



Graduate Programs in Communication: Graduate Handbook 2025-2026

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Graduate Programs in Communication: Graduate Handbook

This manual is a guide for M.A. and Ph.D. students in communication, their academic advisors, and other graduate faculty members. The manual provides an overview of the degree and curriculum requirements, administrative processes, and links to forms that need to be completed. Although this supplementary guide contains a comprehensive description of requirements, graduate students will still need to refer to the current Graduate School rules as they appear in the latest Graduate School Bulletin on its website <https://gradschool.uky.edu/graduate-school-bulletin> . For additional information, consult the Graduate Programs in Communication's website <http://ci.uky.edu/grad>.

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SECTION 1: GRADUATE WORK IN COMMUNICATION

A. Essence of the Program

The College of Communication and Information offers programs leading to the Master of Arts (either Plan A or Plan B) and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Communication. Emphasis is on the study of communication behavior at various levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and mass. The program is designed to serve the needs of students whose goals may include teaching and academic research, professional research, or communication careers in the media or other organizations.

B. Academic and Professional Aspects

In many academic fields, the line between academic and professional education is blurring, and this is true of communication. Professionals and academics alike must understand the literature of the field, be familiar with methods of investigation, be aware of the social and political consequences of varied communication systems and practices, and be able to devise communication strategies to meet differing situations. Thus, while persons interested in academia will be provided with experiences somewhat different from those intending to enter professional work, the basic program is the same. Individuals who earn advanced degrees often have the choice of entering either the scholarly or the professional world.

C. Opportunities for Graduates

There is a need for graduates in academic departments/units of communication, journalism, media and arts studies, integrated strategic communication, and information communication technology throughout the country most of which will require at least 18 hours of post-baccalaureate work or a master's degree. In addition, government, businesses, and the media need persons with advanced training for research, management, and policy positions.

SECTION 2: GENERAL POLICIES

A. Admission

1. Admission Requirements

Students with an undergraduate degree from a fully accredited institution of higher learning and a grade point average of 3.0 or above on a 4.0 scale are admissible to the graduate programs. In addition, all students must submit official scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). Students whose native language is not English must also submit their score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS).

Students with degrees in areas not directly related to communication are encouraged to apply. If admitted, they may be required to take coursework without graduate credit. In some cases, successful professional experience in a communication field will be considered in admitting students to the program. Admission is highly competitive. Typically, only about 10-20% of those who apply are admitted.

2. Admissions Process

A detailed outline of materials required for admission may be found in the Graduate School Bulletin as well as the Graduate Programs in Communication's website: <http://ci.uky.edu/grad>. The Graduate Admission and Financial Aid Committee will review only COMPLETED admission files after January 5 for a fall semester entry. Applicants must have their completed file on record

with the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication prior to the date of review. The Graduate Admission and Financial Aid Committee will only review applications once a year. Results of the Committee's action will be available 30 days from the date of review. New students are admitted for enrollment in the fall semester only. University Scholars and Graduate and Certificate students can enter the program in spring or summer as well.

B. Course Load

The normal semester load for a full-time graduate student is 9 credit hours per semester. Overloads may be requested for up to 15 hours of coursework and must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication (overloads more than 15 hours of coursework require additional approval from the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School). Recipients of full-time assistantships typically take 9 hours of coursework a semester. Course overloads (maximum 15 hours) are not encouraged, and must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Students enrolled in Qualifying Exams/Dissertation Residency Credits (CI 757/767) for 2 credit hours are considered full-time. Master's students enrolled in Thesis Residency Credit (CI 768) for 6 credit hours with no additional courses can receive 'under-enrollment permission' in order to maintain their full-time assistantship. The request is made through the Graduate School's Funding Office upon recommendation of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

C. Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may be assigned to a graduate student if (a) a portion of the coursework remains undone, and (b) there is a reasonable possibility that a passing grade will result from completion of the work. All incomplete 'I' grades must be replaced by a regular final letter grade within 12 months. If an 'I' grade has not been replaced within the allowable period, the University Registrar shall change the 'I' grade to a grade of 'E' on the student's permanent academic record and adjust the student's grade point average accordingly, unless otherwise approved because of exceptional circumstances by the Dean of the Graduate School upon recommendation of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

D. Time Limits for a Degree

TIME LIMIT FOR MASTER'S DEGREE

Students first enrolled in a master's program in the fall 2005 semester and beyond have 6 years to complete all requirements for the degree, but extensions up to an additional 4 years may be requested for a total of 10 years. Extensions up to 2 years may be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School or designate. Requests for extensions longer than 2 years must be considered by Graduate Council. Requests should be initiated by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Transfer of Credit

A total of 9 hours (or 25% of the credit hours needed to fulfill the pre-qualifying residency requirement) may be transferred into a master's degree program upon request of the DGS. These hours include all post baccalaureate work, graduate work taken at another regionally-accredited university or as a student in another graduate program at the University of Kentucky.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete the equivalent of two years of residency prior to the qualifying examination and one year of post-qualifying residency. Specifics of these requirements are detailed below.

Pre-Qualifying Residency: Students must complete the requirement of 45 credit hours of graduate coursework within five years of entry into the doctoral program. Extensions up to an additional three years

may be requested to fulfill the pre-qualifying requirement.

(UPDATED 6/2024) Scheduling the Qualifying Examination for Residence Credit: CI 757 residence credit is applied to the semester of the qualifying examination and the examination must be passed during the semester of enrollment in this course. Students will register for 2 credit hours of CI 757, and this will be recognized as full-time enrollment. This course will be graded S/UN and will NOT be repeatable. Students will not be able to register for CI 767 until the qualifying examination is passed. If the qualifying examination is not taken or passed while registered for CI 757 an I or UN grade may be assigned, and enrollment in up to 9 credit hours of alternative coursework will be required in subsequent semester(s) until the qualifying examination is passed. At that point an S grade may be assigned to CI 757.

(UPDATED 6/2024) Post-Qualifying Residency: Students first enrolled in a doctoral program in the fall 2005 semester and beyond are required to enroll in a 2-credit hour course, CI 767; Dissertation Residency Credit, after successfully completing the qualifying examination (CI 757). This constitutes full-time enrollment. For non-funded students, the Graduate School will provide a scholarship for the out-of-state portion of the (2) credit hours associated with a CI 767 course and the student will only be responsible for the in-state tuition rate plus mandatory fees. Students must remain continuously enrolled in this course every fall and spring semester until they have completed and defended the dissertation. The student need not be physically present on campus while enrolled for credit after the qualifying examination. Students are required to complete a minimum of two semesters of CI 767 before they can graduate. Continuous enrollment in CI 767 also applies to students whose programs of study or certification standards require an extended practicum or field experience.

Transfer of Credit

A total of 9 hours (or 25% of the credit hours needed to fulfill the pre-qualifying residency requirement) may be transferred into a doctoral degree program upon request of the DGS. These hours include all post baccalaureate work, graduate work taken at another regionally-accredited university or as a student in another graduate program at the University of Kentucky.

E. Termination Policy

The Graduate Review Committee will review the progress of each student in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs on an annual basis; the committee may recommend to the Graduate Faculty the termination of any student's program. The Graduate Faculty may then recommend termination to the Graduate School. Such recommendation will be made only after consultation with the student's Advisory Committee (or the Major Advisor if no committee has been named) and only after ratification by a two-thirds vote of the Graduate Faculty members present.

SECTION 3: THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

A. Program Requirements

The Master of Arts in Communication degree at the University of Kentucky requires that every student becomes familiar with the important theories and concepts and the principal investigative methods used to expand knowledge of this subject. This material takes up approximately one-third of the coursework. Beyond that, each student can (with the help of an advisor) devise an individualized curriculum. Master's work is a time for sharpening career plans and taking concrete action to realize goals. This process can be enhanced through consultations with faculty members, careful selection of courses, writing pertinent papers, and preparing a thesis.

Incoming students are expected to have had at least twelve hours of appropriate undergraduate work in communication. Should the Graduate Faculty believe that there is a deficiency in the applicant's undergraduate work in communication, students may be required to enroll in additional undergraduate classes that do not count toward the master's degree.

The M.A. program requires all students to complete 30 credit hours. Students may choose from either the Plan A or Plan B options to complete their degree requirements.

1. Plan A (Thesis Option)

Students choosing Plan A will take a minimum of 24 credit hours of coursework: 12 hours from required core courses and 12 hours from elective courses. Additionally, they must complete 6 credit hours of CI 768 Residence Credit for the Master's Degree, as well as an oral examination in defense of the thesis.

*CI 651 Communication Theory	3 credits
*CI 665 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication	3 credits
*EDP 557 Gathering, Analyzing and Using Educational Data (or approved equivalent by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication)	3 credits
*CI 631 Proseminar in Interpersonal Communication OR CI 645 Proseminar in Mass Communication Theory OR CI 608 Mass Communication and Society	3 credits
Electives	12 credits
CI 768 Residence Credit for the Master's Degree	6 credits
Total	30 credits

*Required Core Courses

At least 21 of the 30 credit hours must be from offerings within the College of Communication and Information. At least half of the minimum course requirements (excluding thesis, practicum, or internship credit) must be in courses at the 600 and 700 levels. Plan A students may count up to 6 credit hours of CI 768 Residence Credit for the Master's Degree towards the 21 hours. No more than 3 credit hours may be earned in CI 696 Communication Internship, CI 700 Directed Reading in Communication, CI 781 Directed Study in Communication, or CI 790 Research Problems in Communication. If Plan A students need more than 12 credit hours of CI 768 to complete their thesis, they should then register for CI 748 Master's Thesis Research.

2. Plan B (Non-thesis Option)

Students choosing Plan B will take a minimum of 30 hours of coursework: 12 hours from required core courses and 18 hours from elective courses. Additionally, they must successfully pass a comprehensive written and oral examination over the student's program.

*CI 651 Communication Theory	3 credits
*CI 665 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication	3 credits
*EDP 557 Gathering, Analyzing and Using Educational Data (or approved equivalent by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication)	3 credits
*CI 631 Proseminar in Interpersonal Communication OR CI 645 Proseminar in Mass Communication Theory OR CI 608 Mass Communication and Society	3 credits
Electives	18 credits
Total	30 credits

*Required Core Courses

At least 21 of the 30 credit hours must be from offerings within the College of Communication and Information. At least half of the minimum course requirements (excluding thesis, practicum, or internship credit) must be in courses at the 600 and 700 levels. No more than 6 credit hours may be earned in CI 696 Communication Internship, CI 700 Directed Reading in Communication, CI 781

Directed Study in Communication, or CI 790 Research Problems in Communication.

B. Formation of the Advisory Committee

The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication advises all new graduate students until the selection of a Major Advisor and Advisory Committee, which should be formed and appointed no later than the point at which 18 credit hours of graduate work have been accumulated OR at least one year prior to the Comprehensive Examination or Thesis defense, whichever comes first. The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication will also serve as advisor for all provisionally admitted students and those post-baccalaureate students who intend to request formal admission.

The Advisory Committee will consist of at least three members, two of whom must be Graduate Faculty members in the Graduate Programs in Communication, at least one of whom must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty in the Graduate Programs in Communication. The Major Advisor of the Advisory Committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in the Graduate Programs in Communication. The student should consult with the advisor and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication to select the other members of the committee who are officially appointed by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. The committee will evaluate coursework and supervise the thesis (Plan A) or oversee the final comprehensive exams (Plan B).

C. Application for Degree

To be eligible to receive a degree, master's students must submit an electronic request via [Application for Degree Form](#). Applications must be received in the Graduate School within 30 days of the start of the semester in which the student expects to complete his or her work (or within 15 days of the start of Summer Session).

D. The Final Examination Procedure

For all degree candidates (thesis and comprehensive exam), the electronic [Request for the Final Examination Form](#) must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication as well as the Dean of the Graduate School. The logistics of time and location should be scheduled through the Graduate Program in Communication's office as well as the Advisory Committee. The final examination approval should be submitted two weeks prior to taking the final oral examination. The final oral examination must be held no later than eight days before the last day of classes of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded.

1. Plan A (Thesis) Students

By submitting a [Request for Final Examination Form](#), the student is attesting that the majority of the Advisory Committee members have read the thesis (the draft of the thesis submitted must be complete in content, including all footnotes, tables, figures and appendices, reference page, title page and abstract) and are in favor of moving to the final examination.

It is the duty of the Advisory Committee to examine the student, generally on the field and specifically on the thesis. In all decisions, the majority opinion of the Advisory Committee prevails. If the Advisory Committee is evenly split, the candidate fails. The Major Advisor is responsible for obtaining pass/fail signatures and returning the official **Graduate School Examination Card** to the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication who records the action in the student's file and sends the card to the Graduate School no later than two weeks after the examination. Graduate students are not permitted to touch or handle the examination card once it has been signed by the committee members.

After successful completion of the examination, the student has 60 days to submit a final copy of the

thesis to the [Graduate School](#) according to its regulations (via this [form](#)). Otherwise, a second final examination may be required. Requests for exceptions to the 60-day policy should be made in a form of an e-mail from the student's Major Advisor to the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School. An electronic PDF copy of each thesis must be e-mailed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication for the records within his or her Office.

2. Plan B (Comprehensive Exam) Students

The student's Advisory Committee will administer the final examination, which ordinarily will consist of a six-hour (two hours for each portion) written examination covering communication theory, research methods, and the student's specialization, followed by an oral examination. Exams may be taken in a controlled "in-house" format in the College or as a "take-home" format, depending on the Advisory Committee's thoughts concerning the best way to examine a particular student.

For all master level students, the electronic [Request for Final Examination Form](#) must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication as well as The Dean of the Graduate School. The comprehensive exam's oral portion must be scheduled by the student through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and approved at least two weeks in advance by the Graduate School. The written portion is not officially scheduled, but usually takes place at least two weeks prior to the oral examination and should be planned with the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

Preparation. Each faculty member should provide the graduate student with a general description of his or her question, based upon the coursework completed by the student and the objectives of the required courses, six to eight weeks prior to the exam. The questions should clearly reflect the objectives of the accompanying coursework.

In-House Version. For the in-house version, students are provided with an internet-disabled computer and asked to type their responses for a maximum of two hours on each of the three sections of coursework described above (6 total hours). Questions are distributed from the committee members through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. The separate exam sections are spread over a period of time within the same week. With the discretion of each committee member, students are permitted to bring notes with them to their written exams. These notes are to be limited to no more than one side of an 8-1/2 x 11" page, with 1" margins all around, and no smaller than 11-point font, for each exam question. All arrangements for in-house examinations must be made through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication office and are made available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Take-Home Version. Students will be e-mailed one individual prompt through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and are given 24 hours to respond to each question (72 hours total). The examination is administered over a maximum of five-day period within the same week (not to include weekends). All arrangements for take-home examinations must be made through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

Expectations for Answers. Although specific committee expectations should be discussed prior to the administration of exams, below are some general guidelines.

- Answers are typically 6-10 pages in length but may not exceed 15 double-spaced pages excluding title page and references (total of 60 pages maximum across all four areas) for take-home exams. Exceeding the page allowance can result in exam failure, and/or request to retake all or part of the exam. No page limit for in-house exams.
- Answers for each question are complete, accurate, and grammatically correct.
- Answers are thoughtful, informed, and consistent.

- Take-home exam answers are well documented, up-to-date, carefully proofread, and are detailed in APA formatting (including reference page).
- Sufficient detail is provided (e.g., go beyond undergraduate textbooks to demonstrate doctoral expertise).
- Both written and oral responses need to demonstrate that students have sufficient understanding of, and competence in, communication theory, communication research methods, communication specialization, and a relevant cognate area.
- Answers are clearly presented in the active voice of the master level student.
- Oral responses to questions are specific, informed, thoughtful, and consistent.

Pre-Oral Defense Student Feedback. Committee members must not engage in individual defense discussion with the student about his or her written exam performance. Instead, any feedback a committee member wants to share with the student must be provided to the committee's Major Advisor. All committee members must communicate with the committee's Major Advisor about the student responses to their individual questions no later than 48 hours before the scheduled oral defense. The Major Advisor must communicate any major concerns to the student no later than 24 hours before the oral defense.

Although giving general feedback is acceptable, it should not render the oral defense perfunctory. Students should be prepared to spontaneously defend, explain, and if necessary, offer corrections for their answers during their oral defense. In addition, faculty who do not wish to give any feedback prior to the oral defense should communicate their preference to the committee and student prior to the administration of both written and oral exams.

The results of the examination must be reported by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication to the Graduate School within two weeks of its conclusion via the official **Examination Card** received through e-mail. The committee must report either "pass" or "fail", with no conditional clauses attached. In all decisions, the majority opinion of the Advisory Committee prevails. If the Advisory Committee is evenly split, the candidate fails. If the result is failure, the committee determines the conditions to be met before another examination may be given. The minimum time between examinations is four months. A second examination must be taken within one year after the first examination. A third examination is not permitted.

Although the Graduate School requires a pass/fail decision, it leaves open the option of retesting any portions of which the committee deemed the student's performance unacceptable. For example, the committee might specify that the retake exam (of which there must be both a written and oral portion) consists only of questions on Methods. The committee determines the conditions to be met before the second examination is given.

Regardless of the exam's outcome, the Major Advisor is responsible for obtaining pass/fail signatures and returning the official **Graduate School Examination Card** to the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication who records the action in the student's file and sends the card to the Graduate School no later than two weeks after the examination. Graduate students are not permitted to touch or handle the examination card once it has been signed by the committee members.

SECTION 4: THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

A. Program Requirements

The Ph.D. program emphasizes communication as a social science. Graduates are prepared for academic positions involving teaching and communication research. This preparation may also lead to careers in government, the media, and other organizations as researchers, consultants, and policy makers. To complete the program, students must demonstrate:

1. A thorough grasp of perspectives on the nature of social science theory and the process of theory construction and testing;
2. A broad knowledge of theories and research in various communication contexts (e.g. health communication, interpersonal communication, media and mass communication, information studies, instructional communication, risk and crisis communication, strategic and organizational communication, etc.);
3. In-depth knowledge of the communication context chosen as the student's area of specialization;
4. Competence in a cognate field that supports the student's area of specialization;
5. A broad knowledge of various communication research methods and statistical procedures, with special expertise in either quantitative or qualitative methods.

Credit hour guidelines for the Ph.D. program are as follows:

	<i>Minimum of Required Post-M.A. Hours</i>
Theory and Contexts:	12 credits
*CI 651 Communication Theory	
*CI 631 Proseminar in Interpersonal Communication OR CI 645 Proseminar in Mass Communication	
*CI 751 Advanced Topics in Communication Theory Construction	
Area of Specialization	12 credits
Research Methods/Statistics:	12 credits
*CI 664 Qualitative Methods in Communication Research	
*CI 665 Quantitative Methods in Communication Research	
*STA 570 Basic Graduate Statistics Analysis (or statistics course approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication)	
Cognate	6 credits
CI 790 Research Problems in Communication	3 credits
CI Dissertation Residency Credits	4 credits
Total	49 credits

*Required Course

The above are guidelines, not requirements, for the number of credit hours to be taken in each of the four areas beyond the M.A. hours. The student's Advisory Committee decides on the actual number of hours to be taken by a particular student in each area, depending on the strength of the student's background. However, each student's program is to be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. Serious departures from these guidelines must be justified by the student's Advisory Committee to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and the Graduate Review Committee.

A minimum number of hours are suggested past the master's degree in each area, regardless of the strength of a student's previous coursework, because (1) it is assumed that a doctoral student should have knowledge of the most recent development in a particular area; and (2) to afford the student the opportunity to participate in advanced seminars directed particularly at doctoral students. An additional reason for a minimum number of post-M.A. hours in the cognate area is the need for an outside member on the student's doctoral committee. This person normally is someone with whom the student has had recent coursework.

CI 790 Research Problems in Communication must be taken before completing the qualifying exam. The student's Advisory Committee can determine when this course best fits in his or her plan of study. However,

CI 767 Dissertation Residency Credit must be taken the semester after the qualifying exam is passed.

Language Requirements. Proficiency in a foreign language is not required for successful completion of the Ph.D. in communication. A student's Advisory Committee, however, may stipulate certain graduate-level courses in another language for the student's program that are consistent with the objectives of the student's program.

G. Pre-Residency and Residency Requirements for Ph.D. Students (Updated June 2024)

Students must complete the requirement of 45 credit hours of graduate coursework (not including CI 757 Qualifying Examination Residency Credit and 767 Dissertation Residency Credit) within five years of entry into the doctoral program. Extensions up to 12 months may be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School upon receipt of a request from the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. Requests for extensions longer than 12 months must be considered by the Graduate Council and will require the positive recommendation of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication, the Major Advisor of the student's doctoral Advisory Committee, and a majority vote of Graduate Faculty in the program. If the qualifying examination has not been passed at the end of five years, or at the end of all approved time extensions the student will be dismissed from the program.

CI 757 is Qualifying Examination Residency Credit for dissertation research before the qualifying examination. Students may register for one semester of this course in anticipation of completing the qualifying examination during the semester. The course is **not** repeatable and is not required. (2 credit hours, counts as full-time enrollment).

Students will register for 2 credit hours of CI 757, and this will be recognized as full-time enrollment. This course will be graded S/UN and will NOT be repeatable. Students will not be able to register for CI 767 until the qualifying examination is passed. If the qualifying examination is not taken or passed while registered for CI 757 an I or UN grade may be assigned, and enrollment in up to 9 credit hours of alternative coursework will be required in subsequent semester(s) until the qualifying examination is passed. At that point an S grade may be assigned to CI 757.

After successful completion of qualifying exams, students are required to enroll in a 2-credit hour course, CI 767 Dissertation Residency Credit, after successfully completing the qualifying examination. The students need not be physically present on campus while enrolled for credit after successfully passing the qualifying examination. They must remain continuously enrolled in this course every fall and spring semester until they have completed and defended the dissertation. This constitutes full-time enrollment.

H. Formation of the Advisory Committee

The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication advises all new students until the selection of a Major Advisor is completed, which should take place no later than the point at which 18 credit hours of graduate work have been accumulated. The rest of the Advisory Committee should be formed and appointed at least one year prior to the Qualifying Examination. The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication will also serve as advisor for all provisionally admitted students and those post-baccalaureate students who intend to request formal admission.

The Major Advisor, who must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty, works closely with the student during the remainder of the student's program in selecting courses, deciding on major emphases, determining a cognate, preparing for the qualifying examination, and in writing of the dissertation.

Upon formation of the Advisory Committee, students must submit the electronic [Advisory Committee Formation Form](https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm), found through the Graduate School's website: https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm. The Advisory Committee has a core of (at minimum) four members. This core consists of the Major Advisor, two other members from the

major area and at least one representative from any minor (cognate) area. At least one member must be from outside the program. All members of the core must be members of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Kentucky, and three (including the Major Advisor) must possess full Graduate Faculty status. The Dean of the Graduate School appoints an Outside Examiner, who becomes part of the Advisory Committee at the time of the final (dissertation) examination. An associate member of the graduate faculty in the Graduate Programs in Communication can co-chair the Advisory Committee.

I. Course of Study

Generally, after completion of 18 hours of doctoral work, the student will propose a course of study for the remainder of his or her graduate work to his or her Advisory Committee, and submit the [*Course of Study Form*](#) (found on <https://ci.uky.edu/grad/resources>) to the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. The student will ordinarily not deviate from the approved course of study unless special circumstances make it necessary and then only with the approval of the committee.

The committee should meet at least once each semester to review the student's progress, consult with the student and the Major Advisor and, if necessary, to revise the program. In addition to advising and program planning, the Advisory Committee is in charge of administering the qualifying examination, supervising preparation of the dissertation, and administering the final examination of the dissertation.

J. The Qualifying Exam

All doctoral students are required to take a qualifying examination consisting of both written and oral components. The purpose of this examination is to verify that students have sufficient mastery of their field to become candidates for the degree. For communication students, this means mastery of the four areas described previously: communication theory and contexts, area of specialization, research methods and statistics, and the cognate area. Exams may be taken in a controlled "in-house" format in the College or as a "take-home" format, depending on the Advisory Committee's thoughts concerning the best way to examine a particular student.

For all doctoral students, the electronic [*Request for the Qualifying Examination Form*](#) (found through the Graduate School's website) must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication as well as The Dean of the Graduate School. The qualifying exam's oral portion must be scheduled by the student through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and approved at least two weeks in advance by the Graduate School. The written portion is not officially scheduled, but usually takes place at least two weeks prior to the oral examination and should be planned with the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

Preparation. Each faculty member should provide the graduate student with a general description of his or her question, based upon the coursework completed by the student and the objectives of the required courses, six to eight weeks prior to the exam. The questions should clearly reflect the objectives of the accompanying coursework. Whenever possible, the exam should be written in a way that the student can integrate the answers into his or her dissertation proposal.

In-House Version. For the in-house version, students are provided with an internet-disabled computer and asked to type their responses for a maximum of four hours on each of the four sections of coursework described above (16 total hours). Questions are distributed from the committee members through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. The separate exam sections are spread over a period of time within the same week. With the discretion of each committee member, students are permitted to bring notes with them to their written exams. These notes are to be limited to no more than one side of an 8-1/2 x 11" page, with 1" margins all around, and no smaller than 11-point font, for each exam question. All arrangements for in-house examinations must be made through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

Take-Home Version. Students will be e-mailed one individual prompt through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication and are given 24 hours to respond to each question (96

hours total). The examination is administered over a five-day period within the same week (not to include weekends). All arrangements for take-home examinations must be made through the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication.

Expectations for Answers. Although specific committee expectations should be discussed prior to the administration of exams, below are some general guidelines.

- Answers are typically 6-10 pages in length but may not exceed 15 double-spaced pages excluding title page and references (total of 60 pages maximum across all four areas) for take-home exams. Exceeding the page allowance can result in exam failure, and/or request to retake all or part of the exam. No page limit for in-house exams.
- Answers for each question are complete, accurate, and grammatically correct.
- Answers are thoughtful, informed, and consistent.
- Take-home exam answers are well documented, up-to-date, carefully proofread, and are detailed in APA formatting (including reference page).
- Sufficient detail is provided (e.g., go beyond undergraduate textbooks to demonstrate doctoral expertise).
- Both written and oral responses need to demonstrate that students have sufficient understanding of, and competence in, communication theory, communication research methods, communication specialization, and a relevant cognate area.
- Answers are clearly presented in the active voice of the doctoral student.
- Oral responses to questions are specific, informed, thoughtful, and consistent.

Pre-Oral Defense Student Feedback. Committee members must not engage in individual defense discussion with the student about his or her written exam performance. Instead, any feedback a committee member wants to share with the student must be provided to the committee's Major Advisor. All committee members must communicate with the committee's Major Advisor about the student's responses to their question no later than 48 hours before the scheduled oral defense. The Major Advisor must communicate any major concerns to the student no later than 24 hours before the oral defense.

Although giving general feedback is acceptable, it should not render the oral defense perfunctory. Students should be prepared to spontaneously defend, explain, and if necessary, offer corrections for their answers during their oral defense. In addition, faculty who do not wish to give any feedback prior to the oral defense should communicate their preference to the committee and student prior to the administration of both written and oral exams.

The results of the examination must be reported by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication to the Graduate School within two weeks of its conclusion via the official ***Qualifying Examination Card*** received through e-mail. The committee must report either "pass" or "fail", with no conditional clauses attached. In all decisions, the majority opinion of the Advisory Committee prevails. If the Advisory Committee is evenly split, the candidate fails. If the result is failure, the committee determines the conditions to be met before another examination may be given. The minimum time between examinations is four months. A second examination must be taken within one year after the first examination. A third examination is not permitted.

Although the Graduate School requires a pass/fail decision, it leaves open the option of retesting any portions of which the committee deemed the student's performance unacceptable. For example, the committee might specify that the retake exam (of which there must be both a written and oral portion) consists only of questions on Methods. The committee determines the conditions to be met before the

second examination is given.

K. The Dissertation Prospectus

The student selects the dissertation subject in consultation with the Major Advisor and the Advisory Committee. After the student has tentatively chosen a subject, the members of the Advisory Committee must evaluate the project, offer advice and provide guidance in the preparation of the dissertation prospectus (commonly referred to as the dissertation proposal).

The prospectus defines the project, indicates its limits, and demonstrates its feasibility. It must describe the basic approach, indicate the specific methods to be used, cite previous research and show how the dissertation will advance the field. The prospectus must be sufficiently detailed to show that the student has adequate background to undertake the study, has mastered the research methods needed, and is aware of the implications of the proposed work.

When the Major Advisor and student agree that the prospectus is ready to be presented, copies are circulated to the Advisory Committee. The prospectus is approved as is, approved with minor revisions, or disapproved by majority vote of the Advisory Committee. The Major Advisor is responsible for providing a copy of the prospectus and the [*Dissertation Prospectus Form*](#) (found through <https://ci.uky.edu/grad/resources>) to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. In all decisions, the majority opinion of the Advisory Committee prevails.

L. Application for Degree

To be eligible to receive a degree, doctoral students must submit an electronic [*Application for Degree*](#) form. Click on Student Services /myRecords/Graduate Degree Application. Applications must be received in the Graduate School within 30 days of the start of the semester in which the student expects to complete his or her work (or within 15 days of the start of Summer Session).

M. The Final Examination

The final oral examination is conducted by a committee appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. The Dean of the Graduate School and the President of the University are ex officio members of all final examination committees. The examination is considered a public event and any member of the university community may attend.

At least eight weeks prior to the final examination, the student must submit his or her electronic [*Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Doctoral Examination*](#) found through the Graduate School's website: http://www.research.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm. At this time the Graduate Dean appoints an Outside Examiner as a core member of the Advisory Committee. The Graduate School will designate the specific time and date of the examination at least two weeks prior to the actual examination.

Following the appointment of the Outside Examiner, the final examination date may be set by consulting all members (including the outside examiner) and submitting the electronic [*Request for Final Examination Form*](#) (found through the Graduate School's website: https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm at least two weeks before the scheduled date for the Final Exam. By submitting a [*Request*](#) for Final Examination Form, the student is attesting that the majority of the Advisory Committee members have read the dissertation (the draft of the dissertation submitted must be complete in content, including all footnotes, tables, figures and appendices, reference page, title page and abstract) and are in favor of moving to the final examination.

In all decisions, the majority opinion of the Advisory Committee prevails. If the Advisory committee is evenly split, the candidate fails. In the event of failure, the Advisory Committee recommends to the Graduate Dean conditions under which the candidate may be re-examined. Should any vacancies on the committee occur between the two examinations, the Graduate Dean shall appoint replacements. A third

examination is not permitted.

After the final examination is passed, the final copy of the dissertation is prepared according to Graduate School regulations: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/thesis-dissertation-preparation>. Final copies are then submitted to the Graduate School office within 60 days of the final examination. If this deadline is not met, the candidates must undergo a second examination. An electronic PDF copy of each dissertation must be e-mailed to the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication for its records.

SECTION 5: GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

A certificate is not a graduate degree program, but it does provide the student formal recognition of the mastery of a clearly defined academic topic. The Graduate Programs in Communication offer three certificate programs: Health Communication, Instructional Communication, and Risk Sciences. Our certificates are available to students enrolled in a) the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in the Graduate Programs in Communication, b) students in other doctoral programs at the university, and c) students enrolled in the Graduate School for non-degree certification status. Please consult the certificate director for information on individual requirements. In order to be awarded the certificate, students must submit the [Graduate Certificate Completion Form](#), to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication upon course completion.

SECTION 6: APPOINTMENT AND RE-APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANTSHIPS

A. Maximum Duration of Graduate Support

The granting of a teaching or research assistantship shall be limited to two years (four semesters) of master's degree work and four years (eight semesters) of doctoral work. These semesters do not have to be consecutive. Exceptions to the above shall only be considered at the recommendation of the Graduate Review Committee and with the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. Recommendation for additional assistantship support is contingent on scholarly productivity, progress made towards the degree, and availability of funds.

B. Workload

Assistantships can require no more than 20 hours per week of assignable duties. Requests can be made for a work overload for students (including but not limited to assisting with grading, labs, and performing hourly research). In order for an overload to be approved, students must complete the [Work Overload Request Form](#) (found on <https://ci.uky.edu/grad/resources>) and obtain approval from supervisors, advisers, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in Communication. First-year graduate students are not permitted to obtain overloads in their first semester.

All teaching assistants in the Graduate Programs in Communication must end all part time (or summer time) campus work assignments outside of the program before the new academic year's teaching assistant's employment start date (August 05, 2019).

In order to preserve the academic focus of graduate students on full-time assistantships with full tuition waivers, the Graduate School does not allow for additional salary or employment. In rare circumstances, requests can be made through the Graduate School's Associate Dean for Graduate Funding, Finance, and Analytics. In each case, the completed Graduate School the [Work Overload Request Form](#) should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs who will in turn forward the appeal with, or without, endorsement to the Graduate School's Associate Dean for Graduate funding, Finance, and Analytics. The student, current supervisor, and overload supervisor should be copied on the emailed request.

C. Reappointment

All assistantship recipients should be notified on or around March 1st of their reappointment. Reappointment is contingent upon performance based upon feedback from the student's adviser and assignment supervisor.

Graduate Programs in Communication: Graduate Handbook 2024-2025

PROOF OF READERSHIP FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

I certify that I have read the *2024-2025 Graduate Programs in Communication: Graduate Handbook*.

I understand that a copy of this is available to me at all times via the website under ci.uky.edu/grad/resources.

Printed Name

Signature

Date