DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2021 - 2022

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Our Mission

The Department of Communication believes that messages matter.

We foster students' abilities to produce and interpret messages in an ethical and thoughtful manner, so they can achieve their personal, professional, and civic goals in a diverse, global landscape.

We facilitate a better understanding of communication across a vast array of contexts in order to improve the quality of people's lived experiences and create a more equitable and just society.

We serve our university, discipline, and communities as advocates, allies, activists, and scholars.

Program Learning Outcomes

Our program is designed so that our students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

1) Our students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

2) Our students will conduct and evaluate communication research.

3) Our students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

4) Our students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence.

5) Our students will apply theories and/or practices of social justice and civic engagement.

6) Our students will analyze the ethical implications of communication and apply ethical principles.

Degree Requirements

Graduate Education at Saint Louis University

For general information regarding graduate education at SLU, please consult SLU's Academic Catalog, available on SLU's website, which contains specific details on graduate education requirements and procedures specified by the University. You should always consult it first when you have a question about graduate education requirements.

Required Coursework

Each student develops an M.A. program of study with the Graduate Program Coordinator and a faculty mentor according to her or his individual goals. Our program requires a student to complete 30 hours of credit with an overall "B" (3.00) average.

The program of study includes 9 credit hours of core courses all students must take:

- CMM 5000: Graduate Study of Communication
- CMM 5801: Quantitative Research Methods in Communication
- CMM 5802: Qualitative Inquiry for Communication and Social Justice

For their remaining coursework students may select, in consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator and their faculty mentor, graduate seminars in Communication, graduate courses in other disciplines, 4000-level undergraduate courses in Communication, and independent studies with Communication faculty. The three different routes toward completion of the MA degree in Communication involve different coursework requirements.

- **Comprehensive Exam Option**
  30 hours of coursework and completion of **comprehensive exams**
  Students who choose the comprehensive exams option are required to take 30 hours of coursework (10 courses) and complete comprehensive exams.

- **Applied Project Option**
  27 hours of coursework and **3 hours of applied project work**
  Students who choose the applied project option are required to take 27 hours of coursework (9 courses) and 3 hours of applied project work (CMM 5890).

- **Thesis Option**
  24 hours of coursework and **6 hours of thesis work**
  Students who choose the thesis option are required to take 24 hours of coursework (8 courses) and 6 hours of thesis work (CMM 5990).

Elective Options

Graduate Seminars in Communication

Within a two-year cycle of courses, the following courses are likely to be taught in addition to core courses and one or two other electives that vary from year to year:

- CMM 5020: Interpersonal Communication
- CMM 5090: Health Communication
- CMM 5200: Organizational Communication
- CMM 5400: Contemporary Issues in Media
- CMM 5600: Strategic Communication

In addition, within a two-year cycle of courses a course will likely be offered that focuses on Culture and Communication (e.g., Culture and Public Dialogue, Language and Cultural Diversity, Intercultural Communication).

Coursework in Other Departments

Students are encouraged to explore the relationship between Communication and other university departments and disciplines. **Students can take a <u>maximum of 6 credit hours</u> of graduate-level (5000- or 6000-level) coursework outside of the department.**

4000-Level Options

Students may **choose up to a total of 9 hours in the following areas**:
- 4000-level courses in Communication
- graduate coursework outside of the department
- independent studies

Limitations on Elective Options

Unless an exception is granted by the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Graduate Committee:
- no more than 6 of these 9 hours may be taken in 4000-level courses in Communication
- no more than 6 of these 9 hours may be taken in graduate coursework outside of the department
- no more than 3 of these 9 hours may be taken as an independent study.

Transferring Credits

A maximum of 6 hours of relevant graduate coursework completed at another university may be transferred to the Master's program in Communication. Petition forms may be obtained at the Office of Graduate Education, DuBourg Hall 450. The Graduate Program Coordinator must approve all requests prior to submission to Graduate Education. Any hours transferred will be regarded as part of the 6 hours allowed outside of the Communication Department.

Degree Completion Options: Overview of Capstones

At the end of their course of study, graduate students in the program choose from three different Capstone degree completion options.

Comprehensive Exam Option
The comprehensive exam offers an opportunity for students to synthesize knowledge from across their coursework in the program and demonstrate competency in communication theory and research, with a particular focus on their area of specialization. The comprehensive exam option includes both a written and an oral exam. Students choosing this option take 30 credit hours of coursework and take comprehensive exams during their last semester in the program. **See Appendix A for details.**

Applied Project Option
The applied project allows students with a professional focus to engage in an in-depth application of communication theory and research methods to a professional setting. It is an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills developed in graduate study to professional practice. Students are involved in producing some form of material on behalf of an organization or field of practice. Projects may take different forms. Students choosing this option take 27 credit hours of coursework and take 3 credit hours of CMM 5890: Applied Project. **See Appendix B for details.**

Thesis Option
A thesis involves the creation of new knowledge relevant to the field of communication, a professional area, or an organization. Students read existing research in their topic area and develop a set of research questions or hypotheses to investigate. They then design and implement a study to answer those questions. Students choosing this option take 24 credit hours of coursework and take 6 credit hours of CMM 5990: Thesis Research. **See Appendix C for details.**

Deadlines for
Applied Project and Thesis Proposals

The deadline for completing an oral defense of a thesis prospectus or applied project proposal is the Friday before the beginning of the final exam period during the semester prior to the student's final semester of classes. For example, if you plan to finish your degree in spring of 2027, you must defend your proposal the Friday before final exam period of fall semester of 2026. Final committee approval of a thesis prospectus/applied project proposal must occur before the end of the final exam period that same semester. If these deadlines are not met, the student will not be able to register for applied project hours or thesis hours for the following semester. In rare cases, a student may appeal for an extension based on extenuating circumstances, but this appeal must be submitted to the graduate program director before the deadline.

Graduate Student Mentoring and Review

Initial Mentoring

The Graduate Program Coordinator will serve as the mentor to all first-year graduate students. Each first-year student should schedule a formal mentoring meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator to be held 1-2 weeks after midterm during the first and second semester of the graduate program (usually October and March). During each meeting, students will discuss their progress in the program, coursework choices for the following term, and questions or concerns they have. Students are encouraged to meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator as well as other faculty members outside of these two formal meetings as well for mentoring purposes. At the mentoring meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator the second semester, students will also have their first review (see details below).

Process for Choosing a Capstone Chair

At the second semester mentoring meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator (or after completing 6 to 9 hours of coursework), students should come prepared to talk about which option for completion of their graduate study they are leaning toward - thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam. Students should also come with ideas about possible chairs for their thesis, applied project or comprehensive exam committee. Based on the students' interests and availability of faculty members to serve on committees, the Graduate Program Coordinator will offer

recommendations as to whom the graduate student should formally ask to serve as the chair of their capstone committee.

The student should then send an e-mail to the potential Capstone Committee Chair to schedule a time to talk about possibility of the faculty member serving in this capacity. At the meeting, the student should be prepared to talk about the direction of their study to help the faculty member assess the fit between the student's interest and the faculty member's area of specialization.

After a faculty member agrees to serve as the chair of the students' thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee, this faculty member becomes the student's formal mentor. After a faculty member agrees to serve as a student's Capstone Committee Chair, the student and Chair should consult about additional committee members. After decisions are made, the student and committee should complete the **Capstone Committee Form** (see Appendix G) and send to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Department's Administrative Assistant on which the Capstone Committee Chair is copied to formally confirm the shift in mentorship. Chairs of thesis, applied project, and comprehensive exam committees should be in place by the time a student finishes 15 credit hours of study, but can be chosen earlier as well.

A student's mentor will always be glad to be a resource for the student throughout his/her time in the program. As far as "official" mentoring duties:

- A student's mentor will be responsible for meeting with the mentee before course registration starts each semester (usually, then, in October and March) to talk about course options and the student's plans for the next semester.

- In addition, a student's mentor will be responsible for conducting formal reviews with the student. These meetings will conclude with the student and the mentor completing and signing an evaluation form (see Appendix E), which the mentor will then forward to the Graduate Program Coordinator. The mentor will include with the form a paragraph-length evaluation that summarizes the student's status in the program and will include recommendations for going forward.

Format for Review Meetings

The Graduate Program Coordinator will gather materials about each student and share those materials with faculty mentors before mentors meet with students. Those materials include:

- feedback from communication instructors
- for research assistants, supervisors will provide feedback on students' RA work
- for teaching assistants, the basic course director will provide feedback on students' teaching and teaching development
- for professional assistants, supervisors will provide feedback on students' professional work

Students will then be asked to submit an activity report (see Appendix F) to their mentors before meeting with him or her. This report will vary slightly depending on if students are a first-year student or a returning student. Mentors will deliver a copy of the activity report to the Graduate Program Coordinator, and the Graduate Program Coordinator will keep a copy in each student's file.

At the completion of meeting with the student, the mentor will complete the evaluation form, and both the student and the mentor will sign the form. The mentor will include with the form a paragraph-length evaluation that summarizes the student's status in the program and includes any recommendations for going forward the mentor gave the student. The mentor will submit a copy of the form and the paragraph to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who will then also sign the form. The Graduate Program Coordinator will give one copy of the form and paragraph to the student and keep a copy in the student's file.

If a mentor decides a student is making inadequate progress, the mentor will offer specific recommendations to help the student improve performance. A student would only go on formal academic probation if he/she falls under relevant university requirements (e.g., graduate assistants must maintain a 3.0 GPA).

Timing of Review Meetings
For students entering the program in the fall semester, the first review will occur by the midterm mentoring meeting in March during the 2nd semester in the program of study. Students may request an earlier review date in the spring semester.

The second review of the year will occur late in the spring semester – either right before, during, or right after final exams.

With this timing, full-time students who start in the fall and complete the program in two years will have **three** formal review meetings:
>   1 early or mid spring semester of their first year
>   1 at the end of the spring semester of their first year
>   1 mid to end fall semester of their second year

Registration Procedures

General Information

To register for graduate courses, students need to first consult with their faculty mentor. For 5000-level graduate courses, graduate students can register themselves after discussing their plans with their mentor. For 4000-level courses, independent studies, or thesis or applied project credit hours, the requisite faculty member must grant students the necessary overrides before students can register themselves.

During the meeting with their faculty mentor, students and their mentor will consult the student's program of study and select the appropriate courses. This advisement and registration appointment should transpire during the early registration period each semester if possible; however, students may register (drop or add as well) after the early registration period. Students must register before the first day of classes or the university will assess a late registration fee.

Independent Studies

If students are interested in arranging an independent study (IS) with a faculty member, the student should discuss the possibility of completing the IS with a graduate faculty member in the Department of Communication whose area of specialization matches the content area of the study. After a faculty member agrees to direct the IS, the student should provide the following the Graduate Program Coordinator (with the director of the IS copied):
- title of the proposed IS course
- the name of the faculty member with whom they would like to work (the faculty member must be a graduate faculty member in the department)
- course description
- a summary of what the student would like to examine in the study (a theoretical area, a method, etc.)
- why they would like to examine this area

The Graduate Program Coordinator will then make a decision regarding the approval of the IS. The professor and student will create a contract for the IS that the Graduate Program Coordinator will place in the student's file.

Schedule of Progress through the Program

Full-time students typically complete our program in two years (4 academic semesters). Full-time students typically take 6 credit hours their first semester in the program, 9 credit hours in their second and third semesters, and 6 credit hours in their final semester.

Choosing a Capstone Committee Chair

Selection of a Capstone Committee Chair should be guided by the match of a students' area of content and methodological interest with a faculty members' area of expertise. Students are encouraged to connect with faculty about their work and specializations by attending Department research talks, workshops, social events and scheduling times to meet with faculty about their current professional endeavors.

Students should choose a route to degree completion (thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam) by the time they complete 15 hours of coursework (usually by the end of the second semester of coursework for full time students). With the Graduate Program Coordinator, students should select a faculty member to ask to chair their thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee. Requests should be made during the latter part of students' 2nd semester of graduate study and chairs should be in place by the end of 2nd semester. The chair of the thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee will then become a students' formal mentor. **See more details in "Process for Choosing a Capstone Chair" in the "Graduate Student Mentoring" section of this Handbook.**

Students should coordinate with their chairs about forming the rest of the committee. Those students writing theses or completing applied projects should form their committees no later than early in their next-to-last semester in the program. Those students should defend their proposals no later than the end of that next-to-last semester. (See Appendices A, B, and C for more specific details.)

Students choosing the comprehensive exam option should form their committees no later than the end of their next-to-last semester. Those students take comprehensive exams during their last semester in the program. The written exam is typically held four weeks prior to the end of the semester on a specific date posted at the beginning of each semester. The oral exam takes place after a student has passed the written exam. (See Appendix A for more specific details.)

After decisions are made, the student and committee should complete the **Capstone Committee Form** (see Appendix G) and send to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Department's Administrative Assistant on which the Capstone Committee Chair is copied to formally confirm the shift in mentorship.

General Semester-by-Semester Timeline
for Full-Time Graduate Students starting in Fall 2021

Note: This timeline is meant as a general guideline for what should be done when.
However, different faculty members have their own understandings of timeline that may supersede
these dates.

Fall 2021
- Before midterm, schedule an informal mentoring meeting with faculty members whose area of teaching and research expertise overlap with your own interests. Ask advice about additional learning opportunities and courses the faculty member would recommend, given your academic and professional interests.

- Schedule a formal mentoring meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator to be held 1-2 weeks after midterm (around the end of October). During this meeting, students will discuss their progress in the program, coursework choices for the following term, and questions or concerns they have.

Spring 2022
- Complete your First Year Student Activity Report I (see Graduate Student Handbook, Appendix G). Submit it to the Graduate Program Coordinator by **January 15, 2021**.

- Schedule a formal mentoring and review meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator that takes place no later than midterm (early to mid March). At this meeting, students will:
    o Discuss their progress in the program, coursework choices for the following term, and questions or concerns they have.
    o Complete their first formal review based on evaluations submitted by instructors, assistantship supervisors (as applicable), and the student activity report.
    o Discuss which degree completion option they are leaning toward - thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam. Students should come with ideas about possible chairs for their thesis, applied project or comprehensive exam committee. Based on all students' interests and availability of faculty members to serve on committees, the Graduate Program Coordinator will offer a recommendation as to whom the graduate student should formally ask to serve as the chair of a thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee.

- By the end of the semester, and after conferring with the Graduate Program Coordinator, ask a faculty member to serve as a chair for your thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee.

- After finals week, complete the First Year Student Activity Report II (see Graduate Student Handbook, Appendix H). Submit it to the Graduate Program Coordinator by **May 28, 2022**.

- Schedule a formal mentoring and review meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator to take place no later than **June 15, 2022**. Meetings can take place via video conference if you are out of town. At this meeting, students will:
    - Discuss their progress in the program, coursework choices for the following term, and questions or concerns they have.
    - Complete their second formal review based on evaluations submitted by instructors, assistantship supervisors (as applicable), and the student activity report.

Summer 2022
- If you have chosen to complete an applied project:
    - Establish connections with an organization or industry partner for your project.
    - In collaboration with the chair of your committee, identify two additional faculty members to invite to serve on the project committee. At least two members of the committee must be faculty in the Department of Communication. (This may be accomplished the semester prior to the final semester in the program if faculty members are unavailable for consultation during the summer.)
    - In collaboration with your committee chair, identify an organizational member or industry specialist to serve as the fourth member of the project committee. This fourth member will provide input and serve as a consultant of sorts for the project, but he/she will be a non-voting member of the committee.
    - Develop a review of literature relevant to the direction of your applied project.

- If you have chosen to complete a thesis:
    - With guidance from your chair, develop a literature review on your thesis topic.

- If you have chosen to complete comprehensive exams:
    - With guidance from your committee chair, begin developing a reading list for comprehensive exam material and review material from prior coursework in terms of how it may be a part of your exam.

Fall 2022
- If you have chosen to complete an applied project:
    - Finalize you client and committee members early in the semester.
    - With guidance from your committee chair, create a formal prospectus.
    - Submit it to your committee and schedule a defense date no earlier than two weeks after the committee has received your prospectus.
    - Your prospectus must be defended before the close of the Fall 2021 semester.

- o After committee approval of the prospectus, students doing research involving human subjects will need to submit a research protocol to the Institutional Review Board for approval before moving forward with the project.

- If you have chosen to complete a thesis:
  - o In collaboration with the committee chair, identify two additional faculty members to invite to serve on the thesis committee. At least two members of the committee must be faculty in the Department of Communication. Students should have a thesis committee in place no later than four weeks into this second-to-last semester.
  - o With guidance from your committee chair, create a formal thesis proposal.
  - o Submit it to your committee and schedule a defense date no earlier than two weeks after the committee has received your prospectus.
  - o Your proposal must be defended before the close of the Fall 2021 semester.
  - o After committee approval of the proposal, students doing research involving human subjects will need to submit a research protocol to the Institutional Review Board for approval before moving forward with the project.

- If your have chosen to complete comprehensive exams:
  - o With your chair, select an additional committee member. Notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of the committee member you have chosen. The Graduate Program Coordinator will assign the third committee member.
  - o After you are notified of your final committee, schedule a time to meet with your committee Chair to discuss preparation for the exam. Subsequently, meet with each member to do the same.

Spring 2023
- Review **Graduate Education Calendar of Deadlines** for the Spring Semester of 2023. Please note:
  - o Dates for initiating candidacy procedures and submitting the application for degree conferral, as per Graduate Education deadlines and requirements.
  - o Date for returning your signed degree audit.
  - o For students completing a thesis, the date for submitting your thesis proposal form and final draft of abstract and thesis for format review, and last day for oral defense of thesis, and last day to submit your thesis for Proquest.
  - o For students completing comprehensive exams, note the last day to take comprehensive exams and submit results.

- Complete your **Returning Student Activity Report** (see Graduate Student Handbook, Appendix I). Submit it to your mentor (the chair of your thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee) by **January 15, 2023**.

- Schedule a formal mentoring and review meeting with your mentor (the Chair of your thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam committee). This meeting should be held no later than midterm. At this meeting, students will:
    o Discuss their progress in the program, timeline for completion and questions or concerns they have.
    o Complete their second formal review based on evaluations submitted by instructors, assistantship supervisors (as applicable), and the student activity report.

- For those completing theses and applied projects:
    o Submit your thesis or applied project manuscripts to your committee at least two weeks before your scheduled defense.
    o Defenses usually take place in April.

- For those completing comprehensive exams:
    o Create a memo outlining course work and your reading list for the committee before Spring Break. Comprehensive exams take place in early April, with enough time to allow for any revisions that may be needed.

- Graduate!

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of Communication has three different types of Graduate Assistantships: Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships, and Professional Assistantships. Each carries with it a unique set of responsibilities and expectations for the job. The **Graduate Assistantship Manual** outlines the responsibilities and expectations for each assistantship. In addition, the manual offers an outline of the orientation, training and mentoring activities for each assistantship and a plan for evaluation of job performance. All graduate assistantships are competitively awarded. When assigning assistantships, priority will be given to incoming first-year students.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. As members of this community, students share with faculty and administrators the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty in submitting an assignment, test, research report, or any other documentation required to validate the student's learning. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing/recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In the case of violations in a course, course instructors may assign an appropriate grade and/or recommend further sanctions to the Dean. In addition, these violations will be reported to the Graduate Program Coordinator and Chair for inclusion in the student's academic file. Should the Graduate Program Coordinator or Chair feel that the incident or series of incidents warrant further action, they may institute procedures for making recommendations to the Dean for further sanctions.

Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students have the right to appeal the final decision of the Dean as described under **"Procedures for Academic Appeals" in Appendix D** of the Graduate Student Handbook. This policy on Academic Integrity and Ethical Behavior comes from the Graduate Student Handbook. Students should review the complete policy on Academic Standards for Graduate Students, available on the SLU website.

Appendix A
Comprehensive Exam

Description

Comprehensive Exams offer students an opportunity to synthesize and integrate material learned over the course of their master's program and demonstrate what they have learned. Examination questions will draw from three areas of the student's graduate program: research methods, communication theory, and his or her specialized area. The three selected committee members will write questions for the comprehensive exam, one in each of the three areas. The comprehensive exam includes a written exam in which students answer at least five of the nine questions posed by their committee members (two in the area of theory, two in the area of research methods, one in any of the three areas). The written exam is followed by an oral examination in which students respond to questions about their written responses.

Process

A. Before the completion of 15 credit hours (for full-time students, this is prior to the end of their second full semester):

1) Identify a chair for the comprehensive exam committee. This person will guide the student in the process and share decisions.

B. In the semester prior to the final semester in the program (for full-time students this is during the third full semester):

1) In collaboration with the committee chair, identify a second faculty member to serve on the comps committee.

2) Inform the Graduate Program Coordinator about these choices. The Graduate Program Coordinator will then assign a third member for the committee. After the committee is solidified, complete the **Graduate Student Capstone Committee Form** and submit to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

3) Students should first meet with their chair to discuss how to prepare for comprehensive exams. After that they will meet with each committee member. The committee members will guide the student in his or her preparation. Students should develop a reading list in consultation with the their comprehensive exam chair and approved by all members of the student's exam committee at least **two months** before the scheduled exam. The reading list should be developed from material

that was part of the student's graduate coursework experience. Reading lists will vary, depending on the student's coursework experiences and interests. A reading list will typically include a range of journal articles and book chapters with 3-5 readings for each area of the exam (research, theory, and area of specialization), yielding about 10-15 articles and book chapters. Reading lists may also include a book-length work as relevant to a student's program of study, in which case the number of journal articles and book chapters may be closer to 8-9 works.

C. In the last semester in the program (for full-time students this is the fourth semester):

1) Written comprehensive exams will take place on a designated dates (often a Saturday) in the last semester. Students will have up to 8 hours of writing time to complete the exam. Students may schedule the writing hours for the exam over the course of one to two days. For example, students may write for 8 hours on one day, or spread the exam hours across a two-day time period (for example, 4 hours one day and 4 hours the second, or 6 and 2). The student may take up to an hour of breaks during the scheduled writing times.

2) If a student does not believe that the 8-hour time period will provide sufficient time to complete the exam [for example, due to (dis)ability, language, health concern or other], the student may submit a request to the Graduate Program Coordinator for an extension of the exam time for up to 4 additional hours on a third day. This request will be considered for approval by the Graduate Committee.

3) The student should reserve an office or classroom in Xavier Hall that is quiet and comfortable for the student to take the exam. If completing the exam in Xavier Hall is not conducive for the student, the student may request to complete the exam at a different location and check in remotely via Zoom.

4) The exam will be monitored by a support person who will help the student begin, keep track of writing time and breaks, and finalize the exam submission.

5) The exam takes an open-book and open-note format. Students are expected to consult and accurately cite work from their reading list in their exam responses. The writing reflected on the exam should be original writing.

6) Exam responses should not exceed the following word limits:
   a. Theory: 1200
   b. Research: 1200
   c. Personal Interest: 800

7) Students receive an assessment of their exam responses from their committee members via their chair. To proceed to oral exams, students must receive a "proceed to orals" decision on two of three research methods questions, two of three theory questions, and any one other question.

Committee members will have three options when grading:

1) **Proceed to orals**
   a. No questions. Oral will involve discussion of ideas only.
   b. Minor questions to determine pass – no rewrite but student may be asked a minor question or two regarding her/his answer during the oral portion of the comprehensive examination.
   c. Major questions to determine pass – no rewrite required but student will be questioned in depth in oral portion of the comprehensive examination.

2) **Rewrite** – a rewrite is required. A rewrite will be required if two of the three readers grade the answer as a rewrite. Students will rewrite the same questions from the original examination.

3) **Defer** – committee member defers to other two members' opinions. This option is used when a committee member does not feel qualified to judge a particular response.

Note: If a student's response to a question is not considered sufficient to proceed to orals, the student may receive a rewrite. Students may rewrite up to two answers in a second written exam independently scheduled with the Graduate Program Coordinator and, if the new answers are satisfactory, then proceed to oral exams. A student must receive proceed to orals on at least 3 questions to avoid retaking the examination the next semester. The second exam will not be the same as the first. In addition, if the student does not receive proceed to orals on three or more questions in the subsequent exam, s/he will be removed from the program without getting a diploma.

8) Complete an oral examination in which students will respond to questions about their written exams. The final oral examination must be completed by the deadline established by the Office of Graduate Education for that semester. A student can be asked to retake the exam after this oral session if s/he fails to provide satisfactory answers to questions.

The oral examination format is:

1) Discussion between student and committee members.
2) Student is excused from the room.
3) Committee members discuss if the examination should be suspended and reconvened at a later time if the student is not prepared for the oral examination.
4) If the committee **decides not** to suspend the oral examination, committee members complete their Confidential Report: Performance of a Master's Degree Candidate on the Final Oral Degree Examination.
5) Committee members discuss their impressions and recommendations and then complete the ballot.
6) Student is invited back into the room and informed of the recommendation.
7) The student is invited to provide feedback about the program at that time or later directly to the Graduate Program Coordinator.
8) If the committee **decides** to suspend the oral examination, the student is informed of the suspension and of a new date during that semester for the final oral examination. Oral examinations may only be suspended once.

Appendix B
Applied Project

Description

The applied project will allow students with a professional focus to engage in an in-depth application of communication theory and research methods to a professional setting. It is an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills developed in graduate study to professional practice. Students should be involved in producing some form of material on behalf of an organization or field of practice. Thus, applied projects should meet the following criteria:

- Work must be conducted on behalf of a particular organization (commercial or non-profit) or in conjunction with an industry partner
- For students currently employed at an organization, the project should offer a benefit to the organization that goes beyond the students' current assigned job duties.
- The applied project is directed at a non-academic audience

The project is intended to blend theory, research and practical skills, building on students' learning in the graduate program. Projects may take different forms.

Example Products for an Applied Project:
- Documentary or Audio/Video Production
- Practical Guides (i.e. manuals/handbooks)
- Strategic Campaign
- Communication Audit
- Website or New Technology
- Training Module

Process

A. Before the completion of 15 credit hours (for full-time students, this is prior to the end of their second full semester):

1) Identify a chair for the project committee. This person will function as the project advisor.

B. Before beginning a third semester of course work (for full-time students, this is the summer before the third full semester):

1) Establish connections with an organization or industry partner for your project.

2) In collaboration with the committee chair, identify two additional faculty members to invite to

serve on the project committee. At least two members of the committee must be faculty in the Department of Communication. (This may be accomplished the semester prior to the final semester in the program if faculty members are unavailable for consultation during the summer.)

3) In collaboration with the committee chair, identify an organizational member or industry specialist to serve as the fourth member of the project committee. This fourth member will provide input and serve as a consultant of sorts for the project, but he/she will be a non-voting member of the committee.

C. In the semester prior to the final semester in the program (for full-time students this is during the third full semester):

1) Develop the content of your project proposal, reading in the areas you want to focus on for the project. The proposal should be approximately 12 to 15 pages and include the following material:

   An overview of the project that describes the problem to be addressed and the objectives of your project
   Why are you completing this project? What is your purpose? Why is it important?

   Background research that introduces relevant theories and research
   This should not be a full-blown literature review. Instead, discuss/explain the communication theories and research that inform what you want to do. How and why will those theories and that research help guide your work as you go forward with your project?

   An overview of the organization or field and the relevance of this project for that context

   Production plan
   Conceptualize the project. You need to have a concrete idea for the project before you start it (in other words, you shouldn't just jump right into the organization and try to figure the project out as you go). What, specifically, will your project look like at the end? What will your project include? Justify your choices. If you plan to make a video, for instance, what/who will be in the video? Why do those components make sense? And how long will the video be? As another example, if you plan to produce a strategic campaign on behalf of an organization, what will be included in the campaign? Why do those components make sense?

   Constraints
   What, if any, barriers exist to the successful initiation and completion of your project? Is there technology you need to master, for instance? How do you plan to overcome the barriers?

A detailed timeline for completing the project

A statement from the organization or industry partner indicating you have permission to carry out your project

2) Orally defend the proposal at a meeting with committee members by the end of the semester prior to the final semester in the program.

3) After committee approval of the proposal, students doing research involving human subjects will need to submit a research protocol to the Institutional Review Board for approval before moving forward with the project.

D. In the last semester in the program (for full-time students this is the fourth semester):

1) Enroll in CMM 5890: Applied Project for three credit hours. These hours will be pass/no pass.

   Note: Students will be able to register for CMM 5890: Applied Project only by special permission. Students completing an applied project must have a letter of cooperation from their partner organization or industry partner and submit this letter to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who will then initiate registration for CMM 5890: Applied Project after the student has successfully defended his or her project proposal.

2) For all types of projects, students will create a written document reflecting on the work, the choices made, and how communication theory and research informed those choices in the development of the project. The written document will be 8 to 10 pages in length and address the following questions:

   1. Provide a summary of your project. What did you do? What did you make?

   2. What communication theories informed the work of the final project and how?

   3. What research methods did you employ in the production/creation of the final project?

   4. What is the contribution of your final project to the organization? In other words, how will the organization use your project?

   5. How will you help facilitate the organization's use of your project? Will you continue to collaborate with the organization? If not, how will the organization use your project after you stop working with the organization? What is the longevity of your project?

3) Submit the project product along with the written reflection paper to the committee (typically at least one week before the defense).

4) Orally defend the project to the committee. The oral defense will be open to members of the organization or industry, as well as the committee. The oral defense must be completed by the date identified on the Graduate Education calendar for the semester.

Appendix C
Thesis

Description

A thesis is an original research study designed and conducted by the student and reported in a scholarly manuscript. The candidate in writing a thesis should place its subject within the context of other related research, justify the methods used, discuss her or his findings or understandings, and discuss the limitations of the study and its implications for future inquiries in the field. A thesis normally will be longer than most journal articles in communication; however, a thesis is not a book-length project. In this department most theses run between 70 and 125 pages.

Process

A. Before the completion of 15 credit hours (for full-time students this is prior to the end of their second full semester):

1) Identify a chair for the thesis committee. This person will function as a research mentor and guide through the process.

B. In the semester prior to the final semester in the program (for full-time students this is during the third full semester):

1) Enroll in CMM 5990: Thesis Research for three credit hours if student is splitting thesis hours between semesters.

   Note: Students must take 6 credit hours of CMM 5990: Thesis Research. Students can choose to split this up between semesters, registering for 3 credit hours their second-to-last semester and 3 credit hours their final semester, or take all 6 credit hours in the final semester.

2) In collaboration with the committee chair, identify two additional faculty members to invite to serve on the thesis committee. At least two members of the committee must be faculty in the Department of Communication. Students should have a thesis committee in place no later than four weeks into this second-to-last semester.

3) Develop the content of the thesis prospectus, reading research in the area of focus and developing initial arguments for the thesis project. The prospectus should be approximately 15 to 20 pages and include the following material:
   - A working title for the project
   - An overview of the thesis that describes the "gap" in the literature filled by the study and offers background research introducing relevant theories and research.
   - The identification of a set of research questions or hypotheses for the project.
   - A description of the methods or procedures used to answer the questions posed.
   - A tentative timetable for completion of the project.

4) Submit the thesis prospectus to the thesis committee and schedule an oral defense of the prospectus.

5) Orally defend the proposal at a meeting with committee members by the end of the second-to-last semester in the program.

6) After committee approval of the proposal, students doing research involving human subjects will need to submit a research protocol to the Institutional Review Board for approval before moving forward with the project.

C. In the last semester in the program (for full-time students this is the fourth semester):

1) Enroll in CMM 5990: Thesis Research to complete the 6-credit requirement. See note above under B.1.

2) Gather and analyze data and write the thesis.

3) Submit the completed thesis to the committee.

4) Orally defend the thesis to the committee. The oral defense must be completed by the deadline established by the Office of Graduate Education for that semester.

Appendix D
Procedures for Academic Appeals

If a graduate student wishes to appeal any academic decision in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), that appeal should first be made to the faculty member or faculty involved and, if necessary thereafter, to the department chairperson or program director if the program has no chair. The initial appeal must be made within 30 days after the academic decision was communicated or made available to the student. If the appeal is carried forward to the department chairperson or program director, this must be done within 30 days of the faculty's decision. The department chair or program director reviews the materials and either supports the instructor's recommendation or determines an appropriate outcome.

Should the student wish to continue the appeal process, the next step involves the Board of Graduate Education (BGE) of the College of Arts and Sciences. An appeal to the BGE must be made in writing and submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education within 30 days of the decision by the department chairperson or program director. The Associate Dean will notify all parties involved of the appeal and will provide both parties an opportunity to submit any supporting documentation they believe the BGE should review. Written submissions will be limited to 10 pages, with additional appendices if necessary, from each side in the dispute.

The appeal may be heard as an agenda item at one of the regularly scheduled BGE meetings, or a special meeting may be called. A quorum of the BGE, excluding ex-officio members, must be in attendance. When the BGE sits as appeals board, a graduate student selected by the Graduate Student Association will be appointed to the board as a voting member. This student must be a graduate student in the College of Arts and Sciences but not from any departments involved in the appeal. Since this is an internal and not a legal procedure, students involved in the appeals process may be accompanied by someone who is not acting as an attorney or representing the student in his/her capacity as an attorney. If a member of the BGE is a member of the department or program involved in the appeal, that BGE member will abstain from active participation in the appeals process. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education shall be present throughout the entire process, but shall not be allowed to propose or second any motion, or to cast a vote on any motion related to the appeal.

The BGE will hear the case presented by the student and others supporting the student's appeal and will also hear the presentations of the other parties involved. Then, the BGE will conduct a discussion. If the BGE finds that insufficient information has been presented, it may request a period of not longer than 30 days to obtain the information, meet again, and reach a decision. The BGE will consider the merits of the student's appeal and the adequacy of procedures followed in the department. The BGE may support the decision being appealed, overturn it, or change the penalty imposed. The Associate Dean will inform the student in writing of the BGE's decision.

Should the student wish to appeal the decision beyond CAS, a written appeal may be submitted to the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education. This must occur within 30 days of the decision by the BGE. The AVP will review the documents as submitted to the BGE and may request additional information to determine whether or not the process as outlined in this section was appropriately followed. The AVP cannot overturn a decision but can remand the decision back to CAS for further investigation if the process was not followed.

Appendix E
Evaluation Form

Student Name _____

Date of Evaluation _____

Inadequate = not meeting expectations, not progressing
Adequate = meeting expectations, making sufficient progress

	Inadequate	Adequate
Academic Progress	_____	_____

Comments:

Specific recommendations for future action:

Signatures:

Student: _____   Mentor: _____

Date: Date:

Graduate Program Coordinator: _____

Date:

Appendix F
First-Year Student Activity Report I

Name
Date

1. Please list coursework completed and currently enrolled in for this academic year, along with your grades in those courses.

2. What coursework do you anticipate taking in the next academic year?

3. What degree-completion option do you anticipate choosing and why? Comprehensive exams, thesis, or applied project?

4. Have you had sufficient resources in the program to learn to read complicated texts, theoretical material, and research articles?

5. Do you feel as if you have the skills to make an academic argument?

6. Do you have sufficient access to:
- information on further graduate work?
- professional practices?
- employment opportunities?
- faculty research projects?

7. If you plan to work in the industry after you complete the program, what professional development activities have you completed? What professional development activities do you anticipate completing in the next year, including during the summer?

8. If you plan to pursue a Ph.D. after you complete the program, what professional development activities have you completed and do you anticipate completing to prepare yourself for doctoral study?

9. What do you want to improve before you graduate? Research skills, writing skills, oral skills? Something else?

10. What concerns, if any, do you have about your progress in the program?

Appendix G
First-Year Student Activity Report II

Name
Date

1. Please list coursework completed and currently enrolled in for this academic year, along with your grades in those courses.

2. What coursework do you anticipate taking in the next academic year?

3. What degree-completion option have you chosen (comprehensive exams, thesis, or applied project) and why? Who is the Chair of your committee?

4. Have you had sufficient resources in the program to learn to read complicated texts, theoretical material, and research articles?

5. Do you feel as if you have the skills to make an academic argument?

6. Do you have sufficient access to:
- information on further graduate work?
- professional practices?
- employment opportunities?
- faculty research projects?

7. If you plan to work in the industry after you complete the program, what professional development activities have you completed? What professional development activities do you anticipate completing in the next year, including during the summer?

8. If you plan to pursue a Ph.D. after you complete the program, what professional development activities have you completed and do you anticipate completing to prepare yourself for doctoral study?

9. What do you want to improve before you graduate? Research skills, writing skills, oral skills? Something else?

10. What concerns, if any, do you have about your progress in the program?

Appendix H
Returning Student Activity Report

Name
Date

1. Please list coursework completed and currently enrolled in for this academic year, along with your grades in those courses.

2. What degree-completion option have you chosen (comprehensive exams, thesis, or applied project) and why? Who is the Chair of your committee?

3. Please list your committee members.

4. Describe the status of your degree-completion option. What progress have you made thus far? And what is your expected timeline?

5. Have you had sufficient resources in the program to learn to read complicated texts, theoretical material, and research articles?

6. Do you feel as if you have the skills to make an academic argument?

7. Do you have sufficient access to:
- information on further graduate work?
- professional practices?
- employment opportunities?
- faculty research projects?

8. If you plan to work in the industry after you complete the program, what professional development activities have you completed? What professional development activities do you anticipate completing in your remaining time in the program?

9. If you plan to pursue a Ph.D. after you complete the program, what professional development activities have you completed and do you anticipate completing to prepare yourself for doctoral study?

10. What do you want to improve before you graduate? Research skills, writing skills, oral skills? Something else?

11. What concerns, if any, do you have about your progress in the program?

Appendix I
Capstone Committee Form

Student Name _____

Date _____

Capstone Selection

_____ Thesis
_____ Applied Project
_____ Comprehensive Exam

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____

_____

By signing this form, the student and Chair of the committee acknowledge that they have reviewed the process, procedures, and timeline for the selected Capstone option, as outlined in the Graduate Handbook. After signing, please submit to the Graduate Program Coordinator via e-mail. If changes in Capstone option, Chair, or committee membership occur, please complete a new form and submit to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

_____   _____
Student Signature   *Date*

_____   _____
Signature of Committee Chair   *Date*