

Masters

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The Department of Communication Studies has a healthy diversity of outlooks and approaches. This diversity, however, has not prevented the development of an exceptionally supportive interpersonal climate. We are committed as colleagues to effective teaching and productive research. We believe that our students share these commitments and we are most excited to work with students who want to study in such an environment.

Departmental Policies and Procedures

All graduate students should follow the latest edition of the [MLA Style Manual](#) or the [APA Publication Manual](#), depending on the nature of the research, in their writing. Writing should also show evidence of careful proofreading for grammar, punctuation, and organization as well as proper citation of sources. In all cases, writing must conform to the current edition of the Graduate School [Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Reports, Theses, and Dissertations](#). See: <http://gradschool.siu.edu/thesis-dissertation-researchpaper/etd-guide.html>

All graduate students whose research involves human subjects must receive clearance from the SIUC Human Subjects Committee prior to the involvement of subjects. For needed forms, see: <http://ospa.siu.edu/compliance/human-subjects/forms-and-training.html>

Master's Degree Programs

A minimum of 30 semester credit hours is required for the M.A. degree. At least fifteen of these hours must be at the 500 level. A student who completes only a minimum of 30 hours of course work may devote no more than 9 hours to work outside the Department of Communication Studies. All MA students are required to take CMST 501 in their first fall semester and CMST 539 if they are assigned to teach as TAs.

The individual student is assigned a temporary faculty facilitator for the first semester and then will select an advisor early in the second semester. The faculty advisor and the student will plan the program of study. Additional requirements for the Master's degree may be met by either of the following plans chosen by the student in consultation with the advisor.

Plan 1: Thesis. Each student must complete a minimum of 30 semester credit hours, with no more than 6 hours or fewer than 3 hours of thesis credit in CMST 599 counted toward the 30 hour minimum. The thesis is submitted to a committee of three members of the graduate faculty, at least two of whom must be from the Department of Communication Studies. The committee must approve the prospectus and will administer an oral examination over the thesis. The thesis defense is an open meeting. Students are required to submit two copies of the thesis to the Graduate School, one copy to the Department of Communication Studies, and one copy to the advisor.

Plan 2: Research Report. Each student must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours, with no more than 3 or fewer than 1 hour of research report credit in CMST 595 counted toward the 30-hour minimum. A research report is submitted as evidence of research competence. An advisory committee, consisting of the student's advisor and one other member of the Department of Communication Studies, will administer an oral examination over the research paper before it is submitted to the Graduate School. The oral examination meeting is not an open meeting. One copy of the research report is submitted to the Graduate School, one copy to the Department, and one to the advisor.

All M.A. students must have a graduate grade point average of 3.00 in order to be eligible for the degree.

A summary of Master's degree requirements follows:

1. At least 30 hours of graduate credit, only 9 of which may be from outside the Department.
2. At least fifteen hours in courses numbered 500 or above, which must be completed at SIUC.
3. Research report or thesis option.
4. Appropriate number of completed copies of thesis or research report to the Graduate School, the Department of Communication Studies, and the student's advisor.
5. Grade point average of 3.00.

If granted, assistantship funding for Master's level students is for two academic years, assuming satisfactory progress toward the degree. A full-time load for students with assistantships is a minimum of 8 credit hours and a maximum of 12 hours. A full-time load for students not on assistantships is 6 credit hours minimum. In order to complete the program in two years, the following course schedule is recommended for graduate students on assistantships and fellowships:*

Fall: CMST 539 (Required of all Teaching Assistants)
CMST 501 (Required of all MA and PhD students)
CMST ____

Spring: CMST 5__
CMST 5__
CMST ____

Fall: CMST 5 __
CMST ____
CMST ____

Spring: CMST ____
CMST 595 (Research Report-- minimum 1 hour, maximum 3 hours)
or
CMST 599 (Thesis-- minimum 3 hours, maximum 6 hours)

*Note: Students on assistantship/fellowships are advised to take no more than 9 hours their first semester of study. To complete work within two years, each student is encouraged to provide faculty with sufficient time for the administration and evaluation of his/her research report or thesis. *After six years from the start date, all M.A. students will complete three courses in the department to establish currency.*

Note: Once a student completes all coursework and is working on their thesis or research report, they must enroll for 1 credit hour of CMST 601 (continuing enrollment) every semester until graduation. This applies only if the student is no longer on an assistantship/fellowship. If the student is on an assistantship/fellowship, then they should keep enrolling for CMST 595 (research report) or CMST 599 (thesis) until graduation.

DEPARTMENT ADVISEMENT RECORD

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

MASTER'S DEGREE

Indicate your intention by checking as appropriate:

____ Plan 1: Thesis

____ Plan 2: Research Report

ADVISOR: _____

Approval Signature _____ Date _____

If known, please complete:

Plan 1: Thesis Committee: Chairperson _____

Member _____

Member _____

Plan 2: Research Report: Advisor _____

Member _____

Distribution of copies:

Keep one for yourself, give one to the Director of Graduate Studies, and give one to your Advisor.

III. On a separate sheet of paper, please outline a projected timeline for completion of the master's degree.

IV. ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Continuation ____

Change ____

Termination ____

Date: _____

Subject to the following conditions (if any):

Advisory Committee:

Chair: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

IV. DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL

Continuation ____

Change ____

Termination ____

Subject to the following conditions (if any):

Director of Graduate Studies

Department of Communication Studies

Miscellaneous Policies

Reading time for various documents

Graduate students present their committees and advisors with various documents during the course of their studies. In an effort to bring about some common understanding about how long the committee has to turn various documents around, the following may be considered as a guideline:

Reading time for prospectus/theses/research reports – 3 weeks prior to defense date

Additionally, to avoid a last week rush of defenses, the student should work with the adviser to figure out what type of timeline is necessary to meet graduation deadlines for the fall, spring and summer. Faculty are neither required nor expected to be available for meetings in the summer if they are not on contract.

Second semester reviews

In an effort to avoid an end-of-the-spring-semester flurry of second semester meetings, along with other committee meetings and defenses, it is suggested that all second semester reviews be completed by the end of March (this time is suggested since the month of April is occupied with regional conferences which makes availability difficult).

Schedule for Completion

If you wish to graduate in May, you should be aware of the amount of time needed to meet your deadline. Count backwards to see when you must complete your work in order to graduate:

The Graduate School deadline for May graduation is typically around the first week in April. Let's say April 7. This deadline is for all materials to be deposited with the Graduate School.

Figure at least one week for revisions from your defense. Now you're back to March 30.

You must give your committee at least three weeks to read your document. That takes you back to March 7 to have a completed document in the hands of your committee members.

After you have completed all the revisions that your advisor has asked you to do, it is not uncommon for an advisor to want to read your document one more time before giving you the green light to go to committee. Assume your advisor will take two or three weeks to read the whole document. You are now at February 15. Typically your advisor will find a few more things that he/she wants you to do. So, to make your March 7 deadline, figure in another week: February 7.

Such a timetable should be easily transferred for either fall or summer graduation. You need about two months time after you think you have finished writing your document. Notice too that summer defenses are only allowed if all members of your committee agree to meet. Since most of our

faculty members are not on contract during the summer, you should not expect that everyone will be available or willing to meet. Another complicating factor is holidays. You should not expect faculty to read your work during holiday breaks.

Policy for handling graduate committees during faculty sabbaticals and other extended faculty leave

In recognition of the complications on faculty advising and graduate committee service brought about by such factors as sabbatical leaves or other extended absences from routine availability, and in order to permit appropriate and timely progress toward degree completion for students, additional flexibility in conducting graduate committee work is necessary. In extended cases such as these, when a faculty committee member is unavailable, and with the assent of the student's advisor, the department will seek to make reasonable accommodations as follows:

1. Second semester review: The faculty member on sabbatical/leave may be represented by another faculty member. The student should work with his/her advisor to decide who the representative should be.
2. Prospectus/Thesis/Research Report oral defense: The faculty member on sabbatical/leave may be replaced with appropriate permission.

Policy Regarding Appointment of Graduate Assistants / Graduate Students as Instructors of Record

All graduate student GAs with appropriate master's degrees and suitable prior experience will be eligible to teach 100, 200 and 300 level courses as Instructors of Record. They will be trained, mentored and supervised by a faculty supervisor. Master's students with bachelor's degrees only will not teach as Instructors of Record. Instead, they will be eligible to work with a Faculty of Member of Record for a course.

Extensive first-year and ongoing training and mentoring is provided to all GAs, whether they are Instructors of Record or working with a Faculty Member of Record. Details are available in the department's GTA Handbook.