

**Graduate Program Handbook
Department of Communication
Portland State University**

Masters in Communication

Overview

The Department of Communication offers graduate work leading to the Master of Science in Communication. We offer two tracks for master's students. The Research Track is designed for students who want to focus on communication research in their careers and for those interested in doctoral studies. The Professional Track is designed for students who prefer to focus on applying their studies to their careers in communication. Students decide at the time they apply which track is most suitable for them. Our faculty concentrate on research in the areas of media; politics; health; science and the environment; persuasion and propaganda; and language and social interaction.

Department Culture

Collegiality and collaboration are key elements to student success at Portland State University. Students are encouraged to work with faculty and other students on projects. Students collaborate on class assignments and may collaborate on research with faculty, presenting their findings at meetings and conferences. Students have also collaborated with faculty on published manuscripts, documents and reports.

The Communication Department values intellectual curiosity and ongoing learning. Be an active and contributing member. Attend departmental events, including colloquia, graduate student meetings, and social events to support each other and to increase how much you learn. Develop your own networks for now and later in your career. Today's peers from your cohort will be tomorrow's leaders.

Graduate Director

The Graduate Director is a faculty member who oversees and helps students in the graduate program. Students may seek advice on program planning, thesis procedures, and other questions about the program as a whole. Together with the Department Chair, the Graduate Director assigns graduate teaching assistants (GTA) to classes.

Faculty Mentor and Advisor

Faculty serve as program advisors in communication for all candidates admitted to the graduate program. A mentor is assigned to each incoming student and assists in deciding on the appropriate courses to take during the first year based on department requirements and areas of interest. Students should meet with their mentor to discuss goals together and develop an individual plan.

All students are required to secure a faculty advisor to guide them through their thesis or exams. Your advisor may be the same individual as the faculty mentor assigned when you arrived on campus, or you may ask an alternate faculty member to serve as advisor. You should choose your advisor spring term of your first year. Thereafter, your advisor will assist you in deciding on coursework.

Communication M.S. Program Details

All students must meet both University and Department requirements to successfully complete the graduate program in communication. To earn the MS in Communication, students must complete a total of 46 graduate credits, of which 40 are taken in coursework, plus an additional 6 credits toward the student's Thesis or Project (exam). Every student must complete three core courses (12 credits) in addition to elective courses (28 credits). After the required 40 credits of coursework, all students complete 6 credits toward their culminating thesis or project.

To fulfill the 28 elective credits required to complete this program, students are required to take a minimum of 20 credits of Communication 510-599 elective coursework. The remaining 8 credits of elective credit may be completed in several different ways. First, students may simply take additional Communication elective courses. Second, students may explore taking courses outside the Department towards this degree if they are approved by the student's program advisor in consultation with the Graduate Director. (Use the Course Substitution Form in Appendix D.)

Third, students are encouraged to take one credit of Comm 507 (Communication Research Apprenticeship) per quarter (a maximum of 6 credits may be counted toward the requirements of the degree). Comm 507 involves working closely with a faculty member in order to gain hands-on experience in how to conduct communication research. Each unit of 507 credit is associated with 4 hours per week of course time. 507 is graded P/NP.

Fourth, students may explore completing up to 8 credits through an internship, R&C, study abroad, or another similar experience. Such opportunities should be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the student's program advisor and the Graduate Director to determine the pedagogical or professional benefit. Pending approval, credits earned through such courses may be applied to the program requirements.

Program Requirements

Required Core Credits

Comm 511: Introduction to Communication Theory	4
Comm 521: Quantitative Methods in Communication Research	4
Comm 531: Qualitative Methods in Communication Research	4
Core Credits	12

Elective Credits

Comm 510-599 (at student's discretion)	20
Comm 500-599 OR outside courses (with faculty approval)	8
Elective Credits	28

Thesis/Project Credits

Minimum Required Credits 6

Minimum Core + Electives + Thesis/Project Credits Required 46

Program Options

All students complete one of the following with close supervision of their advisor.

a. Thesis

The thesis entails a systematic study of a significant problem and contributes to the body of knowledge relevant to the study. A thesis is a research report completed in close consultation with the student's academic advisor and may be either quantitative or qualitative. Each student who elects the thesis option will complete a written thesis and pass a final oral examination. Prior to beginning work on the thesis, students must demonstrate proficiency in relevant theories and research methods. Students must complete at least 6 thesis credits (Comm 503).

b. Project

Students who choose the Project Option work closely with their faculty advisor on planning a course of study grounded in relevant theories, concepts and practices. All students who choose this option must demonstrate appropriate research and methodological competency by successfully completing 3 exams as the culminating project. Students must complete at least 6 project credits (Comm 506).

c. 4+1 Bachelors plus Masters Degree

Students who are undergraduates in Communication at Portland State may apply in their junior year for the accelerated Bachelors plus Masters program. Students who complete this program take 4-5 courses during the senior year of their undergraduate degree at the 500-level that count for both the undergraduate and graduate program.

Sample Two Year Program (Full Time)

Year One

Fall	Winter	Spring
Comm 511 – Theory	Comm 531 – Qualitative	Comm 5xx – Elective
Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 521 – Quantitative	Comm 5xx – Elective
Comm 507 – Apprenticeship	Comm 507 – Apprenticeship	Comm 507 – Apprenticeship
- Meet with mentor at least once	- Meet with mentor at least once - Meet with each graduate faculty you might consider for your advisor - Apply by week 7 if you want to switch to research track	- Think about thesis or exam topics and methods - Secure an advisor by week 7 - Work with your advisor on a timeline and plan for remaining courses by finals

Over summer, you should write your thesis proposal if you are on the Research Track.

Year Two

Fall	Winter	Spring
Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 503 – Thesis OR Comm 506 – Project
Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 5xx – Elective or R&C	[Comm 507 – Apprenticeship]
Comm 507 – Apprenticeship	Comm 507 – Apprenticeship	
- Choose committee (thesis or exam) - Send thesis proposal to committee by week 3 - Thesis proposal meeting by week 5	- Work on thesis with advisor (data collection and analysis) - Submit GO-16M to have thesis committee appointed by TGS OR - Attend exam seminar and develop reading lists with exam committee by week 7	- Confirm GO-16M approval by reviewing DARS - Final thesis to committee by week 4 for a week 6 defense OR - Write exams by week 6

Apply for graduation by the first Friday of your anticipated graduation term:

<https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/applying-for-graduation>

Students must be mindful of several logistical graduation requirements:

<https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/summary-of-procedures-masters-degrees>

University forms:

<https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/forms>

Sample Program (Part Time)

Year One

Fall	Winter	Spring
Comm 511 – Theory	Comm 521 – Quantitative	Comm 5xx – Elective
- Meet with mentor at least once	- Meet with mentor at least once - Meet with each graduate faculty you might consider for your advisor - Apply by week 7 if you want to switch to research track	- Secure an advisor by week 7 - Work with your advisor on a timeline and plan for remaining courses by finals

Year Two

Fall	Winter	Spring
Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 531 – Qualitative	Comm 5xx – Elective
- Meet with advisor at least once	- Meet with advisor at least once	- Think about thesis or exam topics and methods

Year Three

Fall	Winter	Spring
Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 5xx – Elective	Comm 5xx – Elective
- Meet with advisor at least once	- Meet with advisor at least once	- Choose committee - Defend thesis proposal

Year Four

Fall	Winter
Comm 5xx – Elective or R&C	Comm 503 – Thesis OR Comm 506 – Project
- Work on thesis with advisor - Submit GO-16M to have thesis committee appointed by TGS OR - Develop reading lists with committee by week 7	- Confirm GO-16M approval by reviewing DARS - Final thesis to committee by week 4 for a week 6 defense OR - Write exams in week 6

Sample Program (Final Years of BA or BS + MS in Communication)

Communication majors may apply for admission to the Bachelors plus Masters program provided the following conditions have been met:

- Completed all core Communication undergraduate courses: Comm 300, Comm 311, and Comm 316 or Comm 326 with an average GPA of 3.7 or higher
- On track to complete at least 135 undergraduate credits towards the Bachelors degree before the fall term in which the student wishes to begin the Bachelors plus MS program.
- A GPA of 3.5 or above is required for all communication classes taken prior to entry into the MS program, along with a PSU institutional GPA of 3.3.

Fall		Winter		Spring		Notes/Milestones
COMM 511	4	COMM 521	4	Senior Capstone / Honors	6	COMM 511, 521, and three COMM 5xx electives to replace COMM 3xx and 4XX electives
Upper Division Elective	4	COMM 5xx Elective	4	COMM 5XX Elective	4	
Upper Division Elective	4	Upper Division Elective	4	COMM 5XX Elective	4	Secure a graduate faculty advisor spring term
General Elective	3	General Elective	2			Apply to MS by March 1
Total Credits	15	Total Credits	16	Total Credits	14	Total Credits: 45

Year Five (26-30 Graduate Credits)

Fall		Winter		Spring		Notes/Milestones
COMM 5xx Elective*	4	COMM 5xx Elective	4	Comm 506 – Project	6	Choose exam committee fall term
COMM 5xx Elective	4	COMM 5xx Elective	4	COMM 5XX Elective	4	Develop reading lists by week 7 of winter term
COMM 507	1	COMM 507	1			Write exams by week 6 of spring term
Total Credits	9	Total Credits	9	Total Credits	10	Total Credits: 28

* COMM 511 waived on strength of COMM 316 and 326 grades of A- or better for each.

Continuation Criteria

After beginning the Bachelors plus Masters program, continuation requirements include:

- maintaining a 3.3 PSU institutional GPA (university requirement)
- a B or higher on all graduate courses taken for shared credits (university requirement)
- a minimum 3.0 GPA each academic term
- satisfactorily complete each undergraduate course attempted (C or better)
- incompletes must be resolved within one academic term
- secure a graduate advisor before completing undergraduate requirements

Research and Professional Tracks

Research Track - Thesis

Students on the Research Track complete a thesis, which entails systematic study of a topic in the field of communication. Students complete a written research report that contributes to scholarship and pass an oral examination. Prior to beginning work on the thesis, students must demonstrate proficiency in relevant theories and research methods. Student's investigation may employ quantitative or qualitative methods. A thesis represents the independent work of the student under the supervision and guidance of the chair. Although the thesis is not required to show original results, and will not necessarily explore entirely new topics or ideas, it must reveal independent investigation, including the understanding and application of accepted methods of scholarship and research.

Students writing a thesis must be capable of working with minimal faculty supervision. Select your committee and prepare your preliminary thesis about 1 year prior to graduating. That is, the spring term of your first year should be the time you make decisions with your advisor about your topic and options. In consultation with your chair, you will begin working on your proposal. Once the proposal is approved, you begin work on the thesis.

Students are reminded that faculty members supervise graduate students in addition to their regular teaching load, research and administrative duties. Graduate students are expected to make efficient use of faculty time by preparing carefully in advance for each meeting with faculty members.

Students are required to complete a minimum of 6 Thesis credits (Comm 503).

NOTE: The requirement of independent investigation may include using data collected by previous researchers or in collaboration with other investigators. A common practice is to develop a thesis related to a faculty member's research program. Copies of theses and proposals are available for your review in the Communication Department.

Steps in the Process of Completing a Thesis

1. Select a general area of interest and working topic.

Choose a topic for your thesis no later than the beginning of your third quarter.

2. Select an advisor.

Your advisor (the chair of your thesis committee) provides guidance in the selection of a specific topic and overall approach for the thesis. The chair has primary responsibility for overseeing and approving the coursework that will be required to support the student's thesis, and for guiding the thesis from start to finish.

We urge you to work with a faculty chair whose scholarly interests match yours. (No faculty member is obligated to direct a thesis or serve on committees for any student). Students should be aware that faculty members must limit acceptance of new advisees because of

workloads. Flexibility in the choice of a topic, chair and committee will minimize frustration and optimize the student's learning experience. Faculty members will suggest appropriate topics related to their own scholarly interests.

3. Select committee members.

Work with your advisor in selecting an appropriate committee. The committee includes your chair plus two additional faculty members. Two of the committee members (the chair and one other member) must be from the student's department; the third member may be from the student's department or may be PSU faculty from another department or OHSU faculty. To solicit prospective committee members, provide them with a pre-proposal that briefly outlines your proposed thesis (1-5 pages). Faculty can then review this and make some determination of their suitability to work with you. Schedule a face-to-face meeting to address questions. You cannot automatically assume someone will serve as a chair or committee member.

4. Write your thesis proposal.

The thesis proposal must specify what questions/hypotheses will be addressed by the thesis, what research will be undertaken, and what form the thesis will take. It is comprehensive and includes detailed purpose and method sections as well as a substantial theory (literature review) section in which the student will summarize and evaluate pertinent literature.

A complete proposal usually constitutes a draft of the introduction, theory/literature review chapter, and proposal methods. During development of the proposal, the student and chair may make changes in the thesis committee to enhance guidance on the specific thesis topic or area.

5. Schedule your proposal meeting.

With approval from the chair, the student arranges a meeting for all committee members. The revised, completed proposal must be received by each committee member **at least 2 weeks** prior to the meeting. Send the completed thesis proposal to the committee by week 3 of the fall term of second year.

In the proposal meeting, the student will orally present a synopsis of the proposal. Committee members ask questions, make recommendations and may request changes to be completed before the student initiates the project.

NOTE: Students may not enroll for thesis credit until their thesis committee has approved the thesis proposal.

6. Complete your thesis.

Following approval of the proposal, students meet with their chair to ascertain expectations. Sometimes students decide they need additional courses. If writing problems are identified, the student should expect to obtain editing assistance.

Human Participants

Any thesis involving the study of human participants must have approval of the Human Subjects

Research Review Committee. All pertinent forms can be found on the Research and Strategic Partnerships (RSP) website.

Appointment of Master's Thesis Committee

After obtaining approval from the IRB, submit the GO-16M (see the Graduate School's website) to have the thesis committee approved by the Graduate School. You must confirm that the GO-16M was approved on your DARS before scheduling your thesis defense.

Data Collection and Writing

In coordination with your advisor, you will obtain data and write the remainder of your thesis. Follow APA formatting and adhere to the Graduate School's very specific formatting requirements (described online).

Thesis Oral Defense & Completion

To schedule your defense, be sure to complete the Thesis Defense Scheduling Form (see Appendix D). The oral defense should not be scheduled until the advisor confirms the candidate is ready, and TGS confirms the thesis committee has been approved. Run your DARS to confirm that your committee has been approved and all other degree requirements have been met. It is the responsibility of the student, in consultation with the chair, to plan sufficient time for writing, review, and correction before giving the document to the committee (prior to the oral defense). Enrollment in at least 1 graduate credit each quarter as students work on or defend the thesis is required.

The student must distribute advisor-approved, complete copies of the thesis at least 2 weeks before the oral thesis defense date. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the date, time and place for the defense by coordinating with the committee members. The student should note that most faculty have 9-month appointments and are unavailable in the summer.

The oral thesis defense consists of the presentation and discussion of a student's thesis work. At the start of each defense, the student provides a brief summary of the work at hand. This presentation is open to the public and also includes a short question-and-answer period. Following this presentation, the faculty committee members briefly confer in private before welcoming only the student back for a closed-door discussion of the thesis. Students should bring a GO-17M and Thesis Signature Page to the defense with the top portion complete.

The thesis is not complete until content approval is given by the full committee and formatting approval is given by the Graduate School. Committees typically ask students to make revisions and clarifications after the oral defense. The final, content-approved (by the committee) thesis must be submitted to TGS by a specific deadline in order to graduate in a given term. The Graduate School provides a calendar of dates as well as guidelines for electronic thesis formatting and submission requirements on its website. You must complete this process (and apply for graduation) for your degree to be granted.

Professional Track - Exams

The Professional Track is designed for students who prefer to focus on applying their studies to careers in communication. Professional Track students typically complete written exams as their culminating projects, although they may elect to write a thesis if their advisor approves. Students taking exams are required to complete a minimum of 6 Project credits (Comm 506) in preparation for their exams and must pass three exams: two in theories and one in methods (qualitative or quantitative). We encourage students to work with their committee members to develop topic areas focused on solving a problem with communication methods and theory.

The comprehensive exam option is designed to be equal to the thesis option in rigor and level of required effort. Students should expect to spend at least one quarter preparing for the exam. Students should be prepared for the possibility that they may be required to rewrite one or more questions if they fail any question on the first try. Rewrites require an additional quarter of Comm 506 to prepare adequately.

Students enroll in COMM 506 when completing the exams (minimum of 6 credits).

Steps in the Process of Completing Exams

1. Select an advisor.

Your advisor provides guidance in the selection of specific topics for your exam questions. Your advisor also has primary responsibility for overseeing and approving the coursework that will be required to support your exams.

2. Select committee members and exam areas.

In consultation with the advisor, you will select a committee of 2-3 faculty members (the advisor and 1-2 other faculty members) who agree to write exam questions. All committee members must be faculty in the Communication department. As you select committee members, you will also choose the areas in which you will write. You must have taken at least 4 credits of coursework in each area that you choose.

3. Develop a reading list, and prepare for exams.

You will propose a reading list in each exam area, based on previous course readings, research projects, and a search of the relevant literature. The committee member responsible for each question will work with you on revisions (and often expansions) to the reading list. The reading lists will often include several thousand pages of scholarly books, journal articles, and book chapters. Submit a draft reading list to the committee member writing the exam question by the end of week 1 of the term prior to taking exams. Submit finalized readings lists and the Exam Grade Template (see Appendix D) by week 7 of the term prior to taking exams. You should check in with your advisor and committee members about expectations and questions that you have as you study.

4. Sitting for the exams.

Exams are offered over the course of an academic term during the regular academic year. They are open note and take-home. Students will receive their exam questions from the department by email the morning of the first Friday of the term that they have elected to take exams. Answers to the exam must be returned to the graduate director by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday of the sixth week of the exam term. Most exams will require roughly 20 pages for an adequate answer, not including references. Answers are expected to be written in polished, grammatically correct prose following APA format (12-point font, double spaced, 1 inch margins) guidelines. Your exams must be entirely your own work, with no collaboration or input from others.

With prior written permission from your committee, you may include limited *relevant* selections quoted or adapted from your own previous work, with appropriate self-citation. (Re-using your own previously written material without citation is self-plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty.) However, the bulk of each answer should represent new material, explicitly written in response to the question. It is important to address all facets of the question in depth.

Exam Scoring

The faculty members on your exam committee will read and score the exams. Faculty have two weeks to grade the exams. For each exam question, you will receive one of the following grades: pass, marginal pass (with revisions required), or fail (with rewrite required). Incomplete responses or responses lacking sufficient depth and rigor will lead to a fail or marginal pass.

You must pass all 3 questions to successfully complete the exam. If you receive 1-2 marginal passes (and a pass), you will have the option to revise the exams during the same term. Exam revisions will be due by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday of week 10 of the term. If you receive 3 marginal passes or if you fail any of the exams, you will be given one additional chance to pass. You will re-take the failed exam(s) at the next time they are offered (e.g. the following term). The questions do not change for your re-take. If you have not passed all 3 exams on the second sitting (which does not allow for a round of revisions), you will be dismissed from the program.

Graduation

Whether you are completing the program with exams or a thesis, be mindful that there are several steps that students must take to graduate. It is each student's responsibility to complete the paperwork necessary to graduate. See the next page for a checklist to follow. Please review the university requirements outlined in the links below and coordinate with your advisor.

<https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/applying-for-graduation>

<https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/summary-of-procedures-masters-degrees>

<https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/forms>

Graduation Checklist

All Students:

- ☐ Apply for graduation via Banweb.
 - Must be completed no later than first Friday of spring term.
- ☐ Review DARS at start of graduation term to confirm graduation requirements have been met; request any missing substitutions/exceptions from Graduate Director (see form in Appendix D).

Thesis Students:

Completion of Thesis:

- ☐ Schedule proposal defense with faculty committee members
- ☐ [GO-16M Form](#) due post-proposal defense (minimum 2 weeks before end of term preceding term in which thesis is defended)
- ☐ Thesis defense must be 5 weeks before end of graduation term at the latest
 - Completed thesis draft is due to committee minimum 14 days before defense
 - Final thesis (with completed edits) due to the Graduate School 3 weeks before the end of the graduation term
 - See the formatting requirements [here](#)
- ☐ [GO-17M Form](#) due post-thesis defense at conclusion of graduation term
 - Student is not permitted to handle GO-17M once it is signed

Additional Steps for Graduation:

- ☐ Complete the [electronic thesis deposit process with ProQuest](#)
- ☐ Complete an [electronic thesis access form](#)
- ☐ Complete a [thesis signature form](#)

Exam Students:

- ☐ Submit the Comprehensive Exam Form (found in the Student Handbook) to the Grad Director no later than the last week preceding the examination term.
- ☐ After the exams are passed, the Grad Director submits a DARS exception to notify the Graduate School & facilitate graduation.
 - Students should verify their DARS report shows degree completion before the end of their graduation term. Contact the Grad Director if there are any issues.

Academic Policies

Full and Part Time Options

Full-time student status is defined by the University as a minimum of 9 credits per term. Communication students meet the requirement by taking 2 four-credit courses and 1 one-credit course each term. Only full-time students are eligible for Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantships. Part-time status means students enroll in 1 to 8 credits per term.

Students are expected to take courses continuously (except during summer terms) regardless of whether you are full-time or part-time. You will need the approval of the Graduate Director if you wish to take a leave. You must sign up for at least 1 credit of graduate work to ensure minimum enrollment, including if you have finished coursework and are working on your thesis or exams. All coursework applied to the master's degree program must be completed within the seven years prior to the awarding of the degree (e.g., a course started in the fall term of 2009 will be beyond the seven-year limitation at the close of fall term 2016).

Transfer Credit

Please be mindful there are several requirements when requesting approval to transfer credits into the program at Portland State. You will need approval from the Communication faculty in addition to approval from PSU's Graduate School (TGS). Submit a GO-21 form your first term at PSU to request transfer credit.

Interdisciplinary Coursework

The study of human communication is interdisciplinary, drawing on methods and theories from a variety of humanistic and social science disciplines. Students may take 4 credits in another department in lieu of a Communication elective with approval from the Communication faculty. Talk to your advisor about appropriate courses, and submit a Course Substitution form to the Graduate Director when you have earned a grade in the course you would like to count. Submit the form as soon as you have earned a grade to ask for a DARS exception, so that course will count correctly on your DARS audit. In some circumstances, an additional external elective may be allowed to count towards the Communication MS degree at the Communication faculty's discretion.

Conditional Status

Students are admitted to the Graduate Program in Communication on a conditional basis. Each spring the graduate faculty review the progress of each student who is still on conditional status. Students who are deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress will be moved to regular status. Students will be informed of the faculty's action after the review is completed. If you are not advanced to regular status, meet with your faculty advisor immediately to discuss needed remedial action. A written plan will be put in place that outlines the specific expectations that need to be met and the time frame for doing so.

Academic Probation (University Guidelines)

A graduate student with regular or conditional degree status will be placed on probation if the student's cumulative graduate GPA at PSU, based on a minimum of 9 or more letter-graded graduate credits after admission to the graduate level at PSU, falls below 3.00. While on academic probation the student will not be permitted to graduate, to receive or continue to hold a graduate assistantship, or to register for more than a total of 9 graduate credits in any term. Removal of academic probation occurs if the cumulative graduate GPA is brought to 3.00 within the next 9 graduate credits in graded courses after beginning probation.

Academic Disqualification (University Guidelines)

Disqualification occurs if:

1. A student on academic probation fails to achieve a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher within the next 9 letter-graded graduate credits after beginning probation status; or
2. A student becomes subject to academic probation for a second time.

A student who is disqualified may not register for any graduate courses at PSU.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

University Guidelines - Graduate students who do not make satisfactory progress toward the degree may have admission to the degree program cancelled. Criteria for dismissal from graduate programs include:

- Failure to validate admission by registering and paying for at least one credit.
- Academic disqualification.
- Academic dishonesty.

In addition to above PSU guidelines for satisfactory progress, the Communication department requires that graduate students achieve the following:

- Secure an academic advisor by their third term.
- Achieve a minimum 3.0 GPA each academic term.
- Earn a minimum of 12 credits toward the communication degree each academic year until coursework is completed.
- Satisfactorily complete each course attempted (C or better); incompletes must be resolved within one academic term.
- Register for at least 1 credit each year unless on academic leave after coursework is completed.

The nature of remediation for failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress will be at the discretion of the department. We will send you a letter, and you need to schedule a meeting within 2 weeks to discuss remediation. Unless otherwise agreed at the meeting, you will have one academic term to achieve satisfactory progress, or your admission to the degree program may be cancelled.

Office Policies

Graduate Student Office Space

The communication department provides graduate students with resources to help them succeed. Graduate Teaching Assistants are assigned cubicles within UCB 440K and mailboxes in the front of UCB 440. Graduate students who are not GTAs are able to use open cubicles. Each cubicle has a computer with SPSS and other lab software installed. Additionally, graduate students may reserve time in UCB 441, the Communication Department conference room, or in UCB 442, the Communication Research Collaboratory. We strongly encourage graduate students to make use of these spaces since interaction among students is an important part of the graduate school experience.

Please see the department staff if you would like a key. Keys to the department allow access to the main UCB 440 office, UCB 440K, and the kitchen (with a microwave and refrigerator). Be responsible in your use of these spaces by cleaning up after yourself. If you are in the office on evenings or weekends, you are responsible for keeping doors locked and turning off lights when you leave. You may only allow guests (e.g. undergraduate students or classmates) if you have permission from Communication faculty or office managers. You are responsible for overseeing anyone who you allow into the space when the office is closed.

Photocopying and Supplies

You may only use the department photocopier and printers for materials related to your department teaching and research assignments. You may not copy articles or materials for personal use (including for your coursework, thesis, or exams). You may similarly use office supplies (e.g. pens, paper, etc.) for teaching and research assignments only. Confirm with front office staff before taking any supplies.

Email

You are responsible for checking both your university and Canvas email daily throughout academic terms. The university and department will send updates about graduate student events and resources through the pdx email. Confirm that you are included on the Communication Graduate Student email group and calendar.

Appendix A

UNIVERSITY SERVICES

Graduate School (TGS): TGS is the primary resource for students, faculty, and staff regarding graduate policy and procedures. <https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/>

Disability Resource Center (DRC): 116 Smith; (503) 725-4150; drc@pdx.edu

Disability Statement: It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center in order to establish reasonable accommodations. <https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center/>

Campus Resources: <https://www.pdx.edu/student-life/resource-centers>

Research Resources: Visit the areas in the Library devoted to social science, education, humanities and business. The Library offers orientations at the beginning of each term. Become familiar with the journals and electronic resources of each area. Interlibrary loan is also available to graduate students.

Student Health & Counseling (SHAC): UCB 200; (503) 725-2800. All students taking 9 or more credit hours and students who pay the health fee, are eligible to use SHAC.

Student Rec Center: 1800 SW 6th Ave. All students are members and can use the exercise facilities and free group exercise classes.

Office of Information Technology: The Helpdesk is located in the basement of Smith. For more information about labs and computing services at PSU, go to:
<https://www.pdx.edu/technology/support> To check your printing quota, go to:
<http://print.pdx.edu/>

Writing Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/> Writing Center offers professional critique of student work for all writing abilities. Repeat appointments with a consistent person are advised.

Inclement Weather Information: Every student is responsible for verifying weather conditions and the University's operational status prior to coming to campus. PSU procedures for closure notification include the university website (www.pdx.edu) and switchboard (503-725-3000).

Basic/Emergency Needs: <https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/find-help>

CARE Team: CARE connects students with resources when they are experiencing distress and/or other issues that might impact their ability to function at their best in and outside of the classroom. <https://www.pdx.edu/dean-student-life/care>

Child Care: 126 Smith; (503) 725-CARE

Committee for Improving Student Food Security: <https://www.pdx.edu/student-access-center/>

Office of Global Diversity & Inclusion: 503-725-4432. Serves faculty, staff, and students that believe that they have been the recipients of harassment or discrimination (e.g., sexual, racial, etc.).

Cultural Resource Centers: The mission of the Cultural Resource Centers is to create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. We honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success and leadership. Resources include study space, computer labs, events, student jobs, and leadership opportunities. Centers include La Casa Latina Student Center, Multicultural Student Center, Native American Student & Community Center, Pacific Islander, Asian & Asian American Student Center, and Pan-African Commons.

Women's Resource Center: The PSU Women's Resource Center advocates for the best educational and campus experience for all members of our community. We accomplish this by advancing social justice and by working towards a safe and healthy campus. Located in the basement of the Montgomery Housing Building; 503-725-5672

Queer Resource Center: The Queer Resource Center provides students along the sexuality and gender spectrum with the support they need to persist to graduation. The Queer Resource Center's vision is to facilitate a campus environment such that Portland State University is the higher education destination of choice for students, staff, and faculty along the sexuality and gender spectrum. 458 Smith Memorial Student Union: 503-725-9742

Quiet Prayer and Meditation Lounge: This lounge is open to all students. It is a quiet and tranquil space where students are encouraged to pray, meditate, relax, etc. It is located in the basement of Smith Memorial Union Building (Room 047).

Campus Public Safety Office: The Campus Public Safety Office can be contacted at its non-emergency number, 5-4407, for escort services, free of charge. They will escort students to their bus, car, apartment, or office on campus and up to two blocks off campus.

Facilities & Property Management: 503-725-2FIX (2349)

National Graduate Student Crisis Line: Available 24 hours a day at 1-800-GRAD-HLP. Note that this is not a PSU-specific resource.

Appendix B

Graduate Assistantships

A graduate assistant receives tuition remission in addition to the stipend earned. The amount of the stipend will vary depending on the FTE offered. The tuition paid by the student is variable depending upon the tuition rate in the current tuition tables. Please note that tuition remission is for instructional fees only. Other miscellaneous fees and health insurance are the responsibility of the student. All graduate assistantships follow guidelines in the Graduate Employee Union contract at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1at9J-g91kPz3xBUWRICwi9Gq62jlu7c-/view>

Responsibilities

Graduate Teaching Assistants are required to get in touch with their supervising faculty member beginning September 16, which is the date contracts for fall term begin. GTAs are encouraged to discuss their obligations with the faculty member and make sure that all expectations are clear. GTAs should be on campus until all exams are given and grades are entered at the end of the term (see the Academic Calendar on the PSU website: <https://www.pdx.edu/registration/calendar>). If grades are due past the date of the contract's end, make arrangements in advance with the supervising faculty member.

In accord with federal law, you must keep students' grades confidential. For each course that you TA, you are responsible for reviewing the Code of Confidentiality.

TA for mixed Undergraduate-Graduate-Level Courses

When serving as a GTA in a mixed undergraduate-graduate course, the GTA should not oversee or assign grades to other graduate students' work.

Departmental Expectations

Be Professional

As graduate teaching assistants, you should expect to come to each class session. Faculty rely on your presence. If you will miss a class, you need to talk to the faculty member in advance as early as possible. Follow your contract policies for submitting for any sick leave.

In addition to class time, you should also hold 2 office hours each week to meet with students. Work with your supervising faculty to determine when you will hold your office hours, and inform the office managers of your regularly scheduled hours and any time that you need to deviate from them. If students do not visit your office hours, you may use them for other grading or class management duties.

Dress appropriately for a professional environment during classes and whenever you meet with students.

Be Responsive

Reply to faculty and students swiftly and thoroughly. You need to check your email (both Canvas and pdx) daily, and respond to all emails within 24 hours. Be sure to cc faculty on all

emails with students.

Be Honest

To teach large and/or demanding courses, faculty rely on you. If you need something, do not understand something, or will not be able to meet a deadline, let them know. As a Communication department, we value upfront communication about any problems or mistakes, so we can address them as quickly as possible.

Be a Positive Example

Undergraduate students watch you and perceive you as a leader. Please be aware that they will adopt the behaviors that you model for them. If you send casual emails, they will too. If you are sloppy in your preparations, they will be sloppy in their approach to the course. If you putter around online during lecture, they will take note. As a GTA, please strive to model good habits for our students. Come to class, pay attention, and be prepared.

Be Kind

We want our students to learn and succeed. With this in mind, it is our responsibility to challenge them – and to help lift them up so that they can meet course expectations. Some students will struggle at times on exams and assignments. It is painful to receive a low grade. Given this, it is especially important that our students know that we care about them. In interactions with students – in person, and when grading – be certain that you are kind, gentle, and fair. It is OK when students earn a bad grade, but please be very careful about making students feel bad about themselves. If students do not earn high grades, it is especially important for them to understand why. Our job is to inspire, not to discourage.

Ineligibility for Funding Due to Substandard Performance

When a faculty member supervising a graduate assistant notes that the GTA is not performing the duties of the position at an acceptable level:

1. The faculty member will meet with the student to discuss concerns and make suggestions, where possible, about how to improve subsequent performance.
2. If concerns persist, the faculty member will inform the Graduate Director for mediation and appropriate action.
3. The Graduate Director will meet separately with the faculty member and the student before making a determination. After meeting with both the faculty member and the student, the Graduate Director will make a decision about the student's continued eligibility for funding, and if funded, whether the student is assigned to a different faculty member.

Appendix C

Academic Honesty (University Guidelines)

Graduate students have a primary, unique relationship and responsibility to the faculty of the academic departments, the faculty upon whose recommendations graduate degrees are awarded. A major feature of the graduate student's responsibilities to the faculty is the adherence to academic honesty. Academic honesty is a requirement for all graduate activities and assumes that the student is honest, that all coursework and examinations represent the student's own work, and that all documents supporting the student's admission and graduation are accurate and complete. Any violation of academic honesty may be subject to disciplinary sanction as provided in the PSU Student Conduct Code.

Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to:

1. Cheating in examinations and course assignments. The willful use or provision to others of unauthorized materials in written or oral examinations or in course assignments.
2. Plagiarism. The appropriation of language, ideas, and products of another author or artist and representation of them as one's own original work; failure to provide proper identification of source data; use of purchased or borrowed papers in graduate courses without complete identification of the source. This can include the use of generative AI.
3. Selling or offering to sell course assignment materials. Selling or offering to sell material to another person; knowing, or under circumstances having reason to know, that the whole or a substantial part of the material is intended to be submitted in fulfillment of a course requirement.
4. Academic fraud. Furnishing false or incomplete information to the University with the intent to deceive; forging, altering, or misusing University documents or academic forms which serve as the basis for admission, course study, or graduation; misrepresenting a person's identity to an instructor or other University official.

Appendix D

Communication MS Forms

The following forms are available from the front desk, or you may print them from here.

Communication Graduate Course Substitution Form – For use if you wish to earn credit toward your MS degree for a course taken outside the department

Scheduling Thesis Defense Form – Complete before scheduling your thesis defense.

Exam Grade Template Form – Complete before taking your exams.

Name _____ PSU ID _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address (print clearly) _____ Phone _____

Catalog Year (term started this degree program at PSU) _____ Advisor (if current student) _____

I request that the course (number) _____ (title) _____

that I took in (term and year) _____, earning a grade of _____

be allowed to count as a communication elective.

In support of this request, I submit the following attached evidence:

☐ Copy of DARS report with course(s) highlighted

☐ (required) Copy of course description(s) (required)

☐ Copy of course syllabus (required)

☐ Other _____

Reason for request:

Advisor Recommendation

☐ Approve (Comment) _____

☐ Do not approve (Date) _____

Advisor Signature _____

Graduate Director Endorsement

☐ Approve (Comment) _____

☐ Do not approve (Date) _____

Graduate Director Signature _____

**MS in Communication
Scheduling Thesis Defense Form**

Student Name (Last, First):

Date:

PSU ID Number: _____

Email: _____

Advisor: _____

Title of Thesis: _____

☐ Ran DARS (must attach form)

☐ Complete Course Substitute Form (if necessary)

☐ GO-16M is approved (confirm on DARS)

Defense Date: _____

Time: _____

Advisor Signature:

Date:

Note: GO-17M and signature page required at thesis defense

Comprehensive Exam

Graduate students should work with their advisors to complete this form by Week 7 of the term prior to sitting the exam. Examiners must be graduate faculty of the Department of Communication, and the committee may include 2-3 faculty members.

Exams are offered over the course of an academic term during the regular academic year. They are open note and take-home. Students will receive their exam questions from the department by email the morning of the first Friday of the term that they have elected to take exams. Answers to the exam must be returned to the graduate director by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday of the sixth week of the exam term. Exam questions are emailed to students, and responses should be emailed back to the committee and Graduate Director.

Student's Name: _____ PSU ID # _____

Student's Phone: _____ Student's Email: _____

Advisor: _____

First Theory Question

Faculty: _____ Topic: _____

Second Theory Question

Faculty: _____ Topic: _____

Method Question _____

Faculty: _____ Topic: _____

Reading Lists Approved Date: _____ Exam Term: _____

NOTE: A copy of the form will be placed in the student's file so that faculty can complete the pass/fail sections once exams are evaluated. The Graduate Director adds the results to the student's official file.

[Complete this section after the exam responses have been received]

		<u>Retake</u>
1. First Theory Question		
Faculty signature: _____	☐ PASS	☐ PASS
	☐ MARGINAL	☐ MARGINAL
	☐ FAIL	☐ FAIL
2. Second Theory Question		
Faculty signature: _____	☐ PASS	☐ PASS
	☐ MARGINAL	☐ MARGINAL
	☐ FAIL	☐ FAIL
3. Methodology Question		
Faculty signature: _____	☐ PASS	☐ PASS
	☐ MARGINAL	☐ MARGINAL
	☐ FAIL	☐ FAIL