

Graduate Handbook

2026-2027

Updated: June 2026
University of Arizona Department of Communication

Abbreviations: DGS = Director of Graduate Studies (Jake); GPC = Graduate Program Coordinator (Marissa)
GSAS = Graduate Student Affairs and Services

Disclaimer: You are a student at the University of Arizona. Hence, you are subject to all 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 those policies here, but they are on the relevant websites. Before you do anything unusual (add classes late in the semester, protest a campus ordinance, tell a student to appeal a grade), 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	4
Concentrations of Study	4
Expected Learning Outcomes for UA Communication Graduate Programs:	4
Communication Faculty	4
II. GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH	5
Annual Research “Check-Up” Questions	5
Research Teams	6
III. ACCELERATED MASTER’S DEGREE	7
AMP Standards and Requirements	7
AMP Degree & Tuition Policies	7
AMP Plan of Study Requirements	8
Summary AMP Unit Distribution	8
AMP Timeline	8
AMP Comprehensive Exams	8
IV. MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE	9
MA Standards and Requirements	9
MA Comprehensive Exams (AMP and Non-Thesis Option)	10
MA Thesis	12
Satisfactory Academic Progress in the MA	14
MA Unit Distribution	14
MA Timeline	15
Advancing from MA to PhD	15
V. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY	16
PhD Policies and Progress	16
Satisfactory Academic Progress in the PhD	16
PhD Unit Distribution	16
PhD Timeline	17
Coursework: Plan of Study	17
PhD Minor in Communication (<i>not</i> for Comm students)	19
PhD Comprehensive Exams	19
Comprehensive Written Exams & Oral Defense (Comps)	19
Comprehensive Exam Committee	19
Examination Components	19
Procedures and Preparation for Written and Oral Comprehensive Questions	20
Timing and Administration of Written Comprehensive Examinations	22
Evaluation of Written Comprehensive Examination	22
Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Policies	22
Oral Defense of Comps	22
Dissertation	23
Dissertation Committee	23
Dissertation Format Options	24
Dissertation Proposal	24
Dissertation Proposal Meeting	24
Preregistration of Your Dissertation (Recommended but not required)	25
Final Oral Examination for the Dissertation	25
VI. HUMAN SUBJECTS POOL AND IRB	27
VII. TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS AND POLICIES	28
Research and Teaching Time Commitments	28
Teaching Efficiency	28

Grading Policies	29
Grade Inflation	29
Teaching Improvement	29
Loss of Teaching Position	29
Change of Status: Moving from Assistant to Associate Status	29
VIII. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND POLICIES	30
AGSC (Association of Graduate Students in Communication)	30
Artificial Intelligence Policy	30
Graduation Procedures for MA and PhD	30
Commencement	30
Graduate Student Funding	31
Academic Progress and Graduate Student Evaluation	31
Graduate Student Appeals (Failing to Make Satisfactory Academic Progress)	32
Academic Probation	33
Continuous Enrollment Policy	33
Leave of Absence Policy	34
Expectations for Working with your Advisor	34
Expectations for Working with your Committee	35
Be Nice; Be Professional	35
Disability Resource Center	35
IX. Appendix A: Course Rotation	36
X. Appendix B: Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty	37
XI. Appendix C: Proposal Defense Form	38
XII. Appendix D: Record for Comps Organization Meeting	39
XIII. Appendix E: PhD Comps Exam Format (An Example)	40
XIV. Appendix F: Teaching Evaluation Form	42
XV. Appendix G: Department of Communication Grading Policies	43
XVI. Appendix H: Annual Awards	46
XVII. Appendix I: MA Thesis Timeline	50
XVIII. Appendix J: PhD Dissertation Timeline	51
XIX. Appendix K: Expectations and Learning Outcomes for Research Team (Comm 900)	53

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. 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. The department offers annual awards (see Appendix H).

Concentrations of Study

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

- **Communication Processes:** Social influence and argumentation; Message effects; Nonverbal and discourse processes; Information processing; Deception; Conflict management; Social cognition and person perception; Relationship change; Stereotyping and identity; Communication and aging
- **Communication Contexts:** Health; Mass media; Social media; New technology; Small group; Political; Marital, family and close relationships; Intercultural/intergroup; Organizations; Communication networks
- **Communication Methods:** 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 and their associated empirical literatures in at least two areas of the discipline (i.e., interpersonal, mass, social influence, health). Develop hypotheses or research questions based on those theories.
4. **Teach:** Teach college-level communication classes in an expert and fully professional manner (this outcome does not apply to the AMP program).

Communication Faculty

See the department website for a current list of faculty members: <https://comm.arizona.edu/core-faculty>

People on this list can advise graduate students and be on graduate committees, *except* for those listed as having "Professor of Practice" or "Career-Track" roles.

II. GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Research is fundamental to your experience in our department (unless you are an AMP student). We expect MA students to have hands-on experience in primary communication research, and to contribute meaningfully to multiple conference papers and/or publications. We expect PhD students to develop an independent line of research in their specialty area, and to build a record of publication competitive with the best doctoral students in the discipline. Some of this work will happen in faculty-led research teams (see details below). But as you advance in the program, you should also be pursuing independent and collaborative projects outside of research team.

Annual Research “Check-Up” Questions

It’s worth asking yourself whether each year is bringing you closer to a research record that reflects your intellectual goals and passions, and that will help you on the job market. The questions below, tailored to your stage in the program, might be helpful. If you can answer “yes” to these questions, then pat yourself on the back and keep doing what you are doing. If your answer to these questions is “no,” talk with your advisor and the DGS about steps you can take. Maybe more important, look at the questions you’ll be asking yourself at the end of your *next* year in the program, and start doing the things that will get you to a “yes” on those questions.

At the end of your...	Ask yourself...
1 st year MA	• Have I contributed substantively to at least one data collection (e.g., in research team)? • Have I begun talking to my advisor about an MA thesis that could be publishable? • Can I use a theory to conceptualize a valid research study?
2 nd year MA	• Has my research team’s work from year 1 moved closer to submission for publication? • Have I contributed to additional primary research (data collection) this year? • Have I completed an MA thesis that will be readily converted into a first-authored conference and/or journal submission? • Have I identified potential research collaborations outside of research team (e.g., with other grads, other faculty)?
1 st year PhD	• Has my research team’s work from prior years moved closer to submission for publication? • Have I contributed to additional primary research this year? • Has my MA thesis moved closer to publication? • Am I developing a unique individual research identity and research pipeline, independent of my research team? • Could I develop a publishable research project without significant faculty oversight?
2 nd year PhD	• Has my research team’s work from prior years moved closer to submission for publication? • Have I contributed to additional primary research this year? • Can I articulate my own research identity clearly, and can I point to evidence for that identity on my CV or in my research pipeline? • Am I developing collaborative networks outside of my research team?
3 rd year PhD	• Has my research team’s work from prior years moved closer to submission for publication? • Have I contributed to additional primary research this year? • Is my research identity even more clearly evident from my CV than last year? • Am I developing collaborative networks outside of my research team?
4 th year PhD	• Has my research team’s work from prior years moved closer to submission for publication? • Have I completed a dissertation that will be readily converted into one or more articles?

Balance quality and quantity in your research activity. A rigorous and complex study that is published with you as the first author in a top journal is very valuable. It is worth spending significant time on that. But having multiple publications is also valuable to demonstrate that you are broadly research-active. Maintain research activity on multiple fronts; while one project is dormant (under review, in data collection), use that time to make progress on other projects. Talk openly and regularly with your advisor about which research team activities are likely to yield publications and about authorship on those projects. It is the responsibility of the *whole team* to keep lines of

communication about such issues open. Don't expect your research team to feed you all your publications—pursue your own independent work outside the research team. If you are concerned about your research productivity, talk to your advisor and/or the DGS.

Maintain a CV that reflects all your research activity, organized in three sections. (a) Publications (including all work that is accepted for publication, 'in press', etc.); (b) Work in Progress (including all projects that are underway and their current status – in development, data collection, data analysis, write-up, under review, R&R, etc.), and; (c) Conference Presentations. Update the CV regularly and make sure it is error free and in immaculate APA style.

Research Teams

Expectations for faculty and students and informal learning outcomes for research teams are laid out in [Appendix K](#) of this document. This is critical information and we encourage all faculty and students to be familiar with those expectations. Some basics here:

1. PhD students register for 1 unit of research team credit (Comm 900) until they **complete** comprehensive exams; after that, research team participation is optional. All MA students (non-AMP) register for 1 unit of Comm 900 during each semester in the program. Four Comm 900 units are required for both the MA and the PhD degree. Comm 900 is not required for the AMP.
2. Students must receive a grade of 'S' (superior), or 'P' (passing) to get COMM900 credit.
3. The DGS typically assigns students to their advisor's research team. However, you are free to discuss working on other research teams with the leaders of those teams. Consider your workload and multi-tasking capacity before joining multiple research teams: doing a good job on one team is better than doing a bad job on three.

Research team 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 papers and publications that result from their efforts (with all the rights and responsibilities attendant to author status); indeed, this is the goal of research team. If you are doing lots of work that is not leading to publications, discuss with your advisor and/or the DGS.

Typically, research team activities should average 3-6 hours per week, with flexibility according to students' other responsibilities. Participation in a research team does not remove the need to develop your own independent research (e.g., by translating proposals developed in classes into completed research projects). These independent projects are crucial to career prospects, the development of research skills, and your success in graduate school. Independent research work is not part of your research team responsibilities (i.e., doing independent research doesn't mean you don't need to work on research team!).

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.

III. 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 for the job market or admission to professional graduate programs (e.g., law school). The AMP is not 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 at least 75 undergraduate credit hours at the time of application; at least 90 credit hours of enrollment is required at the time of entry into the AMP. If the 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 do not count 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

Advisor: AMP students will be assigned a graduate advisor, typically the DGS, 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.
 - 3 units max of independent study OR 3 units of internship can count towards the 34 unit minimum. Either needs to be approved by the student's AMP advisor, and for an internship the student must write a paper analyzing how they applied communication theory/research to the internship.
 - Students may take up to 3 elective units outside the department upon advisor's approval.

AMP Plan of Study Requirements

All coursework must be approved by the advisor by the end of the second semester of the program (i.e., the end of the senior year). At this time, prepare a “Plan of Study” form and submit to 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 and do not count towards the degree. The Plan of Study form will be routed to the department’s GPC first, then to the student’s advisor and DGS for approval, before receiving final approval by GSAS. Once approved, 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 a new Plan of Study to Graduate College. Resources for navigating the GradPath system are available here: [GradPath | UArizona Graduate College](#)

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	9 credits	Grades of D or lower are not accepted Min overall grad GPA 3.0 / undergrad GPA 3.3
500: Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication 561: Research Methods I 571: Research Methods II		
Theory Courses (609/610/620/669; one is offered per semester)	6 credits	
Communication Electives (3 credits can be from outside of Comm; 3 credits can be an internship or independent study)	18 credits	
Comprehensive Exam Prep (Comm 599)	1 credit	
TOTAL	34	

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 towards the undergraduate degree and are taken during the senior year.

AMP Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive exams for the AMP follow the same procedures as those for non-thesis MA students. See the [MA Comprehensive Exams](#) section below.

IV. MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

The MA degree offers training in communication theory and research that serves as a foundation for various career objectives. MA students 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) is designed to provide students with the communication-based background necessary for advanced professional performance in such areas as business, media, government, or teaching at the community college level. This option culminates in a final written and oral comprehensive exam.

MA Standards and Requirements

Advisor: Faculty must have at least a .51 appointment in Communication and be tenure-stream (*not* professors of practice) to advise a MA thesis. Faculty with at least .49 FTE in Comm or with an adjunct or joint appointment in Comm may *co*-advise a Comm thesis if the other co-advisor has at least a .51 appointment in Comm. Advisors may be changed based on discussion between the student, the current advisor, and the potential future advisor.

Coursework and Forms: MA students electing either the thesis or non-thesis route must successfully complete 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 will need to prepare a **"Plan of Study"** form and submit it to 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 is routed to various approvers; once approved by all parties, the student receives a notification from GSAS. If changes occur after the it has been submitted and approved, you must submit a new Plan of Study to the Graduate College. Resources for navigating GradPath are here: [GradPath | UArizona Graduate College](#). After the Plan of Study is approved and before you defend your thesis or comprehensive exams, a **"Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form"** form must be submitted via GradPath. This should occur within the first three weeks of Fall semester in the student's 2nd year.

MA Course Requirements

- 1) Core Courses: Complete all *three* of the following.
 - a) 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication
 - b) 561: Research Methodologies I
 - c) 571: Research Methodologies II
- 2) Theory Seminars: Complete *two* of the following (additional theory courses count as electives).
 - a) 609: Mass Communication Theory
 - b) 610: Interpersonal Theory
 - c) 620: Theories of Social Influence
 - d) 669: Health Communication Theory
- 3) Research Team: All MA students participate on a research team (COMM 900) for one credit per semester. Exactly 4 research team credits are required for the degree.
- 4) Electives: Remaining 15 units are fulfilled by electives (as approved by the advisor / committee).
 - a) Only 3 units of independent study can count toward the degree.
 - b) 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.
 - c) Students may take up to 3 elective units outside of the department.
 - d) Additional electives may be taken beyond the minimum degree requirement (and can count towards the PhD); these should *not* be on the plan of study.

MA Comprehensive Exams (AMP and Non-Thesis Option)

AMP and non-thesis MA students will take common comprehensive exams during a scheduled examination period. The comprehensive exams include both a written and an oral portion. The comprehensive examination committee is the department graduate committee and (at the graduate committee's discretion) other outside members. The members of the committee must be members of the graduate faculty (see [Appendix B](#) for details on this).

After the Plan of Study is approved and before the student defends comprehensive exams, a "Master's/ Specialist Committee Appointment Form" must be submitted via GradPath. This should occur in 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 DGS and then 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 DGS. Students should consult with the DGS if they are experiencing problems or are seeking an alternative advisor. Changes in committee composition will require students to submit a new Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form to the Graduate College.

Written exams

- In the beginning of the second semester of the student's second year, they submit their preferences for the topics they would like to cover on the exams. In all cases, the comprehensive exams will include materials from 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.
- Exams are written over a 2-week period in a designated room in COMM with a departmental laptop and administered by the GPC in most cases.
- All students take their written exams at the same time.
- Each exam is 2 hours. The comps committee selects questions from an existing test bank. Students are 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 to the exam.
- The GPC distributes completed exams to the MA comps committee.
- To prepare for the written exam, students study readings, notes, and coursework in relevant 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 are evaluated pass/fail by the MA comps committee. Disagreements over grades are settled by the committee. The committee sends their evaluations to the student's advisor and the GPC within two business weeks after the last exam. The student is 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 that area. Comps committee members will return a grade on a re-examination no later than two weeks after the completion of the exam. Results of the second examination are final.
- Committee members' copies of the written exams are not given to the student.

Written Exam	Student Receives Question	In-house Exam Date
Research Methods/Stats	1 st Mon. after Spring Recess	1 st Wed. after Spring Recess
Theory	1 st Fri. after Spring Recess	2 nd Mon. after Spring Recess
Elective	2 nd Wed. after Spring Recess	2 nd Fri. after Spring Recess

Oral Exam

- If the student passes the written exams, the oral exam takes place at least 3 weeks after written exams end. All students and the comps committee will meet for orals on one day.

- The oral exam will take no more than 60 minutes.
- Students are permitted to refer to their written exams prior to and during the oral exam.
- The exam includes specific, follow-up questions about all areas of the written exams, as well as opportunities for broader questions reflecting on the entire graduate program.
- Oral exams are comprehensive. Students might be asked to explain or expand an answer provided in the written exams, but will also be asked new questions in the core areas to determine mastery.
- After the oral exam, the comps committee discusses and tells the student the result (P/F).
- In the event of a failing grade on the oral exam, the examining committee votes on whether to have a re-examination or not (the latter decision terminates the student's degree). If there is a second oral exam, it follows the same procedures as the first, except that results of the second examination are final.
- Upon the 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 an 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 GPC, DGS, and graduate committee will schedule the oral defense at least three weeks after the written exams are submitted.
4. Your committee chair (usually the DGS) 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 GPC 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 GPC 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 GPC 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.

MA Thesis

A handy timeline for writing a successful (and on-time) MA thesis is in [Appendix I](#).

MA Committee

The MA committee consists of the advisor and two additional faculty members from the department. All members of the thesis committee must be members of the graduate faculty; see [Appendix B](#). 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 DGS. Students should consult with the DGS if they are experiencing problems or seeking an alternative advisor. Changes in committee composition require student to submit a new Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form.

Proposal

The thesis is a rigorous, empirical research project that addresses an important question in communication. The student must successfully defend a thesis proposal before data collection can begin. The proposal normally includes: (a) Introduction/ Literature Review, (b) Hypotheses, and (c) Method and Analysis plan, (d) Complete APA references, and (e) full appendices of materials (questionnaires, stimuli), etc.. Students should defend the proposal in the fall of their second year in the MA program, which means work on it should begin in earnest the previous summer. The proposal must be submitted to the committee a minimum of *two weeks* before the requested defense date. The "Proposal Defense Form" ([Appendix C](#)) must be signed by the student and all committee members and submitted to the GPC immediately following the proposal defense. Please refer to the following for policies, sample pages, formatting guides, and archiving instructions: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses>. 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. A thesis involving human subjects must be approved by the IRB before **any** data collection occurs.

Preregistration of the Thesis (Not required but recommended)

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](#). Do this *after* your proposal defense, when all the details are finalized, and before you start collecting data. Preregistering your study will impress editors / reviewers if you plan to publish your thesis research. It is also an excellent habit to establish early on in your research career because preregistration will increasingly be the norm for publication in the near term. Individual committees can require preregistration. Currently, the grad committee is *not requiring* preregistration, but we are *recommending* it.

Final Thesis & Scheduling the Defense

Once the thesis is approved by the advisor, you are ready to defend in front of your committee. The document you distribute to the committee should be a polished piece of work; don't give your committee a draft! Provide a final copy of the thesis to all committee members at least three weeks prior to the defense; do not try to schedule your defense until the proposal is sent to the committee. Consult with your advisor about how to prepare for the defense. Consult your committee on whether the defense will begin with a brief presentation (common but not required).

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

The thesis defense has 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 an 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's your responsibility to send an email (and doodle poll or similar) to your committee members to get the defense scheduled. The defense should be scheduled for two hours and must occur no sooner than two weeks after the proposal is submitted. Let the GPC 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 of 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>
7. Keep detailed notes of the feedback you are getting from your committee members. You will need these for any revisions.

After the defense:

8. 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 GPC.
9. 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.

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/during the defense:
 2. Schedule your defense. It is your responsibility to send an email to your committee members to get the defense scheduled (e.g., via Doodle poll). The defense should occur at least three weeks after the thesis is submitted to them. This is a tentative date because the defense only happens if the committee agrees that the written document is ready to defend. Tell the GPC the date.
 3. Check your GradPath forms are done (Responsible Conduct of Research form, Plan of Study, and Appointment of MA Committee form submitted and approved).
 4. Approximately a 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.
 6. At the defense, keep detailed notes of the feedback you are getting from your committee members (your advisor might assist with this). You will need these for any revisions.
- After the defense:
7. The GPC will email a Qualtrics Survey called Quality of Thesis/Dissertation form to your committee for them to complete.
 8. 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.
 9. Your thesis should have a signature page. Fill in your name and thesis title. Then, send the signature page to the GPC, who will route it to your committee members via Adobe Sign for their signature. [Sample Pages | UArizona Graduate College](#)
 10. 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>
 11. Confirm with the GPC that they submitted your last GradPath form: The Master's Completion Form.

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 the 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 it is not defended by the first week after the start of the spring semester (barring extenuating circumstances), the student will be scheduled for comprehensive exams. The student's advisor can appeal to the DGS 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 is 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. 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

	THESIS	NON-THESIS
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

MA Timeline

Semester	Register for...	Credits	Other activities
1	500, 561, 1 unit of Research Team (900)	7	-
2	571, 1 required theory course, 1 elective, 1 unit of research team	10	Select/confirm advisor and committee members; Thesis option: Discuss thesis plans with advisor; develop writing goals for summer; you need to get the bulk of the proposal writing done in the <u>summer</u> !!
3	2 electives, 1 required theory course, 1 unit of research team	10	Submit approved "Plan of Study" form via GradPath Submit "Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment" form to Graduate College via GradPath Thesis option: Finalize proposal, submit to committee, have proposal meeting, submit IRB paperwork; Begin data collection now or first thing in January Non-thesis option: Submit selections for comps exams (theory and elective) to grad program coordinator
4	Thesis: 1 elective, 3 thesis units, 1 unit research team Non-thesis: 2 electives, 1 unit of Research Team	7	Thesis: Complete data collection, analysis; Write thesis, check on filing deadlines, submit thesis to committee, schedule defense, submit to grad college Non-thesis: Written and oral comprehensive exams; Once defended, program coordinator notifies Graduate College of Completion of Degree Requirements
	Total =	34	

Advancing from MA to PhD

Admission into the PhD program in the Department of Communication is not automatic upon successful completion of the MA degree. MA students wishing to pursue a PhD in the department must apply with the same process and deadlines as other applicants. Students who will complete their MA degree in the fall semester should consult with the department's GPC and/or DGS 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 GPC for clarification on required submissions). The graduate committee evaluates applications and consults with the student's advisor prior to rendering a decision. 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 the decision until the successful completion of the MA degree. Admission into the PhD program is contingent upon successful completion of the MA degree, including submission of a complete and final MA thesis to the department (admission to the PhD is unlikely for a student writing MA comps). The decision to admit will be based on the merits of the application and the applicant's ranking relative to other applicants.

Students cannot teach in the summer (as GTAs) if they are not pre-enrolled full-time in the fall semester. Thus, 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 to receive summer teaching assistantships.

V. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The PhD in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona is principally a research degree. The PhD aims to prepare students to be well-rounded scholars and researchers with the skills and ability to succeed in research careers. PhD Students will, at minimum, master the subject matter in at least two substantive areas (their major and minor) in addition to demonstrating methodological proficiency. Students will develop a strong understanding of research practices, internalize sound scholarly values, and develop a record of published research and conference presentations. Most students will receive training and experience in teaching. Typically, the department does not accept PhD students on a part-time basis. 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. Most of the student's time is devoted to coursework, advanced scholarship, instruction, research, and preparation of the dissertation.

PhD Policies and Progress

All students must have a faculty advisor with at least a .51 appointment in Communication and who is a member of the graduate faculty in communication. See [Appendix B](#) for Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty for the Graduate Programs in Communication. See later sections for committee details.

Satisfactory Academic Progress in the PhD

Benchmarks for satisfactory academic progress in the PhD:

- Coursework typically completed at the end of the 5th semester and no later than the end of the 6th semester (see timeline below).
- Students required to hold their Comprehensive Exams planning meeting with their major committee members by October 15 of their 5th semester.
- Comps successfully completed during the 6th semester.
- Dissertation proposal 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](#).
- Annually, students are assessed by the faculty regarding their research, teaching, and whether the student has maintained appropriate standards of professional and collegial behavior.

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 grad committee acting in consultation with the department head.

PhD Unit Distribution

	1 MINOR	2 MINORS
A Departmental core: 500, 561, 571 and two of the required theory seminars (609, 610, 620, 669) <i>[If you completed these courses in our MA, you don't need to repeat them, but <u>must</u> replace the units by taking other elective/theory classes]</i>	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 min.	18
TOTAL	64-70	73-85

PhD Timeline

Semester	Activity
1	500*, 561* (additional elective or theory course may be taken) - Research Team*** (900)
2	571*, 1 required theory course, 1 COMM elective - Research Team*** (900) - Select an advisor if not already decided; discuss minor with the advisor
3	1 required theory course (or department elective), 1 minor** course, 1 research tool - Research Team*** (900) - Meet with the advisor to discuss committee composition - Meet with minor advisor to understand minor coursework expectations
4	1 minor course, 1 research tool, 1 department elective (or required theory course) - Research Team*** (900) - Submit the “Plan of Study” form through GradPath for approval
5	1 department elective, remaining courses (e.g., minor, electives) - Research Team*** (900) - Submit: “Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form” through GradPath - Meet with major committee about comprehensive exams; begin studying - Meet with minor advisor to understand comps structure for minor - While studying, plan your dissertation; these are complementary activities
6	- Remaining courses (e.g., minor, electives) - Research Team*** (900) - Complete: Written comprehensive exams at the beginning 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: “Proposal Defense Form” to the GPC - Submit: Human subjects paperwork
7	9 units of Dissertation: Comm 920 (18 total units are required and must be on the Plan of Study) - Conduct doctoral research
8	9 units of Dissertation: Comm 920 - Complete doctoral dissertation - Submit: Dissertation to the committee at least three weeks before the expected defense date - Submit: “Announcement of Final Defense” form to the Graduate College, <i>10 business days before</i> the date of the final defense.

*Replace core courses with electives if they were completed during the MA

**Units for minors are determined by the minor department (minimum of 9); total hours to graduate vary 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).

Coursework: Plan of Study

After discussion with their advisor, the student will prepare a plan of study. The student will declare one or more areas of specialization and 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 will prepare a

“Plan of Study” form and submit it to 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 is routed to the department’s GPC first, then to the student’s minor advisor, major advisor, and DGS for approval, before receiving final approval by the Grad College. Once approved, the student receives a notification email. 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 is the student’s contract and can only be changed by approval of the committee. 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](#).

Major:

A minimum GPA 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, passing each with a grade of B or better. There is only one opportunity to retake a class. Students who have completed the core as part of their MA program must replace these units with electives.
 - 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 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 used 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 DGS 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.

Minor(s):

Students must have 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 coursework.

PhD Minor in Communication (*not* for Comm students)

PhD students majoring in Communication cannot minor in Communication. Students who are NOT majoring in Communication and 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 their 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 coursework).

PhD Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive Written Exams & Oral Defense (Comps)

Typically in the 6th semester, students will take comprehensive exams over the major and minor fields. The written major is run entirely in COMM (the written minor is run entirely in the minor department). Only at the oral do the two come together: your minor advisor must attend the oral along with the entire major committee.

Comprehensive Exam Committee

In consultation with the advisor, the student selects a committee for comprehensive exams. The committee should consist of three committee members (including the advisor) from the graduate faculty in the Comm Department. The minor advisor(s) must be from the graduate faculty but otherwise the minor members are determined by discussion between the student and the minor department. Only members of the graduate faculty can give and grade comp exams (see [Appendix B](#)). Having additional committee members beyond the required number is *discouraged*.

After the Plan of Study is approved and before the student defends comprehensive exams, a "Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form" (CECAF) must be submitted to the Graduate College through GradPath. This should occur no later than the first three weeks of your Year 3 fall semester. This form is routed to the COMM GPC, minor advisor, major advisor, and DGS before receiving final approval from GSAS. Once the paperwork has been approved, changes in the committee require approval of the advisor, or a majority of the committee and the DGS. Students should consult with the DGS if they are experiencing problems or are seeking a new advisor. If changes occur after the CECAF form has been submitted and approved, a new CECAF must be submitted.

Examination Components

Written comps cover the areas listed below. Exams in the major are taken in a department room with a department computer. The exams are administered by the GPC.

- 6 hours theory (2 areas selected from interpersonal, health, social influence, mass, 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: The minor portion of the written exam, including content and timing, is determined by the minor department and scheduled directly with the minor department. Students must connect with their minor advisor EARLY to establish the procedures for this. If the minor advisor needs assistance in determining the format of the exam, ask them to consult with the *THEIR* DGS, not the comm DGS.

COMM 609: Media Theory: 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)	COMM 610: Interpersonal Theory: 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, Family Systems Theory , Self-Determination Theory , Affection Exchange Theory, Gottman’s Cascade Model , Theories of Social Cognition (e.g., Balance Theory, Attribution Theory), Communication Privacy Management , Theory of Resilience and Relational Load
COMM 620: Social Influence: Expectancy-Value Theories, Theory of Reasoned Action / Planned Behavior, Theories of Attitude Change, Social Judgment Theory, Attitude Accessibility Theory, 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	COMM 669: Health Communication: Culture and Health, Culturally Competent Communication Model, Feminist Standpoint Theory, Interpersonal & Health, 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
Comm 561 (Methods): 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 (Statistics): 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 and interpreting 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

Procedures and Preparation for Written and Oral Comprehensive Questions

To prepare for written comprehensive exams, students meet once with their MAJOR committee to identify the courses/topics that will be covered in the examination. *The minor committee member does not attend this meeting.*

Students should hold this meeting early in Fall of the third year. If you are doing a systematic review (see below), this meeting is the time for you to pitch your plan for the study, including research question(s) and the scope of the study. You should prepare a short proposal for the systematic review (1-2 pages) for the committee to review at that time.

During this meeting, you will organize your committee members' question-writing responsibilities. You might discuss what will be highlighted on each exam, and also what might not be covered on each exam, but this is ultimately up to the discretion of each committee member. You must keep notes at this meeting and record them on the template from [Appendix D](#). Send this to your major committee members and the GPC immediately after the meeting. The GPC will send this information to committee members when requesting exam questions.

Following this committee meeting, comps committee members will not convey additional information regarding the content of exam questions to the student; additional meetings are not permitted. Committee members will not meet to discuss study tips, grading plans, or the elements of a model answer. Comps preparation is an intellectual adventure for you on your own. Relish that adventure and don't seek to supplement it by meeting repeatedly with faculty. If 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, the student must have the approval of their committee to have a later conversation about the specific exam with the relevant committee member.

Studying for comps should not be a full time job. You have other research to accomplish and a dissertation proposal to write. Integrate those tasks – writing the dissertation proposal should help you prepare for your specialty and methods comps, for instance.

Theory and Methods Exams:

For the theory and methods exams, the syllabi for the identified classes are a good 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 level of a professional handbook chapter or a 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 questions. Good answers on comps should reflect broad knowledge of the area and critical thinking about that content. See [Appendix E](#) for a sample comprehensive exam question format.

Specialty Exam

Students have a choice for their specialty exam. They can choose to be examined over an elective, or a combination of elective classes that are relevant to their dissertation. Typically, students who take this approach will craft a reading list that is approved by the committee. They will study for the exam like they would for the theory/methods exams and 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 their dissertation topic. A systematic review is a lit review 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 the systematic review should be publishable based on these guidelines (e.g., these guidelines require at least one additional independent coder to contribute to the coding of the systematic review.)

The systematic review is graded pass/fail, with the major criterion for passing being whether it is publishable according to PRISMA guidelines. The systematic review is a good option for students who know the topic of their dissertation, and who are planning a multi-study dissertation. In that case, the systematic review can be one of the studies in their dissertation. More resources on systematic reviews, including a recording of a workshop given by Dr. Chris Segrin, are here: <https://bit.ly/3SfwXfT>

Timing and Administration of Written Comprehensive Examinations

Students should take their written exams no later than their third year. Ideally, students will schedule their exams at the *beginning* of the spring semester. The written exams are held over a period of three weeks and scheduled in consultation with the GPC. 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 must be scheduled within the same semester in which the written exams were taken, but no earlier than *three weeks* after completing the written portion. Exams are closed-book, and each consists of ~1-3 questions (often with sub-questions) to be completed in 3-hours. The student's committee writes the questions for the exams. Students do not have advance knowledge of the questions. Students submit their completed exams to the GPC, who sends them to the committee.

Evaluation of Written Comprehensive Examination

Written exams are graded by the committee on a pass/fail basis. Disagreements are settled by committee discussion. The committee must supply their evaluations to the student's advisor and to the GPC, 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. The written minor exam is graded by the minor advisor. Written exams are kept on file for one year after the written and oral (if it occurs) have been completed. Procedures following written exam evaluations depend on the committee's decision, as follows:

Pass: If the student passes all written major and minor comprehensive exams and advances to the oral exam, the student can meet *once* with their advisor to discuss preparation for the oral exam. At this time, the advisor might convey concerns identified by committee members regarding the student's written answers, if any have been expressed. Committee members can express these concerns to the advisor, but are not required to do so prior to the oral. See "Oral Defense of Comps" below.

If there are substantial concerns about the written exams: At the committee's discretion, if an answer contains substantial areas of concern but does *not* merit outright failure, the student may be permitted to rewrite all or a portion of that exam within the same semester. The committee would consider that rewrite as supplemental information to the original written exams and render a P/F vote on the entire package (original exam + supplemental rewrite) and proceed accordingly to oral or to a formal rewrite (see next paragraph).

Fail: Failure in any area requires re-examination on new questions in the area. This rewrite must occur no sooner than four months but no later than one year after the original test. Comps committee members return a P/F 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.

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Policies

In the Communication Department, comprehensive examinations require the student to demonstrate mastery of the major theories and methods of inquiry; to be able to make informed criticisms 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.

Oral Defense of Comps

Upon completing the written major *and* minor written exams, students will schedule, at their committee's convenience, a *tentative* date for their oral defense. The entire major AND minor committee assembles for the oral – so the committee must include at least four committee members (*at least* three from the major and *at least* one from the minor). The defense should be scheduled for two hours, must occur in the same semester as the exams were written, and can occur *no sooner* than 3 weeks following completion of the written exams. The candidate must prepare the "Announcement of Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy" form (available through UACCESS Student Center) and submit it via GradPath for approval. This form is routed to the department's GPC first, then to student's minor advisor, major advisor, and DGS for approval. Once approved, the committee chair will

receive a notification email from the Graduate College requesting submission of exam results at the end of the defense. Oral defenses are conducted in accordance with Graduate College regulations. If essential the oral can occur via video conference, but we encourage in-person meetings wherever possible. The oral is graded P/F.

Pass: The Graduate College advances student to candidacy and bills the student for candidacy. Students must expeditiously submit the “Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form” to the Graduate College and move *swiftly* to defending their dissertation proposal which they have been writing while studying for comps.

Fail: The examining committee can either (a) recommend re-examination on the same written exams; the re-exam must be at least four months after the original oral, or (b) vote not to recommend a re-examination. The latter decision terminates the student’s program of study.

So You’re Planning a PhD Comps Oral 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. Send an email to your committee members (major *and* minor) to get the defense scheduled. Most students use online tools (e.g., When2meet) to do this. The defense is scheduled for two hours and occurs 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.
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 on the written exams (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.
6. Study your written exams carefully and critically; know how to address any errors that you spot (contact the grad program coordinator for a copy of your written exams if you don’t have them). **You *can* refer to your written exams prior to *and* during the oral exam.**

After the defense:

7. The GPC will distribute the “Comprehensive Exam Rating Form” to the committee, who will all complete the form.
8. The committee chair will tell you the results of your comprehensive exams (i.e., Pass/Fail). If you need to have another oral defense, your committee will communicate next steps.
9. Your advisor must enter in the result of the exam via the Announcement of Comprehensive Exams form on GradPath. You should check that and remind them about it!

Dissertation

A handy timeline for a successful (and on-time) dissertation is in [Appendix J](#). Start EARLY!!!!

Dissertation Committee

The doctoral dissertation committee must contain three faculty members who are graduate faculty in the Department of Communication (at least .51 FTE). It need not be the same group as your comps committee. Additional members are permitted but this practice is discouraged – faculty are busy and there is little to be gained by making four of them read your dissertation. The minor advisor is typically not involved from here on out, but if they remain on the committee they must be full participants (e.g., they must attend the proposal meeting and final defense).

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, along with a data analysis plan. 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, they 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

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 defense should occur during the 5th or 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, offer an analysis plan, and 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. Once completed, the form is submitted to the GPC immediately after the proposal defense. This is an internal form and 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>). Students should be working on the dissertation proposal while they are preparing for comps, and should have the proposal defense soon after comps.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

Students should be working on their dissertation proposal while they are studying for comprehensive exams. This will involve exchanging multiple drafts with their advisor. Once the advisor approves the dissertation proposal, the student should schedule a **2-hour** dissertation proposal meeting no sooner than two weeks after the committee gets the written proposal. Once the proposal is approved, students seek IRB approval and proceed with gathering data, and writing the final document. 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. Send a doodle poll/ when2meet to your committee. The defense should be scheduled for two hours and should occur at least two weeks after the proposal is submitted.
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.
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 and set a date by which the dissertation will be defended. This information is reported on the Proposal Defense form before submitting it to the GPC.
8. Tell the grad program coordinator that you are done with your proposal and send them your dissertation title. They will initiate the Prospectus Approval Form on GradPath.
9. Complete your revisions. Do this right away while the committee's recommendations are fresh in your mind.

Preregistration of Your Dissertation (Recommended but not required)

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. Preregistering your study will help it get published and is an excellent habit to establish early in your research career. It is likely that preregistration will be the norm for publication in the future. Committees or advisors have the discretion to require preregistration.

Final Oral Examination for the Dissertation

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 is submitted electronically to the full committee for review. The document you distribute to the committee should be a polished piece of work; don't give your committee a draft! When submitting the dissertation to the committee, the student should schedule an oral defense a minimum of three (3) weeks later at the committee's convenience. Do not attempt to schedule the defense date before submitting the final document to the committee. 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.

All members of the dissertation committee must attend the final oral defense. The meeting should be scheduled for two hours. Afterwards, the Chair completes and submits the Results of Final Oral Defense form through the link provided by the Graduate College. The student must obtain the signatures of their doctoral committee on p. 2 of the dissertation. Send the form to the GPC, and they will route it for electronic signatures. Once you receive the signed form, replace page 2 of your dissertation with that form before submitting the final document to the Grad College.

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. You must 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 (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). Submit your Announcement of Final Oral Defense form.
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/After the defense:

6. Working with your advisor, take careful notes of your committee's feedback.
7. The Grad 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.
8. 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.
9. Your advisor enters results of the defense on the Results of Final Oral Defense form in GradPath.
10. Your dissertation should have a signature page. Fill in your name and title. Then, send the signature page to the GPC, who will route it to your committee members via Adobe Sign for their signature. [Sample Pages | UArizona Graduate College](#)
11. 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>

VI. HUMAN SUBJECTS POOL AND IRB

IRB and SONA information is here: <https://bit.ly/4fZTJiY>

Before doing any human subjects research or submitting to IRB, read the IRB section of that document carefully.

Before using COMM students for research, read the SONA sections of that document carefully.

Failure to follow SONA instructions may jeopardize your future access to the subject pool.

Failure to follow IRB instructions could jeopardize your ability to do research, period.

ALL RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS (whether with SONA or not) MUST HAVE IRB APPROVAL!!!

VII. 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 (DUS). Assignments are made by consultation between the Department Head, DUS, and DGS, based on 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 are assigned a teaching supervisor, who monitors and evaluates performance each semester. The evaluation form can be found in [Appendix F](#). Fourth-year PhD students who have passed comps do not require a teaching supervisor.

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

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 online, OR
4. Two sections of a multi-section course, where sections meet twice per week in person or online, 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. To teach in the summer, GTAs must be enrolled in 6 hours *in the upcoming fall*. These 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.

All summer classes are online, and 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 of hours per day to work on the class, hold office hours, and respond to students. You may not go on an extended vacation to a remote location during your 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 will result in not getting teaching assignments in subsequent summers.

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. .50 appointments have expectations of up to 20 hours work per week.
2. However, there is natural variation in teaching appointments both within semesters and between courses. 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.

Teaching Efficiency

As a graduate teacher, you have many demands on your time beyond your teaching obligations. And no matter what your career goals, if teaching is a part of them you will need to balance the time you spend on any one class (or student) with your responsibilities to your other classes/students, research activities, graduate mentoring, service, administration, etc. As such, we encourage you to set appropriate boundaries in the time you devote to your teaching, both for your current success and your future career satisfaction. For example:

- A) Instead of investing lots of time and energy into making study guides, set aside class time for students to ask substance-based questions regarding your exam. Make your students do the work whenever possible. It's not just good for protecting your time, it will make them better students.
- B) Balance the time you spend grading an assignment with how much time you expect students to spend completing it. If you are spending more time grading than the student did completing the assignment, you should rethink your approach.
- C) Set clear expectations and boundaries for your students regarding their communication with you. This might include setting times when they can expect to hear from you, setting firm rules about what you expect from them when they email, and/or telling students who show up outside of office hours to set an appointment.

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

Please see [Appendix G](#) for the department policy on grade inflation. Be aware of your grade distributions throughout the semester and avoid situations where the vast majority of students are getting As and Bs (or indeed Ds and Es, although that situation is rarer!).

Teaching Improvement

There are resources available to assist you in developing your skills as a teacher. Please see the university teaching center: <https://ucatt.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. Certain 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 dependent on our budget. 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

MA students are hired as Graduate Assistants, while PhD students are hired as Graduate Associates. It is Graduate College policy that the change in status from assistant to associate will only occur at semester end/beginning. MA students who are admitted to the PhD but have not completed all aspects of their degree will be hired at the Assistant level until the degree is complete.

VIII. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND POLICIES

AGSC (Association of Graduate Students in Communication)

All MA and PhD students are AGSC members. AGSC acts as a liaison between the students and the faculty and university; AGSC members serve on departmental and college committees as a voice for all grads. In addition, AGSC arranges social and academic events. All positions are elected.

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. Claiming ignorance of a faculty member's rules will not be considered a valid reason for any potential violations.

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) may be used for generating materials, 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 strictly 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. 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 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 names on the diploma.
2. Diplomas are mailed ~2 weeks after the degree is posted. Inquiries about orders/mailing of diplomas go to GSAS, 621-3484. Diplomas aren't mailed to campus addresses.
3. If the completion date on your Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form changes, notify GSAS 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. You do not have to attend any ceremony. If you are planning on attending the SBS ceremony and would like your advisor to be there, let them and the GPC know at least a month in advance. Questions about the ceremonies themselves should be directed to the SBS Dean's Office / the Graduate College. Commencement dates, 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

Points below 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 begins. (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 never 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. This is not part of your 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. Most 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 DGS, 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 are 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 an 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 (within 1 year) will be regarded as a lack of satisfactory academic progress. Incomplete grades change automatically to a failing grade (‘E’) after a specific period of time (typically one year) unless the student has petitioned to extend the incomplete and the petition is granted.
4. All courses to be counted toward the minimum hours requirements must carry a grade of A or B (regular classes), or P or S (SPF graded courses).
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., plagiarism, cheating, or 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 a graduate student.
9. For doctoral students to be considered in good academic standing and making satisfactory academic progress, students must pass their comprehensive exams by the end of the 6th semester (3rd year).
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 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.

At the end of the spring semester, the faculty formally review the progress of all graduate students. Additional reviews are scheduled as necessary. Students' 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. Typically, this will come in the form of the annual evaluation letter, but it might occur at any time during the year. The written notification will include a clear statement of what they must do and a date by which such actions must be completed.

Graduate Student Appeals (Failing to Make Satisfactory Academic Progress)

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, but other timing is possible). Dismissal would typically occur after the student has received written notification that they are not in good academic standing, and then fails to meet the criteria laid out in that letter. Students will be given the opportunity to internally appeal dismissal decisions by doing the following:

- Submit a written appeal to the DGS and the advisor. This must occur within 30 days of the written notification of dismissal. If, after reviewing the appeal, the DGS and advisor agree, they can reverse the dismissal decision upon the completion of appropriate conditions.
- In cases in which the DGS and advisor don't agree or seek further consultation, a meeting between the student, advisor, DGS, and graduate committee will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. 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.
- If 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 with a cumulative GPA 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 DGS.

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. We encourage immediate intervention and closer mentoring of students to enhance retention and probability of graduation. Students 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 GSAS 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 GPC 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 GPC 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 don't maintain continuous enrollment and fail to file timely requests for a LOA, are automatically discontinued from their programs. If the student wishes to be reconsidered for the program, they are 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 (e.g., when a traumatic medical event or natural disaster prevents a student from applying a priori). 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 coursework elsewhere, research, fieldwork, internships, professional development) are handled on a case-by-case basis by the 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 (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. You should also have a conversation with your advisor about reasonable turnaround times for reviewing your work so that clear expectations/boundaries are set. If you feel that your advisor is taking an excessive amount of time to provide you feedback on a document than what you initially discussed, you should consult with them, the DGS, 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 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.

Students should not plan on a summer/winter defense for their comps or proposals—these defenses must wait until the next semester. Most committees will entertain the idea of having a defense for a dissertation or thesis defense in the summer. However, students must arrange this early and expect that their committee will have limited availability.

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 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. 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.

University of Arizona Websites

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](#) (see the *Manual for Submission of Theses and Dissertations* here).

GradPath/ UAccess Student Center (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:

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

Professional Organizations in the Field of Communication

International Communication Association: www.icaheadq.org

National Communication Association: www.natcom.org

Western Communication Association: www.westcomm.org

IX. Appendix A: Course Rotation

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.

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-level) in:	<i>Two</i> additional courses (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-level) in:	<i>Two</i> additional courses (500-level) in:
Interpersonal	Political
Methods/Stats	Other Specialization
Other Specialization	Health

X. Appendix B: Criteria for Membership in the Graduate Faculty

TL;DR for students – Graduate faculty typically includes tenured or tenure-eligible faculty in Comm. These are any of the people in the “Core Faculty” portion of our website, *except* those who are listed as professors of practice / career-track faculty.

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 may be included on committees, see section 1.2 of <https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/graduate-faculty-policy>

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.

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 Policy, Tenure-eligible/tenured faculty and Continuing Status eligible/Continuing Status academic professionals with faculty appointments are automatically members of the Graduate Faculty in Communication.

Members of the Graduate Faculty in Other Programs without FTE in Communication : 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

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.

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 in Communication (grants, publications, presentations).
- c) Have a record of strong mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students.

.

Criteria for the endorsement to chair a Doctoral Committee.

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 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.

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.

XI. Appendix C: Proposal Defense Form

Department of Communication
(submit to GPC)

Student Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

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.

Describe required revisions (if any; or attach in a separate document):

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.

XII. 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			

XIII. Appendix E: PhD Comps 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)

Design an intervention to encourage people to quit vaping. As you discuss the various elements of your intervention, explain *in detail*, how they draw on at least three relevant theories of health communication. Discuss how those three theories might make conflicting recommendations for at least one aspect of your intervention, and explain how you would resolve those conflicts.

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.

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.

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. If you have written most of your dissertation proposal it will help you immensely in answering your specialty question!

XIV. Appendix F: Teaching Evaluation Form

The teaching evaluation form is online. Faculty evaluate TAs on whichever of the following are relevant and provide open-ended comments:

Please evaluate the TA on the following criteria; leave blank where not applicable.

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Mastery of subject matter	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teamwork	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking fluency: English as a second language	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional demeanor & behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐
Holds office hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keeps class records / maintaining D2L, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Constructs exams	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grades consistent with department norms	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grades papers and exams in a timely manner	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preparation (media, written materials)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lecturing / Running the classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐

XV. Appendix G: Department of Communication Grading Policies

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 so easy 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.
- g) We have a responsibility to the broader community and, in particular, the state of Arizona. Passing a student who should have clearly failed a course harms those who rely on us to produce capable citizens and a productive workforce.

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.

Rule of thumb: Two useful metrics to assess your grading approach are the median and standard deviation. If your final grade median is quite high (i.e., greater than 85%) or low (i.e., less than 70%) AND your standard deviation is low (see above), there is a definite problem with your grading and you will need to re-evaluate your approach in the classroom, ideally with help from a faculty member. If just one of these conditions is met, you may have a problem with your grading, and it is probably a good idea to re-examine your grading/approach.

XVI. Appendix H: Annual Awards

Students are eligible to apply for and receive multiple awards. Award amounts vary year-to-year. Award winners are chosen by the Graduate Admissions Committee. When the application window is open (typically mid-June through late July), you can submit applications for all awards *except* the Hickey and Sprigg awards via the following portal: https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3KH1AQs4ACJHLSe

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, submit an updated CV (pdf).

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). Guidance for constructing a portfolio and examples are widely available on the web. When constructing portfolios, we encourage students to incorporate information on teaching efficiency – spending inordinate time on activities that contribute only marginally to student learning is not typically good teaching practice.

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 before applying. They must successfully defend their 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. The student must be registered for at least 9 dissertation credits (total 18 units) during the semester in which they accept the award, and they must maintain good standing in the program. This is an endowed award, funded by the UofA Foundation. Details on the application process are described below.

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 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 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 (pdf). 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., are eligible). 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 [Criteria for this award currently under legal review and probably changing]

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. Please do *not* apply for this award or request consideration for it; decisions are made by the committee based on information we already have.

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 are eligible for the José Sprigg Fellowship (and hence it should show up for you in Scholarship Universe) if you are a COMM grad student with a minimum GPA of 3.25. Apply on that site.

Important Notes for All Awards:

- When asked to submit a CV, please make sure it is current, that all citations are complete and 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 go in their own separate 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 when the donor is known and alive.
- 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

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 requires:

- 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 for all those expenses individually, 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 (or buy you a new phone) 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 (and is limited to the expenses you outline). 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 document 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 and progress. This award facilitates completion of the dissertation by helping with 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

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., successfully completed comprehensive exams), (b) be working in residence on their dissertation for the entire academic year in which the award is given, (c) be enrolled in 9 units of dissertation credits (total of 18 units), and (d) successfully defend their dissertation proposal by October 1 of the semester that they accept the award.

Students who meet these criteria are strongly urged to apply. Questions about eligibility should be addressed to the GPC. These eligibility requirements cannot be waived.

Application Process

A *completed* application must be received by the deadline. The application should include the following (with the recommendation letter delivered separately by the faculty recommender):

- 1) **The application packet.** This single PDF should include:
 - a) **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.
 - b) **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 and 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.
 - c) **Budget itemization and justification.** The budget does not require a certain format, but it should detail specific expenses related to doing the project, the actual costs, and the total amount being requested. The justification should be a single paragraph explaining the need for all the expenses.
- 2) **Curriculum vitae.**
- 3) **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 the proposal being defended by October 1st, and the probability of the dissertation's completion by the end of the academic year, as well as the student's likelihood of gaining 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 recommender portal by the application deadline.

XVII. Appendix I: MA Thesis Timeline

Spring First Year:

- ▶ Begin discussions with advisor on goals for thesis; theories, specific research questions, topic areas, and the like. Make plans for summer writing with advisor.

Summer After 1st Year:

- ▶ Write thesis proposal

Second year: September-October:

- ▶ Thesis proposal submitted to advisor
- ▶ Revisions to proposal completed
- ▶ Student submits thesis proposal to committee for approval

October-November:

- ▶ Student schedules a thesis proposal meeting with committee, informing GPC of date, time and location [student brings proposal defense form to meeting]

November-December:

- ▶ Student successfully defends thesis proposal with revisions completed over winter break to avoid being placed in the comprehensive exam track
- ▶ Advisor obtains committee signatures on Thesis Defense Form and turns form in to GPC
- ▶ Student completes human subjects paperwork

December-January:

- ▶ Student starts thesis data collection
- ▶ Student reviews Graduate College dates and deadlines for spring graduation here:
<https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/degree-requirements/important-degree-dates-and-deadlines>

February-March:

- ▶ Student completes data collection
- ▶ Student checks Graduate College formatting requirements here:
<https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses/dissertation-and-thesis-formatting-guides>
- ▶ Student reviews *Archiving the Master's Thesis* instructions here:
<https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses/submitting-and-archiving-your-thesis>

March-April:

- ▶ Student submits thesis to advisor for approval and format review no later than the 2nd week of April
- ▶ Student provides a copy of the approved thesis to all committee members no later than 2 weeks before the oral exam
- ▶ Student schedules final oral defense of thesis to occur no later than the 1st week of May

April-May:

- ▶ Student completes final oral defense no later than the 1st week of May
- ▶ Each committee member completes Quality of Thesis form and submits to GPC
- ▶ Student completes revisions and submits thesis to the Graduate College by the deadline for spring graduation
- ▶ Advisor informs GPC of completed revisions
- ▶ Student informs GPC of submission of thesis to Graduate College
- ▶ GPC submits Master's completion form to GSAS through Grad Path

XVIII. Appendix J: PhD Dissertation Timeline

First and second years of program:

- ▶ Develop active program of research, with programmatic studies leading towards ideas for the dissertation

Fall of 3rd Year:

- ▶ While studying for comprehensive exams, simultaneously work on dissertation proposal
- ▶ Uses comps theory and methods prep to refine ideas for dissertation
- ▶ Maintain open lines of communication with advisor concerning plans for dissertation

Spring of 3rd Year:

- ▶ After passing comprehensive exams in February to early March, submit dissertation proposal to advisor
- ▶ Submit “Doctoral Committee Appointment Form” through GradPath before defense of proposal
- ▶ Submit dissertation proposal to committee by mid-April
- ▶ Schedule a dissertation proposal meeting with committee by end of April, informing GPC of date, time and location
- ▶ Defend diss proposal [bring proposal defense form]
- ▶ Advisor obtains committee signatures on Dissertation Proposal Defense form and submits to GPC, letting GPC know once revisions are complete; Student completes revisions by early May
- ▶ GPC approves Proposal Confirmation Form in GradPath after revisions are complete

Summer after 3rd Year:

- ▶ Complete Human Subjects paperwork
- ▶ Start dissertation data collection
- ▶ Student reviews Graduate College dates and deadlines for spring graduation here: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/degree-requirements/important-degree-dates-and-deadlines>

Fall of 4th Year (August):

- ▶ Student checks Graduate College formatting requirements here: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses/dissertation-and-thesis-formatting-guides>

September-December of 4th Year:

- ▶ Continue dissertation data collection, with goal of finishing by December
- ▶ Student continues writing dissertation (e.g., methods section, revising lit review; beginning results section)
- ▶ Regular check-ins with advisor throughout semester

January of 4th Year:

- ▶ Review the Graduate College dates and deadlines for spring graduation here: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/degree-requirements/important-degree-dates-and-deadlines>

February-March of 4th Year:

- ▶ Write the results and discussion chapters of dissertation
- ▶ Submit drafts to advisor for approval; will likely take several iterations
- ▶ Provide copy of the approved dissertation to all committee members no later than 3 weeks before the oral exam
- ▶ Schedule dissertation defense with committee, informing GPC of date, time, and location.
- ▶ Student submits “Announcement of Final Defense Form” in GradPath at least 10 business days prior to the oral examination

April of 4th Year:

- ▶ Complete final oral defense prior to Graduate College deadline & departure of faculty for summer
- ▶ Each committee member fills out Quality of Dissertation sheet and hands in to GPC
- ▶ Advisor enters Results of Final Oral Defense in GradPath
- ▶ Student reviews *Archiving the Dissertation* instructions here: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertaions-theses/submitting-and-archiving-your-thesis>

May of 4th Year:

- ▶ Complete revisions and submit dissertation to the Graduate College by the deadline for spring graduation
- ▶ Advisor informs GPC of completed revisions
- ▶ Student informs GPC of submission of dissertation to Graduate College

XIX. Appendix K: Expectations and Learning Outcomes for Research Team (Comm 900)

Given a competitive job market, it is critical that our students get opportunities in Comm 900 to contribute to peer-reviewed, empirical work on which they will be authors. Over time, they should develop the skills to lead projects. Each year of research team activity should yield material and observable outcomes on grads' CVs (i.e., data collections that are meaningfully 'in progress,' conference presentations, journal submissions, peer-reviewed publications). The following are the *minimum* expectations for faculty and students in Comm 900:

Faculty Expectations (Comm 900)

- a. Teams will consistently have ongoing research activity in which students are directly involved at a level that merits authorship.
- b. Faculty will establish authorship expectations for students, and regularly discuss performance towards meeting those expectations with students.
- c. When students do not meet minimum expectations (3 hours per week), faculty will communicate with students about plans for improving performance, and consult with the DGS if performance does not improve and other avenues have been exhausted.
- d. Over time, faculty should help students gain the skills to *lead* projects on the team.
- e. Faculty should aim to have their teams regularly produce peer-reviewed publications that include graduate students as authors.

Student Expectations (Comm 900)

- a. Students will work actively on research team activities for at least 3 hours per week
- b. Students will communicate immediately with their faculty supervisors if they are unable to complete assigned work, providing reasons and reasonable new deadlines by which the work will be completed.
- c. Students will engage with Comm 900 both as a class and as an essential part of their graduate training and career preparation
- d. Students will seek appropriate opportunities to demonstrate leadership on research tasks and projects.

Learning Outcomes (Comm 900)

Students will be able to:

- a. Articulate the criteria for academic authorship
- b. Describe the research process from conceptualization to publication
- c. Perform research-related activities in ways that merit authorship credit
- d. Communicate effectively about research activities in a team environment
- e. Develop conceptually sound plans for conducting research projects
- f. Lead their own team-based research projects (for advanced students)