

## **FOREWORD**

Welcome to graduate study in the Department of Communication at North Dakota State University! This handbook provides information about various requirements, procedures, policies, and activities that are relevant to graduate study in the Department of Communication. The handbook is intended to provide you with useful information throughout the course of your graduate studies.

To make the most out of your graduate studies, it is important that you take a proactive approach to your education. One way to do that is to familiarize yourself with the contents of this book. Take the time to read it through in its entirety and be sure to consult it frequently as you move through your program of study. Many of the questions you have about graduate education will be answered in its pages.

In addition to knowing how our graduate program works, all graduate students are expected to be familiar with the policies and guidelines of the graduate school at NDSU and the university writ large. I encourage you to spend time on the university and graduate school web pages to become familiar with their content. These resources will be of use at various stages of your education so be sure to access them frequently.

Our graduate program is a source of great pride. Our graduate students are engaged scholars and practitioners who collaborate with faculty to create a vibrant, collegial environment. We count Disney Corporation, Target Corporation, and Sanford employees as well as University of Nebraska-Omaha, Kent State University, Texas Christian University, and University of Texas-San Marcos faculty among our recent graduates.

If you have questions that are unanswered in the pages of this handbook, please feel free to contact me directly. Graduate school is an exciting time in your life. The department's faculty is here to support you as you advance your education.

Warmly,

Amy O'Connor  
Director of Graduate Studies

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## **1. Introduction**

The Department of Communication offers Master of Arts, Master of Science, and Ph.D. in Communication. Our Department emphasizes an applied research<sup>1</sup> focus and the faculty actively pursues research agendas in a variety of contexts with this in mind. Generally, applied communication research refers to a type of communication scholarship as well as to a sub-field of communication. In a more specific sense, applied communication research is communication scholarship that emphasizes the creation of knowledge about communication in specific contexts related to issues of concern to society. Our faculty works closely with graduate students to help them design programs of study that best fit their individual needs. As part of this process, students are required to take a proactive stance toward their graduate education and actively participate in the different educational options the department offers.

### The Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee comprises the director of graduate studies and three additional faculty members. This committee solicits, reviews, and recommends the acceptance of graduate student applicants (both master's and doctorate), assesses doctoral student progress yearly, and evaluates each Ph.D. student's research competency based on the department's requirements. This committee works closely with the curriculum committee regarding curriculum changes in both the master's and doctorate programs.

### Planning your degree

The Department's graduate program is governed by the principle that each student should have the opportunity to study and conduct original research in an applied context of the student's interest. As such, the department seeks to balance two concerns: to permit students to design a plan of study suited to their individual interests and abilities; and to ensure that students acquire a coherent perspective within the communication discipline. The ultimate objective is to prepare students to assume productive and responsible roles within their chosen profession.

## **2. Graduate Advising**

### First-Year Mentor

A faculty member is assigned to each new graduate student as a first-year mentor to assist the student with course selection, to sign registration materials, and to be a

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on applied communication research, see: L. Frey & K. Cissna (Eds.), *Handbook of Applied Communication Research* (2009): Routledge. Also See, D. O'Hair & G. Kreps (Eds.), *Applied Communication Theory and Research* (1990): Erlbaum.

familiar person to whom the new graduate student can come for advice and counsel. The first-year mentor relationship does not imply a lasting advising relationship.

#### Definition and function of faculty advisor

The faculty advisor is the faculty member who oversees all aspects of the student's academic program. Typically, the faculty advisor is a specialist in the student's primary area of study or research. The faculty advisor aids the student in selecting an advisory committee, constructing a plan of study, making changes to the plan of study or the committee members, registering each semester, comprehensive exams, and thesis/dissertation.

At any point students may ask a faculty member to serve as their advisor. Typically, master's students select an advisor during their first year; doctoral students usually select an advisor sometime during their second year of study. Students must acquire consent from those faculty members to serve as a faculty advisor or member of the advisory committee.

In the event that the faculty advisor resigns, retires or otherwise leaves NDSU, the graduate student has two options: 1) the student may replace the faculty advisor by designating a new advisor according to the usual approval processes; or 2) the student may ask the departing advisor to continue to serve as a co-advisor. The student, in consultation with the departing advisor, will then select another co-advisor from among the faculty. It is up to the student and the co-advisors to negotiate the responsibilities and duties.

#### Advisory committee

A student is required to have an advisory committee. For doctoral students, the advisory committee comprises the student's faculty advisor, a minimum of two members of the department faculty, and one committee member from outside the department. For masters students, the committee includes the student's advisor, one departmental committee member, and one member outside of the department. The outside committee member is selected by the student and the faculty advisor and can be from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, or from the university. For *masters students only*, the outside committee member can be a non-academic professional. Please consult the Graduate School handbook for the requirements and forms associated with this option. Some students have chosen to have more than the minimum number of four committee members. This decision is typically due to need for a faculty expert covering specific content areas, and should be done in consultation with the faculty advisor.

Doctoral students *may* elect to form two distinct advisory committees. One committee may be constituted to advise the student through comprehensive exams with a second

committee constituted for the dissertation. In such cases, a committee substitution form must be filed.

Changes to the advisory committee require a change of committee form to be completed and approved by the department's director of graduate studies.

### Academic Progress

The department follows the NDSU Graduate School definitions regarding academic warning and academic probation. A student with a cumulative grade point average of less than 3.0, is placed on Academic Warning. In this status, a student may continue in the program and has one semester in which to bring their cumulative GPA back up to 3.0. Any student admitted in conditional status because of grade deficiency is automatically placed on academic warning. If a student on Academic Warning fails to achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in the subsequent semester of attendance, then the student will be placed on Academic Probation. A student on academic PROBATION may not continue the pursuit of the graduate degree program without a waiver from the Dean of the Graduate School acting on a recommendation from the appropriate program administrator. A student on Academic Probation is not eligible for a graduate assistantship or tuition waiver.

### **3. Plan of Study**

The plan of study shall include the specific courses the student is expected to complete and other special requirements for the particular degree the student is seeking. For doctoral students, the plan of study is based on one major area and either one or two substantive minor areas. Major areas typically reflect areas of concentration offered by the department. However, students may construct major areas that are more specialized, reflect emerging areas within the discipline, or are hybrids of traditional / emerging areas. Minor areas are defined as: 1) any area that would be acceptable as a major; 2) any cognate area of study in another department; 3) coherent interdisciplinary area based on studies in two or more departments. For master degree students, the plan of study includes the courses completed in content and methods areas.

The plan of study is submitted to the graduate school for approval **no later** than the term immediately after the advisory committee is formed and must be filed in the graduate school prior to scheduling the final examination. The Department requires that a plan of study be filed for masters degree candidates at the end of 12 hours of coursework and for doctoral students at the end of 21 hours of coursework.

The forms of plan of study for master's students and doctoral students are different. The newest versions of these forms can be obtained from the NDSU graduate school web site.

Changes made to plan of study must be approved by the advisor and department director of graduate studies and submitted to the graduate school. The Request for Change form is available on the Graduate School web site: [www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/](http://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/).

#### **4. Master of Arts / Master of Science degrees**

The Department offers both a Master of Arts and a Master of Science degree. Students select the degree option they prefer, with the difference being the methodological classes associated with each degree. Master of Arts students typically take qualitative and rhetorical methods classes while Master of Science students enroll in quantitative methods classes. We offer both a Plan A thesis and a Plan B paper option. In consultation with the faculty advisor, students elect to complete a research-based thesis (six credit hours) or a non-thesis option (three credit hours). In either case, a prospectus meeting and final defense are required. Students interested in continuing on to doctoral studies should consider the thesis option because it provides the student with an opportunity to engage in the research process and write a document that will be useful in the application to doctoral study process. Further, a thesis may be advisable for students who wish to do research in their professional careers. The non-thesis option provides students with the opportunity to take three more credits of coursework and may be useful to students who are interested in mastery of content areas and do not require a thesis for their future careers.

As part of your studies, we encourage you to read Colon Semenza, G.M. (2010). *Graduate study for the twenty first century: How to build an academic career in the humanities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. This book provides excellent advice on everything from the graduate seminar paper to getting a job. In addition, it has an excellent chapter on publishing and the differences between a publishable manuscript and a class paper.

##### Master's degree coursework

Six credits of core classes (COMM 700 and COMM 711) are required. In addition, master's students take six credits of research tools and 12-15 credits of elective coursework. Students chose among a variety of courses offered within the department, and may elect to take courses outside the department that are applicable to the communication discipline. Students are required to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate coursework with a 3.0 GPA or better.

##### Thesis and Non-thesis options

Students choosing the thesis option work closely with their faculty advisor and advisory committee to develop a research-based project. The project is designed to showcase a student's mastery of communication concepts, methods, and analysis. The student will have a prospectus meeting in the semester before graduation is anticipated. In this

meeting the advisory committee will provide feedback and direction. *The prospectus meeting and final defense meeting must occur in different semesters.*

Students choosing the non-thesis option will take three course credits and three exam preparation credits in their last semester. At the beginning of the last semester, a meeting will be held with the graduate student and committee members. In this meeting, the bibliography, upon which the student's written essays will be based, will be edited and approved. Graduate students are primarily responsible for the creation of this bibliography, although committee support is encouraged. During this meeting final arrangements will be made about the number of essay questions and time allotments. Committee member composition and selection will be the same as for the thesis option (three communication faculty members, one outside member). Committee members will create writing prompts for the student. This will be facilitated by the advisor. A writing prompt pool for the communication theory and methods portion is available to graduate students, but the committee is **not** required to use it.

The non-thesis option requirements include eight hours of writing time. The committee has flexibility when deciding the number of questions (e.g., three or four questions), the hour allotment per question (e.g., two or three hours per question), and location of the exam. At a minimum, questions will target communication theory, research methods, and a content area. The communication theory prompts are designed to assess student's understanding of COMM 711; the methods prompts focus on 700 and other methods that the student should have mastered based upon their coursework; the content prompts emphasize the classes on the students plan of study that are more specific to his/her area of emphasis. Content prompts may include theory and methods as well. Students are not allowed to use outside resources, including the internet, during the writing portion, although students may study during breaks in the examination. The general topics that the student will write about can be known ahead of time (e.g., Friday from 1-3 pm will be a question on group communication). All parts of the written portion of the non-thesis option will need to be completed over the course of one week.

Master degree candidates are required to schedule their writing times through the Director of Graduate Studies. Writing times will be offered early to mid April for the spring and mid to late November for the fall semester. Students are encouraged to schedule their times with the Graduate Director as soon as possible to avoid scheduling conflicts or delays. Online students need to coordinate with their advisor regarding how the written portion will be conducted.

The oral defense will be conducted within two weeks of the written answers being completed, generally toward the end of the semester. The focus of the oral defense is to have students elaborate or clarify responses. Based on the oral defense, the

committee can pass, request a rewrite, or fail the student, as is currently true for the thesis and non-thesis option.

***Students selecting the non-thesis option should submit the following paperwork:***

1. Register for Individual Study (793) entitled Non-thesis masters option
2. Complete a Request to Schedule Examination form to the Grad School, 2 weeks prior to the final exam date.
3. Upon successful defense, the committee will submit a Report of Final Examination form within 7 days of your exam.
  - a. The committee may require answers to be re-written. This timeline needs to be coordinated with your committee.
4. The student will not submit the written answers to the Graduate School, the department may keep an archive if desired.
5. The student must apply to graduate by submitting the Application for Graduate Degree form. There will be a \$25 charge rather than the completion package charge paid by students completing a thesis or paper.
6. Please check the NDSU Graduate School website for deadlines to meet degree requirements for the semester in which you are graduating. These dates fluctuate so it is important to be aware of the exact dates.

*General question bank for the M.A./M.S. Plan B option*

Please note that the committee may chose to add questions to this list and does not have to use the questions below. The question bank is merely a guide to aid both the examining committee and the student.

*Theory Questions*

1. Name two theorists that have influenced you. Discuss their theories in detail (include the question(s)/problem(s) the theories are addressing, their component parts, key terms, as well as critiques of the theory), and why they have been important to your study of communication.
2. Contrast how interpretive theory and post-positivist theory would be useful in different ways to investigate a communication problem that interests you.
3. Do you think that a post-positivist theory approach could be used to successfully investigate identification within a small working group? Discuss why or why not.



4. Do you think that an interpretive theory approach could be used to successfully investigate identification within a small working group? Discuss why or why not.
5. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that ALL communication is strategic?
6. Pick a broad theoretical perspective on the study of communication (e.g., rhetorical, semiotic, socio-psychological, sociological/cultural, cultural/critical, phenomenological, etc.). Discuss the underlying ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions behind this particular way of conceptualizing 'communication', making sure to include how or as what communication is theorized, what problems of communication are best addressed by this approach, and challenges to this approach of theorizing communication.
7. Discuss how you would evaluate a theory. In your discussion, please identify specific criteria for evaluation, justify your use of those criteria, and use a theory of your choice to illustrate the evaluation process

*Method Questions (underlined words can be substituted)*

1. You're interested in researching organizational identification in family businesses. State a clearly defined problem/question, a working hypothesis, and discuss how you would collect data and analyze it.
2. You want to do a research project on the different narrative types in traumatic experience of child abuse. You're interested in how family and friends can provide social support. What method would you use, and how would you make sure that your research is consistent with the principles of the Belmont Report?
3. Compare and discuss the benefits and downsides of inductive and deductive approaches to communication. Make sure to address issues how these approaches affect generalizability, theory creation, sample size, etc.
4. Compare and contrast when you would use quantitative and qualitative methods. -

What criteria do we use to assess quantitative and qualitative methods? Compare and contrast. Your answer should discuss issues of reliability and validity.

5. Please describe the strengths and weaknesses of one of the following methods and explain when such a method would be appropriate to use.

- a) interview
- b) surveys
- c) focus groups
- d) ethnography
- e) coding
- f) rhetorical criticism

6. Based on its quantitative or qualitative orientation, answer the following question:

- a. Quantitative: How would you assess if your data collection approach was valid / reliable?
- b. Qualitative: What are some of the different ways or frameworks you could use to interpret your data?

## **5. Doctoral degree**

Our Ph.D. program is a source of great pride in our department. Our doctoral students are welcomed as full members of the scholarly community from their first day at NDSU. These students are excellent scholars-in-training who are active in the discipline from a very early stage. Their record of success in teaching, research, publications, and placements is very good and continues its upward trajectory. The Ph.D. Program in Communication is designed to be completed in three to four years. Students select their area of focus and work closely with their faculty advisor and advisory committee to develop a plan of study and research that will allow the student to pursue their scholarly interests. Students are encouraged to develop a plan of study that reflects their individual interests and to consider the variety of research expertise of our faculty.

As part of your studies, we encourage you to read Colon Semenza, G.M. (2010). *Graduate study for the twenty first century: How to build an academic career in the humanities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. This book provides excellent advice on everything from the graduate seminar paper to getting a job. In addition, it has an excellent chapter on publishing and the differences between a publishable manuscript and a class paper.

Students are encouraged to work closely with their advisor in addition to the faculty to maximize their education and experience. As a future colleague in the discipline, it is important for students to develop the research, teaching, and collegiality skills that will be necessary in their careers.

### Degree requirements

Students are required to complete at least 60 credit hours beyond the master's degree, successfully defend a comprehensive exam portfolio, and design, execute and defend a dissertation. Ph.D. students have both a major and minor concentration area. Our program consists of nine credits of core courses (COMM 701, 711, one foundational theory class in major area) as well as a major content concentration of 15 credits, a minor concentration area of 9 credit hours 12 credits of research courses, and a minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours.

1. *Research requirement*. In addition to coursework, doctoral students are required to publish research article(s) and present research at conferences. This feature unique to the department's Ph.D. program is designed to produce highly competitive graduates ready for top positions in academia and industry. To achieve this requirement, doctoral students actively participate in faculty-led research teams and receive extensive faculty mentoring regarding research design, analysis, and the publication process.

As students get started on meeting their research requirement, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, it is important to get to know the faculty and the different research projects they are working on. The department designed the research requirement to help students learn about the research and publication process. To this end, learning under the direction of faculty is paramount. In addition, collaborating with more advanced graduate students and having any manuscript you are considering for publication undergo a "friendly" review are beneficial and strongly recommended. Friendly reviews are generally done by faculty members or other advanced colleagues that can provide you with a detailed review of your manuscript prior to submission.

To meet the publication requirement students must complete the following PRIOR to their comprehensive exams.

1. A single authored, competitively selected (excluding student division) conference paper at a national or international conference.
2. A co-authored manuscript with faculty and a maximum of one additional student that is under review at a top tier, national or international journal, in the student's area of research. It is NOT required that the submission be accepted only that it is under review.
3. One published manuscript at a regional, national, or international journal.

Please note, these are the minimum standards to advance to comprehensive exams. Students are encouraged to seek research and conference opportunities well beyond those required. As a point of reference, there is not a limit on the number of authors for item 3, and depending on the manuscript a student could meet the requirement of item 2 & 3 with the same paper.

2. *Comprehensive Examination.* When coursework is nearly completed, doctoral students will meet with their advisors to determine if they are prepared to complete the comprehensive examination. The advisor will consider the program of study, the student's professional presentations and publications, the student's teaching or other applied work, and the student's professional service. Students need to complete the required number of courses for the degree **and** meet the research requirement before proceeding to the comprehensive examination.

The goals of the comprehensive exam process are two-fold:

- a. To evaluate the depth and breadth of the doctoral candidate's knowledge.
- b. To assess the candidate's ability develop a dissertation that will build original knowledge.
- c. To reinforce the ethical standards and obligations of academic research.
- d. To assess candidate's ability to create engagement between scholarly work and broader audiences.

#### Comprehensive Exam Format:

The semester prior to the examination, the student will meet with her/his advisor and advisory committee to develop a reading list that is grounded in their coursework and central to their disciplinary focus.

- a. The advisory committee must approve the reading list.
- b. A separate reading list may be developed for theory, methods and content/dissertation focus.
- c. The reading lists should be unique to each student and developed collaboratively by the advisor, advisory committee, and student.

The comprehensive exam is described as follows:

**b. Written examination (12 hours, closed book, timed exam).**

- a. Students will be provided a computer for the exam.
- b. Students may bring a reference list with them into the exam.
- c. Students may not access the internet or use USB drives or bring in notes beyond the articles noted above.
- d. Students may know the area and general contours of the question but will not be given the specific questions in advance.
- e. The questions will be formulated based on the agreed upon reading list.
- f. The questions will be created by the advisory committee and will be unique to each student based on their plan of study and research trajectory.
- g. The length of the question (e.g. 2 hours) is determined by the advisory committee. Students must have a minimum of 3 hours in each area (theory, methods, content). The hours/questions can be divided any way the committee sees fit (e.g. three 1 hour questions; two 2 hour questions)
- h. The exam will be scheduled with the departmental secretary/advisor.
- i. The closed book portion of the exam must be completed in a consecutive two week timeframe.

**c. Translational research (open book).**

- a. The student and their supervisory committee will discuss and determine the form of the translational research project based on the student's research foci and career goals. The project should be developed in a way that would allow for its inclusion on the Communication Research and Training Center's website.
  - i. Developing a submission-ready NFP of an externally funded grant to fund their research.
  - ii. Developing a "Communication Current" style paper based on their single authored conference paper.
  - iii. Developing courses and syllabi based on the three examination areas.
  - iv. Creating a training manual.

**d. Academic Honesty**

- a. Plagiarism or other dishonesty during the comprehensive exam process will be subject to a range of negative sanctions, which can range from the student having to rewrite comps to the student's expulsion from the program. See policy 335 for more information (CODE OF ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY AND CONDUCT).

*Comprehensive Exam Defense:* Students are required to orally defend their comprehensive exams. During the examination, the advisory committee engages students in a defense of the material presented, their coursework, and research. At the end of the defense, students submit the required paperwork to the graduate school indicating a pass or fail of the examination. This form also allows the committee to ask students to rewrite sections of the comprehensive exam. If a student fails, he or she is allowed one opportunity to re-write and successfully defend a comprehensive exam; a second failing grade will result in dismissal from the program.

The defense of the comprehensive exam can occur in the same semester that the student's prospectus defense occurs.

It is at the discretion of the committee members if an exam occurs during the summer months. Students are encouraged to be mindful of faculty's time and not assume their committee will be available during the summer.

3. *Dissertation.* The dissertation represents the culmination of the student's doctoral studies, represents original student research, and launches a student's scholarly career. In this spirit, the dissertation demonstrates the student's ability to conceptualize a study, engage in the necessary theoretical development, methodological execution, data analysis, and write-up of the study and its implications. Students are required to take a minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours with the prospectus and final defense taking place at least one semester apart. Please take care to be sure you are scheduling your defenses (comprehensive exam, prospectus, final) correctly.

As with the comprehensive exams and prospectus, students should provide committee members with a *minimum of 2 weeks* to review dissertation documents.

As with the comprehensive exam and prospectus, it is at the discretion of the committee members if an exam occurs during the summer months. Students are encouraged to be mindful of faculty's time and not assume the committee will be available during the summer.

a. *Dissertation prospectus:* Typically the prospectus is the first three chapters of a student's dissertation (intro, literature review, methods). At the prospectus meeting, the student and his/her advisory committee work closely to define the scope and direction of the project.

b. *Dissertation:* Students complete original research in the discipline-standard dissertation format. Students are encouraged to read previous dissertations to get a sense of the type of projects that have been successful. The final defense occurs in a semester after the prospectus presentation. The exact timing depends upon the student's progress. Students have ten years to successfully

defend their dissertation *after beginning coursework*. Students have one year from the defense of the dissertation to turn in the final document to the Graduate School. If extra time is required, committee, departmental, and graduate school approval are required. The student is responsible for meeting both the departmental and graduate school requirements for graduation. It is important to pay close attention to paperwork submission deadlines.

Once the student has successfully defended his/her final dissertation, he/she will share the research in a public presentation. The Department is proud of the work our doctoral students do and will sponsor, at the end of each semester, a colloquium that showcases the dissertations of our graduating doctoral students. The Director of Graduate will coordinate the scheduling of the colloquium and promote the event. Students who will be graduating need to inform the Director of Graduate Studies on or before April 1 / November 1 so that a public presentation can be scheduled. All students are required to present their research to publicly.

## **6. Teaching/Research Assistantships**

Graduate students can apply for a teaching or research assistantship. Most of our doctoral students and about one-third of our master's degree students are awarded assistantships. Most T.A.s are responsible for teaching two or three sections of the Fundamentals of Public Speaking course (COMM 110). As graduate students progress through the program, they may be offered the opportunity to teach upper division COMM classes. These decisions are made by the department chair in consultation with faculty.

Graduate assistants receive a stipend and tuition waiver. The number of assistantships and stipends offered changes from year to year depending on department resources. Masters students who wish to be considered for assistantships must submit their application by March 1. Screening of new doctoral students starts in mid-January.

Master's students who have teaching assistantships are required to enroll in COMM 702 – Introduction to College Teaching. Doctoral students without prior teaching experience or those interested in pedagogical issues are strongly encouraged to take COMM 702 as well. It is advisable to enroll in COMM 702 as soon as possible, preferably in your first semester of coursework.

## **7. Travel support**

Graduate students are encouraged to participate in regional or national conferences. Travel support is usually available. Students can apply for travel support when they have academic papers accepted by a regional or national conference. Applications for travel support will be considered by the department chair. Typically, travel support only covers part of the costs associated with travel.

For doctoral students, conference presentations are a requirement of the degree. For masters students, conference participation is not required, however if a career in academia is desired conference participation may be worthwhile. Students are encouraged to work closely with their advisor in determining what conferences are most desirable based on interests, finances, and learning/networking opportunities.

## **8. Doctoral Student Progress Report**

The yearly doctoral student progress report provides a formal evaluation of each student, and will be kept in each student's file. Evaluations offer students a clear assessment of their progress. The goal of the annual evaluation is to provide useful feedback to students and to create an opportunity for students and faculty to have a constructive conversation about their graduate education. Although the majority of the time student progress reports are used to generate feedback, reports can also be the basis for corrective action (e.g., probation, dismissal). The director of graduate studies will use feedback provided by the graduate committee to write a formal letter to each student. A hard copy will be provided to each student. At the committee's discretion, committee member may choose to review the letters before they are sent out.

On March 1 of each year, the graduate committee sends an email notice to all doctoral students. The email will provide two items. First, a letter to the doctoral students introducing the evaluation process will provide background for the review. Second, a template of the Multiple Indicator Assessment will be attached, providing students with the format for their student progress report submission. Reports are due to the director of graduate studies on or before April 1 of each year. Each of the required sections of the Multiple Indicator Assessment is reviewed below. Students are encouraged to carefully file information as they receive it and create their report as they go along. Doing so will help eliminate errors and/or omissions.

The first part of the Multiple Indicator Assessment is research competence. Students will provide a complete list of their conference papers (including both acceptances and rejections), journal submissions, and journal publications. Work should be listed chronologically. Conference papers should indicate if the student was the presenter. Articles that are currently under review should be included, although students may also list articles in progress if they so choose.

The second part of the Multiple Indicator Assessment is classroom competence. Students will provide a one-paragraph summary describing their experience in their courses, specifically focusing on their ability to engage with faculty and other students and grasp course materials. The student will also provide a chronological list of their courses and corresponding grades.

The third part of the Multiple Indicator Assessment is teaching competence. Students will list the courses they have taught during their academic career. Courses should be



listed chronologically. For each course, teaching evaluation question #1 of the Student Rating of Instruction (SROI) should be included. Additionally, each year, doctoral students should have a peer assess their teaching and write a recommendation. During a student's last year, this peer evaluation should be completed by at least one faculty member. Regarding research competence, students will be evaluated based on the research requirement point system. Students should list all publications to date. In addition, students should include manuscripts that are revise & resubmit, under review and works in progress. For manuscripts that are revise & resubmit and under review, please provide as much detail as possible. For example, date of submission, round of review, etc. Also included in this section should be conference presentations. Finally, students should indicate any research teams they are participating in and their role on the team.

In evaluating classroom competence, grades and instructor evaluations will serve as the primary mechanisms. The director of graduate studies may solicit feedback from departmental faculty if there are concerns about a student's performance. To evaluate teaching competence, primary emphasis will be given to satisfactory SROI scores. Faculty or staff in charge of course direction, such as the basic course director, will be solicited for feedback.

## **9. Online degree options and information**

Working with the NDSU Office of Continuing Education the Department offers an online master's degree program in communication. This program features the same standards of rigor, and the same quality of degree, as that available to students who choose traditional classroom study. This option may be ideal for those who are place-bound or working, and therefore unable to come to a traditional campus for master's degree study. Students typically enroll in one class (three credits) per semester, but may take more classes if they choose. Summer session classes also are available online.

Students interested in online instruction apply for graduate school as they would for a traditional program, under the same admission requirements. Upon acceptance a student may choose to combine classroom-based instruction on campus with online courses, or may complete the entire program online.

Degree requirements are identical to those of the traditional master's degree. Online students choose eight or nine three-credit courses, plus either a six-credit thesis or a three-credit final examination. Online students may defend their thesis/exam by speaker phone or other remote connection, or may come to campus for the meeting.

The Department has offered the online Master's degree for nearly a decade and has seen students from around the country and around the world complete their graduate study goals through this program. Credits for the online program do cost more than those for the traditional program. However, many students who live elsewhere find these courses to be cheaper because they are not charged out-of-state tuition. Our

online classes are for master's degree students; doctoral students may take a course online but it is not credited toward the 63 credit hours required for the Ph.D.

## **10. Graduate Student FAC**

The FAC is the "Friday Afternoon Club" organized by graduate students. Its mission is to provide educational and social programming for the Department's graduate students. The FAC elects officers each year. Past activities have included curling, the annual kickball tournament, and ice cream socials. In addition, the FAC has hosted guest speakers on topics such as mentoring, conference participation, writing theses or dissertations, and the academic job search.

## **11. History of the Department of Communication at NDSU**

North Dakota State University established its first communication studies program in 1907, when Alfred Arvola became chair of the Department of Public Discussion and Social Service. The department was renamed Speech and Drama in 1952 with the arrival of Dr. Frederick G. Walsh as chair, who was succeeded by E. James Ubbelohde in 1976. In 1984, the unit added mass communication to become the Department of Mass Communication, Speech Communication and Theatre Arts. Dr. Robert Littlefield became first chair of this new department. Eight years later Theatre Arts joined the Division of Fine Arts, and the remaining programs became the Department of Communication. Littlefield served as chair until 1994, followed by Dr. Timothy L. Sellnow from 1994 to 2000. With the approval of the doctoral program in place, Sellnow stepped aside to enable the hiring of Dr. Paul E. Nelson, who served as chair from 2000 to 2012. Dr. Mark Meister currently serves as department chair.

The department offered its first Master of Arts degree in speech in the late 1950s, continuing until the Department's reorganization in 1984. When the department of MCSCA formed, separate Master of Arts and Master of Science degree programs were awarded in speech communication and mass communication. Communication faculty began work to create a communication Ph.D. program in 1996, with the first doctoral students admitted in 2000. Dr. Judy C. Pearson served as director of the Ph.D. program from its inception until 2012. Dr. Ross F. Collins served as director of the master's program from 1995 to 2004, and from 2006 to 2012. Today, Dr. Amy O'Connor serves as the Director of Graduate Studies for the department, coordinating both programs.

## **12. Resources**

You are encouraged to work closely with faculty to maximize the many opportunities available to you during your graduate studies. At NDSU, you may consider joining the Graduate Student Association. In the department, students participate in the graduate student organized FAC which organizes monthly social and academic events. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in the department's colloquia series and join faculty on research teams.

Associations

The associations noted below provide memberships, host annual conferences, and also provide job postings. Students are encouraged to engage in the discipline and join one or more of the following associations.

**Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC):**

[www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org)

**Central States Communication Association (CSCA):** [www.csc-net.org](http://www.csc-net.org)

**International Communication Association (ICA):** [www.icaheadq.org](http://www.icaheadq.org)

**National Communication Association (NCA):** [www.natcom.org](http://www.natcom.org)

NCA Handbook for Graduate Education:

<http://www.natcom.org/ProductCatalog/PublicationCategory.aspx>