Handbook 2026–2027

This handbook provides a general overview of our graduate program along with the specific requirements, procedures, and expectations that are essential for students to know as they progress through each stage of graduate student life.

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I. Program Overview

I.1 Program Overview

I.1.1 Major Areas of Graduate Training

The following represent major areas of graduate study offered in our program. These scholarly foci originate in our department's founding and represent prominent sub-disciplines in the field of communication. One of the strengths of our graduate program is that faculty often conduct research in more than one of these three primary areas, and we encourage students to explore overlaps among areas. Students may also focus in sub-areas, but typically choose one of the following as a primary area for the purposes of coursework:

1. **Interpersonal & Intergroup Communication** (including intercultural communication)
2. **Media & Digital Communication** (including both traditional mass media and emerging communication technologies)
3. **Organizational & Group Communication** (in private, public, and non-profit settings)

I.1.2 Program Structure

Students engage in one of two program structures:

1. **MA/Phd Track** (5 years): Students with no previous MA degree complete the program within five years, earning both an MA (typically after two years) and a PhD
2. **Phd Only Track** (4 years): Students with an MA degree (with a research-based thesis) from another university complete the program within four years, earning a PhD degree

Note: The department does not admit students who, at the time of the application, are interested in the MA degree only.

I.1.4 Maintaining Full Time Status

Maintaining active status as a graduate student involves paying fees and officially registering in classes each quarter. Full time status on UCSB’s campus is **8 units**, but it is normative in the Department of Communication to enroll in **12 units** to meet coursework requirements. Students are advised to enroll in **12 units** most quarters. A typical course load is **13 units** per quarter,

which includes three courses to fulfill requirements (**12 units**) and **COMM 505**: Colloquium (**1 unit**). Students should not exceed **17 units** in any single quarter and must receive prior approval from the Graduate Director in order to exceed **16 units**.

I.1.5 Part-Time Status Exception

Part-time eligibility is available for doctoral students who have not yet advanced to candidacy. The Graduate Division may grant students part-time status on a quarterly basis. Please see full policy here and consult the Graduate Program Assistant on eligibility.

II. Master of Arts Degree

II.1 Introduction

Completion of the PhD requires that the student first obtain a Master of Arts (MA) degree. Students admitted to the MA/PhD track earn their MA degree at UCSB as outlined in this section.

II.2 Time to MA Degree

Time to Degree is the number of years considered to be reasonable by the faculty of an individual department for completion of an MA degree by a full-time student in that program.

In the Department of Communication, **full time students are expected to complete the MA degree in their first two years (6 quarters) of academic study.**

II.3 MA Degree Requirements

To earn an MA degree students must:

1. Complete a minimum of **44 units** in the MA portion of the program
2. Complete course requirements
3. Successful defense of a Master's thesis

II.3.1 Degree Milestones & Good Progress Deadlines

Milestone	Recommended by	Required by	Notes
Nominate MA Advisor		**Year 1, end of Winter**	Must inform Student Affairs Manager.
Nominate MA Committee Members		**Year 1, end of Spring**	Must inform Student Affairs Manager.
Defend Thesis Proposal	**Year 1, end of Spring**	**Year 2, January 15th**	If a student does not have an approved proposal by **January 15** of year 2, the student will fall out of academic good standing
Coursework Requirements	**Year 2, end of Fall**		No official deadline, but coursework beyond Year 3, Fall quarter cannot be transferred to PhD Requirements

Milestone	Recommended by	Required by	Notes
Thesis Defense	**Year 2, end of Spring**	**Year 3, November 1st**	Must inform Student Affairs Manager when scheduled. If a student has not successfully defended their thesis by **November 1** of year 3, the student will fall out of academic good standing

See V.3 Standards of Scholarship for the implications of falling behind this timeline.

II.4 MA Coursework Requirements

For more detail on specific courses see the UCSB Course Catalog. Also see more information about III.5 Opt-out of Required Courses.

II.4.1 Required Coursework

Students entering the MA/PhD program must successfully complete the following **4 core courses** during the MA portion of their degree:

- **Comm 202** (Introduction to Communication Graduate Studies)
- **Comm 200** (Communication Theory Construction)
- **Comm 204A** (Research Methods in Communication)
- **Comm 204B** (Introduction to Applied Statistics)

In addition, students must complete the following:

- **One** of the following Survey Courses (**4 units**):
  - **Comm 207** (Interpersonal Communication)
  - **Comm 213** (Mass Media, the Individual, and Society)
  - **Comm 222** (Organizational Communication)
- **Three** elective content courses (**12 units**) (At least one in the department)
  - Multiple **COMM 593** (Directed Reading) courses may be taken. One **COMM 593** may count toward the elective requirement, and **one additional COMM 593** may be counted as an elective with the approval of the student's advisor and the Graduate Director. Such approvals are granted only in exceptional circumstances
- **8 units** of **Comm 598** (Master's Thesis Research and Preparation)
- **4 units** of **COMM 505** (Colloquium)

Notes:

- **All students must enroll in COMM 505 (Colloquium) every quarter they are in the program;** 4 units count toward the MA degree.
- Students may still take methods courses and apply them to PhD requirements or count them as an elective.

II.4.2 Additional Enrollment Policy

- Students are advised to enroll in **12 units** most quarters. A minimum of **8 unit** enrollment are required to maintain full- time status
- Students may take courses beyond the requirements above, and may transfer any number of credits to the PhD portion of their degree without petition. Courses cannot “double count” toward both degrees simultaneously
- **Fall quarter of year 3** is the final quarter in which units may be transferred between MA and PhD degree requirements without petition
- Survey Course requirements must be taken in the department and no substitutions are permitted
- Although students may enroll in more than **8 units** of **Comm 598** during their career, only **8 units** count towards the MA degree

II.5 Sample Progress & Progress Benchmarks

The plan below shows one way to complete the MA portion of the program on time. It is *illustrative, not prescriptive* — the order of electives and the survey course is flexible, and students should build an actual plan with their MA advisor and confirm it with the Student Affairs Manager.

II.5.1 Sample Course Plan — MA/PhD Track

Year 1

Quarter	Courses	Units
Fall	• **COMM 202** Introduction to Communication Graduate Studies • **COMM 204A** Research Methods in Communication • **Content elective** (in-dept) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	**13 units**
Winter	• **COMM 204B** Introduction to Applied Statistics • **Content elective** (in-dept) • **Content elective** (out-dept) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	**13 units**
Spring	• **COMM 200** Communication Theory Construction • **Survey course** (COMM 207, 213, or 222) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	**9 units**

Year 2

Quarter	Courses	Units
Fall	• **Survey course** (COMM 207, 213, or 222) • **COMM 598** Master’s Thesis Research and Preparation (4 units) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	**8 units**

Quarter	Courses	Units
Winter	• **COMM 598** Master's Thesis Research and Preparation (7 units) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	**8 units**
Spring	• **COMM 598** Master's Thesis Research and Preparation (7 units) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	**8 units**

> This plan achieves the total required **44 units**. Students enroll in **COMM 505** every quarter they are in the program. Students are advised to enroll in **12 units** most quarters; **8 units** is the minimum for full-time status.

II.5.2 Degree Milestones & Deadlines

Milestone	Recommended by	Required by	Notes
Nominate MA Advisor	—	**Year 1, end of Winter**	Must inform Student Affairs Manager.
Nominate MA Committee	—	**Year 1, end of Spring**	Nominated through GradPoint Students.
Defend thesis proposal	**Year 1, end of Spring**	**Year 2, January 15**	Committee needs a minimum of 14 days to review before the meeting.
Coursework requirements	**Year 2, end of Fall**	No official deadline	Coursework beyond Year 3 Fall cannot transfer to PhD requirements.
Thesis defense	**Year 2, end of Spring**	**Year 3, November 1**	Must inform Student Affairs Manager when scheduled.

II.5.3 Progress Benchmarks

Two deadlines determine academic good standing during the MA:

- Students are expected to have their thesis proposal approved by their committee by the **end of Spring in year 1**. A student whose proposal has not been approved by **January 15 of year 2** falls out of academic good standing
- Students are expected to successfully defend the MA thesis by the **end of Spring quarter in year 2**. A student who has not successfully defended by **November 1 of year 3** falls out of academic good standing

Thesis defenses should take place during the academic year; faculty are not expected to be available over the summer. See V.3 Standards of Scholarship for what falling out of good standing entails.

II.6 MA Advisor & MA Committee

II.6.1 MA Advisor’s Role

MA students must select a ladder faculty advisor who will guide their plan of study, oversee their degree progress and research, and chair their MA committee.

See V.1 Advising for more detail on advising policy and norms.

See VI.5 APPENDIX 5 for Standards for Faculty/Graduate Student Relationships.

II.6.2 MA Committee’s Role

The MA committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the student's thesis proposal and evaluating the final version of the thesis. Policy on committees is as follows:

- Students must have at least two ladder faculty on their committee in addition to their MA advisor
- At least two committee members must be faculty in the Communication Department
- With Academic Senate approval, non-ladder faculty may in some cases be able to serve on MA committees. For any committee member exceptions, students should work with the Student Affairs Manager to complete an exception request, which requires Graduate Director approval

II.6.3 Selecting an Advisor and Committee Members

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

- **MA Committee Members** should be nominated by the **end of Spring quarter in year 1**
- 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

II.7 MA Thesis

II.7.1 Nature and Scope

The thesis is typically an empirical research project that addresses an important issue in communication. It may be based on data gathered by the student or on data available from other sources. The thesis is typically a collaborative effort with the student's MA advisor, although the student assumes primary responsibility for the written thesis. The thesis should be approximately **35-50 pages** in length (including references and tables) and should follow the general format of a conference paper and/or journal article.

II.7.2 Thesis Proposal and Proposal Meeting

The student must submit a thesis proposal to their MA committee before formal work on the thesis may begin. The proposal is a description (approximately **20-25 pages**) of the research project to be undertaken, including theoretical background and rationale, as well as the methodology to be employed. The process is as follows:

1. A copy of the MA thesis proposal should be submitted to the advisor for preliminary review
2. Students must receive approval from their advisor prior to giving their committee a copy of the thesis proposal
3. With the advisor's approval, the proposal is distributed to the committee
4. Students must give committee members a minimum of 14 days to review the proposal before the proposal meeting is held
5. The student is responsible for scheduling the MA proposal meeting with their committee and informing the Student Affairs Manager. The purpose of the meeting is for the MA committee to offer advice and guidance to the student so they may complete a thesis that is theoretically and methodologically rigorous as well as manageable within the year timeframe for completion

II.7.3 Enrolling in Thesis Preparation Units

Students should start developing their thesis proposal during Year 1 with the aid of their MA advisor and begin enrolling in thesis preparation units during Year 2. If a student is collecting or otherwise working with thesis data in **Spring of Year 1**, they may enroll in thesis prep units during that quarter.

II.7.4 Thesis Defense - Timing & Deadlines

Thesis defenses should take place during the academic year. Faculty members are not expected to be available for defense meetings during the summer months. If students hope to defend during the summer, they must secure agreement from each member of their MA committee during the Spring quarter. If faculty members are not available, the defense must be held within the first two weeks of the Fall quarter.

- Students who are unable to defend by the **end of Spring of year 2** should schedule an appointment with the Graduate Director to discuss the reasons for this delay and to present a precise timeframe for completion ratified by their MA Advisor
- Students who do not defend by the end of their second year will be recommended for monitoring status. Each quarter, the Student Affairs Manager will consult with the student’s faculty advisor to determine whether they are making significant progress in completing their thesis project to remain on monitoring status
- Students who are not determined to be making significant progress (as assessed by their faculty advisor and graduate director), will be recommended for probation and after one quarter of probation risk being recommended for dismissal by the graduate dean

II.7.5 Defense Process

1. Students must distribute a completed version of their thesis to their MA committee **at least 14 days prior** to a scheduled defense date. Students must receive approval from their advisor prior to giving their committee a copy of the thesis
2. Once the thesis is completed and vetted by the MA Advisor, the student presents and defends the research project to their MA committee at a scheduled oral defense meeting that typically lasts **2 hours**. Students should consult with their advisors about how to prepare for the thesis defense

II.7.6 Defense Outcomes

1. The thesis is approved (“pass”) with few or no changes to be made
2. The committee requires that some major changes be made that can be supervised and approved by the student’s advisor without an additional meeting
3. The committee requires that substantial changes be made and that a subsequent defense meeting is needed to evaluate the revisions. The student is responsible for scheduling the defense date, time (allow for a **2 hour** meeting), and location

II.7.7 Revisions Process

Should the committee require that the student make revisions to the thesis, the student and faculty advisor should work together to summarize the requested revisions and email the summary to the committee members. Each committee member should reply to the email with their approval of the revision requests or provide additional instructions. This procedure is required to ensure that the student and all the committee members are on the same page with respect to how the thesis should move forward.

II.7.8 Informing the Student Affairs Manager & Degree Check

Once a student completes all requirements for coursework at the MA level, they should contact the Student Affairs Manager for a degree check to ensure all requirements have been fulfilled.

III. Doctor of Philosophy Degree

III.1 Introduction

The PhD in the Department of Communication is awarded to students who demonstrate academic excellence, and the ability to conduct rigorous and meaningful original research. All students must first obtain a thesis-based MA degree from UCSB or another accredited institution before working toward the doctorate. A comprehensive-exam-based MA degree can also be acceptable if obtained at an accredited institution. In the section below, separate notations are made for the two categories of PhD candidates: UCSB MA and Outside MA.

III.2 Time to PhD Degree

Time to Degree is the number of years considered to be reasonable by the faculty of an individual department for completion of a PhD by a full-time student in that program.

- Students **with an MA from UCSB** are expected to complete the PhD in **three years**
- Students **with an MA from another institution** should complete within **four years**

Funding is not guaranteed for students past time-to-degree.

III.3 PhD Degree Requirements

To earn an PhD degree students must:

1. Complete a minimum of **66 units** beyond the MA (students entering with a UCSB MA) or **86 units** (students entering with an MA from another institution)
2. Complete course requirements listed below
3. Successfully defend a PhD Dissertation

III.3.1 Degree Milestones & Good Progress Deadlines

Milestone	Recommended by	Required by	Notes
Choose PhD advisor	MA/PhD: **end of Spring, year 1** of the doctoral phase PhD-only: **end of Spring, year 1**	No later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation	Must inform Student Affairs Manager.
Choose PhD committee	MA/PhD: **end of Spring, year 1** of the doctoral phase PhD-only: **end of Spring, year 2**	No later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation	Nominated through GradPoint Students.
Advance to candidacy (pass qualifying exam)	—	MA/PhD track: **year 4** PhD-only track: **year 3**	Advancement follows a passing result on the qualifying exam.

Milestone	Recommended by	Required by	Notes
Dissertation proposal approved	MA/PhD: end of **Spring, year 4** PhD-only: end of **Spring, year 3**	MA/PhD: **November 1, year 5** PhD-only: **November 1, year 4**	The doctoral committee requires an oral hearing before approving the proposal.
Dissertation defense and degree completion	—	MA/PhD track: **year 5** PhD-only track: **year 4**	Funding is not guaranteed past time-to-degree.

See V.3 Standards of Scholarship for the implications of falling behind this timeline.

III.4 PhD Coursework Requirements

For more detail on specific courses see the UCSB Course Catalog. Also see more information about III.5 Opt-out of Required Courses.

III.4.1 Required Coursework

Students must successfully complete the following 5 core courses during the Phd portion of their degree (if not previously completed in their MA portion):

- **COMM 202** (Introduction to Communication Graduate Studies)
- **COMM 200** (Communication Theory Construction)
- **COMM 204A** (Research Methods in Communication)
- **COMM 204B** (Introduction to Applied Statistics)
- **COMM 204C** (Advanced Topics in Research Methods and Statistical Analysis)
- **Two** of the following Survey Courses:
  - **COMM 207 (Interpersonal Communication)**
  - **COMM 213 (Mass Media, the Individual, and Society)**
  - **COMM 222 (Organizational Communication)**

Note: *Those with an MA from UCSB will have completed several of these courses during their MA program, including* ***COMM 200****,* ***COMM 204A****,* ***COMM 204B****, one survey course, and* ***COMM 202****.*

III.4.2 Additional Coursework

In addition, but including any transferable units, all doctoral students must complete the following requirements beyond their MA coursework and in addition to the core requirements.

- **Four** elective content courses (**16 units**), at least **one** of which must be **outside the department**
- Multiple **COMM 593** (Directed Reading) courses may be taken. One **COMM 593** may count toward the content elective requirement, and **one additional COMM 593** may be counted as an in-department elective with the approval of the student's advisor and the Graduate Director. Such approvals are granted only in exceptional circumstances
- **Two** elective methods/tools course (**8 units**)
- **4 units** of **COMM 596A** (Directed Research)
- **12 units** of **COMM 597** (Preparation for the Qualifying Examination) — optional for students taking a reading quarter
- **12 units** of **COMM 599** (Dissertation Preparation)
- **COMM 505** (Colloquium)

Note: All students must also enroll in Comm 505 (Colloquium) every quarter they are in the program

The above represent the minimum requirements. Students may take courses beyond the minimum to maximize their preparation for the qualifying exams and dissertation project, and for their own research and teaching interests.

III.4.3 Additional Enrollment Policy

- For those with a UCSB MA degree, a minimum of **66 units** of coursework beyond the MA degree (including dissertation units) is required for the PhD
- For those with an MA degree from another institution, a minimum of **86 units** (including dissertation units) is required
- Any student who completes all requirements but has fewer than the minimum units may complete the remaining units with additional courses that are approved by their faculty advisor and the Graduate Director
- Students are advised to enroll in **12 units** most quarters. A minimum of **8 unit** enrollment are required to maintain full-time status
- The above represent the minimum requirements. Students may take courses beyond these minimums
- Courses cannot "double count" toward both MA and PhD degrees simultaneously
- **Fall quarter of the third program year** is the final quarter in which units may be transferred between MA and PhD degree requirements without petition
- Survey Course requirements must be taken in the department and no substitutions are permitted

- All units, with the exception of **COMM 599**, should be completed before the student takes their qualifying examinations

III.4.4 Course Substitution Policies

- Required courses should be taken at the graduate level (200 level and above). Undergraduate courses may be considered only when graduate courses in the topic are unavailable or when a student lacks appropriate background in the area, and only at the discretion of the student's advisor, the course instructor, and the Graduate Director. In such instances, a student is advised to enroll in **COMM 593** (Directed Reading), rather than the 100+ level undergraduate course, and discuss with the course instructor what additional work is required to make the course equivalent to a graduate level class
- 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 units** from another UC campus. These courses must not have been used to fulfill degree requirements already at the other institution. Submit a petition for transfer of units here
- See Opt-out of Required Courses for more information on opting out of courses.

III.5 Opt-out of Required Courses

Who Can Opt-Out?

Students can petition to opt out of the following courses under the following circumstances:

- Those students entering UCSB with an MA who have previous comparable or advanced training in research methods/statistics and wish to opt-out of **COMM 204A** and/or **COMM 204B**
- Students who are entering UCSB with an MA who have taken a survey course that is comparable to one of our survey courses
- Only on very rare occasions will students without an MA be approved to opt out of these courses

Opt-out Process

To opt-out of required courses, students must follow the steps below:

1. The student must provide the syllabi of the relevant courses they completed elsewhere, along with a petition form
2. The student must have received a grade of A- or higher in the course
3. The UCSB instructor of the relevant course must assess the syllabus for equivalency to the required course
4. The student's advisor (or if one hasn't been chosen yet, the Graduate Director) will also need to provide approval
5. If the petition is approved, **the student must replace those units with alternative statistics or research methods courses as approved by the student's advisor** or (if one hasn't been chosen yet) the Graduate Director

To start the opt-out process e-mail the Graduate Director with the above information.

III.6 Sample Programs of Study

There is no single way to progress through the program. As long as all requirements are completed in a timely fashion, the order in which courses are taken is up to the student and their advisor. The plans below are *illustrative, not prescriptive*. Two versions are shown: starting in the UCSB MA and transferring the usual allowable units; and entering with an MA from another institution.

> Students enroll in **COMM 505** every quarter they are in the program. Students are advised to enroll in **12 units** most quarters; **8 units** is the minimum for full-time status.

III.6.2 PhD with a UCSB MA — (Assuming MA completed)

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring
3 (PhD)	• **Content Elective** (in-dept) • **Methods/tools** • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **Content Elective** (in-dept) • **Content Elective** (out-dept) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **Content Elective** (in-dept) • **Methods/tools** • **COMM 596A** Directed Research • **COMM 505** Colloquium
4 (PhD)	• **Quals Writing Quarter** • **COMM 597** Preparation for the Qualifying Examination • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **Dissertation proposal Defense** • **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring
5 (PhD)	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium

- **Fall of year 3** is the last quarter in which units may transfer from MA to Phd
- **Required:** nominate MA advisor by end of Winter, year 1; MA committee by end of Spring, year 1
- **Recommended:** defend thesis proposal in Fall of year 2 (required by January 15); complete the thesis in Spring of year 2
- **Ideally,** choose a PhD advisor and finalize the PhD committee by end of Spring, year 3; both must be selected no later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation
- Begin discussing the quals reading list with committee members as soon as they agree to serve
- **Recommended:** hold the dissertation proposal meeting by end of **Spring, year 4** (**required:** proposal approved by **Nov. 1 of year 5**); complete data collection by end of Winter, year 5

III.6.3 PhD with an MA from another institution

Time-to-degree for the PhD-only track is **3 years to advance** to candidacy and **4 years to complete** the PhD.

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring

1 (PhD)	• **COMM 202** Introduction to Communication Graduate Studies • **COMM 204A** Research Methods in Communication • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 204B** Introduction to Applied Statistics • **Survey course** (COMM 207, 213, or 222) • **Content Elective** (in-dept) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 200** Communication Theory Construction • **COMM 204C** Advanced Topics in Research Methods and Statistical Analysis • **COMM 505** Colloquium
2 (PhD)	• **Second survey course** (COMM 207, 213, or 222) • **Content Elective** (in-dept) • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **Content Elective** (out-dept) • **Methods/tools** • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **Content Elective** (in-dept) • **Methods/tools** • **COMM 596A** Directed Research • **COMM 505** Colloquium
3 (PhD)	• **Quals Writing Quarter** • **COMM 597** Preparation for the Qualifying Examination • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **Dissertation proposal Defense** • **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation
4 (PhD)	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium	• **COMM 599** Dissertation Preparation • **COMM 505** Colloquium

- **Recommended:** choose a PhD advisor by end of **Spring, year 1** and finalize the committee by end of **Spring, year 2**; both must be selected no later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation
- **Recommended:** defend qualifying exams at the end of the **Fall writing quarter, year 3** (no later than week 2 of Winter); hold the dissertation proposal meeting by end of **Spring, year 3** (**required:** proposal approved by **Nov. 1 of year 4**)
- **Recommended:** complete data collection by end of Winter, year 4; defend the dissertation by end of Spring, year 4

III.7 Interdisciplinary Emphases

Several interdisciplinary programs are available for doctoral students to obtain cross-training in the theories and methods of other disciplines that approach the same area of study, but from different perspectives. Please contact the Graduate Director for which interdisciplinary emphases are currently offered.

III.8 PhD Advisor & Committee

III.8.1 Deadlines for Selecting Advisor and Committee Members

- Ideally, the **PhD advisor** should be chosen by:
  - MA/PhD students: **end of the Spring quarter of year 1 in the doctoral phase of their program**
  - PhD students: **end of Spring quarter in year 1 of the program**
- Ideally, the **PhD committee** should be chosen by:
  - MA/PhD students: **end of the Spring quarter of year 1 in the doctoral phase of their program**
  - PhD students: **end of Spring quarter in year 2 of the program**
- In all cases, the PhD advisor and committee must be selected **no later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation**

III.8.2 PhD Advisor's Role

PhD students must select a ladder faculty advisor who will guide their plan of study, oversee their degree progress and research, and chair their PhD committee.

See V.1 Advising for more detail on advising policy and norms.

See VI.5 APPENDIX 5 for Standards for Faculty/Graduate Student Relationship

III.8.3 PhD Committee's Role

PhD committee members are responsible for guiding the student in their preparation for their qualifying exam, preparing qualifying exam questions, actively participating in the qualifying exam defense, and rendering a judgment regarding the quality of the exam responses. PhD committee members are also responsible for reviewing and approving the student's dissertation proposal and the final version of the dissertation.

III.8.4 Committee Composition

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.

Policy on Committee Composition

- Students must have at least two ladder faculty on their committee in addition to their PhD advisor
- At least two committee members must be faculty in the Communication Department
- With Academic Senate approval, non-ladder faculty may in some cases be able to serve on MA committees. For any committee member exceptions, students should work with the Student Affairs Manager to complete an exception request, which requires Graduate Director approval
- Although doctoral committees must consist of at least 3 ladder faculty, students are encouraged to include additional faculty members, especially those from outside the department, as a diversity of perspectives can benefit the student’s doctoral work. Thus, the particular composition and size of the committee should be dictated by the student’s research interests
- For those pursuing interdisciplinary emphases, the committee composition must also fulfill the requirements of the particular emphasis (typically one committee member must represent the emphasis on the committee.)
- With Academic Senate approval, non-ladder faculty may in some cases be able to serve on PhD committees (see here for more information)

III.8.5 How to Choose PhD Committee Members

Committee members should be chosen based on their expertise in the content and/or methodology relevant to the student’s expected dissertation work, and should be selected in consultation with the PhD advisor. Once faculty agree to serve on a PhD committee, students must nominate their

committee members in GradPoint Students.

III.9 Qualifying Examination

III.9.1 Purpose of the Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam process is designed to serve several purposes.

1. To test a student's conceptual mastery of influential theories and research within the student's chosen area of study: interpersonal, organizational, or media communication
2. To assesses a student's methodological skills in addressing communication-related problems
3. To provide the student with an opportunity to craft original and insightful arguments about issues in communication research
4. To provide a diagnostic assessment of the student's preparation to begin the dissertation process

Students have **one quarter** to write answers to **three questions** provided by their Qualifying Exam Committee, which is referred to as the “writing quarter.” An official reading quarter may be added at the request of the student or at the discretion of the committee. Normally, the writing quarter takes place during the regular academic year, although students may read or write over the summer with prior approval from their committee.

III.9.2 Qualifying Exam Committee

Policy on Committee Composition

- The qualifying exam committee is typically composed of a student’s PhD committee members, but does not have to be
- Students must have at least two ladder faculty on their committee in addition to their PhD advisor
- At least two committee members must be faculty in the Communication Department
- Students may have more than three committee members, and they may include outside ladder faculty at the qualifying exam stage if they choose
- Typically, the Communication ladder faculty members write the qualifying exam questions. If a student chooses to have more than three PhD committee members at this

stage, only those faculty members who write the qualifying exam questions are required to attend the exam defense

- Committee members should be chosen before the student is ready to prepare for the qualifying examinations

Students should work with the Student Affairs Manager to coordinate the paperwork. Faculty practices related to qualifying exams may differ. Students are encouraged to talk to potential committee members about their processes and expectations for qualifying exams.

III.9.3 Parameters of the Qualifying Exam Questions

The exam consists of three questions crafted by the communication faculty on the student's PhD committee. Each committee member typically takes primary responsibility for writing one of the three questions, though input from all committee members is encouraged. **The student's written response for each question should be a paper approximately 25 pages in length (but no more than 30 pages), excluding references.** Each of the three questions posed by the committee will cover one of the following domains:

Broad Theory Question

This question tests the student's broad knowledge of the primary area of study in the program (i.e., Interpersonal/Intergroup, Media, or Organizational Communication). The question is intended to be somewhat expansive and to encourage the student to analyze and integrate influential bodies of work in creative fashion. For example, a question might require a student to compare and contrast major theories in the area, or to synthesize and analyze meta-theoretical issues that characterize the area.

Specialty Focus Question

This question is designed to assess the student's specialized knowledge in a selected area of interest. The question typically will be more topical than the broad area question and is intended to reflect the individualized expertise that a student has developed. This question can, but does not have to, reflect the student's topic for the dissertation.

Methods Question

This question assesses the student's methodological competence as a communication researcher. Ideally, the question is crafted in a way that reflects the student's broad area of study and/or specialty focus for the dissertation. This question may deal with hypothesis testing and design issues, methodological assumptions of different designs, and/or statistical tests and analyses.

III.9.4 Exam Preparation

At least one quarter prior to the writing quarter (two if the student is doing an official reading quarter), the student should consult with the PhD committee to determine the respective responsibilities for question preparation among the members. At the discretion of the advisor, this consultation may be accomplished either through a formal meeting with all committee members present or through individual interactions with committee members. Once the areas of responsibility for each committee member are established, the student should consult with each committee member, either individually or as a group during the preparation period, concentrating on the area in which they will be preparing a question.

For the optional reading quarter: the student should work with the faculty member to construct a bibliography relevant to the question and to define scope or parameters for the question. Students are advised to meet regularly with each committee member during this preparation process. Committee members should be as helpful as possible during this process, but will not reveal the precise scope and content of the question that will be asked on the examination.

Note: *Under no circumstances may a student prepare a draft of their own question. If a student is asked to draft their own question, or a portion thereof, the student should refuse to do so and may report this faculty violation to the Graduate Director or the Department Chair so that they may assure proper procedures are being followed. If a student is found to have participated in the drafting of their own exam question(s), the question will be redrafted either by the committee member initially responsible for providing the question or by other committee members, while maintaining the general focus negotiated during the preparation quarter, so that the student will not know the exact nature of the question to be answered during the exam period.*

III.9.5 Qualifying Exam Timeline

Normative expectations for Qualifying Exams

- **MA/PhD Students**:
  - Reading Quarter is **Summer before Year 4 (optional)**
  - Writing Quarter is **Fall of Year 4**
- **PhD Students**:
  - Reading Quarter is **Summer before Year 3 (optional)**
  - Writing Quarter is **Fall of Year 3**

III.9.6 Exam Procedures

In the writing quarter, the student writes, submits, and defends their responses. Rules for the exam are as follows:

- Papers should be prepared according to the guidelines in the most recent Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
- Each of the three papers should be approximately **25 pages** in length and **no more than 30 pages**, excluding references
- Students should use 12 point font size and 1 inch margins
- The exam is open-book, and students may consult all relevant resources to assist in the preparation of their response. However, students are **prohibited from seeking direct feedback from their committee during the writing period**
- Once the questions are obtained, students are welcome to clarify a question's meaning or scope with a particular committee member. However, students are expected to work independently in crafting answers to the questions. Faculty members do not give feedback during the writing stage, nor will they read preliminary versions of the papers
- Students are not allowed to share their exam questions with other grad students, nor are they allowed to seek assistance from fellow grad students to answer their exam questions
- Responses are judged based on the quality and comprehensiveness of their responses
- Upon successful completion of qualifying exams with a grade of “Pass/Advance,” the student will Advance to PhD Candidacy

Start Date of the Exam

The student will receive all three questions from the Student Affairs Manager **on the first Monday of instruction of the writing quarter.**

Due Date of the Exam

Completed answers to the examination questions must be submitted by **Monday of the 10th week of the writing quarter.** This deadline insures that the committee will have a **minimum of seven days** to read and evaluate the student’s exam papers prior to the oral defense date. Copies of the exam questions and answers must be submitted to each committee member and the Student Affairs Manager.

Date of the Oral Defense

The defense meeting must be scheduled well in advance and should take place **during the 11th week (or final exam week) of the quarter** in which the exam occurs but **no later than 2 weeks into the beginning of the following quarter.** The student is responsible for scheduling

the defense date, time, and location (allow for a 2-hour meeting) with the Student Affairs Manager.

Note: Exams are typically completed during the regular academic year (Fall, Winter, or Spring quarters), but may be completed during summer if (a) all committee members agree in advance and (b) will be in residence for the oral defense. In cases where the written portion of the exam occurs during the summer, the questions will be distributed by the Student Affairs Manager on **the first day of Summer Session E**. The oral defense should be scheduled **within 2 weeks of the beginning of the fall quarter**.

III.9.7 Other Exam Policies

- Before undertaking reading for or writing of exams during the summer, students must verify that committee members will be available during summer for any needed consultation or oral defense
- No matter what quarter is chosen for the qualifying exam and in order to make it equitable, all reading periods will be **10 weeks** and writing periods are **9 weeks** (with the last week reserved for the committee to read the exams in preparation for the oral defense)
- The qualifying exam is normally undertaken as soon as the student has completed all required doctoral coursework in the program. A student may begin the reading quarter for the exam while completing their last one or two required courses. However, students should avoid taking coursework during the quarter when the exams are written, as this may interfere with a student's ability to focus on and successfully complete the exam
- During any optional reading quarter, a student should enroll in a minimum of **8 units** of **COMM 597** (Preparation for the Qualifying Examination), and during the writing quarter a student should enroll in a minimum of **8 units** of **COMM 597** (Preparation for the Qualifying Examination). Students may enroll in up to **12 units** if necessary to maintain Department enrollment norms. However, only **12 units** of **COMM 597** in total will count toward degree requirements

III.9.8 The Oral Defense

The oral defense lasts for approximately **two hours**, which includes committee questions to clarify, elaborate, etc. on the student’s written answers. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee will make a determination about whether the student passed, or did not pass all or part of the examination requirement. If the student passes, they will advance to candidacy (see Section III.9.11). If the student does not pass, they may be asked to rewrite one or more answers (See Section III.9.9 for rewrite procedure).

III.9.9 Qualifying Exam Rewriting Procedure

At the conclusion of the oral defense, each question is assessed by the committee as passing or in need of rewriting. All questions must be deemed passing for the student to advance. If one or more questions (or portions thereof) are deemed in need of rewrites, the student has one additional opportunity to retake the exam.

This rewrite may take one of two forms: The student may be asked to submit a revised response to the initial question(s), or if the committee deems it more useful, the student may be asked to respond to a revised question. Under either circumstance, the procedures outlined for the initial exam should be followed. The student has up to **nine weeks from the date of the initial defense** to submit passable response(s). The student may ask for clarification from committee members, and they make take part of their 9-week allotted time to seek clarification from their committee before they commence the rewrite. However, once the rewrite begins, they may not solicit feedback or submit drafts of their response(s) for feedback to their committee. Students are not allowed to seek assistance from fellow grad students to answer their exam question(s). Once the revised response(s) are submitted, the committee must make a final judgment as to whether or not the responses are passing. The committee may determine that either:

1. The full committee should assess the response(s)
2. Individual committee members should make the judgment about the suitability of the rewritten answers or
3. The student must schedule a second oral defense

Rewrites should be minor adjustments to a response that are requested by the committee. The time required for revisions should be negotiated between the student and the committee but revisions should be submitted to the committee (or the designated faculty member) within a few weeks.

Students who are rewriting all or a portion of the qualifying exam are recommended to Graduate Division for monitoring status. Once they complete and pass their rewrite, monitoring status is lifted. Those students who do not pass the exam after the rewriting opportunity are recommended for probation and possible eventual dismissal from the program by the Graduate Dean.

III.9.10 Sample Questions

Each set of questions asked of a student is unique. However, questions asked of students in the past are available from the Student Affairs Manager for students to review if they would like.

III.9.11 Advancement to PhD Candidacy

Once students successfully pass their qualifying exam, they advance to PhD candidacy and thus are eligible for faculty privileges at the library. International students will be exempt from non-resident tuition for a period of nine quarters upon advancement to PhD candidacy.

III.10 Doctoral Dissertation

III.10.1 Nature and Scope

The dissertation represents the culmination of a student's intellectual and scholarly growth. The dissertation should be an original piece of research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge within the field of communication. A successful dissertation demonstrates the ability to frame meaningful questions for inquiry as well as the methodological skill required to provide appropriate answers to the research questions posed. Unlike the master's thesis, which may be the product of a more collaborative effort with the faculty advisor, **all aspects of the dissertation (including conceptualization, data collection/analysis, and manuscript preparation) are the sole responsibility of the doctoral candidate.** The faculty advisor's role is to provide extensive guidance and feedback throughout the project, in concert with other members of the student's PhD committee. It is the student's responsibility to negotiate with each member of the committee the nature and extent of the member's contribution to the student's dissertation work. Faculty/student interaction varies from case to case. It is important, therefore, that the needs and expectations of all parties are communicated clearly at the outset of the project.

Typically, students work on the dissertation during the entire three quarters of their final year in the doctoral program. Dissertating students should enroll in **12 units** per quarter of **COMM 599** (Dissertation Preparation). Students who are not in residence may enroll in **8 units** rather than **12 units**.

III.10.2 Seeking External Funds

All students are encouraged to seek funding to support their dissertation work from sources outside the Communication Department. Such sources might include campus sources (e.g., Graduate Division Dissertation Fellowships) as well as extramural sources (government funding agencies, private foundations, etc.)

III.10.3 Dissertation Proposal

The first step toward the dissertation is the preparation of a written proposal as outlined below:

- Proposals should be **25-30 pages** and include:
  - a review of relevant literature
  - a rationale for the dissertation project
  - a detailed outline of the methods to be used in the study
- A preliminary proposal may be circulated to committee members prior to convening a proposal meeting. Students must receive approval from their advisor prior to giving their committee a copy of the dissertation proposal. Students should also ask their committee members if they would like a hard copy or electronic version
- Once a final draft is completed and distributed, the student must schedule a mandatory committee meeting to be held **no sooner than fourteen days after distributing the proposal**. The proposal meeting is designed to provide to the student feedback from all committee members before the dissertation project is undertaken. A productive proposal meeting can go a long way toward ensuring a successful dissertation
- The student must inform the Student Affairs Manager about the scheduling of the dissertation proposal meeting
- **Students should refrain from any data collection until the project has been approved by the committee** as changes to study design and measures often result from committee discussion. See exception in the section below.
- Once the proposal is approved by the committee, it serves as a blueprint for the dissertation project. Any substantive changes to the research plan agreed upon at the proposal meeting should be made only with the explicit consent of the committee

Proposal Revision Process

Should the committee require the student to make revisions to the dissertation proposal, the student and faculty advisor should work together to summarize the requested revisions and email the summary to the committee members. Each committee member should reply to the email with their approval of the revision requests or provide additional instructions. This procedure is required to ensure that the student and all the committee members are on the same page with respect to how the dissertation should move forward.

III.10.4 Timing

Graduate students are expected to complete their qualifying exams and dissertation proposal **prior to starting dissertation data collection**. However, the sequencing with respect to qualifying exams and dissertation work is subject to exigencies that arise in the research process, which may require some flexibility. **Before moving forward with any data collection for one's dissertation, the student must receive approval from their doctoral advisor and all committee members.**

The dissertation proposal meeting should take place **by the end of Spring quarter of the year the student advances to candidacy** (Spring, year 3 for PhD-only students; Spring, year 4 for MA/PhD students). Given the expected time to degree, students would greatly benefit from thinking about their possible dissertation project while preparing for their qualifying exam and using the qualifying exam process to help develop thinking about the project whenever possible.

If the proposal has not been approved by the committee by **November 1 of year 4** (PhD-only) or **November 1 of year 5** (MA/PhD), the student's good standing in the program is at risk.

III.10.5 The Dissertation

There are no strict requirements on the format or length of the dissertation. Instead students should consult with their committee about what constitutes a sufficient dissertation.

III.10.6 Dissertation Defense Meeting

Once the final draft of the dissertation has been completed and reviewed by the PhD Advisor, it should be circulated to the committee and an oral defense meeting should be scheduled. Students must receive approval from their advisor prior to giving their committee a copy of the dissertation proposal. Students should also ask their committee members if they would like a hard copy or electronic version. **Students must give committee members at least fourteen days to read the dissertation before the defense meeting.** The student is responsible for coordinating the defense date, time, and location (allow for a 2-3 hour meeting) with the Student Affairs Manager.

Students should consult with their advisors about how to prepare for the dissertation defense. The defense meeting typically results in one of several possible outcomes:

1. The dissertation is approved ("pass") with little or no changes to be made
2. The committee requires that some major changes be made that can be supervised and approved by the student's advisor without an additional meeting
3. The committee requires that substantial changes be made and that a subsequent defense meeting is needed to evaluate the revisions

Dissertation Revision Process

Should the committee require the student to make revisions to the dissertation, the student and faculty advisor should work together to summarize the requested revisions and email the summary to the committee members. Each committee member should reply to the email with their approval of the revision requests or provide additional instructions. This procedure is required to ensure that the student and all the committee members are on the same page with respect to how the dissertation should move forward.

III.10.7 Public Portion of Dissertation Defense

Students must inform the Student Affairs Manager as soon as the defense date is scheduled. The Student Affairs Manager will advertise the defense to the department. Members of the academic community and other interested parties are invited to **the first 30 minutes** of the dissertation defense. During this period, the student will give a **10-minute overview** of the dissertation after which they will field questions from the public guests. After the questions are exhausted or **30 minutes** have passed (whichever comes soonest), the public portion will conclude. Guests and the candidate will exit the room, and the PhD committee will meet briefly before inviting the candidate back into the meeting to engage in the dissertation defense.

III.10.8 Filing PhD Dissertation

Once the dissertation has been approved by the committee, the student must file a copy with the Graduate Division. Student should work with the Student Affairs Manager to make sure all paperwork for filing is completed. The final version of the dissertation must comply with UCSB requirements (see Filing Your Dissertation with the UCSB Graduate Division on the Graduate Division Web site).

III.11 Leaving ABD (All But Dissertation)

Doctoral candidates are strongly encouraged to complete the dissertation while in residence. The student must be enrolled as a full-time student the quarter the dissertation is filed (see possible exceptions below). Leaving the university for employment elsewhere may be an attractive option, but completion of the dissertation is often very difficult once a student is off campus with other responsibilities to meet. In addition, it is difficult to obtain regular consultation and feedback from an advisor and committee members when a student is not on campus. If a student does make the choice to leave ABD, it is critical that they maintain their student status. Otherwise, they put their degree conferral in jeopardy.

According to Graduate Division Policy, students who leave the University without an approved leave of absence relinquish all privileges of being a student. This is also known as “ lapsed status .” In contrast, an approved leave of absence represents an official status recognized by the University and allows limited access to University services. Privileges lost include pre-existing offers of funding, access to Student Health Services and Graduate Student Health Insurance, library access, and the like. There are additional consequences for International students (please see Graduate Division Policy for additional details. Most important, reinstatement from lapsed status is not automatic. Thus, it is critical that students do not lapse in status while pursuing their degree.

IV. Funding

IV.1 Introduction

The Department of Communication is committed to providing financial support to all graduate students admitted to the program. All funding is contingent on the student being registered and making satisfactory progress toward the degree. There are several forms of funding typically available to students, as outlined in this section.

IV.2 Teaching (TA and Associate)

IV.2.1 Teaching Assistant

Because of large undergraduate enrollments, the most common form of financial support for graduate students in Communication is a nine-month teaching assistantship, typically at a 50% (half time) employment. Teaching Assistants help course directors teach undergraduate courses, typically assisting in grading, exam preparation, holding office hours, and often conducting class discussions. **COMM 202** is mandatory preparation for any student who wishes to be a Teaching Assistant. Teaching Assistants must be registered graduate students in good standing to be employed. Graduate students holding a Teaching Assistant appointment of 25% time or more in a given quarter will have a portion of their university and educational fees and mandatory health insurance paid for that term as outlined in the current agreement between The Regents of the University of California and the Association of Student Employees, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), AFL- CIO. (NOTE: The remissions quoted are consistent with the terms of the current contract. Please be aware that future wages, terms, and conditions are subject to modification based on the collective bargaining process.)

The assignment of TA positions is a challenging process involving a number of contingencies and considerations. Students are selected for TA assignments by the TA coordinator and department staff in consultation with two graduate student representatives.

IV.2.2 Teaching Associate

When resources are available, a limited number of students may be employed as Teaching Associates. Teaching Associates conduct the entire instruction of a course under the mentorship of a faculty member. Associates are allowed to teach lower division courses (e.g., **COMM 88** or **89**) and, upon approval from the university, upper division courses (e.g., **COMM 107**, **110**, **113**, **160**).

Eligibility and criteria for being selected include:

- seniority in the graduate program

- excellence in teaching
- competence in relevant communication course content
- strong progress toward degree requirements

Qualified students who are closer to defending their dissertations are prioritized. Teaching Associates are not allowed to hold any other positions (Research, Administrative, or TA) during their quarter appointment as an Associate. Graduate students holding a Teaching Associate appointment of 50% time in a given quarter will have a portion of their university and educational fees and mandatory health insurance paid by the University for that term as outlined in the current agreement between The Regents of the University of California and the Association of Student Employees, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), AFL-CIO. (NOTE: The remissions quoted are consistent with the terms of the current contract. Please be aware that future wages, terms, and conditions are subject to modification based on the collective bargaining process.)

IV.2.3 Reader

Occasionally, the Department may have needs for assistance with grading of assignments and exams in individual courses. In these cases, students may be hired as Readers. These opportunities are sporadic and thus are more likely to serve as opportunities to increase a student’s employment percentage (e.g., from 50% to 75%) during any one quarter, rather than as a sole source of financial support. Employment above 50% requires that the student obtain approval from the Graduate Director and Student Affairs Manager.

IV.3 Research Grants

IV.3.1 Graduate Student Researcher (GSR)

A limited number of graduate student research positions are typically available in the department, and these are awarded by faculty members who have grant-supported research. A Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) is employed to assist a faculty member with scholarly research, and often collaborates in the publication of research results as determined by supervising faculty (for more information, refer to Standards for Faculty/Graduate Student Relationships: Research in Appendix VI of this Handbook). Graduate students holding a research appointment of 25% time or higher typically will have their educational fees, health insurance, and nonresident tuition paid by the contract or grant that funds the position.

IV.3.2 Applying for Grants

A number of federal agencies and foundations provide funds for graduate work, especially dissertation grants. Dissertation grants relieve students from teaching duties and provide them with support for conducting their research. Some examples of these grants are: Ford Foundation Fellowship, NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant, NSF GRFP Graduate Research Fellowship Program, Fulbright, American Association of University Women, Mellon Fellowships, and Woodrow Wilson Foundation. The UC Graduate Division maintains a list of grants and fellowships, an archive of successful grants, and fact sheets. Importantly, students need to complete and defend their dissertation proposals to be eligible for many dissertation grants. Many COMM Department grants are managed by the Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research (ISBER). Students should work with their academic advisors and the Department Financial Assistant to determine where the grant should be housed.

IV.3.3 Receiving External Grants

In most cases, graduate students and faculty PIs cannot sign themselves to receive grants. The grant must be reviewed legally by university representatives before terms are accepted, the money is received by the university, and funds are dispersed to the PI or student. Both during the application process and through the funding cycle, students should be in contact with the appropriate departmental financial staff (most likely in COMM or ISBER) to ensure appropriate protocols are followed.

IV.4 Fellowships

Fellowship funds are awarded on the basis of merit and promise of productive scholarship. Types of university awards and funding sources include centrally administered fellowships, Department and campus gift and endowment funds, and Departmental grant funding. Fellowship funds could provide payment of any of the following: tuition and fees, health insurance, non-resident supplemental tuition, and stipend. A fellowship is any payment to a student that is not salary or direct reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs. All fellowships must be processed and disbursed by the Graduate Division. Important: fellowship support is taxable income. Click here for more information.

IV.4.1 New Graduate Students

The campus has a limited number of recruitment fellowships for graduate admissions. Applicants must have distinguished scholastic records and be approved for admission in the Department's graduate program.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to seek out national, governmental, and foundation fellowships, scholarships, grants, and loans that can be used at any university. Information about these may be obtained by writing directly to individual agencies and foundations. The campus financial aid office may be able to advise students about extramural sources. In addition, the Graduate Division maintains a website for funding sources.

IV.4.2 Graduate Division Continuing Fellowships

For continuing students, a variety of fellowships are available, many of which are awarded through an annual campus-wide competition. Continuing student fellowships are awarded on the basis of academic merit, financial need, scholarly achievement, diversity, and promise. To be eligible, students must be enrolled full- time and have filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1st. Some fellowships are restricted to U.S. citizens and permanent residents, while others are available to international students as well.

In most cases, graduate students must have successfully completed their written and oral qualification exams (Quals) before the end of winter quarter to be eligible for the majority of

continuing fellowships.

A general announcement for Continuing Graduate Student Fellowships will be sent to the department in late February. The Graduate Committee will call for requests and will evaluate them to determine the most competitive applications. Students need to submit applications to the Student Affairs Manager and the Graduate Director by mid-March to have the materials assembled and forwarded to the Graduate Division for the campus- wide competition. Interested graduate students should carefully read the eligibility requirements for each fellowship (e.g., Domestic only, Advanced to Candidacy, ability to be employed along with the fellowship, diversity statement, etc.) and work with the Student Affairs Manager for proper inclusion of required nomination documents.

Several Continuing Student Fellowships and Grants require departmental nomination (Award amounts and eligibility may change annually – please consult the Graduate Division website or with Student Affairs Manager for current information). **Please be aware that stipends associated with fellowships are taxable income.** Click here for more information.

IV.5 Employment Limits

Limits on % Time Employment

Graduate students generally are limited to 50% time employment at UCSB to ensure that the majority of time is devoted to their academic study and training. Exceptions can be granted in cases of departmental need or special circumstances for a student. A student who wishes to work more than 50% time must inform the Student Affairs Manager of their employment opportunities.

In order for a student to seek employment in another department, the Graduate Director or Chair must sign the eligibility verification form giving home department approval for the hire. The hiring department should coordinate the signing of this form with the Department of Communication. A maximum of 75% time may be requested from the Department.

In some cases, Graduate Division approval must be requested to hire a student (see here for situations requiring an exception). In these cases, the student must be able to demonstrate that the supplemental employment will not interfere with academic performance and progress toward the degree. To facilitate this request, the Student Affairs Manager will fill out an Exception to Employment form, the student's advisor must answer the exception form questions and attach to the request, and the Graduate Director or Department Chair must sign before the form is sent to Grad Div. Exceptions are made on a quarter-by-quarter basis only.

Policy for International Students

Students on F-1 and J-1 visas may not work over 50% time on campus during the academic year. All eligible students may work 100% time during the summer without departmental approval. Click here for more information about academic appointments.

Limits on Quarters of Employment

A graduate student may serve as a Teaching Assistant and/or Associate Instructor for a combined **maximum of 12 quarters (four years)**. See Academic Policies and Procedures in section IV-1 of the Red Binder for exceptions and updated policy.

V. Policies

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.

VI. Appendices

VI.1 APPENDIX 1 - Department of Communication Administrative Structure

Below is a brief description of each position's responsibilities, but in all cases the Graduate Director, the Student Affairs Manager, and your own advisor are best prepared to address substantive issues related to your graduate career.

The Department Chair is the faculty member responsible for the overall running of the graduate and undergraduate programs, the budget, teaching allocations, and all departmental activities. The Department Vice Chair assists with Chair duties as negotiated with the Chair. When the Chair is away from the Department, the Vice Chair is the acting Chair.

The Graduate Director is the faculty member responsible for the everyday and routine activities associated with the graduate program, including the rules and procedures for degree progress, admissions, graduate advising, the evaluation and notification of graduate student progress, graduate student stipends, travel allocations, thesis and dissertation information. The Graduate Director is assisted by the Graduate Committee comprised of faculty representing the different areas of interest, and the Student Affairs Manager.

The Student Affairs Manager (SAM) is the staff member who oversees both undergraduate and graduate advising in the department. The SAM works closely with the Graduate Director, Business Officer, and Department Chair to support graduate and undergraduate student's academic and curricular needs are addressed, ensures advising structures support timely progress to degree, and maintains/manages administrative records. For graduate students, this includes advising towards and processing degree milestones, assisting with course planning and registration, organizing the annual graduate review, and processing admissions records they serve as an ex officio member of the department's Graduate Committee and Undergraduate Committee.

The Undergraduate Advisors work with the faculty undergraduate advisor and are in charge of undergraduate advising, enrollment management, add/drop procedures, textbook orders and desk copies, and other matters directly related to the undergraduate program. The Undergraduate Advisors are assisted by peer advisors, who are Communication undergraduate students trained in

the departmental requirements. Undergraduate Advisors sit on the Undergraduate Committee and are managed by the Student Affairs Manager.

The Business Officer (MSO, Management Services Officer) oversees the everyday management of the department, staff personnel, department space, internet services, and the like.

The Financial & Administrative Assistant manages department and faculty discretionary spending, processes travel and entertainment reimbursements in Concur, and functions as the department timekeeper (Kronos).

The Academic Personnel & Office Coordinator focuses on administrative support related to faculty recruitment and hiring, UCPath academic employee payroll submission, and faculty merit and promotions..

VI.2 APPENDIX 2 – Department Offices & Meet Spaces – Social Sciences and Media Studies (SSMS)

Graduate student offices are assigned on a yearly basis, determined by the type of funding and responsibilities a graduate student has for the year with assistance and oversight by two graduate students selected by the GSA. Graduate students typically share offices with other graduate students. Graduate Student offices do not have phone lines, but students' UCSBNetID and password provides Wi-Fi access.

The department also has several rooms available for special events including research team meetings, computer analyses, laboratory experiments, research protocols, defenses, exams, and small group teaching sessions. Click here for more information.

Space and rooms within the department may be reserved for special events by completing the Room & Lab Calendars & Requests form. Graduate proposals, defenses, graduate meeting requests, and any other graduate student-related space requests will be forwarded to the Student Affairs Manager for processing.

VI.3 APPENDIX 3 - University 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.

VI.4 APPENDIX 4 - Glossary of Key Terms

Below is a glossary of key terms used throughout this handbook.

199RA

The course number used for undergraduates who serve as research assistants to faculty or graduate student in exchange for course credit. To be eligible to enroll in COMM

199RA, students must have 1) attained upper-division standing; 2) a minimum of a 3.0 grade-point average for the preceding two quarters; and 3) be declared as an upper-division Communication major. Students are limited to **5 units** per quarter, with no more than a total of **12 units** combined from **COMM 194** (Group Studies) and **COMM 199** (Independent Studies) across all quarters. Undergraduates who assist graduate students must also have a faculty supervisor to enroll. Click here to access UCSB's general catalog for a complete list of Communication courses.

ABD

Advancement to candidacy ("All But Dissertation"). Once students successfully pass their qualifying exam, they advance to PhD candidacy and thus are eligible for faculty privileges at the library. International students will be exempt from non-resident tuition for a period of nine quarters upon advancement to PhD candidacy.

Colloquium

Colloquium, including annual/bi-annual departmental named colloquia, colloquia talks by visiting scholars and research talks ("job talks") by job candidates, meets regularly throughout each quarter and features guest speakers, including faculty and graduate students from the Department of Communication as well as scholars from other departments and campuses who present their research. Graduate students are required to register for COMM 505 each quarter. Those not fulfilling this requirement will receive a "U" (unsatisfactory) for the course. If students do not attend regularly, their faculty advisor will be asked to speak to the student about their attendance.

Core Courses

Students entering the MA/PhD program must successfully complete the following 4 core courses during the MA portion of their degree: Comm 202 (Introduction to Communication Graduate Studies), Comm 200 (Communication Theory Construction), Comm 204A (Research Methods in Communication), and Comm 204B (Introduction to Applied Statistics). Students must 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.

Directed Readings

Directed Reading (COMM 593) is designed to provide students with a similar experience as a typical seminar course, except that it is conducted on an individual basis with a faculty member. COMM 593 is particularly useful when a course that a student desires is not being offered as part of the regularly scheduled curriculum. Students should consult with individual faculty members to determine whether a COMM 593 is possible in a given quarter. Availability of 593 is at the discretion of the faculty member, and should not be presumed.

In advance of a COMM 593 course, students and supervising faculty should develop a contract that describes the course goals, designated reading list, and the required assignments. Contract forms are available on the department website and from the Student Affairs Manager. Multiple COMM 593 courses may be taken. One COMM 593 may count toward the content elective requirement, and **one additional COMM 593** may be counted as an in-department elective with the approval of the student's advisor and the Graduate Director. Such approvals are granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Directed Research

Directed Research (COMM 596A) is a research-oriented tutorial experience with a faculty member. The purpose of this course is to provide the student with supervised research experience in an area of communication in the faculty member's area of expertise. The research activities for which COMM 596A units can be earned include any or all of the following: critically reviewing the literature and formulating hypotheses or research questions, designing measurement techniques, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting results, and writing final reports of studies for a scholarly conference or publication.

Doctoral students must complete 4 units of COMM 596A for their degree requirements. In advance of the Directed Research, students and supervising faculty should develop a contract that describes the goals of the course and the specific nature of the work to be conducted for the precise number of units. Contract forms are available on the department website and from the Student Affairs Manager.

Dissertation

The dissertation represents the culmination of a student's intellectual and scholarly growth. The dissertation should be an original piece of research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge within the field of communication. A successful dissertation demonstrates the ability to frame meaningful questions for inquiry as well as the methodological skill required to provide appropriate answers to the research questions posed. Unlike the master's thesis, which may be the product of a more collaborative effort with the faculty advisor, all aspects of the dissertation (including conceptualization, data collection/analysis, and manuscript preparation) are the sole responsibility of the doctoral candidate. The faculty advisor's role is to provide extensive guidance and feedback throughout the project, in concert with other members of the student's PhD committee.

Extramural funding

This is funding that the student receives from an external source such as the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, or a private enterprise.

Full-Time/Part-Time Status

Maintaining active status as a graduate student involves paying fees and officially registering in classes each quarter. Full time status on UCSB’s campus is 8 units, but it is normative in the Department of Communication to enroll in 12 units to meet coursework requirements. Students are advised to enroll in 12 units most quarters. A typical course load is 13 units per quarter, which includes three courses to fulfill requirements (12 units) and COMM 505: Colloquium (1 unit). Students should not exceed 17 units in any single quarter and must receive prior approval from the Graduate Director in order to exceed 16 units.

Part-time eligibility is available for doctoral students who have not yet advanced to candidacy. The Graduate Division may grant students part-time status on a quarterly basis.

GSACC

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee to the Chair is an elected body of graduate students who advocate for grad students’ interests and promote healthy communication between grad students and faculty. Representatives are elected on an annual basis and serve in roles such as TA Liaison, DEI Graduate Representative, Office Representative, Communication Chair, and more. Visit the Department’s website to learn more.

GSR

A Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) is employed to assist a faculty member with scholarly research, and often collaborates in the publication of research results as determined by supervising faculty. A limited number of graduate student research positions are typically available in the department, and these are awarded by faculty members who have grant-supported research. Graduate students holding a research appointment of 25% time or higher typically will have their educational fees, health insurance, and nonresident tuition paid by the contract or grant that funds the position.

Internal funding

This is funding that comes from the department, a faculty member, or the university, such as central fellowships.

Ladder faculty

Tenured or tenure track PhD faculty with full time appointments.

MA Advisor

MA students must select a ladder faculty advisor who will guide their plan of study, oversee their degree progress and research, and chair their MA committee.

MA Advisors should be nominated by the **end of Winter quarter in year 1**. Students submit a nomination form through the Department website; nomination forms require both the advisor's and the student's signature. Students may change advisors and committee members as they progress through the program.

MA Committee

The MA committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the student's thesis proposal and evaluating the final version of the thesis. Students must have at least two ladder faculty on their committee in addition to their MA advisor, and at least two committee members must be faculty in the Communication Department. With Academic Senate approval, non-ladder faculty may in some cases be able to serve on MA committees. MA Committee Members should be nominated by the **end of Spring quarter in year 1**.

MA Thesis

The thesis is typically an empirical research project that addresses an important issue in communication. It may be based on data gathered by the student or on data available from other

sources. The thesis is typically a collaborative effort with the student's MA advisor, although the student assumes primary responsibility for the written thesis. The thesis should be approximately 35-50 pages in length (including references and tables) and should follow the general format of a conference paper and/or journal article.

Non-Senate or Non-Ladder faculty

Faculty members who have permanent positions but are not tenure-track appointments.

PhD Advisor

PhD students must select a ladder faculty advisor who will guide their plan of study, oversee their degree progress and research, and chair their PhD committee.

PhD Advisors should be nominated by the **end of the Spring quarter of year 1** in the doctoral phase of their program (MA/PhD students), or by the **end of Spring quarter in year 1** of the program (PhD students). The PhD Advisor and Committee must be selected no later than the quarter prior to the commencement of qualifying exam preparation.

PhD Committee

PhD committee members are responsible for guiding the student in their preparation for their qualifying exam, preparing qualifying exam questions, actively participating in the qualifying exam defense, and rendering a judgment regarding the quality of the exam responses. PhD committee members are also responsible for reviewing and approving the student's dissertation proposal and the final version of the dissertation.

Students must have at least two ladder faculty on their committee in addition to their PhD advisor, and at least two committee members must be faculty in the Communication Department; doctoral committees must consist of at least 3 ladder faculty. PhD Committee Members should be nominated by the **end of the Spring quarter of year 1** in the doctoral phase of their program (MA/PhD students), or by the **end of Spring quarter in year 2** of the program (PhD students). Once faculty agree to serve on a PhD committee, students must nominate their committee members in GradPoint Students.

Quals

The qualifying exam process is designed to serve several purposes: to test a student's conceptual mastery of influential theories and research within the student's chosen area of study (interpersonal, organizational, or media communication); to assess a student's methodological skills in addressing communication-related problems; to provide the student with an opportunity to

craft original and insightful arguments about issues in communication research; and to provide a diagnostic assessment of the student's preparation to begin the dissertation process.

Students have one quarter to write answers to three questions provided by their Qualifying Exam Committee, which is referred to as the “writing quarter.”

TA

Teaching Assistants help course directors teach undergraduate courses, typically assisting in grading, exam preparation, holding office hours, and often conducting class discussions. COMM 202 is mandatory preparation for any student who wishes to be a Teaching Assistant. Teaching Assistants must be registered graduate students in good standing to be employed.

Teaching Associate

Teaching Associates conduct the entire instruction of a course under the mentorship of a faculty member. Associates are allowed to teach lower division courses (e.g., COMM 88 or 89) and, upon approval from the university, upper division courses (e.g., COMM 107, 110, 113, 160). Teaching Associates are not allowed to hold any other positions (Research, Administrative, or TA) during their quarter appointment as an Associate.

Temporary Lecturers

Faculty members who do not have permanent positions and are not tenure-track appointments.

VI.5 APPENDIX 5 - Standards for Faculty/Graduate Student Relationships

VI.5.1 Overview

The purpose of this document is to specify our departmental standards of behavior for faculty and graduate student relationships. We recognize such relationships are only one facet of departmental climate, but in many ways they are fundamental to a healthy graduate program. We focus on four main types of faculty-graduate student relationships:

1. The relationship between advisors and their advisees
2. The relationship between seminar instructors and course participants
3. The relationship between course directors and teaching assistants
4. The relationship between faculty and graduate student researchers

For each type of relationship, we describe overarching goals of the relationship, norms of behavior for participants in the relationships, and situations that may signal a problem.

This document is intended to serve several functions. First, it is designed to clarify, reinforce, and promote healthy values and norms among current faculty and graduate students in the Department of Communication. Second, the document should be used to communicate our values and norms to new and visiting faculty, scholars and graduate students. Finally, this document is designed to serve as a vehicle for promoting continuing dialogue about faculty/graduate student relationships.

Value Statement . The Department of Communication seeks to promote the welfare and intellectual pursuits of faculty and graduate students. Toward this goal, we acknowledge that faculty and graduate students are both responsible for contributing to a supportive climate. We believe that faculty-student relationships should be characterized by the following:

- an appreciation of diverse values, goals, and perspectives
- consideration of one another’s welfare and interests

- negotiated expectations and decision-making
- honoring and upholding the boundaries of privacy
- mutual respect and trust

The following pages provide more specific goals and expectations for the differing areas of activity in which graduate students and faculty typically interact. Graduate students are expected to familiarize themselves with these principles, and to strive to promote their successful realization. Should a graduate student recognize a situation that is inconsistent with these goals and principles, they is encouraged to bring this to the attention of the Student Affairs Manager or Chair of the Department.

VI.5.3 Advising and Mentoring

The Relationship between Advisors/Mentors and their Advisees

The heart of our graduate education and training and research work is a healthy relationship between advisors and advisees. We see this ideally as a mentorship process with mutual obligations.

Goals:

- professional academic training
- socialization to the academic enterprise
- pursuit of excellence in mutual projects
- open dialogue regarding expectations of the relationship
- support and compassion in the relationship
- confidentiality and trust
- recognition of each other's needs, goals, and time constraints

Advisors should:

- discuss the objectives and expectations of the relationship
- recognize that they are role models for students
- guide students rather than control them
- be an advocate for their students
- recognize students' particular goals and needs
- have regular meetings every quarter with students
- give students regular and timely feedback on their work

- monitor and assist students in making progress toward the degree
- encourage students to express themselves in the relationship
- be sensitive to the power differential in the relationship

Advisees should :

- discuss the objectives and expectations of the relationship
- keep advisor up-to-date about their own progress
- recognize that advisor has many other professional commitments
- seek mentoring and support from other faculty in addition to the advisor
- recognize that academic commitment and hard work are fundamental to a positive advising relationship
- feel comfortable changing advisors at any time
- review advising options at the time of major benchmarks in the program (e.g., after MA degree, after qualifying exams)

Situations that May Signal a Problem:

- participants perceiving that academic freedom and personal choice are limited in the advising relationship
- participants experiencing retaliation in the advising relationship
- participants feeling their privacy is invaded in the advising relationship
- participants feeling frightened or threatened in the advising relationship
- participants feeling like they are being taken advantage of in the advising relationship
- participants having difficulty contacting and/or meeting with each other
- participants allowing personal lives to overlap into and jeopardize professional relationship
- advisors involving advisees in departmental conflicts
- advisors using the allocation of resources to control advisees

VI.5.4 Graduate Coursework

The Relationship between Seminar Instructors and Course Participants

Graduate classes and seminars offer an opportunity for constructive interaction between graduate students and instructors (faculty). We view graduate coursework as a valuable occasion for a mutual exchange and learning. If you have a problem with a faculty member teaching a class, please come see the Graduate Director, Department Chair, or Vice Chair as soon as possible.

Goals:

- free expression of ideas
- mutual dialogue regarding course expectations and objectives
- equal opportunity for learning
- responsible behavior toward completing course objectives
- objective evaluation of performance

Instructors should :

- discuss the objectives and expectations they have regarding the course
- provide a course syllabus at the start of the quarter
- clearly specify all course assignments
- provide reading assignments at least a week before they are due
- hold class sessions at their normally scheduled times
- develop specific goals for each class
- be prepared to lead discussions
- return assignments in a timely manner that enables students to take advantage of feedback during the remainder of the course
- return final assignments before the beginning of the next quarter
- make themselves available outside of the classroom for help and assistance
- provide all students with the same opportunity to learn -- additional materials or assistance provided to some should not be denied to others (unless DSP is involved)
- provide and be willing to receive explicit and constructive feedback

Students should :

- discuss the objectives and expectations they have regarding the course
- attend and be prepared to contribute to all class discussions
- complete all assignments on time
- take responsibility for seeking additional help when needed
- provide and be willing to receive explicit and constructive feedback

Situations that May Signal a Problem:

- participants being personally attacked for the expression of their ideas
- participants engaging in behaviors (e.g., yelling, belittling, intimidating, etc.) that discourage others from participating in discussions

- participants taking advantage of personal relationships to unfairly influence course-related outcomes
- instructors requiring students to make-up canceled class sessions outside of the normally scheduled time period

VI.5.5 Teaching

The Relationship Between Course Directors and Teaching Assistants

The Department of Communication depends on both its faculty and graduate students to accomplish its undergraduate teaching mission. We view graduate students and faculty as members of a quality team.

Goals:

- teaching assistants receive valuable experience in both teaching and course development
- course directors obtain valuable assistance in the development and delivery of their courses to undergraduate students
- mutual feedback and adjustment of behaviors to benefit the course, undergraduate students, and the course team
- both teaching assistants and course directors contributing to a quality teaching team which successfully delivers course materials to undergraduate students

Norms:

- organizational meetings should occur sufficiently in advance of the commencement of the course to allow team members to begin the course prepared in their respective duties
- team members for a course should plan consistent and regular course meetings
- specific dialogue should occur between the team members concerning mutual expectations for the course and the team relationships
- regular supportive feedback should be given among team members which is consistently designed to enhance course performance, self-esteem and professional development
- teaching assistants should keep course directors informed as mistakes occur or problems arise with students or in sections
- there should be consistent maintenance of professional standards of timeliness, preparation, organization and accessibility to undergraduate students by all teaching team members
- all team members should be open to constructive critique
- all team members should contribute to the development and maintenance of an atmosphere which makes it apparent to undergraduate students that the team members

respect and support one another

- team members’ relationships with undergraduate students should be professional at all times, both in class and outside of class
- observation of sections should not be intrusive, the timing of observations should be mutually negotiated, and the resulting feedback should be delivered in a supportive, constructive manner • an equal opportunity for learning and access to resources should be created across different sections for the same course

Situations that May Signal a Problem:

- frequent or regular lecturing by the teaching assistant in the place of the course director
- significant work added to the teaching assistant’s load which was not anticipated and discussed at the commencement of the course
- criticisms by teaching team members of each other, delivered to third persons before they are delivered to team members
- criticisms by teaching team members of one another to or in presence of undergraduate students
- unequal teaching loads for teaching assistants who are similarly situated
- unequal access to resources and opportunities for learning given to different undergraduate students in the same course
- a feeling of fear on the part of any team member to perform or freely communicate in their professional capacity

VI.5.6 Research

The Relationship between Faculty and Graduate Student Researchers

The University of California, Santa Barbara is classified as a Research University 1 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Department of Communication is committed to research that advances our understanding and knowledge of the human communication processes. We view collaborative research between graduate students and faculty as a vital component of our research mission.

Goals:

- quality research through an open exchange of ideas
- supportive research mentoring
- recognition of differing participant needs
- equitable recognition of contribution
- scholarship that enhances the understanding of human communication

Norms:

- participants should solicit each others' ideas
- participants should schedule regular research meetings to facilitate the project
- participants should be willing to discuss ideas contrary to one’s own
- participants should openly discuss the allocation of work
- recognition should be negotiated on the basis of work allocated
- faculty should provide instruction in the conduct and techniques of research
- students should communicate the extent of their knowledge and experience
- project expectations should be negotiated in advance
- project expectations should be explicitly renegotiated as warranted
- participants should follow through on negotiated deadlines
- participants’ practices should meet or exceed basic ethical standards of research

Situations that May Signal a Problem:

- participants feeling forced to do more work than they previously agreed
- participants feeling like they are not getting the recognition they deserve