



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Mass Communications



Guide to Procedures for Graduate Studies

Welcome to those of you who are just entering a graduate program in the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech, and welcome back to those of you who are returning. This manual is designed to describe the graduate programs in the college and to answer questions we anticipate you may have.

Students should stay alert for program changes. If this document does not answer all your questions, please do not hesitate to talk to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or to your faculty adviser.

Again, welcome to the College of Mass Communications. We wish you a productive and successful academic career.

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Admissions Procedure

All graduate students must be accepted for study by both the Graduate School at Texas Tech University and the College of Mass Communications.

Applicants should submit the following to the Graduate School:

- a graduate application available on the College of Mass Communications website
- official transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate (if any) work
- current scores for the Graduate Record Examination.

Admission to a graduate program in the College of Mass Communications is based on a holistic assessment of the student's promise for success in graduate-level work in mass communications. Materials reviewed include the personal statement, letters of recommendation, GPA and GRE scores. GRE scores neither ensure admission nor automatically disqualify an applicant. Evidence of language skills is particularly important because these skills are essential to success in any communications program.

International students must submit TOEFL scores of at least 550 (75 on the modified TOEFL).

As long as undergraduates are within 12 hours of completing their degree they can take graduate courses. There is a form in the Graduate School for the student to complete and submit. Students must get permission from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies to enroll in graduate courses.

Master's Students

In addition to materials submitted to the Graduate School, applicants for the M.A. program should submit the following to the College of Mass Communications:

- Master of Arts Student Application form available on the College of Mass Communications website,
- written personal statement,
- a description of academic and professional experiences in mass communications,
- written samples of academic or professional work in mass communications, and
- letters of recommendation from two people who can attest to your ability to succeed in graduate work.
- TAPES, DISKS AND PORTFOLIOS SHOULD NOT BE SUBMITTED.

Students who would like an appointment as a graduate assistant or who seek financial assistance should submit their applications at least six months prior to the date they plan to begin classes.

Ph.D. Students

In addition to materials submitted to the Graduate School, applicants for the Ph.D. program should submit the following to the College of Mass Communications:

- Doctor of Philosophy Student Application form available on the College of Mass Communications website,
- written personal statement,
- a description of your academic and professional experiences in mass communications,
- written samples of academic and/or professional work in mass communications, and
- letters of recommendation from three professors attesting to your ability to succeed in doctoral level work.
- TAPES, DISKS AND PORTFOLIOS SHOULD NOT BE SUBMITTED.

Students who would like to serve as a graduate instructor or who seek financial assistance should submit their applications at least six months prior to the date they plan to begin classes. Early application does improve the student's chances for approval.

Applicants who have submitted all required material by March 1 will be notified of admission decisions by the first week of April.

Students who are most likely to succeed in our program will submit GRE scores above the 70th percentile and GPAs of 3.4 or higher and will present evidence of professional experience or extensive internships in mass communications.

Change of Status

Students who are currently enrolled in the M.A. program in Mass Communications at Texas Tech must apply in order to transfer to the Ph.D. program. The admission standards for the Ph.D. program are more stringent than for the M.A., and not all M.A. students will be admitted to the Ph.D. program. All other students must apply for admission to the Ph.D. program as a new student.

Transfer Credit and Leveling

Transfer Credit

Graduate course work at other universities or in Texas Tech programs outside the College of Mass Communications may be applied to requirements for graduate degrees in mass communications subject to the following restrictions:

1. All transfer work must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Evaluation of transfer work will be based on the similarity of courses to those offered in the College of Mass Communications.
2. For M.A. programs, no more than six hours from outside the College of Mass Communications may be applied to an M.A. in mass communications. In some exceptional situations, and only with the approval of the graduate school and the college, nine hours may be transferred.
3. For Ph.D. programs, no more than 12 hours of coursework, beyond the M.A. and outside of Texas Tech University may be transferred.
4. Only courses in which the student received a grade of B or higher may be considered for transfer credit.

Leveling Work

Students who do not hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in mass communications or a related field (e.g., public relations, advertising, journalism) may be required to complete undergraduate leveling work. This leveling coursework does not reduce the credit hour requirements in any graduate curriculum.

Generally, a leveling course in mass communications writing, a course in mass communications theory, and one or more courses in the appropriate mass communications specialty will be required for students whose prior academic experiences do not address these skills and knowledge. The amount of such leveling work and the specific courses required will be determined by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Financial Aid

We strongly encourage students to complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) at least six months before beginning their studies (www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students who have completed this form and qualify for work study are eligible for assistantships and aid for which other students may not qualify. For additional information about financial aid, please see the Texas Tech Student Financial Aid website: www.fina.ttu.edu

Scholarships

Applications for most scholarships are due December 1 of each year for the following academic year. Applications for some scholarships awarded by the College of Mass Communications must be received at least six months prior to the date you will begin coursework. Scholarship awards of at least \$1,000 annually (can be split across semesters) will waive out-of-state tuition rates for domestic students.

Assistantships

Students with this waiver are permitted to pay in-state rates. Students must enroll in nine hours per semester to qualify for most scholarships. Graduate assistantships are intended for superior students in good academic standing. These assistantships involve a variety of duties including, but not limited to: serving as an instructor of record, assisting faculty with specific courses and/or assisting faculty with research projects.

Students with assistantships are expected to work 20 hours per week for the College of Mass Communications, are required to be full-time students and may not hold any other employment. See Appendix G of this document for more information.

Students who receive assistantships are not permitted to use college equipment or supplies for their coursework.

An assistantship (TA, RA, or GA) that is at least 20 hours per week gives a student both the out-of-state tuition waiver and some fee waivers. The \$1,000 scholarship only gives the out-of-state tuition waiver.

M.A. Assistantships

M.A.-level graduate assistants generally assist with class administration such as taking roll and/or with faculty research. They may not grade student coursework for content and are not assigned to clerical tasks like filing and copying.

Based on their academic and work performance M.A.-level assistants may be reappointed for up to four academic terms; typically three regular semesters and one summer term.

Ph.D. Assistants

Usually, only doctoral students with 18 or more completed graduate hours in mass communications are qualified to serve as Graduate Part Time Instructors (GPTI), and only GPTIs may serve as instructors of record for academic courses.

Doctoral-level assistants who qualify to serve as GPTIs are typically assigned to teach one course each semester and to provide faculty research assistance. They may also be assigned to teach two classes or to work exclusively on research. Assignments are based on student qualifications and college needs.

Based on their academic and work performance, Ph.D.-level assistants may be reappointed for up to six regular semesters.

Master of Arts Program

Thesis Program

The Master of Arts programs offered by the college include a thesis or a professional option. Students in either option are required to pass a comprehensive examination after completion of the core coursework. See Appendix D for a thorough description of this examination.

The thesis program totals 31 credit hours and requires 25 hours of coursework and a minimum of 6 hours of thesis credit. The 25 hours of coursework must include the following courses:

- MCOM 5160 - Seminar in Graduate Study (1 hour)
- MCOM 5366 - Mass Communications Theory (3 hours)
- MCOM 5364 - Research Methods (3 hours)
- MCOM 5374 - Data Analysis (3 hours)

The thesis is comprehensive original research and typically takes a full summer or regular semester to complete. Thesis research is conducted and the research report written under the guidance of a thesis committee of at least two faculty members.

Professional Program

The professional program requires 37 hours of coursework that must include the following courses:

MCOM 5160 – Seminar in Graduate Study (1 hour)

MCOM 5366 – Mass Communications Theory (3 hours)

MCOM 5364 – Research Methods (3 hours)

One of the following:

MCOM 5374 - Data Analysis

MCOM 5349 – Administration of Communications Media

MCOM 5320 – Media Law

MCOM 6315 – Integrated Campaigns

EMC 6315 – Media Economics

The professional program requires the completion of a master's report. The master's report must be completed under the supervision of two members of the graduate faculty in mass communications. Students may elect to add a third supervisor chosen from the graduate faculty in an academic unit outside of mass communications. To inquire about examples of past submitted reports, contact the Graduate Program Director.

Sports & Media Option

The Sport & Media option is one of the professional M.A. programs in the College of Mass Communications. A typical curriculum in this option is:

MCOM 5160 – Seminar in Graduate Study (1 hour)

MCOM 5366 – Mass Communications Theory (3 hours)

MCOM 5364 – Research Methods (3 hours)

MCOM 6330 – Seminar in Sport and Media (3 hours)

MCOM 5370 – Three-hour internship in sport and media

ESS 5324 – Marketing and Promotion in Sport (3 hours)

MCOM 6050 – Six-hour project at a professional sports organization or the U.S. Olympic Committee.

One of the following (3 hours each):

MCOM 5374 – Data Analysis

MCOM 5349 – Administration of Communications Media

MCOM 5320 – Media Law

MCOM 6315 – Integrated Campaigns

EMC 6315 – Media Economics (when taught as such)

Two courses from (3 hours each):

PR 6315 – Special Topics in Public Relations

PR 5343 – Public Relations Problems and Cases

ADV 5326 – Advertising and the Consumer

ADV 5322 – Contemporary Issues in Advertising

MCOM 5344 – Seminar in Public Opinion and Propaganda

Two courses from (3 hours each):

ESS 5320 – Sport Leadership

ESS 5321 – Financial Management in Sport

ESS 5322 – Management of Sport and Athletics

ESS 5325 – Legal and Ethical Aspects of Sport

ESS 5327 – Sport Facility Planning and Management

Recommended M.A. Course Schedules

Thesis Master's Degree

FIRST FALL TERM (10 credit hours)

MCOM 5160 – Seminar in Graduate Study (1 credit)

MCOM 5366 – Mass Communications Theory

MCOM 5364 – Research Methods

One 3 credit hour elective

FIRST SPRING TERM (9 credit hours)

MCOM 5374 – Data Analysis

Two 3 credit hour electives

FIRST SUMMER TERM (3 credit hours)

One 3 credit hour elective & the comprehensive examination

SECOND SUMMER TERM (3 credit hours)

One 3 credit hour elective

SECOND FALL TERM (6 credit hours)

Six hours of thesis credit

Professional Master's Degree

FIRST FALL TERM (10 credit hours)

MCOM 5160 – Seminar in Graduate Study (1 credit)

MCOM 5366 – Mass Communications Theory

MCOM 5364 – Research Methods

One 3 credit hour elective

FIRST SPRING TERM (12 credit hours)

MCOM 5374 – Data Analysis

Three 3 credit hour electives

FIRST SUMMER TERM (3 credit hours)

One 3 credit hour elective & the comprehensive examination

SECOND SUMMER TERM (3 credit hours)

One 3 credit hour elective

SECOND FALL TERM (9 credit hours)

Three 3 credit hour electives

Independent Study Hour Limit

M.A. students are limited to 6 hours of independent study courses.

Program of Study and Degree Plan

The Graduate School requires that each student submit a degree plan outlining his or her course of study by the middle of the second semester of study.

Each graduate student's degree plan must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. All graduate students are encouraged to consult the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies as early as possible in their program of study for assistance preparing their degree plan.

Degree plans may be changed up to the beginning of the semester of graduation. However, all degree plan changes must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and by the Graduate School by the first week of the semester of graduation.

M.A. Comprehensive Evaluation

All master's students in the College of Mass Communications must pass the comprehensive examination before graduation. Further, no student may select a thesis chair, form a thesis committee, or defend a thesis or project until after she or he has passed the comprehensive examination. Students must complete all core courses with a grade of B or higher before they may take the comprehensive examination.

In order for a qualified student to take the comprehensive examination, he or she must notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in writing of his or her intent to take the examination by the last class day of the semester preceding the date the examination is to be taken.

Each fall, spring and first summer term, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will form a M.A. comprehensive examination committee. Only graduate faculty members will serve on the M.A. comprehensive examination committee.

The M.A. comprehensive examination will be given on three days during the academic year:

1. the second Monday of October,
2. the second Monday of February and
3. the second Monday of June.

The examination will be given from 1-5 p.m. The examination will begin promptly at 1 p.m. No late admittance will be permitted.

The M.A. comprehensive examinations will be administered in the Center for Communications Research on the appointed day.

Students will use the computers in the CCR to keyboard their answers. At 5 p.m. all work will stop and the tests will be collected. No extensions of the time will be permitted.

All students taking the M.A. comprehensive examination in any given term will answer the same questions.

Questions on the M.A. comprehensive examination will address mass communications theory and research methods.

The M.A. comprehensive exam questions must not replicate the questions on a final exam for a particular course.

The examination will be graded using a system that masks the identity of each student whose work is being graded.

Each question will be graded separately and given a score based on a 4.0 scoring system. Only members of the committee will grade the examinations. After all answers have been evaluated and given a grade, the grades will be averaged to determine a final score.

A score of 0 to 1.50 will be a failing grade. The student must retake the examination during the next term when M.A. comprehensive examinations are offered.

A score of 1.51 to 2.50 is a marginal pass. The committee may conduct an oral defense. Any student, with a score of 1.51-2.50 whose response to the oral defense is not deemed adequate by the committee must retake the examination during the next term when M.A. comprehensive examinations are offered.

A score of 2.5 to 3.5 is pass. No oral defense is required.

A score above 3.5 is a “pass with distinction” and the student will be notified of this accomplishment.

For those students who have passed the examination, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will file the Report of Final Defense by the Texas Tech University Graduate School deadline.

M.A. Committees Thesis Program

Master’s students in a thesis program, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, must select a committee to assist and evaluate the student’s research and thesis production. The committee must include a thesis director and at least one additional committee member all of whom must be members of the graduate faculty in the College of Mass Communications. At the discretion of the student, one additional member of the committee may be selected from the faculty of Texas Tech University.

The thesis director and student are responsible for establishing deadlines and component tasks for the creation of the thesis. Students are advised to submit, and committees are advised to collectively evaluate, a thesis prospectus that describes the research question or hypothesis, literature and methodology for the thesis. This prospectus evaluation should occur during, or prior to, the semester before the semester in which the student plans to defend the thesis.

Students cannot hold a formal prospectus defense until after passing all sections of the M.A. qualifying exams.

Professional Program

Master's students in professional programs are required to create a graduate committee to guide their final project.

Master's students who enroll in MCOM 6050 (master's report) must identify at least two members of the graduate faculty who will direct their final project. This committee will be responsible for evaluating and grading the student's performance in that project. The committee chair will set the standards and requirements for the project in consultation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Retention and Satisfactory Progress

In addition to all requirements of the Graduate School, graduate students in the College of Mass Communications must meet the following requirements in order to qualify for assistantships, financial aid and/or graduation.

For all graduate students any course in which he or she receives a grade of "C" or lower will not be counted toward required coursework.

A more complete detailed description of academic requirements are included in the Appendices.

Any M.A. student who does not maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 ("B") or higher, who has completed more than 1.25 times the minimum number of hours required for his or her program or who has been enrolled in his or her M.A. program for more than six years (or four years after completion of all coursework) is not making reasonable progress. Students who are not making reasonable progress will not be qualified for any financial aid, including assistantships, and may be required to pay out-of-state tuition. Most master's students are not making reasonable progress when they exceed 45 credit hours of enrollment.

Academic Scrutiny

Any master's student will be placed under academic scrutiny if she or he:

- receives a grade of C or lower in any graduate course, and/or
- receives either a semester or cumulative grade point average below 3.0.

This period of academic scrutiny will be in effect from the end of the academic term in which the student received the subject grade or GPA and will remain in effect through the end of the spring or fall semester following the term in which the student received the subject grade or GPA. A student who increases his/her GPA above 3.0 or who receives no grade lower than B in the semester following being placed under scrutiny will be returned to normal status following the semester of scrutiny.

Enrollment Abeyance

A master's student in the College of Mass Communications will not be permitted to enroll in any graduate courses in the College of Mass Communications if she or he:

- receives a semester grade point average below 3.0, during a term of academic scrutiny,
- receives two course grades of C or lower in any graduate course or combination of graduate courses,
- completes more than 1.25 times the minimum number of graduate credit hours required for his or her program without completing all requirements for graduation,
- completes more than 46 graduate credit hours without completing all requirements for graduation,
- is enrolled for more than four years after the completion of all coursework without completing all requirements for graduation, and/or
- is enrolled for more than six years without completing all requirements for graduation.

Readmission

Master's students who are placed in enrollment abeyance from the College of Mass Communications may not take any courses in the College of Mass Communications for at least one fall or spring semester after they have been placed in enrollment abeyance. During the period of enrollment abeyance students who plan to seek future enrollment in mass communications courses should complete readings, non-credit coursework or other tasks that will strengthen their application for future enrollment.

The College Graduate Admissions Committee will review applications from students seeking to enroll after being placed in academic abeyance using the same criteria they would apply to applications for transfer from other schools or programs. The fact that a student has been placed in academic abeyance will be considered by the Admissions Committee as part of the committee's readmission decision.

Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. in Mass Communications at Texas Tech focuses on convergent media and integrated communications. The phrase “Convergent media and integrated communications” as addressed in the doctoral program in the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech University is the study of message content, message effect, and simultaneous message delivery through multiple media as those variables change, interact and change one another.

While coursework may concentrate in the areas of advertising, electronic media, journalism or public relations, each student is required to acquire at least some background in all areas of mass communications and some familiarity with all media of mass communications.

Residency Requirement

The graduate faculty in the College of Mass Communications considers participation in an academic environment and the exchange of ideas between scholars an important part of a doctoral education.

For the doctoral program in the College of Mass Communications, the residency requirement is fulfilled by the completion of 24-hours of coursework over a 15-month period. (Adopted Aug. 17, 2010).

Curriculum Overview

The doctoral degree requires a minimum of 75 hours of coursework beyond the bachelor’s degree or a minimum of 48 hours of coursework beyond the master’s degree. In addition, all students must complete at least 12 dissertation hours.

For students who begin their Ph.D. immediately after the bachelor’s degree, the program requires a minimum of 87 hours—75 hours of coursework and 12 hours of dissertation work.

The coursework must include a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 15 hours in a minor area outside of mass communications.

For those students who already have a master’s degree in mass communications (or graduate degree approved by the graduate dean), the program requires a minimum of 60 hours --- 48 hours of courses and 12 dissertation hours. The 48 hours of coursework must include 6 to 15 hours in a minor area outside of mass communications, 21 hours of core work, and 12 to 21 hours of mass communications electives.

Students are also expected to complete individual research projects with a member of the graduate faculty.

Students who enter the Ph.D. program from the College of Mass Communications M.A. program will not be required to retake courses that were passed previously with a grade of B or better.

Core Courses

The following courses are required for all Ph.D. students:

Mass Communications Required Courses:

MCOM 5364 – Research Methods

MCOM 5366 – Mass Communications Theory

MCOM 5374 – Data Analysis

MCOM 6366 – Advanced Theory

MCOM 6364 – Selected Research Methods (topics rotate)

Mass Communications Required Integration Course (must select one)

MCOM 6315 – Integrated Communications Campaigns

MCOM 6310 – Contemporary Issues in Communications Technology

Outside Statistics Requirement

A non-MCOM Graduate Statistics Course is required for all Ph.D. students. (see university course catalog)

Minor or Cognate Courses

All doctoral students are required to complete a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 15 hours of coursework in a minor or cognate area. These areas of study may include management, marketing, information systems, technical communication, or any other area of concentration designed in consultation with the student, the department involved and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Students should get approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies before selecting a cognate.

Independent Study Hours Limit

Ph.D. students are limited to a total of 15 hours of independent study credit.

Program of Study and Degree Plan

The Graduate School requires that each student submit a degree plan outlining his or her course of study by the middle of their second semester of study.

Each graduate student's degree plan must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. All graduate students are encouraged to consult the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies as early as possible in their program of study for assistance preparing their degree plan.

Degree plans may be changed up to the beginning of the semester of graduation. However, all degree plan changes must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and by the Graduate School by the first week of the semester of graduation.

No student may sit for the doctoral qualifying exam or the research competency exam without a completed and approved degree plan.

Program Exams

Research Competency Exam

All doctoral students in the College of Mass Communications must successfully complete the research competency examination before completing coursework. The exam is intended to assess the student's need for additional instruction. Based on the results of this exam, the student may be required to take additional coursework in research methods, theory or data analysis.

Students are advised to take the exam as early as possible in their academic career.

Students must request permission to take the research competency exam in the semester after completing the following required courses:

- MCOM 5364 – Research Methods
- MCOM 5366 – Mass Communications Theory
- MCOM 5374 – Data Analysis
- Non-MCOM Graduate Statistics Course

If, following the research competency examination, students are required to take additional coursework in research methods or statistics, those course requirements are added to the student's program and may not be counted as electives.

If, following the research competency examination, students are required to take additional coursework in research methods or statistics, the student must again take and successfully complete the research competency examination after having completed those additional courses.

In order for a qualified student to take the research competency examination, he or she must notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in writing of his or her intent to take the examination by the last class day of the semester preceding the date the examination is to be taken.

Each fall, spring and first summer term, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will form a research competency examination committee.

Only Graduate Faculty members will serve on the research competency examination committee.

The research competency examination and doctoral qualifying examinations will be administered in the Center for Communications Research on the appointed days.

The research competency examination will be given on three days during the academic year:

1. the second Monday of October,
2. the second Monday of February and
3. the second Monday of June.

The examination will be given from 1-5 p.m. The examination will begin promptly at 1 p.m. No late admittance will be permitted.

Qualifying Exams

All doctoral students must pass a qualifying examination (sometimes called a comprehensive examination) after completing all coursework with a grade of B or higher. The qualifying exams include a written portion and an oral defense of the written answers to questions in the following areas:

- mass communication theories
- research methods
- the student's major area
- the student's cognate area.

Each doctoral student will form his or her qualifying examination committee with the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Each committee will comprise a chair, two members of the graduate faculty in mass communications, and one member from the student's cognate area.

The committee chair must be approved to direct doctoral dissertations. No faculty member is obligated to serve on any particular committee.

Scheduling Qualifying Exam

In order for a qualified student to take the qualifying examination, he or she must notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in writing of his or her intent to take the examination by the last class day of the semester preceding the date the examination is to be taken.

Students may not take the exam until the student has received passing grades in all courses on the degree plan.

No student may schedule the qualifying examination (comprehensive exam) until after she or he has successfully completed the research competency examination.

No student may take the research competency examination and the qualifying examination in the same term.

Each question area is scheduled for four hours. Students must complete all sections of the exam within a seven-day period.

All four questions will be created and graded by the student's examining committee.

Oral Defense

An oral defense is mandatory for qualifying exams. No more than 30 days after the written portion of the doctoral comprehensive examination is completed, the committee and student will meet for an oral defense. The examining committee chair is responsible for inviting all members of the graduate faculty in mass communications to attend the meeting. This defense will begin by giving the student an opportunity to clarify, correct or expand on answers originally written. The committee may then ask questions of the student designed to confirm the student's understanding of the examination material. The questions in the oral examination should not go beyond the scope of the written comprehensive examination questions unless such expansion is needed to confirm the student's understanding of concepts addressed in the written examination.

Following the oral defense, each question will be graded by all members of the committee. A student will pass the question only if a majority of the examining committee votes to pass the student for the question.

Students whose answers are “in need of additional clarification” may be given an opportunity to write explanations or expansions of their answers following the oral defense. This option is entirely at the discretion of the examining committee.

Following the oral defense, the committee will meet privately and will assign the student one of the following grades per each of the four sections of the exam:

- Pass with distinction
- Pass
- Fail

A student must pass all four sections of the exam to receive an overall passing score.

Students who pass the exam (all sections) may then form a dissertation committee and present a dissertation proposal.

Students who do not pass any question or questions will be required to re-take only the question or questions they did not pass in a subsequent qualifying examination.

If a student fails any portion of the exam he or she must retake that portion. A second examination may not be taken less than four months or more than 12 months after the initial failure. Students who fail the doctoral comprehensive examination twice will not be continued in the doctoral program.

After passing the qualifying examination a student is admitted to candidacy and will, with the advice and consent of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, select a dissertation committee.

All doctoral students in the College of Mass Communications must pass the qualifying examination and be admitted to candidacy before selecting a dissertation chair, forming a dissertation committee or submitting a dissertation proposal.

During the academic term in which a student takes the qualifying examination for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. for the first time, he or she may enroll in MCOM 8000 (dissertation hours).

A student may not form dissertation committee or present a prospectus until he or she has passed the qualifying examination.

For those students who have passed the examination, the student's examination committee will report to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies who will file the Report of Final Defense with the Texas Tech University Graduate School.

Dissertation

Dissertation proposals will not be considered until the required research competency examination and doctoral qualifying examinations have been satisfactorily completed.

The dissertation committee will guide the student through the dissertation proposal and the dissertation itself.

The dissertation is original research reported in a document that demonstrates a mastery of research techniques, thorough understanding of the subject matter, and a high degree of skill in organizing and presenting material.

Ph.D. Advisory Committees

The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, in consultation with the student, will appoint an advisory committee for each doctoral student. This committee will include a chair and two or three other members. The members of each committee must be selected from the graduate faculty in the College of Mass Communications. One additional member from the student's cognate area must be added before the student's qualifying examination.

Members of the advisory committee may or may not continue as members of the student's dissertation committee. However, the student may request changes in the membership of his or her committee at any time, including curriculum milestones such as the beginning of preparation for the qualifying examination or the dissertation.

The dissertation committee will be selected after completion of the qualifying examination. This committee must include a chair selected from the graduate faculty in the College of Mass Communications and three other members of the graduate faculty at Texas Tech University. At least one member of the committee must be selected from the graduate faculty in the student's cognate area.

The student is expected to present this committee with a dissertation proposal that includes a review of relevant literature, research hypotheses or questions and a description of appropriate research methods. The committee will evaluate the proposal and, in consultation with the student, establish a schedule for completion of the dissertation. This committee will also conduct the dissertation defense and determine acceptability of the final dissertation.

For a list of graduate faculty in the College of Mass Communications, see the College of Mass Communications website.

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/masscom/graduate/faculty.php>

Under exceptional circumstances, a committee member may be chosen from the graduate faculty at another university. Such individuals must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, must be admitted to the Graduate Faculty by the Texas Tech University Graduate Council, and must agree to attend the defense of the comprehensive examination, prospectus and dissertation.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for knowing degree requirements and for enrolling in courses that will enable them to complete their degree programs. It is also their responsibility to know the university regulations for the standard of work to continue in the Graduate School and the College of Mass Communications. For information, consult both the general and specific degree requirements in the University Catalog and this publication.

Clarification of these policies may be obtained from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and/or the Graduate School.

Retention and Satisfactory Progress

In addition to all requirements of the Graduate School, graduate students in the College of Mass Communications must meet the following requirements in order to qualify for assistantships, financial aid and/or graduation.

For all graduate students any course in which he or she receives a grade of "C" or lower will not be counted toward required coursework.

Teaching Responsibilities and Experience

Most mass communications graduates will become college professors. Therefore, in addition to experience in scholarly research, it is the policy of the College of Mass Communications that most Ph.D. students, as appropriate, gain meaningful experience in the classroom. This may be done as a Graduate Part Time Instructor (GPTI) who is the instructor of record for a course, as a teaching assistant or through a graduate course in Mass Communications Pedagogy (MCOM 6010).

Based on a review of records and performance, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, in consultation with the graduate faculty, may identify exceptional doctoral students who may serve as teacher of record during their first semester of study. After some training and/or coursework most doctoral students will be assigned to teach courses as instructor of record after their first semester of study. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will make all teaching assignments based on students' credentials and the current teaching needs of the college.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Any Ph.D. student who does not maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 (on a 4 point scale) or higher, or who has completed more than 1.25 times the minimum number of hours required for his or her program is not making reasonable progress. Students who are not making reasonable progress will not be qualified for any financial aid, including assistantships. Further, Ph.D. students may not exceed 99 total hours of graduate enrollment.

Academic Scrutiny

This policy governs enrollment in courses offered by the College of Mass Communications and graduation with degrees offered by that college. Nothing herein modifies the Graduate School's exclusive authority to suspend graduate students or to place graduate students on probation. Unless prohibited by the Graduate School, graduate students placed in enrollment abeyance by the College of Mass Communications are free to pursue enrollment in courses outside the College of Mass Communications and/or admission to other graduate programs at Texas Tech University.

Any Ph.D. student will be placed under academic scrutiny if she or he:

- receives a grade of C or lower in any graduate course, and/or
- receives either a semester or cumulative grade point average below 3.25.

The period of academic scrutiny will be in effect from the end of the academic term in which the student received the subject grade or GPA and will remain in effect through the end of the long (spring or fall) semester following the term in which the student received the subject grade or GPA.

Enrollment Abeyance

A Ph.D. student in the College of Mass Communications will not be permitted to enroll in any graduate courses in the College of Mass Communications if she or he:

- receives a semester grade point average below 3.25, during a term of academic scrutiny,
- receives two course grades of C or lower in any graduate course or combination of graduate courses,
- completes more than 1.25 times the minimum number of graduate credit hours required for his or her program,
- completes more than 75 graduate credit hours after the master's degree or a total of 99 hours of graduate coursework in Texas,
- is enrolled for more than eight years without completing all requirements for graduation, and/or
- is enrolled for more than four years after admission to candidacy without completing all requirements for graduation

Readmission

Doctoral students who are placed in enrollment abeyance from the College of Mass Communications may not take any courses in the College of Mass Communications for at least one long semester after they have been placed in enrollment abeyance. During the period of enrollment abeyance students who plan to seek future enrollment in mass communications courses should complete readings, non-credit coursework or other tasks that will strengthen their application for future enrollment. The College Graduate Admissions Committee will review applications from students seeking to enroll after being placed in academic abeyance using the same criteria they would apply to applications for transfer from other schools or programs. The fact that a student has been placed in academic abeyance will be considered by the Admissions Committee as part of their holistic decision.

Expectations for Student Conduct

Each graduate policy is intended to assist student decisions and guide faculty conduct. All are subject to change and all are subservient to applicable university policies and deadlines. Anyone reading these policies is advised also to read and understand the applicable university operating policies and to ensure these guidelines are current.

Graduate students are governed by the Student Code of Conduct. The code is available either on-line or from the Office of Student Life.

Texas Tech University and the College of Mass Communications are dedicated not only to learning, research and the advancement of knowledge, but also to the development of ethically sensitive and responsible persons. The college seeks to achieve these goals through sound educational programs and policies governing individual conduct that encourages independence and maturity. By accepting membership in this college, an individual joins a community characterized by free expression, free inquiry, intellectual honesty, respect for others, and participation in constructive change. All rights and responsibilities exercised within this academic environment shall be compatible with these principles.

The stressful situations experienced in graduate school occasionally result in personal friction between students or between students and faculty. In most cases, these incidents can and should be worked out between the individuals involved on the basis of common courtesy, mutual respect, and common sense. Individual incidents or trends that cannot be resolved at the personal level or which are serious violations of civil, student or professional codes should be documented in writing and reported to the appropriate authority. Typically such reports are initiated with either the Dean of the College of Mass Communications, the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. If conflicts cannot be resolved within the College of Mass Communications, other options for addressing conflicts include the University Ombudsman or the Student Mediation Center.

Human Subjects

All research, including thesis and dissertation research that involves human subjects either directly or indirectly must be approved PRIOR to the research itself. University policy does not allow approval after the research has begun. Research involving human subjects includes, but is not limited to, research that uses subjects to respond to surveys, observes human behavior, or analyses communication or communication records.

TTU Operating Policy 74.09 details the procedures required by 45 CFR 46.102 and appropriate university rules. The Human Subjects Committee, operating under the Office of Research Services, serves as the TTU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Instructions and forms for requesting human subjects research approval are available from the Office of Research Services or the Center for Communications Research

Travel Assistance

Graduate students who present research papers at academic conferences may receive travel support. Usually such funding is only available for a paper's first author and only for one "presenter." Funding for such requests will not cover all travel expenses and is limited by availability of funds. Priority for allocation of limited funds will be given to doctoral students. In order to process requests for graduate student travel, all requests must be received by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies 60 days prior to the planned travel or by the last day of the academic term preceding the term in which the student will be traveling, whichever date is earliest. Except in extraordinary situations travel funding is not available for international travel.

Students who submit papers for consideration for presentation at academic conferences are advised to contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies for information about travel funding availability and procedures at the time they submit the paper for consideration. Students who wait to apply for travel funding until after their paper is accepted risk not receiving travel funding.

Graduate Assistant and Graduate Part-time Instructor Policies

The administration and enforcement of these policies are the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. If you have any questions about a policy, its interpretation or enforcement please ask him or her as soon as possible.

In this document, regardless of their assignments, master's level graduate assistants are referred to as Graduate Assistants (GAs) and doctoral level graduate assistants are referred to as Graduate Part Time Instructors (GPTIs).

Orientation – During the week preceding classes of the first semester of employment all GAs and GPTIs are required to attend an orientation. The date and time of this orientation will be determined by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Payment – GAs and GPTIs will be paid in monthly installments with the first payment made at the end of the first full month of employment.

Duration of Assistantship – GAs and GPTIs are typically hired in fall for one academic year or in summer or spring for one academic term. Renewal of their employment is contingent on their maintaining good academic standing and the quality of their performance in assigned duties. Maximum time of appointment for GAs and GPTIs are different and are detailed below. As used in this policy, good academic standing means that the student is neither on academic probation, under academic suspension, under academic scrutiny, nor enrollment abeyance. These terms are defined in a separate policy statement.

Summer Appointments – Summer appointments are not guaranteed and are contingent on the graduate assistant's past performance, funding availability and the needs of the college.

Insurance Benefits – This benefit is not funded by the College of Mass Communications.

Enrollment Requirements - All GAs and GPTIs must be full-time students and may not enroll in more coursework than will permit them to dedicate appropriate time and attention to their duties as GAs or GPTIs. Students must complete a total of 24 credit hours during the fall, spring and summer terms of the year of appointment. During the fall and spring terms minimum enrollment is 9 hours of graduate credit and maximum enrollment is 12 hours of graduate credit. During summer terms maximum enrollment is 9 hours of graduate credit (this maximum applies to the total credit for both summer sessions). Some limited exceptions to these minimums may be possible during the final term of a student's graduate program and some limited exceptions to the maximums may be possible under extraordinary circumstances. Such exceptions can only be granted with the consent of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

Outside Employment – GAs and GPTIs may not have any other employment during the terms in which they are employed by the College of Mass Communications.

Work Commitment – Except for GPTIs who are instructors of record, GAs and GPTIs must work 20 hours each week and must submit a time and hour report at the end of each week to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. During weeks of university holidays the time commitment from GAs and GPTIs is reduced in a ratio to the number of days of official holiday. The work obligation of GAs and GPTIs begins with the week preceding the first week of classes each semester and continues through the last day of the final examination period.

Obligation to Faculty Supervisor – During the week prior to the beginning of classes GAs and GPTIs must meet with the faculty members who will be supervising their assistantship. The purpose of these meetings is to establish assignments and expectations. Because it is the obligation of the GA or GPTI to meet these assignments and expectations he or she is advised to establish a clear understanding of the assignment and to request the faculty member to provide a written description of the assignment. For assistants who will serve as instructor of record, their faculty supervisor is the department chair responsible for the subject course.

Decorum and Collegiality – GAs and GPTIs are in the unusual position of simultaneously being employees, colleagues and students. They are therefore required to meet a high standard of decorum and collegiality. Specifically GAs and GPTIs should maintain civility and, where appropriate, deference in their interaction and communication with the faculty; a high standard of civility and cordiality in their communication with staff and their fellow graduate students; and a high standard of civility and fairness in their interactions with undergraduate students.

Respect for Diversity – The College of Mass Communications respects and encourages diversity within its academic community. All members of the college, including GAs and GPTIs, are required to show respect for and avoid criticism of the values, beliefs and cultures of others.

Standards of Dress – All GAs and GPTIs are required to dress appropriately for their assigned duties. For most tasks this means attire appropriate to a professional communications setting.

Use of College Equipment – GAs and GPTIs are prohibited from using college equipment that is not available to other graduate students for their own class work. This prohibition is imposed to ensure that all students compete equally for grades. Specifically, GAs and GPTIs should not use office printers and copy machines for their individual class work.

Policies Specific to GAs

Assignments – GAs are typically not assigned as instructors of record but are assigned to assist faculty members with class administration duties such as maintaining attendance records and with research assistance. They may be assigned to provide assistance to more than one faculty member.

Maximum Term of Employment – Subject to conditions described above, the assistantships of GAs may be continued for up to four academic terms. If an assistantship is provided for a summer term that summer term does count as one of the four terms.

Partial Fee Waivers – GAs receive a partial fee waiver funded by the university, not by the College of Mass Communications. This waiver includes a waiver of out of state tuition and the waiver of most student fees.

Policies Specific to GPTIs

Assignments – GPTIs may be assigned as instructors of record in a course and/or to assist with faculty research. They may be assigned to teach two sections in a semester but will most often be assigned to teach one section and to also provide research assistance to a faculty member. During the first semester in which a GPTI teaches, his or her entire assignment will be teaching one section.

Maximum Term of Employment – Subject to conditions described above the assistantships of GPTIs may be continued for up to three years. Summer appointments and assistance during these three years are not guaranteed and are contingent on available funding.

Fee Waivers – GPTIs receive a full waiver of student fees during the terms of employment (note that such waivers are not guaranteed during summers).

Policies that are unique to GAs or GPTIs who are serving as instructor of record:

Common Syllabus – All graduate students who are teaching a course are required to use and follow a syllabus provided by their faculty supervisor. No deviation from this syllabus is permitted without the express permission of the faculty supervisor.

Class Cancellations – No graduate student instructor is permitted to cancel class without securing permission from his or her faculty supervisor. In the event an illness or emergency forces cancellation of a class, the graduate instructor should report the situation as soon as possible to the faculty supervisor and should make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are notified of the cancellation before they arrive for class.

Class Observations – As is the case with all untenured and adjunct faculty, classes taught by GPTIs will be observed by members of the tenured faculty. These observations may be unannounced but are usually done after consultation with the instructor to be observed.

University Class Policies – GPTIs are subject to the same class management policies as the faculty. These policies address student attendance and absences, student record confidentiality, sexual harassment, disabled student services and accommodations, grading, and academic integrity.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

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