# V. Policies


- V.1 Advising
- V.2 Grading
- V.3 Standards of Scholarship
- V.4 Credit Transfers
- V.5 Out-of-State Students
- V.6 Leaves of Absence
- V.7 Maternity/Childcare Benefits
- V.8 Exit Survey
- V.9 Access to Student Files
- V.10 Instructional Funding
- V.11 Procedures for Relinquishing a TA Position
- V.12 Department Resource Policies
- V.13 Rights and Responsibilities
- V.14 Mandatory Annual Sexual Harassment Training

# V.1 Advising

## V.1.1 Advisor’s Role

Each MA or PhD student must select an academic advisor. The role of the advisor is to assist the student with a plan of study, to oversee the student's progress and to supervise the student’s research activity that culminates in the written thesis or dissertation. The advisor also serves as chair of the student's MA/PhD committee.

Please see VI.5 APPENDIX 5 of this document for Standards for Faculty/Graduate Student Relationships

## V.1.2 Selecting an Advisor

Before selecting an advisor, incoming students explore the research interests and specializations of the faculty. In their first year, students are strongly encouraged to schedule individual meetings with various faculty. The meetings are meant to help students learn more about faculty’s research interests and the potential for collaboration. See here for some suggestions from the Graduate Division on practices that may be useful for developing good faculty-graduate mentee relationships.

The advisor should be a tenure-track faculty member (also called ladder faculty) of the Department of Communication. On occasion, a student may wish for a ladder faculty member outside the department to chair their dissertation work. Although some faculty may be official affiliates of our department, they are still considered outside members. In these circumstances, the student must also select a co-chair who is ladder faculty within the Communication Department.

Students should declare their advisor by the deadlines listed below and submit a nomination form through the Department website. Nomination forms require both the advisor's and the student's signature.

## V.1.3 Changing Advisors

Students may change advisors and committee members as they progress through the program. This is especially common as students move from the MA to PhD program as their research

interests shift, though it may occur at other points as well (e.g., after successful defense of the qualifying exams). Changes to advisory members typically involve a conversation with the faculty members in advance and updated forms indicating the new advisory structure.

# V.1.4 Deadline for Selections/Form Filing

## MA Advisor

MA Advisors should be nominated by the **end of Winter quarter in year 1** in the program.

## PhD Advisor

Ideally, the PhD advisor should be chosen by the end of the **Spring quarter of year 1** in the doctoral program, though they must be selected **no later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation**.

# V.2 Grading

## V.2.1 Letter Grades

To remain in good standing, graduate students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of **3.25**. The Graduate Division automatically places a student on academic probation if the cumulative GPA falls below **3.0** in a given quarter, a student received a NG or does not take courses for a letter grade, or if a student has **12 or more credits** of incomplete (I), no grade (NG), or no record (NR) per Regulation 270 in the Academic Senate Bylaws – Requirements for Graduate Students.

Students who fall below the Department's required **3.25 GPA minimum** will receive official notification from the Graduate Director. The first notification is considered a department warning and the second notification will involve possible academic monitoring. If a student continues to have deficiencies in grade point average or incompletes after the **third quarter**, the Graduate Dean may proceed with probation or academic dismissal, upon consultation with the department.

## V.2.2 Grading Standards

All required coursework, with the exception of **COMM 202**, **505**, **597**, **598**, and **599** must be taken for a letter grade. Although a full range of grades (A through F) may be used, the range of grades typically seen, and their definitions, appear below.

**A+** Superior work; The student's work and contributions far exceed expectations on all criteria of student evaluation.

**A** Excellent work; The student's work and contributions far exceed expectations on at least one dimension of student evaluation and exceed expectations on all remaining criteria.

**A-** Good work; The student's work and contributions exceed expectations on at least one dimension of student evaluation and easily meet expectations on all remaining criteria.

**B+** Solid work; The student's work and contributions meet expectations on all criteria of student evaluation.

**B** Satisfactory work; The student's work and contributions generally meets expectations on all criteria of student evaluation.

**B-** Minimally acceptable: Students who receive a B- are encouraged to assess how they can improve their work in future classes.

**C+** Unacceptable work; The student's work and contributions fail to meet expectations on all criteria of student evaluation; the student fails to meet minimum course standards. Students who receive a C+ are required to revise their work from the major assignment in the class to the satisfaction of the professor or they may repeat the course at the next time the course is offered and earn a B- or higher.

# V.2.3 Incompletes

Students must get approval from the course instructor in order to take an incomplete (I) grade in a graduate course. Typically, an incomplete is given when a student has a minimal amount of work left to complete in the class. Students must file a petition prior to the last day of the quarter in the Registrar's office to receive an incomplete (I) grade (see here). If this petition is not on file and an instructor submits an "I" grade, the Registrar will enter the grade as an "F" or "U." Incomplete work needs to be finished by the end of the quarter following the original class. Otherwise, the "I" grade will become a "F." Grades of "NG" (No Grade) are treated similar to "I" grades and need to be completed after one quarter to receive a letter grade. Students with "I" and "NG" grades on their record are ineligible to receive their MA or PhD degree.

# V.2.4 Appeals Processes

Students with concerns about grades in graduate courses or with issues regarding annual student evaluations should talk with the course professor and their faculty advisor. Appeals regarding these decisions should go to the Graduate Director. For concerns regarding cumulative coursework performance, time-to-degree, qualifying examinations, academic milestones, and overall performance, students should appeal to the Graduate Director and, if unsatisfied, to the Department Chair. Regarding academic monitoring, probation and/or dismissal questions, contact the Student Affairs Manager or the Graduate Division's Academic Support team.

# V.3 Standards of Scholarship

## V.3.1 Good Standing Policy

To remain in good standing, students must make timely progress and meet departmental and University scholarship standards.

To remain in good standing, students must:

- Take courses for a letter grade to achieve the minimum cumulative **GPA of 3.25** (courses graded Pass/No Pass or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory earn 0.0 grade points and do not contribute to good standing)†
- Earn a grade of **B- or higher** in all core courses. Students who earn a **C+ or lower** must revise work or repeat the course to the satisfaction of the professor and attain a B- or higher
- Keep the transcript free of excessive units of unfinished coursework, defined as **8 or more units** of Incomplete, No Grade, and/or No Record †
- For MA students, successfully defend the master's thesis proposal **by January 15th of year 2**
- For MA students, defend the MA thesis within the **two-year time limit,** and no later than **November 1 of year 3**
- Advance to candidacy within **4 years** of entering the university with a B.A. Advance to candidacy within **3 years** of entering the university with an MA
- Successfully defend the dissertation proposal by **November 1 in year 5** (if entering the program with a B.A) or **November 1 in year 4** (if entering the program with an MA)
- Successfully defend and file the dissertation by **the end of year 5** (if entering the program with a B.A.) or the end of year 4 (if entering the program with an MA)

† Department good standing requirements may be more stringent than the Graduate Division's rules. For example, the Department of Communication's minimum GPA requirement to remain in good standing is 3.25.

### Other Good Standing Policies

- All time-to-degree expectations are suspended during any university-approved leaves (e.g., family leave, medical leave), but resume once the leave is over

- Assuming students meet each of these standards, they will be considered in good standing and be eligible for all teaching and funding opportunities typically available to students of their rank
- Students not meeting such standards will have funding opportunities will be in jeopardy. In other words, students may not be able to receive funds such as annual payment of campus-based fees, travel stipend, and summer research stipend (when offered)

# Annual Progress Evaluation

Ladder faculty meet annually to review the progress of all continuing graduate students at the end of Spring quarter. The major function of the review is to provide students with timely feedback regarding their progress in the program. The process also allows faculty to identify problems and counsel students about areas that may require more attention and/or the sharpening of certain skills.

Prior to the faculty review, all students who have not completed their degree objectives are asked to submit an Annual Progress Report on their efforts and accomplishments during the current academic year. The progress report should be organized into four sections:

1. **Coursework** performance (courses taken and grades)
2. **Overall progress** toward the degree (what benchmarks have been reached this year, what benchmark is the student working toward and how close is the student to achieving this goal)
3. **Research** activity (publications, papers submitted for publications, conference papers, research projects)
4. **Service** activity (for the department, campus, community and/or the discipline). Teaching performance is evaluated for those with teaching responsibilities in the department. Students also are asked to submit an updated curriculum vita with their progress report

Following the faculty evaluations, students will receive a written summary of their annual progress. The summary letters are typically sent out within 3 weeks of the evaluation meeting. Students are encouraged to meet with the Graduate Director and with their faculty advisor to discuss their evaluations and to plan for the following academic year.

# On-going Monitoring

The Student Affairs Manager will monitor each student’s course performance and progress through the program to identify when a student fails to meet one of the standards of scholarship listed above. The goal of this monitoring system is to allow for early intervention in cases in which a student may be experiencing difficulties and would benefit from some additional attention and oversight.

# V.3.2 Unsatisfactory Progress

Students will receive early notification of unsatisfactory progress, both in writing and orally, within two weeks of the issue being identified. Written notification will delineate the nature of the faculty concerns, steps and a timeline to be taken to achieve satisfactory progress, and potential consequences if these steps are not taken. The Graduate Division will be copied on all official correspondence related to progress.

The Graduate Director and the student's faculty advisor will consult with the student and develop an academic progress plan (to be co-signed by the faculty member and the student). The plan is submitted to the Graduate Director and the Student Affairs Manager, who review it and then submit it to the Graduate Division, together with a copy of the written notification. While a progress plan is in effect, the student must consult with the Department's Graduate Director on all coursework decisions and progress-related issues, and progress is re-evaluated on a quarterly basis based on evidence of progress.

**A student will have at least one quarter to make the necessary academic improvements for incompletes and progress to degree.** The student will remain on the department's monitoring status for one year until:

1. The problem is corrected
2. The student graduates/advances
3. The department decides to recommend to the Graduate Dean formal academic monitoring or probation (see the Good Standing section above)

## Potential Outcomes of Continued Unsatisfactory Progress

There are two possible implications of not meeting the department's progress expectations: monitoring status or probation. The department may recommend to the Graduate Dean that the student be placed on academic probation or dismissed. Generally, a student will be placed on academic probation for at least one quarter before a recommendation for academic dismissal will be made. **Students on academic probation are not eligible to hold student academic appointments (including summer teaching opportunities), receive central fellowship support, or receive departmental travel funding for conferences.**

In the case of an MA/PhD student who fails to meet scholarship standards, the department may recommend that a student leave with a terminal Master's degree. This decision will be made based on input from the student's master's committee, the Graduate Committee, other faculty who may have worked with the student, and the Department Chair.

# V.3.3 Requests to Place Progress Expectations On Hold

Students should notify either the Student Affairs Manager and/or Graduate Director as early as possible when personal circumstances might limit their ability to meet progress expectations. The Department has formal processes in place for students to request that their progress expectations be put on hold.

A student may request that an upcoming progress expectation be placed on hold if they are experiencing serious extenuating circumstances. The request must be submitted in writing to the Department Graduate Director that clearly identifies the nature of the situation along with any appropriate supportive documentation, the rationale for the expected difficulty in meeting expectations, and the specific progress expectation(s) that the student wants put on hold. Approved requests will result in the exemption from particular progress expectations for the specified period of time.

# V.3.4 When the Unexpected Happens

Students who experience personal difficulties may also wish to consult the following resources:

- Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Disabled Students Program
- Graduate Division
- Graduate Student Resource Center
- Career Services
- Office of the Ombuds
- Student Health Service

These are just some of the resources available to graduate students at UCSB. For a more comprehensive list, please see Student Affairs Manager, Graduate Director or Graduate Division.

For more information about petitions and appeals, students should consult the University's Graduate Policy Handbook, section on Disputes, Appeals, and Grievances, or speak with the Student Affairs Manager.

# V.4 Credit Transfers

With the approval of the Graduate Director and the Graduate Division, a maximum of **8 units** of graduate coursework may be transferred from another institution not affiliated with the University of California or **12** from another UC campus. Click here for specific regulations. As the Graduate Division does not have specific unit requirements for the PhD, the unit transfers may be handled within the Department, unless the student would like the courses to appear on their UCSB transcript.

# V.5 Out-of-State Students

Graduate students coming to UCSB from outside the State of California are expected to begin establishing California residency immediately upon arriving in California. Residency exempts a student from paying nonresident tuition, and can be obtained after one year of graduate school. To be classified as a California resident, a student must:

1. Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident of the U.S
2. Be able to document a presence in the State of California for one full year prior to the residency determination date
3. Show an intent to make California a permanent residence (i.e., register to vote in California elections, obtain a California driver's license). Also note that students applying for residency cannot be absent from the state for a period longer than 6 weeks. For more information, visit the Residency website page in the Office of the Registrar

International students work directly with the Office of International Students and Scholars for any non-residency issues. For more information, visit the Office of International Students & Scholars.

# V.6 Leaves of Absence

## V.6.1 General Leaves of Absence

Students must apply for a leave of absence with the Graduate Division. Requests made on the grounds of outside employment or lack of funding will be denied by the Graduate Division. Petitions for leaves may be submitted first to the Student Affairs Manager in the department or directly to the Graduate Division for final approval. A leave of absence is approved for a set period of time only. Please see the Graduate Division Web site for more information.

## V.6.2 University Approved Leaves for ABD Students

There are some options to reduce the cost of tuition and fees for students who are not funded by the department while ABD or who are not in residence:

### Filing Leave

Students who have continually maintained full-time status and who plan to file within a particular quarter may apply for a filing leave for that quarter. A filing leave is a one-time opportunity and should be implemented only when the student and their dissertation advisor feel confident they will be able to file their dissertation with Grad Division in that quarter. If subsequent quarters are needed to complete, defend, and file the dissertation, the student will be charged tuition and fees for their remaining time in the program. Students on filing leave may not be employed on campus. Click here for information on a filing leave of absence.

### In Absentia Registration

Graduate students whose research or study requires them to In Absentia Registration live outside of the local area (defined as Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura counties) for the duration of one or more full quarters, can take advantage of in absentia registration. The research or study must be directly related to the student’s degree program and of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the local area. This includes students holding a fellowship, internship, or having a graduate student research appointment. Please see the Graduate Division website for specifics on qualifying for In Absentia.

# V.6.3 Parenting Leave

See Graduate Division's website for further information on personal leaves of absence, including parenting leave.

# V.6.4 Reinstatement from Unregistered Status Petition and Requirements

Students who have a break in registration must petition to return to registered status. To reinstate, the student must complete a Petition for Reinstatement to Graduate Status and secure the approval of the department Graduate Director and the Graduate Division Academic Services unit. Departments are asked to think carefully about a decision to reinstate a student and to consider a range of issues including timeliness in meeting degree requirements, willingness of faculty to continue to work with a student, changing interests of the faculty, etc.

Please refer to the general instructions found in the Graduate Division's Petition for Reinstatement to Graduate Status for more detailed information about the reinstatement process.

# V.7 Maternity/Childcare Benefits

The department is committed to facilitating communication and cooperation between student and advisor, and the good-faith efforts of both to accommodate the arrival of a new child in the home by birth, adoption, or foster placement, or the care of a child with a serious illness. It is the intention of this policy to reinforce the importance of that cooperation, and to provide support where needed to make that accommodation possible.

Please UCSB's official policy on Parenting Accommodations and visit with the Student Affairs Manager to explore how the department can support you.

# V.8 Exit Survey

The Department is continually looking for ways to improve the graduate student experience. As part of these efforts, all graduate students separating from the University may be asked to complete a short exit survey to gain insight into the strengths of the program and areas in need of improvement. The responses are provided to the faculty, so that they can learn how to improve the program. To maintain privacy, students' names are not included with the responses, although students who wish to identify themselves are welcome to do so. Students may also request a face-to-face exit interview with either the Graduate Director or the Department Chair if preferred.

# V.9 Access to Student Files

The Department keeps a file on every graduate student that includes such paperwork as transcripts, application materials, annual evaluations, and Graduate Division forms and petitions that have been filed. Graduate students have a right to examine their student files (including teaching evaluations) at any time. Students who wish to see their file should notify the Student Affairs Manager. Student files must be examined in the department, and no materials can be removed or added without the permission of the Graduate Director and the Chair of the Department of Communication.

# V.10 Instructional Funding

The Department has set limits on the total number of years graduate students can be funded through instructional support. Instructional support includes funding in any combination of the following titles: teaching assistant, teaching associate, reader, and tutor on an annual stipend. In all cases, funding is contingent on satisfactory progress toward the degree, satisfactory teaching performance, departmental curricular needs, and budget constraints. Students on academic probation are ineligible for instructional funding.

For students entering the program with a BA and whose progress toward the degree is deemed satisfactory, a maximum of five years (**15 quarters**) of instructional funding from the time of initial enrollment is committed. The five-year limit does not include summer instructional support. If a student receives other forms of funding during that 15-quarter period (e.g., fellowship, grant, paid research assistantship), this does not extend the instructional support commitment. Rather, these other forms of funding substitute for instructional support funding for those quarters. Students in their sixth year who have not completed their degrees must seek other sources of funding or other employment. If departmental monies became available, students might be hired on a quarter-by-quarter basis under exceptional circumstances and with the student's advisor and the Graduate Director's approval. Separately, service as a Teaching Assistant or Associate Instructor is capped at **12 academic year quarters** (four years) in any combination of the two titles. Quarters 13 through 18 require an approved Request for Exception to Employment Policy, which the Department may grant. Quarters 19 through 21 require approval from the Dean of the Graduate Division, under temporary authority extended by the UC Office of the President. Reader and tutor appointments do not count toward this limit. See Red Binder IV-1, Student Academic Titles for the current limits and the exception process.

For students entering the program with an MA from another university and whose progress toward the degree is deemed satisfactory, a total of four years of funding through instructional support is permissible. The four-year limit does not include summer instructional support. Hence, 12 quarters is the maximum term that students entering with an MA degree from another university can expect to be funded through instructional support. If a student receives other forms of funding during that 12-quarter period (e.g., fellowship, grant, paid research assistantship), this does not extend the instructional support commitment. Rather, these other forms of funding substitute for instructional support funding for those quarters. Students in their fifth year who have not completed their degrees must seek other sources of funding or other employment if needed. If department monies became available, students might be hired on a quarter-by-quarter basis, keeping in mind the limits on quarters of Teaching Assistant and Associate Instructor service described above.

Students who are awarded UCSB centrally-administered fellowships (e.g., Regents Special Fellowship, Graduate Opportunity Fellowship) may be given supplemental instructional support from the department in the form of partial teaching appointments (e.g., 25% TAship, 25% Reader). During stipend years of the fellowship, students are permitted to supplement fellowship with

employment up to an average of 35% time over the course of the academic year.

Nonresident Tuition Fellowships are awarded by the department typically to domestic students who will qualify for California residency after one year. These awards do not count as instructional support and therefore are not included in the tallying of the five-year and four-year limits described above.

# V.11 Procedures for Relinquishing a TA Position

Opportunities often arise that give graduate students a chance to work as Research Assistants on grants, receive their own grants, obtain fellowships, or have other professional positions. These opportunities frequently require that grads be removed from the TA pool for a quarter or more. There may also be other circumstances that result in a grad wishing to be removed from the TA pool.

**If you are currently a TA and funded by the department, we need to know about these opportunities and circumstances as soon as possible**.

## Procedure

1. Consult your advisor and discuss with them whether your plans are a good idea given your situation
2. If your plans mean that you would potentially be giving up your TA position for a given period of time, notify the Student Affairs Manager, TA Coordinator, and the Department Chair as soon as you have submitted an application or have become aware even of the possibility of getting alternative funding (or of otherwise having to leave the TA pool)
3. It is particularly important that you notify the TA Coordinator at the time the Department requests your preferences for the TA assignments for the next quarter, typically the 6 or 7 week of the previous quarter. The TA assignments can then be made with contingencies put in place in case your position needs to be replaced. If your funding opportunity (or other emergency) arises after the next quarter's TA assignments have been completed, it is much more difficult to accommodate your request, but in any case, notify the above immediately
4. Make a formal request to be released from your TA position when you receive an offer for the alternative position (or other plans become firm). Please email the Student Affairs Manager, TA Coordinator, and Department Chair with this request. Keep in mind that the Department needs to know this information as soon as possible to begin to find a replacement TA. The sooner your request is given, the more likely it is that your request can be accommodated

Talk with the Student Affairs Manager, TA Coordinator, and Department Chair about your opportunity/plans. The Department typically honors these requests, especially if handled in a timely manner. However, if the TA Coordinator cannot find replacements to cover classes, the request may be rejected, especially if it comes too late in the quarter. Note that the final decision as to whether a graduate student can be released from a TA position rests with the Department

Chair, who will consult with the relevant parties.

If your request is granted, submit written documentation (hard copy or email) to the Student Affairs Manager and TA Coordinator (cc: Department Chair) stating that you are relinquishing your TA position for a given time. Be sure to indicate the quarter(s) that you will not be a TA and when you expect to return to your position. This needs to come directly from you, not from a faculty member or other person sending a note on your behalf.

# V.12 Department Resource Policies

## V.12.1 Mailboxes

Located in room 4108 in the Department of Communication, mailboxes are assigned to each student upon entrance into the Graduate program.

## V.12.2 Copy machines

The Department’s copy machine is located in room 4118. The copy machine costs are based on the honor system. If a graduate student has a personal project that requires substantial usage and department resources, contact the Department Business Officer for a copy code.

If you are a Graduate Student Researcher for a quarter, the faculty PI may request your assistance in making copies. If this is the case, the PI will give you a copy code specifically for the project. This code is to be used only for the purpose of making copies for the specific grant or project.

Please note that UCSB students receive a $20 credit (equivalent to 200 free pages) to print at university printers in the UCEN, SRB, Library, and San Clemente. Students should make every effort to use these funds for personal projects and reserve the Department copier for department needs. Visit GauchoPrint for more information on campus printing.

## V.12.3 Keys

Graduate students are given separate keys to their office and the mailroom. Keys must be returned when students move to new offices or separate from the University. The Business Officer is responsible for all key disbursements. A charge of $10 per key will be charged if your key is lost.

## V.12.4 ID Cards

Students will receive an Access ID card during orientation. If the Access ID is lost, students can purchase a new one here. The Access ID is used to gain entry to SSMS after hours. Student should connect with the Business Officer to ensure their Access ID card is set up properly to give them 24/7 access to SSMS.

# V.12.5 Supplies

Supplies are for instructional use only. Students must purchase their own paper and other supplies for personal use, such as coursework and research. The supply cupboard is located near the copy machine in room 4118, and contains pens, paper clips, rubber bands, staples, paper for copying classroom handouts, and exams.

# V.13 Rights and Responsibilities

A series of campus regulations address the rights and responsibilities of members of the University community and provide campus-wide standards for implementing regulations as a means of sustaining this community. These can be found on the Graduate Division website.

# V.14 Mandatory Annual Sexual Harassment Training

Each academic year, all graduate students are required to complete the online Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment prevention training. Each graduate student will receive an email notifying them of the required sexual harassment training, and in that email, a link will be included to access the online program. The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which all who live, work, and learn in our campus community can feel free of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. One’s role as a graduate student carries the additional responsibility to uphold our community standards, promoting a healthier and safer campus environment for all, including their graduate and professional peers and the undergraduate students that we serve together. The training provides information on how to report sexual harassment that students themselves might experience or that is happening to other members of their campus.

**Failure to complete this training will result in a hold on your course registration capabilities and could incur other penalties from the university or department.**