



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Media & Communication™

**Graduate Program
Operating Policy & Procedures**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Operating Procedure Manual is to provide graduate program faculty members, students, and staff members with information about (1) policies that are unique to the College of Media & Communication's Graduate Program; (2) procedures that the college graduate program follows in implementing those policies; and (3) procedures that the graduate program follows in implementing the policies of Texas Tech University and the College of Media & Communication.

This Manual is modeled after the TTU and College of Media & Communication OP Manuals and is not intended to be an exhaustive source of information on policy matters. Complete information is available in the following sources:

1. Policies and Procedures Operations Manual of the Board of Regents concerning the TTU System. <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/>
2. TTU General Catalog: policies and descriptions concerning the University's structure and academic programs. <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/>
3. TTU Faculty Handbook: various policies concerning rights and responsibilities of TTU faculty members. <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/facultyHB/>
4. TTU College of Media & Communication Operating Procedures Manual (available on the college's intranet)

Where questions of jurisdiction arise, the published policies of the Texas Tech University, the Texas Tech University Graduate School, and the College of Media & Communication take precedence. Information in this Manual does not create any contractual rights for University employees.

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Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.01: Mission, Goals, & Structure of CoMC Graduate Program

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to specify the mission, goals, and structure of the College of Media & Communication's graduate program.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Mission

The mission of the College of Media & Communication graduate program is to contribute to the global body of knowledge concerning how communication processes interact with the diversity and complexity of society. In efforts to obtain this goal, graduate students and faculty members advance research and practice from a variety of methodological, theoretical, and philosophical perspectives. Ultimately, the College prepares scholars, educators, professionals and public servants to be engaged leaders and citizens at state, regional, national, and international levels.

2. Vision

The Graduate Faculty of the College of Media & Communication will further develop the Graduate Program – already composed of internationally recognized scholars, world class research facilities, and students of great intellectual curiosity – in alignment with Texas Tech University's goal to become a premier research institution, while maintaining a focus on graduate teaching and mentorship of young scholars.

3. Values

The Graduate Faculty of the College of Media & Communication adhere to the following core values:

- We champion rigorous inquiry into matters of importance to our academic fields, the professions they support, and the democratic society of which they are a part;
- we support the open exchange of ideas that characterize Texas Tech University's commitment to academic freedom;

- we value the successful mentoring and development of the next generation of scholars and educators;
- we share a commitment to recognizing the value of academic research that proceeds according to diverse epistemological and disciplinary imperatives, and we make every effort to achieve diversity of all kinds when considering the makeup of both the graduate faculty and the graduate student population;
- we support a global approach to graduate education in terms of pedagogy, scholarship, and outreach;
- we maintain a steadfast commitment to effective teaching, even as we reach ever higher in terms of the quality, practical application, and our scholarship efforts;
- we value civil engagement and discussion, collegiality, and professionalism.

4. Strategic Goals

The Graduate Faculty of the College of Media & Communication are committed to pursuing the following strategic goals:

- To maintain excellence in research productivity and the acquisition of external research funds in order to further recruit and develop the very best graduate students nationwide;
- To maintain excellence in training prolific researchers and effective teachers who place regularly on faculties of the best programs in Media & Communication nationally and internationally, or who obtain leadership positions in relevant private and public sector realms;
- To grow the Graduate Faculty in accordance with the needs of the Graduate Program and its students.

5. Structure

- a. *Graduate Programs.* Within these operating policies and procedures, it should be understood that “graduate programs” refers collectively to those graduate programs that reside at the college level as well as departmental graduate programs within the college.

As of Oct. 2016, *college graduate programs* include:

- Doctor of Philosophy in Media & Communication

As of Oct. 2016, *departmental graduate programs* within the college include:

- Master of Arts in Communication Studies (resides in the Department of Communication Studies)
- Master of Arts in Mass Communications (joint program residing within Departments of Advertising, Journalism & Electronic Media, and Public Relations)
- Online Master of Arts in Strategic Communication & Innovation (joint program residing within Departments of Advertising, Journalism & Electronic Media, and Public Relations)

Where necessary, distinctions will be made within individual OPs to specify whether policies apply solely to college or departmental graduate programs.

- b. *Graduate Faculty*. References to “graduate faculty” refer collectively to all graduate faculty members within the College of Media & Communication regardless of departmental appointment.

When necessary for the sake of clarity, distinctions will be made between graduate faculty in general and graduate faculty eligible to vote on issues related to specific degree programs. In such cases, the term *voting faculty* will be used.

As of Oct. 2016, the voting faculty for each CoMC graduate program include:

Graduate Degree	Voting Faculty
Ph.D. in Media & Communication	All college graduate faculty
M.A. in Communication Studies	Graduate faculty with appointments in COMS
M.A. in Mass Communications	Graduate faculty with appointments in ADV, JEM, & PR
M.A. in Strategic Comm. & Innovation	Graduate faculty with appointments in ADV, JEM, & PR



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.02: Policy and Procedure Development

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process through which graduate studies policies may be developed, revised, and adopted.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

Policies and procedures in this manual are designed to guide the processes followed in the College of Media & Communication graduate program. As conditions change, policies may change. Policy changes may be initiated through (1) periodic review of the policies by the graduate faculty and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and (2) special action taken by the graduate faculty or college administration during the academic year. In either case, full-time graduate faculty members with appointments in the College of Media & Communication are eligible to vote on the recommendations.

2. Procedure

- a. *Periodic review.* The CoMC graduate faculty, CoMC Graduate Council, and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies of the College of Media & Communication periodically will review all policies and procedures and will recommend appropriate changes, additions, and deletions for the appropriate graduate faculty members' consideration and approval.
- b. *Special action.* At any time during the regular academic year, the graduate faculty of the College of Media & Communication may make a recommendation to modify a policy, add a new policy, or eliminate an old one. A graduate faculty member wanting to make any policy changes, additions, or deletions should notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the chair of the CoMC Graduate Council, in writing, of the recommended changes, additions, or deletions. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will provide members of the graduate faculty and the Graduate Council a copy of the proposed changes for consideration and approval.

c. *Consideration and approval.*

- i. Prior to a vote to approve any modifications to graduate policies and procedures—whether triggered by periodic review or special action—the appropriate graduate faculty members should have at least 10 business days during Fall or Spring semester to review and consider the recommended policy changes. Votes should not take place during the summer when graduate faculty members who are on 9-month contracts may not be on campus. If a vote cannot wait until Fall, then graduate faculty members should be given 10 business days to consider the proposed policy revision.
- ii. During that time, any graduate faculty member can submit a written request to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies that he/she convene a meeting of the graduate faculty or the CoMC Graduate Council for deliberation of the proposed policy changes.
- iii. Robert’s Rules of Order will be followed in making proposals, discussion of proposals, and voting.
- iv. After deliberation and consideration of the proposed policy changes, the appropriate graduate faculty will vote whether to approve the proposal or not, either as is or with modification.
- v. Votes may be recorded by show of hands, paper ballot, or via online survey.
- vi. Proposals are approved upon garnering support of a simple majority of the eligible voting faculty.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible to vote on a given policy, faculty members:

- a. must be full members of the college and university graduate faculty as outlined in CoMC Graduate Program OP 2.01 and in TTU OP 64.10,
- b. may only vote on those policies affecting programs for which they qualify as voting faculty members per their departmental appointment and as outlined in CoMC Graduate Program OP 1.01.5b.

Policies that are not tied to a specific graduate program are to be voted on by the full college graduate faculty.

4. Reporting

Regardless of which programs are affected, following a vote:

- a. The results of the vote should be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, who will report the outcome of the vote to the college graduate faculty.
- b. Copies of the new or revised policies should be provided to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies who will distribute a copy of the policy that includes a timeline for implementation.

A copy of the policies will also be included in the college graduate program OPs and will be publicly available via the graduate program website.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.03: College Graduate Council

DATE: Nov. 21, 2016

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the responsibilities of the college's Graduate Council as well as the process through which faculty members are appointed to the college Graduate Council.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of the College of Media & Communication Graduate Council is to:

- represent the interests of the graduate faculty at large,
- debate and vet policy options,
- present policy options to college graduate faculty for consideration,
- bring issues to attention of college graduate program administration.

2. Scope

- a. The scope of the Graduate Council includes all matters pertaining to the college's graduate faculty, graduate students, and graduate programs.
- b. In regards to graduate programs, the Graduate Council will focus on college-level graduate programs (i.e., the doctoral program) and those departmental graduate program matters that have the potential to affect the college at large.
- c. In cases of departmental graduate program matters that do not affect the college, only Graduate Council members who are voting faculty for those programs may propose, amend, or vote on policies and procedures related to those issues. Voting faculty is determined per CoMC Graduate Program OP 01.01.

3. Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of the Graduate Council include:

- a. *Graduate Curriculum.*
 - i. The Graduate Council shall initiate and/or review proposed revisions to the graduate curriculum and other degree requirements (e.g., capstone projects).
 - ii. The Graduate Council shall review and approve new proposals for graduate level (5000- and 6000-level) courses before these proposals are forwarded to the College Academic Programs Committee.
 - iii. The Graduate Council does not need to review specific courses taught under existing departmental graduate special topics courses (e.g., ADV 6315, etc.). The rotating topics for these courses should be determined by department chairs in consultation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

- b. *OP Review & Revision.* The Graduate Council shall initiate and/or review proposed operating policy revisions following the process outlined below:
 - i. Once a policy issue arrives at the Graduate Council (either forwarded by Associate Dean of Graduate Studies or initiated by the council itself), the Graduate Council will deliberate and then create an initial draft of the policy.
 - ii. The chair of the Graduate Council will send a draft of the policy to the graduate faculty.
 - iii. Graduate faculty will be encouraged to submit comments to and ask questions of their departmental graduate council representatives. In lieu of the departmental representatives, graduate faculty members may submit comments to or ask questions of the at-large graduate council representatives and the chair of the Graduate Council.
 - iv. The Graduate Council representatives will collect comments from graduate faculty and then present these comments at the next Graduate Council meeting.
 - v. The Graduate Council will engage in further deliberation with consideration given to the concerns expressed by the graduate faculty.
 - vi. The Graduate Council will draft a revised policy and then forward to the graduate faculty for a vote as outlined in CoMC Graduate Program OP 01.02.

- c. *Admissions.*
 - i. The Graduate Council shall serve as an admissions committee for the doctoral program. The council will also discuss funding at this time and forward both admissions and funding recommendations to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The council shall follow the guidelines outlined in CoMC Graduate Program OP 04.03. All graduate faculty will be made aware of the start of the admissions process and encouraged to review/comment on applicants. Graduate faculty can submit their comments in writing to the chair of the graduate council or individual council members.
 - ii. Admissions decisions for the Masters of Arts in Mass Communication will be made by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies; however, at the associate

- dean's request, the Graduate Council will review and make recommendations regarding select applications.
- iii. Admissions decisions for the Masters of Arts in Communication Studies will be made at the departmental level.
 - iv. Admissions decisions for the Masters of Arts in Strategic Communication and Innovation will be made by the program director; however, the director may forward select cases to the Graduate Council for review and recommendations.
- d. *Strategic Planning.* In consultation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, the Graduate Council shall initiate and/or review proposed changes to the graduate program strategic plan.
- e. *Academic Misconduct.* The Graduate Council shall review and render decisions regarding cases of academic misconduct when such cases are referred to the council by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies as outlined in CoMC Graduate Program OP 3.06.4.
- f. *Additional Responsibilities.* The Graduate Council may be assigned other responsibilities as designated by a majority vote of the college graduate faculty or by revision of this policy.

4. Subcommittees

In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, Graduate Council members should chair the following graduate program subcommittees. Membership of these subcommittees should include graduate faculty members who are not already appointed or elected to the Graduate Council. Subcommittee chairs should make regular reports to the Graduate Council regarding the activities of their subcommittees. In some instances, an issue may be referred from the Graduate Council to a subcommittee (or vice versa) for deliberation, comment, or action.

- a. *Graduate Student Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee.* This subcommittee shall advise graduate program administration regarding graduate student recruiting strategy, address retention issues, and conduct annual reviews of the doctoral students per CoMC Graduate Program OP 04.04.
- b. *Ph.D. Career Development Subcommittee.* This subcommittee shall implement programs to train doctoral students regarding career development issues such as how to effectively search for their first job, professional networking, preparation of application materials, preparing research job talks, etc.
- c. *Graduate Scholarship Subcommittee.* This subcommittee shall meet annually to review graduate student applications for scholarships

5. Membership

- a. All members of the Graduate Council must be members of the college's graduate faculty.

- b. The Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies is an ex-officio member of the council and retains the right to vote. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies is a non-voting, ex-officio member of the council.
- c. Each department in the college may appoint one representative to the council using whichever method the department chair—in consultation with departmental faculty—deems appropriate for their unit.
- d. Four additional at-large representatives are elected from among the college graduate faculty. Nominations to fill empty at-large positions should be solicited early in the fall semester, followed by a vote of eligible graduate faculty that should take place no later than the end of the second week of the fall semester. The Assistant or Associate Deans for Graduate Studies will be charged with organizing these procedures.
- e. Graduate faculty who hold administrative appointments in the college or university graduate program may not serve as departmental representatives. Department chairs cannot be appointed by themselves as departmental representatives, but chairs and other administrative positions may be elected to at-large positions.
- f. The college’s graduate students will appoint one doctoral student to serve as a liaison to the Graduate Council. This student liaison is non-voting and will be invited to attend council meetings as determined by the chair of the council.
- g. The council chair is determined by vote of the council membership at the start of each fall semester and the term of agreed upon service as chair lasts for the period of one academic year. Only voting members of the council—departmental representatives, at-large representatives, or the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies—can serve as chair.

6. Length of Appointments:

- a. Appointments for departmental and at-large council representatives are for two-year terms.
- b. Terms follow the academic calendar, beginning Sept. 1 of year 1 and ending Aug. 30 of year 2.
- c. Every year, two of the at-large representatives and two of the departmental representatives rotate off the council and are replaced as described in section 5 above. The following schedule should be observed:

<i>Year</i>	<i>End Terms/New Appointments</i>
Odd Numbered Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Communication Studies • At-Large Representative #1 • At-Large Representative #2
Even Numbered Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalism & Electronic Media • Public Relations • At-Large Representative #3 • At-Large Representative #4

- d. There are no limits related to faculty service on the graduate council for departmental or at-large representatives. Department chairs have the freedom to appoint the same person

to multiple consecutive terms. At-large representatives can serve for consecutive terms if nominated and elected by the graduate faculty.

- e. Should a member resign their seat on the council or separate from the College of Media & Communication, a new member should be immediately appointed (in the case of departmental representatives) or elected (for at-large representatives), using the procedures outlined in section 5 above.
- f. If the chair of the council resigns or steps down during the course of the academic year, the council will nominate and elect a new chair that serves a term only to the end of the academic year in which the previous chair resigned.

7. Meetings

- a. The Graduate Council should meet monthly during the fall and spring semesters while classes are in session.
- b. The council chair may request that members of the graduate faculty attend council meetings when their participation would provide insight regarding specific issues under consideration by the council.
- c. The chair should schedule meetings at a time and location on campus that is convenient for all council representatives and should provide representatives with adequate notification (at least two weeks) of upcoming meetings.
- d. Meetings can be convened if a quorum of 6 members (including voting ex-officio members) are present. The minutes will reflect which representatives were present and which were absent. Representatives who are excessively absent should consider resigning their appointment to the Graduate Council.
- e. Departmental representatives—in consultation with their department chair—may designate another graduate faculty member from their department to serve as their proxy if they are unable to attend a meeting.
 - i. The departmental representative should notify the chair of the Graduate Council in writing regarding the appointment of a proxy prior to a council meeting.
 - ii. The department chair may not serve as a proxy.
 - iii. In matters where a vote is required, the missing departmental representative may elect to (a) abstain from the vote, or (b) provide a proxy vote to be delivered to the chair of the Graduate Council.
 - iv. The proxy representative has the responsibility of reporting the outcomes of any council discussion back to the departmental representative.
 - v. Departmental representatives who overuse proxies should consider resigning from the Graduate Council and allowing their department to appoint another representative.
- f. At-large representatives may not send a proxy representative, but they may submit a proxy vote as outlined above for departmental representatives.
- g. At least one week prior to any meeting of the council, the chair will distribute a draft agenda to the graduate faculty.
- h. At least one week following any meeting of the council, the chair will distribute minutes of the meeting to the graduate faculty.
- i. Any graduate faculty member may request to address the committee to discuss an issue of concern, submit a proposal, etc. Requests should be sent to the chair in writing at least

one week prior to a council meeting. Requests can also be sent to departmental or at-large representatives, but should be forwarded to the Graduate Council chair in writing at least one week prior to a council meeting.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.04: Graduate Course Development & Scheduling

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process through which graduate courses are proposed, approved, and scheduled, including new course, new electives, and special topics courses.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Relevant College OP

CoMC OP 303.1 addresses the approval process for special topics courses; the following OP is meant to supplement, not supersede, that OP.

2. Purpose

In order to run an efficient graduate program, new graduate courses—including electives and special topics—should be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies as well as the relevant department chair in cases where the proposed course has a departmental rather than college prefix. Clear communication among instructors, departmental administration, and the graduate program is critical for ensuring course quality, to avoid redundant course offerings, to maintain efficiencies and use resources wisely, and to ensure that courses will attract enough student interest to meet the university's requirements for minimum enrollment.

3. Procedure

- a. Prior to submitting a course approval form to the CoMC Academic Programs Committee (for new courses and electives) or scheduling a departmental special topics course at the graduate level, a proposal should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. This submission should come at least one semester prior to the term during which the course would be first offered.
- b. A proposal should include the following elements:

- i. A statement regarding the need for the new course, as well as estimated course enrollment, a list of faculty who could potentially teach the course, and a timeline for offering the course
 - ii. A sample syllabus
 - iii. In the case of a new graduate course or elective, a course approval form should accompany the proposal
 - iv. In the case of a departmental offering, the proposal should be approved by the chair of the relevant department
- c. The proposal will be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies prior to advancing to the CoMC Academic Programs Committee or prior to the course being scheduled.
 - d. In some cases, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies may approach a department chair about offering a particular graduate course in their area; in this case, the above approval process should still be followed.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.05: Graduate Part-Time Instructors & Lab Instructors

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish procedures by which graduate students are appointed to teaching assignments as well as outlines for evaluation of graduate students serving in instructional and instructional support positions within the college.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1) Purpose

The purpose of this OP is to:

- a. Distinguish among Graduate Part-Time Instructors (GPTI), Teaching Assistants serving as Lab Instructors (TAL¹) and traditional Teaching Assistants (TA).
- b. Outline procedures for chairs and other program coordinators to request GPTI, TA-Lab, and TA support.
- c. Outline the responsibilities of GPTIs, TALs, and TAs.
- d. Specify procedures evaluating GPTIs and TALs.

2) Classifications

Graduate students in instructional and instructional support roles serve in one of three capacities:

Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI): A graduate part-time instructor is a graduate student, typically a doctoral student, who is the instructor of record for a course. Typically, this is one 3-hour undergraduate course that counts as a 10-hour assignment for the semester (.25 FTE).

¹ This is an internal acronym used only to differentiate the two different assignments that TAs hold.

Teaching Assistant - Lab Instructor (TAL): A teaching assistant serving as a lab instructor is typically a first semester doctoral student or a master's student who is supervising 1 to 2 lab sections under the supervision of a lead faculty member. Typically, one lab assignment counts as a 5-hour assignment for the semester (.125 FTE).

Teaching Assistant (TA): A traditional teaching assistant is a graduate student, typically a master's student, who is providing instructional support to a faculty member. Typically, this includes taking roll, grading assignments that do not require subjective judgment (e.g., multiple choice tests using an answer key), helping prepare course materials (e.g., making copies, constructing lecture slides, etc.), and helping to proctor exams.

3) Requesting Support

Department chairs or other program coordinators should follow the procedure described below when requesting graduate student instructors and instructional support.

- a. Once course scheduling for a future semester begins, the chair or coordinator should submit to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies a list of doctoral students that they would like to staff courses within their area. They should also indicate how many TALs and TAs they will need in that semester to cover labs and to provide support to instructors.
- b. In the case of TAs for instructional support, the chair or coordinator should provide a brief rationale as to the necessity for a TA to support a given course.
- c. In the case of GPTIs, the following should be taken into consideration by both the chair/coordinator and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies:
 - i. The nature of the teaching portfolio and the professional career goals of the individual doctoral student.
 - ii. The doctoral student's prior teaching and professional experience.
- d. At no time should chairs or coordinators make a commitment to a graduate student regarding an assignment until it is reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Likewise, graduate students are discouraged from lobbying individual chairs or coordinators for an assignment; those requests should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies who will then reach out to the appropriate chair or coordinator to discuss opportunities for the graduate student to teach.

4) Responsibilities

GPTIs and TALs are to abide by the same standards as other instructors at TTU and within CoMC regardless of rank or appointment. As such, they should familiarize themselves with TTU and CoMC OPs governing classroom policies and procedures as well as FERPA guidelines and other policies relevant to working with students.

In addition, TALs should recognize that they are responsible for following the policies and procedures outlined by their supervising instructor for the course. TALs should also utilize

the grading procedures and follow assignment guidelines as determined by their supervising instructor, as well as following the syllabus and course schedule for the course. In cases where TALs have concerns or questions, they should contact their faculty supervisor immediately.

All GPTIs, TALs, and TAs are reminded that they are responsible for notifying their supervising instructors (in the case of TALs and TAs) or department chairs or coordinators (in the case of GPTIs) if they will be absent from class for any reason. Preferably, this notification should be made ahead of time with enough advance warning so that a substitute can be arranged. GPTIs and TALs should never cancel class/lab without prior approval of their chair, coordinator, or supervising instructor.

5) Evaluation

During a given semester, all graduate students in instructional and instructional support roles should be evaluated using the following procedures:

- GPTIs:
 - The chair or coordinator in whose unit the GPTI is serving should conduct a classroom observation approximately one to two months into the semester (or during the second week for a summer course). The chair or coordinator should provide written feedback regarding the GPTI to both the GPTI and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.
 - Copies of peer teaching evaluations and student evaluation of the course and instructor should be provided not only to the chair/coordinator and GPTI, but also to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.
- TALs: Should follow the above procedures, with evaluations being conducted by the supervising instructor in lieu of the chair/coordinator.
- TAs: At the end of the semester, the supervising instructor should provide written feedback regarding the TAs performance to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.06: Graduate Program Assessment

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish the graduate program-level student learning outcomes and the tools and processes by which these outcomes are assessed.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The graduate program has a responsibility to perform routine assessment as part of the university's assessment goals and to ensure that the graduate program evolves to meet the needs of students and a changing industry.

2. Periodic Review of Student Learning Outcomes

The graduate program administrators and faculty should review both program-level and course-level student learning outcomes on an annual basis to ensure that they are meeting the current needs of graduates of the program.

At least once annually, discussion of program-level student learning outcomes should be the focus of a graduate faculty meeting (or a CoMC Graduate Council meeting).

If changes to program-level student learning outcomes are approved by majority vote of the graduate faculty, then all assessment tools and course-level student learning outcomes should be revised accordingly to ensure that useful, relevant assessment data is being collected during the next review period.

3. Responsibilities

- a. The Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies is responsible for leading the graduate program assessment team and oversees direct assessment of the doctoral program and MA in Media & Communication.

- b. The assistant graduate director oversees collection and reporting of assessment data for the MA in Communication Studies.
- c. The director of the online programs oversees collection and reporting of assessment data for the MA in Strategic Communication and Innovation.
- d. Individual graduate faculty instructors are responsible for providing assessment data in a timely fashion when requested by a member of the graduate program assessment team. This typically takes the form of an assessment ‘report card’ that compiles course-level assessment data that is used in producing the program-level assessment reports.

Individual graduate instructors should also ensure that they are following the standards for their course as established in any course-level student learning outcomes and methods of assessment.

4. Timeline

- a. At least two weeks prior to the end of a semester, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies will submit any report cards and other information requests to relevant faculty to collect course-level assessment data.
- b. Report cards and other assessment information requests should be completed and returned within two weeks of the end of a given semester.
- c. Each administrator tasked with oversight of assessment for a degree program should ensure that their assessment reports are uploaded to the university assessment dashboard at least one month prior to the university deadline.
- d. At that time, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies will review all graduate program assessment items and provide feedback to each area and request updates and revisions to the reports as necessary.

5. Reporting Findings

Following submission of the annual assessment report, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies should consult with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and other graduate program and college administrators as necessary to review the assessment reports and identify any items to be addressed in the following academic year.

This may include forming committees, submitting course revisions, submitting OP revisions, addressing items with specific graduate faculty members or the graduate faculty as a whole, etc.

A copy of the assessment report should also be made available to the graduate faculty for review and discussion. A copy should also be distributed to the CoMC Graduate Council for review.

6. Follow-Up Actions (Closing the Loop)

All follow-up actions to address areas of concern identified by annual assessment should be documented thoroughly (e.g., minutes from faculty meetings or committee meetings).

Evidence of these efforts and activities should be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies as this information will be utilized in drafting the next assessment report.

If necessary, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies will work with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and other administrators and graduate faculty members to revise the program- and course-level student learning outcomes and methods of assessment.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.07: Graduate Program Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process through the graduate-level faculty-led study abroad programs are proposed, approved, scheduled, promoted, implemented, and evaluated. This OP also covers study away programs as well as programs at distance sites such as the Junction Campus.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

As with undergraduates, study abroad provides unique experiential learning opportunities to graduate students (both master's and doctoral students). To that end, the graduate program should seek to offer regular opportunities for these students to engage in study abroad and study away programs that are tailored to their needs, ideally providing (a) professional development, (b) networking with media and communication professionals in a global context, and (c) opportunities to conduct research within global and cross-cultural communication contexts.

2. Approvals

In addition to the university and college procedures and requirements, all graduate study abroad proposals should first be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies prior to forwarding the proposal to the CoMC International Affairs Committee for review. Submission of proposals by the graduate program should take place at least one month prior to any deadlines established by the college or the university (whichever is earlier).

All graduate study abroad programs must receive prior approval from the associate dean, regardless of whether or not that program was approved in the past.

3. Evaluation

Copies of all post-study abroad evaluation materials should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies within one month of the end of the graduate study abroad program. This information will be used before approving future study abroad proposals submitted by that faculty member and/or to that destination.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.08: Graduate Certificate Programs

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to outline the procedures by which new graduate certificate programs are proposed, approved and evaluated.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Proposing New Certificates

Faculty members or departments wishing to propose new graduate certificates should prepare proposals as outlined on the TTU Provost's website:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/curriculum/new-programs/new-certificates-chart.php>

Proposals originating from faculty members should secure written approval from their department chair (or chairs in case of proposals originating from interdisciplinary teams).

All proposals should be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies for approval before submitting to the College Academic Programs Committee and beyond.

2. Oversight

A graduate faculty member should be tasked with providing oversight of each graduate certificate, including review of syllabi for relevant courses, collection of assessment data, coordination of student learning outcomes at the certificate-level and course-level, etc.

3. Evaluation

Certificate programs should be included in annual program evaluation efforts. Assessment data regarding each certificate should be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies per OP 01.06 in this Manual.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 01.09: Online & Hybrid Graduate Courses

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to outline the procedures by which new online and hybrid graduate course are proposed, approved, and evaluated.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. CoMC Policies

The College of Media & Communication strives to offer engaging and enriching educational experiences across the curriculum and across delivery modalities. To ensure that the College's distance education courses successfully bolster its overall efforts to provide a first-class education, the CoMC eLearning Committee oversees computer-based, distance efforts for both undergraduate and graduate courses

2. Approvals

- a. Department chair or Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (depending on level) requests that a faculty member develop a course syllabus for a specific course title.
 - i. Request should be made at a minimum of three months prior to the start of the semester in which the class may be offered.
 - ii. Syllabi must be completed in time for review and scheduling
- b. Faculty member completes syllabus and 1-page narrative that outlines pedagogical approach specifically detailing how the course will meet rigor and interaction expectations citing examples in the syllabus.
- c. Faculty member additionally submits plans for in-course evaluation of course success as well as plans for end-of-course evaluation (course evaluation separate from required university evaluation).
- d. If course is not currently in the CoMC terrestrial inventory, faculty member must submit syllabus and accompanying material to CoMC Academic Programs Committee.
- e. Syllabus, narrative, and evaluation plan are submitted to department chair if departmental or Associate Dean for Graduate if general CoMC course.

- f. Department chair or Associate Dean for Graduate Studies advises faculty member and eventually approves course submission to CoMC e-Learning Committee.
- g. CoMC e-Learning Committee chair informs CoMC Management Committee of submission.
- h. CoMC e-Learning Committee convenes and considers application. Faculty member and/or department chair may be asked to attend committee meeting.

3. Expectations

All e-Learning courses are expected to contribute to the overall mission of the college. Course content and breadth will be judged along two dimensions in particular:

- a. Overall rigor and area coverage:

eLearning courses are expected to possess similar outcomes and objectives to classroom based courses. Students taking eLearning courses should expect courses that are at least as rigorous as similar terrestrial courses. Breadth of coverage, varied means of assessment, and level-appropriate outcomes should be expected.

- b. Student-Faculty Interaction:

eLearning research has universally posited that distance course success is yoked to faculty-student interaction. As such, CoMC eLearning courses must demonstrate high levels of interaction between students and faculty members. Courses should have built-in interaction rather than rely on organic interaction that is simply hoped to take place. Interaction can take varied forms such as participation in on-line discussions, timely email exchanges, technology-dependent interpersonal or group discussions (Skype), or via telephone to name a few. It is not sufficient for a faculty member to simply say she or he will be available for these interactions if the student initiates them. The interactions need to be planned and outlined in the syllabus.

4. Evaluation

Online courses should be routinely monitored each semester to ensure that they are meeting the minimal standards for interactivity and rigor. These areas should also be addressed as part of the graduate program's annual program review.

Attachment A: Application for Approval of Graduate e-Learning Course

Attachment A, OP 01.09
Application for Approval of Graduate e-Learning Course

Course name and number: _____

Semester to be offered: _____

Expected enrollment _____

Checklist:

- Demonstrated proficiency in Blackboard or Blackboard training
- Completed Syllabus (attach)
- Demonstration of rigor/breadth in syllabus
- Demonstration of planned student-faculty interaction in syllabus
- Completed rigor/breadth/interaction narrative (attach)
- Completed assessment plan (attach)

Routing & Approvals:

Faculty Member

Department Chair

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

e-Learning Committee Chair

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 02.01: Graduate Faculty Eligibility

DATE: April 16, 2013

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to specify the procedures and standards for college faculty members to establish and maintain an appointment on the graduate faculty of the College of Media & Communication.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Graduate Faculty Eligibility

- a. Any tenure track faculty member in the College of Media & Communication holding a PhD in media and communication or a related discipline will be appointed to the graduate faculty at the beginning of his/her employment in the college if PhD is earned or upon completion of PhD if ABD when contract begins.
- b. While full graduate faculty status does afford faculty members the opportunity to actively participate in the graduate program, graduate faculty status alone will not determine teaching load. Teaching load is based upon a variety of factors, only one of which is participation in the graduate program. See CoMC OP 108.1 for information regarding teaching load and course buyout.
- c. As need dictates, it is possible for non-tenure-track instructors to receive provisional appointment to the graduate faculty. Provisional status will be reserved for individuals whose extensive professional experience makes them uniquely capable of teaching select courses or serving on select committees. Provisional graduate faculty members will not be extended voting privilege in graduate faculty affairs nor will provisional graduate faculty members be permitted to chair MA Thesis, PhD Dissertation or PhD Comprehensive Exam committees. All appointments to provisional graduate faculty status will be conducted by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in consultation with graduate faculty members.
- d. Provisional status will be reserved for faculty members not on tenure track in the College of Media & Communication. All tenure-track faculty in the College of Media & Communication with earned doctoral degrees in mass communications or a related

discipline will be granted full graduate status. In addition to possessing full graduate faculty status, CoMC faculty members wishing to chair thesis, dissertation or doctoral exam committees must maintain an active research program as described below.

2. Full vs. Provisional Graduate Faculty Status

While full graduate faculty status provides eligibility to teach CoMC graduate classes, specific tasks or duties required in the operation of a graduate program are reserved for members meeting the following standards:

Teach MA/PhD Classes

- Full or provisional graduate faculty status

Oversee MA Final Project

- Full or provisional graduate faculty status

Serve on MA Thesis/PhD Dissertation/PhD Comprehensive Exam Committees

- Full or provisional graduate faculty status

Chair MA Thesis/PhD Dissertation/PhD Comprehensive Exam Committees

- Full graduate faculty status
- Active research program*

*The CoMC graduate faculty believes that maintaining an active research program is vital for faculty members chairing student research and exam committees. The CoMC deems a faculty member as having an active research program if she/he can demonstrate a recent (within the last 6 years) record of:

- Publishing in peer reviewed academic journals
- Authoring discipline-related books
- Editing or co-editing discipline-related books
- Authoring book chapters in discipline-related books
- Serving as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on successful, substantive grant applications

Eligible faculty must demonstrate more than minimal achievement of these standards. Typically, expectations are that faculty members achieve at least half of what would be expected of the research requirements to earn tenure at the time their status is reviewed.

3. Graduate Faculty Status Review

- a. In early February of each year, a committee of full graduate faculty members will meet to determine the status of those being reviewed. Continued appointments will commence on September 1 of the same year. Faculty will be reviewed 6 years from their initial appointment and then every 3 years following.

- b. Any full graduate faculty member who has not been previously deemed eligible to chair MA thesis/PhD dissertation/PhD comprehensive exam committees may request an ad-hoc review in the interim. If the faculty member is deemed as having an active research program, she/he will not undergo review for the subsequent 3 years.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.01: Satisfactory Progress for Graduate Students

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for ensuring that graduate students make satisfactory progress toward graduation and the eligibility criteria for assistantships and financial aid.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. General Information

In addition to all requirements of the graduate school, graduate students in the College of Media & Communication 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.

2. Satisfactory Academic Progress

- a. *Ph.D. Students.* Any CoMC Ph.D. student who does not maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (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.
- b. *M.A. Students.* Any CoMC 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. In

most cases, M.A. students are not making reasonable progress when they exceed 45 credit hours of enrollment.

3. Academic Scrutiny

This policy governs enrollment in courses offered by the College of Media & Communication 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 scrutiny. Unless prohibited by the Graduate School, graduate students placed in enrollment abeyance by the College of Media & Communication are free to pursue enrollment in courses outside the College of Media & Communication and/or admission to other graduate programs at Texas Tech University.

A CoMC graduate student (M.A., Ph.D., graduate certificate) will be placed under academic scrutiny if she or he:

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

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 semester following the term in which the student received the subject grade or GPA. If the student is placed in scrutiny at the end of the spring semester, the scrutiny will remain in effect across both summer I and summer II semesters.

A graduate 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.

4. Enrollment Abeyance

A CoMC graduate student (M.A., Ph.D., graduate certificate) will not be permitted to enroll in any graduate courses in the College of Media and Communication if she or he:

- a. receives a semester grade point average below 3.0, during a term of academic scrutiny or fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher following a term of academic scrutiny,
- b. receives two course grades of C or lower in any graduate course or combination of graduate courses,
- c. completes more than 1.25 times the minimum number of graduate credit hours required for his or her program,

- d. completes more than 46 graduate credit hours after the master's degree or a total of 99 hours of graduate coursework in Texas,
- e. is enrolled for more than eight years without completing all requirements for graduation, and/or
- f. is enrolled for more than four years after admission to candidacy without completing all requirements for graduation.
- g. Students placed in abeyance should withdraw from any CoMC classes for which they are enrolled for future semesters.
- h. Students may reapply to the program but may not recommence studies (if readmitted) until one semester has passed between being placed in abeyance and continuation of studies. If a student is placed in abeyance at the end of the spring semester, the student cannot re-enroll (if admitted) until fall.
- i. Students in abeyance may be able to enroll in graduate classes outside of the College of Media and Communication during abeyance. It is possible that credits earned in these "outside" classes could count toward degree requirements in the form of electives (usually limited to 6 hours). If a student in abeyance wishes to take outside hours during abeyance, the student should consult with CoMC program director or assistant/associate dean to ensure that outside classes would count toward the CoMC degree if students is readmitted.

5. Readmission

CoMC graduate students who are placed in enrollment abeyance from the College of Media & Communication may not take any courses in the College of Media & Communication 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 Media & 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.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.02: Enrollment Requirements

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies regarding minimum enrollment requirements to maintain full time graduate status as well as describe policies regarding continuous enrollment.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Full Time Enrollment

- a. All graduate students must be enrolled in a minimum of 9 hours in a regular semester to maintain full-time status.
- b. Full-time enrollment for a master's student is 9 to 16 hours
- c. Full-time enrollment for a doctoral student is 9 to 13 hours

2. Continuous Enrollment

Graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment. It is the student's responsibility to enroll each semester for the minimum number of hours to retain their desired status. To maintain continuous enrollment, a graduate student must be enrolled for a minimum of 1 credit hour in a given semester, including semester they plan to graduate.

For the purposes of continuous enrollment, summer enrollment includes taking course work in Summer 1, Summer 2, and/or Summer 3 (full-summer term).

3. Enrollment Holds

It is the graduate student's responsibility to ensure that all holds are cleared that would prevent them from enrolling in courses. This includes removing internal holds due to failure to submit official documents such as annual doctoral student reviews.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.03: Graduate Temporary Student Status

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for undergraduate students seeking temporary graduate status, including approvals, conditions, and requirements for successfully transitioning to full graduate student status.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Undergraduates in their final semester before graduation may enroll in up to 6 hours of graduate-level coursework upon approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and provided that they have 12 or fewer hours of undergraduate coursework remaining.
2. The undergraduate must present a letter of recommendation from a CoMC graduate faculty member testifying to the student's suitability and preparation for early entry into graduate study.
3. Undergraduates applying for GTMP status must meet the usual entry requirements for the master's degree (GPA, GRE, etc.).
4. The student will be limited to 5000-level courses with the exception of departmental 7000-level Independent Study courses.
5. Students in GTMP status are strongly encouraged to consult with their undergraduate major advisor as well as the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies prior to enrolling to ensure they are satisfying degree requirements for both degrees (undergraduate and graduate).



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.04: Approval of Dissertation & Thesis Committees

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for approval of qualifying exam, dissertation, and thesis committee composition.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

To ensure that chairs and members of qualifying exam, dissertation, and thesis committees are eligible to serve in those roles. The goal is not for the graduate program to dictate selection of a student's committee, but rather to ensure that the chairs and members of said committees hold the appropriate graduate status (see CoMC Graduate Studies OP 02.01) and to help the graduate program track the composition of committees for assessment and reporting purposes.

2. Provision for First Time Dissertation Chairs

Untenured faculty who have never chaired a dissertation—at TTU or at another institution—must serve as a committee member on another dissertation committee within CoMC prior to serving as a dissertation chair. This requirement may be waived by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in certain cases.

3. Procedure

- a. Prior to the start of a doctoral student's qualifying examination or the submission of a master's student's thesis proposal, the proposed chair of the student's committee should inform the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies regarding the committee, to include: (1) the name of the student, (2) the name of the chair, (3) the name of any additional internal and external committee members, (d) a tentative timeline for the completion of the thesis

or the qualifying exams, dissertation proposal and dissertation.

- b. Upon receipt of this notification, the associate dean of graduate studies will verify that the student has completed all necessary course work and other requirements to proceed with a thesis, qualifying exam or dissertation. After review, assuming these requirements have been met, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will send notice of approval to the chair and student.
- c. If at any time the composition of the committee changes, the chair (or the new chair) of the student's committee should send written notification to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.05: Graduate Student Independent Studies

DATE: February 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for proposing, approving, and evaluating graduate student independent studies as well as limits on the number of independent study credits per student.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed as needed, but at least every five years, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty Council. The next review will occur on or before February 2026.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Relevant CoMC Policy

CoMC OP 303.1 addresses requirements for eligibility to enroll in an independent study and other procedures. This policy is not intended to supersede CoMC OP 303.1, but rather to clarify points not addressed therein (e.g., maximum number of hours).

2. Maximum Number of Independent Study Hours

- a. Doctoral students are limited to a maximum of 12 credit hours of independent study that can be counted toward credits taken in the College as part of the student's degree plan. Once all required credits have been taken and passed, additional independent study credits are permissible.
- b. All master's students are limited to a maximum of 6 credit hours of independent study.

1. Doctoral Student Independent Study Research Requirements

- a. At the doctoral level, the purpose of Independent Study hours is the pursuit of research-related knowledge outside the traditional classroom structure. As such, work undertaken for any independent study credits as part of a doctoral student's coursework must be scholarship-oriented and is expected to align with a student's interests in theory, methods, major area of study, or cognate study area.
- b. All independent study credits must be approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee) before the student will be permitted to enroll in those credits.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.06: Graduate Student Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for reporting, tracking, and evaluating cases of alleged academic misconduct and plagiarism committed by graduate students in the College of Media & Communication.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. General Information

Any suspicion that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty should be investigated. The CoMC graduate program integrity is dependent on faculty and students upholding high standards regarding intellectual honesty and ethical behavior in scholarship.

2. Reporting

Because graduate students progress is monitored centrally through the CoMC Graduate Program, ALL instances of academic dishonesty suspected by a graduate faculty member or graduate student in the college should be reported to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. In order to be able to log offenses and track repeat offenders, the CoMC expects all instances of academic misconduct to be submitted to and reviewed by the Office of Student Conduct—no exceptions.

3. Consequences for Misconduct

While faculty members are encouraged to determine their own course consequences for academic misconduct, the College expects some equity in punishment for similar offenses. Likewise, to track college-wide prevalence of academic misconduct and remediation, a committee will be formed and meet when necessary to consider especially egregious cases or students who repeatedly violate policy.

4. Graduate Academic Misconduct Committee

When necessary, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will forward academic misconduct cases to the CoMC Graduate Council for review.

The Graduate Council shall review all relevant documentation regarding the case and send requests for additional information to graduate program administrators, faculty, and/or students as necessary to resolve the matter.

Once a decision has been made, the chair of the Graduate Council will send the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies a copy of the council's decision and recommendations for a remedy. The associate dean will forward a copy of this decision to the student accused of academic misconduct and advise the student of any relevant policies or procedures that govern resolution of the incident.

If the student was currently working on a thesis, qualifying exams, or a dissertation, then a copy of the decision should also be sent to the student's committee chair.

5. Education & Prevention

In an effort to address the root causes of plagiarism before it happens and to help remediate and educate students about proper source attribution, etc., the graduate program has taken the following steps:

- a. ***Training.*** All graduate students (both MA and PHD) will be required to complete a training module regarding plagiarism before the end of their first semester in the program (exact nature of the training is covered in the CoMC Graduate Handbook). Evidence of successful completion of this training should be sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Failure to complete this training will result in a registration hold being placed on the student's record until the training is successfully completed.
- b. ***iThenticate.*** All graduate student terminal projects are required to be submitted to iThenticate by their thesis, non-thesis option, or doctoral advisor. These projects include:
 - i. Thesis proposal
 - ii. Thesis (final draft)
 - iii. Dissertation proposal
 - iv. Dissertation (final draft)
 - v. Master's Report or other terminal written assignment for non-thesis options

It is the advisor's responsibility to ensure that these documents are submitted and reviewed prior to distribution to committee members or presentation during oral defenses. Evidence of submission should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies prior to a given defense date and accompany submission of any paperwork regarding successful or unsuccessful defenses.

In cases where iThenticate indicates that there is reason for concern regarding possible plagiarism, the advisor should report this to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and inform the student. At that point, the advisor and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies should determine how to remediate the student and what further action is necessary if any (e.g., convene the Academic Misconduct Committee, etc.).



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Media & Communication

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.07: Assignment of Graduate Assistants

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for prioritization of graduate assistant assignments.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Relevant CoMC OP

CoMC OP 108.2 and OP 108.3 address the assignment of graduate students. This policy does not supersede these college OPs; however, it does address the prioritization of doctoral RA assignments.

2. Prioritization

The assignment of RAs to graduate faculty within the college typically will be prioritized in the following manner:

- a. Faculty members with grant funding designated for the hiring of research assistants will receive top priority
- b. Next, faculty members with start-up funds for research assistants will be assigned RAs
- c. Next, untenured junior faculty without start-up will receive RAs
- d. Finally, tenured senior faculty without start-up will receive RAs
- e. In cases where faculty members requesting RAs have neither grant funding nor start-up funding, the faculty member's research record will be taken into consideration in determining prioritization of RA assignments.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.08: Graduate Student Research Funding

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish the procedures through which graduate students can apply for research funding as well as establishing guidelines for the responsible use of those funds.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Graduate Student Research Funding Award is to provide graduate students with financial resources to cover research expenses.

One of the sources associated with graduate student research funding is the Billy I. and Avis R. Ross Graduate Research Award for Mass Communication, which is used to fund primarily doctoral dissertation research and sometimes thesis research. Other funding is available when budget permits.

Donors hoped that the fund would allow for more complete and robust research to be conducted by College of Media & Communication graduate students.

2. Use of Funds

Funds can be used to pay for the following:

- Participation incentives
- Stimulus material creation
- Travel expenses associated with data collection
- Material reproduction
- Recording and transcribing
- Other expenses as approved by the award committee

Funds cannot be used to pay for the following:

- Researcher stipend or salary
- Conference or presentation travel
- Technology
- Expenses not approved by university
- Content analysis coding

3. Proposal Submission Process

- a. After faculty mentor approval, students will submit their proposals and one-page budget outline to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. Proposals should explain the importance of the project by including a brief literature review and a justification of need for further investigation. Proposal should also outline how funds from the endowment will improve the project.
- b. The Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies will convene the awards committee; the committee is to be composed of CoMC graduate faculty members.
- c. Students must be enrolled in thesis/dissertation hours during the semester the funds will be distributed for the Ross award. Other research funding requires only enrollment in the university.
- d. Proposals should be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies as early in the semester as possible.
- e. Awards will be made until yearly allocation of funds is exhausted. Yearly allocation will vary.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.09: Standards for Committee Review of Graduate Student Work

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for establish standards for the period of time granted to graduate faculty members of graduate student committees to review proposals, theses, dissertations and other terminal projects.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

Graduate faculty members typically juggle multiple commitments and deadlines. To that end, graduate students—and their chairs—working toward a thesis, capstone project, or dissertation should provide adequate time to their committee members to review proposals, drafts, and final theses/dissertations prior to a defense date. Ultimately, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that these documents are delivered in a timely fashion to their chair and committee members to meet self-imposed, chair-imposed, and university-imposed deadlines. Committee chairs and committee members should not be expected to review these documents at the last minute, regardless of when the deadline is or the consequence of missing the deadline.

2. Standards

In most cases—and unless explicitly agreed to by the parties involved—drafts of proposals, theses, capstone projects, and dissertations should be delivered to committee members at least 10 business days prior to any defense date.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Media & Communication

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 03.10: Graduate Student Exit Interviews

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for conducting exit interviews with graduate students who are separating from the college's graduate program.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

To assist with assessment efforts and continuous improvement of the college's graduate programs, all graduate students should be interviewed on their separation from the graduate program, regardless of reason for the separation (e.g., graduation, transfer, etc.).

2. Procedure

- a. Master's Students: Upon successful defense of a student's MCOM 6050 Master's Report, COMS Praxis, thesis, or other terminal project, the student should complete the MA Exit questionnaire provided by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- b. Doctoral Students: Upon notification of a completed defense, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies should arrange to conduct an in-depth interview (face-to-face or online) with the student.
- c. Others: Upon separation for reasons other than graduation, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies should attempt to conduct an in-depth interview with the former student if possible.
- d. In all cases, a written report should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and used to complete graduate program assessment reports.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 04.01: Doctoral Student Curriculum

DATE: February 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to outline the curriculum for doctoral students pursuing a Ph.D. in Media & Communication.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed as needed, but at least every five years, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty Council. The next review will occur on or before February 2026.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The Doctor of Philosophy in Media & Communication degree is designed to prepare students for careers in communication research and academia. Doctoral study includes coursework in theory and research about communication processes and effects. Completion of the Doctor of Philosophy degree requires 87 hours of graduate study beyond the baccalaureate degree or 60 hours beyond the Master of Arts degree, including 12 hours dedicated to a traditional research-based dissertation.

The Ph.D. in Media & Communication at Texas Tech focuses on the integration of different approaches to the study of media and communication. While coursework is broadly focused on media and communication, students may concentrate in the areas of the College's undergraduate degrees, or many other communication-related sub-fields.. Each student is required to acquire at least some background in all areas of media and communication.

2. Core Curriculum

All Media & Communication doctoral students will take 22 hours to include the following core courses:

- MCOM 5160 Proseminar in Mass Communication
- MCOM 5364 Quantitative Research Methods
- COMS/MCOM Qualitative Research Methods (course prefix and number varies)
- MCOM 5366 Seminar in Mass Communication Theory
- MCOM 5374 Data Analysis (quantitative) or an approved Qualitative Data Analysis
- MCOM 6366 Advanced Mass Communication Theory

- Advanced Data Analysis (can be quantitative or qualitative focused)
- MCOM 6364 Topic-specific Research Methods (rotates Survey, Experiment, Content Analysis, Historical, Cultural/Critical, etc.—students must select at least one)

3. Electives

All Media & Communication doctoral students will take an additional 26 hours of elective coursework. These hours are to be completed in courses outside of the College (representing a cognate area) and electives within the College.

- **Cognate courses:** 6 to 15 hours need be taken outside of the College. At least 6 hours from outside of the College must be able to represent a cognate area to be defined by the student in consultation with their advisor and approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee).
- **CoMC electives:** 9 to 21 hours must be completed by taking elective courses within the College. Up to 12 elective hours can be acquired through independent study credits assigned by research faculty.

4. Dissertation

Students will take 12 hours of dissertation coursework.

5. Transfer Credits

- Doctoral students may not transfer any credits from another institution to count toward completion of the CoMC doctoral degree.
- Doctoral students must take a minimum of 60 hours beyond the master's degree. For doctoral students who earned their master's degree at TTU, the student must take a minimum of 75 hours beyond the bachelor's degree and must take all required courses for the doctorate.
- Doctoral students may not substitute courses for those required for the Ph.D. (e.g., a research methods course from another university or another college at TTU may not substitute for a CoMC research methods course).

6. Residency Requirements

The CoMC graduate faculty considers participation in an academic environment and the exchange of ideas between scholars an important part of a doctoral education. Therefore, the residency requirement is fulfilled by the completion of 24-hours of course work over a 15-month period.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 04.02: Ph.D. Student Qualifying Examinations

DATE: February 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process by which doctoral students complete a qualifying examination prior to admission to candidacy.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed as needed, but at least every five years, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. The next review will occur on or before February 2026.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

a) Purpose of Qualifying Exams

i) The purpose of the qualifying exams is to provide a formal way for PhD students to demonstrate, and for faculty to evaluate, students' competence in the areas of theory, methodology, a primary subject area, and a cognate subject area, as well as readiness to engage in independent scholarship. Students deemed ready to engage in independent scholarship are able to:

- (1) Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critically analyze extant scholarship.
- (2) Demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge.
- (3) Demonstrate the ability to independently develop and provide support for rigorous arguments.

- a. All doctoral students must pass a qualifying examination after completing all coursework with a grade of B or higher. Students may not take the exam until the student has received passing grades in all courses on the degree plan.
- b. In order for a student to take the qualifying examination, he or she must notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee) in writing, using a form provided by the College's Office of Graduate Studies, of intent to take the examination by the last class day of the semester (long semesters or summer) preceding the date the examination is to be taken.

- c. 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).
- d. A student may not form a dissertation committee or present a dissertation proposal until he/she has passed the qualifying examination.
- e. Each doctoral student will form his or her qualifying examination committee with the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or the PhD Program Director. Each committee will comprise a chair, two additional faculty members from the College, and one member from the student's cognate area (outside the College). The committee chair must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies to direct doctoral dissertations, and each member of the committee (including the chair) must have graduate faculty status at TTU (they must have a PhD and must be tenured or on the tenure track—any exceptions must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies or the PhD Program Director, and by the appropriate administrator from the Graduate School). No faculty member is obligated to serve on any particular committee.
- f. This OP applies to all students who were admitted to the PhD program for Fall 2020 or later. Students admitted prior to Fall 2020 may elect for their qualifying exams to be guided by this OP or to the version of this OP that this revision replaced, in consultation with their chair and committee, prior to beginning their qualifying exams.

2. Procedures

- a. The qualifying examination questions should cover the following four areas:
 - theory,
 - research methods,
 - the student's major area,
 - the student's cognate area.
- b. The duties of the Examination Committee are to:
 - develop the format and questions for the examinations,
 - administer the examinations,
 - coordinate proctoring of exams as needed,
 - evaluate the student's written answers,
 - announce the results of the doctoral qualifying examination to both the student and to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee).
- c. Examination committee chairs and committee members should be given leeway in structuring the nature of the exam questions, tailoring the format, delivery, submission, duration and timing, and administration of individual questions to fit a student's research focus and achieve desired learning outcomes, as described in the Purpose of Qualifying Exams, above. However, the following general guidelines should apply:
 - i. Students must complete all sections of the exam within a three-week period.

- ii. Committee members should submit their questions to the chair no less than 5 business days prior to the start of the exam period.
- iii. At the discretion of the committee, exams may be in-house, take-home, open-book, and/or open-note. Each question may follow a different format.
- iv. Responses to each of the exam questions will be evaluated by all members of the student's examining committee.
- v. Individual committee members may provide the student with questions and/or a reading list prior to the exam period—they are not obligated to do so.
- vi. If the examination committee wishes to deviate from these general guidelines, they should seek approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee).

d. Oral Defense

- i. An oral defense following the written examination is mandatory.
- ii. The committee and student will meet for an oral defense 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.
- iii. The oral 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.
- iv. Evaluation
 - i. Immediately following the oral defense, all members of the committee will evaluate the student's responses to each question (both written and oral) during a private discussion without the student present. Following the private discussion, the committee will invite the student back into the room and will inform them of the committee's decision. Possible outcomes of the evaluation include:
 - 1. Pass
 - a. The student is approved to advance to candidacy. "Pass" includes an evaluation by all members of the committee that the student demonstrated competence in all four areas of the exam (theory, methodology, a primary subject area, and a cognate subject area).

2. Pass with revisions
 - a. Indicates that the student demonstrated competence, but responses in one or more of the subject areas need revisions. “Pass with Revisions” indicates that the student has demonstrated competence, but that additional clarifications and/or revisions are needed. Signatures of committee members indicating “pass” are not delivered to the Office of Graduate Studies until required revisions to only those sections that need revisions are submitted. Revisions must be submitted within 3 weeks of the oral defense. It is recommended that the committee members read the revisions and provide feedback, but no additional decision about pass/fail is needed.
3. Fail
 - a. Fail indicates that the committee determines that the student failed to demonstrate competence in one or more areas of the exam. Students must retake only the portion(s) of the exam for which they failed to demonstrate competence, though revisions also may be required on those sections judged as “pass with revision.”
 - i. Study Period: The study period once any revisions have been submitted (see OP 04.02 section 2.e.i.2.). For each subject area that the student fails, the student must wait three weeks before they can retake the failed portion(s). For example, if they fail two subject areas, they must wait six weeks before they can retake the failed portions.
 - ii. Retake Period: The student will begin retaking the exam on the first business day following the end of the study period. Students will have no more than five days to retake each failed portion of the exam. For example, if two sections are being retaken, students must complete both sections within a 10 day period. The format of the exam will follow procedures outlined in section 04.02(2c[iii]) above.
 - iii. Oral Exam: A second oral exam will be held to evaluate the retaken exams portions following the oral exam procedures outlined in section 04.02 section c above.
 - iv. Evaluation: Student responses will be evaluated according to the evaluation guidelines in Section 2e above, with the exception of “Fail.” If the committee determines that the student fails to demonstrate competence in one or more of the retaken exam areas, the student will not be advanced to candidacy and cannot continue in the doctoral program.

- ii. Any dispute involving the qualifying exams will follow the university's Graduate Student Appeals OP (64.07).

3. Admission to Candidacy

- a. 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.
- b. All doctoral students in the College of Media & Communication must pass the qualifying examination and be admitted to candidacy before selecting a dissertation chair, forming a dissertation committee, or submitting a dissertation proposal.
- c. For those students who have passed the qualifying examination, the student's examination committee will report to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee) who will file the Report of Final Defense with the TTU Graduate School.
- d. Dissertation advisors will not submit dissertation research proposals to the TTU Institutional Review Board until their doctoral student has advanced to candidacy.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 04.03: Ph.D. Dissertations

DATE: February 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process through which the doctoral students propose, conduct, and defend a dissertation.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed as needed, but at least every five years, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. The next review will occur on or before February 2026.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

- a. All doctoral students must propose, conduct and defend a dissertation project before awarding of the doctoral degree.
- b. A student may not form a dissertation committee or present a dissertation proposal until he/she has passed the qualifying examination.
- c. Each doctoral student will form his or her dissertation committee with the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee). Each committee will be comprised of a chair, two members of the graduate faculty in the College of Media & Communication, and one member from the student's cognate area. Each member of the committee, including the chair, must have graduate faculty status at TTU. The committee chair must be approved to direct doctoral dissertations. No faculty member is obligated to serve on any particular committee. A committee must have at least four members, but may have more than four members—the TTU Graduate School must approve any additional members to the committee.
- d. There is no requirement that the qualifying exam committee and the doctoral dissertation committee be comprised of the same faculty members.

2. Dissertation Format & Expectations

The dissertation project represents a student's original, substantial contribution to the body of knowledge in media and communication. Typically, the dissertation is an extensive, rigorous investigation into or examination of a particular phenomenon within the discipline, during which the student is expected to (a) synthesize relevant literature; (b) pose one or more

hypotheses, propositions, or research questions; (c) collect and interpret data related to the hypotheses, propositions, or research questions; and (d) situation the findings and conclusions within the broader body of knowledge.

To achieve these outcomes, a variety of theoretical, methodological, and philosophical approaches can be utilized, as appropriate for the student's area of study. Likewise, the dissertation project can take a variety of forms, ranging from the traditional dissertation project, to a multi-study dissertation, to a multiple journal article format, etc.

Ultimately, it is up to the individual student and their advisor to determine how to structure the dissertation project so that it is most beneficial and appropriate for the student given the student's career goals and area of interest. Students and their advisors should carefully consider how the dissertation deliverables best position the student for success in their career—the results of the dissertation may be used to submit articles to peer-reviewed journals, as the basis for a book, or take some other form.

Advisors are encouraged to consult with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee) and/or the College of Media & Communication Graduate Council should they have questions or concerns about using a 'non-traditional' dissertation format.

3. Procedure

The dissertation requires students to:

- Submit a dissertation proposal to their committee—typically, this comprises a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature and methods of data collection,
- Successfully defend their proposal,
- Conduct the dissertation study or studies (for multi-study dissertations),
- Submit the written dissertation to their committee,
- Successfully defend their dissertation project.

4. Oral Defense

- a. An oral defense is mandatory for the final dissertation defense regardless of which option is selected.
- b. The student and the chair should work together to ensure that all deadlines and other requirements of the university Graduate School are met. It is not the responsibility of the CoMC Graduate Program to remind students and chairs of these deadlines nor is the Graduate Program obligated to ask the Graduate School for deadline extensions or request exemptions from fulfilling dissertation requirements. This includes holding defenses before dissertation defense deadlines and securing a Dean's Representative.
- c. The dissertation committee chair should notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee) regarding the oral defense date at least 15 business days prior to the defense date. The office of the ADGS will then notify all college graduate faculty and students

regarding the upcoming defense at least 10 business days prior to the scheduled defense. This notification will include a copy of the dissertation's abstract

- d. The oral defense will begin with an open-to-the-public period during which the student presents her/his dissertation project. Following a period of questions and answers that includes the public, the public is dismissed and the committee may ask questions of the student regarding their project. The questions in the oral defense should not go beyond the scope of the dissertation project unless such expansion is needed to confirm the student's understanding of concepts addressed in the written manuscript or the oral defense. The committee confers in private after the student is dismissed, then reports its decision to the student.

5. Results & Reporting

- a. Following the dissertation defense and the submission of any necessary revisions to the dissertation chair, the committee will meet privately and will assign the student one of the following grades:
 - Pass with distinction
 - Should be reserved for truly exemplary work requiring no or minimal revision
 - Should be granted only upon unanimous agreement of all committee members
 - Pass
 - Fail
- b. The dissertation chair is responsible for ensuring that any requested revisions to the dissertation are completed and approved by the dissertation committee members prior to the student submitting the dissertation to the Graduate School.
- c. The dissertation chair should submit to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (or designee) a signed Oral Defense and Thesis-Dissertation Approval Form once the student has successfully defended their dissertation project. The chair is responsible for securing all signatures from the dissertation committee members.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 04.04: Ph.D. Student Recruitment, Admissions, & Retention

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process through which the Ph.D. program recruits, evaluates, admits and supports prospective doctoral students.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The quality of not only the graduate program, but the undergraduate program, in the College relies heavily on the recruitment, retention and graduation of outstanding doctoral students. For all practical purposes, these students are joining our faculty as colleagues for three years and have a tremendous influence on multiple facets of the college. To that end, it is critical that the Ph.D. program admit the best doctoral students possible.

2. Recruitment

a. Recruitment Strategy

- a.** Recruiting the best doctoral students possible is the responsibility of the College's graduate faculty.
 - i.** Graduate faculty are expected to identify and establish academic relationships with prospective Ph.D. Students.
- b.** The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and graduate faculty identify graduate programs that do not offer a Ph.D. degree and establish relationships with faculty in those programs. Relationship development includes but is not limited to:
 - i.** Visiting campuses
 - ii.** Meeting with faculty and students at conferences

3. Admissions

a. Graduate Council Review & Recommendations

- i. Ph.D. applications are reviewed as they are submitted. That is, there is no application deadline; applications are reviewed on a “rolling” basis.
- ii. The Graduate Council reviews all applications to the Ph.D. program. The Council may review one application at a time or multiple applications at once depending on the amount of submissions.
- iii. Required application materials include:

1. Completed TTU Graduate School (Apply Texas) and CoMC Graduate Program applications
 - a. In the CoMC application, prospective students will be asked to upload the following materials: resume, cover letter, personal statement, and samples of academic/professional work in communication (if applicable).
2. Three recommendation letters from current or former professors.
3. GRE scores (required for PHD applicants; not required for MA applicants with GPA of 3.0 or higher)
4. TOEFL scores (if required)
5. Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended.

iv. Procedures

1. The Graduate Council meets as needed to review individual or multiple applications and reviews each application individually on its merits alone.
2. The number of applications recommended for acceptance varies per year, based on funding availability, quality of the applications, and ability of graduate faculty to mentor incoming Ph.D. students.
3. The Graduate Council is empowered to make decisions on acceptance or rejection without the approval of the rest of the Graduate Faculty. Decisions on acceptance or rejection must be made by the minimum of a quorum (more than 50%) of the Graduate Council. Graduate Council voting may occur in person or via electronic means (e-mail, phone, text, etc.). Votes are recorded by a member of the Graduate Council or by a member of the Graduate Office staff. Once approved or rejected, the Associate or Assistant Graduate Deans may then extend offers or rejections to applicants.

4. If deemed necessary by the Graduate Council, recommendations from the college graduate faculty may be requested for certain applications. In this event, applications will be made available to members of the college graduate faculty for a minimum of 3 business days. After 3 days, the Associate or Assistant Graduate Dean will create and distribute a ballot (in person, paper, or electronically). The Graduate Council may review the recommendations of the college graduate faculty when determining whether or not to accept or reject an application.

b. Official offers are made only by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

4. Retention

Efforts should be implemented to foster a supportive environment and encourage satisfaction with the Ph.D. program.

- a. Funding: Nearly every student admitted to the Ph.D. program is funded with either a graduate assistantship and/or scholarship. This helps create a collaborative rather than competitive atmosphere among the students and allows them to focus on their studies without the need for outside employment.
- b. Annual Review: See OP 4.05 in this Manual.
- c. Temporary Mentor Program: See OP 4.06 in this Manual
- d. Additional retention and efforts should be planned and implemented by the Graduate Council's Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 04.05: Annual Review of Ph.D. Students

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for conducting an annual review of the doctoral students within the College of Media & Communication.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of even-numbered years, or as needed, by the assistant and/or Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Any recommended changes will be submitted to the graduate faculty for review and approval.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

- a. The majority of doctoral students in the College of Media & Communication assume tenure-track faculty positions in universities and colleges after graduation. Full-time tenure-track faculty members are evaluated along three major areas: research, teaching, and service. In addition, much like faculty, doctoral students are expected to behave professionally and actively engage with college activities. Thus, the purpose of the doctoral student annual review is to familiarize doctoral students with the faculty annual review process and ensure satisfactory progress toward completing the Ph.D. degree.
- b. Annual review also helps students and their advisors make informed decisions in regard to achieving students' varied professional goals, which may include employment at a research-intensive university, a teaching-intensive program, or in an industry position.
- c. The information gathered from the annual review also provides valuable graduate program assessment information, which will help guide the program toward achieving desired student learning outcomes and program goals.

2. General Information

- a. The Doctoral Student Annual Review is mandatory for all College of Media & Communication doctoral students regardless of funding status.

- b. Students failing to submit a completed report before the deadline will have a hold placed on their record and will not be allowed to register for classes (or will be dropped from classes) or file an intent to graduate.
- c. During the first year, temporary advisors will work with doctoral students to complete and submit their first annual report for review. Beginning in their second year, students' permanent advisors will help complete and submit the reports. If a student has selected a permanent advisor prior to the end of their first year, that faculty member will complete and submit the first annual report.
- d. While all doctoral students are required to submit annual reports, only students in the first or second year of the program will be reviewed. Students in their third year will not be reviewed if they are ABD and rotating off of funding at the end of the academic year. Students in their third year (or beyond) will be reviewed only if they have not filed an intent to graduate during the spring or summer semester.

3. Timeline

Annual reviews will take place during the spring semester of each academic year. The general timeline below should be followed unless the university academic calendar makes this problematic. In all cases, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies should send a notice to all doctoral students early in the spring semester (recommended timing is the week after spring break) informing them about the annual review timeline.

- **April 15:** Doctoral students submit all requested materials to their temporary or permanent advisors as well as the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.
- **April 22:** The advisors complete the students' evaluation letter. The advisors should submit a copy of each evaluation to the assistant dean of graduate studies and the student being evaluated.
- **May 1:** The Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies convenes the annual review subcommittee to review all doctoral student annual reports.
- **May 15:** The subcommittee provides feedback to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies regarding each student's progress.
- **June 1:** The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies provides a memo to the doctoral student and the advisor, informing them of the outcome of the annual review. The annual report, the subcommittee review, and the memo should be placed on file in the graduate program office.

4. Annual Report Documents

The following documents comprise each student's annual report.

- **Annual Report:** Doctoral students should generate their annual reports acknowledging research, teaching and service in Digital Measures. The reporting period should include April 1 of the previous year to date.
- **Degree Audit:** The graduate office should prepare a degree audit for each student, indicating coursework completed to date, grade in each course, cumulative GPA, and remaining coursework needed to satisfy degree requirements.
- **CV:** Each student (with input from his or her advisor) should prepare an updated CV. Formats are flexible, but a template can be provided for new students.
- **Peer Teaching Evaluations:** Copies of all peer teaching evaluations for the last year should be provided to students by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. If possible, each student's advisor should perform at least one of these evaluations annually.
- **Self-Evaluation:** Each student should complete a reflective statement (~500 words), evaluating his or her performance in the last year, identifying goals for the coming year, and outlining a plan for achieving these goals. It is appropriate for the student's advisor to assist with and provide feedback regarding this document. Depending on the student's year in the program, the following points should be addressed:
 - *First year:* Students should discuss their progress toward: (a) selecting a permanent advisor; (b) determining a plan of study; (c) establishing a focus area for their research, and (d) considering potential dissertation topics, potential cognate area, and post-graduation goal(s).
 - *Second year:* Students should (a) discuss their progress toward establishing a line of research and/or developing a teaching portfolio (whichever is appropriate given their stated career goals). Further, they should: (b) outline their job search progress; (c) review their timeline for completing qualifying exams, proposal defense, and dissertation defense; and (d) discuss potential committee members; etc. Students should also (e) review their progress toward the goals stated in the prior-year self-evaluation statement and (f) explain how they have addressed any feedback from the graduate faculty that was provided in the first-year review.
 - *Third year (and beyond):* Students should discuss their progress toward (a) completing their dissertations and (b) fulfilling their post-graduation plans. They should also (c) review their progress toward the goals stated in the prior-year self-evaluation statement and (d) explain how they have addressed any feedback from the graduate faculty that was provided in the prior-year review.
- **Advisor Letter:** Based on a review of the above documents, each student's advisor should prepare a letter to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies that (a) provides an assessment of the student's performance to date, (b) outlines recommended actions for the student to take in the coming year, and (c) provides any necessary context for interpreting items in the annual report (e.g., lack of publication submissions, etc.).

- **Student Response (optional):** Each student, upon reviewing the advisor's letter, may submit a written response, to be appended to the annual report and forwarded to the annual review subcommittee.

5. Annual Review Subcommittee

Reviews of doctoral students will be conducted by a subcommittee comprising six members of the graduate faculty committee and chaired by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. The subcommittee membership should be representative of the various disciplines and approaches within the graduate program to ensure that students receive well-rounded, informed feedback.

All members of the subcommittee will review and discuss the performance of all doctoral students. While the subcommittee will primarily utilize the annual reports and supporting documentation, a meeting with a specific doctoral student and/or the student's advisor may be requested if the majority of the subcommittee's members feel this is necessary for a fair, accurate, and effective review.

After the reviews are conducted, the subcommittee chair will provide a report to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, summarizing the subcommittee's evaluation of and recommendations for each doctoral student in regards to teaching, research, service, professionalism, and academic citizenship.

6. Feedback to Students

After reviewing the subcommittee report, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will provide each doctoral student with a standardized letter incorporating the subcommittee's evaluation and recommendation, along with additional commentary from the associate dean as necessary. A copy of the letter will be provided to the student's advisor. Copies of the associate dean's letters, the subcommittee reports, and the student's annual reports will be kept on file in the graduate office.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 04.06: Temporary Advisors for Doctoral Students

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe policies and procedures for assigning temporary advisors to new doctoral students within the College of Media & Communication and to specify the role and responsibilities of temporary advisors.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of even-numbered years, or as needed, by the assistant and/or Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Any recommended changes will be submitted to the graduate faculty for review and approval.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The goal of this policy is to ensure that new doctoral students joining the college are provided with temporary advisors during their first year in the Ph.D. program. Temporary advisors will ensure that new doctoral students are acculturated into the college by helping them (a) understand policies and procedures, (b) build a solid foundation for future graduate study, and (c) identify a permanent advisor.

2. Term of Service

A temporary advisor should be assigned to each incoming doctoral student within one month of the student accepting an offer to join the program and no later than one month prior to the start of the student's first semester. The temporary advisor will work with the student during his or her first year in the program. The expectation is that the student—with the temporary advisor's assistance—will identify a permanent advisor by the end of the first year of study, at which time the temporary advisor's term of service will end. In some rare cases, a temporary advisor may be asked by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies to continue in a temporary advisor capacity if the student has not found a permanent advisor at the end of the first year.

Temporary advisors may become permanent advisors based on a mutual agreement between the student, the advisor, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Temporary advisors are not obligated to transition to permanent advisor status nor are they obligated to serve in a

temporary advisor capacity beyond one year. Their term of service may end prior to the completion of the student's first year of study if the student secures a permanent advisor.

3. Temporary Advisor Eligibility

Any tenured or tenure-track graduate faculty member may serve as a temporary advisor; however, the primary responsibility for serving in this capacity should lie with non-administrative, tenured faculty members, and faculty members who have passed their third-year reviews with a strong evaluation from the college tenure and promotion committee.

Temporary advisors and doctoral students need not have similar research interests, teaching interests, or shared methodological approaches, although such matching will occur if and when possible.

4. Temporary Advisor Role & Responsibilities

The temporary advisor's primary role is to serve as a mentor during the doctoral student's first year of study; as such, the advisor's focus will be on integrating the student into the academic culture of the doctoral program, college, university, and profession. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- a. Provide general mentorship regarding professionalism and academic citizenship
- b. Provide feedback regarding first-year plan of study
- c. Provide mentorship regarding teaching assignments; if the doctoral student has a teaching assignment, the temporary advisor should observe the student at least once during the semester
- d. Provide feedback regarding possible research foci and cognate areas as well as suggestions regarding appropriate faculty collaborators who can help the student pursue those interests
- e. Help the student identify a permanent advisor
- f. Assist the student with preparing his or her first year doctoral student annual report, including writing an evaluation letter

5. Service Credit

Serving as a temporary advisor should be listed as credit toward college service and taken into consideration during faculty annual review.

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 05.01: Master of Arts in Mass Communications Curriculum

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the requirements for the master's degree in media & communication, including the requirements for specific tracks within the master's degree (thesis, professional, and sports media tracks).

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Thesis Concentration Curriculum

a. Core Courses:

- MCOM 5364 Research Methods
- MCOM 5366 Seminar in Mass Communication Theory
- MCOM 5374 Data Analysis

b. Electives:

- 9 to 15 hours of college elective courses (can be in ADV, COMS, JEM, MCOM, or PR)
- Students may take up to six hours of graduate coursework outside the college in place of up to six hours of college elective courses upon approval of the graduate advisor

c. Thesis Hours: Students should take 6 hours of MCOM 6000 Thesis

2. Professional Concentration Curriculum

a. Core Courses:

- MCOM 5364 Research Methods
- MCOM 5366 Seminar in Mass Communication Theory

b. Electives:

- 15 to 21 hours of college elective courses (can be in ADV, COMS, JEM, MCOM, or PR)
 - 3 hours of MCOM 5370 Internship credit is possible under the college elective category.
 - Students may take up to six hours of graduate coursework outside the college in place of up to six hours of college elective courses upon approval of the graduate advisor
- c. Final Project: Students should take 3 hours of MCOM 6050 Master's Report

3. Sports Media Concentration Curriculum

- a. Core Courses:
- MCOM 5364 Research Methods
 - MCOM 5366 Seminar in Mass Communication Theory
 - MCOM 6330 Seminar in Media & Sport
- b. Electives:
- 12 to 18 hours of college elective courses (can be in ADV, COMS, JEM, MCOM, or PR); at least 6 hours must be in approved sports media electives
 - 3 hours of MCOM 5370 Internship credit is possible under the college elective category; the internship should be in sport media.
 - Students may take up to 6 hours of graduate coursework outside the college in place of 6 hours of college elective courses
- c. Final Project: Students should take 3 hours of MCOM 6050 Master's Report; the final project should be focused on sport media



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 05.02: Professional Master's Student Final Project

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the purpose and requirements for satisfactory completion of the final capstone project for the master's degree in media and communication professional and sports media tracks.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

All master's students in the general professional track and the sports media track will complete a research project in order to fulfill the MCOM 6050 final project requirement and demonstrate a graduate-level mastery of research methods and theory. This project should be completed in the last semester of their graduate program. It should be noted that the research report is not meant to be a thesis. It will generally be more applied and pragmatic.

2. Scenarios

There are two scenarios in which a student can complete the MCOM 6050 project.

- a. Complete a final project for an organization, including but not limited to the student's current employer.

Students who are employees of an organization are encouraged to complete their MCOM 6050 Final Project for their employing organization as a means of adding value to the organization. (Note: The student's employer must sign a form acknowledging that the student is conducting research on the organization's behalf as part of this course requirement.)

Examples: A student working for a grocery store chain may conduct focus groups to help the organization determine what public relations messages best resonate with their customer base. A student working for a sports franchise could do a content analysis of how the local media covers the organization's public outreach efforts.

- b. Complete a final project on a topic that does not involve any particular organization.

Students may elect to do an MCOM 6050 project that does not involve any particular organization.

Example: Student conducts in-depth interview with residents regarding how the media influences their decisions regarding water conservation.

3. Requirements

No matter which scenario the student chooses in which to complete his/her MCOM6050 Final Project, the student is required to complete the following steps:

- a. Identify a research project with a media component.
- b. Submit a project proposal and have it approved by faculty adviser/instructor.
- c. Collect and analyze data.
- d. Write-up the findings and interpretation of the data using the report outline.
- e. Present/defend the project and results via an oral presentation.

4. Oral Defense

All master's students conducting an MCOM 6050 project must participate in an oral defense of their project. This defense is open to the public and should be publicized prior to the defense to provide adequate opportunity for graduate faculty members and students to attend.

The defense should consist of approximately 20 minutes of formal presentation followed by 10 minutes of questions led by the student's MCOM 6050 graduate supervisor.

MCOM 6050 supervisors should ensure that a second CoMC graduate faculty member is in attendance to serve as a representative of the CoMC graduate program and ensure that proper procedures are followed.

At the conclusion of the defense, the MCOM 6050 supervisor and graduate program representative will both sign the notification of completed defense form.

Attachment A: *MCOM 6050 Written Report Outline*

Attachment A, OP 05.02 MCOM 6050 Written Report Outline

The final written reports, which will be presented at the close of the semester, will be written using the following rubric as a guide. The report should be 5000-6250 words (approximately 20-25 pages) at a minimum. Tables, charts and graphs are to be included and do not count toward minimum word/page requirements.

Executive Summary

- What are the key takeaways?
- What is the overview of what you found and how you looked for it?

Statement of the problem

- What is the specific problem?
- What is the problem's significance? Why is it important?

Literature Review

- Who else did what and found out what about the general topic and the specific problem? What practical and/or theoretical contributions have we had so far? Synthesize and summarize.
- What do we know for sure about the problem?
- What needs further research?
- What theory/theories could guide your research?

Research Questions

- What specifically will you look for/expect to find?

Method

- Be thorough.
- Discuss the specific population/sample & sampling technique, procedure, stimulus material (if there is any), and measures.
- Provide a copy of your research instrument (code sheet, questionnaire, etc.).
- Be detailed and exhaustive about how you conducted the research.

Analysis and Interpretation

- How did you analyze the data you collected?
- What did you find?
- What are your findings' practical implications?
 - Provide ample tables/graphs/charts.

Limitations

- What is imperfect about your study?
- What questions are you leaving unanswered?

References

- APA Style is required

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 05.03: Master's Student Internships

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Master's students in the professional and sports media tracks are strongly encouraged to complete a professional internship in their area of study.

1. Eligibility

For-credit graduate internships should meet the following requirements:

- a. For a 3-credit MCOM 5370 Internship, students must complete 140-hours of work at the internship.
- b. Students must be supervised by a qualified practitioner at the internship site. Typically, this is someone with 5 or more years of professional experience in media and communication.
- c. Students must have internships and supervisors approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies prior to accepting and beginning the internship for credit.
- d. Students may not receive credit for an internship for working at an organization at which they are already employed in either a part- or full-time capacity (note: this does not rule out paid internships).

2. Internship Requirements

- a. Students must submit weekly progress reports to their faculty advisor.
- b. Students must submit a terminal written paper detailing their internship experience and how their coursework could be applied to address an existing or potential communication-based problem or opportunity at the internship site.

- c. The student's on-site professional supervisor must submit a completed evaluation form to the student's faculty supervisor no more than two weeks prior to the end of the semester and no more than 5 business days prior to the date that grades are due that semester.



Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 05.04: M.A. Thesis

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the process through which the master's students propose, conduct, and defend a thesis.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Thesis Committees

- a. Each doctoral student will form his or her thesis committee with the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.
- b. Each committee will be comprised of a chair and at least one other graduate faculty member, both of whom must be members of the MA in Mass Communication program graduate faculty.
- c. The committee may include a third member who is on the Texas Tech University graduate faculty.
- d. No faculty member is obligated to serve on any particular committee.

2. Thesis Format & Expectations

The thesis project represents a student's original contribution to the body of knowledge in media and communication. Typically, the thesis is an investigation into or examination of a phenomenon within the discipline, during which the student is expected to (a) synthesize relevant literature, (b) pose one or more hypotheses, propositions, or research questions, (c) collect and interpret data in support of this hypotheses or proposition, and (d) situate the findings and conclusions within the broader body of knowledge.

To achieve these outcomes, a variety of theoretical, methodological, and philosophical approaches can be utilized, as appropriate for the student's area of study. Ultimately, it is up to the individual student and their advisor to determine how to structure the project so that it is most beneficial and appropriate for the student given the student's career goals and area of

interest. Students and their advisors should carefully consider how the thesis deliverables best position the student for success in their career.

Advisors are encouraged to consult with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and/or the College of Media & Communication Graduate Council should they have questions or concerns about using a 'non-traditional' thesis format.

3. Procedure

The thesis requires students to:

- Submit a thesis proposal to their committee—typically, this comprises a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature and methods of data collection,
- Successfully defend their proposal,
- Conduct the thesis study,
- Submit the written thesis to their committee,
- Successfully defend their thesis project.

4. Oral Defense

- a. An oral defense is mandatory for the final thesis defense.
- b. The student and the chair should work together to ensure that all deadlines and other requirements of the university Graduate School are met. It is not the responsibility of the CoMC Graduate Program to remind students and chairs of these deadlines nor is the Graduate Program obligated to ask the Graduate School for deadline extensions or request exemptions from fulfilling thesis requirements.
- c. The thesis committee chair should notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies regarding the oral defense date at least 15 business days prior to the defense date. The office of the ADGS will then notify all college graduate faculty and students regarding the upcoming defense at least 10 business days prior to the scheduled defense. This notification will include a copy of the thesis abstract.
- d. The oral defense will begin with an open-to-the-public period during which the student presents her/his thesis project. Following a period of questions and answers that includes the public, the public is dismissed and the committee may ask questions of the student regarding their project. The questions in the oral defense should not go beyond the scope of the thesis project unless such expansion is needed to confirm the student's understanding of concepts addressed in the written manuscript or the oral defense. The committee confers in private after the student is dismissed, then reports its decision to the student.

5. Results & Reporting

- a. Following the thesis defense and the submission of any necessary revisions to the thesis chair, the committee will meet privately and will assign the student one of the following grades:
 - Pass with distinction
 - Should be reserved for truly exemplary work requiring no or minimal revision
 - Should be granted only upon unanimous agreement of all committee members
 - Pass
 - Fail
- b. The thesis chair is responsible for ensuring that any requested revisions to the thesis are completed and approved by the thesis committee members prior to the student submitting the thesis to the Graduate School.
- c. The thesis chair should submit to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies a signed Oral Defense and Thesis-Dissertation Approval Form once the student has successfully defended their thesis project. The chair is responsible for securing all signatures from the thesis committee members.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Media & Communication

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 06.01: Master of Arts in Strategic Communication and Innovation Curriculum

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the curriculum for the Strategic Communication & Innovation Online Master's program.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Core Courses:

- MCOM 5366 Seminar in Mass Communication Theory
- MCOM 5364 Research Methods
- MCOM 5310 Strategic Communication Planning & Writing
- MCOM 5312 Media Management, Entrepreneurship, & Consulting
- MCOM 5314 Strategic Communication in a Global Environment
- MCOM 5316 Communication in Organizations

2. Elective Courses: Students will select three of the following courses:

- MCOM 5318 Advanced Social Media Practice
- MCOM 5321 Production of Digital Media Content
- MCOM 5322 Multimedia Story Telling
- MCOM 5324 Audience/Data Analysis & Reporting
- MCOM 5334 Interpersonal Communication
- MCOM 5332 Special Topics in Strategic Communication

3. Final Project:

- MCOM 6050 Master's Report Final Project (Applied Research Project)

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 06.02: Strategic Communication and Innovation M.A. Capstone Project

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the purpose and requirements for satisfactory completion of the capstone project for the online master's degree in strategic communication & innovation.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

All students in the Strategic Communication & Innovation Master's Program, in order to fulfill the MCOM 6050 Final Project Requirement, will complete a research project in order to demonstrate a graduate-level mastery of research methods and theory. This project should be completed in the last semester of the graduate program. This final report is not intended to be equivalent to a master's thesis. Instead, the project should be a research-focused write-up emphasizing application and pragmatism of strategic communication knowledge gained from the master's program.

2. Scenarios

There are two scenarios students can pursue to complete the MCOM 6050 capstone project.

- a. Complete a final project for an organization including, but not limited to, the student's current employer. Students who are employees of an organization are encouraged to complete their MCOM 6050 capstone project for their employing organization as a means of adding value to the organization. (Note: The student's employer must sign a form acknowledging that the student is conducting research on the organization's behalf as part of this course requirement.)

Examples: (1) A student working for a grocery store chain may conduct focus groups to help the organization determine what public relations messages best resonate with their customer base. (2) A student working for a sports franchise could do a content analysis of how the local media covers the organization's public outreach efforts.

- b. Complete a final project on a topic that does not involve any particular organization. Students may elect to do a capstone MCOM 6050 project that does not involve any particular organization.

Example: (1) A student conducts in-depth interview with residents of a community regarding how the media influences their decisions regarding water conservation. (2) A student conducts an experiment with people to determine how different messaging strategies influence publics of interest.

3. Requirements

No matter which scenario the student chooses in which to complete his/her MCOM6050 capstone project, the student is **required** to complete the following steps:

- a. Identify a research project with a strategic communication and innovation component.
- b. Submit a project proposal and have it approved by faculty advisor/instructor. Proposals should be submitted to advisors before the 5th class day of the semester in which the 6050 is conducted.
- c. Collect and analyze data.
- d. Write-up the findings and interpretation of the data per their advisor's/supervisor's instructions to be submitted in final form to MCOM 6050 advisors/supervisors prior to the oral defense...
- e. Present/defend the project and results via an oral presentation.

4. Final Paper/Oral Defense

All online master's students conducting a capstone MCOM 6050 project must submit a final, written report to their advisor/supervisor prior to the oral defense. The paper must be 5000 words (approximately 20 pages) excluding references (tables/figures do not count toward that length). Exact expectations of length and content should be worked out between student and supervisor

All online master's students conducting a capstone MCOM 6050 project must participate in an oral defense of their project. This defense is open to the public and should be publicized prior to the defense to provide adequate opportunity for graduate faculty members and students to attend. The defense should consist of 15 to 20 minutes of formal presentation followed by 10 to 20 minutes of questions led by the student's MCOM 6050 graduate supervisor.

MCOM 6050 supervisors must ensure that a second CoMC graduate faculty member is in attendance to serve as a representative of the CoMC graduate program and ensure that proper procedures are followed. At the conclusion of the defense, the

MCOM 6050 supervisor and graduate program representative will sign the notification of completed defense form.

Attachment A: *MCOM 6050 Written Report Outline*

Attachment A, OP 06.02 MCOM 6050 Written Report Outline

The final written reports, which will be presented at the close of the semester, will be written using the following rubric as a guide. The report should be 5000-6250 words (approximately 20-25 pages) at a minimum. Tables, charts and graphs are to be included and do not count toward the minimum word/page requirements.

Executive Summary

- What are the key takeaways?
- What is the overview of what you found and how you looked for it?

Statement of the problem

- What is the specific problem?
- What is the problem's significance? Why is it important?

Literature Review

- Who else did what and found out what about the general topic and the specific problem? What practical and/or theoretical contributions have we had so far? Synthesize and summarize.
- What do we know for sure about the problem?
- What needs further research?
- What theory/theories could guide your research?

Research Questions

- What specifically will you look for/expect to find?

Method

- Be thorough.
- Discuss the specific population/sample & sampling technique, procedure, stimulus material (if there is any), and measures.
- Provide a copy of your research instrument (code sheet, questionnaire, etc.).
- Be detailed and exhaustive about how you conducted the research.

Analysis and Interpretation

- How did you analyze the data you collected?
- What did you find?
- What are your findings' practical implications? Provide ample tables/graphs/charts.

Limitations

- What is imperfect about your study?
- What questions are you leaving unanswered?

References

- APA Style is required

Graduate Studies Operating Policy & Procedure

OP 07.01: Master of Arts in Communication Studies Curriculum

DATE: June 19, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to describe the curriculum for the Communication Studies Master of Arts degree.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October of every third year, or as needed, by the CoMC Graduate Faculty. This OP will be reviewed again in October 2019.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Credit Hour Requirements for M.A. Degree Completion

The Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies is a two-year program that requires 36 hours of coursework. Students will take four core courses (12 credit hours) along with either 18 elective hours (thesis path) or 21 elective hours (portfolio, publishable papers, and comprehensive examination paths). Additional details about each of the degree completion options are provided below.

2. Core Courses

- COMS 5310 – Graduate Studies in COMS (3)
- One Theory Course, choose from the following Theory courses (3):
 - COMS 5300 – Communication Theory
 - COMS 5306 – Theories of Rhetoric
- One Methods Course, choose from the following Methods courses (3):
 - COMS 5301 – Qualitative Research Methods in Communication
 - COMS 5305 – Quantitative Research Methods in Communication
 - COMS 5307 – Historical Critical Research Methods in Communication
- COMS 6307 – Seminar in Instructional Communication (3)

3. Electives

Students may choose from any of the Department of Communication MA elective courses to fulfill the remaining 18 (thesis path) or 21 (portfolio, publishable papers, or comprehensive examination paths) hours. Students may take up to six hours of electives toward their degree outside of Communication Studies without official approval. Any outside electives beyond this require the approval of a student's graduate advisor. Elective hours may contribute to a minor (6-9 hours in one department). Departmental electives include the following courses:

- **COMS 5300**-Communication Theory: A comprehensive overview of contemporary communication theories and research. Can be taken as an elective should another theory course be selected for degree completion.
- **COMS 5301**-Qualitative Research Methods: The course will introduce research methods of discourse analysis, conversations analysis, ethnography, applied qualitative communication research, and development of grounded theory. Can be taken as an elective should another methods course be selected for degree completion.
- **COMS 5305**-Quantitative Research Methods: The study of quantitative research methods in communication, emphasizing research designs, quantitative treatments and analysis. Can be taken as an elective should another methods course be selected for degree completion.
- **COMS 5306**-Theories of Rhetoric: An in-depth study of rhetorical theories which have had significant impact on the research, teaching, and practice of communication behavior. Can be taken as an elective should another theory course be selected for degree completion.
- **COMS 5307**-Historical Critical Research Methods: Survey of contemporary methods of rhetorical criticism and their application in analyzing a wide variety of message types. Can be taken as an elective should another methods course be selected for degree completion.
- **COMS 5302** – Intercultural Communication: An examination of the relationship between culture and communication and approaches to studying Intercultural communication.
- **COMS 5303** – Communication in Small Groups: A study of factors affecting interpersonal communication in small group settings. Course content includes considerations of both theoretical and applied orientations to the study of small group communication.
- **COMS 5304** – Communication in Organizations: This course examines theoretical perspectives, contemporary research, and practical models of human communication in complex organizations.
- **COMS 5309** – Conflict Management and Problem Solving: In depth study of, and research into conflict resolution through mediation and negotiation.
- **COMS 5313** – Theories of Persuasion: Analysis of representative theories and models of persuasive processes and their implications for communication behavior. Theories of public, interpersonal, and mass communication are included.
- **COMS 5314** – Communication Issues in Health and Health Care. An exploration of the nature and roles of discourse processes in health care interactions, including interpersonal, organizational, public, and Intercultural communication contexts.
- **COMS 5315** – Nonverbal Communication: Examines communicative functions of nonverbal message behavior. Considers a variety of behavioral domains and interaction contexts from both theoretical and practical perspectives.
- **COMS 5318** – Interpersonal Communication: Communication theory and research on historical and contemporary topics in interpersonal, communication contexts.
- **COMS 6302** – Seminar in Interpersonal Communication: A research course focusing on specific topics in interpersonal communication. Topics vary with students' needs. May be repeated for credit.
- **COMS 6304** – Seminar in Rhetorical Theory: A research course focusing on specific topics in rhetorical theory. Topics vary with students' needs. May be repeated for credit.

- **COMS 6305** – Seminar in Communication for Center Directors: Explores center directorship communication and services provided by these independent academic units within a variety of higher education contexts as educational change agents.
- **COMS 6307** – Seminar in Instructional Communication: A research course focusing on specific topics in instructional communication. Topics vary with students’ needs. May be repeated for credit. (NOTE: required only for GTAs)
- **COMS 6308** – Seminar in Cultural Communication: A research course focusing on specific topics in cultural communication. Topics vary with students’ needs. May be repeated for credit.
- **COMS 7000** – Research/Project. Each COMS 7000 course must be given a title in order to apply to a student’s degree plan.

4. Degree Completion Options

Graduate students in the Communication Studies MA program must generate a final project following one of the four pathways listed below. Each student should identify and formally invite a faculty member to chair their committee. The chair will assist the student in forming a committee in the second semester of his or her studies in the MA program. At that point, students will file a “Program for the Master’s Degree and Admission to Candidacy” (i.e., a Tentative Degree Plan/TDP) form with the COMS graduate advisor. Students must complete this by the end of your second semester and in order to be approved to take COMS 6000 and 7000 courses. The following are the four options for degree completion:

- a. Thesis
- b. Publishable Paper
- c. Praxis Portfolio
- d. Comprehensive Examination

a. Thesis

This should be a significant scholarly work that can either be original research or an update to an earlier published study—it is not expected to be absolutely original. Nevertheless, there needs to be a clear body of work or data that is analyzed through an acceptable methodology and helps to affirm, reject, or extend work that may have been published earlier.

- A well-written extended essay that generates an argument about a specific topic related to the field.
- This well-researched extended study that includes a literature review, overview of the methodology and how others have used it, analysis of the data, and a conclusion that includes findings and implications for the field and future research. Thesis arrangements and forms must adhere to the standards appropriate for the research question(s), methodology, and targeted academic audience.

Standards. A successful thesis will display the following characteristics:

- Defined by the committee and current standards in the field that apply to the particular research questions, area of study, chosen “method,” and ethical considerations.

Graduate students completing the thesis option will take the four core courses (12 hours), eighteen hours electives, and six thesis hours (COMS 6000) of coursework for a total of 36 hours.

b. Publishable Papers

Under this option, students will research and prepare two academic papers the committee deems suitable for submission to one or more journals in the field. The papers should be targeted toward specific peer-reviewed publications ranking at the level of 3 or higher, or as approved by the committee. The goal of this option is to encourage MA students who may want to go on to the PhD to complete two sustained projects that result in possible publication. This is not to be considered a reduction from the rigor of a thesis but a practical way to assist our students to achieve publications that promote their scholarship. Each paper must adhere to the word/page length as determined by the targeted journal(s) and be deemed academically rigorous by the MA committee.

Standards. The successful papers will display the following characteristics:

- Well-written and revised prose with length appropriate to the proposed publication venue.
- A clear explanation of theoretical and/or methodological approaches.
- Analysis worthy of publication in the targeted outlet
- Precise and correct use of a bibliographical citation style appropriate to the publication venue.
- At least one of the two pieces should be solo-authored
- The second essay should be co-authored with at least one of the committee members.
- This option should at least meet, if not exceed, the thesis option.

Graduate students completing the publishable papers option will take the four core courses (12 hours), twenty-one elective hours, and three independent research hours (COMS 7000) of coursework for a total of 36 hours. The three hours of COMS 7000 should be assigned a title accordingly and taken in the last semester of their program.

c. Praxis Portfolio

The praxis project portfolio is a collection of materials connected to a project in communication studies for a specific client and a specific need. Examples include, but are not limited to, a professional consultation with a group or agency, a communication resource (such as a website or mobile application) for actual people to use, or a training workshop that culminates in pedagogical materials that might be employed again. The project must be conducted while the student is in the MA program in Communication Studies. The project must be significantly revised and extended for submission if it arose from work done in courses or if it involved collaborative authorship.

The portfolio must be introduced with an essay that describes the work, including the student's contributions to any collaborative element; contextualizes the work in scholarship, research, and theory in the field of Communication Studies; and argues for how it fulfills the Communication Studies MA program outcomes.

Standards. A successful portfolio will display the following characteristics:

- A well-written essay containing a convincing argument for how the portfolio fulfills program outcomes.
- 3–6 artifacts from the project, with clear descriptions of their role and significance.
- A clear contextualization of the portfolio within the scholarship of the field.
- A statement describing how the project artifacts were revised or extended and what the author’s role was in any collaboration.

Graduate students completing the portfolio option will take the four core courses (12 hours), twenty-one elective hours, and three independent research hours (COMS 7000) of coursework for a total of 36 hours. The three hours of COMS 7000 should be assigned a title accordingly and taken in the last semester of their program.

d. Comprehensive Examination

The MA exam will consist of at least two departmental, preferably three total faculty members who will submit questions covering theory/method and areas of interest. The number of written hours will be at the discretion of the faculty members with final approval from the committee chair. The committee chair and student will determine how the hours will be split among the questions. Students will meet with each committee member to discuss the comprehensive exam. These meetings will take place no later than two weeks before the written portion of the exam is scheduled.

A minimum of three of these hours must cover a core competency, which draws from one or more of the four core courses required by the COMS MA program (Theory: 5300 & 5306; Research: 5301, 5305, & 5307; Graduate Studies in COMS: 5310; Instructional Communication: 6307). The exam will be at least 9 hours long but not longer than fifteen. Preference is for a 12-hour/4 question, exam to be taken at home or in a supervised place of testing—as each faculty member deems acceptable and appropriate. Exams must be completed during a one-week duration.

After the written portion, the committee will provide input on whether the student is ready to defend his or her answers during an oral exam. If the student does not pass the written portion, he or she has one more opportunity to rewrite or revise before the committee reexamines his or her answers as per graduate school or University protocol. Upon approval from the committee, the oral exam will be scheduled two weeks from the time of the written exam. If the student does not pass the oral exam, one of the following might occur: The student is asked to rewrite some, or all, of the written exam before scheduling a second oral exam or the student will be asked to schedule a second oral exam. At the discretion of the committee, students who do not pass their first oral exam may petition to retake the oral exam portion of the comprehensive exam. The student is responsible for making sure he or she schedules the written and oral exam are compliant with Graduate School deadlines.

Standards. A successful exam will display the following characteristics:

- A well-written and demonstrated competency in the COMS content areas

- Ability to orally discuss and defend any omitted content on the written portion of the exam

Graduate students completing the comprehensive examination option will take the four core courses (12 hours), twenty-one elective hours, and three independent research hours (COMS 7000) of coursework for a total of 36 hours. The three hours of COMS 7000 should be assigned a title accordingly and taken in the last semester of their program.

5. Proposal Process for All Projects (excluding the exam option)

By the end of that semester, the student should submit to his or her committee a proposal that describes the project and justifies it to the satisfaction of the committee. The committee must approve the formal project proposal before the student can commence work—this usually takes the form of an oral, face-to-face proposal meeting between the student and the committee members.

Standards:

Recommend each committee be comprised of 3 members (1 Chair, 2 committee members, and at least two members from COMS)

Written materials submitted to the committee chair, approved, and then submitted to the committee members at least one week before the desired meeting.

6. Defense Process for All Projects (including the comprehensive exam option)

It is expected that each student defends his or her work orally to his or her committee members. This should be completed in a timely manner in order to meet TTU deadlines for thesis and comprehensive examination defense completions.

Standards:

Completed materials given to and approved by the thesis chair

Completed MA exams are to be returned to the chair and the individual committee member.

Electronic and/or hard copy of the completed project given to the committee members at least two weeks before the requested oral defense date.

Oral defense scheduled with the approval of the chair.

Students are recommended to include a note near the beginning of each finalized project (other than the MA exam) that explains the extent of collaboration between the student and the faculty members on the committee.