Department of Communication Studies

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Graduate Program Handbook

2024-2025

(for students matriculating Fall 2024 and later)

This handbook is available online via https://comm.uga.edu/graduate-student-handbook-0. Adjustments to this handbook may occur with faculty approval, and revised electronic copies will be posted on the department's website. Any questions or suggestions for improvement should be directed to Dr. Analisa Arroyo (arroyo@uga.edu).

For specific information on teaching and instructor rules and regulations, please consult the Department of Communication Studies' Instructor Manual.

I. DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS & POLICIES

A. Contact Procedures

A.1. COMM Staff

- **Angie Switon-Hart,** *Academic Advisor/Undergraduate Coordinator Assistant.* Angie can be contacted for questions relating to course sectioning and room assignments; she also helps with registration.

- **Kayla Jones,** *Graduate Coordinator Assistant.* Kayla is graduate students' resource for all graduate program and university requirements and procedures. Kayla also facilitates exam copying, undergraduate student pick-up/drop-offs, mail distribution, etc. All incoming deliveries from undergraduate students should be made to the front office. Students should not be provided direct access to a graduate student's personal mailbox.

- **Tara Funderburk**, *Assistant to the Department Head and Debate Program.* Tara facilitates travel arrangements and can help with travel authorities and travel reimbursement.

- **Franklin OIT Helpdesk** (https://franklin.uga.edu/office-information-technology). Franklin OIT Helpdesk can be utilized in support of any computer or software issues experienced with graduate student computers including the lab and the classroom. Students have to log in using their UGA MyID and fill out a ticket to receive support.

A.2. Faculty with Administrative Responsibilities (2024-2025)

Students should feel free to contact any faculty members about course-related issues or general concerns. However, the following faculty members have designated responsibilities in the following areas:

- **Dr. Roger Stahl**, Department Head

- **Dr. Kelly Happe**, Associate Department Head

- **Dr. Analisa Arroyo**, Graduate Program Coordinator

- **Dr. Barbara Biesecker**, Undergraduate Program Coordinator

- **TBD**, Interpersonal, Intergroup, & Health Communication Studies Area Chair

- **TBD**, Rhetorical Studies Area Chair

- **Dr. Hillary Palmer**, COMM 1110 Coordinator

- **Dr. Christin Huggins**, COMM 1500 Coordinator

- **Dr. Sachiko Terui**, Internship Coordinator

- **Dr. Mackensie Minniear**, Colloquium Coordinator, Research Pool Coordinator

A.3. Listservs

The Graduate School contacts students via a listserv to remind students of deadlines, to provide information about seminars, and to share other pertinent news. These are courtesy emails only; students are never excused from meeting Graduate School deadlines. In addition, the Graduate Coordinator Assistant sends out a courtesy email at the beginning of each fall and spring semester reminding students of important departmental, Graduate School, and conference submission deadlines.

Listserv Addresses:

- comm@listserv.uga.edu (all members including graduate students, staff, and faculty)

- commgrad@listserv.uga.edu (All graduate students, graduate coordinator, graduate coordinator assistant

B. COMM Graduate Forum

The COMM Graduate Forum is an important component of the department's community. Some of the objectives of the Forum are to: (a) address specific concerns of graduate students regarding our department; (b) develop, in conjunction with the department, colloquia involving both graduate students and faculty and guest speaker series on topics relevant to the field and of interest to graduate students; and (c) foster a sense of community among the graduate students and to promote interaction between students and faculty. Officers are elected from the active members in the spring. One member of the Forum attends faculty meetings as a non-voting member to share graduate student perspectives and to report back to the graduate students any information that might be of interest.

Officers for 2024-2025:

- **Mik Davis**, President

- **Joey Konrad**, Treasurer

- **Taylor Vanderveen**, Social Chair

- **Matty Ray & Malek Sebri**, Spotlight Scholar Co-Chairs

C. Spaces in the Department

1. Graduate Student Offices (513)

Graduate students will be provided with a desk, filing cabinet, and shelf on a shared bookshelf. Graduate student mailboxes and the graduate student copy machine are also in this room. There are no individual printers in offices; printing and copying are centralized.

2. Graduate break room (514)

The graduate break room is available to all graduate students in the department. It has a refrigerator, sink, toaster oven, and microwave for shared use. If anything

is put in the fridge, be sure a name is printed on it. Please clean up after using the break room, as custodial staff are not responsible for this area.

3. Conference room (503)

Research meetings, Program of Study meetings, and oral evaluations (i.e., defenses") are frequently held in this room. To reserve this room, students should contact the Graduate Coordinator Assistant. If students bring food or drink into the conference room, they should be sure to clean up after themselves.

Dissertations and theses written by department graduates are kept in this room. If a student wishes to view one of these, they can sign it out with the Graduate Coordinator Assistant.

4. Conference room (606)

Faculty meetings, seminars, and other departmental meetings are held here.

5. Seminar room (607)

Most graduate seminars are held here. Classes have priority for use.

D. Equipment in the Department and at UGA

The department owns several laptops, digital recorders, and cameras that students may check out for instructional or research use. Please see the Assistant to the Department Head to check out equipment.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) also provides instructional equipment and a large media catalog of audio/visual programs available for graduate students. CTL is in the Instructional Plaza beside the Journalism Building. They deliver and pick up equipment to classrooms on campus. There is an office housed in the Miller Learning Center (MLC), where students may go to get keys for classrooms and instructor lounges.

E. Photocopying

Photocopying is a major expense for the department. If copying work is for research a student is doing with a professor, or if the student is a teaching assistant for a professor, the Graduate Coordinator Assistant will make the copies with the faculty and staff copy machine. To do so, students should provide the Graduate Coordinator Assistant with the document, and indicate the number of copies needed, whether they should be printed 1- or 2-sided, if it should be stapled or not, the type of paper to print on, and the date that the copies are needed. For students' own teaching-related copies, the graduate student copy machine is in Room 513. Please notify the Graduate Coordinator Assistant whenever the copier needs toner or is not working properly.

Copying should be kept to an *absolute minimum*. To reduce copying expenses, instructors are expected to post their syllabi and course policy statements, assignments, and other instructional material on eLearning Commons(eLC). When eLC accounts are created for classes, the Undergraduate Coordinator and the teaching supervisor must have access to those accounts; students should list them as instructors as well. Students must use the web interfaces provided by the

University of Georgia for their classes.

Exam copies will be ready for pick-up in the mailroom if a request containing all necessary information is submitted to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant at least 72 business hours before the exam. Requests submitted with less than 72 hours' notice may be fulfilled at the discretion of the staff. Please note that all rush requests may be accommodated, particularly during peak times such as finals and midterms. Additionally, since the staff may be handling exams for multiple classes during these busy periods, errors can occur. Please ensure a thorough check to confirm that all pages are present and in the correct order before distributing them to students.

F. Research Pool: Soliciting Participants

Students enrolled in Introduction to Public Speaking (COMM1110) and Interpersonal Communication (COMM1500) are required to earn **2** research credits to satisfy the research requirement. To do so, they have the option of participating in departmental-sponsored research studies or an alternative research option, which may vary by semester and will be detailed in the course workbooks and on the department website.

Additionally, upper-level courses may offer students the opportunity for research participation as a course requirement or in exchange for extra credit. Students must complete a separate research opportunity for each course where they are to receive credit (so stress to students that there is no "double dipping").

Graduate students conducting or facilitating research studies should read the University of Georgia's Policies on Human Subjects. As researchers, graduate students are responsible to ensure that research options provided for students meet these ethical guidelines. Specific obligations are required to comply with the guidelines. First, graduate students must have their research project approved by the UGA Institutional Review Board, and then follow departmental guidelines for requesting approval from the Research Pool Coordinator, securing lab space if necessary, and granting credit to students in a timely manner.

F.1. Students and Research Participation

By participating in a research option, students can earn credit toward their **2**-credit research requirement in one of the basic courses or receive extra credit in an upper division course. (Students in COMM1110 or COMM1500 CANNOT receive extra credit).

The Communication Studies Department offers several research options to fulfill this requirement with varying credit allotment. These options will be described in the course workbooks and online at https://comm.uga.edu/research-opportunities. Specific opportunities will be announced by email throughout the semester and listed in our SONA portal at https://uga-comm.sona-systems.com/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=/.

All COMM1500 and COMM1110 students will have a copy of the document entitled "UGA Communication Research Participation: Information for Students" in their course workbooks. This information is also available on our

department website (https://comm.uga.edu/research-opportunities-0). For **all** graduate instructors whose courses have a research credit component, please make sure you have read this document and discuss the research requirement and all research options with students.

Instructors must also follow the specific instructions provided in an email to all instructors by the Research Pool Coordinator at the beginning of the semester. This will show you how to create an Instructor account in SONA, so that you can pull a credit report at the end of the semester. Additionally, you will need to provide a separate instructions document to students on how to set up a participant account in SONA.

Important: Remember to add your courses that are offering/requiring research credit to the Google spreadsheet circulated at the beginning of the semester. Otherwise, your courses will not be entered into the SONA system and your students will not be able to select them to designate credit.

F.2. Guidelines for Conducting Research Using the Research Pool

Students enrolled in COMM 8700 will learn about the UGA Institutional Review Board/Human Subjects Office (IRB) and the Communication Studies Department's Research Pool Procedures. New students must also go online to complete the CITI certificate. All graduate students must go through the CITI training process at UGA even if they have obtained a similar certificate at a prior institution.

Conducting research in the Communication Studies Department involves a multi-stage process. Students must adhere to the following guidelines while researching. Failure to follow any of the following guidelines will result in the project's immediate cessation. Further, if a graduate student researcher receives three (3) separate complaints during a study, the research project will be suspended until the student appears before the Executive Committee and is granted permission to continue the research study.

***Graduate students wishing to use the *lab space* for their research should contact the Graduate Coordinator Assistant. To schedule *classroom space*, see the departmental Graduate Coordinator Assistant.

Step 1: Notification of anticipation for research

By the Friday of Week 3 of each semester, researchers must email the Research Pool Coordinator about their anticipation to collect data for that semester. This notification should include a completed form (see Step 3), which will include:

- Researcher/Supervisor names

- Preliminary study title

- Study type (Lab vs. Online)

- Anticipated launch time (Week X or Month X)

- Estimated number of participants and justification for this number (e.g.,

results of a statistical power analysis or norms for your area of research) *

- Any specific eligibility requirements (e.g., female students 18 and older)

- IRB status (approved; under review; not yet submitted)

If a researcher does not notify the Research Pool Coordinator by Friday of Week 3, then there is no guarantee that the study can be conducted at the preferred time and with the preferred number of participants.

The Research Pool Coordinator will not accept notification of new studies within the last 2 weeks of the semester.

Number of participants will also be contingent upon availability in the research pool during that semester.

Step 2: IRB

Submit IRB application via the "IRB Portal" (also known as OVPR eResearch Portal) on the UGA Human Subjects Office web page (https://research.uga.edu/hrpp/hso/). *Note: CITI training must be completed before submitting your proposal to IRB.*

Step 3: Research pool application form submitted to the Research Pool Coordinator and set up in SONA

Fill out the "Research Pool Application Form" under "Graduate Student Froms" on the departmental website. The details listed on this form should match the study details approved by IRB.

Submit the "Research Pool Application Form" to the Research Pool Coordinator for approval, *as soon as possible and at least 1 week before intending to solicit research participants.*

Create a Researcher account in SONA following the instruction document provided by the Research Pool Coordinator to the department listserv at the beginning of the semester. Or, if you already created an Instructor account, email the Research Pool Coordinator to give you Researcher access.

Once the Research Pool Coordinator approves your Research Pool Application Form, and you have obtained Researcher access in SONA, you will create the study opportunity in SONA and notify the Research Pool Coordinator (either by selecting that option in SONA or by sending an email). Once the Research Pool Coordinator approves the study in SONA, you can announce the study and begin data collection.

Once the study is set up, the Researcher may email the department listserv to notify all instructors of the opportunity.

Step 4: Data collection: Sign-in sheets, consent forms, and debriefing (if conducting lab-based research)

If collecting data in the lab, provide a sign-in sheet for your research participants, where each student lists their name and their class (with instructor's first and last name, course number and the class meeting time)

to receive research confirmation. If you are collecting data online, provide a screen where participants can enter this information.

If applicable, sign all consent forms before administering them to your participants. Sign the forms in any color ink other than black (e.g., blue, green, etc.).

If applicable, administer two (2) consent forms to participants before collecting any data. Participants should retain one copy of the consent; this copy can be submitted to their instructor as temporary/interim proof of their participation.

Ensure that participants can stop participating if they wish; they have the option of not participating in a study or terminating participation at any point during the session. If a student refuses to participate, give him/her full credit for participating in the study. Additionally, participants should not be penalized for deciding not to participate. Therefore, if a student shows up, reads the consent form, and decides not to participate or signs the consent form and subsequently changes their mind, the student should still receive participation credit. (Students who decline consent for online studies would not receive credit, however.)

After completing the session, all participants must be debriefed. If applicable, at a minimum, distribute a hard copy of the debriefing form. You may also wish to orally debrief participants (this is particularly encouraged if your study involves deception). The debriefing should include a full explanation of everything that happened during the session, what was being studied, and a summary of your hypotheses. If deception was used in the study, you must explain three things to the participants: 1) what you did not tell them, 2) why you did not tell it to them, and 3) your hypotheses/ predictions. Be sure to ask participants NOT to reveal the debriefing to other potential study participants.

For an online/web-based study, information from 1-5 should also be collected/provided as part of the survey, where applicable.

If students have signed up for your research opportunity but can no longer participate, please ask the students to cancel their sign-up in SONA and/or contact you, and request to have their names removed from the opportunity sign-up list as early as possible.

Step 5: After (or during) data collection

The last day of data collection each semester will be the Friday before Reading Day.

The deadline for granting credit is Reading Day. By the end of Reading Day, ensure that you have granted credit to all participants who completed your study, and declined credit for students who were no-shows. It is also possible – and preferable – to grant credit earlier in the semester as soon as you have concluded data collection (or periodically throughout data collection).

If students have any problems or concerns about whether their research

participation has been acknowledged to their instructor, they should e-mail the researcher. The researcher can contact the Research Pool Coordinator for assistance in resolving these issues as needed.

Additional Notes:

Sometimes students complete an online study twice. This tends to happen more often near the end of the semester when students begin to worry about their credit status. If undetected, this will harm the validity of your study data. Here are some ways to discourage this:

- Grant credit in a timely manner, such as once or twice per week during data collection.

- Include instructions in your SONA study description and in your survey (such as on the consent page and on the name entry page) telling participants **NOT** to complete the study more than once.

- Check your participant list for duplicates and delete the duplicate data.

II. PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

A. Advisor and Committee

Students will be assigned a temporary advisor for their first year of study. However, students will need to select an official advisor (a.k.a. "major professor") as they seek to work on making satisfactory progress after the first year of graduate study. The major professor must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member within the Department of Communication Studies. Many students find that selecting an official major professor is a difficult decision. We appreciate that such a decision takes time. As part of this process, students may wish to speak with many faculty members to determine what may be the best advisory relationship for them. Given the time involved in selecting a major professor, we ask that students adhere to the following decision deadlines to turn in an Advisor Agreement Form.

- **MA students:** By the first day of spring break of the first year of the MA program.

- **PhD students:** By the first day of fall break of the second year of the PhD program.

- **Accelerated PhD students:** By the first day of spring break of the first year of the program.

In consultation with the major professor, the student will form a committee of at least two other graduate faculty members. All members of the committee must have an appropriate standing on the graduate faculty. All members constitute the Advisory Committee. The committee, in consultation with the student, plans and approves the student's Program of Study, advises the student on required research skills, guides the thesis or exam research, reads, and approves the thesis or exams, and administers the thesis or exam defense and the final examination over the Program of Study. For PhD students, the Advisory Committee will serve as the Comprehensive Exam Committee and Dissertation Committee. (However, in consultation with the major professor, a student may change the composition of their committee after the comprehensive exam stage and before the dissertation prospectus stage. For instructions, see next section.) Generally speaking, the committee experience should promote scholarly discussion and generally be a constructive experience.

A.1. Changing the Composition of Graduate Committees

Students may change the composition of graduate committees, including major professor and committee members. Reasons to change include, but are not necessarily limited to, instances in which: a) a faculty member has engaged in unprofessional conduct directed toward the student so that the ability of the student to work with the faculty member could be impeded; b) a student's academic interests have changed substantively so that the expertise of the faculty member is no longer useful in completing the committee task; or c) a

major epistemological or methodological difference of opinion exists between the student and the faculty member which cannot be resolved.

If a student wishes to change major professors, they must first consult with the Graduate Coordinator. It is recommended that the student then seek agreement with a faculty member to serve as their new major professor. Then, the student or the Graduate Coordinator will inform the current major professor of the change. The student must submit a new advisor-advisee contract to the department and, if the student has already defended comprehensive exams, submit a new Advisory Committee Form with the Graduate School.

If a student wishes to change committee members, they must consult with their major professor, inform members of the change, and, if the student has already defended comprehensive exams, submit a new Advisory Committee Form with the Graduate School.

If a committee member, including the major professor, wishes to step down from a graduate committee, the committee member must inform the Graduate Coordinator. The committee member or the Graduate Coordinator must inform the student. If the student has already defended their comprehensive exams, they must submit a new Advisory Committee Form with the Graduate School.

A.2. Ownership of Ideas

The ownership of data, approach, and/or arguments may become an issue when modifying the composition of a graduate committee. In such cases, the Graduate Coordinator or Department Head presiding over the meeting may suggest a range of solutions regarding the issue of ownership.

B. Program/Course Schedule/Program of Study

Students are responsible for seeking out input from their temporary advisor, major professor, other faculty members, and/or the Graduate Coordinator about what classes to take.

B.1. Program of Study

PhD students must have a Preliminary Program of Study Form and all students must have a Final Program of Study Form approved by a committee through GradStatus.

PhD Students' Preliminary Program of Study Form should be completed during the first semester of their second year of study if they are on the conventional track or the first semester of year three if they are on the accelerated track. The Preliminary Program of Study Form can be found here.

The Preliminary Program of Study Form will be reviewed by the student's Advisory Committee. The Preliminary Program of Study Form may be circulated to committee members without a formal meeting. If the committee agrees that the Program of Study is appropriate, committee members may sign off. If any committee member deems the preliminary Program of Study inadequate or inappropriate, they may request a meeting of the committee.

All students' Final Program of Study Form (Form G138) must be approved

before a student proceeds with comprehensive exams or papers. The Comprehensive Exam Committee for the final Program of Study is at a minimum the official major professor and two Communication Studies graduate faculty members. The Final Program of Study Form may be circulated to committee members without a formal meeting. If the committee agrees that the Program of Study is appropriate, committee members may sign off on the final Program of Study. If any committee member deems the Program of Study inadequate or inappropriate, they may request a meeting of the committee.

C. Colloquium Registration and Attendance

The department holds colloquiums most Monday afternoons and attendance at these is **required**. Occasionally, there may be a scheduled colloquium on Wednesdays or Fridays in the late afternoon.

All fully enrolled graduate students in the Department of Communication Studies graduate program (MA, PhD, Accelerated) are expected to enroll in COMM 8000 for 1 credit every semester and to attend all colloquia.

The Colloquium Coordinator will take attendance of all graduate students at every colloquium meeting. Students are responsible for emailing the Colloquium Coordinator about attendance conflicts no later than *24 hours* before the scheduled colloquium meeting.

Students are allowed one absence with no requirement to report the absence to the Colloquium Coordinator. After the one absence, students are allowed an additional absence only in the event of a university-related activity (such as participation in a debate tournament, data collection that cannot be rescheduled, etc.), conference attendance, family emergency, or unavoidable personal emergency. The need to do work, take care of personal business, or attend to issues that could have been otherwise scheduled are not acceptable excuses. An exception to the absence policy will occur when the department schedules a speaker outside of the normally scheduled colloquium period. Any unexcused absence from colloquium beyond the first absence will result in a grade of "U" (unsatisfactory) for that semester.

If it is the case that a student is enrolled in an out-of-department course that meets at the same time as colloquium, this student should identify the conflict to their major professor and the Colloquium Coordinator. If approved by the student's major professor, the student will not enroll in COMM 8000 for the semester of conflict but instead will enroll in research hours (COMM 7000 or 9000) or another course. If a student cannot enroll in COMM 8000 due to a course conflict, the missed colloquium hours do not need to be made up.

D. Review of Graduate Students

D.1. Evaluation Letters

The faculty review graduate student performance annually. First- year students are reviewed in the fall and the spring. Students after their first year and not in their final year are reviewed in the spring. Students who are in year 5 or beyond do not need to be reviewed. Based on faculty discussions, graduate students will receive a letter from the Graduate Coordinator that conveys whether a student

is currently making "satisfactory progress" or "unsatisfactory progress" as defined by the following: (a) satisfactory performance in all coursework, including but not limited to achievement of a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in all Communication Studies graduate-level 3 credit content based seminars--not including 6010, 6011, or research hours--in two consecutive semesters; (b) satisfactory progress toward degree (see the deadlines and sample programs of study in this handbook for details); (c) satisfactory teaching, research, or debate assistance, as determined by faculty evaluation and course evaluations; and (d) satisfactory performance in graduate studies as defined by the UGA Graduate School policy regarding probation and dismissal.

D.2. Self-assessments

As part of the evaluation process, graduate students are required to provide a self-assessment of their own performance regarding their (a) course work, (b) teaching, research, or debate assistantship, and (c) progress towards degree. Additional information in the self-assessment, including noting departmental service, is also encouraged.

For first year students who are reviewed in the fall of their first semester, self-assessments are due no later than **December 1**. For all graduate students not in their last year of the program, self-assessments are due no later than **April 15**. Please send self-assessments to both the major professor and the Graduate Coordinator.

D.3. Meetings About Evaluations

Students are required to meet with their temporary advisor or major professor about their evaluation. For graduate students receiving an evaluation at the end of the spring semester, they must meet with their temporary advisor or major professor no later than the first full week of fall classes. As first year students are also evaluated in the fall, they must meet with their temporary advisor about their fall evaluation no later than the first full week of spring classes.

D.4. Feedback About Teaching

Each term, GTAs will be evaluated by their students. At a minimum, during a student's first two years in the program, they will also be evaluated by a faculty member. If they are a GTA for a large lecture class, the instructor of record will evaluate their teaching. If they are the instructor of record for a class, they will be evaluated by their teaching supervisor or by a faculty member assigned by the Undergraduate Coordinator.

MA-level GTAs will be evaluated every fall and spring semester they teach at UGA, whether as a teaching assistant or as the instructor of record. PhD-level GTAs are evaluated every fall and spring semester for their first two years, unless the GTA earned their MA in the Communication Studies program and are beginning the PhD program, in which case the GTA's teaching will be evaluated by a faculty member in the first year of the PhD program only. PhD-level GTAs are also evaluated when (a) they teach a new course for the first time or (b) if the Undergraduate Coordinator or teaching supervisor believes that additional evaluation is warranted.

Each semester, the Undergraduate Coordinator will compile a list of faculty evaluators matched to GTAs. The Undergraduate Coordinator will then email the list to all relevant faculty and graduate students. It is the GTAs responsibility to contact the faculty evaluator, provide them a copy of the SACS-compliant syllabus for the course, and arrange a time for a classroom observation. Within two weeks of the observation, the faculty evaluator will complete an evaluation form reviewing their performance. Copies of the evaluation will be given to the GTA, temporary advisor or major professor, as well as the Undergraduate and Graduate Coordinators, who will put it in the student's permanent file.

GTA's are strongly encouraged to have faculty visit their courses and write substantive letters about the GTA's in-and beyond-classroom teaching near the time they will be on the job market. Faculty writing letters may reference the GTA's forms, but it is typically the case that old letters play little to no role at this later stage of the graduating student's career.

E. Renewal of Funding

Students funded through a departmental award--teaching, research, or debate assistantships--are guaranteed funding for one academic (10-month) year if students follow all policies and procedures related to the UGA Code of Student Conduct. Decisions on funding renewal will be made each spring. Eligibility for assistantship renewal is based on: (a) satisfactory performance in all coursework, including but not limited to achievement of a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in all Communication Studies graduate-level 3 credit content based seminars--not including 6010, 6011, or research hours--in two consecutive semesters; (b) satisfactory progress toward degree (see the deadlines and sample programs of study in this handbook for details); (c) satisfactory teaching, research, or debate assistance, as determined by faculty evaluation and course evaluations; and (d) satisfactory performance in graduate studies as defined by the UGA Graduate School policy regarding probation and dismissal. Students will receive a separate letter regarding the renewal of their assistantship.

Matriculating PhD students should have the MA degree in hand before they begin coursework in the fall of their first year of the program. If a student has not finished the requirements for the MA degree by December of their first year, they will not be guaranteed funding for the following fall.

F. Summer Meetings and Defenses

Many faculty members rely on the summer to write and work off campus. Further, many faculty members are not paid over the summer and are therefore not expected to fulfill committee roles that are part of the fall and spring semesters. Students should not assume or expect that they can have their exams or any program-related meeting (such as Program of Study, prospectus, and/or thesis/dissertation meetings) during the summer term. Please plan accordingly.

G. Orientation

The departmental orientation is held every year the week before the start of classes. Every graduate student is required to be in attendance to receive important reminders and updates on policies, expectations, and requirements. The dates of orientation are shared early- to mid-summer.

H. Graduation

- MA students cannot participate in spring graduation unless they have successfully defended comprehensive exams (non-thesis track), a master's thesis, or if they have set a defense date with all committee members over the summer (not during the fall semester).

- PhD students cannot participate in spring graduation unless they have successfully defended their dissertation or if they have set a defense date with all committee members over the summer, not during the fall semester.

- Accelerated students cannot participate in graduation unless they have a firm defense date scheduled with all committee members to take place no later than the end of the immediately following summer semester.

III. TEACHING ASSIGNMENT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Teaching Assignments for Fall and Spring Semester

A typical funded GTA assignment is a 10-month (fall and spring semesters) assignment.

Graduate teaching assignments are based on recommendations from the Area Chairs forwarded to the Associate Head and approved by the Department Head. Please note that it should not be expected that every GTA's first choice can be met, as teaching assignments are based on seniority in the program (excluding 5th year funding), satisfactory progress in the graduate program, instructor experience, available assignments (based on undergraduate course needs), and available instructors (based on course schedules).

Typical teaching assignments are 17.78 hours per week. These hours may be assigned in different formats depending on the degree program, the student's year in program, the quality of the student's past teaching in the program, and the department's needs for particular courses.

The most common schedule for students (other than first year MAs) will be two stand-alone sections of either 1110 or 1500. *Advanced PhD students* usually can teach one 1110 or 1500 and one other course in *at least one semester* (e.g., cross-over to the other basic course, 3300, 3700, or some 2000 level topics courses). *First year MAs* whose language skills qualify them to teach breakout sections will often be assigned to teach breakout sections of the large lecture 1110 or 1500 (1110: attend lecture F, conduct 2 breakout sections MW; 1500: attend lecture MW, conduct 3 breakout sections F) and one other lesser assignment, such as doing grading for the research pool. First year MAs whose language skills do not qualify them to teach breakout sections will typically be assigned to assist in one of the large lecture courses that do not have breakout sections and to assist one or two other instructors with grading for defined hours per week.

The teaching preferences of experienced graduate students will be solicited via a Teaching Request/Preference Form distributed to the graduate students during the preceding semester. Generally speaking, teaching assignments are based on the following criteria (more or less in order of importance): (a) Is the GTA making satisfactory progress toward the degree; (b) Has the GTA demonstrated a record of teaching success (as indicated by prior teaching evaluation numbers and student and faculty feedback); (c) Is the GTA qualified to teach this class by virtue of academic preparation and demonstrated exceptional capacity to teach?; (d) What is the seniority of the GTA? (If possible, assignments will be based on seniority within the department, with consideration of teaching experiences within the department); (e) Is the GTA able to work within the constraints of the class schedule?

Students with excellent teaching evaluations (by students and faculty) will generally be given preference for repeat teaching of advanced courses when other criteria are

equal. It is important to keep in mind, however, that these decisions are, more often than not, complicated and multifactorial. In some cases, the major professor may recommend a new course not be assigned to ensure the student completes their own research. In exceptional cases, priorities may have to be changed to respond to what has become a shifting resource environment. If a student believes that they have been unfairly overlooked for an assignment, they should submit a request in writing to the Department Head detailing their case.

B. Summer Teaching Opportunities and Assignments

The department typically has a limited number of opportunities for GTAs to teach over the summer terms (June and July). Students will receive a teaching preference form for summer teaching opportunities. As a general policy, advanced PhD students who are currently in their 2nd or 3rd year in the program, followed by MA students currently in their 1st year of the program, will receive priority. Students beyond the 2nd year in the MA program or 4th year in PhD program as of the summer will not receive priority.

Being awarded a summer teaching assignment is not a guarantee that the class will "make" —note that a class must have at least 15 students enrolled in 1000-2000 level courses and 12 students in a 3000-4000 level courses at the beginning of the term for the course to continue. *If minimum enrollment is not met, the course will be canceled, and the GTA will not be paid*. So, it is in the GTAs best interest to work with the Undergraduate Coordinator to promote the course to ensure enrollment.

As part of summer teaching, students must be registered for at least 9 hours of course credit during the summer.

C. Pedagogy Courses and Teaching Staff Meetings

Those with teaching and research assistantships will be supervised by a faculty member. In their first year, students will enroll in either 6011 or 6010 in the fall and in the spring (even if they are not teaching). These courses focus on teaching introductory public speaking and interpersonal communication courses. Beyond the first year, if a student has been assigned to teach 1110, and have not previously enrolled in 6010, they will need to enroll in 6010 for the academic year (fall-spring). Similarly, beyond the first year, if they have been assigned to teach 1500, and have not previously enrolled in 6011, they will need to enroll in 6011 for the academic year (fall-spring).

If a student is teaching a 2000 or 3000-level course, or are assisting with a large lecture course, they will have staff meetings with the content-relevant teaching supervisor. All other courses will involve staff meetings at a time determined by the supervisor. These meetings provide a time in which any issues can be addressed and questions may be answered. If a GTA cannot attend a staff meeting, they must make sure they contact their supervisor, as these meetings are mandatory.

D. GTA Supervision and Evaluation

Like faculty, all GTAs are required to have their classes evaluated by their students. They will also be evaluated by a faculty member (see section II.D.4. above for details).

IV. OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

A. Funding Beyond the Assistantship

A.1. Travel Money

a. Departmental Travel Awards:

The department sometimes has a small amount of travel support available to graduate students. If the department is able to offer some financial support, students may apply for funding if: (1) they have not been fully enrolled for four semesters at UGA and they have filled out the department's travel funding application available on the department's website; (2) they have been fully enrolled at UGA for at least four semesters and they complete the department's travel funding application and provide the Assistant to the Department Head with all the information required to submit a travel funding application to the Grad School. The Graduate School's application for funding requirements is available on their website.

If a student receives departmental funds, they are expected to participate enthusiastically in department events at the conference, including any department receptions and graduate student and faculty recruitment activities. The Graduate Coordinator or Graduate Coordinator Assistant will provide the details and the application deadlines via e-mail notification. Departmental travel award information, including internal criteria and instructions on applying for Graduate School funding, is available on the department's website. Students who receive funding for conference travel must present during a colloquium dedicated to practicing conference presentations.

b. Graduate School Travel Awards:

The Graduate School offers travel funds for domestic and international travel (see above). Students seeking travel assistance must be registered during the semester in which the request is submitted and for the semester for which the trip is scheduled. More information can be obtained from the Graduate Coordinator Assistant and from the Graduate School website (https://grad.uga.edu/funding/travel-grants/).

c. Travel Reimbursement:

Once awarded travel money, a "Travel Authority" must be completed *PRIOR* to each travel circumstance or individual conference. Students should work with the Assistant to the Department Head to process a travel authority. Following travel, an additional travel reimbursement form will need to be completed. Before a student plans to drive their own car, make sure that

they check current UGA policies on government-owned automobiles or rental cars for certain distances of travel. See the Department Head Assistant for details. Original itemized receipts must be submitted for all incurred expenses other than meals calculated at a per diem rate. Memberships are non-reimbursable.

A.2. Scholarships, Fellowships, and Awards

a. Research:

There are many resources available to support graduate student research, although all of these are competitive with varying success rates. For a listing of awards, see the Graduate School web page (https://grad.uga.edu/funding/). The Graduate Coordinator will also forward all announcements about awards.

b. Teaching:

Each year the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) recognizes outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistants across the campus. A committee composed of the supervisors of a given course (e.g.., 1110, 1500, 2300, etc.) and the Undergraduate Coordinator will select from the pool of non-first year teaching assistants the nominee(s) from the department for the Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. Particularly exemplary nominees may be further eligible for the University Excellence in Teaching Award (ETA), the Outstanding Teaching Assistant (OTA), and the prestigious Future Faculty Fellows Program (3FP). Students may self-nominate by contacting their major professor directly and asking that they forward their name to the Undergraduate Coordinator.

c. Service:

Every year the department recognizes one graduate student with the Jerold. L. Hale Graduate Student Service Award. This cash award is designated to a student selected by the faculty who has demonstrated exemplary service and dedication to the Department of Communication Studies.

B. Well-being and Other Resources for Graduate Students

The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Department is located at the University Health Center. Students who wish to meet with a counselor for the first time may walk in or call 706-542-2273 to schedule an appointment. CAPS also provides stress management programs such as meditation and therapy. CAPS is on the third floor of the University Health Center, on the corner of College Station and East Campus Roads. All students registered for credit at The University of Georgia are eligible to use the CAPS services. Student Care and Outreach also provides various services and support. Additionally, the Graduate School offers an emergency fund for financial hardship. The Graduate Student Association and CWA Local 3265 provide opportunities for collective expression of graduate students' concerns and professional development.

C. Professional Associations

The [National Communication Association (NCA)](#) and the [International Communication Association (ICA)](#) are the two major professional associations for the communication discipline. Both organizations have student rates and each hosts a yearly conference - NCA in November and ICA in May. NCA also hosts a listserv ([COMMNotes](#)) which includes a substantial amount of information relevant to the field, as well as current job listings. Students should also read "SPECTRA," the newsletter for NCA, for job announcements which are also available online through [NCA's Career Center.](#)

In addition, the [Southern States Communication Association (SSCA)](#) host a smaller yearly conference in the southern region, typically in April.

D. Other Opportunities for Professional Development

Becoming a scholar is not a process that occurs exclusively, or even primarily, within the classroom's walls. Students should expect to spend a substantial amount of time in other types of professional development activities. In addition to participating in the department colloquium and attending lectures on campus, it is a normal practice of scholars and apprentice scholars to attend academic conferences and deliver papers. Students may also want to form discussion groups with their fellow graduate students. Depending on their area, students are likely to want to work on a research team with one of the faculty members in the department, or to work with a faculty mentor on research in addition to their major professor. In the year before the dissertation, a student may also want to apply for an [NCA Doctoral Honors Seminar](#). We encourage students to be proactive in seeking out opportunities for professional and personal growth, and we will try to keep graduate students apprised of new opportunities.

E. Advising and Registration

The academic calendar is available [here](#). The schedule of classes for each semester is available [online](#). In-department seminars and courses are generally determined at least a semester in advance; sometimes schedule adjustments will occur the semester before the course is offered. As for out-of-the-department seminars, the best way to shop for them is by using [Athena](#). Students may also want to check the UGA Syllabus System to locate sample syllabi. Please contact the Academic Advisor/Undergraduate Coordinator Assistant if there is a need to register for a seminar on a Wednesday or a Friday that conflicts with the Monday colloquium time.

Students can register after their temporary advisor or major professor has signed the yellow advisement form and submitted it to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant. Yellow advisement forms can be obtained in the main office. After a student is cleared to register by the Graduate Coordinator Assistant and Academic Advisor, they will then register online, using [Athena](#). It is important to remember that getting advising slips, making an appointment with one's major professor, and registering are all the responsibility of the student. *Also, do not forget that students must register for classes in advance, or they will not get paid.*

Graduate students must register for at least 3 credit hours for two of the three semesters during the academic year, with some exceptions for some UGA employees. If a student cannot enroll for two of three semesters, they should seek a leave of absence. Leaves of absence are addressed below.

Course registration deadlines: Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their temporary advisor or major professor early to plan courses to register for in a subsequent semester. If a returning student, they must turn in their registration form (the "yellow sheet") for fall semester courses to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant no later than March 15th. If they are registering for spring semester classes, they must turn in their registration form to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant no later than October 1st. If a student does not turn in their registration forms by these deadlines, revisions to their teaching schedule based on conflict due to their desired courses will not be possible.

E.1. 1st Year Course Registration Policy

All MA and PhD students are required to exclusively enroll in courses offered within the department during their initial year of study. This directive serves a twofold purpose: (1) to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the department's research areas, methodologies, and scholarly discourse, and (2) to facilitate students' familiarity with graduate faculty members for the purpose of selecting a major professor and committee members. While the department strongly encourages adherence to in-department course requirements, exceptions for PhD students may be considered on a case-by-case basis for compelling academic reasons. Should a PhD student wish to take a course outside the department during their first year, they must seek approval from their major professor.

F. Graduate School Paperwork and Deadlines

Students are responsible for meeting a large number of deadlines for the Graduate School and the university. **If a student does not meet a deadline, they may not receive their degree.** With the exception of the non-thesis MA completion form (an in-department form), all paperwork is on the Graduate School's website (https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/forms/) and available through GradStatus.

Students are responsible for accessing and completing these forms. Students are also responsible for obtaining appropriate approval from their committee, as needed.

V. THE MA PROGRAM:
PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, & TIMELINES

A. Coursework Requirements

MA students must complete a program of study which constitutes a logical whole. Master of Arts degrees require a minimum of 30 semester hours with at least 12 semester hours of content-based course work open only to graduate students (exclusive of 6010, 6011, 7000, 7200, and 7300). A maximum of 6 hours of 7000 and 3 hours of 7300 may be applied to the 30 semester hours required. At least 3 hours of 7300 must be listed on the program of study. MA students may not count more than one 3 credit hour independent study course toward the requirements for their degree. No grade below C will be accepted on the program of study. Hourly requirements will vary according to whether a student chooses to pursue the thesis or non-thesis option (see below).

Any graduate student funded by the university must be enrolled in 12 hours each fall and spring semester. If a student is funded in the summer, they must also enroll in 9 hours over the summer. The department generally does NOT recommend students take more than 9 content-based hours. Thus, each semester, a student may need to enroll in COMM 7000 (Master's Research) in order to reach a total of 12 hours.

A.1. Acceptance of Credit by Transfer

The university's policy on transfer credits can be found here.

A.2. GradFIRST Requirement

Graduate students must complete a 1-credit GradFIRST seminar (GRSC 7001) during fall or spring of their first year. The GradFIRST seminars supplement discipline-specific training in graduate students' academic programs with focused professional development and engagement/networking opportunities.

Completion of GradFIRST will be listed on the Program of Study (G138) form in GradStatus. In the section titled "GradFIRST requirement," the student should list the semester in which the course was completed. GRSC 7001 should *not* be listed as a course under "Course Information" in programs of study.

A.3. Research Practicum: 8050 Requirements

The research practicum is a unique feature of the graduate program at UGA and is designed to ensure that every graduate student gets the chance to work with a faculty member on a research project before reaching the stage of independent research in their own thesis. MA students take 2 hours of COMM 8050. Students should expect to spend about 20 hours of time on a one credit hour 8050. The number of semesters a student works with any faculty member depends on the project's character and should be negotiated in advance. Students may only take one hour of 8050 credit with any one professor in any given semester and may only take one 8050 with the person who is their major professor Note: Students must complete an "8050 Contract" before starting the 8050 work. This contract

is available from the department website [here](). Students should turn in the completed contract to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant. If a student does not have an approved 8050 contract by the end of the drop/add period of a given semester, they will be dropped from the 8050.

Some models for the 8050 include:

- A faculty member has a project and needs help collecting data. Students will learn about writing questionnaires, collecting data, coding results.

- A faculty member is writing a research grant/proposal/paper and needs help with library research. Students might search for documents, read, and produce 1-page summaries.

- The student and the faculty member start a new project (the student should assume 2-3 8050 hours to complete). They go through all phases of a research project from initial idea to recruiting human subjects, writing questionnaires, collecting data, coding results, analyzing data, and writing up results.

- The student started a project in a class with a faculty member and use the 8050 to finish the project with one-on-one guidance.

- A faculty member is editing a journal, and the student works with the editor and the author to prepare the print-ready manuscript.

B. Thesis vs. Non-Thesis Options

Coursework required for the MA follows two trajectories: the thesis option and the non-thesis option. Examples of a plan of study for each option is available [here.]()

In consultation with the major professor, students will declare whether they will pursue the thesis or non- thesis option by the first day of UGA's spring break of their first year of the MA program. Should a student decide to shift options, they should inform the graduate coordinator immediately. Generally speaking, students are not able to switch from the thesis track to the non-thesis by reading day of the fall semester of their second year of MA study.

B.1. Thesis Option

A thesis is a written product reflecting a systematic study of a significant question, problem, or issue relevant to the communication discipline. The exact nature of the thesis will be negotiated with the student's major professor and their committee. Thesis proposals should be submitted to committee members by Oct. 1 of a student's second year; if not, then the student will switch to the non-thesis track. Additionally, if a student has not successfully defended their thesis prospectus by reading day of fall semester of the student's second year, then the student will switch to the non-thesis track. No thesis prospectus nor thesis draft should be distributed to the committee until the major professor has approved the whole document as ready for defense unless committee members explicitly agree to review drafts. Committee members must be given two weeks to read the thesis prospectus and thesis draft. UGA requires a particular format for theses; information on these requirements can be found

on the [Graduate Bulletin.](#)

For students pursuing the thesis option, required courses include:

1. Core theory course: 8500 (Interpersonal Communication Theory) if on the Interpersonal, Intergroup, & Health (IPH) track or 8200 (Rhetorical Theory) if on the Rhetoric Studies (RS) track.

2. Core methods course: 8700 (Empirical Research Methods) if on the IPH track or 8300 (Rhetorical Criticism) if on the RS track.

3. Electives: 12 additional seminar hours related to a student's Program of Study within or outside of the department.

4. Non-seminar requirements: GRSC 7001 ("GradFirst"), COMM 6010 or COMM 6011 (Seminar in Communication Education); two hours of COMM 8050 (Research Practicum); and COMM 8000 (Communication Colloquium) every semester.

Students must be registered for **3 hours** of credit in any semester when they are using university facilities, including the semester that they graduate.

Students must enroll in **12** hours of coursework if they have an assistantship in the fall and spring semesters. If a student is on a teaching or research assistantship over the summer, they must enroll in **9** hours.

B.2. Non-Thesis Option

The non-thesis MA option is consistent with the department's goal to provide rigorous and high-quality training in the communication discipline. This option may be appealing to students who seek a stronger foundation in the communication discipline that can be applied to a post-MA career, including students who intend to pursue a career outside of academia and/or students who earned their undergraduate degrees in other disciplines and, therefore, need additional coursework in and exposure to the communication discipline.

For students pursuing the non-thesis option, required courses include:

1. Core theory course: 8500 (Interpersonal Communication Theory) if on the IPH track or 8200 (Rhetorical Theory) if on the RS track.

2. Core methods course: 8700 (Empirical Research Methods) if on the IPH track or 8300 (Rhetorical Criticism) if on the RS track.

3. Electives: 12 additional seminar hours related to a student's Program of Study within or outside of the department; one seminar must be in the opposite area of the student's Program of Study.

4. Non-seminar requirements: GRSC 7001 ("GradFirst"), COMM 6010 or COMM 6011 (Seminar in Communication Education); two hours of COMM 8050 (Research Practicum); COMM 8000 (Communication Colloquium) every semester; COMM 7900 (Graduate Level Internship), see below.

5. Additional electives for non-thesis candidates: 6 hours of in-department

seminars at the 8000-level or above.

6. <u>COMM7910 Graduate level internship</u>. It is assumed that non-thesis students will do an internship unless a compelling reason not to do so is made to the student's Advisory Committee. If the committee agrees that the internship is not in the student's best interest, the student will do an additional graduate level content class in lieu of the internship. Thesis track MA students and Accelerated Track students are not required to do an internship.

B.2.1. Internship Process

Students should select to be thesis track or non-thesis track by the first day of Spring Break of their first year. Students must sign up for an internship no later than December 15th of their second year of study and complete the internship by May for spring graduation. A student can, of course, complete the internship in summer between the two academic years or in fall of their second year but it must be completed by spring of their second year for a student to graduate in May.

The graduate student works with their major professor to generate ideas for the internship (see form on website for ideas). It is the graduate student's responsibility to secure the internship. An internship can be paid or unpaid. Note: Student are expected to work a minimum of 150 hours per semester to receive 3 credit hours.

Once the student has procured an internship, the student completes the internship form available on the department's website. The major professor must sign off that the proposed internship is appropriate for graduate level credit. The Internship Coordinator will also sign. The student should register for COMM 7910 under the Internship Coordinator's name. The Internship Coordinator will also keep a list of internships our students have completed and the names of the organizations/supervisors.

B.2.2. Internship Assignment:

A. The student should keep an on-going log of duties that they completed as part of the internship. They should also keep copies of projects, assignments, products, etc.

B. Student will put together a 6-10-page portfolio that must be read and approved by the internship supervisor. The portfolio can include a write up of the internship that could be used on a CV/resume, a copy of any relevant materials that the student generated on the internship, a summary of skills acquired, related readings in theory and research, and/or summary of projects worked on.

D. Students are expected to work a minimum of 150 hours per

semester to receive 3 credit hours. This equates to a *minimum of* 10 hours a week over a 15-week semester.

C. Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is a rigorous assessment designed to evaluate a student's extensive knowledge and understanding of their field of study, typically encompassing both coursework and independent research conducted during their time in graduate school.

The non-thesis option replaces the thesis requirement with both a written and oral examination. The Written Comprehensive Exam will consist of two parts. Part I will be a 6-hour closed book exam in which the student will answer questions in two areas (3 hours in each area). For RS students, these two areas are (1) rhetorical theory and (2) rhetorical criticism, and, for IPH students, these two areas are (1) communication theory and (2) empirical research methods. Within one or two of these areas (at the discretion of the major professor), students will also be asked questions applicable to a particular content area of focus. The content area of focus will be negotiated between the student and the committee members. Students should anticipate between 1-3 questions within each area.

The major professor will negotiate with committee members to provide questions and in which particular areas. It is up to the student to meet with individual committee members and to consult with the major professor to discuss the parameters of particular questions. Committee members may require additional readings in the two main areas as well as the content area in preparation for the examination.

Students will complete the written portion of the exam in the department, using department- furnished computers. The two areas of the written exam can be completed on the same day (3 hours for area 1, followed by a 1-2-hour break, and 3 hours for area 2), or on consecutive days (3 hours for area 1, followed by 3 hours for area 2 on the next day). Students pursuing the two-day option cannot complete the exam over a Friday-Monday period.

Committee members shall have two weeks to grade the exam. Committee members will inform the major professor if the student's answers are a "pass" or "fail" in each area. A two-thirds majority will determine if a student passes or fails each area of the written examination. If a student fails an area of the exam, the student will have one opportunity to retake the exam within a time frame and following conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee. After a certified "pass" has been achieved in both areas covered by the written examination, a two-hour oral examination will be held.

D. Oral Examination Requirements

After it has been determined that a student has produced a thesis or has comprehensive exams ready to be defended, a two-hour oral examination will be held. Note that it is recommended that students tentatively schedule the oral defense before completing the thesis to ensure the availability of all committee members; however, the oral examination will only take place once it is

confirmed by the advisor.

The oral examination is intended to be an inclusive examination in the student's field of study. Therefore, a portion of the oral examination may not focus on a student's thesis or comprehensive exam questions. The oral exam is graded on a pass/fail basis, with 2/3 of committee members required for an overall pass. A student who fails an oral exam will have one opportunity to retake the exam within a time frame and conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee.

Note: Exams are not routinely scheduled during the summer term. Graduate students should not provide food or beverages for committee members during committee meetings or defenses.

E. Colloquium Presentation Requirement

As part of the MA degree, students must present a research project (not restricted to one's thesis) in a department colloquium at least once before the thesis defense. MA students commonly present for 10-15 minutes, in the style of a conference presentation, followed by about 10-15 minutes of questions. Non-thesis MA students may present their internship paper or other research. Thesis MA students may present their prospectus or other research. MA students can satisfy the colloquium requirement by practicing a conference talk during one of the colloquium sessions set aside for this purpose. Students must consult their major professor about the specific parameters of such a presentation.

F. Residency, Continuous Enrollment, Time Limits, & GPA Requirements

As per UGA guidelines, the minimum residence requirement is two semesters which do not have to be consecutive. All requirements for the degree must be completed within six years beginning with the first registration for graduate courses on the Program of Study. An extension of time may be granted only for conditions beyond the control of the individual. To be eligible for graduation, students must maintain a 3.0 (B) average on the graduate transcript and a 3.0 (B) average on the Program of Study.

According to the Graduate School, the minimum/continuous enrollment is as follows: "All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) graduate or professional course credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer), including the 3 hours of graduate credit that is required for registration during the semester in which degree requirements are complete, until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated…"

G. MA Timeline

Below is a list of tasks MA students should accomplish in the indicated semesters.

Year 1

- Semester 1
  - Become acquainted with the faculty and assigned temporary advisor
- Semester 2
  - Select an official advisor (major professor) by submitting the Advisor Agreement Form by the first day of Spring Break
  - Decide upon pursuing thesis or non-thesis track by the first day of Spring Break (non-thesis track need to take additional coursework)
  - Compose advisory committee (Major Professor + 2 other faculty members)
  - Submit Advisory Committee Form(G130) (not required for non-thesis students)
  - Submit Program of Study (G138) Form
  - If pursuing thesis option:
    - Complete 24 hours of required coursework, exclusive of research and thesis hours and at least 12 hours of credit open only to graduate students (not including COMM 7000)
  - If pursuing non-thesis option:
    - Complete 24 hours of required coursework, plus two additional in-department seminars, exclusive of research hours, at least one 6000+ 3 credit hour course in the opposite area of study, at least 12 hours of credit hours open only to graduate students (not including COMM 7000), at least one internship.

Year 2
- Semester 1
  - If pursuing thesis option:
    - Submit thesis to committee members by Oct. 1 and defend by Reading Day; after that, student must transfer to non-thesis track
  - If pursuing non-thesis option:
    - Meet with advisory committee to discuss examination questions
  - Discuss scheduling colloquium presentation with major professor
- Semester 2
  - Enroll in at least 3 hours of COMM 7200 (non-thesis) or COMM 7300 (thesis)
  - Present at colloquium
  - Submit Application for Graduation
  - If pursuing thesis option:
    - Complete written thesis
    - Complete oral defense of thesis
    - Submit Approval Form for Master's Thesis and Final Oral Examination (G140)
  - If pursuing non-thesis option:
    - Complete written exams
    - Complete oral exam
    - Submit MA Comprehensive Exam Form (this is an in-department form available on the department's website)

Note: If any of the forms needed for graduation are between 1 and 45 days late, submit relevant form with the Late Filing for Graduation Form along with a late

fee of $50. If forms are more than 45 days late, the student will not graduate that semester.

H. Double Dawg Program Requirements

Double Dawg students will follow the requirements for the *non-thesis* MA degree. During the 4th year of their undergraduate program (during which they begin taking graduate courses, some of which also count toward their undergraduate degree), they will be assigned a temporary advisor. It is expected that they will continue to consult with the Academic Advisor/Undergraduate Coordinator to make sure they satisfy all the requirements for the undergraduate degree. Double Dawg students must choose a major professor by the end of the first week of fall classes in their fifth year (the year in which they are a full-time graduate student). Below is a sample program of study for coursework only; A sample Double Dawg Program of Study for coursework can be found here. Double Dawg students must also 1) deliver a colloquium presentation; 2) satisfy the internship requirement (unless exempted by their committee); and 3) satisfy the cross-over requirement. See the section on the requirements for the non-thesis MA degree.

I. Admission to PhD Program

MA students wanting to pursue a PhD in the department must apply during the admission cycle. Note: If admitted to the PhD program, students must have their MA degree completed by December of their first year in the PhD program; otherwise, they will not be guaranteed funding for their second year.

VI. THE PHD PROGRAM:
PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINES

A. Coursework Requirements

All PhD students at UGA must complete a Program of Study which constitutes a logical whole and should consist of 16 or more hours of 8000- and 9000-level courses in addition to research, dissertation writing, and directed study. No grade below C will be accepted on the Program of Study. To be eligible for graduation, a student must maintain a 3.0 (B) average on the graduate transcript and a 3.0 (B) average on the Program of Study. The Program of Study must carry a minimum of 30 hours of coursework, three hours of which must be dissertation writing (9300). Of note: per Graduate School policy, students should not have more than 54 hours in COMM 9000 and COMM 9300 combined.

Coursework required for the PhD in Communication Studies varies according to area. Example Plan of Studies can be found here.

During the first year of study, students in the **_IPH_** track are required to take:

- COMM 8500 (Communication Theory)
- COMM 8700 (Empirical Research Methods)
- COMM 6010 or 6011 (Communication Education)
- GRSC 7001 ("GradFirst")
- an additional seminar in the fall.

Students in the **_RS_** track are required to take

- COMM 8200 (Rhetorical Theory)
- COMM 8300 (Rhetorical Criticism)
- COMM 6010 or 6011 (Communication Education)
- GRSC 7001 ("GradFirst")
- an additional seminar during the fall.

After the first year, **_both_** IPH and RS students are required to:

- Take COMM 6010 or 6011 if they have not taken this course before and are teaching the undergraduate course related to the pedagogy course for the first time
- Take 6 hours of research methods
- Curate a program of study that demonstrates competence in two concentrated areas of scholarship
- Complete three hours of COMM 8050 (Research Practicum)

- Complete COMM 8030 (Professional Development in Communication Studies), which is a 1-credit course that can be taken in the second or third year, in consultation with their major professor; this class is typically offered in the spring semester.

- Take a class in the other area
  - PhD students in RS must take at least one seminar in the IPH area at the 6000 level or above, and IPH students must take at least one seminar offered in the RS area at the 6000 level or above. This requirement can be satisfied at any time during one's coursework years and can be satisfied by taking a core theory or method course.

At least 18 hours of coursework must be in courses offered by Communication Studies, exclusive of research, thesis, or 8050 hours. Students cannot count more than 2 independent study courses and cannot count more than 2 courses below the 7000 level toward the requirements for the doctorate. Please note that the actual number of hours is set by the major professor and committee and may involve substantially more than 36 hours of content hours. The university's policy on transfer credit can be found [here](#).

Note: Any graduate student funded by the university must be enrolled in at least 12 hours each fall and spring semester. If a student is funded in the summer, they must also enroll in 9 hours over the summer. The department does not advise that most students take more than 9 content-based credit hours. Thus, each semester, students may need to enroll in COMM 9000 (Doctoral Research) in order to reach a total of 12 hours. Students should not have more than 54 hours in COMM 9000 and COMM 9300 combined.

A.1. Research Practicum Requirements (COMM 8050):
The research practicum is a unique feature of the graduate program at UGA and is designed to ensure that every graduate student gets the chance to work with a faculty member on a research project before reaching the stage of independent research for their own dissertation. PhD students take 3 hours of COMM 8050. Students should expect to spend about 20 hours of time on a one credit hour 8050. The number of semesters that a student works with any given faculty member will depend on the character of the project and should be negotiated in advance. Students may only take one hour of 8050 credit with any one professor in any given semester and they may get only one hour of 8050 credit with their major professor.

Note: Students must complete an "8050 Contract" before starting their 8050 work. This contract is available from the department website [here](#). Students should turn in the completed contract to the Graduate Coordinator. If an 8050 contract is not approved by the end of the drop/add period of a given semester, they student will be dropped from the 8050.

Some models for the 8050 include:

- A faculty member has a project and needs help collecting data, and the student learns about writing questionnaires, collecting data, coding

results and/or data analysis and write-up.

- A faculty member is drafting a research grant/proposal/paper and needs help with library research. The student might search for documents, read, and provide 1-page summaries.

- The student and faculty member start a new project (the student should assume 2-3 8050 hours to complete). They go through all phases of a research project from initial idea to recruiting human subjects, submitting IRB forms, writing questionnaires, collecting data, coding results, analyzing data, and writing up results.

- A faculty member has a project "in process." The student joins the project assists in bringing it to completion. This option is more typical for PhD rather than MA students. Examples of this include: A project half-written that needs someone to "take charge" and finish it; data that have been collected but no one has looked at it or thought about it; a faculty member is asked to write a book chapter but does not have the time to devote to it so the student helps and becomes co-author.

- The student started a project in a class with a faculty member and uses the 8050 to finish the project with one-on-one guidance.

A.2. Areas of Concentration & Outside Coursework:
All PhD students are required to declare two concentrated areas of scholarship in their Program of Study, each of which should be defined by at least 3 courses (courses may not be counted in both areas). It is helpful if one of the areas is more general (e.g., rhetorical theory or communication theory) and the other is more specific (e.g., feminist rhetorical criticism or health communication).

A.3. PhD Methodology Requirements:
All PhD students are required to complete a minimum of 6 hours of research methods, although IPH Studies and RS students have different options for how to do this. Courses taken to satisfy the research skills requirement cannot be included elsewhere in a student's Program of Study. The 6-hour requirement represents a minimum; more coursework may be required.

IPH students:

1. Students must receive a grade of "B" or better in the final course of the sequence of ERSH 8310 (ANOVA)-8320 (regression), the final course of the sequence of STAT 6210-6220, or an equivalent course (note that some students will be advised to take the first course in the sequence as well). Alternatively, students must receive a grade of "B" or better in a course where ERSH 8320, STAT 6220, or an equivalent course is a prerequisite (e.g., SOCI 6620 and PSYC 6430).

2. Students must satisfactorily complete at least one additional methods course to be determined in consultation with their major professor and committee. Note: The completion of ERSH 8320, STAT 6220, or equivalent, and one additional methods course represent the *minimum*

research methodology requirement. Ideally, students will acquire competencies in advanced **quantitative** (e.g., factor analysis, structural equation modeling: e.g., ERSH 8750) OR they will acquire competencies in **qualitative** analytic techniques (e.g., conversation analysis, manipulating complex relational databases, ethnography).

- Examples of departments where such skills can be acquired may be found include education (ERSH), sociology (SOCI), psychology (PSYC), journalism (JRMC), and women's studies (WMST).

- Examples of courses that teach qualitative methods include ERSH 8410: Qualitative Research Methods in Education, JRMC 9030: Qualitative Research in Mass Communication, ERSH 8420: Advanced Qualitative Methods in Education Research, SOCI 6750: Qualitative Methods in Social Research, and WMST 6011 Feminist Research Methods.

3. IPH students have the opportunity to choose between a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods track (see below for the requirements).

- Accelerated students must declare a track by the end of Spring semester of 1st year.

- PhD students must declare track by end of spring semester of 1st year.

The template below offers the requirements for each track. The list of optional classes is just a suggestion. Those courses are negotiable between the major professor and student.

a. Quantitative

1. COMM 8700 Research Methods (OR Mean/Median and ANOVA upon major professor's advice)
2. Regression
3. A Third Methods Course

b. Qualitative

1. COMM 8700 Research Methods (OR QUAL 8400 Qualitative Research Traditions upon major professor's advice)
2. COMM 8550 Qualitative Methods offered every other year ORQUAL 8410 Designing Qualitative Research
3. A Third Methods Course
   Examples of classes:

   QUAL 8410 Designing Qualitative Research
   QUAL 8420 Analyzing Qualitative Data
   QUAL 8520 Interviewing Research
   QUAL 8525 Narrative Analysis
   QUAL 8530 Case Study Research

QUAL 8540 Fieldwork and Participant Observation
QUAL 8545 Digital Technology and Qual. Res.
QUAL 8560 Ethnomethodological and Conversation Analytic Studies

c. Mixed Methods Track

Students who want to pursue a mixed methods track will take 4 courses: 2 in Qualitative Methods and 2 in Quantitative Methods.

<u>Quantitative</u>

1. COMM 8700 Research Methods
2. Regression

<u>Qualitative</u>

1. COMM 8550 Qualitative Methods offered every other year OR QUAL 8410 Designing Qualitative Research
2. 2nd QUAL class

RS students:

Most RS students complete their methodology requirements within the department. Examples of classes that students have used for the methodology requirement include (but are not restricted to):

- COMM 8340: Topics in Methodologies of Rhetorical Criticism

- COMM 8360: Feminist Rhetorical Theory and Criticism

- HIST 7900: Historiography

- WMST 6010: Women and the Construction of Knowledge

- WMST 6011: Feminist Research Methods

B. PhD Preliminary Examinations

The PhD Preliminary Examinations are a rigorous assessment designed to evaluate a student's extensive knowledge and understanding of their field of study, typically encompassing both coursework and independent research conducted during their time in graduate school. Preliminary exams are taken after the Program of Study process is complete. Students **must notify the Graduate Coordinator Assistant** when the *oral* exam is scheduled, as the exam must be announced to the Graduate School at least two weeks before it takes place. Graduate students should not provide food or beverages for committee members during committee meetings or defenses.

The exam process may take one of two forms: paper option or comprehensive written exams.

B.1. Papers Option

Because of methodological differences, the papers process for IPH and for RS

students works differently.

B.1.1. IPH Studies

Students whose goal is to work at a research institution are strongly advised to complete the paper option. For this option, students produce two papers, one in each substantive area. There are four possibilities for types of papers:

- Two original data pieces
- One theory piece and one original data piece
- One secondary data analysis and one original data piece
- One grant proposal to federal agency and one original data piece

Two Original Data Pieces

Original data piece: Every student will have at least *one* original data piece. Students will submit a theory section, method/data analysis section and, if appropriate, instrumentation for approval of the committee before moving forward. A proposal is considered "original" if it is not based on a secondary analysis of another data set. Typically, this type of project does not originate in a class or an 8050. Students *cannot* collect data until the proposal has been approved by the committee.

What kind of help can the committee provide during the process? Students will receive substantive feedback on the proposal following the initial submission of the paper to the full committee. As the student drafts the paper, they can solicit answers from committee members to technical questions (e.g., Is this analysis correct? Is this alpha high enough? What goes in a discussion? etc.). The major professor must read IRB forms and check questionnaires before they are printed. The student should *not* ask for or expect substantive feedback at any time other than at the proposal defense and when turning in the first full draft to committee. This paper is an exam process meant to establish the student's competency.

Secondary data piece: A student may have written a research proposal for a class paper that they want to develop for their exam paper, or the student may have been working with a faculty member on an 8050 project and there may be a part of the data set they think might be appropriate for an exam paper. In both cases, the student will write a formal proposal (theory, methods, instrumentation) and submit it to the committee. Students should also submit a paragraph describing the history of the proposal (e.g., was this a class project? Have any other manuscripts been written using this data set? etc.).

A second type of secondary analysis draws on data not directly

collected by the student. This would involve data collected by another person as part of a larger project.

Like the requirements for the original data piece, the student will submit a proposal that includes a theory section and method/data analysis section. The student will also include: (1) a letter of transmittal from the original researcher indicating the student has permission to use the data; (2) a list of unpublished manuscripts, conference presentations, and published articles/book chapters that have been based on this data; and (3) a section that clearly details how the research questions and/or hypotheses can be addressed given the nature of the data.

When using secondary data, the student must make a strong case in the proposal that the work they are proposing is original and different from previous analyses of the data and that the data and the way it was collected is sufficiently robust to address the purpose of the research (i.e., includes relevant moderating variables, uses interview protocols that obtain the needed data, etc.). In the case of some kinds of qualitative field work, the student may also need to indicate whether it is possible to validate their interpretations using techniques such as member checks.

Theory paper: This paper should add substantially to an existing theoretical position, make a compelling case for doing so, and suggest major avenues for research testing the major assumptions of the theory. The proposal for a theory paper is likely to be different than for a data paper. A theory proposal is expected to describe the problem and outline the approach the student plans to take to address it.

Grant proposal to federal agency: Students can request the option to write a grant application prepared for submission to a major federal agency (e.g., NIH/NSF grant mechanisms). This option is pending both major professor approval and a committee comprised of at least 1-2 members who can provide feedback on the proposal. The committee may approve an equivalent grant mechanism that is more relevant to the student's field, when the rigor and preparation efforts are deemed as equivalent to that of a proposal to a federal agency. A basic evaluation criterion is that the grant proposal will be of sufficient quality to be approved by a national review committee.

Based on discussions with the major professor, students first choose a target grant, including common mechanisms such as NIH F, K or R grants or NRSA. They will then prepare a detailed proposal outline including the grant mechanism, grant topic, format, specific aims, summary page, and timeline (the length of the outline should be at least half of the full proposal). Students will submit the outline to their committee, and all committee members can respond to the outline. The two committee members assigned to read the grant proposal must provide substantive feedback and sign off on the outline *before* the

student begins work on it. To ensure quality evaluation and feedback, at least one and ideally both committee members assigned to read the grant proposal should have experience writing a major federal grant.

The grant proposal can range from a longer 15-page application to a shorter, 6-page application (single-spaced, Arial 11 pt., 0.5" margins) that closely resembles an F31 NIH style application. Additional pages are permitted for references only. Students are expected to prepare standard components of a federal grant application, such as project summary/abstract, hypotheses, research strategy, study design and methods (including proposed data collection, analytic plan, power calculations), expected outcomes, potential concerns and solutions, innovation, research timeline, bibliography/references, budget plan and justifications (actual amount can be blinded). The exact combination will be specific to the targeted grant mechanism. Consultations with the major professor should direct the student on how to best develop these grant components. Because of the collaborative nature of grant applications, students are allowed to discuss the topic with faculty, but the grant proposal submitted to the committee must be written solely by the student.

B.1.2. Proposals

Students will submit a proposal for a paper to the full committee. All committee members can respond to the proposal; however, at least two committee members must read a specific area and provide substantive feedback and sign off on the proposal. The proposal feedback should be in the form of a letter with "have-to-dos" and "recommendations."

Usually, a meeting of the full committee will occur for each proposal. At a minimum, the two readers and the chair must attend the meeting. At the discretion of the committee, the meeting requirement may be waived.

Students are encouraged to submit proposals as soon as they are complete. The first proposal must be submitted by June 1 of their second year. The second proposal must be submitted by September 1 of their third year. Students who do not meet the deadline for either of these proposals will forfeit the paper option and must complete a written comprehensive exam. Although students may submit a proposal while in course work, the final papers cannot be defended until Program of Study course work is completed.

B.1.3. Submitting Completed Papers

Once the Program of Study process is complete and the two papers are written, both papers will be sent to all committee members. Students will turn in their papers at least 3 weeks before the oral examination.

Committee members have 2 weeks to read the papers and respond.

Each committee member should send substantive feedback to the chair and student. The substantive feedback must be clearly noted as to whether the proposed changes should be completed before the final defense or if they are recommendations for future publication or issues concerning the paper that the student should be ready to discuss in the meeting.

Faculty have the following options when reading the first draft of the full papers: (a) give extensive feedback (as detailed above), for which revisions are required; (b) let the major professor know that the papers are ready to defend as is; or (c) fail the student on the written portion of the exam.

The student has two weeks to make the *necessary* revisions to the manuscript. At the end of the 2 weeks, the student resubmits the revised manuscripts to all committee members. The committee members then have 1 week to read the revised papers and, if the manuscripts are approved, the oral defense is held. If more than one committee member votes not to proceed to an oral examination on the second submission, the student will no longer be eligible for doctorate completion.

B.1.4. Important Deadlines:

- **June 1st****: Committee members must receive the first paper proposal by this date.

- **September 1st****: Committee members must receive the second paper proposal by this date

- **February 1st****: Committee members must receive both completed papers by this date.

- **February 15th**: To meet the next deadline, the oral examination of the papers should take place by this date.

- **March 1st****: Final committee approval (including all signatures on the "Report of the Written and Oral Examination" form that is submitted to the Graduate School) must be obtained by this date.

  ** Students who do not meet this deadline will forfeit the paper option and must complete a written comprehensive exam.

  ** Students who choose option #4 (grant proposal and original data piece) will also follow the same deadlines to submit the proposal outline and the full grant proposal to the committee and complete the oral examination. Students are expected to thoroughly discuss with their major professor and obtain approval regarding the timeline of grant proposal writing and submission, considering that deadlines defined by the grant agencies and UGA's office of research may not always align with the Written and Oral Examination deadlines defined by the department.

Note: The deadlines for the paper option start June 1st after students' second year (third year for accelerated students).

B.1.2. Rhetorical Studies

A student selecting this option will write one original research essay in each of their two areas of study. Each paper should be of a length that is suitable for publication in a scholarly journal (approximately 20 to 30 pages).

Each paper is expected to take form either as an original research study or as a conceptual review and synthesis of an area of study. In Rhetorical Studies, the writing and discovery processes are integrated, therefore students will distribute to committee members a title and abstract of each paper before composing the essays in full. Students will turn in their papers a minimum of 3 weeks before the scheduled oral examination date. Committee members will notify the major professor after 2 weeks whether or not they find the papers of sufficient quality to proceed to the oral examination. If more than one member of the committee does not vote to proceed, the oral examination will be cancelled, and the student will have one additional opportunity to submit papers if this can be accomplished before the deadline for sitting the oral examination (if not, the student will automatically move to the written exam option). If more than one member of the committee votes not to proceed to an oral examination on the second submission, the student will no longer be eligible for completion of the doctorate.

Committee members will evaluate the student's ability to examine important questions pertaining to the chosen area of study. At the oral examination, the papers will be graded pass/fail on the exam as a whole. In the event of a failing grade on the oral examination, the student will have one opportunity to rewrite and resubmit the document(s) within conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee.

A paper may be based on an assignment previously submitted for a course, but substantial revisions will probably be necessary for even an "A" paper to be an acceptable comprehensive examination paper, as the standards of a course assignment and the goals of publication are often quite different. Essays published subsequent to the completion of the MA degree may be submitted for the comprehensive examination, but they should not be based on their MA thesis. One, but not both, of the papers may be used as a section of the student's dissertation.

The level of consultation permitted between the student and the major professor and committee members will be determined by the committee. However, these projects should be substantially independent works. Co-authored essays may not be submitted, and published versions of examination papers should be solo authored unless significant revisions are done for publication after their acceptance for the examination.

Deadline: It is strongly recommended that students have both papers submitted prior to October 1st of their third year (fourth year for accelerated

programs). If the oral examination for a student has not been held by November 1st of their third year (fourth year for accelerated program), the student automatically moves from the paper option to the written exam option.

B.2. Written Exam Option

The written comprehensive exam will consist of two parts.

a. Part 1

Part I will be an open book exam in which the candidate will answer questions in each of their two major areas. Two committee members are assigned to prepare the questions for each area. While there is no fixed form or length for the question, the written exam in an area might consist of one global question with a number of sub-questions, or three separate questions which are somewhat more focused in nature. The intent of this part of the exam is to give the student the opportunity to display mastery of the literature of an area and the ability to synthesize, critique, and offer original insights and commentary. The student will be allowed 2 weeks (i.e., 14 consecutive days) to complete the open portion of the exam. The major professor and the student will agree in advance on the exact time allotted. To ensure sufficient progress toward the degree, students should submit Part I by October 1st of their third year (fourth year for accelerated students). Once submitted, the faculty shall have two weeks to grade the exam.

b. Part II (optional)

After the answers to Part I are graded (all committee members may read answers to all questions), committee members assigned to a given area may develop specific follow-up questions to be answered by the candidate in a closed-book Part II exam. In Part II of the examination process committee members may ask for elaboration on an answer that they regard as inadequate or in need of further development. Part II will be written in the department within two weeks of the time Part I is graded. Students will be given a maximum of eight hours for their responses. At minimum, the committee members who wrote the questions will read and grade the answers. Committee members must respond within two weeks of the student's Part II response. The answers to each question will be graded "pass" or "fail."

A PhD student must receive passing votes from two out of three or three out of four members of the committee. In the event of a failing grade, the student will have one opportunity to retake part or all the examination. A student who fails two sets of written exams will be dismissed from the program.

Note: Exams are not routinely scheduled during the summer term. Failure to meet the suggested deadlines provides sufficient grounds to conclude that a student is not making satisfactory progress on the degree or eligibility for various awards and forms of support.

B.3. Oral Preliminary Examination

After a certified "pass" has been achieved in the written portion of the exam (either paper option or exam option), the student is now ready for the oral examination. Note that it is recommended that students tentatively schedule the oral defense before completing the written exams to ensure the availability of all committee members; however, the oral examination will only take place once a pass is confirmed.

The oral exam is an inclusive examination within the student's field of study. At least one-half hour of the examination will be spent on Program of Study questions. The oral exam is graded pass/fail, with a majority of committee members required for an overall pass. A student who fails the oral exam will have one opportunity to retake the exam within a time frame and conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee. Graduate students should not provide food or beverages for committee members during committee meetings or defenses.

The oral preliminary examination must be scheduled and announced with the Graduate School 2 weeks in advance and must be scheduled through the Graduate Coordinator Assistant 3 weeks in advance. Students must send the following information to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant for the purposes of making the announcement:

- Full, university-recognized name
- 810 number
- Location of the exam (building and room number)
- Starting time of the exam
- Major professor name
- Committee member names

C. Dissertation Requirements

The dissertation is a written product reflecting a systematic study of a significant question, problem, or issue relevant to the communication discipline. The exact nature of the dissertation will be negotiated with the student's major professor and their committee.

C.1. Prospectus and Dissertation Drafts

A prospectus is a formal proposal of a research project that outlines a student's plan for the intended study. A final dissertation draft is the comprehensive and polished version of a student's dissertation that is submitted for final review and approval.

Both drafts must be approved by the advisor and orally defended to the advisory committee. When drafting the prospectus, students should ensure that it includes key sections like the title page, abstract, introduction, literature review, research questions/hypotheses, methodology, timeline, and references. Ideally,

students will be ready for their prospectus meeting no later than the fall semester of their fourth year. When drafting the final dissertation, students should follow UGA's required format for dissertations. These requirements can be found on the Graduate Bulletin: https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-policies/.

After each is drafted, students should seek feedback from their advisor and revise accordingly before submitting the prospectus to their committee. No prospectus or dissertation draft should be distributed to the committee until the major professor has approved the whole document as ready for defense unless committee members explicitly agree to review drafts. After their major professor has approved the prospectus or draft, copies will be distributed to the committee. Committee members must be given two weeks to read the dissertation prospectus and the dissertation draft. Students should schedule a location for each defense with the Graduate Coordinator Assistant.

C.2. Dissertation Oral Examination Requirements

After it has been determined that a student has produced a dissertation ready to be defended, a two-hour oral examination of the dissertation project will be held. The oral exam is graded on a pass/fail basis, with 2/3 of committee members required for an overall pass. A student who fails an oral exam will have one opportunity to retake the exam within a time frame and following conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee. Graduate students should not provide food or beverages for committee members during committee meetings or defenses.

The oral examination must be "announced" to the Graduate School two weeks in advance and must be scheduled through the Graduate Coordinator Assistant.

When requesting an exam announcement, email the following information to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant no later than 2 weeks before the planned exam date:

- Full, university-recognized name
- 810 number
- Location of the exam (building and room number OR Zoom link)
- Starting time of the exam
- Major professor name
- Committee member names

Note: Exams are not routinely scheduled during the summer term**.**

D. Colloquium Presentation Requirement

Students must present a research project (not restricted to the dissertation) in a department colloquium, usually structured for 40-45 minutes of presentation, followed by 15-20 minutes of questions. PhD students should present consistent with an

academic job talk in their area of study. All students must consult their major professor about the specific parameters of such a presentation.

E. Residency, Minimum/Continuous Enrollment, Time Limits, & GPA Requirements

At UGA, the granting of a PhD degree presupposes a minimum of 3 full years of study beyond the bachelor's degree. At least 2 consecutive semesters of full-time work (i.e., enrollment for a minimum of 30 hours of consecutive coursework included in the Program of Study) must be spent in resident study on this campus. Undergraduate courses taken either to fulfill research skills requirements or to remove deficiencies may not be calculated in the 30 consecutive hours of resident credit. Students must also have a cumulative 3.0 (B) GPA and at least a 3.0 in all program courses to graduate.

The department follows the Graduate School's policy on the length of time a student has to complete their PhD degree program: All requirements for the degree, except the dissertation and final oral examination, must be completed within a period of 6 years. This time requirement dates from the first registration for graduate courses on a student's Program of Study. A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to complete all degree requirements within 5 years after passing the comprehensive examination, and being admitted to candidacy, will be required to take the comprehensive examinations again and be admitted to candidacy a second time.

The Graduate School's minimum/enrollment policy is as follows: "All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) graduate or professional course credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer), including the 3 hours of graduate credit that is required for registration during the semester in which degree requirements are complete, until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated. Doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy and thesis-writing master's students who have satisfactorily completed all required courses (exclusive of 7000 and 7300) will be allowed to register at a rate equivalent to the prevailing in-state tuition rate. This policy specifies a minimum for maintaining status as a degree-seeking graduate student only. It does not supersede the minimum enrollment requirements of other programs, offices, or agencies. Doctoral students must maintain enrollment during fall and spring semesters (breaking only for summer semesters) until the residency requirement (30 hours for PHD, 20 hours for EDD or DMA) has been met. Refer to the instructions for Out-of-State Tuition Waivers if necessary."

F. Accelerated BA to PhD Program – Additional Considerations

Unless noted otherwise, the accelerated BA-to-PhD program has all the same requirements as the regular PhD program except for (1) process, (2) funding, and (3) paperwork.

F.1. MA Degree Process

The requirements for receiving the non-thesis MA degree along the way to the PhD are as follows:

IPH Students:

a. Scholarly Paper

Students will produce 1 journal-length scholarly paper. There are 2 possibilities for the type of paper produced: 1) original data paper or 2) secondary data analysis. The paper can originate from a seminar paper or represent a new, unique idea. The student will be required to defend the paper during an oral examination. The paper must also be presented during a departmental colloquium. Papers that are presented during a colloquium dedicated to practicing conference papers also fulfill the presentation requirement.

b. Oral Examination

The oral exam should be completed no later than <u>April 1st</u> so that the necessary paperwork can be submitted to the Graduate School in time for spring graduation. Note that it is recommended that students tentatively schedule the oral exam before completing the scholarly paper to ensure the availability of all committee members; however, the oral examination will only take place once it is confirmed by the advisor. There are 3 possible outcomes: 1) the student passes and continues in the program; 2) the student passes and is rewarded with the MA but does not continue in the program; 3) the student does not pass the exam and does not receive the MA degree. Graduate students should not provide food or beverages for committee members during committee meetings or defenses.

RS Students:

All RS students admitted to the accelerated PhD program are required to take MA exams the fall of their second year. These exams determine the student's readiness to continue in the PhD program and earn the MA along the way to the PhD.

a. Written Exam

Students will assemble a committee of three faculty members and will be given four questions total, only two of which they choose to answer over the course of two days (these need not be scheduled for consecutive days). On each exam day, the student will be given two questions and the student will choose only one to answer. The questions will be written by the committee members to test the student's understanding of theory, criticism, and methodology. They are not written to test the student on their understanding of a particular content area, although they may draw from prior seminars to formulate answers to the questions posed. Exams are closed book and students do not see the questions in advance. Candidates have two hours for

each question (for a total of 4 hours).

b. Representative Paper

Students will also submit one unrevised seminar paper representative of their best work since starting the program. The paper should be distributed to the committee at least 2 weeks before the oral exam is scheduled.

c. Oral Examination

An oral examination (covering both the exam questions and the seminar paper) should be scheduled at least 2 weeks after the written exams have been completed. Note that it is recommended that students tentatively schedule the oral exam before completing the scholarly paper to ensure the availability of all committee members; however, the oral examination will only take place once it is confirmed by the advisor. The oral exam should be completed no later than April 1st so that the necessary paperwork can be submitted to the Graduate School in time for spring graduation. The exams may not be re-taken. There are 3 possible outcomes: 1) the student passes and continues in the program; 2) the student passes and is rewarded with the MA but does not continue in the program; 3) the student does not pass the exam and does not receive the MA degree. Graduate students should not provide food or beverages for committee members during committee meetings or defenses.

F.2. Funding

Accelerated BA-to-PhD students are not typically eligible for a 6th year of funding.

F.3. Paperwork

Students admitted to the accelerated program are classified as PhD students who are receiving the *non-thesis MA* along the way to the PhD degree (typically in the spring semester of their second year in the program).

During the semester in which students prepare for and/or take accelerated PhD preliminary exams, they should register for COMM 7200 – "Master's Comprehensive Preparation." Please do not register for COMM 7300, as that is only for thesis-writing MA students. Once a student has completed the oral examination part of their preliminary exams, they should fill out the "MA Comprehensive Final Exam Form" (available on the department website) and submit the completed form to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant for processing.

During the spring of their second year in the program, students should submit the *MA Program of Study Form* and apply for graduation so that they can receive the MA degree. The Graduate Coordinator Assistant will work with the Graduate School to ensure that the MA option is available to them when they register for graduation in Athena.

Please see the Graduate School's website for posted deadlines to know when to submit the necessary paperwork (Program of Study Form, Application for

Graduation, etc.).

G. Extended Funding

When possible, the Department of Communication Studies supports students seeking additional funding if: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the graduate program (preferably, has defended a dissertation prospectus no later than September of the 4th year of study), or (b) the student seeks to pursue an additional year of course work beyond the general requirements, is making satisfactory progress, and continues to meet the criteria for additional funding.

Please note that meeting any requirements as stated below does not guarantee additional funding. Other considerations, such as number of years of support and source of that support, will also factor into who receives additional funding should it become available.

G.1. Applying for 5th Year Funding in Advance

Students not yet in their 3rd year of study can apply in advance for 5th year funding. If a student is approved for 5th year funding in advance, the department will give the student priority for funding decisions in their 5th year. Of note: the decision of a student's committee to require additional coursework in a student's 3rd or 4th year does not, alone, merit 5th year funding.

Students may apply early for 5th year funding under the following conditions:

- A student identifies the need to take additional coursework (at least 1 semester more) than the usual load, as specified in the graduate program manual.

    o A student seeking 5th year funding based on the need to take additional coursework must include with their request documentation including a completed Program of Study Form and a statement from their major professor indicating that the committee supports the request. All materials will be due to the Graduate Coordinator no later than S*pring Break* of the second year of study.

- A student receiving early approval of 5th year funding is still expected to satisfactorily defend their dissertation prospectus no later than *September 30th* of the 4th year of study in the doctoral program.

- The student is expected to meet an appropriate level of teaching competency throughout the period the student has received assistantship support, as defined by evaluation numbers and open-ended student feedback.

- The student has _no_ incompletes in coursework at the time of application, or during their 4th and 5th year of funding.

G.2. Students Currently in Their 4th Year

- Students in their 4th year are eligible to apply for 5th year funding under the

following conditions:

- o The department identifies the possibility of being able to fund one or more students for a 5th year (ideally by April 15th).

- o The student has defended their dissertation prospectus no later than *September 30th* of the 4th year of study in the doctoral program.

  - ▪ Defense dates after September 30th do not disqualify a student from consideration. However, the student should be sensitive to the preferred schedule for making satisfactory progress.

- o The student meets an appropriate level of teaching competency throughout the period they received assistantship support, as defined by evaluation numbers and open-ended student feedback.

- o The student has <u>no</u> Incompletes in coursework at the time of application.

G.3. Students Beyond the 4th Year

Students beyond the 4th year may apply for additional funding. Decisions will be made based upon the same criteria as students applying during their 4th year. Decisions will be made as soon as possible, however, since other students are given priority, students beyond their 4th year may not receive a final decision until late in the summer.

G.4. Applying for Additional Funding

All students applying for additional funding must submit the following materials to the Department Head:

- A letter of interest identifying and justifying the request for additional funding.

- A current CV

- Evidence of teaching effectiveness (if on a teaching assistantship) including summaries of quantitative and qualitative teaching evaluations.

- A copy of an approved Program of Study Form.

- If applying early for 5th year funding: a list of courses to be taken in the additional year, with a justification for each.

- A letter of support from major professor. If a student is applying early for 5th year funding, the faculty member should speak on the additional coursework that the student needs/should take to justify the additional year.

H. Leaves of Absence

The Graduate School policy on leaves of absence is as follows: (see also: https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/enrollment-policy/

"A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual

circumstances to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy. A leave of absence requires approval of the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Dean of Graduate School. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause such as serious medical and health-related issues; major financial and employment issues; pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, elder care, and other significant family issues; and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. An approved leave of absence stands in lieu of registering for a minimum of 3 credits for each semester for which the leave of absence is granted. During a leave of absence, students may not use UGA facilities, resources, or services designed or intended only for enrolled students; receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship, or financial aid from the University; or take any UGA courses related to their Program of Study. An approved leave of absence does not stop the clock unless the leave is granted for pregnancy, childbirth, or adoption (see below): time on leave counts toward any University, Graduate School, or program time limits pertaining to the degree being sought. Time spent on an approved leave of absence due to pregnancy, childbirth, and/or adoption of a child under six years of age will not count toward time limits governing their graduate degree."

Be sure to carefully review the Graduate School guidelines for applying for a leave of absence as these include important details about deadlines, paperwork, etc.

Regarding Department of Communication Studies guidelines, an approved leave of absence "stops the clock" regarding expected degree completion milestones (MA thesis proposal, PhD comprehensive exams, and the like). Even when students are given extensions on departmental degree milestones, they are still beholden to Graduate School time limits: coursework expires after 6 years; PhD students need to be admitted to candidacy before coursework expires; and once a student has been admitted to candidacy, students have 5 years to complete the dissertation (unless the leave is due to pregnancy, childbirth, and/or adoption of a child under six years of age).

Regarding funding, unfunded leave does not count toward the number of years of funding stipulated in a student's offer letter. Also, students with an approved one-semester leave are entitled to one additional semester of funding to meet all degree requirements. So, for example, if a PhD student takes one semester of leave during their second year of the program, they will receive an extra semester of funding during their 5th year in the program (for 4.5 years).

I. Applying for funding after being admitted to the program (current students)

Students who do not hold an assistantship will be considered for such support at any time they are enrolled in the program depending on the teaching and research needs of the department. However, they may also formally request that the graduate admissions committee consider them for funding when reviewing applications during the normal recruitment cycle. To be considered for funding by the admissions committee, students should submit their request for consideration to the Graduate Coordinator no later than the deadline for applications, usually in early January. The application should include a transcript of the student's grades

for classes taken in this program, a statement of progress toward degree markers (e.g., major professor secured, prospectus meeting held, comprehensives scheduled, etc.), copies of annual feedback from faculty or Graduate Coordinator, and a CV. The admissions committee will take into consideration the student's grades, progress toward degree, and annual feedback when making their decision in comparison to the applicant pool. If a student is given mid-year funding, the funding will continue for the following year provided the student is making satisfactory progress (per departmental policy on renewal of funding).

VII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

A. Academic Honesty Policy

Students at UGA are responsible for maintaining and adhering to the strictest standards of honesty and integrity in every aspect of their academic lives. Honesty in academic matters is a large part of this obligation. As such, students should familiarize themselves with [UGA's Academic Honesty Policy](#).

A.1. Policy on Use of Generative AI in Theses and Dissertation: Per the Graduate Bulletin, the master's thesis demonstrates independent judgment in developing a problem from primary sources, and a dissertation represents originality in research, independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. It is the responsibility of a student's individual effort. As such, the use of generative AI in theses and dissertations is considered unauthorized assistance per the Academic Cod of Honesty and is prohibited unless specifically authorized by members of the advisory committee for use within the approved scope. If approved by the advisory committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be disclosed in a statement within the thesis or dissertation.

Guidance from Academic Honesty: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/

B. UGA's Policies Regarding Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault

According to the University's Equal Opportunity Office, "The University of Georgia (the "University") is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work, and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, University System of Georgia ("USG") policy, and University policy, the University prohibits harassment of or discrimination against any person because of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status by any member of the University Community (as defined below) on campus, in connection with a University program or activity, or in a manner that creates a hostile environment for any member of the University Community. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the University. Bias based on the protected categories of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status will not hinder employment, study or institutional services, programs, or activities. Bias factors will not be permitted to have an adverse influence upon decisions regarding students, employees, applicants for admission, applicants for employment, contractors, volunteers, or participants in or users of institutional programs, services, and activities. The University of Georgia will continue in its efforts to maintain an institutional environment free of such bias and restates its policy

prohibiting the interference of such bias."

Every graduate student should be aware of the university's policies, which include important reporting requirements. On the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) page, information about the following can be found: Title IX and Sexual Misconduct, Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (NDAH), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Accessibility, Affirmative Action and Hiring, plus resources, training, and reporting forms.

Another valuable resource is the Ombudsperson Program. According to the program's website, "The University of Georgia Ombudspersons are designated individuals who serve as independent, neutral, and informal resources for UGA students, faculty, and staff. These individuals provide information and assistance regarding administrative processes and may serve as additional avenues for resolving students' concerns, faculty, and staff's concerns. See an ombudsperson if you have a problem, concern, or issue at work, you do not know where to go for help, you are reluctant to go through formal channels for assistance, or you need a safe place to explore your options." In short, the Ombudsperson Program can be a helpful first resource. However, before consulting an ombudsperson, it is important to consult their website to be aware of their reporting obligations and other important matters. Of special note: if a student is concerned about an issue regarding their status as a student, they should see the Ombudsperson for student affairs; if the concern is regarding their status as an instructor, they should consult the Ombudsperson for faculty.

C. Consensual Relationships

A university employee, including a graduate teaching assistant, is prohibited from pursuing, or having a romantic or sexual relationship with any student or University System of Georgia (USG) employee who the individual supervises, teaches, or evaluates in any way. Additionally, a university employee is prohibited from pursuing or having a romantic or sexual relationship with any student or USG employee whose terms or conditions of education or employment the individual could directly affect.

Individuals who violate the consensual relationship prohibition are subject to disciplinary action under this Policy, up to and including termination.

D. Campus Emergencies: UGA Alert

UGA is committed to keeping everyone as safe as possible through effective communication prior to, during, and following emergencies. UGA Alert allows individuals to receive emergency messages on multiple devices. As many as three phone numbers and two email addresses are able to be identified for receiving emergency notifications. To register, opt in/out, or update information, a valid UGA MyID is needed. Proceed to registration/update information on the MyID homepage to register.

For more information on the Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness, please go here.

For an exhaustive list of all university policies and procedures please consult the

UGA website.