

# *Ph.D. Program Handbook*

**University of Missouri**  
*College of Arts & Science*

**Department of  
Communication**

**Interpersonal and Family Communication  
Mediated Communication  
Organizational Communication  
Political Communication  
Identity, Diversity, and Communication  
Health and Crisis Communication**

[communication.missouri.edu](http://communication.missouri.edu)

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**The Doctoral Program  
Department of Communication  
University of Missouri**

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**PART I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This booklet is designed to help you get from where you are now -- a beginning graduate student -- to where you plan to be in a short period of time: an MU alum. The faculty of the Department of Communication is committed to providing an environment in which graduate students will receive optimal opportunity for professional and intellectual growth.

Graduate study is a world of inquiry. It can be one of the most intensive and exciting times of intellectual development that you will experience. You will learn the importance of asking questions, of cultivating your curiosity, and recognizing that the best answers are ones that often lead to new and even more interesting questions.

Your experiences as a graduate student can be both humbling and liberating. Set answers to complex questions will no longer suffice. You will discover that the field of communication is much more complicated than what you had ever imagined. Such discoveries may make you uncertain of your own abilities and wisdom; that is, the more you learn, the more you will recognize that you know even less about the complex nature of communication. You cannot possibly learn everything there is to know about communication before you leave. However, we hope that you will leave with the ability to continue to learn and grow after you graduate.

Your professors are life-long students who are always ready to share their questions and concerns with others who are interested in similar lines of inquiry. We look forward to learning with you and helping you become an independent scholar. You will see an improvement in the quality of your ideas, the extent of your knowledge, and your ability to pursue your ideas.

The following information includes some of the basic policies and procedures that are followed in the Graduate School and in this Department. Use this booklet to help orient yourself, but always check with your advisor if you find yourself confused about anything.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Please remember that it is your responsibility to be familiar with the information presented here and by Graduate Studies (<http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/>), and to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the program. As stated by Graduate Studies: "In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception be granted because students plead ignorance of, or contend that they were not informed of, the regulations and procedures. Responsibility for following all policies and meeting all requirements and deadlines for graduate programs *rests with the student.*" (see *Student Responsibility to Know Academic Regulations* at <http://gfs.missouri.edu/policies-best-practices/student-responsibility.php>)

## **YOU AND YOUR ADVISOR**

When you begin your graduate work, the Director of Graduate Studies will assign you a faculty member to serve as your temporary advisor for the first semester based on your interests. This temporary advisor helps you select your first semester courses, answers any questions you have, and helps you find solutions to various concerns you may have as a new graduate student.

During your second semester, you are to notify the Director of Graduate Studies whether you wish to continue with your temporary advisor as your permanent advisor or whether you wish to choose a new permanent advisor. Your permanent advisor will help you in shaping your degree program and in selecting your graduate committee, and may eventually serve as your dissertation advisor. You may, of course, later change to another advisor. A change of advisor may occur when an advisor leaves, when an advising load needs readjustment, or when a student changes an area of study or dissertation topic. Before you officially change advisors, be certain that you have talked with your intended new advisor about taking you on as a new advisee. You cannot switch from one faculty member to another without talking with both of those individuals--and the Director of Graduate Studies--about such a change. Either the advisor or the student may initiate a change of advisor. It is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies as well as the student to inform the former advisor, the new advisor, and Graduate Studies of that change.

## **DOCTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

As a graduate student, in addition to your major advisor, you will also have a committee to advise you. The Doctoral Advisory Committee convenes several times:

- a. To evaluate and approve the proposed plan of study
- b. For the oral portion of the comprehensive examination
- c. To evaluate and approve the dissertation prospectus
- d. For the oral defense (examination) of the completed dissertation

The Doctoral Advisory Committee is comprised of a minimum of four members--your advisor and three others. At least three of the members must come from within the Department (although your Advisory Committee may consist of four members from within the Department); and at least one member of your Advisory Committee must be a graduate faculty member from outside the Department.

Graduate students often change direction in their course of study, and consequently the individual members of their advisory committee may change. Students often change their committee members after completing the exams but before starting the dissertation. It is common courtesy to notify the faculty member that you are going to change committee membership. Such decisions must be made with approval of your advisor and be reported on the appropriate form.

Although it was customary at one time to have a first, second, and so forth reader on your committee, this distinction is no longer used in our Department. Your advisor is the first reader and may consult with any other committee members.

## BASIC STEPS REQUIRED FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE PH.D. DEGREE

1. It is required that doctoral students in our program have completed an M.A. degree. Most students complete their M.A. with no problems prior to joining our doctoral program. However, in rare cases, a student may be finishing their M.A. requirements while beginning their doctoral studies. A variety of life circumstances may contribute to this delay. In this case, the student may be placed on probation or dismissed by the Department of Communication if the M.A. is not completed in a timely manner. See the qualifying process for more details. Please communicate with your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies if you find yourself in this position.
2. Students must take a minimum of 48 hours of course work beyond the M.A. degree, plus a semester of Com 9050 and dissertation hours (beyond the 48 hours). Students with a master's degree in another discipline may be required to complete additional course work. Course work consists of 30-36 hours within the Department, including at least 18 hours of course work at the 8000/9000 level. Although not required, doctoral students typically take the vast majority of their hours at the 8000/9000 level.

All doctoral students are required to take the following courses (or demonstrate equivalent levels of knowledge):

8120 (Introduction to Communication Research Methods)

**One** of the following methods:

8130 (Qualitative Methods)

8140 (Content Analysis)

8160 (Rhetorical Criticism)

In addition, a methods topics course (e.g., SEM) may be offered as 8001.

9280 (Seminar in Communication Theory)

9050 (Research): Comprehensive exams; taken after completion of the 48 hours of course work

9090 (Research): Dissertation Hours

3. In addition to courses within the Department, students must take at least 6 hours in a collateral area outside the Department that represents a coherent unit of study and relates to an area of research interest (e.g., psychology, sociology, political science, journalism, English, family studies, anthropology, management). Typically both of these courses will be at the 8000 level, although it is possible that one of the courses may be a 7000-level course.
4. As part of their program, students must take at least 15 hours of courses in research

methods. Nine of these hours may be taken outside the Department. Typical courses include statistics, linguistics, critical theory, informational science, or historiography. This combination of courses is designed to help you further develop your research skills for completion of the dissertation.

5. Students must successfully pass the Department's **qualifying examination process** (explained in Part III).
6. Students must enroll in a semester of **Com 9050 Research** after completion of the 48 hours of course work. During this semester, they must take their comprehensive examinations (both described in the following pages).
7. Students must enroll in dissertation hours after completion of **Com 9090**. Students must maintain **continuous enrollment** until they complete the dissertation. Completing a dissertation includes a **prospectus meeting** to approve conducting the study and a **final defense** of the dissertation (see following pages).
8. Students on assistantship or receiving federal funds should maintain full time status during their time at MU. This means that before you complete comps you should take 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters and 4 hours in the summer. After you complete comps you should maintain 2 hours in the fall and spring semesters and 1 hour in the summer.
9. Each student must meet all the requirements of the MU Graduate School pertaining to completion of a Ph.D. as published by the Graduate School (see <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/>). This includes making sure that **all forms** (see following pages) are submitted to the Graduate School in a timely manner.

## ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK INFORMATION

### Pre-registration

Graduate students get first chance to register for courses. Even if you are not going to pre-register, you should obtain a permission to enroll number on the first day of enrollment for graduate students. By getting your enrollment permission numbers, you are reserving your place in the course. This is particularly critical for 7000 level courses. Permission to enroll numbers are either given out by the Department secretary in 108 Switzler Hall, or by the individual instructor. If you do not obtain an enrollment number, it is possible that there would be no room for you in the course. Because 7000 level classes fill up quickly with undergraduates, **graduate students should be sure to take advantage of the early registration days for graduate students only**. This will help avoid being closed out of a class or having to ask an instructor for an override.

## **Pro-Seminar**

Our graduate courses are supplemented by the Pro-Seminar course. All in-residence graduate students should register for the 1-hour pro-seminar course, which is taught by the Director of Graduate Studies. Pro-Sem houses the professional development activities of the department, including targeted topic sessions and the Colloquium series.

Colloquium typically takes place on Friday afternoons. These sessions bring the graduate students and the faculty together to interact on a professional and academic level. By discussing research and listening to faculty, student, and guest speakers, we greatly enhance the overall quality of the graduate student experience in the following ways: 1) we reinforce the importance of the development of appropriate scholarly behaviors and attitudes; 2) we broaden our awareness and appreciation of the variety and breadth of scholarly issues and research methodologies found within the discipline of communication; and 3) we provide a common meeting ground for all graduate students and faculty to interact as we share ideas and concerns about issues related to the field. As a Department, we value a diversity of research approaches, theoretical perspectives, and life experiences. It is important that these discussions reflect a respect for such diversity.

Periodically, we invite various guest speakers for a public presentation of their research. Past speakers have included our own faculty members, faculty from related fields on campus, and visiting communication scholars. In addition, graduate students use this forum to “practice” their conference presentations. Doctoral students also may present their dissertation research after they have successfully defended their prospectus before their advisory committee.

It is expected that you attend all colloquium and professional development meetings as outlined in the Pro-Seminar syllabus.

## **Com 9170 Research Practicum**

Doctoral students are encouraged to take a minimum of three hours of credit in Research Practicum (Comm 9170). The practicum can be repeated in a subsequent semester for a total of six hours, if desired.

During the research practicum, the student works alone or in small groups with a faculty member on original research. The practicum is designed as a valuable learning experience for the doctoral student by providing exposure to all phases of research from conceptualization to publication. The goal of the research practicum is that graduate students present individual and co-authored papers at various national and international conferences. Publications have also developed as a result of the research practicum.

## **Com 8085 Directed Readings**

You may also choose to take a directed readings course with a professor. To take a

directed readings course you must ask a faculty member to supervise the directed readings. You and the faculty member will select appropriate readings and assignments.

### **Residency Requirement**

Typically, to meet the residency requirement students must complete at least two nine-hour semesters or three six-hour semesters at MU within an 18-month period. Because of this requirement, it is difficult, if not impossible, for students to complete their degree program by taking course work only in the summers or only on a part-time basis.

### **Total Number Of Hours Allowed Per Semester**

Typical full time enrollment for graduate students is nine hours in the fall and spring and four to six hours in the summer. Graduate School regulations forbid graduate students from pursuing more than 16 hours each semester or nine for the summer session.

### **Transfer Credits**

Although the Graduate School will allow up to 30 graduate credit hours to be transferred from other universities, that many hours are rarely accepted. Transfer credit is worked out on a case-by-case basis with a student's advisor and plan-of-study committee, and then is subject to approval by the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Studies.

## **TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

**Requirements:** Graduate teaching assistants are offered to qualified graduate students on a semester-by-semester basis. Minimally, to be renewed, TA's must show satisfactory teaching evaluations and adequate progress toward degree completion. In addition, **graduate students who receive research or teaching assistantships are required register for the Pro-Seminar course, thus attending colloquium and professional development sessions** as a condition of maintaining their status.

**Years of Support:** The Department has made the commitment to fund most doctoral students (i.e. those who have an assistantship as part of their offer) for four years, assuming they are making appropriate progress toward their degree. It is best to work diligently so that you can complete your degree within the four years of guaranteed funding.

**Terminating Your Assistantship:** If you terminate your assistantship or fellowship at any point during the semester, you will also lose a portion of your fee waiver. The fee waiver will be pro-rated based on the number of days in the semester that you had your assistantship/fellowship, and you will be responsible for the balance of your fees that are not covered by the pro-rated fee waiver. This will also occur if you withdraw from the university during the semester. If you are considering terminating your assistantship/fellowship or

withdrawing from the university please check with the Graduate School as to what your pro-rated fee waiver would be and what portion of your fees you would have to pay.

### **ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNICATION GRADUATE STUDENTS (ACGS)**

The graduate students have established the Association of Communication Graduate Students. As an official university organization, the ACGS receives funding from student fees. This organization provides a number of opportunities for graduate students including social support and assistance in awareness of research and travel funding opportunities. Graduate students elect their own officers and conduct activities, as they deem appropriate. The Director of Graduate Studies serves as the faculty advisor, although the organization is run completely by the graduate students.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

The following excerpt is taken from the Graduate School (see *Academic Honesty & Professional Ethics* at <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/scholarly-integrity-ethics/scholarly-honesty-prof-ethics.php>):

Academic honesty is essential to the intellectual life of the University. Students who pass off the answers, words, ideas or research findings of another person as their own are guilty of academic dishonesty. Self-plagiarism, occurring when an individual submits identical work for more than one assignment, is not allowed. In addition to such acts of cheating or plagiarism, any unauthorized possession of examinations, hiding of source materials, or tampering with grade records are acts of academic dishonesty specifically forbidden by university rules.

According to the MU Faculty handbook, faculty members are required to report to their Department chair and the Provost's Office all acts of academic dishonesty committed by graduate and undergraduate students. In all such cases, the faculty member should discuss the matter with the student and then make an academic judgment about the student's grade on the work affected by the dishonesty and if appropriate, the grade for the affected course. The Provost makes the decision as to whether disciplinary proceedings are instituted. Because of the importance of honesty to academic and professional life, acts of dishonesty by graduate students may result in dismissal from the University.

## PART II: BENCHMARKS OF SUCCESS & D-FORMS

### BENCHMARKS OF SUCCESS\*

By the end of one's **first year / summer** in the program, doctoral students should:

- Pass the "qualifying process" (based on first semester course performance) at the conclusion of the Fall semester (Form D1 filed with the Graduate School).
- Form their Advisory Committee, in consultation with their Advisor, and have their Plan of Study approved by end of Spring semester (Form D2 filed with the Graduate School).
- Become involved in at least one research project working with a faculty member or research team.
- Become a member of one or more professional associations (e.g., CSCA, NCA, ICA, AEJMC, etc.), submitting at least one or more papers for conference presentation during or by the end of one's first year of study.
- Attend colloquium regularly.

By the end of one's **second year / summer** in the program, doctoral students should:

- Complete coursework (48 hours).
- Present research at one or more professional conferences, continuing to submit seminar papers and research for conference presentation.
- Continue to develop your research program, both with independent and collaborative research projects.
- Submit research for publication consideration.
- In consultation with Advisor, begin discussion of possible dissertation topic. Begin thinking about writing for the literature review or pre-proposal
- Attend colloquium regularly.

By the end of one's **third year / summer** in the program, doctoral students should:

- Complete comprehensive exams and required literature review or pre-proposal by end of the Fall term (completing Comm 9050 and Form D3 filed with the Graduate School)
- Request to teach available upper-level courses once comprehensive exams are passed. (Assignments for teaching upper-level courses will be made based on departmental teaching needs and course availability as well as student progress.)
- Defend the prospectus (Dissertation Proposal Approval Form) by the end of the spring semester of one's third year
- Continue to submit and present papers at scholarly meetings
- Continue collaborative research with a faculty member or research team, and submit independently authored or co-authored research for publication consideration (the goal is to have one or more publications by the end of one's third year / summer)
- Prepare job materials in late Spring and over Summer to prepare for the job market.
- Attend colloquium regularly.

By the end of one's **fourth year / summer** in the program, doctoral students should:

- Conduct job search, prepare application packets, and prepare for interviews (this process typically starts in August at the beginning of one's fourth year).
- Complete and defend dissertation typically no later than May 1 (form D4 filed with graduate studies).
- Request to teach upper-level course if you have not yet had the chance to do so.
- Continue to submit and present papers at scholarly meetings.
- Continue independent and collaborative research and submit independently authored or co-authored research for publication consideration.
- Attend colloquium regularly.

\*Please note that your advisor may have additional goals for you beyond these Benchmarks.

In the spring of each year, in conjunction with their annual review, doctoral students should provide their advisor with an updated copy of their Curriculum Vita.

### **Scheduling Committee Meetings**

There are generally four committee meetings during this whole process. It is your responsibility to schedule all of these meetings in consultation with your advisor. You should identify an appropriate block of time for your meetings by reviewing the semester's course roster to determine the class schedule for the faculty members on your committee. Note your own class schedule. Eliminate all of those times as meeting options. Then you are responsible for checking with each individual faculty member to determine their availability for a set number of times. You should also check with your outside committee member very early in this process.

## **DOCTORAL PROGRAM FORMS**

There are a number of forms required of all doctoral students. Each form serves a specific purpose and most must be submitted to the Graduate School in a timely manner. These forms are available in the Department's main office and also on the Graduate School's web site (see <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/>). Generally, you are responsible for making sure the forms are available at the appropriate times and places. The following is a brief description of each.

### **D-1 Form: Qualifying Examination Results and Doctoral Committee Approval Form**

All doctoral students must fulfill a qualifying examination process (previously described). Once the Department has determined a student has met the requirements of the qualifying process, the student is responsible for submitting a D-1 form to the Graduate School. This form declares the student has successfully completed the Department's qualifying examination requirement. The form asks for your name, degree program, undergraduate education, and previous graduate education,

This form also asks for the names of the four (or five) members of your doctoral program

committee. At least three must be from the Department and at least one must be from another MU Department. There must be at least four members of your committee who are members of the Graduate Faculty of this campus. The selection of your committee is very important since they will serve in an advisory capacity on all matters of your graduate program. You should seek the counsel of your advisor in selecting them.

This form normally should be submitted at the same time you submit your D-2 Form (described below), but no later than by the end of your first year of course work. For those students who have not yet taken a course from a faculty member outside of the Department, the selection of the outside committee member can be problematic. The student is urged to seek counsel from your advisor on this matter.

### **D-2 Form: Plan of Study for the Doctoral Degree Form**

This form must have the signatures of all committee members. The D-2 form is submitted only after your program of study has been approved following a committee meeting in which at least four members should be present. The committee will meet to determine, in consultation with you, which courses will be appropriate for the program of study. The proposed program of study must accompany the D-2 form. The program of study may be revised and/or updated by using the Program of Study Substitution Form.

The D-2 form should be submitted to the graduate school prior to the beginning of the students' third regular semester of course work. If the D-2 form is not submitted in a timely manner, the student could be placed on probationary status.

Additional coursework: Students sometimes wish to take courses beyond what is on their program of study. This can be beneficial for students who want expertise beyond what they were able to get in their 48 hours of coursework. However, it can create a complication on tuition waiver (for TAs). The tuition waiver benefit for teaching assistants only applies to courses on the plan of study or for courses that contribute to the student's communication education (content or methods). The Grad School wouldn't waive tuition on violin lessons or beginning pottery, for instance. If the Grad School has questions, they'll ask your advisor or the DGS if the course is relevant to the student's graduate program. As long as it is, we'll tell them so, and they'll be ok with it.

Once you have completed comps, the Graduate School will only waive tuition for 2 credit hours per semester during the school year and 1 credit hour in the summer. So, if you wish to take additional coursework at that time, you should enroll in the class instead of dissertation hours. The university will bill you for the difference in tuition (e.g., 1 credit hour of tuition for a 3 credit hour class during the fall or spring semester).

### **D-3 Form: Report of the Result of the Comprehensive Examination**

After the successful completion of the written and oral portions of your comprehensive exams, this form must be submitted, signed by all members of the committee, and the Director of

Graduate Studies. The comprehensive examination must be completed at least seven months before the final defense of the dissertation. The two sections of the exam must be completed within four weeks. (See discussion of the comprehensive examination above.)

### **Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form—Department of Communication**

This departmental form is not submitted to the graduate school, but is placed in your file. It is a formal record of your prospectus meeting and of the committee's recommendation.

### **D-4 Form: Report of the Doctoral Dissertation Defense**

This is the final form that must be signed by all members of your Doctoral Program Committee. You must also submit the Approval Page, which goes with the completed dissertation. The Approval page must have the signatures of your committee members. The dissertation must be accompanied by a brief title of no more than 50 letters and spaces, an abstract of not more than 350 words and a brief biographical sketch in paragraph form. The typescript must include a suitable indication that it is a dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty of MU in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy. Consult the Graduate Studies' Guidelines for Preparing Thesis and Dissertations for specific information concerning the submission of the final copy of your dissertation.

## PART III: EXAMINATIONS

### QUALIFYING EXAMINATION PROCESS

At the conclusion of a doctoral student's first semester, they are required to achieve at least a 3.3 GPA and to have successfully defended and been awarded a Master's (MA) degree. If a doctoral student does not earn a 3.3 GPA in their first semester, then they will be placed on probation and will have the second semester to bring their cumulative GPA to a 3.3. If a doctoral student has not been awarded an MA degree by the end of their first semester, then they will be placed on probation and will have the second semester to successfully defend and be awarded their MA degree. Failure to meet the GPA and/or MA requirements of the Department's qualifying examination process automatically prevents candidacy.

The Director of Graduate Studies shall notify in writing any student who has failed to pass the qualifying examination process that they will be placed on probation during the second semester. The student will be reminded that for their probationary status to be removed, and to be allowed to continue their doctoral program in the Department, they must meet the GPA and MA requirements stated above. If this does not occur, the student will be notified in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies that failure to satisfy the qualifying examination process terminates their candidacy for the doctoral degree in the Department of Communication.

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCESS

#### **Com 9050 Research**

During the semester after the student has completed all 48 hours of their course work the student enrolls in Com 9050 Research. If the student has earned an "incomplete" grade for a course that is on the program of study, the "I" grade must be changed to a letter grade before the student is allowed to enroll in this course. Typically, students enroll for six credit hours in Com 9050 in order to maintain full-time status and retain their teaching assistantship. The student needs to complete the comprehensive examination while enrolled in Com 9050. This exam consists of 3 parts: the written exam, the oral defense, and a dissertation pre-proposal or literature review. This course will be graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

**Comprehensive Examination.** The comprehensive examination is taken at any time during the semester (typically, the fall semester of the third year) as determined by the student and the advisor. Comprehensive exams consist of three parts: written exams, an oral exam, and a dissertation pre-proposal or literature review. The student must complete all three parts of the comprehensive exam process in order to become a doctoral candidate (ABD).

**Written Exams.** The written exam consists of a minimum of 15 hours of written examinations. Doctoral students may take no more than three separate days to complete their 15 hour exams, but may divide the hours across the three days as deemed appropriate. Once the writing of the exam has begun, it must be completed within a seven

day time period. In other words, a weekend may separate two of the writing days.

The members of the student's Doctoral Advisory Committee, including at least one member from outside the Department, prepare the exam questions. **A committee member may write no more than 5-6 hours of exam questions.** The student should consult with each committee member to seek suggestions to assist in preparing for the examination. In general, the exam covers the student's areas of specialization and outside field of study. The exams will be over theory, content, and methods. A minimum of 4 hours of the exam will cover research methods. The exam includes questions designed to determine your competency to interpret theoretical postulates and research findings in your area of specialization and your preparation to do research. Questions will also be related to your principal subject of study.

A student should arrange with his or her advisor where to write the exam. Unoccupied offices are available for this purpose. The student may use a departmental computer for the exam (but not their own personal computer) or may hand write them if agreeable to the committee. The exams are to be picked up in the main office from an office staff member. An "Exam Out/Exam In" form will be kept in the office and the time that the exam was picked up will be noted by the staff member. When you return the exam to the office, please make sure that the staff member notes the time of return on the same form. This policy is to insure the timeliness of your exam writing. The Graduate Secretary will provide an electronic copy of your exams to each member of your committee.

Note that exams will only be administered during normal working hours. Exams may be picked up after 8:00 a.m. Lunch breaks may be arranged by completing one set of questions before the break and picking up another set of questions afterwards. All exams must be completed and returned by 4:30 p.m. There will be no exceptions to this policy. If you want to get up and stretch, or take a walk around the building, you may do so, but the total time for the exam will include this time "away-from-task." In other words, the clock will not stop because you want to take a breather. Thinking time is part of the assigned time.

For students with various disabilities, special considerations may be available. The Director of Graduate Studies and ADA coordinator and will review each individual situation.

**Oral Exams.** Comprehensive examination defenses must occur during the fall or spring semesters and may not be held during summer semesters or University breaks. At least two weeks after completion of the written portion of the comprehensive exam, but no more than one month after the written exams have been completed, the student's committee will meet for the oral segment of the exam. As a result of the combination of written and oral segments, your committee will pass judgment on your performance. They will vote pass or fail. A positive vote by at least four of five committee members is required to pass the exam (if the student's advisory committee consists of four members, then a positive vote of the entire committee is required for the student to pass the exam). If in the oral defense a

student is unable to respond to committee members' concerns about their written exams the student may be asked to make revisions or be required to do rewrites. In the case of minor revisions, the Advisory Committee Chair will withhold signatures on the D3 form until the revision(s) is/are completed to the satisfaction of the committee member(s) requesting the revision(s). In the case of rewrites, the committee will indicate failure on the D3 form and the student will be required to rewrite the failed portion(s) of their original exam following the rewrite procedures described below.

**Revisions.** A revision constitutes a minor portion of an exam that needs to be revised. If there are more than two exams that need minor revisions, then this would constitute a failure and require a rewrite (see below). If the revisions are not deemed satisfactory by the committee member(s) requesting the revision(s), then this results in a failure. The student will then take a second comprehensive examination (i.e. rewrites) after waiting 12 weeks.

**Rewrites.** A rewrite occurs when there are significant errors and deficiencies that were not adequately addressed in the oral defense. After waiting 12 weeks, the student will respond to new questions on the failed portion(s) of the original exam. Upon completion of the rewrites, a second oral defense will take place with the entire committee to determine if the student has passed or failed. Failure to pass two comprehensive examinations automatically prevents candidacy.

**Dissertation Pre-Proposal or Literature Review.** The final part of the comprehensive exam process consists of writing a dissertation pre-proposal or literature review on a topic that the student would like to study for her or his dissertation. This paper may be written before, during and/or after the written examinations according to the student's preference and in consultation with one's advisor. The advisory committee does not read nor need to approve this paper; you will work solely in consultation with your advisor on this requirement. Please be aware that your advisor may ask you to make changes to your paper, thus multiple drafts may be required in some instances.

The pre-proposal or literature review should be approximately 30 pages in length (not counting references) and should provide a thorough review of a central topic for your proposed dissertation. Students should develop this paper in consultation with their advisor. Only the student's advisor is required to review this paper and determine if it is of passing quality. If the paper is not of passing quality, the student will be asked to make revisions until the paper achieves sufficient quality. If the paper is done well and the topic remains of interest, it is likely that all or portions of it will be used in the dissertation itself. However, if in the course of writing the pre-proposal or literature review the student decides that he or she would rather not do a dissertation on this topic, then the student is free to select a different dissertation topic.

## PART IV: THE DISSERTATION

### Continuous Enrollment

Once you have passed Com 9050, you must maintain continuous enrollment. You should be enrolled in Com 9090 Research for one semester hour each fall and spring semester and one semester hour each summer session. You should also enroll in one semester hour of Pro-Sem each fall and spring. Failure to continuously enroll until the doctoral degree is awarded terminates your candidacy.

### Prospectus Meeting

Once you have passed Com 9050 Research, you will work with your adviser to develop a complete research prospectus or proposal. This includes a more extensive rationale and review of literature than the literature review written to meet the requirements for Com 9050. In addition, it includes writing research questions or hypotheses and a proposed methodology. The writing of this prospectus will involve numerous revisions before it is ready to defend. However, what you have written will be part of your final dissertation, typically the first two or three chapters. Your advisor may ask that other committee members participate in the process.

Once your advisor and you are satisfied that the proposal is ready for review, you will provide a copy of the prospectus to all the members of the committee. Then, at least two weeks later, the committee will convene to discuss and approve the prospectus. Prospectus defenses must occur during the fall or spring semesters and may not be held during summer semesters or University breaks. It is typical for the committee to make changes in the proposal. This may involve asking you to do more or less in certain areas or to do some other revisions in the writing.

It is appropriate for students to be considering dissertation topics throughout their program. A number of students have used their research practicum as a springboard for their dissertation. The literature review from Com 9050 is typically a part of the dissertation topic. However, under no circumstances should a student begin collecting data for a dissertation until after the faculty has approved the proposal at the prospectus meeting. Any data collected before the prospectus is approved may not be appropriate for the approved prospectus.

### Oral Defense of the Dissertation

Once your committee has approved your dissertation prospectus, you will work closely with your advisor on collecting data and writing the final dissertation. This will again involve numerous revisions. Your advisor may ask other committee members to assist in this process. Once your advisor and you are satisfied that the dissertation is suitable, you will provide copies of the complete dissertation to all the members of your committee. Then, at least two weeks later, you will schedule the oral defense of your dissertation. *It is encouraged that dissertation defenses, like the prospectus defense, occur during fall or spring semesters, however summer*

*dissertation defenses may be held at the committee's discretion and availability.*

The oral defense provides an opportunity for your committee members to explore the nature of your dissertation with you. The defense may take any form that the committee feels is appropriate to enable it to reach a sound judgment concerning your qualification for the doctorate. This is your opportunity to “defend” your work. Committee members are looking for your ability to articulate your work with sufficient ease and mastery to warrant the conferring of the doctorate. At least four members of your committee, including the outside member, must be present at the oral defense.

It is normal for the committee to ask for a number of changes in the dissertation at this time. These changes must be made before the final dissertation copy is submitted to the graduate school.

The candidate must be enrolled to defend the dissertation. The defense can only take place when MU is officially in session (not between sessions). A report of the examination, carrying the signatures of all members of the committee, is sent to the Graduate School prior to the deadline for the anticipated date of graduation.

### **Grading of 9090 Research**

Effective Spring Semester 1994, dissertation research hours (9090) will be graded on an S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) basis.

### **Dissertation Formatting & Submission:**

See the Graduate School website for the most up-to-date guidelines and rules for formatting and submitting your dissertation. The Graduate School will also post relevant dates and deadlines for dissertation submission and graduation.

## PART V: POLICIES

*In this section, you will find policies relevant to the doctoral student in Communication. This is not an exhaustive list, and other policies may exist beyond those included here. However, this will provide you with a good start to learning about the policies that may affect you.*

### Reasonable Rate of Progress for Doctoral Students

Effective Fall 2000, a doctoral student will have no more than **five years** to complete their coursework and comprehensive exams. The Department has developed a list of **Benchmarks** to help students gauge their progress through the program (see below). On petition of the student and the student's Department, the Graduate School may grant an extension of this time limit.

Effective Fall Semester 1994, a doctoral student will have no more than **five years** after passing the comprehensive examination to complete the doctoral degree. On petition of the student and the student's Department, the Graduate School may grant an extension of this time limit. Departments specifically reserve the right to re-certify currency in the discipline. This may involve additional course work and/or retaking comprehensive exams.

The Department will develop departmental guidelines by which we will consider requests for extensions for more than five years to work on the dissertation. All requests for extensions are to be endorsed by the Director of Graduate Studies and accompanied by a description of the process whereby currency in the discipline was re-certified.

### Graduate Students Teaching Advanced Classes

1. Courses are scheduled to meet the curriculum needs of the undergraduate program of the department by the chair and the academic advisor.
2. Advanced classes include all stand-alone courses taught by a graduate student, including 2000, 3000, and 4000 level.
3. The Department Chair will make course appointments in consultation with the advisor. Selection criteria are the following:
  - a. To teach an advanced stand-alone course:
    - i. The student must have successfully completed the comprehensive exams process. If a completed D-3 has not been filed by the end of the semester preceding the graduate student's stand-alone course assignment, the graduate student will be re-assigned to teach an appropriate course based on department needs. Passing comprehensive exams does not guarantee assignment to an advanced stand-alone course. Assignments are also based on departmental teaching needs and availability.
    - ii. Second, fourth-year doctoral students will not be allowed to teach an advanced course unless they have successfully defended their dissertation prospectus by the end of Spring semester during their third year. Teaching

assignments for the fall term are made by the end of the preceding spring semester; therefore, it is expected that students who request to teach an advanced course in the fall should complete their prospectus defense by this time. If a fall teaching assignment is made before the prospectus is successfully defended, the defense must be completed (or defense meeting scheduled) no later than the end of Spring semester or the graduate student will be re-assigned to teach an appropriate course based on department needs.

- b. Graduate students who have relevant expertise in a professional field (e.g., media production, etc.) will be allowed to teach an advanced stand-alone course before successfully defending their comprehensive exams.
4. Throughout their tenure, it is our aim that graduate students will teach no more than one stand-alone advanced class (which they may repeat), and will teach or assist with no more than three different courses in total (which includes teaching Comm 1200 and also assisting with lab sections of Comm 2100 and Comm 3050).
5. In consultation with the Chair, the graduate student will select and request an appropriate faculty mentor by the end of the semester preceding their advanced stand-alone course assignment.
  - a. A faculty mentor is required only for the first time a graduate student teaches a given advanced class.
6. A faculty member may receive compensation for up to 2 mentees per academic year.
7. Faculty mentors will: (1) approve the syllabus, (2) observe students teach, and (3) meet to discuss progress. Faculty mentors may also provide teaching materials, such as lecture slides and exams, at their discretion. Grade appeals, etc., will still go to the Chair.

### **Leave Policy for Graduate Students**

The Department of Communication recognizes that graduate students have a variety of long term family obligations that may from time to time make it difficult to complete their obligations as a graduate student or teaching assistant. These obligations include but are not limited to birth or adoption of a child, long term illnesses or death of family members or close friends, and so forth. In the case of such obligations, the Department of Communication will attempt to make reasonable accommodations as it attempts to support the student and fulfill the obligations for instruction and for maintaining the standards of the graduate program.

In such instances, graduate students are encouraged to make their advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair aware of the circumstances at the earliest possible date.

In making accommodations for long-term obligations, the Department will consider the following options:

- Reduced teaching loads for teaching assistants.
- Reduced course work load
- Extensions of teaching assistantships beyond the usual four years after a leave

- Extensions of deadlines for work in courses
- Extensions of the 5-year limit on completing the course work or extensions of the 5-year limit on completing the dissertation. These extensions must be granted by Graduate Studies, but the Department will recommend and support such requests.

### **Verser and Alumni Graduate Student Support Fund**

#### **Fund Distribution Guidelines**

At the beginning of each (semester/academic year), the department will determine the amount of money available for distribution to graduate students. Then, the Director of Graduate Studies will distribute an announcement to all current graduate students asking them to apply for the funds. Currently, there is one cycle of funding in the Fall semester of each academic year. Applications must include the approved form and be returned by the deadline for that distribution period.

The faculty will form a Grant Awards Committee of three voting members with the Director of Graduate Studies serving as the convener.

The funds will be distributed based on the following priorities:

1. **First Priority--Dissertation/Thesis Grants:** These grants are associated with the dissertation or thesis. For grants associated with the dissertation or thesis, preference will be given to Ph.D. students who have passed comprehensive exams and to M.A. students who have completed their coursework. Funding is more likely if the prospectus has been approved or the advisor believes approval is likely in the near future. Funding is also more likely to go to projects that have not previously been funded with a Verser award. Funds may be used to print surveys, mail surveys, purchase tapes for recording, purchase data (e.g., tape of political ads), travel to collect data, conduct phone interviews, and the like. Funding is unlikely for costs of standard equipment (e.g., computers), but could be used for specialized equipment or software needed to complete the research project. Funds may not be used for normal costs of travel to and from Columbia or the cost of printing the dissertation.
2. **Second Priority--Research Grants:** These grants are associated with research conducted as part of the degree program (research practicum or independent research hours). Use of the funds follows the same guidelines as for Dissertation/Thesis Grants.
3. **Third Priority--Convention Travel Grants:** Travel grants will be funded only if money is still available after requests for the first two categories have been funded. Priorities for travel grants will be as follows: 1) Travel to special meetings or workshops; 2) Students on the job market (generally fourth year students or beyond); 3) Students presenting papers at a conference; and 4) Students serving as respondents or chairs. Students who are not engaged in a job search or are not listed on the program are not likely to be funded.

## Other Guidelines:

1. Quality of the application: Quality of the proposal and justification for the budget can influence whether a proposal is funded and/or the amount awarded, particularly when the funds available cannot be divided into meaningful amounts for all applicants.
2. Any funds not distributed during a particular (year/semester) will be added to the principal or be available for distribution the following semester/year.
3. Students approved for funding must present receipts to the financial officer of the department prior to disbursement of the funds. In some cases, the financial officer (Martha Crump) may be able to make purchases directly for you, so please check with her.
4. If a funded student fails to request reimbursement or fails to present receipts by June 15<sup>th</sup> of the academic year in which they receive funding, then that funding will be withdrawn. In this situation, the student may reapply for funding during the next cycle.

### Termination Procedures and Appeals

**Annual Review Process:** Each year during the first part of the spring semester, each “in residence” graduate student will complete an annual review process, in consultation with their advisor, to assess the student’s progress in completing their degree, research, and service. First, graduate students will submit an updated CV to their advisor. Next, faculty will meet with their advisees to provide feedback on the student’s progress and set goals for the coming year.

In March or April, following graduate students’ annual review meetings with their advisors, the graduate faculty of the Department will meet to conduct its annual assessment of each graduate student’s progress. The Director of Graduate Studies calls this meeting. Each advisor describes the level of progress towards degree completion for each of his or her advisees.

This meeting is designed to identify problems regarding sufficient progress or quality of work at an early stage in the student’s program. Any problems identified will be addressed with a personal meeting (or phone call, if out of town) between the student and the advisor. A follow-up letter will be sent by the Director of Graduate Studies and will confirm the main points of the faculty concerns and deliberations.

It is at this time that the student would be notified if they are not making satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. Also, specific conditions for making satisfactory progress are to be outlined at this time, such as submission of a chapter of the dissertation, a meeting with the advisor, or some acceptable indication that the student is making sufficient progress.

If difficulties persist, the student risks being dismissed from the program. The student may be placed on probation for a period of at least 30 days. Notification of probation will be in writing. The notification will **explicitly** state that the student is now on probation, and what specific actions must be accomplished by a specific date in order for the student to be deemed in

good standing by the Department and removed from probation. The notification letter will come from the Director of Graduate Studies.

If the student does not comply with the conditions of probation, a letter (signed by the Director of Graduate Studies) will be sent to the student with notification of dismissal from the degree program. This letter will inform the student of the right to appeal, first, to the Department or program, and second, to the Graduate Faculty Senate, along with the procedures for the appeal process (Dismissal Policy and Appeals Process for Graduate Students Amended by the Graduate Faculty Senate on April 23, 2002). A copy of the Department/program's letter must be sent to the Vice Provost/Dean at the same time it is sent to the student. If the student decides to appeal the Departmental/program dismissal, the appeal process will take effect. As long as a student is in an appeal process, the student should maintain enrollment and continue working on degree program requirements. Students must complete the Department/program appeal process prior to considering an appeal to the Graduate Faculty Senate. If the student does not appeal the Department/program's dismissal, the Graduate School will send the student an official notice of dismissal from the program.

Dismissing a student from a degree program does **not** dismiss the student from the University of Missouri. Once official notice is received, the student's status will be changed to "unclassified graduate student," as long as there is no grade point average problem. Unclassified graduate students may transfer to another university or to another degree program at MU.

### **Probationary Status**

Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 or better GPA to be in good standing. If you fall below a 3.0 you will be placed on probation. If at the end of the following semester the cumulative GPA is 3.0 or better, the probationary status will be removed. If you fail to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 you may, on the recommendation of the Department, be allowed a second and final probationary semester. You will be subjected to dismissal upon failure to raise the GPA to 3.0 by the end of the second probationary semester, or at any time that the semester or cumulative GPA falls below 2.0. Note: Summer Session is not counted as a semester.

To graduate, a student must have an overall GPA of 3.0 in all graduate courses taken at MU. (see *Grading & Credit Policies* <http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/progress/grading-credit.php>)

A student may count one course toward graduation with the grade of "C." However, if the student receives a C in a second course, he or she will be dismissed from the graduate program. Receiving C's in 2 or more classes automatically prevents candidacy.

Students who fail to meet other requirements of the PhD program (e.g., failure to complete the M.A. degree in a timely manner) may be placed on probation.

If the stipulations of a student's probation are not met by the student, then they may be

dismissed from the Department of Communication graduate program and the University.

### **Grade Appeal Procedures**

In the event that a student is unable to resolve a complaint about a grade with the instructor of the course, a grade appeal procedure may be initiated. The Director of Graduate Studies shall serve as an ombudsperson to receive grade complaints and appeals about faculty and teaching staff from the student enrolled for graduate communication credit. The Director will appoint a committee to consider each complaint/appeal. The composition will be the responsibility of the Director who may or may not serve on the committee. Such committees should have representation from each sector of the Department. The student will be asked to describe the nature of the complaint and offer supporting evidence in writing. This complaint will be forwarded to the faculty member/teaching staff and she/he will respond in writing. The committee will advise the chair of the Department and the Director of Graduate Studies of the resolution of the grievance in writing. In the event the Director is involved in the appeal, the Department chair will appoint a substitute.

(Policy on Grade Appeal Procedure approved at Faculty Meeting: October 14, 1994)

### **Exemption from Required Courses**

A doctoral student may apply for exemption from enrolling in any of the required graduate courses in the following manner:

1. Submit to your advisor a letter indicating why you believe you should be exempt from a particular course. Your rationale should include a copy of a course description, a copy of a course syllabus, and a sample of your work written specifically for a comparable graduate course taken at another institution. The goal is to provide data to indicate your previous mastery of the material covered in the course under question as it is currently taught in our program.
2. That written documentation will be reviewed by your advisor, and if he/she agrees with your assessment of your abilities, then he/she will forward the materials to the appropriate faculty member (the instructor for the course). That faculty member may request a personal interview to further assess your abilities within a particular field.

Note: these exemptions are typically only granted for those who have recently graduated from a quality graduate program, and who took such courses no more than five years ago.

Receiving an exemption from a course does not reduce the total number of hours required to complete the Ph.D. or the number of research methods hours needed to graduate. Rather, it allows the student to take a more advanced course in the same or a different area of interest. So, for example, a student who receives an exemption from 8120 (Introduction to Communication Research Methods) can then take a more advanced statistics course or an alternative research

methods course.

### **Team Teaching**

Graduate students who have already completed Com 9050 may want to team teach a 3000- or 4000-level course with a faculty member in order to gain additional teaching experience. The interested student should approach the faculty member assigned to that course with the request. The faculty member will determine whether he or she is willing to do so. If he or she is willing to do so, the two will create a written document stating what each would do. Both the faculty and TA participate in teaching the course, including lesson planning, lecture, activities, testing, grading, and meeting with students outside the class. This teaching will be an unpaid add-on to TA's regular duties.

### **Summer Defenses**

Comprehensive examination and prospectus defenses must occur during the fall or spring semesters and may not be held during summer semesters or University breaks. It is encouraged that thesis and dissertation defenses likewise occur during fall or spring semester, however summer thesis and dissertation defenses may be held at the committee's discretion and availability.

### **Other "Odds & Ends"**

The following graduate student awards are presented at the Department's spring Graduate Student Awards Reception:

**Graduate Achievement Award:** This award is presented to the outstanding graduate student in the Department of Communication who demonstrates excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service. The active graduate students in the Department select this award winner.

**Loren Reid Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award:** The faculty select two graduate teaching assistants to receive the Loren Reid Teaching Award. This award is presented to an outstanding graduate student who demonstrates excellence in teaching, inspires learning, practices creative thinking and shows a generous spirit toward students.

**Graduate Research Award:** This award recipient is selected by the faculty and is presented to an outstanding graduate student to recognize superior research achievement. The recipient has been active in conducting research and has demonstrated excellence in quality of work and commitment to advancing knowledge in our field.

**The Frank & Lila Gilman Memorial Fellowship Award:** This award is selected by the faculty and presented to an outstanding graduate student in rhetoric and public address. The award was established by Wilbur Gilman, a 1924 graduate of the College of Arts and

Science, in memory of his parents. The award comes with a very generous stipend.

**Outstanding Service Award:** This award is selected by the faculty and is presented to an outstanding graduate student who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to provide service to the Department.

**University Rules and Regulations:** The *M Book* explains rules and regulations of the University, defines standards of personal and academic conduct expected of students, describes disciplinary procedures and actions, and explains how students may have grievances heard and remedied. It contains information about traffic regulations, parking fines and procedures for appealing them, procedures for reservation of facilities, and other miscellaneous items. The *M Book* is available online.

**Mailboxes:** Each graduate student has a mailbox in 108 Switzler. You are encouraged to check these boxes daily, and use them for communicating with your fellow graduate students.

**Military deployment:** If you are called to duty for military deployment, you may request that your time limits for coursework or dissertation are extended for the period of time you are on duty. To do that, you must provide the Graduate School and the Department's Director of Graduate Studies with documentation--a copy of the orders that shows the dates you will be deployed. The Graduate School has the right to make a decision about whether they will allow an extension, but their practice has always been to honor your service by stopping the clock during the time you are on tour.

**Exceptions:** Any exceptions to the Department policies governing graduate education must be presented by the student's advisor to the Department faculty for their consideration.

**Rumors:** In any organization rumors often pass as truth and misleading ideas sometimes take root. If you hear something through the "grapevine" that you find disturbing or think unwise, unjust, or improbable, there is always a strong probability that the facts have become confused! The wise procedure is to see your advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Department Chair. We believe you will find candor and honesty to be a hallmark of this Department.

**Finally:** No set of "guidelines" could possibly cover everything. We hope that these comments will help you by either answering your questions or making it clear how you may go about having them answered. We are glad that you are here and we hope that you will find your MU experience to be a satisfying and productive one.