

Journalism Graduate Students' Handbook

Guide to the Doctoral Program

We offer a Ph.D. degree in the dynamic and diverse field of journalism. With a core research and theory curriculum and an opportunity to develop two complementary areas of expertise, the Ph.D. degree prepares graduate students for academic careers in research firms or universities.

The following pages cover the degree requirements and policies in the School of Journalism graduate program. This publication represents the combined information available from various official documents and from departmental and University graduate program practices. It is designed to help you understand the basic steps in obtaining the degree.

Academic policies and procedures do change, and we will do our best to keep students informed of and involved in any departmental or Graduate School program alterations. You should also refer to *The Graduate School Catalog* for important information. Once admitted into the program, it is the responsibility of each graduate student to be informed about all requirements pertaining to his/her program of study. Deadlines and requirements are available on various websites of the Registrar, Graduate School, Journalism School and from the Graduate Coordinator as well as in this handbook. Faculty and staff are not responsible for seeing that students are informed of the deadlines and requirements, students are, and no exceptions will be granted to these deadlines and requirements because a student failed to inform him or herself.

This handbook is meant to be a convenience to students and faculty, but official University catalogs supersede any information provided by departments. The responsibility for fulfilling all requirements ultimately rests with the student. The requirements set forth here pertain especially to the current Graduate Catalog. Students who wish to graduate under the rules in a previous catalog should consult the Department's Graduate Adviser. *The Catalog of the University (General Information, The Undergraduate Catalog, The Graduate Catalog, and The Law School Catalog)* is the document of authority for all students. The University reserves the right to change the requirements given in the catalog at any time. Please be aware that different admissions procedures apply to foreign applicants, U.S. applicants, and former UT students.

The Journalism Graduate Studies Committee, which is administered by an elected chair and comprised of graduate faculty, is responsible for policies, curricula, and admissions. The Graduate Adviser, who is appointed by the Director of the School of Journalism in consultation with the GSC and graduate students, directs the Graduate Program and advises graduate students. The Graduate Coordinator, in addition to assisting the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Studies Committee Chair in their duties, has responsibility for daily administration of the Graduate Program, including helping students and answering inquiries about the program and admissions. The dean of the Graduate School is the dean of all graduate students, not the dean of the Moody College or the director of the Journalism School.

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For information on Academic and Registration Policies and Resources from the Graduate School, please see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/>

Orientation

All entering students are required to attend the department orientation prior to the beginning of the semester. Normally this will be in the second to last week of August. Entering students will be guided through the registration process at this time.

Registration

Be sure to register and pay your bill each semester. If you will be paying with financial aid, check to make sure that the payment is credited to your bill before the payment deadline. The Registrar's calendar is available from <http://registrar.utexas.edu/>

A full course load for graduate students is 9 hours per semester. Graduate students can only register for a maximum of 9 hours in their first year of the program, but can register for up to 15 hours per semester after that.

Note: Classes with low enrollment at the end of pre-registration will be cancelled, so please register early. Do not use graduate courses as placeholders as this can cause last-minute cancellations of graduate seminars, disrupting schedules of students and faculty. You may register up until the 12th class day, eliminating the need for placeholders.

Minimum Grades and Incompletes

The School of Journalism and the University Office of Graduate Studies strongly discourage students from delaying completion of work required by specific courses. Incompletes are only allowed for documented illnesses and other UT approved absences. No more than two incompletes, even if converted to a grade, can be taken in the course of the degree.

In addition, when students take "Incompletes" ("X" on transcripts) for courses, they jeopardize their ability to obtain fellowships and University appointments. For example, a student with more than two grades of "X" or one grade of "X" and one grade of "I" cannot be appointed as a teaching assistant. The GSC monitors students with incompletes; if health or other circumstances make it so that students cannot routinely complete coursework in a semester, the GSC advises taking a leave of absence or withdrawing from the program.

When a student receives a grade of incomplete, he or she has **one semester** in which to resolve the "X." Students are urged to get clarification from instructors on what must be done, and by when, to complete course requirements and receive a grade for the course. For more information, see *General Information, 2014-2015*.

A course with a grade of "X" (incomplete) or "I" (permanent incomplete) may not be used in the *Program of Work*.

Required journalism courses must be taken for credit, not CR/NC, and students must earn a B- or better. Any student not earning at least a B- can retake the course one time. Failure to earn at least a B- on the second attempt will result in termination from the program. In addition, no incompletes may be taken in required journalism courses; doing so will also result in termination from the program.

Students are expected to make adequate progress, as defined by the GSC, throughout the course of their studies. Failure to make adequate progress will result in termination from the program. For medical issues that delay a student's progress, the student must register with the

office of Services for Students with Disabilities; SSD will certify the disability and advise the department of the accommodations to be given. For other issues that significantly delay progress, students should discuss a possible Leave of Absence with the Graduate Adviser, or withdraw from the program and reapply later. LOAs are not automatic and must be approved by the GSC subcommittee. Once in candidacy, anything that delays a student's progress toward degree should be immediately reported, with documentation, to the Graduate Adviser. No extensions will be granted for medical or other issues not reported within a month of the time they are incurred. Extensions are not granted for reasons of financial hardship, work, family responsibilities, medical issues not certified by SSD, or other adverse life events.

Advising and the Supervising Committee

The School of Journalism and Graduate School assign great responsibility to the student's supervising committee and its chair, the student's supervisor. Students should take great care in selecting their supervisor and in making sure that this is an informed decision. The supervisor must be a member of the School's Graduate Studies Committee (See the GSC faculty at: journalism.utexas.edu/graduate/graduate-studies-committee). Students are under no obligation to choose any faculty member as supervisor or committee member. Similarly, no faculty member is under obligation to serve or continue to serve as a student's supervisor. The student has the ultimate responsibility for finding and retaining a supervisor. Once a supervisor has been declared and work has begun, changing the supervisor may only be done with the supervisor's consent, or in the case of retirement, departure from the University, illness or death of the supervisor.

Students may elect to also have a co-supervisor, especially in cases where a student's supervisor retires or leaves the University. In their first two semesters, students should meet with potential supervisors and, if possible, take courses from them. A supervisor will be declared in the student's third semester with submission of the proposed Program of Work.

Committees must include a minimum of 3 members on the Journalism GSC. The chair must be on the Journalism GSC. Emeritus faculty members are not GSC members. A complete list of Journalism GSC members is at <http://journalism.utexas.edu/graduate/graduate-studies-committee>. For any committee member who is not a member of a UT Graduate Studies Committee, a *curriculum vitae* and a *letter stating the member's willingness to serve at no expense to the University* must be sent to the Graduate School Degree Evaluators, who must approve the member. Students should be aware that the Department will not pay the expenses of an off-campus committee member to attend presentations or defenses.

Once a committee has been formed and reported to the Graduate School, which occurs once comprehensive exams are successfully defended, it is extremely difficult to remove a committee member. The Graduate Adviser must approve and give the Graduate School the reason for the removal. Death, retirement, leaving the university, or illness that prevents the faculty member from serving are permitted reasons for removing a committee member, with his/her consent. Committee members cannot be removed because they do not approve of a dissertation or proposal; the purpose of a committee is to provide expert advice that improves the student's research. Students should work to improve their dissertation/proposal so that it satisfies the high standards of the committee. Committees cannot be changed within 30 days of the dissertation defense.

Graduate School rules regarding dissertation committees are published on the web site at <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/doctoral-candidacy> and in the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/degree-requirements/doctor-of-philosophy/>.

Grievance Procedures

Grievances related to academic or nonacademic matters should begin with attempts to resolve problems informally with the faculty member where the differences arise. If no satisfactory agreement is reached, grievances then proceed to the graduate adviser, and Graduate Studies Committee chair, in that order. If you are not satisfied with their decisions, you may be directed to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice Provost. The last step in the process is to the Executive Vice President and Provost. Official grievance procedures are listed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* at <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>. The Director of the Journalism School does not oversee the graduate program, nor is the Dean of the Moody College of Communication the dean of graduate students; the dean of the Graduate School is the dean for all graduate students at UT.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same assignment for two courses without the prior permission of both instructors. You must always cite words and ideas that are not your own. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. *Visit the Student Judicial Services Web site:* <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Independent Study

In order to get permission to register for independent study you must complete a form, available on the website under "Forms," <https://journalism.utexas.edu/graduate/graduate-advising-registration>.

The topic of the independent study should be specified. Fill out the form, get the instructor's signature, and then give the form to the graduate coordinator, who will help you obtain the graduate adviser's signature. After the graduate adviser signs the form, the graduate coordinator will add you to the list of students with permission to register for the course and send you an email to notify you to register for it. If you have any problems adding the course after you've received the authorization notice, notify the graduate coordinator immediately.

Graduate Adviser Approval

The student must obtain approval for his or her course of study each semester from the graduate adviser in Journalism until reaching candidacy.

Annual Evaluations

In May of each year, the Graduate Adviser will require each doctoral student to fill out an annual progress report. This will be used to provide all students with feedback on their progress. Failure to make adequate progress in the program, as defined by the GSC, may result in termination from the program at any time. Some of the things that the GSC considers in this evaluation include grades – anything below a B, including a B-, is considered a warning sign. Also, dropping courses or taking incompletes is considered to be a problem. Taking courses on a NC basis that are not statistics courses is also considered negatively. Active participation in formal or informal research groups, and regular scholarly output such as conference papers, book chapters, and journal articles, are signs of good progress. Should you have any questions about your evaluation, please see your supervisor and the graduate adviser.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Because the goal of the doctoral degree program in the School of Journalism is to produce scholars who will be productive researchers in their careers, students must have a depth of knowledge about the content of the field and research methods. The doctoral program prepares scholars to have a working knowledge of the field, encompassing a variety of approaches toward journalism and mass communication. An engaged scholar should be cognizant of quantitative, qualitative, and critical perspectives, and of research at multiple levels of analysis. The graduate faculty in Journalism believes that we owe our students, our field, and our alumni the assurance that our graduate students have been rigorously educated and are able to profess and defend their positions at high levels of discourse and argument.

A Ph.D. is a degree emphasizing research. Students will engage in research not just for their dissertation, but also throughout the entire program, in classes, outside of classes on their own time, and for their dissertation. Key to being able to do a dissertation independently is to produce research all throughout the program. Showing adequate progress in research is paramount for Ph.D. students to continue in the program.

For all research that uses human subjects, students must take the Human Subjects training, financial conflict training, file a proposal with the Institutional Review Board, and comply with all IRB requirements. Students may not start collecting data until IRB approval has been received; must use the current IRB approved consent forms, and must report any amendments to the research, among other requirements. For research classified as “exempt,” the IRB requires students to list the Faculty Supervisor as the Principal Investigator and the student as co-PI. If audio or video recording is being done, the research should be classified as “expedited.” For more information, please visit the Office of Research Support website at: <https://research.utexas.edu/ors/>.

Students are expected to produce original research and present their findings at academic conferences. Travel grants to defray the cost of attending these conferences is available from the Journalism School. For more information, see the graduate coordinator.

Curricular Areas

Our program emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach. Working with the graduate faculty and the graduate adviser, students develop individual programs around four areas of concentration. Area 1 and Area 2 of the four areas of concentration for all students’ programs of work are Methods and Theory. The other two areas (Area 3 and Area 4) are specialties the student chooses to study. The Theory area must have a minimum of 15 credit hours; the Methods area must have a minimum of 18 credit hours. The two specialty areas (Area 3 and Area 4) must have a minimum of 12 credit hours. Journalism school core courses are required and must be taken in the order specified, as they are prerequisites to all other courses in the Ph.D. program. These required journalism courses must be taken for credit, not CR/NC, and students must earn a B- or better. Any student not earning at least a B- can retake the course one time. Failure to earn at least a B- on the second attempt will result in termination from the program. In addition, no incompletes may be taken in required journalism courses upon penalty of termination.

Description of Areas and Course Requirements

Area 1: Methods. The foundation of Area 1 is a required two-semester sequence of methods courses taken in the first year and a third course taken in the second year. The first semester

includes an introduction to survey research, content analysis, focus groups, and experimental design. The second semester of the first year focuses on data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and the writing and presenting of a conference paper. In the fall semester of the second year, students take qualitative methods. This area also includes an introductory statistics course taken outside the journalism school. Students should take additional research methods courses in areas related to the approach to be employed in the dissertation, with a minimum of 18 credit hours.

Area 2: Theory. The foundation of Area 2 is two semesters of theory. The first semester is an introduction to mass communication theory and theories of audience effects. The second semester focuses on media structures, processes and content from critical and cultural perspectives. A minimum of 15 credit hours (5 courses) must be taken in this area. The required Proseminar is included in this area.

Areas 3 and 4. Areas 3 and 4 are specialty areas that reflect students' interests. Specialty areas should be broad enough to represent a coherent body of knowledge. Ideally, both specialty areas will complement each other and relate closely to the students' intended work, including the dissertation. A specialty area might relate to media content (e.g., political communication), media structures (e.g., online news), media audiences (e.g., young adults), media theories (e.g., framing), media effects (e.g., agenda setting), media contexts (e.g., international news), or a host of other major topics, such as women and media, media economics, public opinion, media psychology, ethics, and communication technologies. Each of these two areas must have a minimum of 12 credit hours. Students may also include a methods course within these two specialty areas if that method is a primary way that the particular topic is studied.

Proseminar, Statistics

In addition to the four areas of concentration, students are required to take these core courses: Proseminar in the first fall semester, which is an introduction to graduate study in journalism/mass communication and the life of a scholar. The final project is either a conference or journal submission, or a research proposal, depending on the student's abilities. This is listed under Area 1 Theory on the Program of Work.

A comprehensive statistics course. This is logged under the Area 2 Methods part of the Program of Work. Students emphasizing quantitative and social science approaches will be expected to take additional statistics courses, which are logged under the Methods area or the Area 3 and 4 specialty areas. This is usually taken in the fall of the second year and may be taken CR/NC.

Although it is not required, a teaching course such as J389T is strongly recommended. It is required for a Ph.D. student to become an Assistant Instructor of a course. This is logged under "Other Required and Supporting Coursework."

Hours Required to Earn Ph.D. Degree

A minimum of 57 credit hours is required to earn a Ph.D. degree in the School of Journalism. No more than 20 percent of the total number of hours on the Program of Work may be taken on a Credit/No Credit basis. None of the required journalism school courses may be taken on a Credit/No Credit basis. Taking courses other than statistics on the CR/NC basis is discouraged.

Transfer of Credits

The Graduate School allows a maximum of 6 semester hours of graduate credit from a master's program other than the University of Texas at Austin to be officially transferred and recorded on the UT transcript. The Graduate Studies Committee will evaluate the inclusion of the transferred courses.

As unofficial transfer credit, we may accept other hours from the master's degree or graduate program from another institution. These hours will not be recorded on the transcript, however they may be included on the program of work as appropriate to the areas of study, thus reducing the number of hours a student must take in residence. The GSC reviews these hours and approves them for relevance and fit within the context of each student's program during the student's third semester. In some cases, required courses that the student has recently taken at another institution may be substituted for the required courses (Theory I and II, Introduction to Research Methods, Advance Social Science Research Methods, Qualitative Methods, Introductory Statistics). The Graduate Adviser will hold an advising session each fall for second-year students to prepare the POW and transfer of courses. Incoming students will be evaluated during Orientation for transfer courses that can substitute for first-year coursework.

Time Limits

The Ph.D. program is designed to take between 3 and 4 years to complete. Incoming students will sign a "Milestones Agreement" with the graduate school outlining the timeline that they are expected to meet. See <http://journalism.utexas.edu/graduate/tracking-progress-doctoral-program> for more information. Failure to meet any of these milestones can result in termination from the program. Doctoral students must successfully defend comprehensive examinations within one semester from completion of coursework. Once comps are successfully defended, the student becomes a "doctoral candidate;" until then, it is appropriate to refer to yourself as a "doctoral student." Once reaching candidacy, students must then hold a successful dissertation proposal meeting within one semester after defending comprehensive exams. Ideally, the comprehensive exams and proposal meeting will be held in the same semester rather than being stretched out over two. Defense of the dissertation is expected to occur within two years of advancement to candidacy. Students' progress is monitored by the GSC; students who do not progress according to this timeline or who are deemed to be unable to produce high quality scholarly research at any point in their program, will be reviewed by the GSC as to whether they should remain in the program. Termination can be made at any time for students who are not performing adequately in the GSCs estimation or who fail to meet any of these timeline requirements.

For students who do not complete the dissertation within two years of advancement to candidacy, the Graduate School will ask the Graduate Studies Committee to assess the student's progress annually and recommend whether the student be allowed to continue in the program. The Graduate Studies Committee may terminate the student from the program. No doctoral student will receive funding or support such as a TA position or in-state tuition waivers after 4 years from the time they entered the program.

The University of Texas requires "continuous registration" between the time of advancement to candidacy and the dissertation defense and graduation. Students must register for 3 to 9 credit hours each long semester and pay tuition until they have either graduated, withdrawn, or been terminated. Failure to register will jeopardize a student's ability to graduate.

Graduate Adviser Approval

Prior to registration each semester until comprehensive exams are successfully defended, each student must obtain approval for his or her course of study from the Graduate Adviser in Journalism. Group advising sessions will be scheduled each semester, and individual appointments are also available. All students, including those in candidacy, are required to complete a questionnaire on their program progress to the Graduate Adviser at the end of each spring semester.

Progress through the Doctoral Program

Student progress is monitored by the Graduate Adviser. Students meet with the Graduate Adviser prior to registration until they are formally admitted to doctoral candidacy (after successfully defending the comprehensive exams). Progress through the doctoral program is in four steps:

1) Submission and approval of the program of work (third semester), 2) comprehensive examinations and advancement to doctoral candidacy (no later than one semester after coursework is completed), 3) the dissertation proposal meeting (no later than one semester after comprehensive exams) and 4) dissertation completion and oral defense. At all steps, doctoral students are expected to be familiar with Graduate School policies as well:

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/graduate>

1. Doctoral Program of Work

In the third semester of doctoral work—in the second semester for doctoral students who have completed their master's programs within the School of Journalism—all students will file a program of work listing courses completed in the four areas, courses proposed for the remainder of the program, a brief description of the proposed dissertation, a supervisor and a list of the proposed dissertation committee members. Students prepare the program of work with the assistance of the Graduate Adviser and a graduate faculty member whom the student expects to supervise the dissertation. The GSC will review all POWs and approve them, pending any changes requested. Students will adhere to the POW, taking the courses listed unless they are not offered, in which case a substitute may be made with the GAs approval. Changes to the supervisor after the POW has been approved are subject to GSC approval.

Independent Study: Typically, up to six hours of independent study can be counted in areas 3 & 4 on the doctoral program of work. List Independent Study courses on the Program of Work as "Independent study course--" and then state the special topic for the course. Forms for independent study are available from the graduate coordinator. No more than one independent study per area may be taken. No independent studies from other institutions may be included on the POW.

In proposing a program of work, courses taken at other institutions may be taken into account and included on the program as appropriate to the areas of study. The GSC reviews these hours and approves them for relevance and fit within the context of each student's program. At least one course taken at UT must be listed under each of the specialty areas.

After approval by the proposed dissertation supervisor and the Graduate Adviser, the Program of Work is reviewed and approved or modified by a subcommittee of the Graduate Studies Subcommittee.

Minor amendments to the program of work, such as substituting up to two courses that are not offered or changing up to two committee members, must be approved by the supervising faculty member and signed off by the Graduate Adviser. Substantial amendments to the approved program of work such as changes in dissertation topic, chair, and more than 2 course changes, must be approved by the supervisor and Graduate Adviser and be re-submitted to the Graduate Studies Subcommittee for approval.

The [Program of Work worksheet](http://journalism.utexas.edu/graduate-programs-work) can be downloaded from <http://journalism.utexas.edu/graduate-programs-work>. Contact the Graduate Coordinator for questions and/or concerns.

Ph.D. students must choose a supervisor or co-supervisor who is a member of the Journalism School Graduate Studies Committee by the third long semester. Students will work with their supervisor and the Graduate Adviser to put together a supervising committee. Three committee members must be on the Journalism GSC. Faculty who are retired or emeritus are no longer on

the GSC; they can remain on the committee with GSC approval if they were on it prior to retirement, but do not count toward the three Journalism GSC members. Faculty who leave the University are no longer on the GSC; they can serve on the committee up to one year after their departure but do not count as one of the three Journalism GSC members. They can only serve as co-supervisor; the other co-supervisor must be on the Journalism GSC. Committees must have at least one member (with a limit of two) from a GSC outside of Journalism. Once approved by the GSC, supervisors cannot be changed without GSC approval and consent of the supervisor.

2. Qualifying Comprehensive Examinations and Advancement to Candidacy

Doctoral students in the School of Journalism are expected to pass a series of comprehensive examinations in the four areas of concentration upon completion of their approved coursework. Written examinations are followed by an oral examination in the same semester. After successful completion of the oral examination, the student's Program of Work, dissertation committee and dissertation topic are submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies through the application for candidacy. Once approved, the student officially advances to doctoral candidacy. You must submit the Oral Examination Proposal Form.

Comprehensive exams must be taken within one semester after completion of all courses listed and other requirements identified on the approved Program of Work or, at the earliest, during the last semester of coursework. Typically, a student will take 2 months to study for the comprehensive exams. Comprehensive exams must be taken and defended in the same semester.

Comprehensive examinations in the four areas – research methods, theory, and two areas of concentration – are given by an examination committee chaired by the faculty member who is the dissertation supervisor. A Journalism faculty member must give the theory exam; any faculty member may give the methods and two topic area exams. Exams will be given by 4 of the 5 committee members, including the supervisor. The fifth committee member will join the process during the proposal meeting.

The process of the Comprehensive Examinations is as follows:

Consultation with the Graduate Adviser: During the semester a student expects to complete approved coursework, the student should schedule an appointment with the Graduate Adviser. During this meeting, the student and Graduate Adviser should verify that all coursework for his/her approved program of work has been completed. Additionally, the comprehensive exam process and the examining committee are discussed.

Consultation with Dissertation Supervisor, Committee Members: The student will then consult with the dissertation supervisor to jointly decide which four of the five committee members will be responsible for examination in each of the four areas. The supervisor must give one of the exams. A Journalism School faculty member must give the Theory exam. The student will then meet with the supervisor and each committee member to plan and prepare for the examination and develop a reading list consisting of books and journal articles that represent the core material in that topic. There is no set number of books or articles; however, the list should cover all of the important works on the topic. The list should be comprehensive enough to demonstrate that the student has achieved mastery of the topic area. A draft of each reading list will be submitted to the faculty members, who will then modify the list and approve the student to begin studying for the exam.

See examples of reading lists previous students have used at:

<http://journalism.utexas.edu/sample-reading-lists>

Note on Studying for Comps: Doctoral students who are studying for comps register for independent study on a CR/NC (credit/no credit) basis (these hours are not included in the CR/NC limit for coursework on the POW). Comprehensive exam hours are not listed on the POW. In the space for the description of the course, be sure to indicate “Studying for comps. CR/NC basis.” Fill out the required form (available from the graduate coordinator’s office), get the instructor signature/s, and then give the form to the graduate coordinator, who will help you obtain the graduate adviser’s signature. After the graduate adviser signs the form, the graduate coordinator will add you to the list of students with permission to register for the course and send you an email to notify you. If you have any problems adding the course after you’ve received the authorization notice, notify the graduate coordinator immediately. You can take care of any financial bars by paying the bill.

Nature of the Written Examinations: Each faculty member decides how much to disclose to the student about the number and nature of the exact question(s); one to three questions are typical. A faculty member may exercise the option of discussing with a student the general nature and type of questions to be asked, but the faculty member is under no obligation to do so. It is left to the discretion of each faculty member how much to tell the student about the exact wording of the exam question(s); some faculty will only tell the student the general nature of the question, while others will be more specific in the focus of the question(s). *Under no circumstances will a faculty member inform a student in advance of the actual wording of comprehensive examination questions.* Open or closed books and/or notes will be specified by each faculty member, and the student will be informed of this in advance. Some faculty will require a complete bibliography with the exam; others will not. Consult with each faculty member on these points.

Comprehensive exams are designed to test the student’s ability to think critically about the topic, analyze and synthesize information, and develop new ideas of one’s own; they are not designed to test a student’s ability to memorize and repeat information. Students should be careful not to plagiarize on exam questions. Cite all ideas that are not your own. Verbatim use of more than 10 words should be contained in quotation marks and page numbers cited. Failure to do so will result in the student being reported to the university for academic dishonesty and consequences can include being terminated from the program and dismissed from the university.

Students are responsible for scheduling the exam dates and, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, notifying faculty of when their exam questions are due to the Graduate Coordinator.

Scheduling of the Examinations: All written comprehensive examinations must be completed between the first and last class days of a given semester. Students may not start exams in one semester and end in the next one. All written examinations must be completed within a two-week period. At least 10 business days must elapse between completion of the last written examination and the oral examination.

Administration of the Written Examinations: Committee members representing the student’s program areas submit questions to the Graduate Coordinator via email. The administration of written examinations will be by the Graduate Coordinator via email. *Students should submit their responses to each examination to all examination committee members and the Graduate Coordinator via email in the time stipulated for each area.* Typically, four hours are allowed for each area. The written exams must be completed within 10 business days. This does not include holidays.

The Oral Examination: Written examinations are followed by an oral examination scheduled at least 10 business days after the last written exam and no later than one calendar month after completion of the last exam. The written and oral exams must be taken in the same semester. The oral examination is open only to the student and the examining committee and is scheduled

for 2 hours. Students are not allowed to bring food. The student is responsible for ensuring that faculty members' schedules allow for an in-person meeting. The Graduate Coordinator will assist with booking a meeting room.

During the time between written and oral exams, students can prepare for the orals by considering where they might have explained an answer better, or expanded on it more. The oral defense is an opportunity to improve your performance on the written exams.

Typically, each faculty member will question the student, asking him/her to expand on an answer, explain something, or think about something beyond what was contained in the written answer. The purpose of the oral examination is to test the student's critical thinking and ability to "think on one's feet."

At the oral examination, the faculty will first confer without the student's presence, where the supervisor will poll the faculty on the quality of the written exams. If the quality of the answers is deemed acceptable, the student will rejoin the meeting for discussion and questioning of the written exams. If two or more members of the committee believe it should not proceed, then the committee will vote on one of three options--whether the student will be allowed to rewrite one or more of the examinations; whether written and oral examinations be rescheduled; or whether the student be recommended for dismissal from the program. The consequences of failing one or more of the written comprehensive exams and/or failing the oral defense is termination from the doctoral program.

After successful completion of the oral examination, the student applies for candidacy using the online procedure at: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/doctoral-candidacy>. As part of the candidacy application, the student specifies the dissertation committee and writes a brief description of the proposed dissertation. This can be a rough draft, subject to change; the dissertation proposal is not set in stone at this point. File for candidacy in the same semester in which you complete your comprehensive exams in order to avoid being barred from registering the following semester. One consequence of delaying is that you may not register for J999R and J999W dissertation hours until you have been admitted to candidacy. You are not considered a doctoral candidate until your candidacy has been approved.

As part of the application, the student must designate at least five members for the dissertation committee, typically by adding one faculty member to the four on the comprehensive exam committee, although the committee can be reconstituted at this point, with approval of the GA or GSC. At least one but no more than two members of the dissertation committee can be from a faculty other than the School of Journalism. One outside members must be on a GSC. For details, see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/doctoral-candidacy>. Three members of the committee must be on the Journalism GSC. Faculty who have retired, are emeritus, or who have left the University at the time of the defense are no longer on the GSC; they may be on the committee, but do not count toward the three GSC members. For a list of current GSC members, visit <http://journalism.utexas.edu/graduate/graduate-studies-committee>. Once a student reaches candidacy, the dissertation committee is responsible for advising the student, replacing mandatory advising meetings with the Graduate Adviser.

Once this committee is appointed and reported to the Graduate School, changes to committee members are allowed only in rare circumstances, such as death, incapacitating illness, retirement, or leaving the university.

3. Dissertation Proposal Meeting

A dissertation is required for every candidate. It must be an original contribution to scholarship, an independent investigation in the major field, and constitute a contribution to knowledge.

No later than the end of the semester following advancement to candidacy, a student submits a proposal to the dissertation committee for advice and approval. Although the length of the proposal may vary, it includes a problem statement, literature review, proposed research questions or hypotheses, proposed methodology and plan of analysis, bibliography, and measurement instrument such as a questionnaire or codebook. The supervisor, who advises the student as to the nature and scope of the dissertation proposal, approves it before the student submits it to the other committee members. The candidate must give the dissertation proposal to the committee at least 10 business days before the proposal meeting. The supervisor chairs the proposal meeting in which the committee asks questions and makes suggestions about the proposal, including the theory, method, measurement instrument, data analysis, and contributions to the literature. There is no required number of members who must be in attendance at the proposal meeting; all committee members must agree to read the proposal and request changes, which can be delivered electronically to the student and supervisor by the meeting date. The committee must be unanimous in approval of the dissertation proposal; this is a contract between student and committee members as to what is expected. Significant changes to the dissertation should be approved by all committee members; minor changes may be approved by the supervisor. Students may not bring food to the proposal meeting. Students will file the Dissertation Proposal Form with the Journalism School Graduate Coordinator.

Data should not be collected for the dissertation prior to the committee's approval of the proposal. Because IRB approval can take up to 4 weeks, we allow students to file an IRB application once the dissertation proposal has been given to the committee, with the understanding that any changes the committee requests at the proposal meeting will be incorporated and reported in an amendment to the IRB application. Once an application has been approved by the IRB, changes that do not increase the level of risk to participants do not require another waiting period for approval; simply send your IRB representative an email with the changes outlined, and upload to your online application, identifying it as an amendment. Generally, data for the dissertation should not have been used in previous studies; this is left to the discretion of the committee.

4. Dissertation and Final Oral Defense

At all stages of dissertation research and writing, the student is expected to work closely with the dissertation supervisor. The degree of consultation expected of other members of the dissertation committee varies; check with your supervisor and individual committee members as to their preference. Once a supervisor has approved a draft of the dissertation, it is submitted to committee members 30 calendar days prior to the date of the oral examination.

At least 10 business days before the Final Oral Examination, the student must submit the pink *Request for Final Oral Examination* ("pink form") to the Graduate School, with date, time and location of the examination, and required attachments. The form must be signed by **all** committee members and the graduate adviser. This is a requirement of the Graduate School, not Journalism, and no exceptions or extensions will be made. Late forms will result in postponement of the dissertation defense. See the Graduate Coordinator for this form. Dissertation defenses cannot be scheduled during holiday or spring breaks.

For the dissertation defense, the Graduate School draws no distinction between physical attendance or virtual attendance. Though all committee members are expected to participate, one non-supervisory member may be absent from the defense. Their absence can be explained on the 2nd page (back) of the pink sheet (aka Request for Final Oral). Students **cannot** elect to use the old defense attendance rules (Traditional or Electronic).

The Gold Sheet will still be sent to the committee supervisor, and remains the supervisor's responsibility. The supervisor may sign proxy for any members who participated virtually. The dissertation signature page must have an ink signature from the supervisor. All other signatures may be scanned/facsimile or digital. The oral defense gold sheet remains the responsibility of the dissertation supervisor, and requires an ink signature. The supervisor may sign proxy for any members not present.

The dissertation oral defense is an open meeting; others may attend and view the dissertation oral defense. Dates and locations of oral examinations are posted on the Graduate School web site. At this defense, the student has the opportunity to discuss and to defend his or her work as an expert in his or her chosen field. The final oral offers the chance for a stimulating exchange and a matching of wits that hopefully leaves the participants richer as a result of the experience. Deliberations by members of the committee, however, are closed. Following the defense, the committee approves, rejects or calls for revisions of the dissertation. Students may not bring food to the defense meeting.

A pass report indicates that the committee is unanimously satisfied with the dissertation and the examination. Typically, committees will request changes to the dissertation. When a student has only very minor revisions to make after defending his or her dissertation, the committee should feel free to sign the (white) signature page of the dissertation and leave the overseeing of the revisions to the chair. After reviewing the required changes to the dissertation, a committee member who has not signed and is still not satisfied with the revisions may request another oral examination.

The committee has three alternatives if it does not file a "pass" report. One is *reconsideration*; this decision indicates that extensive revision is necessary, but that the committee is willing to examine the rewriting without requiring another oral examination. The second is *not pass*; this report indicates that the committee is not satisfied with the dissertation but anticipates that it could be made satisfactory with rewriting. Another oral examination is needed. Third is *failure*; this report indicates that the committee has decided that the dissertation is unsatisfactory, and the candidate may not rewrite. The student will be terminated from the program. If the committee cannot agree upon a single decision, the matter is referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies for review.

For *pass* and *reconsideration* decisions, the *Report of Dissertation Defense* ("Gold Sheet") is sent to the Supervisor via campus mail by the Office of Graduate Studies within 10 days after the defense. The Supervisor should bring it to the defense. It is signed by all present at the defense if they agree that the oral examination is acceptable and that another oral examination will not be required. After the Supervisor signs it, this form is provided to the Chair of the GSC for signature attesting that the student has met all coursework and other departmental requirements. If the Committee decides that the dissertation is unsatisfactory but that rewriting may make it acceptable, and that another scheduled defense is required, the gold sheet is returned unsigned with a letter from the Supervisor reporting a "Not Pass." New forms will be generated for signatures at the new defense.

A Signature Page needs to be signed by **all** approved committee members who agree that the dissertation document is acceptable either as it stands, or with revisions subject to verification by the Supervisor. The student is advised to bring at least two properly formatted copies of this page to the defense. Original signatures, not faxes, are required.

Revisions to the dissertation are expected to be completed and turned in to the Graduate School within one calendar month of the date of the defense.

The student must submit the dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies for publication. Students are responsible for promptly sending in all materials required by the Graduate School. Full details are on the Graduate School website, including a checklist. **Students bear sole responsibility for informing themselves of all requirements.**

Please refrain from giving gifts to professors. The University prohibits professors from accepting gifts above a certain monetary level, however, the Journalism School prefers no gifts of any amount. You may express your gratitude in the Acknowledgements section of your dissertation and conference papers or journal articles. Your success alone is thanks enough for committee members.

How Long Should I Wait for Faculty to Read My Proposal, Dissertation, Revisions etc.?

Of course, when you turn something in you want feedback right away. Also, the deadline to graduate, turn comps hours into J999R hours, etc. may be coming up soon. So, what amount of time is reasonable to expect your chair or committee members to have to read your exam, proposal, dissertation, or revisions? They no doubt have other students in the same position as you, and may have multiple proposals, exams, and dissertations to read all at the same time. Under no circumstances should faculty be rushed because a student has not made these deadlines. Here are some general guidelines for how long faculty should be given to read something:

Comprehensive Exams: Graduate School rules dictate 10 business days for faculty to read comprehensive exam answers. It is not appropriate to ask faculty to give you feedback on your answers before the oral defense; that is what the oral defense is for.

Dissertation Proposal: Allow your supervisor a minimum of 2 weeks (10 business days) to read your proposal and return it to you for revisions. Once you have submitted your revised proposal, allow another 2 weeks for your supervisor to read that. Should more revisions be required, give 2 weeks for your supervisor to read your revised proposal. Many supervisors will not take this long, and you can certainly ask how long they will need, but do not email, call, or stop by to encourage them to hurry up. Allow 2 weeks.

Once your proposal has been submitted to the other committee members, allow 2 weeks for them to read it before a proposal meeting is scheduled. The proposal meeting is when you will receive feedback from committee members; it is not appropriate to ask ahead of time.

Dissertation: Allow your supervisor 3 weeks to read the first draft of your dissertation. After that, allow 2 weeks for reading of revisions each time revisions are required. Once your supervisor has approved your dissertation for submission to the other committee members, allow 30 days for them to read it. You may ask if they will be able to read it in a shorter time, and if all agree, then you will be able to schedule a defense sooner. However, Graduate School rules require the defense be scheduled no sooner than 2 weeks from the time you give your dissertation to your committee.

The oral defense is when you will receive feedback on your dissertation.

All times given above refer to University of Texas business days. So, 2 weeks = 10 business days. If UT is closed for a break or otherwise not in session, those days are not business days and you cannot count them in the time faculty have to read something. Meetings and defenses may not be scheduled during times when school is not in session. "Business days" also includes normal business hours between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

You should always clarify in advance with faculty how long they will need to read your materials. If they will need longer than these times to read something, you need to plan accordingly. If faculty take longer than agreed upon, you should first discuss it with them. If there is not a satisfactory resolution to the problem, follow the protocol for grievances outlined at the beginning of this handbook.

It is the student's responsibility to know and meet the Graduate School deadlines for graduation, advancement to candidacy, conversion to dissertation hours, etc. The Graduate School is inflexible on this. The Graduate Adviser will not ask the Graduate School for exceptions. Turning something in the day it is due is never a good idea; Graduate School evaluators have to approve of something before it goes to the Graduate School. If you do not give the evaluators enough time to do their job, you will miss the Graduate School deadline. Therefore, plan ahead.

Note: The Catalog of the University (General Information, The Undergraduate Catalog, The Graduate Catalog, and The Law School Catalog) is the document of authority for all students. The requirements given in the catalog supersede information issued by any academic department. The University reserves the right to change the requirements given in the catalog at any time. Please be aware that different admissions procedures apply to foreign applicants, U.S. applicants, and former University of Texas students applying for readmission.

Dissertation Timeline

Typically, students take two semesters to complete and defend a dissertation. Once a student is admitted to candidacy (after successful defense of comprehensive exams), he or she will have a maximum of two years in which to complete and defend the dissertation. This includes the dissertation proposal meeting. After two years, the Graduate School requires the Graduate Studies Committee to review the student's progress at that time and annually thereafter. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the GSC recommending termination of the student's candidacy to the Graduate School. Extensions to the deadline are not automatic and are granted for only one or two semesters at a time. [See p. 24 of the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/degree-requirements/doctor-of-philosophy/#reviewofprogress>.]

Once in candidacy, students with medical issues that delay progress must notify their supervisor and graduate adviser, and file with the office of Student Disability Services at the time of the event; SDS will certify the disability and inform the department of appropriate accommodations. Students with other issues that delay progress should discuss a Leave of Absence with the graduate adviser; LOAs are not automatic and must be approved by the GSC. Extensions are not granted for reasons of financial hardship, work, family responsibilities, medical issues not certified by SDS, or other adverse life events. Additionally, medical issues not reported at the time of occurrence will not be considered as reasons for extensions. Students with the graduate adviser's approval may use the *Petition for Leave of Absence (for students in doctoral candidacy)* form. Students must petition for readmission following a leave of absence.

The student needs to submit a *Doctor's Degree Candidate Form* from the Graduate School early in the semester (fall, spring, or summer) in which they plan to graduate. The form is valid for one semester only. See this and other requirements at <https://utdirect.utexas.edu/ogs/forms/gradform/dgr1.WBX>. *It is each student's responsibility to notify the Journalism School of any changes in mailing or email addresses.*

Continuous Registration

After completion of the required 18 dissertation hours, continual registration **for at least three hours** in the dissertation course is required in each long session until graduation. Under various circumstances, graduate students must be registered for and must remain registered for a **full-**

time (9 hours long session, 3 hours summer) load. The Graduate School will automatically register eligible students for the spring and fall semesters. Students must pay the fees in order to remain registered, however. The student is expected to graduate within two years of gaining candidacy, three for students with a leave of absence. See <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/continuous-registration>.

Financing Your Graduate Education

The Graduate School has an informative web page listing sources of funding and financial information to help finance your graduate education at <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances>.

Teaching Assistantships

The School of Journalism employs a number of currently enrolled master's and doctoral students as teaching assistants to assist faculty members teaching undergraduate courses.

Appointments of 20 hours per week, include health insurance, tuition assistance, and resident tuition entitlement. See the following link for more information:
<https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment>.

Doctoral students who have completed their course work, have worked as a TA for at least one semester, have completed the J 398T supervised teaching course or have 1 year of teaching experience, and are enrolled in dissertation writing may be considered for Assistant Instructor position. Students who provide evidence of having taught for at least one year at a college or university are eligible to be AIs without taking the supervised teaching course.

Support as a TA/AI is limited to four years from the time the student enters the PhD program.

To be eligible to be a Teaching Assistant in the long semesters, you must be registered for nine hours. There are very few TAs in summer; they require registration of three hours. For more information, see: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment>. To apply for a TA position, fill out a form and return to the Graduate Coordinator by the deadline. TA positions are assigned based on departmental need, the student's skills, performance, student evaluations, and other factors. TA positions are assigned one semester at a time. Having a TA one semester does not guarantee having one in future semesters.

Each fall, there is a mandatory orientation for TAs and mandatory multimedia training. Failure to attend these sessions will result in the revocation of a Teaching Assistantship contract.

Teaching assistantships are also available to our students in departments outside of Journalism. There is no central clearinghouse for these, you just have to find them on your own. The Graduate Adviser can give you a list of departments that have hired our students in the past. If you do obtain a TA outside the department, you MUST fill out the Resident Tuition Entitlement Appointment Eligibility form from the Office of Accounting, have the GA sign it, and return it to OA in order to receive in-state tuition with your TA. Failure to file this form will result in your TRB being revoked. Only students who are within four years of being admitted to the doctoral program may receive in-state tuition with a TA outside Journalism.

International Students

International students are subject to different rules required by the U.S. federal government, their visas, and their home countries. For international students who will be working as a TA, a U.S. Social Security number is required. Students who do not already have U.S. SSNs must arrive on campus at least 3 weeks before classes begin in order to complete the SSN process by the deadline for employment. Failure to meet the deadlines can result in the TA position, tuition waiver, and health insurance being forfeited, and charges for international student health insurance being imposed. Be sure to follow closely all instructions from the Graduate Coordinator in a timely fashion. Students are responsible for knowing all requirements and fulfilling them. For more information, see the website of the International Student & Scholar Services, <https://world.utexas.edu/issss/students>. For medical requirements, please visit: www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/internationalstudents.html

For International students who wish to work or train off campus, Optional Practical Training (OPT) hours are available for a fee. Approval generally takes 90 days. Contact ISSS for details <https://world.utexas.edu/issc/students>. Doctoral students are **not** eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) hours during the long semesters; these hours are reserved for international master's students doing internships. Use of CPT hours stipulates that the program must require all students to do the internship, assistantship or training; there is no such requirement in the Journalism School doctoral program. This is a rule of the U.S. federal government and international VISAs, not the Journalism School, so no exceptions can be made.

Student Loans

The mission of the Office of Student Financial Services is to help remove financial barriers and make the financial aid process as simple and easy to understand as possible. Lots of useful information is posted on their website at <http://finaid.utexas.edu> Information on Tuition/Cash loans is available from the Office of Accounting website at <http://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/sar/il.html>

Recruiting Scholarships

New applicants admitted to the program will automatically be considered for recruiting scholarships. You do not need to apply for them. The GSC admissions committee will evaluate all applicants and notify those chosen if they have been awarded or nominated for a recruiting scholarship. Recruiting scholarships are one-time payments (usually paid out over 2 semesters) and are not recurring; after the first year, students are eligible for Continuing Fellowships, listed below. A call for applications for Continuing Fellowships is sent out in spring. Admitted students will be asked to fill out a form for a TA position. Notification of intentions to award a TA will be made in the first week of April each year for fall.

Fellowships

Currently enrolled students who will be continuing in the program the following year are eligible for the following continuing fellowships. An email announcing the call for self-nominations will be sent by the GSC chair through the graduate coordinator in spring semester. Students must be enrolled for 9 credit hours during the time these fellowships are awarded.

Graduate School Continuing Fellowships

Awards are based on major accomplishments since entering Graduate School, a well-defined program of research, strong personal statement, and letters of recommendation. Emphasis is placed on publication in peer-reviewed journals with preference given to sole and first authorship. Financial need will be considered. The Journalism School is allowed to nominate one student per year; award of the fellowship is not guaranteed to the school's nominee. In 2015-16, the fellowship carried a stipend of \$28,000, health insurance, and tuition assistance benefit.

The Jesse H. Jones Fellowship

The College of Communication annually awards the Jesse H. Jones Endowed Centennial Fellowships to graduate students who possess exceptional ability in advertising, communication sciences and disorders, journalism, radio-television-film, or communication studies. The fellowships are awarded each spring for the following academic year. The fellowships are open to graduate students in their second or subsequent years in their programs. Preference is given to candidates with a strong, interdisciplinary track record. Financial need is a requirement. Students are expected to make a presentation on their research. In 2014-15, the Journalism School's Jesse Jones Fellowship carried a stipend of \$6,500. Calls for applications will be sent by email in late fall or early spring by the College of Communication. See criteria and additional information at <http://communication.utexas.edu/prospective/graduate-students>.

The following fellowships are awarded competitively and are based on merit, which for Ph.D., Master's R&T and Hybrid students are judged by research productivity. Amount and number of awards varies. The call for self-nominations will be made in spring and one application allows you to be considered for all of them. Financial need is a consideration for some. All require enrollment of 9 credit hours in the following year. Calls for applications will be sent by email by the GSC chair via the Graduate Coordinator in late fall or early spring.

The Ada Frances Miller Endowment Fellowship

The Pic Wagner Fellowship

James W. Tankard Jr. Excellence in Graduate Education Award

Nettie Doscher More Endowed Fellowship given by the Texas Exes.

Travel & Research Funding

Funding to travel to conferences in order to present your original research is available. To apply for this funding, a call for applications will be sent from the GSC chair via the GC in spring. You may use this funding retroactively to be reimbursed for conferences already attended, or to attend conferences through the end of the academic year. Funding is only available for presenting original research, not for those attending a conference to see others present, be on an invited panel, or other reasons.

Funding is also available for those conducting dissertation and thesis research (class research projects, research group projects, and individual or group research is not eligible). To be eligible, students must be enrolled in dissertation or thesis hours. A call for applications will be sent with the call for travel funding, described above. Students may apply for both of these sources of funding.

After Graduation

Please be sure to update your personal email address and new physical address at https://utdirect.utexas.edu/utdirect/bio/address_change.WBX

Stay in touch! Update your information with the College at <https://web-apps.communication.utexas.edu/usher/Forms/Alumni/>

Also, the Texas Exes offer email forwarding. See <http://texasexes.org/online/email.asp>