Faculty must have at least a .51 appointment in Communication and be a member of the graduate faculty in communication to advise a dissertation in the department. Please see Appendix B for Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for the Graduate Programs in Communication.

PhD Committee

In consultation with the advisor, the student should select a committee for comprehensive exams. The committee should consist of four faculty members if the student's minor committee requires one member and five members if the student's minor committee requires two members. Three, including the advisor, must come from the Communication Department and be members of the graduate faculty in communication. The minor advisor must be a member of the graduate faculty (determined by the home department). Only members of the graduate faculty can give and grade comp exams. Please see Appendix B for Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for the Graduate Programs in Communication. Having additional committee members beyond the required four (or five) is discouraged.

After comprehensive exams, minor committee members are not required to serve on the dissertation committee; thus, they typically do not continue onto the dissertation committee. It is also possible for adjustments to the dissertation committee to be made; different faculty members could be asked to join the dissertation committee. The same eligibility criteria apply to the dissertation committee as they do to the comprehensive exam committee.

Coursework: Plan of Study

After discussion with their advisor, the student will prepare a plan of study. It is expected that the student will declare one or more areas of specialization and that the proposed coursework and minor will reflect that specialization. The plan of study should be prepared no later than the end of the fourth semester of coursework. At this time, students are to prepare a "Plan of Study" form and submit to Graduate Student Academic Services (GSAS) through GradPath, using a link found on the UAccess Student Center. Only coursework that is *required* for the degree should be listed on the "Plan of Study" form. See Appendix A for Communication Course Rotation. The Plan of Study form will be routed to the department's graduate program coordinator first, then to the student's minor advisor, major advisor, and Director of Graduate

Studies for approval, before receiving final approval by the Grad College. Once approved by all parties, the student receives a notification email from GSAS. Failure to file an approved “Plan of Study” form by the end of the fourth semester of coursework may constitute a lack of satisfactory academic progress. The plan of study becomes the student’s contract and can only be changed by approval of the committee. Of course, a change in advisors may also necessitate a plan of study change at the discretion of the committee. If changes occur after the Plan of Study has been submitted and approved, a revised Plan of Study must be submitted to Graduate College. Resources for navigating the GradPath system are available here: [GradPath | UArizona Graduate College](#) .

A) Major:

A minimum grade point average of 3.0 is required. Courses with grades of ‘C’ or lower will not count toward the degree.

- 1) Core Courses: All students must complete all *three* of the following core courses. These courses must be passed with a grade of B or better in each. There is only one opportunity to retake a class.
 - a. 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication
 - b. 561: Research Methodologies I
 - c. 571: Research Methodologies II

Students who have completed the core as part of their MA program must replace these courses with the comparable number of elective units.

- 2) Theory Courses: All students must complete *two* of the following theory seminars but may take additional theory courses as electives. Students who have completed two of these theory courses for their MA program may substitute elective classes for the theory classes, or they may take the remaining theory classes.
 - 609: Mass Communication Theory
 - 610: Interpersonal Theory
 - 620: Theories of Social Influence
 - 669: Health Communication Theory
- 3) Research Team: Every semester until successful completion of comprehensive exams, PhD students must participate on a research team (Comm 900) for one credit (see Research & Teaching section of this handbook). Four research team credits count towards degree requirements, but continuous enrollment in one research unit per semester is required until comprehensive exams are completed.
- 4) Research Tool: Six units of research methods and/or statistics courses are required. The tool should reflect a particular methodological and/or statistical specialty that will be put to use in the dissertation research. These courses may be taken outside the department.
- 5) Major Electives & Dissertation Credits: The remaining credits are to be fulfilled by elective units in the major (approved by the committee) and dissertation units.
 - Only 3 units of independent study can be counted toward the degree.
 - With the student’s doctoral committee’s approval, one elective class (3 units) may be taken outside the department (e.g., additional methods courses, a content course in another department with substantial communication content). This includes courses taken for a graduate certificate.
 - Dissertation Units: A total of 18 dissertation units will count toward the degree. Each student must complete *at least* 18 dissertation units. The student receives a grade of ‘S’

(superior), 'P' (passing), or 'F' (failure) in COMM 920 until successful defense and final submission of dissertation. The student must list dissertation units as part of the required coursework for the major in the Plan of Study.

Note: students wishing to transfer credit from a graduate program at another university must communicate with the graduate director upon being accepted into the program or prior to taking a course outside of the university for transfer credit. The graduate college has limitations on the number of units that can be transferred (generally no more than 20% of the required units) and oversees all applications. Interested students must complete an Evaluation of Transfer Credit form on GradPath. The graduate committee will also review applications for transfer credit and determine whether it will accept those transfer credits as part of the degree requirement. This is not a common practice.

B) Minor(s):

Students must have at least one minor and may take two (although this is unusual). The requirements for these are specified by the minor department. The Graduate College's minimum requirement is that 9 credits be taken in the minor department. If the department does not have a specified minor track, the person(s) serving on the committee from the minor department will specify the required course work.

Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form

After the Plan of Study is approved and before the student defends comprehensive exams, a "Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form" must be submitted to Graduate College through GradPath. This should occur no later than the first three weeks of the fall semester in the student's third year in the PhD program. This form is routed to the department's graduate coordinator first, then to minor advisor, major advisor, and Director of Graduate Studies for approval before receiving final approval from Graduate Student Academic Services.

- Once the advisor and committee composition paperwork has been submitted and approved, any change in the committee requires the approval of the advisor and the involved faculty, or a majority of the committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies if they are experiencing problems or are seeking an alternative advisor. If changes occur after committee has been submitted and approved, a new Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form must be submitted to Graduate College.

Comprehensive Written Exams & Oral Defense (Comps)

Typically in the 6th semester, students will take comprehensive exams over the major and minor fields. The comprehensive exam is described in greater detail in the section titled "Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Policies" below.

Upon successful defense of comprehensive exams, students are automatically advanced to candidacy and billed for candidacy and archiving fees. At this time, students are expected to expeditiously submit the "Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form" via GradPath to the Graduate College. This means that students should be simultaneously preparing for comps and working on their dissertation proposal). This form is available on the UAccess Student Center.

Dissertation Proposal

The student must prepare a dissertation proposal that is approved by the committee before the dissertation work is undertaken. The student's advisor serves as the chair of the dissertation committee. The proposal must be submitted to the committee a minimum of two weeks before the requested defense date. Ideally, the proposal defense should occur during the 6th semester of the PhD program, following the successful

completion of comprehensive exams.

The dissertation represents the culmination of a student's graduate training. Accordingly, the proposal should comprehensively describe relevant research, advance original hypotheses that make a meaningful contribution to the communication discipline, provide a clear and rigorous method, describe plans for data collection, offer an analysis plan, as well as provide complete appendices of materials (e.g., questionnaires, stimuli) and a complete reference section.

The "Proposal Defense Form" (Appendix C) must be signed by the student and all committee members and submitted to the graduate coordinator immediately following the proposal defense. This is an internal form; it is not submitted via GradPath. Upon successful defense of the proposal, human subjects approval can be sought (<https://research.arizona.edu/compliance/human-subjects-protection-program>). Only after receiving IRB approval can students begin gathering data. Again, students are automatically advanced to candidacy after the successful completion of comps; students should be working simultaneously on their dissertation proposal while preparing for comps and should plan to schedule their proposal defense soon after comps.

Preregistration of Your Dissertation

Preregistration of research studies is becoming more common in our discipline, as well as in other social sciences. Preregistration is the practice of documenting your research plan at the beginning of your study and storing that plan in a read-only public repository such as [OSF Registries](#). At this time, we are not requiring preregistration, but we are *recommending* it. The appropriate time to do this would be *after* your proposal defense, when you are certain that your committee members are satisfied with your proposal, and *before* you start collecting data. Not only will preregistering your study impress your editor and reviewers, if you plan to publish your dissertation research, but also it is an excellent habit to establish early on in your research career because it seems likely that preregistration will increasingly be the norm for publication in the near term.

Final Dissertation and Defense

Once the dissertation work has been completed and approved by the advisor (including all revisions, conditions, and recommendations identified on the "Proposal Defense Form"), the dissertation may be submitted to the committee for review. The student must defend this research in a final oral examination.

The student must submit the "Announcement of Final Defense" form through GradPath to the Graduate College 10 business days before the date of the final defense. Accordingly, the dissertation *must be* submitted to the committee a *minimum of three (3) weeks* before the requested defense date. This provides the faculty with two weeks to read the dissertation and allows an additional one week for the Graduate College to process the defense paperwork. Additional details regarding the oral defense are provided in the section titled "Final Oral Examination for the Dissertation" below.

Students should provide electronic copies of their final dissertation to their advisor and committee members.

Satisfactory Academic Progress in the PhD

Benchmarks for satisfactory academic progress in the PhD:

- Coursework is typically completed at the end of the 5th semester but should be completed no later than the end of 6th semester (see timeline below).
- Students are required to hold their Comprehensive Exams meeting with their internal committee members by October 15 of their 5th semester. If a student is writing their comps in the fall semester, the Comprehensive Exams meeting should occur by April 1 of the preceding spring semester.

- Comps should be successfully completed during the 6th semester.
- The dissertation proposal should be successfully defended by the end of the 6th semester. To remain in good standing, the dissertation proposal must be successfully defended no later than the beginning of the 7th semester.
- Successful completion of the final dissertation defense should occur within the timeframe identified on the proposal defense form (and no later than the 8th semester). See Appendix C.
- The student will maintain appropriate standards of professional and collegial behavior.

Continued funding will be based on satisfactory academic progress. If a student does not meet these benchmarks (barring extenuating circumstances):

- A warning letter will be issued by the Graduate Committee.
- Loss of departmental funding and *dismissal from program* may occur if satisfactory academic progress has not been achieved after one semester of written notification, or earlier if quicker action is deemed appropriate by the graduate committee acting in consultation with the department head.

PhD Unit Distribution

	<i>ONE MINOR</i>	<i>TWO MINORS</i>
A Departmental core: 500, 561, 571 and two of the required theory seminars from the 609, 610, 620, 669 rotation	15	15
B Minor(s)	9-15	18-30
C Research Tool	6	6
D Major Electives	12	12
E Research Team (900)	4	4
F Dissertation (920)	18	18
	<i>minimum</i>	
TOTAL	64-70	73-85

Sample PhD Timeline**

Semester	Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500*, 561* (additional elective or theory course may be taken)• Research Team*** (900)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 571*, 1 required theory course, 1 department elective (or 2 electives if 571 was completed during MA)• Research Team*** (900)• Select advisor if not already decided; discuss minor with advisor
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 required theory course (or department elective), 1 minor course, 1 research tool• Research Team*** (900)• Meet with advisor to discuss committee composition
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 minor course, 1 research tool, 1 department elective (or required theory course)• Research Team*** (900)• Submit “Plan of Study” form through GradPath for approval
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 department elective, remaining courses (e.g., minor, electives)• Research Team*** (900)• Submit: “Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form” through GradPath for approval• Prepare: Meet with committee about comprehensive exams; begin studying
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remaining courses (e.g., minor, electives)• Research Team*** (900)• Complete: Written comprehensive exams at the <u>beginning</u> of the semester• Submit: “Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Examination”• Complete: Oral Comprehensive exam• Submit: Graduate College “Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form• Submit: Dissertation proposal by the end of the semester• Defend: Dissertation proposal• Submit: Human subjects paperwork• Submit: “Proposal Defense Form” to graduate coordinator• Submit: Human subjects paperwork
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 units of Dissertation: Comm 920 (<i>18 total units are required and must be on the Plan of Study</i>)• Conduct doctoral research
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 units of Dissertation: Comm 920• Complete doctoral dissertation• Submit: Dissertation to committee at least three weeks before expected defense date• Submit: “Announcement of Final Defense” form to Graduate College <i>10 business days before the date of the final defense.</i>

**Units for minor are determined by the minor department (minimum of 9); total hours to graduate varies depending on the minor hours required. Individuals with larger minors will need to incorporate additional units into their timeline.

*** All students must register for 1 unit of research team credits (Comm 900) each semester they are enrolled until they successfully complete their PhD comps (4 research credits count towards the degree requirement).

PhD Minor in Communication

Students who wish to pursue a minor in Communication must take 12 units of graduate level Communication courses: any two of the graduate theory seminars (609, 610, 620, 669) and two other courses at the 500+ level in the department. All courses are to be determined by the student and his/her minor advisor, who must be a member of the graduate faculty in communication (see Appendix B). Upon completion of the courses, students must take 6 hours of written minor comprehensive exams (3 hours on theory and 3 hours on other course work).

Note: PhD students majoring in Communication cannot minor in Communication.

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Policies

Graduate College policy at the University of Arizona mandates that students in PhD programs pass both written and oral comprehensive examinations before being advanced to candidacy for a PhD. In the Communication Department, the comprehensive examinations require the student to demonstrate mastery of the major theories and methods of inquiry; to be able to make informed criticism of theoretical and empirical work; to be able to plan and conduct research; and to be able to address theoretical and empirical questions of importance to the field. It is expected that students will display *considerably more sophistication, breadth, and expertise* than is required to pass their coursework.

Examination Components

The major portion of the written exam covers three areas (listed below) are taken “in house” (i.e., exams will take place in a designated room on campus with a departmental computer and are administered by the Graduate Program Coordinator in most cases).

- 6 hours theory (2 theory areas, 3 hours each)
- 3 hours methods and statistics
- 3 hours specialty exam (i.e., can be based on an elective class or specialized combination of classes that informs dissertation, taken in house) or a systematic review paper (i.e., a publishable paper that can also serve as a study toward a student’s dissertation, produced in the time between the student’s comps meeting and the completion of the student’s written exams)
- Minor exam: The minor portion of the written exam, including content and timing, is determined by the minor department and scheduled directly with the minor department.

Procedures and Preparation for Written and Oral Comprehensive Questions

To prepare for written comprehensive exams, students meet once with their committee to identify the courses that will be covered in the examination. Students should hold their comps meetings in the semester preceding their comps. If the student is doing a systematic review, the meeting is also the time for the student to pitch their plan for the study, including their research question(s) and the scope of their study. The student should prepare a short proposal for the systematic review (1-2 pages) for the committee to review at that time. A systematic review should adhere to the reporting guidelines and standards of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses ([PRISMA](#)) website.

During this meeting, you will organize with your committee members about what each person will write for the exams. During the meeting, you might agree on what will be highlighted on each exam, and also what might not be covered on each exam, but this is really up to the discretion of each committee member.

Your job is to keep a good record of this meeting. I recommend sending your meeting notes to your committee members soon after the meeting. Also, please cc the Graduate Program Coordinator, so they can keep this record on file. When Graduate Program Coordinator sends out the requests for the exams, it will be helpful for them to have this on hand to share with your committee members so they can be reminded of what they agreed on months before.

A basic template of the type of information that should be in the "record" is in Appendix D.

Following this committee meeting, comps committee members will not convey additional information regarding the content of exam questions. That is, tailoring or offering specifics beyond the reading lists is

not appropriate, with the exception of the specialty exam. Committee members will also not meet to discuss study tips, grading plans, or the elements of a model answer. Good answers on comps should reflect broad knowledge of the area and critical thinking about that content. Beyond that, this is an intellectual adventure for you on your own. You should relish that adventure and not seek to supplement it by meeting repeatedly with your advisor or other faculty members. As of 2015, additional meetings with comps committee members concerning the content or procedures of comps are not permitted. Additional meetings with comps committee members are only permitted under the following condition: the student is taking a comp in an area that they are currently taking a class in at the time of their comps committee meeting. In those cases, the student must have the approval of their committee to have a later conversation about the specific exam with the relevant committee member.

Theory and Methods Exams:

To prepare for the theory/methods comprehensive exams, the student should review and demonstrate mastery over the following theories and methodological ideas:

Theory List:*

<p>COMM 609: Media Theory</p> <p>Uses and Gratifications Entertainment Theory Selective Exposure Mood Management Theory Character Affinity Theories/Constructs (parasocial relationships/identification, homophily, retrospective imaginative involvement) Agenda Setting Spiral of Silence Cultivation Theory Priming Framing Social Cognitive Theory Social Identity Theory Exemplification Theory Diffusion of Innovations Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Message Processing (LC4MP)</p>	<p>COMM 610: Interpersonal Theory</p> <p>Attachment Theory Politeness Theory/Facework Communication Accommodation Theory Expectancy Violation Social Penetration Uncertainty Reduction Theory Interdependence Theory Equity Theory Dialectical Perspective Social Learning/Social Cognitive Theory Goals Plan Action Theory Theories of Human Mate Selection (e.g., SVR, Psychoevolutionary) Family Systems Theory Self-Determination Theory Affection Exchange Theory Gottman’s Cascade Models of Marital Deterioration Theories of Social Cognition (e.g., Balance Theory, Attribution Theory) Communication Privacy Management Theory of Resilience and Relational Load</p>
<p>COMM 620: Social Influence</p> <p><i>Expectancy-Value Theories</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of Reasoned Action / Planned Behavior <p><i>Theories of Attitude Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Judgment Theory • Attitude Accessibility Theory 	<p>COMM 669: Health Communication</p> <p><i>Culture and Health</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally Competent Communication Model • Feminist Standpoint Theory <p><i>Interpersonal & Health</i></p>

- Cognitive Dissonance Theory
- Functional Attitude Theory

Source & Message Characteristics

- Source Credibility & Sleeper Effect
- Narratives/Narrative Persuasion
- Message Framing

Theories Related to Emotion

- Emotion & Message Processing
 - Cognitive functional model
 - Appraisal-tendency framework
 - Hedonic Contingency View
- Fear
 - Drive model
 - Extended Parallel Process Model
- Anger
 - Anger activism model
- Aversive emotions
 - Negative state relief model

Message Processing Theories

- Elaboration Likelihood Model
- Heuristic-Systematic Model
- Unimodel

Resistance Theories

- Inoculation Theory
- Psychological Reactance Theory

Interpersonal Influence

- Goals-Plan-Action Theory
- Compliance Gaining/Sequential Requests

- Affection Exchange Theory
- Social support
 - Buffering and Main Effect Models
 - Verbal Person Centeredness
 - Theory of Conversationally Induced Reappraisals
 - Dual Process Theory of Supportive Message Outcomes
 - Advice Response Theory
 - Cognitive-Emotional Theory of Esteem Support Messages
 - Network Perspectives
 - Structural-to-Functional Model
 - Weak-Tie Support Network Preference
- Social Skills
 - Social Skills Deficit Vulnerability Model
- Self-Disclosure
 - Disclosure Decision-Making Model
 - Expressive Writing Paradigm

Uncertainty & Information Seeking

- Uncertainty Management Theory
- Problematic Integration Theory
- Theory of Motivated Information Management
- Comprehensive Model of Information Seeking
- Channel Complementarity Theory

Health Behavior Change

- Health Belief Model
- Reasoned Action Approaches
- Social Cognitive Theory
- Transtheoretical Model

Health Messages/Campaigns

- Extended Parallel Process Model
- Narratives/Narrative Persuasion
- Risk Perception Attitude Framework
- Prospect Theory
- Psychological Reactance Theory
- Social Norms Approach

Media & Health

- Entertainment Overcomes Resistance Model
- Entertainment Education

*This list was assembled by the ad-hoc graduate curriculum committee (theory sub-committee) in 2020.
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Expected Learning Outcomes for Required Methods Courses in the Department of Communication:*

COMM 561 (not in sequential order)

- Ability to distinguish between and evaluate qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Comprehension of surveys, experiments, and content analysis, including purposes of each, limitations of each, and basics on how to implement
- Comprehension and evaluation of measurement
- Comprehension of sampling
- Identification and differentiation of reliability and validity, both in measurement and design

COMM 571 (not in sequential order)

- Understanding of null hypothesis statistical testing
- Comprehension of descriptive statistics, distributions, and z tests
- Comprehension of statistical power and effect sizes
- Understanding of and competence in conducting the following statistical tests:
 - Chi Square and other basic nonparametric tests
 - T-tests (one sample, paired samples, independent samples)
 - ANOVA
 - Correlation
 - Multiple Regression
 - Regressions with interactions (moderation)
- Ability to translate statistical output to meaningful results in both written and verbal form
- Competence with a statistical software package

*This list was assembled by the ad-hoc graduate curriculum committee (methods sub-committee) in 2020.

For the theory and methods exams, the syllabi for the identified classes would be a great starting point to prepare. Reading beyond the syllabus material may be necessary to supplement the content provided in your courses. We expect a level of knowledge about each that would be at the levels of a graduate handbook or textbook. The reading lists for the specialty comprehensive examination will be up to the discretion of the committee, particularly the committee member(s) who will write the question.

See Appendix E for sample comprehensive exam question format.

Specialty Exam:

Students have a choice for their specialty exam. First, they can choose to be examined over an elective, or combination of elective classes that are informative to their dissertation. Typically, students who take this approach will craft a reading list that is approved by committee. They will then study for the exam, like they would for the theory/methods exams. They will respond to the exam questions in three hours without books or notes, just as is the case with the theory/methods exams.

The second option is for the student to complete a systematic review on the topic that they will cover in their dissertation. A systematic review is a review of literature in which there is a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic, and those identified are then appraised and synthesized according to a predetermined and explicit method. A systematic review should adhere to the reporting guidelines and standards of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) website. Please see <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>. The paper produced for systematic review should be publishable based on these guidelines. (Note: These guidelines do require at least one coder to contribute to

the coding of the systematic review.)

Like all other exams, the systematic review will be graded on a pass/fail basis with the major criterion for passing being whether the systematic review is publishable according to the PRISMA guidelines.

The systematic would be a good option for a student who already knows what the topic of their dissertation will be by the time they are in their third year, and that student is planning to do a multiple-study dissertation. In that case, the systematic review can be used as one of the studies in their dissertation.

There are additional resources on systematic reviews, including a recording of a workshop given by Dr. Chris Segrin, in a public Box folder:

<https://arizona.app.box.com/folder/147746129350?s=n110gzuer96q0fekr87gqzy9cbbew18o>

Timing and Administration of Written Comprehensive Examinations

Students should take their written exams no later than the third year of full-time student status (or its equivalent). Ideally students will schedule their exams at the *beginning* of the spring semester. The exams will be held over a period of three weeks. In consultation with the graduate program coordinator, students will determine blocks of time in which to sit for the exams. Students are required to finish all major exams by the end of the three-week exam period. If the student is doing a systematic review for their specialty exam, they will need to turn in that paper at the end of the written examination period so that the committee receives all exams at once. The oral defense should be scheduled within the semester that the exams were written but no earlier than *three weeks* after completion of the written portion.

Each exam will typically consist of approximately 1-3 questions to be completed within a 3-hour period. The student's committee will be charged with developing the questions for the exams. Students may discuss content areas on which they will be tested, but they will not have knowledge of the actual questions in advance of the examination.

Students will turn in their completed essays to the graduate program coordinator, who will distribute them to the appropriate committee members. Students cannot bring materials into the examination room with them.

Evaluation of Written Comprehensive Examination

Written responses are graded on a pass/fail basis. Assuming the student passes the written portion of the comprehensive exam and advances to the oral exam, it is acceptable for the student to meet once with their advisor to discuss preparation for the oral exam. It is during this meeting that the advisor can convey concerns identified by committee members regarding the student's written answers. It is the prerogative of the comps committee members to share or withhold concerns about the student's written exam with the student's advisor prior to the oral exam. Some comps committee members might choose to wait for the oral exam to discuss concerns. The oral examination *may not be scheduled less than **three weeks** after completion and distribution of the written portion to the committee*, but it must occur within the same semester as the written comps.

All exams are graded on a pass/fail basis. The student's major committee will grade the student's exam. Any disagreement over a grade will be settled and determined by that committee. The student's committee must supply their evaluations to the student's advisor and to the graduate coordinator generally no later than two business weeks after the last exam. The student will be notified of results within a week of the committee submitting their evaluations. It is the prerogative of the comps committee members to share or withhold concerns about the student's written exam with the student's advisor prior to the oral exam.

However, feedback by comps committee members is encouraged, especially in the case of a failed exam.

To advance to the oral exam stage of the process, students are required to pass all written areas of major comps, as well as the minor written comps. Failure in any area requires re-examination on new questions in the area (needs to be at least four months from the original test but no later than one year after the original test). Comps committee members will be urged to return a decision on a re-examination no later than two weeks after the completion of the exam. Failing the re-examination is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Comps committee members' copies of the student's written exams (with written comments or otherwise) will not be returned to the student. Written exams will be kept on file for a period of one year after the completion of the defense.

Oral Defense of Comps

Upon passing all major and minor exams, students will schedule, at their committee's convenience, a date for their oral defense. The defense should be scheduled for two hours. The defense should occur in the same semester as the exams were written. The candidate must prepare the "Announcement of Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy" form (available through UACCESS Student Center) and submit via GradPath for approval. This form is routed to the department's graduate program coordinator first, then to student's minor advisor, major advisor, and Director of Graduate Studies for approval. Once approved by all approvers, the committee chair will receive a notification email from the Graduate College requesting submission of exam results at end of defense. Oral defenses are conducted in accordance with Graduate College regulations. Four committee members (*at least* three from the major) are required to be present at the oral defense of comprehensive exams. In the event of a failing grade, the examining committee has the option of recommending re-examination after a period of four months or voting not to recommend a re-examination. The latter decision terminates the student's program of study.

Please recall that upon successful defense of comprehensive exam, the Graduate College automatically advances student to candidacy and bills the student for candidacy. At this time, students are expected to expeditiously submit the "Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form" to the Graduate College. This means that students should be simultaneously preparing for comps and working on their dissertation proposals.

So You're Planning a PhD Comps Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is a big accomplishment to be done with your written comps!

Before the defense:

2. Schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to send an email to your committee members to get the defense scheduled. Most students use doodle polls to do this. The defense should be scheduled for two hours and should occur at least three weeks after the written exams are finished. This is a tentative date because it will only happen if the committee votes that you have passed your written comps. If you need to re-write, your advisor will discuss next steps.
3. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form and Plan of Study submitted and approved. You might not have yet done the Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment form. If not, get that submitted right away. After that is approved, you will need to submit the Announcement of Comprehensive Exams form on GradPath.
4. One week before the defense, your advisor should communicate the results of the committee's votes (e.g., Pass/Fail). If you have not heard back, check in with your advisor. If you pass the

written exams, confirm the oral defense date and location with your committee. Reminders are always a good idea! If you did not pass the written exams, your advisor will discuss next steps with you.

5. Talk to your advisor about what you can expect at the defense.

At the defense:

6. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email a Qualtrics Survey called Quality of Thesis/Dissertation form to your committee. Each member will need to complete the form after the defense.

After the defense:

7. The committee chair will communicate the results of your comprehensive exams (i.e., Pass/Fail) at the conclusion of the defense. If you need to have another oral defense, your committee will communicate next steps.
8. Your advisor should enter in the results of the exams via the Announcement of Comprehensive Exams form on GradPath.

Dissertation Format Options

Although PhD students have options for how they organize their dissertations, the type of dissertation that the student pursues is **ultimately subject to the advisor's and doctoral committee members' approval.**

1. Traditional format: One option is to design a dissertation such that there is a cohesive narrative built around a major study (or several studies, see point A below). In this format, there are typically four or five chapters that adhere to the essential components of a research manuscript: introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion. Students who use this option are expected to develop their study (or studies) with considerably more depth than a journal article. Thus, the traditional dissertation is usually lengthier than a journal article. For the proposal of a traditional dissertation, students will typically produce the introduction, literature review, and methods chapters for the committee's review.
 - a. In some cases, students will choose to conduct multiple studies within the traditional format. In these cases, the studies are typically cumulative, as one study builds into the next. In this case, a cohesive narrative is appropriate (i.e., one introduction/literature review for the entire dissertation), and the student might choose to structure the chapters of the dissertation such that each study is presented in its own chapter.
2. Portfolio format: Another option is for students to produce three standalone manuscripts, each of the length of a typical journal article (25-30 pages). A portfolio dissertation should be connected by a theme that is addressed in a short introduction chapter, and a short discussion chapter should summarize the contributions across the three studies. The studies are typically less cumulative than in the traditional dissertation format. With this format, the expectation is that each manuscript should be of publishable quality. Often, there will be some repeated material across the manuscripts (e.g., literature review, justification). If the student did a systematic review for their comprehensive exams, the student can use that as one of their manuscripts, with the approval of the advisor and committee. For the proposal of a portfolio dissertation, the student will need to produce a proposal for each of the three studies. If one of the studies is already drafted (e.g., a systematic review), the current draft could be included in the proposal for the committee's review.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

Students should be working on their dissertation proposal during the same semester they are studying for comprehensive exams (i.e., during their 6th semester). Students should plan to submit multiple drafts to their advisor prior to scheduling a defense. Once the advisor approves the dissertation proposal, the

student should schedule a dissertation proposal meeting at least two weeks after the proposal is submitted to the committee. The meeting should be scheduled for two hours. Students should strive to defend the dissertation proposal before the end of the semester. Once the dissertation proposal is approved, students will seek IRB approval. Please refer to the grad college webpage <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses> for updated policies, sample pages, formatting guides, and archiving instructions.

So You're Planning a PhD Dissertation Proposal Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is a big accomplishment to have written your dissertation proposal!

Before the defense:

2. Schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to send an email to your committee members to get the defense scheduled. Most students use doodle polls to do this. The defense should be scheduled for two hours and should occur at least two weeks after the proposal is submitted to them. (Because the proposal defense does not have to be reported to the Grad College, you don't need the extra week for Grad College processing.)
3. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form, Plan of Study, Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment form, and Announcement of Comprehensive Exams submitted and approved. Now is the time to make sure you have your Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment form submitted.
4. A couple days before the scheduled defense, confirm the defense date and location with your committee. Reminders are always a good idea!
5. Talk to your advisor about what you can expect at the defense.

At the defense:

6. Bring the Proposal Defense form to the defense. It's in Appendix C of this handbook, and it's also available here: <https://arizona.app.box.com/file/709497284015>

After the defense:

7. Work with your advisor to plan revisions to the proposal and the date by which the dissertation will be defended. This information must be reported on the Proposal Defense form before submitting it to the graduate program coordinator.
8. Communicate to the graduate program coordinator that you are done with your proposal and send him/her your dissertation title. He/she will initiate the Prospectus Approval Form on GradPath.
9. Complete your revisions. The best practice is to do those revisions right away because it is easy to forget what the committee was asking for after you get into the data collection and final write-up stage. At the very least, make sure those revisions are done before you send the final dissertation to the committee.

Final Oral Examination for the Dissertation

Once the dissertation is completed and approved by the advisor, the student is ready to defend the research to the committee. At this time, the student should reach out to the committee members to schedule the defense. (Although it is tempting to schedule a likely defense date in the far-off future, we strongly advise that the student wait until the thesis is approved by the advisor before scheduling the defense. This will make it easier for the whole committee to make their plans.)

The candidate must submit the "Announcement of Final Defense" form through GradPath **to the Graduate Student Academic Services Office 10 business days before the date of the oral examination.**

Accordingly, the student must **submit a copy of the dissertation to all committee members at least three (3) weeks before the oral defense.** Once the defense date is approved by all approvers, Graduate Student

Academic Services emails the Dissertation Chair the following forms:

1. The Policies and Procedures for Final Oral Examinations for Doctoral Candidates.
2. The Dissertation Revisions Requirements form that will reflect the Committee's requirements for revision of the dissertation and approval. A copy is provided to the candidate at the end of the examination. The Dissertation Chair keeps the second copy.

All members of the dissertation committee are required to attend the final oral defense of the dissertation. The meeting should be scheduled for two hours. This will be at least the three members from the major department. In many cases the minor committee member(s) step off of the committee following comprehensive exams, but if minor committee members choose to remain on the dissertation committee, they must also attend the final oral defense of the dissertation.

The Chair completes and submits the Results of Final Oral Defense form through the link provided by Graduate College.

The Student must obtain the signatures of their doctoral committee on p. 2 of the dissertation. Send the form to the Graduate Program Coordinator and they will route it for electronic signatures. Once you receive the signed form back, replace it with page 2 of your dissertation before submitting the final document to the Graduate College.

NOTE: Additional important information concerning graduating with a PhD is provided in Section V of this handbook. Students should also be familiar with Graduate College Procedures.

So You're Planning a PhD Dissertation Defense?

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back. It is the CULMINATING ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GRADUATE SCHOOL to have written your dissertation! Way. To. Go.

Before the defense:

2. Schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to send an email to your committee members to get the defense scheduled. Most students use doodle polls to do this. The defense should occur at least three weeks after the dissertation is submitted to them. This is a tentative date because it will only happen if the committee votes to move forward with the defense (i.e., the written document is acceptable).
3. Make sure your GradPath forms are up to date. By this point, you should have your Responsible Conduct of Research form, Plan of Study, Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment form, Announcement of Comprehensive Exams, and Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment form submitted and approved. Now is the time to make sure you have your Announcement of Final Oral Defense form submitted.
4. One week before the defense, your advisor should communicate the results of the committee's votes on the written document (e.g., Pass/Fail). If you have not heard back, check in with your advisor. If you pass the written stage, confirm the defense date and location with your committee. Reminders are always a good idea! If you need to make revisions before re-submitting the thesis to your committee, your advisor will discuss next steps with you.
5. Talk to your advisor about what you can expect at the defense.

At the defense:

6. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email a Qualtrics Survey called Quality of Thesis/Dissertation form to your committee. Each member will need to complete the form after the defense.

After the defense:

7. If you pass, work with your advisor to determine the revisions that need to be completed before your dissertation is final. Keep in mind the Grad College deadlines for submitting your dissertation in time for your graduation date. If you do not pass, your advisor will discuss next steps with you.
8. Your advisor should enter the results of the defense on the Results of Final Oral Defense form in GradPath.
9. Your dissertation should have a signature page. Fill in your name and title. Then, send the signature page to the graduate program coordinator, who will route it to your committee members via Adobe Sign for their signature. [Sample Pages | UArizona Graduate College](#)
10. Archive your dissertation with the Grad College. Please make sure it adheres to the Grad College Formatting Guidelines. <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses>

V. RESEARCH

Research Team Assignments

Research teams have been a longstanding tradition in the Communication Department. Consistent with the philosophy of a Research I institution and a commitment to an apprenticeship model of research education, everyone involved in graduate education in the department is expected to engage in research. Graduate students should participate in a full range of research activities that contribute to their research skills. Research teams serve a reciprocal and mutually beneficial role in promoting knowledge creation and research expertise for faculty mentors and their mentees.

Research team assignments and accountability will be implemented as follows:

1. All PhD students will register for 1 unit of research team credit (Comm 900) until they **complete** their comprehensive exams, after which time research team participation is optional. Four research team units are required for the PhD degree. All MA (non-AMP) students will register for 1 unit of research team credit (Comm 900) during each semester in the program. Four research team units are required for the MA degree.
2. Students receive a grade of ‘S’ (superior), ‘P’ (passing), or ‘F’ (failure) in COMM 900 from their Research Team Supervisor. Only grades of S (Superior) or P (Passing) are acceptable.
3. The Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Graduate Committee and with input from faculty and students regarding their preferences, will assign students to teams in a manner designed to maximize (a) fulfillment of faculty preferences/requests for students on their teams, (b) fulfillment of staffing requirements for funded projects, (c) pairing advisees with their permanent advisors, (d) accommodating student preferences for assignments to projects and faculty, and (e) providing apprenticeship experience to students in conducting all facets of research.

In accordance with the educational nature of the research team role, duties should include a range of tasks and activities appropriate for the student’s level of experience and background. Where student contributions constitute substantial intellectual contributions to the work, they will be entitled to co-author status on any papers and publications that result from their efforts (with all the rights and responsibilities attendant author status). Students are urged to examine the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for guidelines on authorship credit.

A typical research team commitment should average 3-6 hours of work per week. Research team responsibilities should be adjusted commensurate with changes in the student’s other duties (e.g., editorial assistant work, equipment management), as negotiated between faculty supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

Students should be aware that participation in a research team does not obviate the need to develop their own independent research (e.g., by translating proposals developed in classes into completed research projects). Yet, these independent projects are crucial to the development of research skills and the overall successful completion of the graduate program. Evidence of independent research activity and publications based on that activity are crucial to students seeking academic jobs. Such independent research should be pursued outside of research team; research team time and resources should not be used to pursue projects independent of the research team director.

Authorship: You should be familiar with the APA guidelines on academic authorship (e.g., see Section 1.21 of the APA manual’s seventh edition). These policies apply to publishing work from research team, theses/dissertations, or any other joint academic work.

Procedures for Human Subjects Pool

Failure to follow the procedure outlined below may jeopardize future access to the subject pool.

ALL use of COMM students for human subjects research must go through the human subjects coordinator. You should not approach course directors individually.

No classes will be assigned to a given project until all prior steps in the human subjects process have been completed. This includes providing the department's human subjects officer(s) with a copy of the approval from the department or university human subjects committee. The director of the human subjects pool will respond to each request within one week. Requests for subjects must be made in reasonable advance of the start date of data collection; requests made the day before data collection cannot be accommodated.

As of January 2021, the management of studies through the human subjects pools occurs through Sona, a research management software. Here's the process requesting participants from the department's subject pool:

1. Get IRB approval for your project.
2. Login to the department's Sona Systems site: <https://arizona-comm.sona-systems.com>
Watch the video tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec8S3xfO-a8&ab_channel=SonaSystems.
3. Create a new study.
 - You have all sorts of options but the defaults are for 1-unit studies (i.e., take 30 minutes or less), all classes included, and so on.
 - Enter your approval code, which is in the IRB approval letter you were sent, in the appropriate box.
 - Once you click on "add this study" you need to indicate your study's end date, which is the confusing part—you have to choose a timeslot that corresponds to your study's end date.
4. The system will send a notice to the human subjects pool coordinator that a study in Sona is waiting for approval. Assuming all is well (e.g., your study has been approved and the entered number is correct), your study will be approved. At that point, your study is "live."

All students in a given class must have equal opportunities for credit/extra credit. Some studies, by virtue of the need for participants with particular characteristics (e.g., married persons), necessarily exclude some students from the opportunity for credit. The only way in which such a study could be carried out is if the director of the human subjects pool can combine the study with another that does not have such requirements. Only the director of the subject pool may make this determination. You should not try to combine projects on your own, but if you are aware of a potential combination you may pass that information to the human subjects pool director.

A verbal arrangement with an instructor regarding the subject pool does not constitute a binding agreement. Final approval must go through the pool director. Failure to follow these guidelines could jeopardize access to the human subjects pool.

The researcher is responsible for providing the instructor with a list of students who actually participated in the study. In the case where multiple sections of a class are used, the researcher must organize the list by section. It is a good idea to collect the course number, section number, and name of the instructor for the assigned extra credit class from the participants.

Comm 101, 228 and 300 have a requirement for research participation. Instructors of those classes must have clear policies on research participation consistent with the department requirements listed on their syllabi. Instructors should also offer students the opportunity of a writing assignment to complete in lieu of

the research requirement. The following is an example of a syllabus statement:

The department has a research requirement in Comm XXX: TITLE. Research participation is required for this course. The department is a national leader in producing high quality and meaningful communication research, and student participation is critical to those studies. You are required to participate in six research “units,” with each unit expected to take no more than 30 minutes to complete. In some cases, one study might take longer than 30 minutes to complete, in which case you’ll receive credit for having completed two (or theoretically more) units. For example, if a study takes 60 to 90 minutes to complete, you’ll receive credit for having completed three units. A very short study (10 minutes, say) will still count for one unit – there aren’t any fractions of units. You may opt out of the research requirement, in which case you will write a research paper to meet the requirement. *The deadline for opting out of the research requirement is XX/XX/XX [determined by instructor; should be early in the semester]—email your instructor to indicate that you wish to opt out. If you do not receive a response to your email try again; you must have a record of your opt-out decision. ***Failure to complete the research requirement will reduce your grade by one letter grade (e.g., B to C).*

ALL RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS MUST HAVE IRB APPROVAL!!!

VI. TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS AND POLICIES

TO TEACH YOU MUST BE ENROLLED FULL TIME (6 Credits). Even if you are working on comps or your dissertation, you must be enrolled in 6 hours!

All students holding teaching assistantships/associateships will receive their assignments from the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Assignments are made by consultation between the Department Head, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Director of Graduate Studies, and based upon input from the faculty and students regarding availability and fit. Except for students who are in their fourth year of their PhD program and beyond, GTAs will be assigned a teaching supervisor, who will monitor and evaluate student performance each semester. The evaluation form can be found in Appendix F. PhD students who have passed their comps and are in their fourth year of the program do not require a teaching supervisor.

Assignments should reflect students' level of experience and expertise. Students on half-time appointments (.50 FTE) should expect one of the following or similar assignments:

1. One "stand alone" course or its equivalent, OR
2. A combination of teaching/grading responsibilities for online classes, one in 7-week-1 and one in 7-week-2, OR
3. Three sections of a multi section course, where sections meet once per week in person or on-line, OR
4. Two sections of a multi section course, where sections meet twice per week in person or on-line, OR
5. Extensive grading and/or administrative assignments in a larger in-person or online class.

Winter teaching is sometimes available, and summer teaching is often available. In order for GTAs to teach in the summer, they must be enrolled in 6 hours *in the upcoming fall*. These additional teaching opportunities are contingent on teaching performance and the needs of the department. Students will not be assigned additional teaching if they are not making satisfactory academic progress. For example, students who have outstanding incompletes in their graduate coursework will not be assigned additional teaching.

Important note on summer teaching: all summer classes are online, and they are offered in the first 7.5 weeks of the summer or the second 7.5 weeks. This means that graduate students who teach online in the summer can teach from any location that they like. However, we expect that instructors will be available and responsive during their summer classes. That is, instructors should be available at least a couple hours per day to work on the class, hold office hours, and respond to students. It is not acceptable for instructors to go on an extended vacation to a remote location during their summer teaching assignment. If you know that you will be on a vacation in the summer, then either do not request summer teaching, or make sure your vacation does not overlap with the 7.5-week session to which you are assigned. Failure to comply with this policy may result in not getting teaching assignments in subsequent summers.

Fifth year funding is entirely at the department's discretion, and in most years is unlikely. When fifth year funding is available, it will only be considered in cases in which the dissertation proposal has been defended.

Research and Teaching Time Commitments

Time commitments will inevitably vary according to the nature of the assignment, but the following should serve as a rough guide to expectations:

1. On teaching and funded research assistant assignments, 1/4-time appointments carry expectations of 10 hours of work per week, 1/3-time appointments of 16-17 hours of work, 1/2-time of 20 hours,

2/3-time of 26-27 hours, and 3/4-time of 30 hours.

2. Appointments at the same level and pay should require approximately equal levels of work, regardless of the distribution of duties and funding sources. However, there is natural variation in teaching appointments both within semesters and between courses. You are encouraged to take a “long view” that one semester’s heavy load will balance out with a later semester’s light load.
3. Full-time students on assistantships/associateships are not permitted to hold more than a 3/4-time appointment, inclusive of work and teaching activities outside the university.

In sum, a .50 FTE assistantship/associateship requires approximately 20 hours of work per week. Most of our GTAs are on a .50 FTE.

Grading Policies

Getting feedback to students in a reasonable amount of time is an important part of your job as a teacher. Whether you are teaching a standalone class or working as a TA, you should aim to get grading done promptly. Holding onto students’ assignments for more than a week after they have been submitted is typically not appropriate.

Grade Inflation

Grade inflation is a much-discussed topic in academia. Please see Appendix G for the department policy on grade inflation.

Teaching Improvement

There are resources available to assist you in developing your skills as a teacher. Please see the Office of Instruction and Assessment: <http://oia.arizona.edu/>.

Loss of Teaching Position

Repeated unsatisfactory teaching evaluations are grounds for loss of a GTA position. We will work with you to improve your teaching before taking this step. Unprofessional behavior (e.g., inappropriate relationships with students, engaging in teaching activities [including grading] while intoxicated) will result in immediate loss of the teaching position.

Teaching positions are budget-contingent. In a catastrophic budget situation, anybody could lose a teaching appointment, but this is not likely.

Change of Status: Moving from Assistant to Associate Status

In order for a person to be paid as a graduate associate, that person **must** possess an MA degree and have been admitted into the PhD program. It is Graduate College policy that the change in status from assistant to associate will only occur at semester end/beginning. No changes in status will be made mid-semester.

VII. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

AGSC (Association of Graduate Students in Communication)

The Association of Graduate Students in Communication is a group of MA and PhD graduate students that acts as a liaison between the students and the faculty and university. AGSC members serve on departmental and college committee as a voice for all the graduate students in the department. In addition, AGSC arranges social and academic events.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

For your **coursework**, please refer to the AI policies that your professors set in their syllabi. If you are not certain about their policies, please consult with them.

For **comprehensive exams**, the use of generative AI for writing is strictly prohibited. Using AI to study for your comprehensive exams is not recommended, but we cannot legislate what you do to prepare for your exams. Just be aware that many AI tools generate inaccurate or misleading information, reflecting biases in their training models and user prompts. You are responsible for the accuracy of the information included in your exams.

For **theses and dissertations**, generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Verde, Dall-e, Bard, Ollama) may be used for sampling, coding, and data analysis. However, it is your responsibility to consult with your committee about any use of AI for research purposes and to follow their guidance. We also note that any AI-supported research activity requires careful scrutiny and verification, and overreliance on AI for research activity is not recommended. If AI generative tools are used, they must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. Please use the following guidelines for acknowledging/citing generative AI: <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>.

Using AI to write your thesis/dissertation, or proposals, is prohibited. Doing so will be treated as academic dishonesty, as defined by the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity. AI-assisted editing of your original work is allowed but should be used with caution. For example, AI-detection software used by academic journals will likely *not* be able to differentiate between AI-generated and AI-edited content. Thus, a best practice is to use AI sparingly for editing.

Although AI should not be used for writing, we do not legislate how students use AI for earlier stages of the writing process (i.e., searching for research, summarizing research for your own records). Just be aware that many AI tools generate inaccurate or misleading information, reflecting biases in their training models and user prompts. You are responsible for the accuracy of the information included in your theses/dissertations.

Graduation Procedures for MA and PhD

1. The name that is on your student record is the name on your diploma unless you file a name change with the Registrar's Office, 210 Admin Building (<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/>). International students must use their passport name on the diploma.
2. Diplomas are mailed approximately two weeks after degree is posted by Graduate Student Academic Services. Inquiries concerning the ordering or mailing of diplomas must be directed to Graduate Student Academic Services, 621-3484. Diplomas are not mailed to campus addresses.
3. If the completion date that appears on your Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form changes, notify the Graduate Student Academic Services Office at least 2.5 months before

commencement to ensure your name will appear in the program.

Commencement

There are multiple graduation ceremonies at the University of Arizona. Most grads attend the SBS graduate commencement because that is where the formal hooding occurs; however, there are whole-university and graduate college graduation ceremonies as well. You do not have to attend any ceremony. If you are planning on attending a ceremony and would like your advisor and/or the department head to be there, you should let those individuals and graduate program coordinator know as early as possible. Questions about the ceremonies themselves should be directed to the SBS Dean's Office and the Graduate College.

Commencement dates and procedures and deadlines for the submission of paperwork pertaining to graduate degrees are available online at the Graduate College.

<https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/commencement>

Graduate Student Funding

These expectations do not represent contractual obligations. ***Funding depends on the yearly departmental budget.***

1. Master's students should expect support for no more than two years. Support during those years is contingent on making satisfactory academic progress and receiving satisfactory evaluations from teaching and research supervisors. Satisfactory academic progress is defined in the present document.
2. Master's students who wish to be considered for admission to the doctoral program must file for Master's Degree Candidacy no later than the Graduate College's published deadlines during the semester before doctoral work would begin. (For fall entrance into the doctoral program, this means filing for candidacy no later than April, with the intent of completing the thesis in May or August.)
3. Doctoral students can expect funding for four academic years. Support during those years is contingent upon making satisfactory academic progress and receiving satisfactory evaluations from teaching and research supervisors. Funding beyond four years is at the faculty's discretion and is based on: (a) successful defense of dissertation proposal, (b) the availability of funds, (c) the department's needs, (d) the merits and potential contribution of the applicant's line of research, (e) the status and standing of the applicant's ongoing research, (f) the student's performance to date in the areas of research, coursework, and teaching, and (g) the potential for successful completion in the one-year timeframe. In short, *students should not count on funding beyond four years.*
4. Summer funding is based on teaching summer courses. This is often available and the department will make every effort to provide opportunities to teach in the summer. For neither MA nor PhD students is this part of the contractual academic funding. Summer funding priorities are based on course enrollments, graduate student ability, graduate student progress, and experience in teaching independently, fit between graduate student ability and expertise and available courses, and graduate student tenure in the program. Graduate students are unable to get summer teaching on the summer of their departure from the program—enrollment in the subsequent fall is a university requirement for TA hiring in the summer. The majority of summer teaching occurs online and requires a certification of online teacher training.
5. Summer funding is typically not available in the summer after the student's funding term expires (MA: after the second year, unless continuing to the PhD program; PhD: after fourth year). Additionally, the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the graduate committee and the student's advisor, will require that the student make satisfactory progress in their program (e.g., dissertation proposal) before summer funding is offered.
6. Please note that other summer funding opportunities are often available, such as the SBS

Dissertation Completion Fellowship, and we expect you to apply for these awards. These funding opportunities are especially important if you will not be enrolled at UA in the subsequent fall.

7. As of August 2021, Graduate College Fellowship can only be distributed in allotments of \$2,500 or more for PhD students and \$1,000 or more for MA students. In all cases, the graduate committee will make determination of appropriate use of these funds.

Note: ALL students traveling to conferences or for other research purposes should see the administrative associate for insurance paperwork BEFORE departure (even if you are not receiving funding). Failure to complete a travel authorization and register your international trip BEFORE you depart could mean your reimbursement (if applicable) will be denied by Accounts Payable.

Academic Progress and Graduate Student Evaluation

Below are standards for satisfactory academic progress in the graduate program in Communication and the consequences of failing to meet those requirements.

1. The three core courses (500, 561, 571) and either (a) one of the required theory courses (609, 610, 620, 669) and one elective or (b) two electives should be successfully completed by the end of the first year of enrollment in the graduate program. Failure to do so, unless when required courses were unavailable, will result in faculty review of progress and possible dismissal from the program.
2. “Successful completion” means that no incomplete grades are outstanding, that the student has earned no grade below ‘B’ in the core or required courses, and that the student has not withdrawn with a failing grade from any course. If a MA or PhD student earns a ‘C’ or below in any core or required course, the course must be repeated. (This rule does not apply to AMP students; they must maintain a 3.0 graduate GPA and cannot receive a ‘D’ or lower in any grad level required courses.)
3. Failure to remove incomplete grades in a timely fashion (no longer than 1 year) will be regarded as lack of satisfactory academic progress. Also, incomplete grades change automatically to a “failing” grade (‘E’) after a specific period of time (typically one year) unless student has petitioned to extend the incomplete and the petition is granted. An ‘E’ cannot be returned to a regular grade or an ‘I’ once that change has occurred.
4. All courses to be counted toward the minimum hours requirements must carry a grade of ‘B’ or better (‘P’ or ‘S’ for courses that have grade options of S, P, F; e.g., 900 Research, 910 Thesis, 699 Independent Study).
5. A grade below ‘B’ in any two courses taken as part of a student’s graduate coursework, or a question of academic misconduct, will invoke a faculty review of the student’s academic progress and possible suspension or dismissal from the program. Because funding is contingent on making satisfactory academic progress, it is likely to be revoked under such circumstances. Continuation or reinstatement of funding will depend on the outcome of subsequent faculty reviews and the availability of funds.
6. A grade below ‘B’ in any three courses taken as part of a student’s graduate coursework will result in dismissal from the graduate program. Students dismissed from the program may apply for (re)admission to the program only after a period of at least one year. Such applications will be evaluated in a manner consistent with the review of all other candidates during the application period.
7. Academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarizing, cheating, collusion) may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.
8. To be regarded in good academic standing (making satisfactory academic progress) in the MA program, the thesis or comprehensive exams should be completed by the end of two years as graduate student.
9. For doctoral students to be considered in good academic standing and making satisfactory academic progress, comprehensive exams must be passed by the end of the 6th semester (3rd year) in the program.
10. Ideally, the dissertation proposal should be successfully defended by the end of the 6th semester.

Graduate students who have not defended the dissertation proposal by the end of the 7th semester will be considered not in good standing.

11. Successful completion of the final dissertation defense should occur within the timeframe identified on the proposal defense form (and no later than the end of the 8th semester).
12. Failure to submit approved committee appointment forms and department program of study form within the timeframe specified for the degree may constitute lack of satisfactory academic progress.
13. Failure to maintain appropriate standards of professional and collegial behavior may also be grounds for dismissal from the program; students who have been warned in writing concerning behavioral issues and have not made adjustments in a reasonable time frame are subject to immediate dismissal.

The faculty confer at the end of the spring semester to formally review the progress of all graduate students. Additional reviews will be scheduled as necessary. Student's reappointment each semester and/or continuation in the program is contingent on:

1. Satisfying requirements for satisfactory academic progress
2. Receiving satisfactory evaluations from supervisors

If a student is found to NOT be in good academic standing, the student will receive written notification in the form of the annual evaluation letter with a clear statement of what he or she must do and a date by which such actions must be completed.

Graduate Student Appeals

As outlined above, students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress are subject to dismissal from the program. The student will be notified of this decision in writing, typically at the end of the academic year (May or June). Students will be given the opportunity to internally appeal dismissal decisions by doing the following:

1. Submit a written appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies and the advisor. This must be done within 30 days of the written notification of dismissal. If, after reviewing the appeal, the DGS and advisor are in agreement, they can decide to reverse the dismissal decision upon the satisfactory completion of appropriate conditions.
2. In cases in which the DGS and advisor are not in agreement or seek further consultation, a meeting between the student, advisor, DGS, and graduate committee will be scheduled at a time that is feasible for all parties. The student's dismissal will be re-considered in light of the student's written appeal and follow-up questioning during the meeting as appropriate.
3. In the event that the dismissal decision is upheld, the Graduate College will be notified as soon as the decision is made. Any further petition, appeal, or rebuttal will need to be routed to the Graduate College.

Academic Probation

Students who have a cumulative grade-point average of less than 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. The student will come off probation when they bring their GPA back up to a 3.0 average. Students on probation are required to meet with their graduate advisor, discuss the steps to be taken to rectify the problems that led to the probationary status, and devise a written plan of action to be submitted to the Graduate College and Director of Graduate Studies.

Graduate students who are on probation for two consecutive semesters will be academically disqualified by the Graduate College. To obtain non-degree status they are required to apply for non-degree status at the Graduate College. To be re-admitted to the graduate program, they would have to have achieved a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 through additional graduate coursework before applying for admission. Readmission is not guaranteed and would require recommendation by the Department Head, Graduate Committee, and the Dean of the Graduate College. No more than 12 credit units taken as non-

degree will apply to the MA or PhD degree.

Early identification and counseling for students having academic difficulty is in the best interests of students and departments. The Department stresses this is not intended to be punitive to students having difficulty, but to encourage immediate intervention and closer mentoring of students that would enhance retention and probability of graduation. Students currently enrolled who are on academic probation will be contacted and encouraged to follow the steps indicated in paragraph one above so that they might take advantage of intervention and closer mentoring. Contact persons on this topic are the Associate Deans in the Graduate College.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

Master's Continuous Enrollment: A student admitted to a Master's degree program must register each fall and spring for a minimum of 3 graduate units from original matriculation until all degree requirements are met. When course and unit requirements are completed, Master's students must register for a minimum of 1 thesis unit each semester until the thesis is finalized. Master's candidates do not have to register for graduate units during summer sessions unless they plan to make use of University facilities or faculty time (including the Comprehensive and Final Oral Examinations). If they do plan to use facilities or faculty time, they must enroll for one unit of graduate credit.

Doctoral Continuous Enrollment: A student admitted to a doctoral program must register each fall and spring for a minimum of 3 graduate units from original matriculation until the completion of all requirements, written and oral comprehensive exams, and *a minimum of* 18 dissertation units. When these requirements are met, doctoral students must register for a minimum of 1 unit each semester until final copies of the dissertation are submitted to the Graduate Student Academic Services Office. However, students receiving funding such as assistantships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships or traineeships or have a visa to maintain may be required by their funding source to register for more than 1 unit to meet full-time status requirements, and they should check with their program advisor or the graduate coordinator regarding such requirements to ensure that they remain qualified for the funding. For full-time status, a Graduate Associate must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 units. A Graduate Tuition Scholarship requires a minimum of 3 units.

Doctoral students completing a comprehensive exam defense or dissertation defense during the summer do not have to register for graduate units during summer sessions. However, for use of the library by PhD students finishing up their dissertations during the summer, the graduate coordinator can request that GSAS enroll them in GRAD 922 until completion of degree. This "class" is worth zero units and is free of charge; it does not represent registration qualifying for student loans. If degree requirements are completed during an intersession (winter session or summer pre-session), the student must have been registered during the preceding semester.

Unless excused by an official Leave of Absence (which in no case may exceed one year throughout the student's degree program), all graduate students are subject to the Continuous Enrollment Policy and must pay in-state and out-of-state tuition and fees in order to remain in the program. Students who have not maintained continuous enrollment, and who failed to file timely requests for a leave of absence, are automatically discontinued from their programs. In such cases, if the student wishes to be reconsidered for the program, he or she will be required to apply for re-admission to the program, pay the Graduate College application fee, and pay all overdue tuition and fees, including cumulative late penalties. No tuition or registration waivers will be applied retroactively.

Ideally, if a student plans in advance on temporarily leaving the program, they need to complete a request for a regular leave of absence. Additional instructions for filing regular leave of absence requests, and links

to the LOA form, can be found at <https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/enrollment-policies/leave-absence> .

The retroactive leave of absence mechanism is not appropriate for students who have failed to maintain continuous enrollment. Retroactive leave of absence is to be used in truly exceptional circumstances, such as cases where a traumatic medical event or natural disaster, prevents a student from doing their due diligence in applying for a leave of absence. The graduate college will not approve retroactive leaves of absence for students who have failed to maintain continuous enrollment and do not have extreme extenuating circumstances. Refunds of tuition paid for the retroactively applied LOA will not be granted.

Leave of Absence Policy

Leaves of Absence (LOAs) may affect the status of a graduate student's financial aid. Students are responsible for determining the requirements of the funding agency and/or academic unit prior to applying for a Leave of Absence. See the Graduate College website for further information in this regard.

Academic leaves

Academic LOAs (i.e., leaves taken for course work elsewhere, for research, fieldwork, internships, professional development) are handled on a case-by-case basis by the student's department and Graduate College.

Personal leaves

Graduate students in degree programs may be granted a Leave of Absence for a maximum of one year throughout the course of their degree program by the Dean of the Graduate College upon the written recommendation of the student's advisor and Department Head. LOAs are granted on a case-by-case basis for compelling reasons including birth or adoption of a child, personal or family reasons, medical reasons, military duty, or financial hardship. Students will be readmitted without reapplying to the department and the Graduate College. Only when the LOA is approved prior to the beginning of the semester for which the LOA is being sought will students be exempted from fees for that semester. Only academic services or facilities available to the general public can be used during the LOA. Failure to obtain a Leave of Absence or remain in continuous enrollment will result in penalties, as described in the continuous enrollment policy requirements.

Expectations for Working with your Advisor

Different faculty members work in different ways. This handbook cannot tell you how long your advisor might take to turn around a document like a thesis/dissertation proposal (or the actual thesis/dissertation itself), or how many drafts of a document your advisor might need to see before declaring it ready.

However, you should assume:

- a. That your advisor is a busy person and your document may not be their first priority at any given time, and
- b. That carefully reading and providing feedback on a long and complex document like a proposal is not a quick task, and
- c. That a proposal for a thesis or dissertation is unlikely to be ready on the first or second draft. It will almost certainly be weeks between the completion of a first draft and readiness for defense, and sometimes it might be a semester-long process.

As you develop a timeline for a dissertation/thesis, factor in times when you will be waiting for feedback. Plan to use those times to work on other aspects of the project, or to work on other projects. If you feel that your advisor is taking an excessive amount of time to get you feedback on a document, you should consult with him/her, the graduate director, or any other faculty member, in order to get an idea of what reasonable

expectations might be for a specific document. The advisor-advisee relationship is a reciprocal one; if you turn things around quickly and efficiently and with high quality, you are more likely to receive the same treatment from your advisor.

Expectations for Working with your Committee

Committees get a minimum of two weeks to read your thesis, comps, and dissertation (plus a one-week grad college processing time for all defenses other than thesis/dissertation proposals). If you are giving them the exams or thesis/dissertation over a holiday period (e.g., spring break, Thanksgiving), extend their review time so that they are not required to read your work during their vacation period. Don't ask them to do it in less time. If you are heading towards a committee meeting during an exam week, vacation period, or holiday time, consult early and often with your committee about their availability. Double check whether committee members are on sabbatical during a period when you are planning a defense; if they are then you will need to work around their sabbatical schedule. More generally, do not make assumptions about faculty availability, and do not back yourself into a position where you "have to" defend in a constrained period of time, because your crisis is not your committee's emergency... those of you familiar with reactance theory will have some idea of most committees' responses when they feel backed into a corner.

Please also note that students should not plan on a summer defense for their comps or proposals. These defenses do not have to take place in the summer; they can wait until the fall. Most committees will at least entertain the idea of having a defense for a dissertation or thesis defense in the summer, especially if the student needs to finish to take a job or move on to another graduate program. However, students must arrange this early and not expect that their committee members will have the same level of availability that they will during regular semesters.

Be Nice; Be Professional

We value a collegial and pleasant department environment. Interpersonal behavior not conducive to that environment is not appropriate. Communication is a small field, and you do not know when and where you might meet people again in your life. Be nice. Being a graduate student is your job; you are getting paid to teach and learn. We are not an overly formal department, but basic standards of professional behavior apply to all of your academic activities here. You should behave respectfully toward staff and faculty. You should also read your email and respond to official requests for information promptly.

Disability Resource Center

If you have any type of disability or chronic illness/condition, we encourage you to register with the [DRC](#). In particular, if you require additional accommodations to ensure your success in classes and/or if your condition makes it difficult for you to meet your obligations as a student or employee, please register with the Disability Resource Center. Our faculty and staff are used to working with the DRC to accommodate students' needs.

You will need to make an appointment with DRC staff to request accommodations. This can take some time; thus, we encourage you to sign up early, even if you are not certain that you will need an accommodation. It is better to have the administrative intake completed, so that if a situation arises, the accommodation can be easily instituted.

Useful Websites

University of Arizona Sites

Communication Department: <http://comm.arizona.edu>

Graduate College: <http://grad.arizona.edu>

Degree Certification Forms and Steps to Your Degree: [Degree Requirements | UArizona Graduate College](#)

A link to the *Manual for Submission of Theses and Dissertations* is also available at this site.

Forms for Master's/Specialist Plan of Study, Master's/Specialist Completion of Degree Requirements, Doctoral Plan of Study, Results of Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy, Committee Appointment Form, and Announcement of Final Oral Examination are available at the UAccess Student Center and must be submitted via **GradPath**.

GradPath: <http://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/gradpath>

Professional Organizations in the Field of Communication

International Communication Association: www.icahdq.org

National Communication Association: www.natcom.org

Western Communication Association: www.westcomm.org

Appendix A: Course Rotation*

FALL - Odd Years	SPRING - Even Years
Always Offered:	Always Offered:
500 – Intro to Grad Studies in Comm	571 – Research Methods II
561 – Research Methods I	620 – Theories of Social Influence
609 – Mass Comm Theory	
Seminar in <i>one</i> of the following areas:	Seminar in <i>one</i> of the following areas:
Interpersonal	Method/Stats
Methods/Stats	Health
<i>One</i> additional course (500 or 500 level) in:	<i>Two</i> additional courses (500 or 500 level) in:
Other Specialization	Media
Political	Interpersonal
	Other Specialization
FALL - Even Years	SPRING - Odd Years
Always Offered:	Always Offered:
500 – Intro to Grad Studies in Comm	571 – Research Methods II
561 – Research Methods I	610 – Interpersonal Theory
669 – Health Comm Theory	
Seminar in <i>one</i> of the following areas:	Seminar in <i>one</i> of the following areas:
Media	Health
Interpersonal	Media
<i>One</i> additional course (500 or 500 level) in:	<i>Two</i> additional courses (500 or 500 level) in:
Interpersonal	Political
Methods/Stats	Other Specialization
Other Specialization	Health

** This course rotation reflects the classes we anticipate offering each semester as well as general areas we expect to cover. There is no guarantee that these courses will be offered.*

Appendix B: Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for Graduate Programs in Communication¹

A. Prologue:

1 As specified in UHAP Policy 3.1.04:

Members of the graduate faculty have special privileges and obligations within graduate education, especially related to thesis, dissertation and other culminating capstone project committee roles and membership, as well as graduate student advising and mentorship. Graduate faculty membership is automatically granted to tenured and tenure-track faculty and continuing-status and eligible academic professionals with faculty titles and may be granted selectively to career track faculty or others. The Graduate College, in coordination with the academic colleges and programs, oversees the criteria, processes, and procedures related to the granting, review, and in rare cases of unacceptable performance, the remediation or removal of graduate faculty membership to ensure the quality of graduate programs and delivery of graduate education

2 The Graduate College policies governing graduate faculty membership are set out here: <https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/graduate-faculty-policy>

3 Members of the Graduate Faculty are expected to maintain the “Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty”, as outlined in section 4.1 of the Graduate College policy.

B. Tenured/Tenure-Eligible, Continuing Status/Eligible Academic Professionals

As per UHAP Policy 3.1.04 and section 1.1.1 of the Graduate College Graduate Faculty Policy², Tenure-eligible/tenured faculty and Continuing Status eligible/Continuing Status academic professionals with faculty appointments are automatically members of the Graduate Faculty in Communication.

¹ The policies set out in this document do not apply to special members, retired faculty without emeritus status and other faculty who have resigned as well as to academic experts who are not employees of the University of Arizona. For information on how these categories of potential committee members are may be included on committees, see section 1.2 of <https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/graduate-faculty-policy>

² <https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/graduate-faculty-policy>

C. Members of the Graduate Faculty in Other Programs without FTE in Communication³

Faculty who are members of the Graduate Faculty in other programs but who do not hold FTE in Communication may serve as members of the Graduate Faculty in Communication with the following criteria:

- a) Have a terminal degree in Communication or related discipline, and
- b) Regularly conduct and publish research in Communication or related discipline

D. Emeritus Faculty

As per section 1.1.2 of the Graduate College Graduate Faculty policy, faculty who have been awarded Emeritus status by the President of the University of Arizona are automatically members of the Graduate Faculty in their programs, so long as they continue evidence of currency in their field.

E. Criteria for membership of Career Track Faculty and Continuing Status/Eligible professionals without faculty titles.

Career Track Faculty and Continuing Status and CS-Eligible academic professionals without faculty titles may be recommended to be appointed to the Graduate Faculty in Communication if they meet the following criteria:

- a) Hold a PhD degree in Communication.
- b) Have experience conducting research as evidenced by grants, publications, or conference presentations in Communication.
- c) Have a record of strong mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students.

F. Criteria for the endorsement to chair a Doctoral Committee.⁴

The following additional criteria are used to determine if a member of the Graduate Faculty in Communication has the endorsement to chair doctoral committees. Faculty with the

³ Note that the Graduate College does not maintain a list distinguishing among Graduate Faculty Members in different programs. It is the responsibility of each program to ensure that graduate committees are composed of program-approved members. The program does this verification when the DGS approves GradPath forms.

⁴ Note that the Graduate College does not maintain a list of who is entitled to chair doctoral committees. It is the responsibility of each program to ensure that graduate committees are composed of program-approved members and are chaired by appropriately qualified faculty. The program does this verification when the DGS approves GradPath committee forms.

endorsement to chair doctoral committees are expected to maintain the responsibilities outlined in section 4.4 of the Graduate College policy.

- All tenured/tenure eligible Graduate faculty in Communication shall have the endorsement to chair doctoral committees.
- Career Track Faculty and Continuing Status and CS-Eligible academic professionals who hold PhD degrees can also be approved (see section E).

See also section 1.1.5 of <https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/graduate-faculty-policy> for important information about the endorsement to chair criteria.

G. Vote on Membership in Communication Graduate Faculty

In order to add a faculty member under sections E, Communication shall forward a nomination for approval to the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Dean's office, including a current CV, after a vote of all Graduate Faculty in Communication, requiring a 2/3 majority.

Program Approval Graduate Faculty Criteria 17-0, February 17, 2021

Academic College Dean's office approval: **JP Jones, SBS Dean** Date: February 28, 2021

Graduate College Approval

Date April 4, 2021

Appendix C: Proposal Defense Form

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
(to be submitted to Graduate Coordinator)

Student Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____ **(print)**

CHECK ONE: ___ Thesis Proposal ___ Dissertation Proposal

PROPOSAL TITLE: _____

THE COMMITTEE HAS JUDGED THIS PROPOSAL TO (CHECK ONE):

___ Pass with no revisions.
Final defense to occur by: _____

___ Pass with minor revisions*
Revisions (detailed below) to be approved by committee chair no later than: _____
Final defense to occur by: _____

___ Pass with major revisions*
Revisions (detailed below) to be approved by full committee no later than: _____
Committee to be reconvened: ___ Yes ___ No
Final defense to occur by: _____

___ Fail
New proposal must be successfully defended no later than 6 months following today's date (noted above). Failure to achieve a passing result in second defense will result in termination from the program.

IDENTIFY REVISIONS (IF REQUIRED ABOVE):

Committee Chair (Print)	Signature	Date
Committee Member (Print)	Signature	Date
Committee Member (Print)	Signature	Date
Committee Member (Print)	Signature	Date

* Failure to comply with deadlines identified above may result in loss of funding and/or conversion to non-degree seeking student status.

Appendix D: Record for Comps Organization Meeting

Comps Meeting Organization Department of Communication

Student Name:

Date:

Exam	Committee Member(s)	Hours	Notes (What will be covered? What will not be covered?)
Methods			
Theory #1:			
Theory #2:			
Specialty (if applicable)			
Minor			

Appendix E: Comprehensive Exam Format (An Example)

The following example is a suggested format for the PhD comprehensive exam. The example reflects synthesis, critique, and suggestions for future research. Please note that the following suggestion is just that: *a suggestion*. It is *not* intended to be interpreted as a contract or a required format. Comps committee members have some latitude in the structure of the question(s) and how the time period of each area is allocated.

Assume a student takes 620 and 669 to fulfill the required theory courses and 561 and 571 to fulfill the method core.

Theory Question 1: 620 and related coursework (3 hours total)

- (a) 1 hour synthesizing the extant research on the theory or theories and related material.
- (b) 1 hour critiquing the extant research. This is largely a critique of what was synthesized in part (a).
- (c) 1 hour offering suggestions for future research in this area. These offerings are based in part on the problems identified in part (b).

Sample Questions

Inoculation (1 hour)

Describe the basic principles of inoculation theory and describe briefly how a simple study might demonstrate an inoculation effect. What psychological process do you believe underlies the inoculation effect, and what evidence (i.e., empirical research) exists for that process? What limitations exist for the implementation of inoculation interventions on a wide scale in, for instance, public health campaigns?

Dual Processing Models (1 hr)

Based on both the ELM and HSM research, what factors are hypothesized to influence:

(a) attitude structure and formation, (b) message processing, and (c) attitude change? Cite evidence to support or refute the hypothesized role of these various factors in the process of persuasion. How have social scientists operationalized some of these different factors? Have the ELM and/or HSM met with criticism? If so, describe the nature of the criticism(s).

Campaigns (1 hr)

Define social marketing. Identify the key elements that are associated with its successful conduct. Cite some examples of successful campaigns, underscoring the campaign design factors likely and/or known to have contributed to the intended outcome. Finally, assume that you are the architect of a social marketing information campaign to combat smoking up-take by adolescents. What are the key factors to consider in the design of your campaign? Suggest some applied examples of how the campaign messages might be constructed and placed in media venues to best achieve the desired effects on the target audience.

Theory Question 2: 669 and related coursework (3 hours total)

- (a) 1 hour synthesizing the extant research on the theory or theories and related material.
- (b) 1 hour critiquing the extant research. This is largely a critique of what was synthesized in part (a).
- (c) 1 hour offering suggestions for future research in this area. These offerings are based in part on the problems identified in part (b).

Method Question: 561 and related coursework (1 ½ hours total)

This question is based on 561 and related coursework (e.g., research tool) addressing method, design, reliability, validity, etc.

Sample Question:

Survey and content analysis (1.5 hours)

- a) In an abstract sense (i.e., independent of specific methods) define what is meant by (i) measurement reliability and (ii) measurement validity.
- b) Describe how you ASSESS each in survey research and content analysis research (give examples of methodological procedures and statistics).
- c) Describe strategies you can use to MAXIMIZE each in survey research and content analytic research (i.e., specific research strategies that you would use to ensure reliability or validity).
- d) Automated computer-coding of texts is a popular approach in content analysis (e.g., of newspaper articles). Comment briefly about the reliability and validity issues inherent in such procedures.

Stats Question: 571 and related coursework (1 ½ hours total)

This question is based on 571 and related coursework (e.g., research tool) regarding statistical tests, power, etc.

Sample Question:

Imagine that you are attempting to explain teenagers' self-esteem from variables like their weight, body image, gender identity, sexual activity, GPA, television consumption, race, etc.

- a) Specify a simple model that involves a mediated relationship, and describe what statistical procedure you might use to test the model.
- b) Describe a moderator/interaction effect involving some of these variables, and describe what statistical procedure you would use to test that effect.
- c) Imagine performing a one-way ANOVA and finding a significant effect for race/ethnicity (e.g., Black, White, Latino) on self-esteem (e.g., $F(2, 147) = 6.29, p < .05$). What more would you want to tell your reader about this effect, and what calculations might you need to perform to give the reader that information (describe conceptually, don't do the calculations).
- d) A colleague examines the same effect and also rejects the null hypothesis ($p < .001$). He writes to you gloating over the fact that his effects were so much *bigger* than yours. How do you respond?
- e) Imagine finding a *non-significant* correlation between weight and self-esteem. Provide three *substantively different* explanations for this **lack** of statistical significance

Specialty (3 hours total)

This question or series of questions is based on the student's area of research focus and dissertation. Questions can integrate related coursework. For example, a student doing a dissertation on family communication might expect questions that consider the dissertation as well as coursework related to family/interpersonal communication.

Appendix F: Teaching Evaluation Form

This form is subject to minor change to accommodate dynamic teaching schedules and on-line classes

TA Name:	
Evaluator Name:	
Course# / Title	
Semester:	

	<i>Enter dates</i>
Pre-semester syllabus and textbook check	
Midterm grade check	
Class observation	
End of semester grade check	
Evaluation submission	

TA experience (bold one)	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Extensive</i>
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TA role in course (bold one):	<i>Stand Alone</i>	<i>TA with Discussion / Lab Sections</i>	<i>Primarily Grading</i>
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****Enter "X" to indicate evaluation;
leave blank when not applicable.*

SUPERIOR

SATISFACTORY

UNSATISFACTORY

Syllabus (check before semester start)			
Mastery of subject matter			
Preparation (media, written materials)			
Lecturing			
Teamwork			
Speaking fluency: English as a second language			
Professional demeanor & appearance			
Holds office hours			
Keeping class records / maintaining D2L, etc.			
Constructing exams			
Grading consistent with department norms			
Grading papers and exams in a timely manner			
Other (specify) _____.			
OVERALL EVALUATION (required)			

WRITTEN EVALUATION

On the next page, please provide a 1-2 paragraph summary along with this evaluation. The summary should be based in part on in-class observation of the TA.

Appendix G: Department of Communication Grading Policies

It is clear that recent years have seen a steady increase in grades given to students nationwide. Inflated grades can result from many factors, such as:

- A philosophical objection to the idea of "judging" people.
- Fear about students' responses if they are given "low" grades, or fatigue at dealing with student complaints about grades.
- An unusually gifted group of students who rise to every challenge.
- Test design (e.g., tests that are sufficiently elementary that everyone scores near the maximum).
- Teaching to the test.
- Time pressures (when people do not have a lot of time to grade, they generally give higher grades so that they won't be asked to defend them).
- Instructor willingness to spend lots of time with struggling students, grading and re-grading until the work is at an acceptable level.
- A high level of engagement/liking with students, making it difficult to give them low grades.
- An inaccurate perception of grading norms (e.g., a belief that most other instructors give primarily A and B grades).
- A concern that a low grade may hurt a student's chance of graduating.

Without a doubt, there are other features that would lead to grade distributions with large numbers of A and B grades. The above are simply illustrations of the wide variety of causes of grade inflation. In many cases, the underlying causes may be positive, in the sense that they reveal a caring orientation towards students and a desire for students to do well. However, this pattern of grading has some serious negative ramifications that we need to consider as a department.

- a) We have developed an honors program. That program will have little meaning if the vast majority of our students are receiving A and B grades in their classes.
- b) Our students (and their GPAs) are representatives to the outside world of our department and the Communication discipline. If we give A and B grades to students who lack either knowledge, skills, or diligence, we send a message to those outside our department about our own (lack of) standards.
- c) Grade inflation does a disservice to the best students, who receive no reward for their extra abilities or efforts and end up with the same grade as average students.
- d) Grade inflation does a disservice to the C/D students, who are taught that minimal effort and knowledge results in decent evaluations.
- e) Inflated grade distributions increase demand for our major among less able and less hard-working students, which hurts the quality of our classes and increases pressure on our already overcrowded classrooms.
- f) Grade distributions in which C, D, and E grades are virtually absent do a disservice to the idea that we are evaluating our students. The grade "variable" is effectively reduced to a constant.

We do not want to impose departmental quotas on grade distributions. However, it is appropriate to provide some guidelines for sensible course design, as well as information about grading norms. Repeated departure from typical norms is something that we will be pursuing actively on an individual basis with instructors. Below we present some guidelines for course design that apply in our department, and then we provide some normative data to provide some context for each individual instructor's grading practices.

Guidelines for Undergraduate Course Design

Each course is unique. However, certain features should be common to all university level courses. Within the Department of Communication, we expect that all instructors should be familiar with and conform to the following general guidelines.

- a) All courses should have clear statements of course goals, and instructors should have a clear idea of the level of achievement that constitutes work at each grade level. This might be stated in terms of specific knowledge or skills goals of the course—objectives that can be evaluated at the end of the course. Some general guidelines for what constitutes work at each level is provided at the end of this document.
- b) All courses should hold exams, including final exams (held at the designated time). Such exams should be designed to challenge the *full range* of student ability levels (i.e., exams should include problems that will require effort even from the best students). The scores emerging from exams should reflect the inherent diversity in our student body. A typical course should include at least two examinations.
- c) All courses should minimize credit for assignments on which the majority of students habitually get As and Bs. These assignments should either be redesigned to incorporate more challenging elements, or their weighting in the final grade should be reduced.**
- d) Most courses should minimize credit for activities that involve minimal academic investment by the student. Points for “attendance” and “participation” should generally constitute a minor portion of the grade (5% might be appropriate, 15% generally would not). Where attendance is essential, instructors might consider penalizing absence rather than rewarding attendance. Points for “effort” should only be given where effort is directly observable and where differentiation is possible (i.e., it is possible to imagine a scenario where a student might get a D for effort).
- e) Most courses in the Communication Department should involve some evaluation of written work. Written assignments should be designed to challenge all students to think and write creatively, carefully and accurately.
- f) Most upper division courses should involve some independent research activities by the student, including work at the library, as part of a major assignment. No student should be able to graduate from our major without having written some significant research papers.
- g) All courses should include workloads for the students that roughly conform to university guidelines. For a 3 credit hour course, students should be assigned homework, readings, and the like that could be expected to take about 6 hours per week outside of class.
- h) Any and all forms of academic dishonesty should result in substantial consequences for students’ grades.

**Group activities often offer particular challenges and unique issues in the evaluation process. Nevertheless, through careful design of challenging activities, it is reasonable for grade distributions in group projects and activities to resemble those for other activities. In most cases, it is important for group projects to include a group grade and an individual grade (assessed either by instructor observation of group process, or peer evaluation). Evaluation of group projects can also involve grading of individual contributions (e.g., work that individuals are assigned to prepare for a group meeting is graded at the individual level).

In the spirit of encouraging variability, instructors may wish to examine the **standard deviation** of their grades on assignments. On a standard 100-point grading scale, any assignment or exam with a standard

deviation below 7 across multiple semesters might indicate that grades are in too narrow a range—either the assignment was too difficult and nobody could succeed, or it was too easy and everyone succeeded. Such assignments probably are not useful “data points” in achieving a final grade distribution that reflects the diversity of the students. [You can calculate a standard deviation in Excel using =*STDEV*(X1:X9) where X1 is the first cell of a set of grades, and X9 is the last cell].

B. Grading Norms for Undergraduate Classes

Most generally, it is important to remember that first-year students in SBS have GPAs of approximately 2.4. Our majors typically have GPAs of around 2.8. Below we present some grade distributions in various courses to illustrate the range of reasonable and acceptable grade distributions. Notable in these distributions is the relative scarcity of As (reflecting the idea that A represents *excellent* work), the relatively even distribution of Bs and Cs, and the presence of Ds and/or Es in all classes. These are the types of distributions that represent the aptitude and application of our undergraduate students and that utilize the full grading scale in the intended fashion. **We examine grading processes in all classes that exceed 30% A, 35% B, 35% D, or 25% E to understand the reasons for the distribution.** Much as we are concerned with excessively high grades in our classes, we also do not want to see excessive numbers of extremely low grades. We would like to see the entire scale being used.

EXEMPLAR GRADING DISTRIBUTIONS

	A	B	C	D	E	GPA
Lower Division Classes						
	10	22	36	19	13	2.0
	9	38	31	16	6	2.3
	20	39	27	9	5	2.6
	11	24	29	20	15	2.0
	10	38	31	16	6	2.3
Upper Division Classes						
	12	48	37	0	3	2.7
	18	32	40	6	3	2.6
	18	35	43	3	0	2.7
	17	51	24	6	1	2.8
	7	29	43	21	0	2.2
	10	22	36	19	13	2.0

Note: Numbers indicate grades assigned as a percentage of each entire class

The department’s goal here is **not** to start failing lots of our students. Our goal is to enhance our evaluation process by recognizing the *diversity* which exists in our student body. We would be *just* as concerned by a grading distribution which contained 90% D and E grades as we are by one that contains 90% A and B grades (however, the former is much less common). Our students are incredibly diverse, and the grades that they earn should reflect that diversity.

Appendix G: Awards

Department of Communication Yearly Graduate Student Awards & Criteria for Selection

Award winners are chosen by the Graduate Admissions Committee. Students are eligible to apply for and receive multiple awards. Award amounts vary year-to-year.

RESEARCH AWARD (\$500)

Awarded for excellence in research during the preceding academic year; based on performance in terms of journal publications, book chapters, conference presentations, grants, grant reports, and other relevant peer reviewed and/or academic publications. Alongside rate of publication during the review period, the publication outlet (e.g., quality of journal), order of authorship, and extent of contribution will be considered. To apply, please submit an updated CV (in pdf form) attached to an email requesting to be considered for the Research Award.

TEACHING AWARD (\$500)

Awarded for outstanding accomplishment in teaching during the preceding academic year. Award is given based on performance in terms of faculty evaluations of teaching, distribution of grades in classes, and quality of teaching portfolio. To be eligible for this award, students should submit an updated teaching portfolio (pdf format, or a link if the portfolio is web-based) attached to an email requesting that the student be considered for the teaching award.

CHRIS SEGRIN DISSERTATION AWARD *for students who are completing their dissertation (typically \$500-\$800)*

The Department of Communication Graduate Dissertation Award recognizes excellence in graduate student performance based on superior performance in scholarship, research activity, and promise of successful completion of dissertation work that will yield a meaningful contribution to the discipline. To be eligible, students must have successfully completed comprehensive exams, successfully defended dissertation proposal by October 1 of the semester that they accept the award, and be working in residence on their dissertation for the entire academic year. Student must be registered for at least 9 dissertation credits (total 18 units) during the semester in which they accept the award, and students must maintain good standing in the program. This is an endowed award, funded by the UofA Foundation. The application process is described on a subsequent page of this document.

KORY FLOYD GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS (typically \$500-\$800)

Award for a current Communication graduate student in good standing and with a respectable GPA for *research productivity* in the area of *interpersonal communication*. The winner is selected based on published and presented professional work – journal articles, convention papers, book chapters, etc. Students are eligible to receive the award multiple times during the course of their graduate program. Rate of publication during the review period, the publication outlet (e.g., quality of journal), order of authorship, and extent of contribution will be considered. To apply, submit a maximum one-page letter of application outlining accomplishments along with an updated CV (in pdf form). Reward recipients are asked to send a thank you letter to the donors.

ED DONNERSTEIN MEDIA RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP (typically \$500-\$800)

Funding awarded for research-related expenses for a research project on mass communication (broadly defined – many elements of new technology research, media-based health campaigns, etc., will be considered). This is an endowed award, funded by the UofA Foundation. Applicants must be full-time graduate students majoring in communication and pursuing research in media, with a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA or greater. The committee will evaluate each applicant based on academic merit, financial need, and/or other relevant measurable qualities. Award may also support travel for research. Award recipient(s) are not eligible for renewal consideration during the same academic year. However, they can reapply in subsequent years. Additional information regarding eligible research expenses and application procedures is below.

MARGARET HICKEY FELLOWSHIP (typically \$500-\$800) *for women graduate students in the field of*

communication

Awarded for outstanding academic performance in the classroom during the preceding academic year; based primarily on scholarship in terms of GPA. This is an endowed award, funded by the UofA Foundation. The criteria stipulate that the award recipient must be a female graduate student in the field of Communication. Applications are NOT required for this award.

JOSÉ SPRIGG FELLOWSHIP (typically \$500-1000)

This award is in honor to the memory of an alumnus of the Department of Communication MA program. José Sprigg touched many lives and was dedicated to service in many forms during his life. In his memory, this award will be given to one graduate student who demonstrates outstanding academic performance *and* who is also dedicated to service, broadly defined. Applicants must be an enrolled graduate student in the Department of Communication at the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and have a minimum of 3.25 GPA. To apply, the graduate student must self-nominate by writing a letter (1-2 pages) detailing their academic accomplishments *and* their commitment to service at any level: community, university/college, department, or discipline. Successful applicants will convincingly argue how their service informs their academic interests and/or vice versa. Finalists will be selected by the graduate committee, and the finalists' advisors will be asked to provide a letter to support the nomination. Please go to <https://financialaid.arizona.edu/ScholarshipUniverse> and create/submit your student profile. You will be matched to the José Sprigg Fellowship by being a COMM grad student with a minimum GPA of 3.25.

Important Notes For All Awards:

When asked to submit a CV, please make sure it is current, that all cites are in APA style, and that the "publications" sections include *only* work that is published or "in press." Work that is under review or in progress should be in a separate "work in progress" section (or similar). Conference presentations should get their own section.

Any files you submit should have your NAME as part of the FILE name (e.g., *SmithCV.pdf*, not *CV.pdf*). If you don't provide us with the information to make an informed decision on your candidacy for an award, you probably won't win. Everything should have a date on it.

Although only one award has a request that the recipient write a letter of thanks to the donor, the Department considers this practice a good one, especially when the donor is known.

Finally, not every award is given every year. If you don't receive an award in one year, try again the next!

ED DONNERSTEIN MEDIA RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP:

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Work for a thesis or dissertation is eligible, as is independent work, or collaborative work with a faculty member, so long as you (the student) are the lead on the project.

The application will require:

- A summary of your project. This should be a maximum 4 double-spaced pages (not including references) and should include a brief rationale for the project as well as some preliminary description of method, analysis, and expected deliverables (e.g., will you get a conference paper? a publication? out of the project).
- An itemized budget. The budget does not need to be in any specific format, but it should detail specific expenses related to doing the project, the actual costs, and the total amount being requested.
- A budget justification. This should be a 1-2 paragraph explanation which connects the project description and the budget (e.g., if you are studying a specific population and need to travel to reach that population, the budget justification would fill in the dots for why and how you will be traveling and how you estimated costs for travel).

This award does *not* fund salary or personal living expenses, and it can't pay your cell phone bill even if you are using your phone to call respondents. It doesn't cover travel to *conferences* (but it could cover travel to a *research site*). It can cover most other things that are legitimate expenses related to actually performing research. You can purchase equipment with the money; however, you would not OWN the equipment – it would become the property of the department at whatever point you completed the research study (note – software is not equipment). You can pay subjects (e.g., with gift cards) using this money. The maximum amount you may request is \$1000, but the actual reward amount may vary. Joint applications are allowed, i.e., two students collaborating on a project should submit a single joint application.

This application should be submitted as a single PDF email attachment with four sections (Project Summary, References, Budget, Budget Justification).

CHRIS SEGRIN DISSERTATION AWARD (PHD)

The Dissertation Award in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona recognizes excellence in graduate student performance. This award facilitates completion of the dissertation by aiding in research expenses. Note: Individuals may receive the dissertation award in addition to other awards (e.g., a media research dissertation might be eligible for both the dissertation award and the Donnerstein award).

There are three key criteria for selecting the successful applicant:

- (1) demonstrated excellence in scholarship and research activity
- (2) promise of successfully completing dissertation work that will yield a broad and meaningful contribution to the social scientific study of communication phenomena
- (3) specific expenses that will be incurred in performing the dissertation research (this should be clear in the proposal)

Eligibility

To apply, students must: (a) have advanced to Ph.D. candidacy by August 1 of the academic year in which the award is given (i.e., successful completion of comprehensive exams), (b) be working in residence on their dissertation for the entire academic year in which the award is given, and (c) be enrolled in 9 units of dissertation credits (total of 18 units). Students who meet these criteria are strongly urged to apply. Questions about eligibility should be addressed to the Graduate Coordinator. These eligibility requirements cannot be waived.

Application Process

A *completed* application must be received by the Graduate Coordinator via email attachment no later than the application deadline. The application should consist of the following; the first three should be submitted as a *single* PDF file arranged in the specified order; the letter can be delivered separately direct from the faculty recommender.

1. **A letter of application.** The letter of application should be no longer than **one** page (single spaced) and should address the applicant's progress to date in the graduate program (e.g., coursework completion, comprehensive exam status), and how the award will benefit the applicant.
2. **A dissertation proposal overview.** The proposal overview should be a narrative description of the dissertation and should not exceed 4 double-spaced pages (excluding references). The proposal should be organized into the following sections: (a) background and theoretical foundation of the proposed research, (b) significance of the research (implications for & contribution to the discipline), (c) design and procedures, and (d) time frame for the completion of the project. The proposal should be written in language that is accessible to a broad audience of communication scholars. A reference list should follow the proposal overview and does not count as part of the page limit.
3. **Budget itemization and justification.** The budget does not need to be in any specific format, but it should detail specific expenses related to doing the project, the actual costs, and the total amount being requested.
4. **Curriculum vitae.**
5. **One letter of recommendation.** One letter of endorsement from a faculty member in the Communication Department is required (this should be the dissertation advisor except under unusual circumstances). The recommender should comment on the student's academic progress to date, the merits of the dissertation, the likelihood of its completion during the subsequent year and the student's likelihood of gaining suitable employment following completion of the project. Applicants should provide a copy of the proposal to the recommender with enough time for the recommender to write a letter. Letters should be submitted directly to the graduate coordinator by the **application deadline**. **Email submission is encouraged.**