GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024
2025

UCONN | COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Preface

This document represents the policies and procedures of the Department of Communication and its graduate programs as of its publishing in August 2024. Various university websites are referenced through this handbook. More information and potentially updated information are available at these websites. The Department of Communication follows all policies and rules of the University of Connecticut, the Graduate School, and the Graduate Employee Union Local 6950 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Students are expected to be familiar with all of these policies, and not only those referenced in this handbook.

Table of Contents

Preface 2
Communication Department General Information 5
Personnel and Positions 5
Faculty 6
Office Equipment 7
Facility Maintenance 7
Access and Security 7
Campus Emergencies 7
Mental Health Resources 9
Services for Students with Disabilities 9
Learning and Working Environment 9
Pets 9
Smoking 9
Professional Conduct 10
Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence 10
Department website 10
Communication Graduate Program General Information 11
Major Advisor and Advisory Committee 11
Plan of Study 11
Research Projects 12
CITI Training 12
Human Subjects Review 12
Graduate Internships 12
Graduate Internship COMM 5981 12
Graduate Student Funding Sources 13
Graduate Assistantships 13
Summer and Winter Session Teaching Assignments 15
Academic Travel and Conference Participation 15
Graduate Student Fellowships 16
Graduate Certificate in College Instruction 18
Academic Standards 18
Academic Progress 18
Unsatisfactory Academic Performance 18

Academic Integrity 19
COMM Research Colloquium 20
MA Program Information 20
MA Program Description and Requirements 20
Core Courses 21
Choosing a Specialty 21
MA Program Timeline 23
MA Program Checklist 26
MA Comprehensive Exams 27
Master's Thesis Proposal Defense 28
Master's Thesis Defense 28
PhD Program Information 30
PhD Program Description and Requirements 30
PhD Program Elements 30
PhD Program Coursework Overview 31
PhD Program Tracks 32
PhD Program Optional Specialty Areas 37
PhD Program Timeline 39
Summary 39
Details 39
General Examination for the PhD in Communication 45
Part 1: Quantitative or Qualitative Methods Exam (QME) 47
Part 2: Theory Exam 48
Dissertation Proposal Defense 52
Doctoral Dissertation Defense 56
Appendix A: Guidelines for Completing Your Plan of Study 58
Appendix B: E-mail Template for Dissertation and Proposal Defense Announcement 59

Communication Department General Information

Personnel and Positions

The **Department Head** is a faculty member who is responsible for managing the department, including the faculty and administrative staff, and the undergraduate and graduate programs. The current Department Head is Ken Lachlan (kenneth.lachlan@uconn.edu).

The **Director of Graduate Studies** (DGS) is a faculty member who is responsible for administering the graduate program within the department. The DGS is the first contact person if students have general questions or concerns about the graduate program. The current DGS is Kirstie Farrar (kirstie.farrar@uconn.edu).

The **Director of Undergraduate Studies** (DUS) is a faculty member who is responsible for administering the undergraduate program within the department. Since graduate students who have teaching assistantships will be working with undergraduate students as TAs or Instructors of Record, the DUS can serve as a resource for questions or concerns about the undergraduate program. The current DUS is Steve Stifano (stephen.stifano@uconn.edu).

The **Program Administrator** manages administrative tasks within the department and in cooperation with various college and university units. Among other duties, she is responsible for payroll and maintaining accurate records of graduate students' academic progress. The current Program Administrator is Charlene Haukom (charlene.haukom@uconn.edu).

The **Program Assistant** assists the Program Administrator with many administrative duties, but in particular is responsible for graduate admissions, travel reimbursements, professional membership and conference registrations, and classroom assignments. The current Program Assistant is Michael Melnik (michael.melnik@uconn.edu).

The **Academic Advisors** are professional staff responsible for providing academic guidance to undergraduate students in Communication, as well as information for those interested in Communication. Our current Academic Advisors are Katie D'Antonio (kathryn.dantonio@uconn.edu) and Jose "Joel" Nebres (joel.nebres@uconn.edu) . They are both located in the department's Undergraduate Advising Office in room 245 Arjona.

Faculty

Faculty bios and contact information can be found on the department's website at https://comm.uconn.edu/faculty/

David Atkin, PhD (Michigan State University, 1988), Professor.

Anne Basaran, PhD (University of Connecticut, 2016), Associate Professor in-Residence.

Saraswathi Bellur, PhD (Pennsylvania State University, 2012), Associate Professor.

John Christensen, PhD (University of Southern California, 2011), Associate Professor.

Amanda Cooper, PhD (University of Arizona, 2023), Assistant Professor.

David D'Alessio, PhD (Michigan State University, 1997), Associate Professor.

Shardé Davis, PhD (University of Iowa, 2016), Associate Professor.

Amanda Denes, PhD (University of California, Santa Barbara, 2012), Professor.

Kirstie M. Farrar, PhD (University of California, Santa Barbara, 2001), Associate Professor.

Mark A. Hamilton, PhD (Michigan State University, 1987), Professor.

Elizabeth Hintz, PhD (University of South Florida, 2021), Assistant Professor.

Svetlana Kalnova, PhD (University of Connecticut, 2011), Assistant Professor in-Residence.

Kenneth Lachlan, PhD (Michigan State University, 2003), Professor.

Carolyn A. Lin, PhD (Michigan State University, 1987), Professor.

Zexin "Marsha" Ma, PhD (University of Maryland-College Park, 2018), Assistant Professor.

Rory McGloin, PhD (University of Connecticut, 2011). Associate Professor.

Thomas Meade, PhD (University of Alabama, 2012), Associate Professor in-Residence.

Kristine Nowak, PhD (Michigan State University, 2000), Professor.

Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch, PhD (Pennsylvania State University, 2011), Associate Professor.

Tyler Page, PhD (University of Maryland, 2018), Assistant Professor.

Diana Rios, PhD (University of Texas, 1993), Associate Professor. Jointly appointed with El Instituto.

Jocelyn Steinke, PhD (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Associate Professor.

Sara Stifano, PhD (University of Connecticut, 2016), Assistant Professor in-Residence.

Stephen Stifano, PhD (University of Connecticut, 2011), Associate Professor in-Residence.

Jiyoun Suk, PhD (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2021), Assistant Professor. Jointly appointed with the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Institute.

Office Equipment

Most office equipment (phones, photocopiers, fax machine) is available for departmental use only. Read signage for instructions on the use of this equipment, and see administrative staff with questions. Report any ongoing problems to staff immediately. Use of the photocopiers for scanning is available with a scan-only access code posted on the front of the copier. The computer in room 230 Arjona can be used by department faculty, graduate students, and staff on a first-come, first-served basis. The computer is loaded with full versions of SPSS, AMOS, HLM7, and Comprehensive Meta-Analysis, as well as Adobe Acrobat Pro. In addition, graduate students may use the attached printer for personal printing, up to a maximum of 250 pages per person, per semester. This printing allotment is linked to the individual NetID used at sign-in.

Facility Maintenance

Requests for building or equipment repairs or maintenance should be addressed to the administrative staff. If you are in the building when department staff are not available, and you become aware of a repair that is urgent or an emergency (i.e. no heat, serious water leak, etc.), please call 860-486-3113 or use the MyUConn app to report it and then inform the administrative staff via email to allow for follow-up the next business day.

Access and Security

While an active Comm graduate student, your HuskyOne ID card will allow you access to the Arjona building when it is locked, and you will be provided with keys to your assigned office area, the overhead bin at your assigned desk, and department common areas. You may also be provided with one or more keys to lab spaces in the department. With this access comes responsibility for security of the facilities and equipment, as well as your and your colleagues' personal safety.

You are also responsible for the security of your personal possessions. Items of all sorts have been known to "walk away" from labs or offices. This is especially true of books, computers, wallets, keys, and coats. Be aware that the building is accessible to the public during the day, and many people have access to the building after hours. Close and lock doors when you are out of your office and keep rooms such as the conference room, copy room, and grad room closed and locked during the evenings and weekends. If a theft should occur, please notify the police to report it (860-486-4800) and notify the administrative staff.

Remain alert if you are present in the building in the evening or on weekends. To report suspicious behavior at any time, call 860-486-4800 for Campus Police. In the event of an active emergency, you should always call 911.

Campus Emergencies

UConn has developed communication and response procedures for campus emergencies. As a member of the UConn community, you should be familiar with these procedures. More detailed information can

be found at the Office of Emergency Management's website http://oem.uconn.edu. The following is provided as an overview.

In the event of an emergency, the UConn community will be notified through a variety of mechanisms including text message, social media, email, voicemail, and the website http://alert.uconn.edu. Emails will go out to faculty, staff, and students. A voicemail will be posted at the University's 24-hour emergency closing information number, (860) 486-3768. UConn's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/uconn and Twitter account https://twitter.com/uconn will also broadcast the alert. Text messages will go out to those who have registered their phone number. As a UConn student, information from the Student Administration System is auto-enrolled into UConnALERT. Please ensure your personal information is up to date.

In any emergency situation, reacting quickly and calmly, and following directions, is of utmost importance. You play a critical role during emergency response procedures. Other people may not be familiar with the building they are in, the hazards presented in the building, or the procedures that should be followed to ensure their health and safety in the event of an emergency. They will depend on you for immediate direction and assistance.

Become familiar with the following terms:

- **Shelter-in-Place** – you should stay inside the building you are already in or closest to or immediately proceed to the closest building. This is typically used for severe weather events, such as a tornado. Preferably, when a shelter-in-place order is given, the shelter will be a small interior room with few or no windows, such as a bathroom. Do not lock the doors behind you as others may also need to shelter-in-place. Do not walk around or go outdoors once a shelter-in-place order has been given.
- **Evacuation** – you should leave the building or area you are in immediately and safely.
- **Lockdown** – a state of isolation or restricted access instituted as a security measure. You will be the safest by quickly placing a locked door or other barricade between you and the potential threat or danger.

You can prepare in advance by doing the following:

- Determine a location to seek shelter in your building for a Shelter-in-Place order.
- Determine an assembly point outside of your building for an Evacuation order. If you are in the Communication department, the assembly point is the Area 1 parking lot just up Whitney Road, toward the Dodd Center.
- Develop a system to account for everyone in your unit. If someone is not at the assembly point, do you know how to contact them?
- Develop a communications plan. This should include both work and personal contacts.

Go to the Office of Emergency Management's website http://oem.uconn.edu to learn more about responses to an active threat/active shooter, a bomb threat, extreme weather, a fire or explosion, a power outage, hazardous materials accidents, and medical emergencies.

Take note of the following phone numbers:

- Police/Fire: 911

- Non-emergency calls to UConn Police: (860) 486-4800
- Non-emergency calls to UConn Fire: (860) 486-4925
- Student Health Services 24-hour Advice Nurse: (860) 486-4700

Mental Health Resources

UConn's Student Health and Wellness (SHaW) Mental Health unit has many programs and services for graduate and undergraduate students. You can familiarize yourself with the full array of services at https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/mental-health/, but some of them include consultation and support drop-in hours, brief individual therapy, group therapy, psychiatric services, yoga, meditation, and neurofeedback. If you are seeking support for yourself, we encourage you to take advantage of these services. If, in the course of your work as a teaching assistant, you encounter a student who may need mental health services, you should consult your course supervisor immediately.

Services for Students with Disabilities

UConn's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) serves both undergraduate and graduate students to ensure a comprehensively accessible University experience where individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs, opportunities and activities as all others. The Center is also committed to promoting access and awareness as a resource to all members of the community. You may work with the CSD as a recipient of services or as a course instructor or TA who is advised to provide an accommodation for a student. Information about CSD is at https://csd.uconn.edu/.

Learning and Working Environment

Pets

University policy states the following: Pets generally are not permitted in or on any controlled space on University property, and are permitted only in outdoor areas open to the general public. However, individuals with disabilities are allowed to bring service animals and ESA's on and/or into controlled spaces as provided (see full policy at http://policy.uconn.edu/2017/06/12/animals-on-campus/).

While we are fully aware of the value of pet ownership, the presence of animals in University buildings may expose people to allergens and other risks in ways that are not compatible with our goal of a safe environment.

Smoking

Consistent with the General Rules of Conduct and Connecticut Laws, the UConn smoking policy prohibits smoking (including, but not limited to, tobacco and e-cigarettes) in all University owned or leased buildings, facilities and vehicles. Additionally, smoking is banned within 25 feet of all campus buildings, including residence halls. The full policy, including guidance on how to address non-compliance, is available at: http://policy.uconn.edu/?p=1038.

Professional Conduct

As graduate students, you represent the Communication Department and the University of Connecticut. As such you are expected to maintain professional and appropriate behavior while on campus or attending professional events, and while interacting with fellow students, faculty and staff. This includes keeping conversations appropriate and respectful of others, avoiding distracting others, and keeping your workspace neat and free from trash and food (if you have an assigned desk). If at any time you are unclear whether some aspect of your (or another graduate student's) conduct is appropriate and/or professional, please check with department leadership. A professional, respectful environment ensures that everyone will be able to focus on their learning and work. To this end, we also utilize and stress the importance of related university policies about conduct.

Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence

The University of Connecticut and the Department of Communication is committed to maintaining a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living and working environment for all members of the community – students, employees, and visitors. Academic and professional excellence can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination, discriminatory harassment or interpersonal violence. Discrimination diminishes individual dignity and impedes equal employment and educational opportunities. The University's Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence outlines each person's responsibility for fostering an appropriate environment. The full policy and related documents can be found at http://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence.

Department website

Our departmental website at http://comm.uconn.edu/ provides a wealth of information, including a section for our faculty and graduate students: https://comm.uconn.edu/forcomm/ (requires NetID login)

Communication Graduate Program General Information

Major Advisor and Advisory Committee

New students have been tentatively assigned to a major advisor based on listed preference or interest area noted in the application and faculty availability. It is expected that students will select a major advisor and other advising committee members during their first or second semester in the program after getting to know the faculty and taking some courses. When selecting a major advisor and committee members, students should consider shared research interests, helpfulness, compatibility, connectedness to networks for your future jobs, commitment to writing recommendations for you and discussing career decisions -- forever. Committee members should be faculty that the student wants to consult about their research. Faculty get "credit" for being a major advisor or on a committee, so it is fair to put faculty who are substantially assisting students on their committee.

Students must have a committee and a signed plan of study filed by the beginning of the third semester (see next section about Plan of Study for more information). It is important that your committee reflects your research goals and career objectives. Completed, approved plans should be emailed to degreeaudit@uconn.edu and copied to the Department Administrator and major advisor. Once the plan of study is filed, students may reconfigure the advising committee if members will be physically absent during the program completion, members resign, or students change research areas.

Students may not alter the members of the committee after they have started taking exams and before they have completed them. The principle is that the exam committee (which includes the student's advising committee) needs to remain the same as much as possible during the exams. If a faculty member resigns during the exam process, the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Head, in consultation with the student, will select a replacement for the duration of the exam.

The form to change major advisor must be signed by the new advisor. It is courteous to have the old advisor sign it as well. The form is at https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2017/08/Change-of-Major-Advisor.pdf.

Plan of Study

The plan of study is a list of the specific courses that a student will take towards their degree. Both MA and PhD students in Communication should submit a Plan of Study (POS) to the Graduate School no later than the second week of their third semester. The thesis and non-thesis versions of the Plan of Study for the MA program and the Plan of Study for the PhD program are on the Registrar's website, on the Forms page at https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/. Master's students should select their major advisor and discuss whether they wish to be considered for Plan A (thesis) or Plan B (exam) by the end of second semester, so the faculty may discuss their case and give appropriate guidance.

The student is to complete the POS form (see Appendix A for a helpful guide), and have it approved and signed by the major advisor and other committee members. The student should email completed, signed

forms to the Degree Audit unit at the Registrar (degreeaudit@uconn.edu) and copy the Department Administrator and major advisor.

If an approved master's or doctoral plan of study has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar and a change is needed, an email outlining the changes and including the major advisor's approval should be sent to Degree Audit.

Research Projects

Students headed for research or academic careers are actively encouraged to participate in on-going faculty research projects, initiate their own research, and follow-up on class projects. PhD students will need to complete two pre-dissertation research projects, the Mentored Research Project and the Second Research Project, and present the findings in a COMM 6800 colloquium. For more information about COMM 6800, see page 20.

CITI Training

All students involved in conducting research are required to take the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training and keep their certification current through refresher courses as necessary. The online training program is available at the CITI website: http://www.citiprogram.org/. UConn will accept CITI training taken at another institution in lieu of the UConn CITI Training. Evidence of having completed the CITI training must be provided to the faculty member before the student will be able to work on a research project. All people who are listed on a human subjects application must be CITI certified. UConn will only accept CITI training from another institution; no other forms of training will be accepted.

Human Subjects Review

When you are doing research that involves humans, you need to have prior approval from the Institutional Review Board. This board is a federally mandated oversight committee. You will need to submit the appropriate online forms to the IRB, which meets roughly once a month (see https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/irb/). Guidelines for the submission process are at https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/irb/submission-to-the-irb/. The standards and requirements are getting stricter, and it is important that your research is in compliance. The IRB periodically holds trainings for people who would like more guidance about a submission.

Graduate Internships

Graduate Internship COMM 5981

Students have the opportunity to complete an internship(s) for credit while enrolled in the graduate program. An internship should be an opportunity for growth in a COMM-related position. To enroll in this course, a student must secure an internship first, identify a site supervisor, and then contact the course supervisor. The course supervisor will contact the site supervisor to complete a learning contract. The learning contract will list the internship duties and the site supervisor will confirm their willingness to verify the student's hours worked at the end of the semester.

This course follows all guidelines outlined by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for internship courses (https://advising.clas.uconn.edu/policies/ - See "Internship Policy"). These guidelines include:

- No retroactive credit – Students must complete all hours during the semester which credit is requested.
- A student can earn a maximum of six credits of internship during the course of graduate study and may take the course a maximum of two times.
- Each credit requires a minimum of 42 hours worked at the internship.
- Students will be graded on an S/U basis.
- The internship may be paid or unpaid.
- The internship must be for an organization with a Federal Tax ID Number.
- Acceptable internships include those that relate to the field of communication and may position the student for professional work after graduation. Some exclusions apply:
- The student may not work for the COMM Department in any way. This includes as a Teaching or Research Assistant, as a Fellow, or any other work under the direct guidance of COMM faculty or staff (this excludes positions taken by the student to work for a COMM faculty or staff serving in a different role – i.e. if a COMM faculty member is working for a different department at UConn and all internship duties occur in the other department).
- The student may not work in a professional manner elsewhere in academia. This includes working as an adjunct instructor at UConn or another college or university.
- The student may not work at an employer or site supervisor's home office. Work must occur at an office or remotely in a location comfortable for the student.
- The internship may not be a student's full-time job.

Graduate Student Funding Sources

Many graduate students engaged in full-time degree study at the University of Connecticut hold graduate assistantships for teaching or research. Fellowship funding may also be available. Support from any of these sources is subject to terms of the funding source and to approval by The Graduate School. A brief definition of each is as follows:

An assistantship (teaching assistantship or research assistantship) is awarded to a graduate student who provides teaching or research support to the University that is a part of an academic program. In recognition of this support, the tuition of the student is provided by the grant/contract funding agency (for research assistants) or the University (for teaching assistants). Note that all assistantships must be administered through an academic department. Note that while an assistantship includes tuition, holders of an assistantship are still responsible for associated fees.

A fellowship is awarded to a graduate student to pursue an academic program, but does not require the student to provide any teaching or research support to the institution. Most fellowships are considered income and are therefore subject to income tax.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate students who meet the criteria listed below are eligible for graduate assistantships. Appointments are ordinarily made for the nine (9) month period, August 23rd through May 22nd.

Recipients serve the University as teaching assistants and research assistants. Graduate assistants ordinarily take fewer than the usual number of courses per year because of this added workload. To be appointed, to retain an appointment, or to be reappointed, a student must have been accorded Regular (not Provisional) status, must have been maintaining a cumulative grade point average of at least B (3.00) in any coursework taken, must be eligible to register for courses (i.e. must not have more than three (3) grades of Incomplete on her/his graduate academic record***), must be enrolled in a graduate degree program scheduled to extend through the entire period of the appointment or reappointment, and must be a full-time student, counting coursework and/or its equivalent together with assistantship duties, throughout the period.

In order to perform duties with direct instructional responsibilities, a graduate student appointed as a Teaching Assistant will need to provide proof of English proficiency. UConn's English Proficiency Policy for TAs and Testing Procedures can be found at https://ita.uconn.edu/english-proficiency-policy-for-ita/ along with information about how to provide proof of proficiency

*** Though the graduate school allows students with up to three unresolved incompletes to enroll in courses, department policy is stricter with respect to students' eligibility for reappointment as a graduate assistant. Students should be aware that the Department of Communication may not offer GA reappointment to students who have an unresolved incomplete grade for more than one semester, with the exception of COMM 6800. GAs who have an incomplete in one or more courses (with the exception of 6800) in the fall will be expected to resolve all incompletes during the spring semester to have priority for teaching or research assistantships the following summer and fall. Note that summer funding and the first round of fall funding is typically offered sometime before spring break. Students who have an incomplete in the spring semester need to finish their incomplete by mid-fall or risk losing priority for funding for the subsequent spring semester on the grounds of insufficient progress towards the degree.

The holder of a full assistantship devotes an average of 20 hours per week to assistantship duties, whereas the holder of a half assistantship devotes 10 hours per week to assistantship duties. Assistantships are not available for less than 10 hours per week.

Graduate assistants divide their full-time efforts between study and assistantship responsibilities. As a result, they may not hold concurrent employment with the University or the State of Connecticut without the written consent of their major advisor. Stipend rates for graduate assistants in programs based at Storrs are graduated in terms of progress toward the advanced degree and experience. Nine-month rates for Storrs and the regional campuses can be found at https://payroll.uconn.edu/graduate/.

Please see the department's Graduate Assistant Handbook for further information on GA appointment dates and expectations.

Summer and Winter Session Teaching Assignments

Summer and winter session teaching is offered to current graduate assistants in good standing, depending on department need. Summer and winter teaching assignments are determined based on the following (these are not in order of priority):

- Affirmation of interest in teaching during summer or winter by deadline
- Progress towards degree, including no outstanding incompletes (see above)
- Past performance as a TA
- Ability to teach specific courses in an independent classroom
- Seniority, with more advanced graduate students (who are still within their GA funding period) being prioritized
- Department need to have a TA prep a course in the summer in anticipation of an upcoming academic year teaching assignment
- Departmental service, such as students' previous willingness to help the department in times of need.

Note that by contract, faculty have priority over graduate students for all teaching assignments. Also, except in rare circumstances, a student will not be offered winter and summer session teaching in the same academic year.

Academic Travel and Conference Participation

Graduate students intending to travel for academic purposes (presentation, research, etc.) and being funded by a University source (e.g. a *faculty grant* that covers grad student travel) should consult with the department's administrative staff very early in their planning process. Failure to do so may result in an inability to reimburse the student for any travel expenses, regardless of how much funding the student is granted and from what source.

Whenever possible, the *department* supports graduate students planning to attend the annual conferences of the Associate for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the National Communication Association (NCA), the International Communication Association (ICA), the International Association for Relationship Research (IARR), and the Eastern Communication Association (ECA) by paying for up to two *conference registration fees*. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, the department will pay for an active graduate student's ***early bird*** conference registration fee at the early or regular student registration rate. If you miss this deadline your conference registration will not be paid by the department. When it is more cost-effective to become a member of the organization in order to get a reduced registration rate, the department will pay for one year of student membership as well. However, these fees MUST be paid using the department procurement card (credit card). Do not pay for organizational membership or conference registration on your own and expect to be reimbursed. Please note that the department will only pay for registrations at the early registration rate.

If funding is available, a student may ask that another conference of similar cost be substituted for one of the above. The student should fill out the Graduate Student Conference Substitution Request Form (HuskyCT→Comm Teaching and Learning→COMM Grad Student Resources→Forms) and have it

signed by their advisor and then submit the form to the DGS. The Director of Graduate Studies will then consult with the Graduate Studies Committee for approval.

Graduate Student Fellowships

There are several sources of fellowship funds for graduate students, the most common of which are described below This money is intended, in part, to help offset the costs associated with research and with conference travel (over and above registration fees typically paid by the department). Because the award amounts, criteria, and procedures are subject to change, you should use the following information as a guide only and check the relevant websites or offices for more details.

Fellowship payments are subject to federal and state income taxes unless the payment is used to pay for qualified tuition and required enrollment fees. You will be personally responsible for any income taxes resulting from the receipt of this fellowship payment. You should be advised that fellowship payments used to pay for travel, supplies or equipment used in your independent research are not exempt from taxation. Fellowship payments, although taxable, are not subject to income tax withholding if paid to a U.S. citizen or resident alien. It is the sole responsibility of the student to report and pay taxes on the taxable portion of any fellowship, stipend, award or grant that he/she receives. Consistent with IRS guidance, the University does not withhold taxes on the taxable portion of fellowships, stipends, awards or grants except in limited circumstances involving nonresident aliens. If you are a nonresident alien, federal income taxes may be required to be withheld from your payment unless you qualify for exemption by way of an income tax treaty between the United States and your country of tax residence. Fellowship recipients may wish to consider making estimated federal and state income tax payments.

Additional details, and answers to many frequently asked questions, may be found on the following websites: https://tax.uconn.edu/student-tax-faqs/; https://bursar.uconn.edu/1098-t/1098-t-faq/; https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf

Department Fellowships

The department often receives money from the Graduate School and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for graduate student fellowships. If these funds are not restricted to a particular group (PhD students only, for example), the department generally awards these fellowship funds based upon participation and scholarly activities. Funds are generally distributed based on the following criteria. The faculty reserve the right to adjust these criteria as needed.

- Good academic standing = 1 point
- In person attendance at ECA, WSCA, CSCA, IARR, AEJMC, NCA, or ICA = 2 points each
- Virtual attendance at ECA, WSCA, CSCA, IARR, AEJMC, NCA, or ICA = 1 pt each
- Presentation at ECA, WSCA, CSCA, IARR, AEJMC, NCA, or ICA = 1 point per presentation
- Best/top paper at ECA, WSCA, CSCA, IARR, AEJMC, NCA, or ICA = 1 point
- In person attendance at other out of state conference as approved = 2 points each
- Virtual attendance at other out of state conference as approved = 1 pt each
- Presentation at other out of state conference as approved = 1 point per presentation

- Best/top paper at other out of state conference as approved = 1 point
- In press or published book chapter = 3 points each
- In press or published journal article = 4 points each
- Departmental service = 1 point for serving as an officer with CGSA or as a graduate student representative on departmental committees. Points are not awarded for expected good citizenship such as helping with the open house or the grad fair booth**.**
- University service (serving on a university wide committee) = 1 point
- Service to the field (e.g. serving on a committee for a professional organization) = 1 point
- Grant applications submitted = 3 points

PLUS Additional points for 6800/colloquium attendance:

- Students can earn up to one fellowship point per semester, with attendance being a percentage of one point (e.g., if 10 "Expected Attendance Events" or EAEs in a semester and a student attends 8, they get .8 fellowship points)
- No excuses accepted for absences

Students must be in good academic standing at the time they are being considered for awards. Unresolved incomplete grades or insufficient progress toward the degree can make a student ineligible for a fellowship award. Fellowship funds will only be awarded when students have UConn and not another institutional affiliation at the time of the publication acceptance or conference presentation, and at the time of the award. Institutional affiliation can be determined by employment and institutional affiliation given in the final version of the paper. It is the student's responsibility to submit information of activities before the deadline. The deadline will be announced at least two weeks in advance via email.

Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship Program

Pending budgetary approval, the Graduate School awards a limited number of Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships (DDF) awards for advanced students in doctoral programs requiring a dissertation. The DDF enables students to place a higher priority on writing their doctoral dissertation as expeditiously as possible.

To be eligible for the DDF, students must have on file with the Graduate School prior to the submission deadline:

- Satisfactory approval and completion of the Doctoral General Examination.
- Affirmation from the student stating that his/her personal income (which does not include the student's family or spousal income) will not exceed the maximum personal income limit for the year the student is requested the award. The maximum limit is specified on the application form and changes each year.

For more information, go to https://grad.uconn.edu/financing/fellowships/dissertation/

Departmental Doctoral Dissertation Funding

Doctoral students who have successfully defended a dissertation proposal may also be able to apply for dissertation research funding from the department, given that the department has these funds available. The student may only apply for department funds if they do not receive the Graduate School Summer

Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship or the funding is not available OR if the dissertation research project warrants additional funding beyond the Graduate School Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. The application process involves submitting to the Director of Graduate Studies a one-page proposal for the use of the funding and a one-page budget and justification, explaining why the additional funding is needed (sample size, special equipment, etc.). The student must also submit proof of application to the Graduate School Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. The application will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee and brought to the full faculty for a vote.

Conference Participation Award

The Graduate School's Conference Participation Award (previously known as the Doctoral Student Travel Award) is available to support doctoral students' ability to present their research at national or international meetings and conferences, including both in-person and virtual events. This conference participation fellowship in the amount of $750 will be awarded for the semester following the application submission and paid through the student's fee bill.

Eligibility criteria and application information can be found at:

https://grad.uconn.edu/graduate-students/conference-participation-award/

Graduate Certificate in College Instruction

Doctoral students who complete all of the requirements for the Graduate Certificate in College Instruction (i.e. the 9 credits of coursework) will have their Communication coursework requirements reduced by one 3-credit elective. The waiver will not be applied until all 9 credits for the certificate are complete. Note: This reduction will no longer be effective should the certificate program change their rules to allow their required coursework to count toward doctoral program requirements.

Academic Standards

Academic Progress

Graduate students are expected to make adequate progress through the course of their graduate programs. Adequate academic progress for full-time students will be measured based upon the timelines published in this handbook (MA timeline and PhD timeline). Each student is evaluated annually by the department faculty and will receive a letter stating the faculty's assessment of academic progress and performance, as well as research productivity. Lack of adequate progress may make a student ineligible for assistantship or fellowship funding.

Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

When a graduate student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School informs the student's major advisor. The major advisor, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, may recommend a probation period of one semester, during which the student must raise his or her GPA or be dismissed. If the major advisor recommends probation, the student should discuss his or her situation with the advisor to develop an academic remediation plan.

The Graduate School allows students to continue to enroll in courses if they have no more than 3 incompletes on their transcript. Students who find themselves carrying multiple incompletes should speak with their course instructors, their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to make a plan to address their incomplete work. Refer to the website of the Graduate School for more information.

Academic Integrity

Scholarly activity at the graduate level takes many forms, including, but not limited to, classroom activity, research experience, and writing for public dissemination. Integrity in all of these activities is of paramount importance, and the Graduate School of the University of Connecticut requires that the highest ethical standards in teaching, learning, research, and service be maintained.

The Graduate Faculty Council, in accordance with the provisions of its By-Laws, has adopted a policy concerning scholarly integrity in graduate education and research. This policy is available in full at https://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/grad-school-info/scholarly-integrity-and-misconduct/.

Note: Student misconduct other than scholarly misconduct, as defined in this policy, is governed by the University's Student Code of Conduct. Enforcement of its provisions is the responsibility of the Director of Community Standards. For more information about the Student Code of Conduct, go to http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/.

Self-Plagiarism

Please note the following guidelines established by the department's Graduate Studies Committee regarding "self-plagiarism":

It is considered self-plagiarism, and therefore not allowed, to re-use text* between courses or graded assignments. It is, however, allowable to submit material from course papers and dissertations for conferences and publication, even if published in ProQuest. In such circumstances, text can be used as written. Students should be careful, however, when publishing pieces online, on blogs, on ResearchGate, etc. In addition, multiple pieces from a dissertation cannot use the exact same text (e.g. methods, literature review, etc.). The author should re-write the material if carving out multiple manuscripts from the dissertation.

* "text" refers to the student's writing, whether that be a full paper or a portion thereof, such as a paragraph.

Artificial Intelligence

All students are expected to act in accordance with the Guidelines for Academic Integrity at the University of Connecticut. If you have questions about academic integrity or intellectual property, you should consult with me or consult UConn's guidelines for academic integrity. Posting course material on student tutoring and course sharing websites (e.g. Chegg, Course Hero) may be a violation of my copyright and intellectual property and a violation of academic integrity. Many of you may also be aware of the recent release of ChatGPT3, a Large Language artificial intelligence (AI) model that has the capacity to quickly produce text on a range of topics. ChatGPT3 aggregates the ideas and insights of many researchers without giving them credit. Submitting ChatGPT-generated text as your own work

would be an act of plagiarism insofar as it would involve passing off the work of others as your own. For these reasons, you are not allowed to use this ChatGPT or other similar tools.to produce essays or other academic work, unless otherwise explicitly permitted to do so. You should also know that the university has AI detection software that distinguishes between AI generated content and human generated content.

COMM Research Colloquium

In addition to coursework, students are expected to attend and participate in the Research Colloquia Series on Tuesdays/Thursdays at 12:30-1:45 p.m. It is the intellectual heart of the department, where the faculty and graduate students come together to listen to research presentations and discuss ideas. The talks can include MA and PhD defenses, outside speakers, current faculty, graduate student research (COMM 6800 presentations for PhD students), and job candidate presentations for faculty positions.

PhD students in their second year should get a copy of the COMM 6800 Syllabus from the coordinator via HuskyCT, which contains information on deadlines, scheduling, and approval forms. Students are advised to complete their COMM 6800 projects by the end of their 4th semester. Students will sign up for COMM 6800 credit in the semester in which they present/complete the second 6800.

MA Program Information

MA Program Description and Requirements

The MA program in Communication emphasizes the scientific investigation of human communication behavior, stressing developments in communication theory and research as they relate to society and the communication process. The MA in Communication prepares persons for entry into a number of fields that require analysis of communication situations (e.g., advertising and marketing research, personnel training, organization research, social program evaluation). It also provides a solid foundation for PhD work.

All students must complete a program of study of at least 33 credit hours of graduate course work, including a core of required courses. Students must culminate their MA program by either writing a thesis or taking a comprehensive exam. The department encourages all students to discuss their options with their committee members, though most MA students choose the exam option. It is possible for students to complete a project and oral exam rather than the traditional written and oral exam. This approach is sometimes desirable for people going into applied areas. Past projects have been done, for example, by students studying new communication technology and communication campaigns.

The MA program provides the student with a strong theoretical base for analyzing and researching human communication. Students will receive excellent preparation for PhD work, as well as a wide range of information about communication that may be applied in many non-academic settings. Students may wish to focus their studies in more applied domains and use their knowledge of communication theory and research methods in a commercial setting. For example, students who specialize in marketing

may find employment in marketing research firms, larger advertising agencies that maintain their own research departments, and corporations that produce and evaluate their own advertising or personal sales materials. Students interested in careers as behavioral researchers and change agents in organizations may wish to specialize in strategic or organizational communication. Such specialties may include a variety of theoretical approaches to organizational behavior and organizational change techniques through coursework in other departments.

Core Courses

Core courses provide the student with exposure to the major research techniques central to the scholarly literature of communication. The basics of theory construction, techniques of data gathering and data analysis, and typical research projects in communication are covered. As a group, these courses provide a basis for advanced coursework offered by the department.

Core courses and the semester in which each should be completed are listed below:

COMM 5000 Fundamentals of Theory, Research, and Design (1st sem)
COMM 5001 Introduction to Graduate Communication Research (1st sem)
COMM 5002 Communication Research Methods (2nd sem)

The remainder of the student's program will be determined in consultation with the student's advisor and advisory committee. Students may include courses from other departments within the University with the permission of the advisory committee.

Choosing a Specialty

In addition to the Core Courses listed above, students must take two core theory courses relevant to their specialty area, as determined by the major advisor and committee members. Such courses might include:

COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research
COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5300 Mass Communication Theory
COMM 5660 Computer-Mediated Communication
COMM 6850 Seminar in Marketing Communication

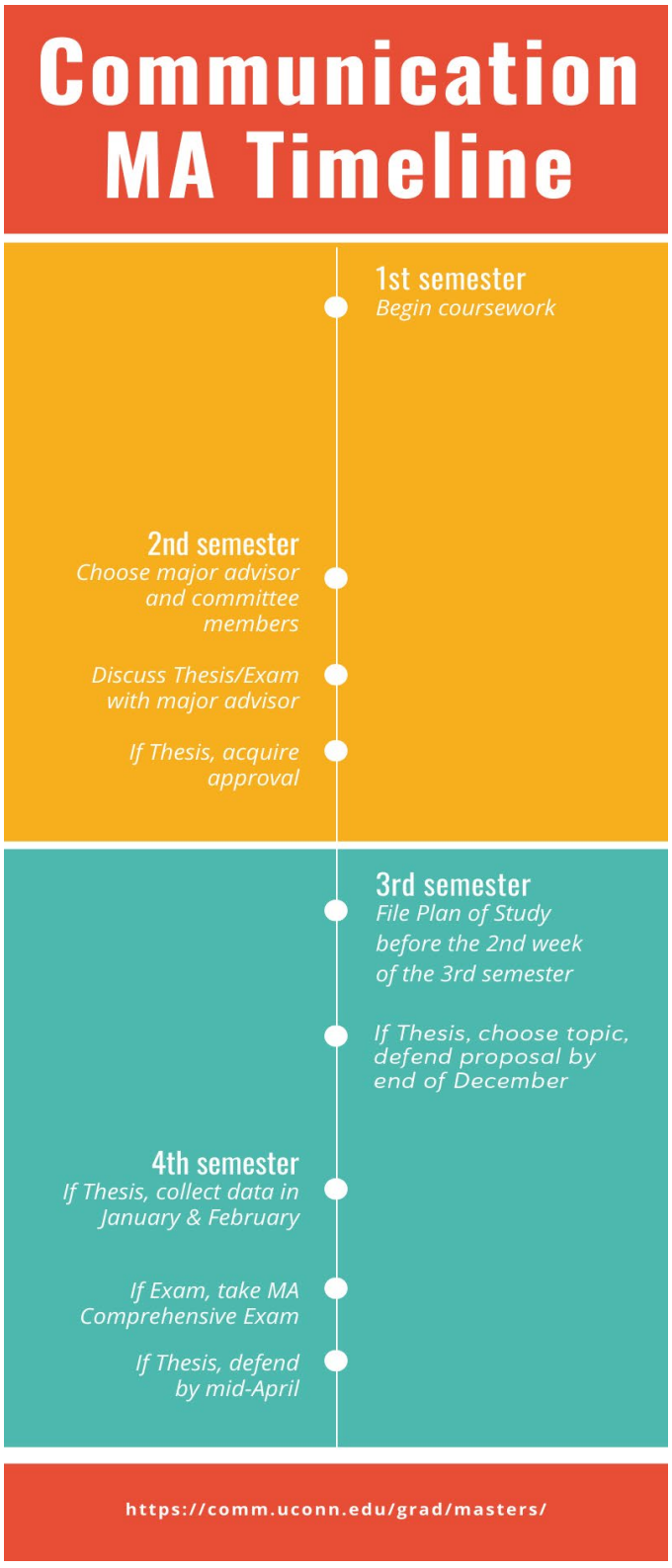
To complete the course requirements, students must choose additional courses from COMM offerings (four additional courses for thesis option; six additional courses for comprehensive exam option) and one related elective course inside or outside the department (for a total of 33 course credits). For students with a specialty area in a related discipline, up to three of the six courses (for the exam option) and up to two courses (for the thesis option) may be outside of the department. Additional courses inside and outside the department might include (in addition to the courses noted above):

COMM 5101 Motivation
COMM 5120 Communication Campaigns
COMM 5150 Crisis and Risk Communication

COMM 5220 Group Communication Research
COMM 5310 Seminar in Mass Communication Research
COMM 5330 Children and Mass Media
COMM 5500 Nonverbal Communication
COMM 5501 Nonverbal Communication & Persuasion
COMM 5640 Social Media Use and Effects
COMM 5650 Communication Technology and Society: Theory and Research
COMM 5900 Professional Communication
MKTG 5115 Market-Driven Management
MKTG 5220 Strategic Marketing
MKTG 5625 Marketing for Global Competitiveness
MKTG 5230 Product and Innovation Management
MKTG 5635 Marketing for Non-profit Institutions
MKTG 5640 Integrated Marketing Communications
MKTG 5660 Customer and Market Behavior
OPIM 5110 Operations Management
PSYC 5613 Industrial Psychology
PSYC 5703 Advanced Social Psychology

These are simply examples of potential course options, and other courses may be substituted by advisory committee approval.

MA Program Timeline



Students typically take 9 credits per semester. Enrollment in at least 9 credits per semester is necessary for students to make adequate progress towards their degree, so those taking less than 9 credits in any given semester need to get approval from the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Department of Communication offers the MA Thesis option (Plan A) or MA Exam option (Plan B). In addition, it is possible for students selecting the Exam Option to complete a project and oral exam rather than the traditional written and oral exam. While most students will choose the Exam Option and take the traditional written and oral exams, students who are considering either the Thesis Option or a project instead of a written exam must discuss this with their major advisor before the end of their second semester. The student's major advisor will bring the request to the full faculty immediately following the end of the second semester.

Year 1

Fall Semester

In their first semester, students take a methods course – COMM 5001 Introduction to Graduate Communication Research. (Although we strongly urge all students to take the introductory methods course, students who have recently taken an equivalent methods and statistics course and who have experience conducting research may talk with the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the start of the fall semester about the possibility of waiving COMM 5001. Note that this course would need to be replaced by another class to meet the 33-credit requirement)

Students should also take COMM 5000. In addition, each student should take the foundation theory course(s) in his/her area and the most relevant electives.

Year 1

Spring Semester

In the spring semester of their first year, students take the second methods course – COMM 5002 Communication Research Methods.

During this time, each student should be forming an advisory committee by choosing a major advisor and at least two associate advisors.

In addition, each student should be discussing with the selected major advisor the completion of the Thesis Option (Plan A) or the Exam Option (Plan B). Students wanting to pursue the Thesis Option or wanting to complete a project in lieu of the written exam in the Exam Option should inform their major advisor of this by the end of the second semester. Immediately after the second semester, the faculty will meet to determine whether to approve the plans of any student not opting for the Exam Option with the written and oral exams.

Year 2 – For students approved for Thesis Option (Plan A)

Fall and Spring Semesters

Students should have received notification in the annual review letter (sent in late May or early June) that the faculty approve the thesis plan. Students who do not have faculty approval cannot do a thesis.

At the beginning of the 3rd semester, students should adjust their advising committee members to reflect their area of research, file the Plan of Study, and choose the thesis topic. Students must complete and file their Plan of Study for the master's degree by the second week of the start of the 3rd semester.

Students must take COMM 5003 or 5004 Advanced Communication Research Methods.

In order to finish on time, the student should defend the thesis proposal before the Winter break, collect data in January and February, analyze data and write it up in March, and defend their thesis in mid-April in time for May graduation. Failure to finish the thesis by the end of summer is considered a lack of good progress towards the degree, and continued funding is unlikely.

Note: This schedule may be extended into the following fall semester for students accepted into our PhD program, with completion necessary by the end of the fall semester.

Year 2 – For students taking Exam Option (Plan B)

Fall and Spring Semesters

Students must complete and file their Plan of Study for the master's degree by the second week of the start of the 3rd semester. By that time, the advising committee needs to be finalized, because all committee members must sign the plan of study form.

Students need a total of 33 credits. In most cases, two more courses are needed in the 4th semester. The rest of the time is spent reviewing for the exam. Any credits taken over 33 can be counted towards the PhD, if the student goes on to obtain one at UConn.

The MA exam is given during the 4th semester and is arranged by the Director of Graduate Studies. Students completing a project instead must orally defend the project. Following the grading of the exam, the Report on Final Examination must be initiated to record the outcome with the Registrar.

MA Program Checklist

FIRST-SECOND SEMESTERS:

Major advisor and committee members:

Major Advisor _____

Committee Member _____

Committee Member _____

MA Plan (Check one)

_____Thesis option (Plan A: requires faculty approval)

_____Exam option (Plan B).

THIRD SEMESTER*:*

_____Signed Plan of Study filed (date: _____)

Thesis Option: (Check off when completed)

_____Second semester: abbreviated proposal to faculty for approval of Plan A.

_____Full thesis proposal in third (fall) semester, write introduction and methods.

_____Full thesis proposal defense by the end of the third semester.

_____Thesis IRB approved (date: _____)

_____Revise proposal, obtain final approval by beginning of spring semester classes

_____Data collection, analysis, and write-up in the first three weeks of spring semester

_____Initial draft to advisor in mid-February: expect multiple revisions.

_____Approved draft to Committee in Mid-March

_____Defend in early April

_____Final approval of advisor and committee in April

_____Submit to Graduate School in late April.

(This schedule may be extended into the following fall semester for students accepted into our PhD program, with completion necessary by the end of the fall semester)

Exam Option:

_____Take MA exams prior to spring break (fourth semester).

MA Comprehensive Exams

A student's MA exams will normally take place before spring break of the 4th semester in the program. According to Graduate School rules, the exam must be passed within one year of completing the MA coursework.

The exam committee consists of all members of the students' advising committee. When more than one student is taking the exams in the same semester, the advising committees are pooled into one exam committee and chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies. Note that the student's specialty area is set when the Plan of Study is submitted.

The student should discuss the schedule for the exams with the major advisor at least one semester prior to the desired exam date.

The format for MA exams is a closed-book, in-person exam, with three questions (2 hours per question). There will be two questions on theory and one on methodology. One theory question will be based on the MA Specialty (as established by the Plan of Study, such as Marketing, Interpersonal, or Mass Communication). The other will draw more broadly from Communication Theory. The MA comprehensive exam is broader than an exam for a particular course, and should demonstrate integration of key ideas. Closed-book exams require that the student use a computer that they have not had prior access to, and that they leave all possessions in another room.

The Director of Graduate Studies should provide a final plan for the exam in writing to each member of the exam committee and the Department Head. The Exam Committee writes the questions. Administration of the exam will be done by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Evaluations of the student’s answers by faculty will be due on Monday at 5:00 p.m. in the second week of classes following the general examination (note that this timeline may differ in the Spring semester due to Spring Break). Students will be informed if faculty have concerns about any of their answers by Tuesday at 12:30 in the second week of classes following the general examination.

The Director of Graduate Studies may schedule an hour-long oral exam no later than two weeks after the last exam was submitted, if requested by any member of the examination committee. The oral portion of the exam is a defense of the student’s written answers intended to allow faculty a chance to ask for clarification. Students asked to present an oral defense are advised to review their answers. At the beginning they will be given a chance to amend their response. The period after the examinations and before the orals is considered to still be the examination period. The entire exam committee must be present (or on a conference call or video). The student may defend virtually or in person as needed. Students should not talk with others about their answers or discuss the examination in any way with faculty members in advance of the oral exam. In the oral exam, an emphasis will be placed on the clarification of written exam answers, although faculty members may ask additional questions to assess the student’s familiarity with communication theory and methods. If the oral defense is needed, faculty grades are not final or shared with the student until after the oral portion of the exam.

Students must pass each question to pass the exam. If the faculty determines that a student needs remedial work before they can answer a question, or determines the results to be inconclusive, the answer to the question is graded as a failure. If the student fails the exam or the committee determines the results to be inconclusive, the committee may choose to recommend to the Grad School one additional examination. Failure to pass the re-examination means dismissal from the program. According to Department of Communication policy, if the student fails two of the questions, the student fails the exam and is eligible to take a new exam once at a later date. If the student passes two of the questions but fails one, the student is eligible to take a partial exam once at a later date, with a new question in the failed area.

Immediately following the grading of the written exam (or oral exam, if there was one) the Report on the Final Examination must be submitted to record the results of the exam, regardless of the outcome.

Master's Thesis Proposal Defense

1) Work closely with and submit drafts to your major advisor. Expect to write multiple drafts.
2) All drafts should be free of grammatical and typographical errors. Sentences should be coherent. If the major advisor finds that they are having to edit too much for language, they may require you to get editorial help elsewhere before submitting more drafts to them. Faculty should be spending time on content, not grammar.
3) After the major advisor approves a draft as ready to be defended, show it to other committee members. You can also bring specific issues to other committee members earlier, but do not expect them to read the whole document until the advisor has approved it.
4) Allow one week for committee members to read drafts and return them to you. Expect revisions from other committee members.
5) When all committee members agree that you have a defendable draft, complete the Thesis Proposal Scheduling Form, available on HuskyCT, which must be signed by all committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies.
6) Work with the department administrator to schedule a date and time (2-hour block) for the defense when all committee members and reviewers can attend. The date for the proposal defense must be at least 3 business days from when the defendable draft of the proposal is sent to the committee and the department administrator. This allows the draft to "lie in state" in the department office so that other people may review it if they choose. The department administrator will make a formal announcement to the department via email.

Master's Thesis Defense

1) Be certain to apply online for graduation early in the semester or summer in which you expect to complete all degree requirements. For more information about steps to graduation, go to https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/masters-degrees/.
2) Work closely with and submit drafts to your major advisor. Expect to write multiple drafts.
3) After the major advisor approves a draft as ready to be defended, show it to other committee members. You can also bring specific issues to other committee members earlier, but do not expect them to read the whole document until the advisor has approved it.
4) Allow one week for committee members to read drafts and return them to you. Expect revisions from other committee members.

5) Properly format your thesis.
6) When all members agree that you have a defendable draft, complete the Thesis Scheduling Form, available on HuskyCT, which must be signed by all committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies. After approval by the Director of Graduate Studies, send a copy of the thesis to the department administrator and schedule the thesis defense.
7) Schedule a date and time (2-hour block) for the defense when all committee members and readers can attend. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure enough faculty members can attend the defense (minimum of 3 for thesis defense). You can send the draft as soon as it is approved and do not have to wait until you have a defense date scheduled. The date for the thesis defense must be at least 3 business days from when the defendable draft of the thesis has been sent to the committee and the department administrator.
8) The department administrator will make a formal announcement to the department via email and submit the defense as an event on the electronic calendars for the department and the Graduate School.
9) Following a successful thesis defense, submit your thesis and thesis approval.

PhD Program Information

PhD Program Description and Requirements

The PhD program in Communication offers students a unique curriculum that stresses the integration of theory and research in communication. Our program places strong emphasis on communication theory and a wide range of research skills and is designed to provide students with a rigorous course of study that will prepare them for careers in the academic, commercial, or non-profit spheres. Our doctoral alumni are active and productive scholars and practitioners of the communication discipline. They can be found teaching and conducting research in Communication departments, schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, and schools of Public Health. UConn Communication doctoral alumni are also valued in industry and government for their skills in research on mass communication and new technology effects, advertising, audience analysis, evaluation, and other areas of communication. Because our program emphasizes a balance between theory and application, alumni leave UConn with a dynamic skill and knowledge set, qualifying them for employment opportunities both inside and outside the academy.

The general aim of the PhD program in Communication is to provide students with a rigorous course of study that will prepare them for careers in either the academic, commercial, or non-profit spheres. The curriculum is not directed toward one of these domains, but rather attempts to give students a breadth of scholarly training that will allow them to pursue any of these career paths.

Academic Sphere. There is a very strong academic research component to communication. Persons with interests in communication are currently found on Communication faculties and in schools of Journalism and Mass Communication. Communication is an established academic area, as reflected in published research by faculty members in departments of Communication.

Commercial and Non-Profit Spheres. Many organizations realize the value of research in mass communication effects, advertising, audience analysis, and other areas of communication. They have created a significant number of positions in communication. At the middle and upper management level, these are often filled by people with PhD degrees. Training for persons filling these positions is often obtained in programs that do not equally emphasize communication theory and methods. The PhD program in Communication is designed to provide the student with strong knowledge of communication theory, coupled with very strong research skills. A graduate of this program can step into a commercial research or non-profit position without facing a period of hit-or-miss "on-the-job" training.

PhD Program Elements

Length of Program

It is expected that students entering with a master's degree will require approximately four years to complete the requisite course work, pass qualifying exams, and then write and defend the dissertation. (Note that students who earn an MA degree from our own program will require approximately three years, having already taken some of the required coursework.) The final program of coursework and

research for a student is created in consultation with their academic advisory committee. This program takes into account the student's prior coursework and career objectives.

Required Coursework

See below for the required courses for all tracks as well as the track-specific required coursework.

Research Requirement (COMM 6800)

Students participate in at least two research projects mentored by faculty. These projects provide students with the necessary research experience before beginning the independent research required by the dissertation. They also put students in a better position to enter the PhD job market. Both research projects (a.k.a. COMM 6800s) must be completed and presented before defending the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam.

General Exam

The General Exam consists of two parts. After coursework is completed, students must (1) defend the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam and, (2) take the Theory Exam.

Dissertation

An original research project designed by the student, approved by the advising committee.

PhD Program Coursework Overview

Required for All Tracks

4 Required Methodology Courses:

COMM 5000 Fundamentals of Theory,Research, and Design
COMM 5001 Introduction to Graduate Communication Research
COMM 5002 Communication Research Methods
COMM 5003 Advanced Communication Research Methods OR COMM 5004 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication

2 Elective Methodology Courses:

- Choose two of the following, or similar with approval of committee; note that COMM 5003 or COMM 5004 can be counted as an elective methodology course if not taken to fulfill the methodology requirements above
- One must be advanced course as indicated by *

  AH 6005 Multilevel Mediation and Moderation Modeling*
  COMM 6001 Proseminar in Communication Research*
  EPSY 6615 Structural Equation Modeling*
  HDFS 5002 Special Topics: Longitudinal Methods*
  HDFS 5005 Qualitative Research Methods
  MKTG 6203 Quantitative Models in Marketing
  NURS 6130 Intro to Qualitative Methods in Nursing
  NURS 6165 Mixed Methods in Nursing Research
  PSYC 5702 Field Research Methods

PSYC 5130 Causal Modeling in Social Psychology*
PSYC 5131 Meta-Analysis: Theory and Practice
PSYC 6130 Measurement and Scaling
SOCI 5231 Qualitative Methodology
STAT 5515 Design of Experiments

1 Directed Research Requirement:

COMM 6800 Seminar and Directed Research in Communication

3 Required Communication Theory Courses (determined by track—see options below)
5 Emphasis Area Courses (1 must be COMM; determined by track—see options below)

Substitutions to required courses may be possible for students who have already completed the required course(s) elsewhere with a grade of B or higher. In such cases, students may substitute a different course within the requirement area (e.g., methods, content, theory, etc.) with approval of the advising committee.

Note on Emphasis Area Courses: Students may add a secondary sub-track as their emphasis area by taking any of the required courses for the secondary track to complete the requirements for the emphasis area.

PhD Program Tracks

Interpersonal Communication Track

Required Communication Theory Course Options (choose at least 3):

COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication (required)
COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research
COMM 5220 Group Communication Research
COMM 5500 Nonverbal Communication

Emphasis Area Course Recommendations

- Choose 5 from theory course options above, course list below, or similar with approval of committee
- 1 must be COMM:

COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5501 Seminar in Nonverbal Communication and Persuasion
HDFS 5240 Aging: Personality and Social Interaction
HDFS 5250 Close Relationships
HDFS 5310 Patterns and Dynamics of Family Interaction
HDFS 5311 Theories of Family Development
PSYC 5101 Motivation
PSYC 5460 Social and Personality Development

PSYC 5500 Research Seminar in Language and Psychology
PSYC 5568 Psychology of Language
PSYC 5703 Advanced Social Psychology
PSYC 5770 Current Topics in Social Psychology
PSYC 5612 Leadership in the Workplace
PSYC 6731 Person Perception
PSYC 6752 Interpersonal Relations
SOCI 5651 Seminar in the Family

Marketing Communication Track

Required Communication Theory Course Options (choose at least 3):

COMM 6850 Seminar in Marketing Communication (required)
COMM 5300 Mass Communication Theory
COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research
COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5310 Seminar in Mass Communication Research
MKTG 5115 Market-Driven Management
MKTG 6202 Advanced Seminar in Buyer Behavior

Emphasis Area Course Recommendations

- choose 5 from theory course options above, course list below, or similar with approval of committee
- 1 must be COMM:

COMM 5120 Communication Campaigns
COMM 5501 Seminar in Nonverbal Communication and Persuasion
COMM 6895 Topics in Applied Communication Research
MKTG 5250 Marketing Research and Information Systems
MKTG 5640 Integrated Marketing Communications
MKTG 5625 Marketing for Global Competitiveness
MKTG 6210 Seminar in Theory and Practice in Marketing

Mass Communication Track

Required Communication Theory Course Options (choose at least 3):

COMM 5300 Mass Communication Theory (required)
COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research
COMM 5120 Communication Campaigns
COMM 5150 Crisis and Risk Communication
COMM 5310 Seminar in Mass Communication Research
COMM 6895 Topics in Applied Communication Research

Emphasis Area Course Recommendations

- Choose 5 from theory course options above, course list below, or similar with approval of committee
- 1 must be COMM):

ANTH 5352 Medical Anthropology
COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5330 Children and Mass Media
GPAH 5319 Allied Health Education
POLS 5341 Public Opinion and American Democracy
POLS 5342 American Political Parties
POLS 5336 Comparative Political Communication
POLS 5386 Public Opinion and Public Policy
PSYC 5120 Health Psychology
PSYC 6733 Social Cognition
PSYC 5616 Human Judgment and Decision Process
PUBH 5400 Intro to Public Health
PUBH 5401 Principles of Epidemiology
PUBH 5404 Environmental Health
PUBH 5405 Social Foundations of Public Health
PUBH 5419 Public Health Agencies
PUBH 5430 Public Health Informatics
PUBH 5451 Maternal and Child Health Services
PUBH 5452 Injury and Violence Prevention
PUBH 5453 Chronic Disease Control
PUBH 5455 Health Education
PUBH 5462 International Health
PUBH 5473 Women, Public Health and Reproduction
PUBH 5474 Minority Health
PUBH 5475 Gerontological Health
SOCI 5453 Medical Sociology
SOCI 5801 Political Sociology
SOCI 5821 Social Movements
SOCI 5829 Social Change

New Communication Technology Track

Required Communication Theory Course Options (choose at least 3):

COMM 5660 Computer-Mediated Communication (required)
COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research

COMM 5300 Mass Communication Theory
COMM 5640 Social Media Use and Effects
COMM 5650 Communication Technology and Society: Theory and Research

Emphasis Area Course Recommendations

- Choose 5 from theory course options above, course list below, or similar with approval of committee
- 1 must be COMM):

COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5220 Group Communication Research
COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5500 Nonverbal Communication
COMM 5501 Seminar in Nonverbal Communication and Persuasion
EPSY 5220 Introduction to Educational Technology
EPSY 5520 Instructional Design
EPSY 5530 Learning Theory
MKTG 5250 Marketing Research & Information System
MGMT5260 Management of Technology and Innovation
MKTG 5640 Integrated Marketing Communication
MKTG 5665 Digital Marketing
OPIM 5165 Management Information Systems
OPIM 5270 Systems Development
OPIM 5620 Managing and Controlling Information Systems
PSYC 5615 Human Factors
PSYC 5101 Motivation
PSYC 5620 Design and Analysis of Human-Machine Systems
PSYC 5703 Advanced Social Psychology
PSYC 6731 Person Perception
PSYC 6752 Interpersonal Relations

Nonverbal Communication Track

Required Communication Theory Course Options (choose at least 3):

COMM 5500 Nonverbal Communication (required)
COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research
COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5300 Mass Communication Theory
COMM 5501 Seminar in Nonverbal Communication and Persuasion

Emphasis Area Course Recommendations

- Choose 5 from theory course options above, course list below, or similar with approval of committee
- 1 must be COMM:

COMM 5220 Group Communication Research
COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5310 Seminar in Mass Communication
COMM 6850 Seminar in Marketing Communication Research
MKTG 410 Seminar in Theory and Practice in Marketing
MKTG 402 Advanced Seminar in Buyer Behavior
PSYC 5101 Motivation
PSYC 5701 Experimental Social Psychology
PSYC 5703 Advanced Social Psychology
PSYC 5770 Current Topics in Social Psychology
PSYC 6732 Attitude Organization and Change
PSYC 6752 Interpersonal Relations

Persuasion Track

Required Communication Theory Course Options (choose at least 3):

COMM 5100 Persuasion Theory and Research (required)
COMM 5120 Communication Campaigns
COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5300 Mass Communication Theory
COMM 5310 Seminar in Mass Communication Research
COMM 5501 Seminar in Nonverbal Communication and Persuasion

Emphasis Area Course Recommendations

- Choose 5 from theory course options above, course list below, or similar with approval of committee
- 1 must be COMM):

COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5500 Nonverbal Communication
PHIL 5316 Seminar in the Philosophy of Social Science
PHIL 5317 Seminar in the Philosophy of Psychology
PSYC 5567 Memory and Cognition
PSYC 5613 Organizational Psychology
PSYC 5703 Advanced Social Psychology
PSYC 6732 Attitude Organization and Change

PhD Program Optional Specialty Areas

Additional recommendations for Emphasis Area Courses for students choosing to specialize in the following areas (can be applied to any track emphasis area requirements):

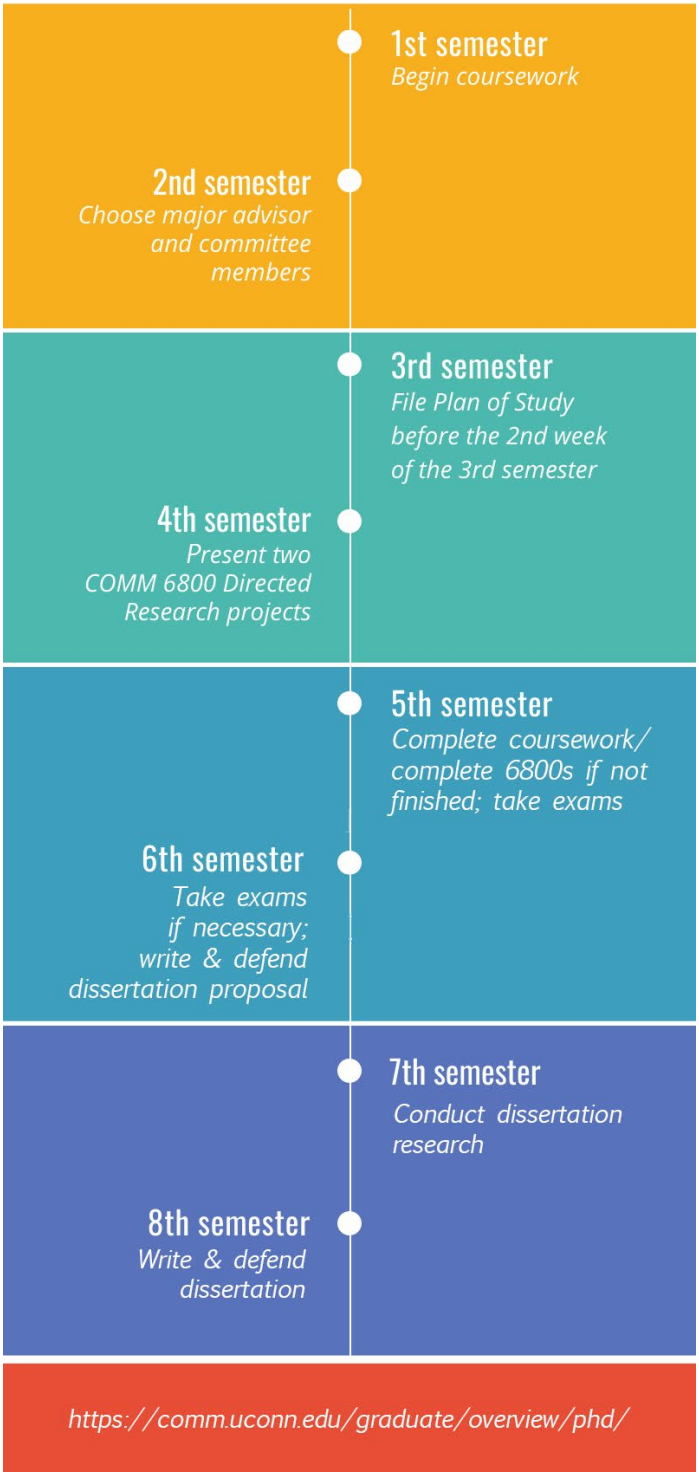
Health Communication

ANTH 5352 Medical Anthropology
COMM 5120 Communication Campaigns
COMM 5200 Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5230 Organizational Communication: Theory and Research
COMM 5770 Health Communication
GPAH 5319 Allied Health Education
PSYC 5120 Health Psychology
PSYC 6733 Social Cognition
PSYC 5616 Human Judgment and Decision Process
PUBH 5400 Intro to Public Health
PUBH 5401 Principles of Epidemiology
PUBH 5404 Environmental Health
PUBH 5405 Social Foundations of Public Health
PUBH 5419 Public Health Agencies
PUBH 5430 Public Health Informatics
PUBH 5451 Maternal and Child Health Services
PUBH 5452 Injury and Violence Prevention
PUBH 5453 Chronic Disease Control
PUBH 5455 Health Education
PUBH 5462 International Health
PUBH 5473 Women, Public Health and Reproduction
PUBH 5474 Minority Health
PUBH 5475 Gerontological Health
SOCI 5453 Medical Sociology

Political Communication

COMM 5120 Communication Campaigns
POLS 5341 Public Opinion and American Democracy
POLS 5342 American Political Parties
POLS 5386 Public Opinion and Public Policy
POLS 5336 Comparative Political Communication
SOCI 5801 Political Sociology
SOCI 5821 Social Movements
SOCI 5829 Social Change

Communication PhD Timeline



https://comm.uconn.edu/graduate/overview/phd/

PhD Program Timeline

Summary

First and second semesters:

Choose major advisor and committee members. This is an ideal time to begin thinking about COMM 6800 projects.

Third semester:

Finalize advisor and committee, and file Plan of Study (before the second week of the third semester; see guidelines in Appendix A). Continue working on completing 6800s.

Fourth semester:

Finalize and present the two COMM 6800 Directed Research projects. The first is expected to be directed closely by a COMM faculty member. The second is expected to be a more independent project with a COMM faculty member.

Begin working on Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam (ideally, no later than the summer between the fourth and fifth semesters).

Fifth semester:

Finish and defend any outstanding 6800 papers and complete coursework.

Complete and defend Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam (must be defended before 5th week of the semester you are taking the Theory Exam)

Take the Theory Exam

Sixth semester:

If not finished, complete and defend Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam (must be defended before 5th week of the semester you are taking the Theory Exam)

Take the Theory Exam

Defend dissertation proposal.

Seventh semester:

Conduct dissertation research.

Eighth semester:

Defend dissertation.

Details

Year 1

Students concentrate on their coursework in the first year. There are three methodology courses: COMM 5000 and 5001 in the Fall and COMM 5002 in the Spring. (Although we strongly urge all students to take the introductory methods courses, students who have recently taken an equivalent methods and statistics course and who have experience conducting research may talk with the Director of Graduate

Studies prior to the start of the fall semester about the possibility of waiving COMM 5001 and replacing with another 3-credit course.)

Theory courses are chosen according to the track the student wishes to pursue. The tracks are defined in detail in the previous section.

Students with an MA in Communication from UConn may reduce their required courses by up to 6 courses (18 credits) from their track by providing evidence that courses required for their track have already been completed during the MA.

As part of their coursework, students may also complete one independent study. Students should submit the Student Enrollment Request Form, available on the Registrar's website (https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/?_gl=1*1vrntgu*_gcl_au*MTM1MjkxNjA3Ny4xNzE2Mjk1NTQy) to the instructor, major advisor, and the Department Head with an attached syllabus within the first week of the semester.

If students wish to complete more than one Independent Study, they must receive special approval from the Graduate Studies Committee (contact the Director of Graduate Studies) and the Department Head.

We encourage students to begin helping on research projects in the first year, even if their contributions are limited at first. Many students begin working on a COMM 6800 Mentored Research Project during the first summer.

During the spring semester of the first year, each student should work on forming an advisory committee by choosing a major advisor and at least two associate advisors.

Years 2-3

By the second week of the third semester, students should finalize their area of specialization, finalize their advising committee members, then complete and file their Plan of Study. The Plan of Study form is available on the Registrar's website at https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/ (scroll down for Graduate Plans of Study section), and guidelines are in Appendix A. Completed, approved plans should be emailed to degreeaudit@uconn.edu and copied to the Department Administrator and major advisor.

Most students take the methods courses COMM 5003 OR 5004 in the second year. Students complete an advanced methods course (see list above for suggestions) and at least one elective methods course in their second or third year, depending on when courses are offered. Students should continue to take theory and emphasis courses in their area.

Students should aim to complete work on their COMM 6800 projects during year 2 in order to be able to take Exams during year 3.

Students should begin working on the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam (ideally, no later than the summer between the fourth and fifth semesters). There are two parts to the General Exam – the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam and the Theory Exam.

While students should work on the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam after their 2nd year, they generally defend the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam during their 5th or 6th semester. Students must notify the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the semester in which they plan to defend the QME Exam.

Students take their Theory Exam the same semester as earning a pass or revise-and-resubmit on their Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam. Following a successful outcome on both the QME and the Theory exams, the student must obtain advisory committee signatures on the Report on the General Examination for the Doctoral Degree, available on the Registrar's website at https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2018/02/Report-on-General-Exam-Doctoral.pdf. The student should email the completed and signed form to DegreeAudit@uconn.edu and copy the department administrator so that it can be saved with the student's digital file. Students with a Graduate Assistantship become eligible for a salary increase once this milestone is achieved, effective at the start of the regular semester following the semester the achievement is officially recorded.

Students also work on the dissertation proposal in the third year, which is often an outgrowth of a 6800 project. If seeking external funding for the dissertation, it is typically applied for in the third year, and may necessitate an accelerated schedule for the proposal defense. Students need to write their dissertation proposal, following the rules for drafts, and successfully defend it to their committee, reviewers, and others. They also must acquire IRB approval for their study, if applicable.

Following passing the General Exams and official acceptance of the dissertation proposal, the student is eligible for a Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship award from the Graduate School.

Year 4

The major activity for the fourth year involves the dissertation.

Students will be involved in collecting data, analyzing the data, and writing the dissertation. The dissertation is defended when all committee members agree that it is in defendable form, following department and University rules governing defenses.

The dissertation will typically need to be revised again after the defense. Once all members of the advisory committee accept the dissertation as complete, the Defense and Final Dissertation Approval process must be initiated online so that each member of the advisory committee can sign off on it. This process takes place via an online workflow and is initiated through a webform: Dissertation Approval Page.

PhD Program Checklist

Faculty Advisory Committee – Second Semester

☐ Select your faculty advisory committee (major advisor and associate advisors)

☐ Start your first 6800 project

Plan of Study – before the second week of the Third Semester

☐ Develop your plan of study in consultation with your advisory committee

☐ Continue working on your 6800 projects

☐ Complete the Plan of Study for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Get each of your committee members to review and sign it.

☐ Email the completed and signed plan of study form to Degree Audit, degreeaudit@uconn.edu, and copy the department administrator and major advisor so that it can be saved with your digital file. This serves as a record of your submission date.

☐ Note: When the Degree Audit unit of the Registrar approves your plan of study, they will add a notation to your transcript. It can take from one week to two months for Degree Audit to approve your plan of study. If two or three months you do not see a notation on your transcript, check with Degree Audit.

Defend both COMM 6800 Directed Research Projects – Fourth Semester

☐ Work with a faculty member on a project (or provide proof that you presented your 6800 at an academic conference; see the COMM 6800 syllabus for more detailed information about this option). Once your faculty advisor for the project indicates that you are ready to present it, have the faculty advisor sign the COMM 6800 Approval Form, which can be found on HuskyCT.

☐ Work with the Director of Graduate Studies to secure a presentation date (note that this date must be 2 weeks after you submit the form and paper to the DGS).

☐ During the semester that you plan to complete the second project, enroll in COMM 6800 for 3 credits.

☐ Work with a faculty member on a second project (or provide proof that you presented your 6800 at an academic conference; see the COMM 6800 syllabus for more detailed information about this option.). Once your faculty advisor for the project indicates that you are ready to present it, have the advisor sign the COMM 6800 Approval Form.

☐ Work with the Director of Graduate Studies to secure a presentation date or provide proof that you presented your 6800 at an academic conference. See the COMM 6800 syllabus for more detailed information.

Note: You must submit the COMM 6800 Approval Form, along with a copy of your project paper, at least two weeks prior to your anticipated presentation date, if you are presenting it to the department.

Note: Both COMM 6800 projects must be completed and presented before you are eligible to take/defend your General Exams.

General Exams – Fifth/Sixth Semester

- ☐ Inform the Director of Graduate Studies when you expect to take your General Exams.
- ☐ Once you have completed your exams, you must complete and submit the Report on the General Examination for the Doctoral Degree form.
- ☐ Have each member of your advisory committee sign the form and email the completed and signed form to Degree Audit at the Registrar, degreeaudit@uconn.edu, and copy the department administrator so that it can be saved with your digital file.
- ☐ Dissertation Proposal – Sixth/Seventh Semester
- ☐ Read carefully the section on the Dissertation Proposal in this Handbook.
- ☐ Write, get feedback, and rewrite as many times as needed until your major advisor says that your dissertation proposal is ready to defend.
- ☐ Follow the steps in the Dissertation Proposal section, including securing reviewers for your proposal defense.
- ☐ Seek IRB approval if your study involves human subjects.
- ☐ After your proposal defense, you may need to make further edits, based upon feedback from the faculty. Once you have completed these edits, assemble the revised proposal, a summary page listing the feedback that was provided and the changes that you made, and the Dissertation Proposal form. Have each member of your advisory committee sign the form, indicating his or her approval of the revised proposal, then submit this packet (approval form, revision summary page, and dissertation proposal) to DGS for approval and signature.
- ☐ Email the packet, along with your IRB approval form, to Degree Audit at the Registrar (mailto:degreeaudit@uconn.edudegreeaudit@uconn.edu) and copy the department administrator and major advisor so that it can be saved with your digital file. This serves as a record of your submission date.
- ☐ Note: When Degree Audit approves your dissertation proposal, they will add a notation to your transcript.

Dissertation Defense – Eighth Semester

- ☐ Work with your major advisor to submit, receive feedback on, revise, and repeat, until your major advisor indicates that your dissertation draft is ready to be read by your other committee members. Send this draft to your associate advisors.
- ☐ Once each member of your faculty advisory committee has agreed that you have a defendable dissertation draft, complete and have signed by each the COMM Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form, which is found on HuskyCT.
- ☐ Submit this form to the Director of Graduate Studies and allow one week for processing. The Director of Graduate Studies will confirm that all program requirements have been met and will inform you when you have been approved to schedule your dissertation defense.
- ☐ Contact the members of your faculty advisory committee, plus enough other PhDs for a total of five, to arrange for a day and time (2-hour block) for the defense that is at least two weeks and three business days in the future. Once the defense has been scheduled, draft an announcement email to be shared on the department listservs and post the defense date on UConn's and the Graduate School's event calendar following the instructions on the Registrar's "Steps to a Successful Graduation" website (at least 2 weeks in advance). Send a copy of the draft of the dissertation that you will be defending to the department program assistant to upload to HuskyCT.
- ☐ After your presentation, you may need to make further edits, based upon feedback from the faculty. Once you have completed these edits to the satisfaction of your advisory committee, follow the extensive instructions on the Grad School's website to complete and submit the necessary forms and the final dissertation. These instructions are extensive and detailed and need to be followed exactly.

General Examination for the PhD in Communication

The General Exam consists of two parts. Students must (1) complete the Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods Exam (QME) and, after coursework is completed and the QME is defended, (2) take the Theory Exam. The General Exam is designed to fulfill four objectives. First, the General Examination provides the examinee with an opportunity to view the field of communication as a whole, and to craft original and insightful arguments about issues in communication research. As such, one of the functions of these exams is to produce scholarly papers suitable for presentation at a major conference or publication in a scholarly journal. Second, the General Examination tests an examinee's mastery of important theories of communication, including an understanding of how social scientific theories evolve and the criteria for evaluating theories. Third, the General Examination assesses an examinee's methodological ability to address communication-related problems. Finally, the General Examination provides a diagnostic assessment of the examinee's preparation to begin the dissertation process.

Responses should address all issues raised in the question in the form of a coherent essay written in APA style and should not be a set of separate answers to individual questions. Remember that this should represent a paper that is ready to be submitted to a journal or conference for review. Thus, students are expected to proof-read each answer prior to submission and ensure that it is free of typographical and grammatical errors. Each answer should be coherent and must not be substantially redundant with your answer to the other question, or with previous papers submitted by the student or by others. This information will be submitted to SafeAssign to compare it to other papers submitted. Examinees should not have others read their work, even if the comments of those others concern grammar or language used. The General Examination must be your work and only your work. Violations of the procedures outlined in this Handbook may result in a failing grade on the exam.

General Examination Committee

The General Examination Committee consists of the union of the advisory committees of all those students taking the General Examination for the first time in a given semester. If a student is re-taking the exam, their original exam committee assesses the re-take.

The Director of Graduate Studies chairs the General Examination Committee. A minimum of five faculty members must serve on the General Examination Committee, with at least three from inside the department (including the advisor). Two committee members may be from outside the department who represent the examinee's cognate area. These outside members have an ad hoc status and may be reading only one question, so they may be present for only a portion of the time during the oral examination. The doctoral advisory committee of the examinees should have been chosen prior to the end of the semester before they are to take the General Examination.

General Examination Process

The exam typically occurs during the third year of graduate study.

During the examination semester, an examinee should enroll in GRAD 6950 or GRAD 6960.

The General Exam occurs over the course of one fourteen-week semester. The Theory examination question is distributed after the Quantitative or Qualitative Methods Exam (QME) is defended, following the timeline below:

Stage	Time Period	Activity
Notify Director of Graduate Studies of Intention to take General Examination in following Semester	The first week of November for Spring semester exams; the first week of April for Fall semester exams.	Finalize doctoral advisory committee and notify major advisor and Director of Graduate studies of specialty areas and of plans to take exams.
Preparation and Schedule/Defend QME	Weeks 1-5 of the exam semester	Examinees and the committee engage in formal discussion as they prepare for the Theory Examination. QME is defended.
Written Responses to Questions	Weeks 6-10 of the exam semester	Examinees receive Theory Examination question and complete a full written response for all aspects of the question.
Preparation for Oral Defense	Weeks 11-12 of the exam semester	Examinees prepare for the oral defense while their committee reads their written response.
Oral Defense	Begins Week 13 of the exam semester	Examinees defend their written response before the committee.

Students should consult with their major advisor early in their coursework to determine which methods exam they should plan to complete.

Part 1: Quantitative or Qualitative Methods Exam (QME)

Quantitative Methods Exam

The Quantitative Methods Exam involves completing a quantitative literature review (which may or may not include meta-analysis) on a topic of your choosing, and it can be your dissertation topic. Please note that this is a Methods Exam and, as such, you should be quantitatively reviewing your topic, rather than conducting a narrative review of the quantitative literature in which you merely describe or summarize the findings of a body of work in a narrative format. You can begin the Methods Exam at any time but are expected to begin no later than summer after your second year. The project must be completed by week 5 of your exam semester (the semester after finishing coursework). You must present your paper to the exam committee during the first 5 weeks of the exam semester, before taking the Theory Exam. If you finish early, you still do not present the paper until the exam committee for that exam semester is established. Note that both 6800s should be completed the semester prior to the exam semester. Students should be aware that completing and defending both 6800s and their QME in the first five weeks of the same semester may not be feasible and should be avoided.

Qualitative Methods Exam

The Qualitative Methods Exam involves completing a qualitative meta-synthesis (also called a qualitative *meta-analysis* or qualitative *meta-ethnography*) on a topic of your choosing, and it can be your dissertation topic. Please note that this is a Methods Exam and, as such, you should be aggregating and integrating qualitative research findings about a process or experience, rather than conducting a *qualitative/narrative review* in which you merely describe or summarize the findings of a body of work in a narrative format. You can begin the Methods Exam at any time but are expected to begin no later than summer after your second year. The project must be completed by week 5 of your exam semester (the semester after finishing coursework). You must present your paper to the exam committee during the first 5 weeks of the exam semester, before taking the Theory Exam. If you finish early, you still do not present the paper until the exam committee for that exam semester is established. Note that both of your 6800s should be completed the semester prior to the exam semester. Students should be aware that completing and defending both 6800s and their QME in the first five weeks of the same semester may not be feasible and should be avoided.

Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods (QME) Examination Grading

Examinees will defend their QME to the exam committee in a 1-hour meeting. After the first defense, the exam committee can recommend one of two options for the question: (1) pass; or (2) revise and resubmit. After the second defense (if needed, and only in cases where a revision is requested), the exam committee can recommend one of two options for the question: (1) pass; or (2) fail. Students who fail the exam after the second defense are not eligible to retake the exam.

A ‘revise-and-resubmit’ may be given for a paper when the examinee adequately addresses a portion of the question but fails to address or incorrectly addresses one or more important aspects of the question.

Students who receive a revise-and-resubmit may continue on to the Theory Exam. Students receiving a revise-and-resubmit must submit the revised work by the end of the following semester unless otherwise noted by the exam committee. The original exam committee will assess the work and the committee will decide if an oral defense is needed and/or if the student passes the exam. If the committee is not satisfied with the work or the student does not complete the exam, the student fails the exam and cannot retake the exam.

Guidelines & Ground Rules for the QME

Recall that the QME must be defended by week 5 of your exam semester, before taking your Theory Exam. If you finish the QME before your coursework or 6800s are completed you still do not present your paper to the committee until the exam committee for your exam semester is established.

Examinees are invited to clarify a question's meaning or scope with a particular committee member or the Director of Graduate Studies. However, examinees are expected to work independently in formulating answers to the questions. Faculty members are not to give feedback during the writing stage or before the oral defense, nor should they read preliminary versions of the papers. The process is intended to follow the guidelines of an open book, take-home exam.

Papers should be word-processed and prepared according to the guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Each paper should be a maximum of 25 pages in length (for the Quantitative) 35 pages in length (for the Qualitative Methods Exam), excluding front matter (title page and abstract) and end matter (references, tables and figures). 12-point font size, Times New Roman style, and 1-inch margins should be used.

Students with ongoing medical or personal emergencies or needing an accommodation that has been approved by the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and the CSD prior to their exams.

Part 2: Theory Exam

The Theory Examination is undertaken once the examinee has completed all required doctoral coursework in the program and defended the QME. The Theory Examination is open-book. Examinees may consult published texts and graphic materials to assist in the preparation of their written response. All sources used should be fully cited. Examinees may not discuss the Theory Examination question or their response with faculty or graduate students at the University of Connecticut or other universities or share drafts with anyone, including to seek grammatical or writing help from the Writing Center. In other words, it is expected that the student is sole author of the answer, in the same sense that a person is sole author of a published work (see APA definitions of criteria of sole authorship), and that there is a full citation of referenced work.

The Theory Examination consists of one question written by the communication faculty on the exam committee. Two members other than the exam committee chair should take primary responsibility for writing the question, although input from all committee members is encouraged. It is the committee chair's responsibility to coordinate the preparation of the question, to review it for appropriateness and to

avoid redundancy, and to compile the question and deliver the exam to the examinee at the appropriate time. Any outside member of the examinee's committee typically is not involved in the construction of the question, but must receive a copy of the question as well as the written paper prepared in response to it prior to the oral defense, in which the outside member will fully participate. The response for the question should be a paper a maximum of 25 pages in length, excluding front matter (title page and abstract) and end matter (references, tables and figures).

This Theory Exam question should test examinees' knowledge of their broader area of study in the program. This broader area is defined by the examinee's track (interpersonal, marketing, mass communication, new communication technology, nonverbal communication, or persuasion). More information on the six tracks is available at https://comm.uconn.edu/grad/phd/. The question is intended to be expansive in that it encourages the examinee to analyze and synthesize influential bodies of work in a creative fashion. The goal of this question is to have examinees demonstrate a differentiated knowledge structure in their area of emphasis and an ability to integrate information on related theories. They should be able to complete the following objectives:

- Contrast the philosophical underpinnings of two or more theories of communication.
- Describe the current state of theory in their area of emphasis, situating key theories in their historical context. Be able to describe the origins and assumptions of key theories, including the main contributors to the theory's development, concepts borrowed from contemporary theories, and parallel developments in the field that facilitated the evolution of concepts central to the theories.
- Compare the process models for two or more key theories in the area of emphasis. Include any boundary conditions that qualify or limit the scope of each theory.
- Provide a list of criteria for critiquing theories and be able to apply those criteria to key theories in their area of emphasis.

Theory Examination Schedule

Examinees will receive the Theory Exam question on the Friday of the 5th week of the semester to allow for a full five weeks of writing time. The completed answer to the examination question must be submitted by Friday of the 10th week of the semester. This deadline ensures that the committee will have a minimum of two weeks to read and evaluate examinees' answers prior to the oral defense date. Copies of the exam question and answer will be submitted to each committee member. The oral defense meeting must be scheduled well in advance and should take place during the 13th-14th week (or final two weeks) of the semester in which the exam occurs. The committee chair is responsible for scheduling the oral defense date, time (allowing for a 1-hour meeting), and location.

During the examination semester, an examinee should enroll in GRAD 6950 (if you hold an assistantship) or GRAD 6960.

Theory Examination Grading

The committee can recommend one of three options for the question: (1) pass; (2) incomplete (the examinee may need to re-write some or all of the paper, or be encouraged to take additional reading

and/or course work); or (3) fail. Students who fail an exam the first time are eligible to re-take the exam once.

An incomplete may be given for a paper when the examinee adequately addresses a portion of the question but fails to address or incorrectly addresses one or more important aspects of the question. Students receiving an incomplete must submit the revised work by the end of the following semester unless otherwise noted by the exam committee. The original exam committee will assess the work and the committee will decide if an oral exam is needed and/or if the student passes the exam. If the committee is not satisfied with the work or the student does not complete the exam, the student fails the exam.

Examinees who fail the Theory Examination the first time should consult immediately with their Advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies as to which steps they should take next. The next steps will include re-taking the exam in the next semester with new questions. Next steps may also include, but are not limited to, taking additional coursework.

The exam is designed to be completed within a one-semester period. Examinees who exceed this time frame will jeopardize their academic good standing and are at risk of losing university-based financial support, including eligibility to work as a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant.

Guidelines & Ground Rules for the Theory Examination

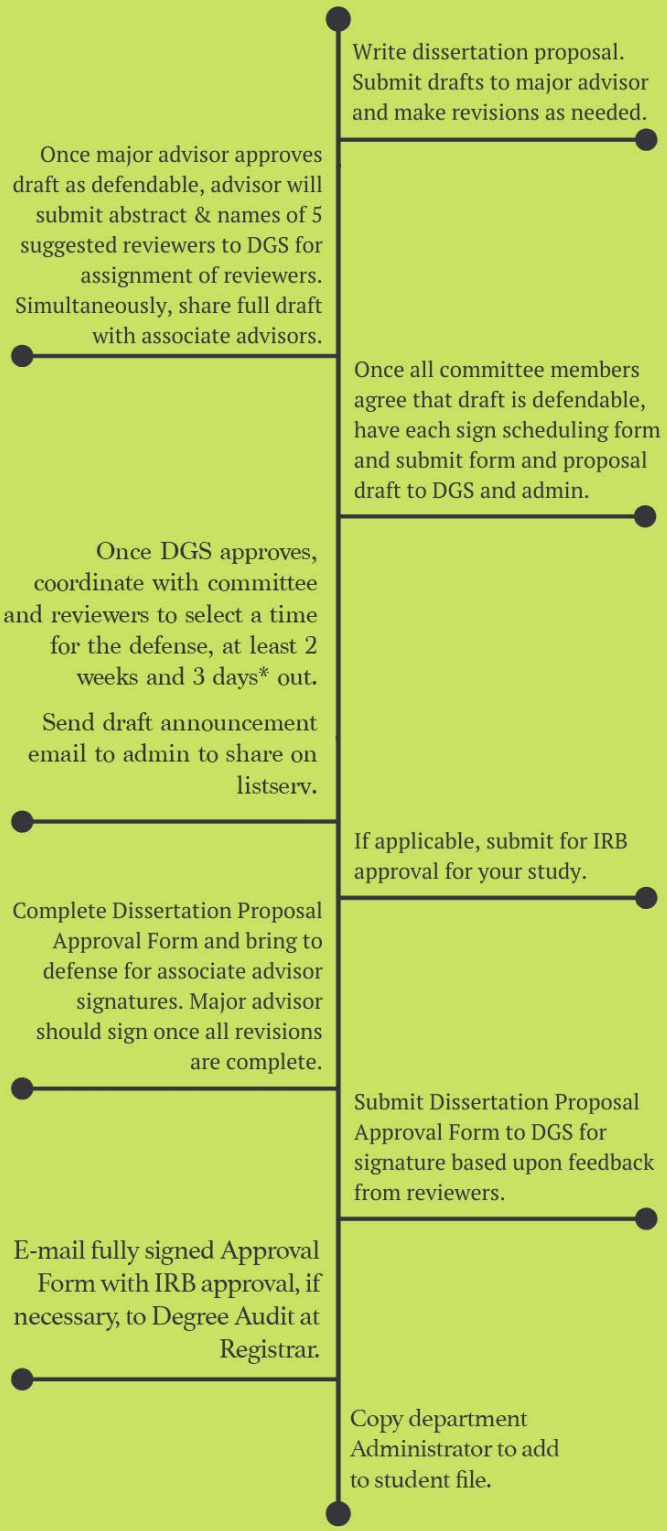
Once the question is obtained, examinees are invited to clarify the question's meaning or scope with a particular exam committee member or the Director of Graduate Studies. However, examinees are expected to work independently in formulating an answer to the question. Faculty members are not to give feedback during the writing stage or before the oral defense, nor should they read preliminary versions of the paper. The process is intended to follow the guidelines of an open book, take-home exam.

The paper should be word-processed and prepared according to the guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The paper should be a maximum of 25 pages in length, excluding front matter (title page and abstract) and end matter (references, tables and figures). 12-point font size, Times New Roman style, and 1-inch margins should be used. Examinees not completing the exam within the semester are considered to be making insufficient progress toward the degree and therefore are at risk of losing financial support.

If a medical or personal emergency occurs during the examination period, the examinee should contact their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies immediately. Extensions will only be considered in extenuating circumstances where there is evidence of an emergency that influenced a substantial portion of the exam and when the exam committee together decides to grant an extension. Students with ongoing medical or personal emergencies or needing assistance from the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) should consult with the Director or Graduate Studies and the CSD prior to their exams.

Dissertation Proposal Defense Process

This is a summary only. For details, see the Dissertation Proposal Defense section of the Communication Graduate Student Handbook.



Dissertation Proposal Defense

Students are strongly encouraged to defend their dissertation proposals during the normal semester/academic year.

1) Work closely with and submit drafts to your major advisor.
2) The final draft of the doctoral dissertation proposal should be approximately 8-15 pages for the introduction and literature review, and as much space as needed for the methods (not including front and back matter, such as title page, abstract, references, tables, appendices, etc.). Though the Graduate School may recommend that proposals be shorter, the department suggests 25-30 pages inclusive of all elements.
3) Allow two weeks for committee members to read drafts and return them to you.
4) Expect to write multiple drafts. All drafts should be free of grammatical and typographical errors. Sentences should be coherent. If the major advisor finds that they are having to edit too much for language, they may require you to get editorial help elsewhere before submitting more drafts to them. Faculty should be spending time on content, not grammar.
5) After the major advisor approves a draft as ready to be defended:
    A. Show it to other committee members. You can also bring specific issues to other committee members earlier, but do not expect them to read the whole document until the advisor has approved it.
    B. Ask your advisor to submit the abstract of the dissertation proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), along with names of 5 faculty other than your committee members that you wish to nominate as reviewers. A student may also confidentially indicate to the DGS up to 2 faculty members they would prefer not serve as reviewers (see guidelines below). Within one week of abstract submission, the DGS will assign 2 reviewers to the dissertation proposal. See full details below.
    C. If your study involves human subjects, submit for IRB approval.
6) Expect more revisions from other committee members.
7) When all committee members agree that you have a defendable draft, complete the Dissertation Proposal Scheduling Form (available on HuskyCT), and have it signed by all committee members. Submit this form to the Director of Graduate Studies and the department administrator, along with the final draft of the dissertation proposal.
8) Once you receive approval from the Director of Graduate Studies to proceed, you must coordinate with your committee members and reviewers to find an acceptable date and time (2-hour block) when all committee members and reviewers can attend. The date for the proposal defense must be at least two weeks from when the defendable draft of the proposal is announced. (This two-week period allows the draft to "lie in state" in the department office so that other people may review it if they choose.) You must email your committee and the department program assistant with the defense version of your proposal **at least 3 days before** the two-week deadline for announcing the defense (so 2 weeks plus 3 days before the date of the defense).
9) Prepare an email announcement as outlined in Appendix B and send it to the department program assistant to share on Listservs. If the defense is in-person or hybrid and you would like to use ARJ 225, contact the department program assistant for room availability *before* you announce. If the defense is to be held virtually, please use your personal WebEx room and include the URL in the announcement.

10) If you are considering applying for a doctoral dissertation fellowship, your Dissertation Proposal defense must be held prior to the due date of the fellowship application. Please note these dates the semester you plan to apply.
11) Complete the Dissertation Proposal approval form and bring it to your defense. Though your advisors may sign this form at the conclusion of your defense, it is likely that they will require revisions before final approval. Email the completed and signed form to degreeaudit@uconn.edu and copy the department administrator.

Important Notes from the Graduate School

- Your Plan of Study must be fully approved at the time your Dissertation Proposal is submitted for final review.
- Your Proposal must be fully approved **at least three months** prior to the date of your [Dissertation] Oral Defense.

Dissertation Proposal Reviewers

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), acting as the designee for the Department Head, will assign 2 reviewers for each dissertation proposal – typically 2 faculty members in Communication. The major advisor should come up with 5 suggested reviewers. These names are submitted to the DGS via email with the dissertation abstract. The DGS may or may not pick solely from this list at their discretion.

The student and major advisor are encouraged to submit the abstract and suggested reviewer list before the dissertation proposal and scheduling form are submitted to ensure that the reviewer assignment process does not interfere with the defense timeline. Proposal defenses must be at least two weeks from when the defendable draft of the proposal is announced. The proposal must be sent to the committee and the department administrator, and the reviewers confirmed, before the defense can be announced, so the sooner the abstract and suggested reviewer list are submitted, the sooner reviewers can be assigned.

During the semester (weeks 1-15 of fall and spring semester, not including breaks), within one week of submission of the abstract and reviewer list, the DGS will assign 2 reviewers and notify the student and major advisor of that assignment.

Additional Notes on the Reviewer Process

- Faculty should respond to the request to review within 48 hours. Suggested faculty reviewers have the right to decline the invitation to review with no penalty. If there are not 2 of the 5 suggested reviewers available and willing to review, or if the contacted reviewers do not respond to the request within the first week, the deadline for reviewer assignment will be extended by one week, during which time the DGS will consult with the major advisor to determine other potential reviewers. Note that the defense date may need to be pushed back in such circumstances.
- Outside of the normal semester, the DGS will assign reviewers within 2 weeks, with a one week extension if there are not 2 of the 5 suggested reviewers available and willing to review, or if the contacted reviewers do not respond to the request within the first two weeks.
- Note that all of the timelines detailed above may take longer in the summer when faculty are not paid and not expected to be available. The above guidelines only apply to the academic year when faculty are paid. During the summer, there is no guarantee that faculty will be available for a

proposal defense, so students should make every effort to defend during the academic year. In extraordinary circumstances, faculty will do their best to facilitate summer proposal defenses.

- In cases in which the DGS is the major advisor, a designated member of the graduate studies committee (as determined at the first faculty meeting of the year) will be responsible for assigning the 2 reviewers following the guidelines and timeline noted above.
- A student may indicate up to two names of non-preferred reviewers if there is a conflict of interest, including but not limited to a strong negative personal conflict with the faculty member(s), a history of or pending legal or adjudicated workplace conflicts, or previous complaints regarding the faculty.

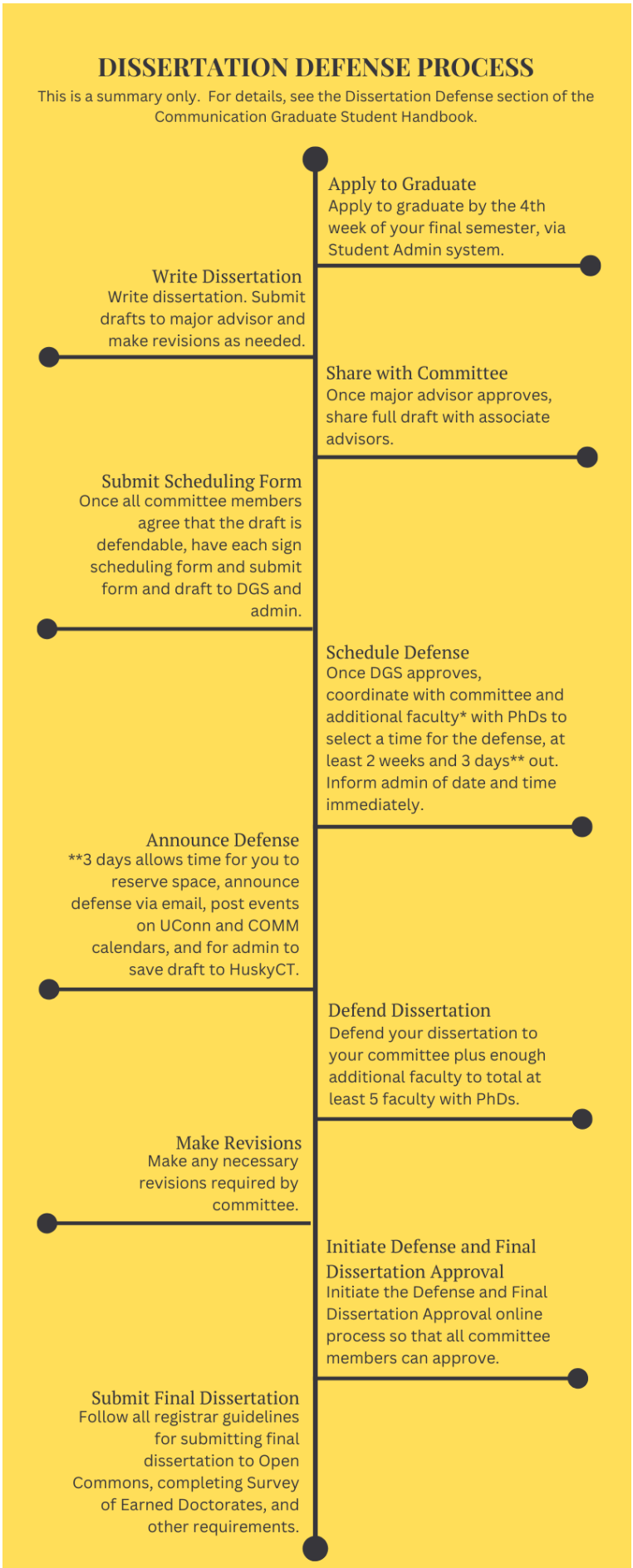
The reviewers typically attend the proposal defense along with the advising committee members. According to the Graduate School, they are charged with reviewing the proposal with the following questions in mind:

12) Is the proposal well written, well organized, and well argued?
13) Does the proposal describe a project of appropriate scope?
14) Does the student demonstrate knowledge of the subject and an understanding of the proposed method of investigation?
15) Does the student show awareness of the relevant research by others?
16) Does the student consider how the proposed investigation, if successful, will contribute to knowledge?

The reviewers will share their assessment with the committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. The DGS will sign the form once the reviews are favorable. A favorable review is determined when both reviewers answer “yes” to all of the questions above (which represent minimal standards) and the committee agrees that the student can proceed with the proposed study. Should the reviewers and committee members disagree on suggested revisions, the DGS will work with the committee and reviewers to determine if the proposal is sufficient and favorable, and the DGS will make the final decision. However, it is expected that the committee and reviewers will work together to resolve the issue before it rises to the level of the DGS.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE PROCESS

This is a summary only. For details, see the Dissertation Defense section of the Communication Graduate Student Handbook.



Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Prepare for the Defense

1) Be certain to apply online for graduation early in the semester or summer in which you expect to complete all degree requirements. For more information about steps to graduation, go to https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/.
2) Work closely with and submit drafts to your major advisor. The faculty assume that in the final dissertation, the literature review and background will be expanded upon beyond the length of the proposal. A full and adequate discussion of the results is also expected. Please consult with your committee regarding the expected dissertation page length.
3) Allow two weeks for faculty to read drafts and provide feedback. Expect to write multiple drafts.
4) After the major advisor approves a draft as ready to be defended, show it to other committee members. You can also bring specific issues to other committee members earlier, but do not expect them to read the whole document until the advisor has approved it.
5) Allow up to two weeks for committee members to respond with comments, and expect more revisions.
6) Once all members agree that you have a defendable draft, complete the Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form (found on HuskyCT→COMM Teaching and Learning→Forms) and submit a copy of the dissertation, as approved by the major advisor and other advisors, to the Director of Graduate Studies and the department administrator. After the Director of Graduate Studies has approved the defense scheduling form, you may schedule the defense.

Schedule the Defense

7) When you receive approval from the Director of Graduate Studies, you must coordinate with your committee members to find an acceptable date and time (2-hour block) when all committee members can attend. The date for the dissertation defense must be at least two weeks from when the defendable draft of the dissertation is announced. (This two-week period allows the draft to "lie in state" in the department office so that other people may review it if they choose.) You must email your committee and the department program assistant with the defense version of your dissertation **at least 3 business days before** the deadline for announcing the defense (so 2 weeks plus 3 days before the date of the defense).
8) It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that there is a minimum of 5 faculty members with PhDs in attendance at the dissertation defense. Generally, 3 of these members are the students' committee members, but the student should ensure that 2 other faculty members with PhDs are also in attendance. These can be your proposal reviewers but they don't have to be. You can send them the draft as soon as it is approved and do not have to wait until you have a defense date scheduled.
9) After you have scheduled your defense with your committee and faculty reviewers, you must announce it as outlined on the registrar's website at https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/#collapsepanel-6450-0-0-53, at least 2 weeks before the date of your defense.
10) If the defense is in-person or hybrid and you would like to use ARJ 225, contact the department program assistant for room availability *before* you announce. If the defense is to be held virtually, please use your personal WebEx room and include the URL in the announcement.
11) Prepare an email announcement as outlined in Appendix B and send it to the department program assistant to share on Listservs.

12) Provide the department program assistant with a link to the event on the Graduate School's calendar (as created in Step 9) to add to the department's event calendar.

Submit your Final Dissertation

13) Refer to https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/#collapsepanel-6450-0-0-140 for detailed instructions of proper dissertation formatting.
14) Once all committee members have approved of your dissertation, the Defense and Final Dissertation Approval process must be initiated to record each committee member's approval with the Registrar.
15) Submit the required paperwork and your dissertation online (see https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/#collapsepanel-6450-0-0-54 and https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/#collapsepanel-6450-0-0-55.

Note: The decision regarding whether a candidate has passed, conditionally passed, or failed the examination (the defense) rests solely with the advisory committee, which will take into account the opinions of other participating faculty members and other experts. The vote of the advisory committee must be unanimous.

Appendix A: Guidelines for Completing Your Plan of Study

Page 1

For PhD

1. Complete top part with name, ID, net ID, phone, and email.
2. Enter previous degrees.
3. Enter field of doctoral study as "Communication."
4. Leave area of concentration blank—we do not have any areas of concentration ("tracks" are different).
5. List Major and Associate Advisors.
6. Sign and date.

For MA

1. Complete top part with name, ID, net ID, phone, and email.
2. Enter degree sought as "M.A."
3. Enter field of study as "Communication."
4. Leave area of concentration blank—we do not have any areas of concentration ("tracks" are different).
5. List Major and Associate Advisors and obtain signatures on first page.
6. Include date that you plan to complete degree (usually May of your second year).

Pages 2-3

1. List all graduate courses you have taken or plan to take in chronological order.
2. If you had your course requirements reduced according to the department procedures, you do not include them on this list. Do not list them as waived or as credit already received. Simply do not include them anywhere on the plan of study.
3. Add up the total number of credits.
    a. For Ph.D. Plan of Study, do not forget to include at least 15 credits of GRAD6950 or 6960, which are required for all doctoral students, in your total.
    b. For M.A. Plan A (Thesis) Plan of Study, do not forget to include at least 9 credits of GRAD5950 in your total.
4. For M.A. only, sign and date page 3.

Appendix B: E-mail Template for Dissertation and Proposal Defense Announcement

To: COMM Program Assistant
Subject: Please share on listservs: [Name] Dissertation Proposal Defense - [Date and Time]

Dear [COMM Program Assistant],

Please share the dissertation (proposal) announcement below to the department Listservs.

[Name], [M.S./MA], [Master's Degree Institution Name], [Master's Degree Year], will defend his/her/their doctoral dissertation (proposal) titled, ["Title"] on [Day of Week], [Month Date, Year], at [Time a.m./p.m.] [on WebEx; in ARJ 225; in ARJ 225 and on WebEx]. A copy of the dissertation proposal is available by emailing [COMM Program Assistant name and email], and the abstract appears below.

If applicable: Use the following link to join the WebEx meeting: [WebEx Link]

[Major Advisor Name], Ph.D., Department of Communication, Major Advisor
[Associate Advisor Name], Ph.D., Department of Communication, Associate Advisor
[Associate Advisor Name], Ph.D., Department of Communication, Associate Advisor

Abstract
[insert abstract]

Example:

Yukyung Yang, M.S., Ewha Womans University, 2017, will defend her doctoral dissertation proposal titled, "Exploring the Influence of Empathy and Social Norms on Reducing Clothing Consumption" on Thursday, August 25, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. on WebEx. A copy of the dissertation proposal is available by emailing Michael Melnik at michael.melnik@uconn.edu, and the abstract appears below.

Use the following link to join the WebEx meeting: s.uconn.edu/cy2l1fex4v

Carolyn Lin, Ph.D., Department of Communication, Major Advisor
Kenneth Lachlan, Ph.D., Department of Communication, Associate Advisor
David Atkin, Ph.D., Department of Communication, Associate Advisor

Abstract
xxxx