

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY COMMUNICATION

Requirements

The Ph.D. in the Department of Communication requires **at least 90** semester hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. The 90+ hours must be in a planned course of study approved and overseen by the student's advisor and advisory committee. The student's planned program will often contain more than the minimum 90 hours due to the research tool requirements. Tool courses do not count toward the 90 required hours. *At least 30* hours of coursework (excluding transfer credit and dissertation hours) must be in Communication.

All transfer credit must have a grade of A, B, or S. One cannot transfer a course with a grade of B-.

Master's Degree Transfer Credits

All students will undertake the Ph.D. program after having completed a Master's degree in communication or a related discipline. The post-Master's student's advisory committee will determine which courses from the Master's program may be appropriately counted as part of the Ph.D. program. If the student is transferring in 30 hours from their Master's and post-Master's work toward their Ph.D., the Graduate College can accept up to as many hours of thesis as counted for their Master's degree. If the student is transferring between 31 and 44 hours of Master's and post-Master's work to apply to their Ph.D., then the limit of thesis hours that can be applied to the Ph.D. is four hours. The Department of Communication allows a maximum of 30 hours of Master's degree credit to be counted toward the Ph.D. The grades in these courses and the student's Master's GPA do not count toward the student's Ph.D. GPA.

If a transfer course has the same title as a course taken at OU, the content of the course must be substantially different to count both for credit. To make this case, the student must provide a syllabus and a letter from the Graduation Liaison illustrating that the classes covered different content. This letter must be submitted to the Graduate College with the Admission to Candidacy form.

Master's Degree Plus Additional Hours Transfer Credits

On occasion the advisory committee may accept some graduate coursework completed beyond the Master's degree. Up to 44 semester hours of a Master's degree program plus post-Master's course work may be applied toward a Ph.D. If students have a second Master's degree, they can transfer up to 14 hours from this degree, as long as the total number of hours transferred from one's Master's degrees and the post-Master's coursework do not exceed 44 hours. The advisory committee has complete discretion in determining the number of hours that may be applied to the prospective candidate's Ph.D. program. All graduate hours transferred from other institutions must meet the criteria concerning transfer credit. Any courses taken at the University of Oklahoma which were not part of a completed Master's degree cannot be more than five years old. *One's time limit for completion of the degree (one's clock) is calculated based on the earliest course listed in this section.*

S/U Graded Courses

No more than 18 hours of Ph.D. coursework beyond the Master's (excluding Comm 6980, Research for Doctoral Dissertation) may be S/U graded coursework. Communication courses falling in this category are Independent Study and Research Task Force. *Independent Study has a maximum of eight hours, and Research Task Force has a maximum of 15 hours.* Students may take more than 18 hours of S/U coursework **beyond** the 90-hour requirement. *Directed Readings* is a letter-graded course, with a *maximum of nine hours* applicable to the 90 hours required for the Ph.D. degree. Regardless of how many hours of Comm 6980 (Research for the Doctoral Dissertation) are taken by the Ph.D. candidate, *no less than two or more than 15* will be counted toward the 90 hours of coursework required for the Ph.D. degree.

Core Requirements

The core courses required for the Master's degree in the Department of Communication (or their equivalent) are required of all Ph.D. students. Students must also earn 32 hours of coursework in a major concentration (such as Communication).

The requirements below are in effect for students entering Fall 2007. Prior students may petition to follow these requirements. Please see Kathy Martin or Amy Johnson for more information about this option. Otherwise, students are under requirements in place when they entered the program.

COMM 5003: Quantitative Research Methods
COMM 5013: Introduction to Graduate Studies
COMM 5033: Advanced Statistics
COMM 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
COMM 5323: Advanced Qualitative Methods
COMM 6023: Research Task Force (6-9 hours)
COMM 6314: History and Theory of Communication

Two tools must be Comm. 5033 and Comm. 5323. The student's advisor and advisory committee may assign additional research tools (usually 6-9 hours) if deemed necessary. If a foreign language is used as a tool, the requirements can be satisfied by examination. Hours taken to satisfy the tool requirements do not count toward the minimum 90-hour post-baccalaureate requirement. The doctoral candidate should be able to demonstrate proficiency in statistics, ethnography, foreign language, linguistics, historiography, electronic media production, or any other tool found by the student's advisory committee to be appropriate to the student's program and research needs.

Time Limits for Completion

Students who enter the Ph.D. program without a completed M.A. degree have until the end of their first semester to post their Master's degree, or a stop will be placed on their enrollment. A doctoral student who enters an OU graduate program with a baccalaureate degree is expected to pass the general examination within five calendar years of his or her first graduate status registration at OU. A doctoral student who enters an OU graduate program with a Master's degree is expected to meet this requirement in four years. After passing the general examination, the doctoral candidate is normally expected to complete all degree requirements within five years. When warranted, the department may extend the time required to complete the doctoral degree for up to one year provided the Graduate Dean is notified in writing. An extension beyond one year requires the approval of the Graduate Dean. Approval of such extension requires the department to certify the student's knowledge to be current and appropriate to the degree to be awarded.

Standards of Performance

All Ph.D. students are required to maintain an overall 3.25 GPA in all graduate courses attempted including tool courses. One grade of C results in a warning letter from the Graduate College. A GPA under 3.00 or two grades of C will put the student on academic probation. The student will then have a 12-hour probationary period. The student must not make lower than a B or a grade of U during this time. At the end of the 12-hour probationary period, the student must have raised his or her overall GPA to 3.0. Failure to meet either of these two conditions will result in the student being unable to continue enrollment in graduate classes. Should a student receive two or more Cs, an automatic stop will be placed on enrollment. To have this stop lifted, the student must submit a plan for improving his or her performance and petition the Graduate Liaison to stay in the program. If the student is permitted to reenroll, the student must still obtain an overall GPA of 3.0 by the end of 12 hours after the first C.

Should a student receive two Cs or give other indication to the advisor of inability to pursue successfully the course of study to the awarding of the degree, the advisor will call a meeting of the student's advisory committee to determine whether the student should be permitted to continue work in the Department of Communication. A student admitted conditionally (low grades, course work deficiencies, or incomplete credentials) to the Ph.D. program who does not satisfy the terms specified in the *Statement of Conditional Admission* will be denied further enrollment. Ph.D. students who enter the program without a completed M.A. degree are considered to have incomplete credentials and will have one semester to complete the M.A. degree or be denied further enrollment.

Graduate students can have no more than 3 incompletes (or 9 hours of "I") in order to retain a graduate teaching assistantship and to attain a satisfactory annual performance rating. Once a student has a 3rd incomplete, they have one semester to remove this incomplete or else jeopardize their annual performance rating and graduate teaching assistantship.

Advising

Ph.D. students entering the department's graduate program for the first time in the fall term will be advised during the orientation meetings held prior to the beginning of classes. Students entering at other times should contact the Graduate Liaison for advising and can also contact Kathy Martin, Academic Advisor, with any questions.

Self advising is most strongly discouraged, as it often leads to future difficulties for the student.

Permanent Advisor

Students must obtain their permanent advisor from among the department's graduate faculty. Permission to become a faculty member's permanent advisee must be secured from the faculty member in question. *Full-time Ph.D. students should obtain a permanent advisor within their first year of enrollment.* Part-time Ph.D. students should secure a permanent advisor by the end of their first twelve hours of course work in the department. The student, advisor, and Graduate Liaison must sign the ***Request for Appointment of Committee Chair*** form included at the end of this handbook and turn it in to the department office for inclusion in the student's file.

Committee

The permanent advisor and student collaborate in selecting an advisory conference/doctoral committee for the prospective candidate *within the first year of enrollment.* The committee must consist of at least five graduate faculty members, including at least one from outside the Department of Communication. *This outside member must be at every meeting of the committee* throughout the student's doctoral program. This outside member cannot be from the College of Law, the Health Sciences Center, or be adjunct faculty or retired. If a student's outside member retires from the university, he or she must be replaced. Students can have more than five members on their committee. They may also have more than one outside member as long as the number of committee members from within the department outnumbers the members from outside the department.

Anything you send to your committee members (e.g., Advisory Conference form, Dissertation proposal, final dissertation reading copy) *should be provided in hard copy, not electronic copy*, unless a committee member specifically asks for an electronic copy.

Advisory Conference

The first responsibility of the advisory committee is to meet with the student to assist in planning the student's Ph.D. program, taking into consideration the student's strengths and deficiencies and, if necessary, suggesting ways to overcome any deficiencies. The committee members decide how much of the Master's program credit can be applied to the Ph.D., with a maximum of 30 hours. They select research tools and determine a tentative calendar for degree completion.

At a plan of study meeting, the student and his or her committee discuss the ***Report of the Advisory Conference Form***. This form will list all of the classes a student will apply to his or her Ph.D. program. The committee must agree on the classes that will apply to a student's Ph.D. program. The student will need to have an advisor and committee members chosen before they can have this meeting. Very useful instructions for filling out the advisory conference report and the form itself can be found at <http://gradweb.ou.edu/docs/forms/doctoral/doctoralforms.htm>.

Students should have the plan of study meeting at least by the end of their third semester in the Ph.D. program. Otherwise, they chance either taking classes that will not apply to their program or that a committee member will request that a student take a class not originally planned, potentially lengthening a student's time in the program.

After the advisory conference is held, the student must file the completed *Report of the Advisory Conference*. The report must be signed by the advisory committee, the advisor, and the Graduate Liaison. If any changes in the student's program become necessary, a *Request for Change in Doctoral Advisory Conference Report* must be filed with and approved by the Graduate Dean. The request must be approved and signed by all members of the committee and the Graduate Liaison.

Ph.D. students who continue to enroll in courses not sanctioned by an advisory committee may find that they have taken courses that will not be accepted by their advisory committee or may be required to take more courses than they planned, potentially lengthening the time to their completion of degree.

Change in Committee Membership

When a change in the membership of a student's committee is contemplated, the student must show the signed approval of all original members and all new members on the *Request for Change in Doctoral Advisory Conference Form* if the outside member or chair is being replaced. Otherwise, only the chair, new committee member, and Graduate Liaison must sign the form. In either case, the form must be filed with and approved by the Graduate Dean.

No doctoral committee membership change is allowed within thirty days of the dissertation defense or general exam.

If a member of a student's committee terminates employment with or retires from the university and wishes to continue to serve, that member in consultation with the student must request, in writing, permission from the Graduate Dean. *This does not apply to the outside member, who must be replaced.* If the chair retires, he or she can remain on the committee as a co-chair, and a current member of the departmental graduate faculty must be designated as the other co-chair for the committee.

The following criteria must be met for a member who is leaving the university to remain on a student's committee:

- 1) The faculty member is *willing to consult regularly* with the student, read the student's dissertation, and attend the student's final oral examination. All these must be accomplished with no cost to the university.
- 2) The student must have *passed the general examination before* the faculty member leaves the university.
- 3) The student should be in the *final year* of dissertation research.

General Examination

When all research tools have been completed and all other course work has been completed, the prospective Ph.D. candidate should file in the Graduate College a completed ***Application for General Examination for the Doctor's Degree***. Application forms are available online at <http://gradweb.ou.edu/docs/forms/doctoral/doctoralforms.htm>, and must be turned in ***two weeks*** prior to the start of the exam. All members of the student's doctoral committee must sign the form. Failure to have authorization prior to the exam will require the exam to be repeated. Individuals must complete both the written and oral exam in the semester in which it is authorized.

No Ph.D. general exam may be taken until all "I" (incomplete) grades have been resolved and the student has completed and obtained a B or better in all tool courses. The student must apply for the examination at least two weeks before it is to be held. The exam may not be scheduled during final examination periods or when the doctoral committee cannot be assembled. Most faculty members are on 9-month appointments; therefore, summer examinations will not be scheduled. The student must be enrolled in at least two hours of graduate credit during the semester he or she takes the exam.

After the Graduate Dean authorizes the exam, the student should arrange a time and place for the examination with his or her doctoral committee. There is only one room with a computer available. This room is assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis, so it is *best to schedule it as early as possible*. The student's doctoral committee will prepare and conduct the general examination. The general exam will consist of a written portion followed by an oral portion in the presence of the entire committee. Failure to have authorization prior to the exam will require the exam to be repeated.

Topics and hours for each question are developed by the student's advisor in conjunction with the student. The adviser will send the other members of the student's committee a list of topics and the number of hours allowed for each question. The student should set up a time to meet with each committee member to discuss the question and receive any reading list that the faculty may wish for the student to review.

The exam criteria in the following paragraph go into effect, fall semester 2007.

The written portion of the exam is divided into two parts. These two parts together must be 16 to 18 hours in length:

- 1) Students are tested on communication theory and methods with three to four hours of questions for each of these areas. These two sections are closed book and are fairly standardized across students.
- 2) The second half of the exam consists of questions individually tailored for the student, considering his or her area (and sub-areas) of specialty, course work, dissertation topic, etc. These questions could be open or closed depending on the desire of the faculty member writing the questions.
- 3) All portions of the exam will be administered in Burton Hall. Questions shall not be provided in advance.
- 4) The written portion of the exam should be spread over a time period not to exceed two weeks.

Generally, students should orally defend their answers within two weeks of completing their general exams. Any exceptions must have permission of the graduate liaison. Written and orals must be in the same semester. Within 72 hours after the oral portion of the exam, a written report signed by all members of the committee must be submitted to the Graduate Dean. The report should indicate whether the student passed or failed the examination. If the student passes the exam, the Graduate Dean will admit the student to candidacy for the doctoral degree. If all or any portion of the general exam is failed, a report must be submitted to the Graduate Dean indicating a failure on the examination. The student, at the discretion of the committee, may seek authorization from the Graduate College to repeat those portions of the exam failed the first time in a following semester.

If a student fails any portion of the general exam on the second attempt, he or she will be terminated from the doctoral program. No portion of the exam may be taken a third time. If a student's performance is marginal, but not failing, and the examining committee wishes the student to complete further readings, course work, investigations, etc., in a set time period, the results of the exam can be held in abeyance with the approval of the Graduate Dean. At the end of the time limit (usually no more than one semester), the committee must file the report with the Graduate College.

The Graduate Dean will investigate any report received in the Graduate College without unanimous vote. The Dean may choose to confer with the dissenting member(s), with the committee chair, or with the entire committee. The course of action taken is dictated by each individual case.

If the authorized general examination is not held, a report indicating the reasons why it was postponed must be submitted to the Graduate College.

Preparation for Dissertation

To obtain a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma, any research utilizing human participants must be approved by the University of Oklahoma—Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NCIRB), *even if the individual is not collecting data from*

participants at the University of Oklahoma. This approval must be obtained *before* any participants are recruited or data collected. If the dissertation utilizes participants from any other university or is affiliated with any other university, then permission must be obtained from that university's IRB board as well.

Before one can obtain IRB approval, he or she must complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI), which is required for all investigators. *Students should complete this training before submitting any IRB applications, as otherwise, the applications will be returned.* For further information, see <http://www.ouhsc.edu/irb-norman/training.asp>. If the student plans to utilize the Department of Communication Research Subject Pool, he or she should reference the policies listed on page 43 of this handbook.

Any graduate student traveling outside of the United States for academic purposes (e.g., research) needs to notify the Graduate College by filling out a form available on the first page of the Graduate College website known as the International Travel For Academic Purposes Form. When a graduate student intends to travel to a country for which there is a State Department warning, the student is required to meet with the Dean of the Graduate College before the trip to discuss the circumstances of the trip and to sign a statement releasing the University from liability.

At some time, usually near the end of his or her program of study, the student, in collaboration with his or her major advisor, will determine a dissertation topic. After the general examination has been passed, the student will submit a prospectus for the dissertation to his or her doctoral committee. The committee will meet with the student to discuss the proposed study. The student is required to hold this meeting, and attendance by all advisory committee members is strongly encouraged. These meetings are open, and other interested faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend.

When any problems have been resolved to the satisfaction of the committee, the doctoral committee will give the student permission to proceed with the study. The approved document from the defense of prospectus serves as a contract between the student and the committee. A copy of the approved prospectus, signed by all committee members, is filed in the student's folder in the departmental office.

Enrollment in Research for Doctoral Dissertation

Doctoral students in the Department of Communication may not enroll in dissertation hours until the general examination has been taken and successfully passed. Any exceptions must be cleared with the Graduate Liaison. The initial enrollment in Comm 6980 must be for at least two credit hours. Following the initial enrollment in Comm 6980, the graduate must maintain continuous enrollment in at least two hours of Comm 6980 during each regular semester until the requirements for the degree are completed or the degree candidacy is discontinued. The number of dissertation credit hours for each enrollment will be determined by the faculty advisor on the basis of the amount of faculty and university services required by the individual student, with a minimum enrollment of two hours. A student working full time on his or her dissertation and using university facilities should be enrolled in at least nine hours of Comm 6980 in fall and spring semester. A graduate assistant holding a 0.5 FTE appointment will be required to enroll in at least six hours of Comm 6980 during the fall and spring semesters in order to be considered a full-time student. One does not have to enroll in

summer if one is not doing at least one of the following: 1) Working on the dissertation, 2) Obtaining advice from committee members, or 3) Using facilities of the university, such as the library. Such enrollments must be completed during the regular registration period.

Regardless of the final number of hours of Comm 6980 accumulated during the period of dissertation research reading and writing, no less than two or more than 15 will be counted toward the Ph.D. requirements.

The final number of hours of Comm 6980 in which the student must enroll in the final semester of the degree program, along with the collection of the appropriate fees, is the responsibility of the Graduate College and the Bursar's office.

Reading Copy of the Dissertation/Preparation for the Final Oral Examination

Before defending one's dissertation, one must...

- 1) Turn in the *Application for Graduation* to the Office of Academic Records. See the Graduate College Bulletin for deadlines for each semester (currently: fall—November 1st, spring---March 1st).
- 2) Complete the *Degree Check card* two weeks prior to turning in the reading copy to the Graduate College.

When the reading copy has received preliminary approval of the major professor, it should be submitted to the Graduate College along with a double-spaced abstract of not more than 350 words and the *Request for Authority for Defense of Dissertation*. Reading copy deadlines are printed in the front of the university class schedule for each semester; in addition, the reading copy must be submitted to the Graduate College at least two weeks prior to the defense.

The doctoral candidate should prepare and distribute hard copies of the dissertation to each doctoral committee member at least two weeks before he or she plans to defend. The reading copy should be in an acceptable dissertation format and must include all figures and tables, numbered pages, and a complete bibliography. It should not contain grammatical or spelling errors. *Instructions-Thesis/Dissertation* is available from the Graduate College.

At least five members of the student's doctoral committee must read and determine whether the dissertation demonstrates the student's ability to conduct original research and makes a significant contribution to the student's discipline. They may accept or reject it. If they reject it, the student will be given another opportunity to submit an acceptable dissertation to the committee. If they accept it, they may require changes and corrections. When the dissertation is acceptable and a degree check indicates that the student has completed all course work with acceptable grades, the student may schedule the final oral examination.

Dissertation Defense

The final oral examination is a defense of the dissertation and is open to the public. The student is responsible for *posting a notice* of the impending dissertation defense several days

before it is to occur. The candidate applies to the Graduate College for the oral defense when he or she presents the reading copy of the dissertation showing preliminary approval of the dissertation director in writing and receipts showing that all fees have been paid. At that time, the candidate will be issued the **Authority Form of the Final Oral Examination** by the Graduate College. The candidate will also receive the **Survey of Earned Doctorates** form, a 3 x 5 card used for reporting the dissertation topic, the **Data Entry Form for Thesis/Dissertation Title** in the Graduate College, the **Graduation Exit Survey**, and the **UMI Agreement Publishing Your Dissertation**. The defense must occur during the semester for which the authorization is given and no later than the last day of class (not during finals week). At least four members of the doctoral committee, including the outside member and the advisor, must be present to conduct the examination. Most faculty members are on 9-month appointments; therefore, summer defenses will not be scheduled. The back of the **Authority for the Final Oral Examination** is the **Report of Final Oral Examination**. These results should be reported to the Graduate College within 72 hours after the examination. The same rules of the report and dissenting apply here as in the Master's program's oral examination and thesis defense. Only one attempt to defend the dissertation is allowed.

Three final copies (two hard copies and one electronic) of the dissertation on 100% cotton bond paper with original signatures of the committee must be delivered to the Graduate College within 60 days of the defense or before the deadline for that semester's graduation, whichever is first. The student must also have returned the following to the Graduate College: Survey of Earned Doctorates form, Dissertation Title Entry form, and Graduation Exit Survey. Once the dissertation copies and the signed **UMI Agreement** have been turned in to the library (prior to 4:30 p.m. each day), the library will give the student a **Dissertation Deposit Receipt**, which must be returned to the Graduate College. Only then will the candidate be cleared for graduation.

Ph.D. PAPERWORK AT A GLANCE

Step	Due	Required Paperwork
Selection of Advisor	2 nd Semester (full time) or equivalent (part-time)	Request for Appointment of Committee Chair (Dept. Office)
Selection of Committee and Plan of Study Meeting	2 nd Semester or equivalent	Report of Advisory Conference (Graduate College)
General Exam	3 rd Year	Application for General Exam for Doctor's Degree (Graduate College)
Admission to Candidacy		Written report of exam results submitted to Graduate College Dean within 72 hours of oral exam
Prospectus	After completing general exams	Copy signed by committee members (Dept. Office)
Submission of Dissertation	Two weeks prior to defense date or reading copy deadline for that semester	"Reading Copy" submitted to Graduate College Dean for review.
Schedule Defense	Final Semester	Authority for Final Oral Examination (Graduate College)
Dissertation Defense	Final Semester	Report of the Final Exam (on reverse of Authorization Form-Graduate College)
Deposit Dissertation	Final Semester after successful completion of the thesis defense.	Signed UMI Agreement, Dissertation Deposit
Cleared for Graduation	After deposit at Bizzell	Data Entry Form, and Survey of Earned Doctorates, Dissertation Topic Card