

## Foreword

Welcome to graduate studies 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 progress and degree advancement in the Department of Communication. We hope this handbook will be a guide to you and your advisor when making program decisions during your stay at NDSU.

To make the most out of your graduate studies, it is important that you take a proactive approach to your education. Becoming familiar with the contents of the handbook is one way of being proactive. 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. Of course, I am available to meet and discuss any issues that may arise during your program; however, many of the questions you have about graduate education will be answered in the following pages.

In addition to knowing how our graduate program works, all graduate students are expected to be familiar with the policies and guidelines of NDSU and the Graduate School. I encourage you to spend time on the university website and become familiar with the 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 faculty at research and teaching universities across the United States, and employees at major organizations and non-profits among our most recent graduates.

Graduate school is an exciting time in your life. The department's faculty is here to support you as you advance your education. Thanks for choosing NDSU.

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Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

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## 1. Introduction

The Department of Communication offers Master of Arts and Doctorate of Philosophy in Communication degrees. Our Department emphasizes a focus on meaningful research, with faculty and graduate students pursuing communication scholarship that emphasizes the creation of knowledge about communication in specific contexts related to issues of concern to society. Faculty work 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 (e.g., colloquia, workshops, trainings) the department offers.

### *The graduate committee*

The Graduate Committee is comprised of the Director of Graduate Studies and four additional faculty members. For purposes of graduate student assessment, committee members are often instructors of core graduate courses. Among other items, the committee solicits, reviews, and recommends the acceptance of graduate student applicants, assesses doctoral student yearly progress, and evaluates each Ph.D. student's research competency based on department requirements. This committee works closely with the curriculum committee regarding curriculum changes to both master's and doctoral 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 a meaningful 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 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, and first-year students should not assume their first-year mentor to take on the role of faculty advisor.

### 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 is a mentor to the advisee and aids the student in selecting an advisory committee, constructing a plan of study, conducting comprehensive exams, and completing a thesis/dissertation.

At any point students may ask a faculty member to serve as their advisor. Typically, master's students select an advisor toward the end of 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 responsibilities and duties.

### Advisory committee

Each graduate student must clear 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 master's students, the committee includes the student's advisor, one departmental committee member, and one member outside of the department. All committee members are selected together by the advisor and student. An outside committee member can be

selected from any college in the university. An outside committee member may also be appointed by the Graduate School if desired. For *master's 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 completed.

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 pursuit of a graduate degree without a waiver from the Dean of the Graduate School acting on a recommendation from the Director of Graduate Studies. A student on Academic Probation is not eligible for a graduate assistantship or tuition waiver.

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

The plan of study includes the specific courses a student is expected to complete for their degree. For doctoral students, the plan of study is based on one major area and one substantive minor area. Major areas typically reflect areas of concentration offered by the department (i.e., organizational communication and media & society). 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's degree students, the plan of study should reflect the student's desired area of interest within our curriculum.

The plan of study is submitted to the graduate school for approval by the end of the student's second semester of study for M.A. students, and at least one month prior to scheduling the comprehensive exams for doctoral students. Plan of Study forms are located on Graduate School website.

Amendments to the plan of study must be approved by the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies and then submitted to the graduate school. The Request for Change form is available on the Graduate School website.

#### 4. Master of Arts Degree

The Department offers a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree, with opportunities to specialize in different methods for scholarly inquiry and topic areas based on consultation with their first-year mentor and/or advisor. In consultation with the faculty advisor, students elect to complete a research-based thesis (6 credits) or an examination (3 credits). In either case, a preliminary meeting and final defense are required. Students interested in continuing on to doctoral studies should take the thesis path, as it will further increase their ability to conduct original scholarship. Further, a thesis may be advisable for students who wish to conduct research in their professional careers. The examination option allows students to take three additional credits of coursework. The examination option may be particularly useful for students looking to use their expertise in professional fields.

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 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. As with everything you read, please read the book with a critical eye as you form your own beliefs about academia.

##### Master's degree coursework

Six credits of core classes (COMM 700 and COMM 711) are required. In addition, master's students take six research methods credits 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 (pending committee approval). Students are required to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate coursework with a 3.0 GPA or better.

##### Thesis and examination 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. *For the sake of timely*

*completion, it is strongly recommended that the prospectus meeting and final disquisition submission occur in different semesters.*

Two weeks prior to the defense of the thesis, students must submit a *Notification of Scheduled Examination* to the Graduate School. After the defense, students are responsible for submitting a *Report of Final Examination* form and following all other Graduate School timelines/deadlines for graduation as outlined here: [https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/current\\_students/pathway\\_to\\_degree\\_completion](https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/current_students/pathway_to_degree_completion).

Students choosing the **examination option** will take three course credits and three exam preparation credits in their last semester. Students should work closely with their advisor to put together a reading list for the exam. Then, at the beginning of the last semester, a meeting will be held with the graduate student and committee members; in this meeting, the reading list, upon which the student's written essays will be based, will be edited and approved. Graduate students, with guidance from their advisor, 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. The advisor (with help from committee members) may generate some practice essay questions for the student during the semester of exam preparation.

The examination 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 a student's understanding of theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide their thinking and research; readings in this category may come from COMM 711, may include seminal theories in the student's area(s) of mastery, and/or may come from recommendations by the advisor about general theories s/he deems most useful for the student's area of interest. The *methods prompts* focus on COMM 700, COMM 704/707, and other methods that the student should have mastered during their coursework. The *content prompts* emphasize the classes on the student's 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 the internet or notes during the writing portion of the examination; access to department computers (or if department computers are not available, a private computer with internet connectivity turned off) and a private room for writing should be arranged in advance. 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 examination option should be completed over the course of one week. 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 examination, 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 for both the thesis and examination options. The committee may require full answers or parts of answers to be re-written. The timeline for doing so, and decisions about who other than the advisor wants to review re-written portions of answers, needs to be coordinated by the advisor. The advisor is responsible for ensuring that committee members agree to pass the student before the advisor signs the Application for Graduate Degree (see point 3, below).

Students selecting the examination option should follow the procedures outlined by the Graduate School under *Non-Thesis Master's Students (Plan C)* on the *Pathways to Degree Completion* page. This includes the following:

1. Register for Master's Exam credits (COMM 799)
2. Submit the *Intent to Graduate* form by the posted deadline early in the semester in which they plan to graduate. This form will not require the advisor's approval.
3. Submit the *Graduation Application* form by the posted deadline for the semester in which they plan to graduate. This form will be a DocuSign form to be signed by the student, advisor, and program coordinator *after the student has successfully passed their exam*.

Please check the NDSU Graduate School website for changes to these processes and deadlines to meet degree requirements for the semester in which you are graduating. These dates fluctuate so it is important to be aware of them.

General question bank for the M.A. examination option

Please note that this list is provided to help students prepare for their examinations. These should be considered practice questions; actual questions on the exam will differ.

*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 job placements continues in an upward trajectory. The Ph.D. program in Communication is designed to be completed in 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 the variety of research expertise of our faculty.

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, and design, execute, and defend a dissertation. Ph.D. students have both a major and minor concentration area. Our program consists of 12 credits of core courses (COMM 701, 702, 711, and either 735 or 783) as well as a major content concentration of 12 credits, a minor concentration area of 9 credit hours, 12 credits in research methods courses, and a minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours.

1. *Research requirement.* In addition to coursework, doctoral students are required to publish peer-reviewed research article(s) and present research at conferences. The research requirement is designed to produce highly competitive graduates ready for top positions in academia and industry. To achieve this requirement, doctoral students actively participate in research projects 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 smart strategies. Friendly reviews are generally conducted by faculty members or other advanced colleagues that can provide you with a detailed review of your manuscript prior to submission.

To meet the research requirement students must complete the following *prior to* their dissertation proposal defense. When you have met the requirement, please send an email to the Director of Graduate Studies requesting confirmation that the requirement has been met.

- i. Be the presenting author of a paper at a peer-reviewed conference.
- ii. Be a co-author on a manuscript with a faculty member that is under review at a top tier journal. It is NOT required that the submission be accepted, only that it is under review.
- iii. Be an author of a published manuscript in a peer-reviewed journal.

Please note, these are the minimum standards to advance to the dissertation prospectus stage. 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 items 2 & 3 with the same paper.

If a student’s advisor believes that their student’s career goals would be better served by a modification of the particulars (but not the spirit) of any of these three requirements, please set up a meeting with the DGS to discuss. For example, in some areas of our discipline, a chapter in a book may be more relevant for demonstrating ability to publish than a journal; or, students pursuing industry careers may be better served by publications or presentations in non-academic venues.

These research requirements are designed to strengthen students’ career prospects by creating actual evidence of research ability. At the same time, they should not become an unreasonable barrier to degree completion or completion timeline, thereby potentially limiting career prospects. In situations

where extrinsic factors – overly long review cycles, financial or health-related barriers to in-person conference presentations, changes in editorship that knock back review timelines, global pandemics, etc. – students should work with the DGS on alternative ways for completing the research requirements.

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, and the student's teaching or other applied work. Students need to complete the required number of courses before proceeding to the comprehensive examination.

The **goals** of the comprehensive exam process are

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

**The semester prior to the examination, or within the first week of the semester of the examination,** the student should 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. The reading list should include sections on communication theory, research methods, and at least one content area. The *communication theory* section is designed to assess a student's understanding of theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide their thinking and research; readings in this category may come from COMM 711, may include seminal theories in the student's area(s) of expertise, and/or may come from recommendations by the advisor about general theories s/he deems most useful for the student's area of interest. The *methods section* focuses on COMM 700, COMM 704/707, and other methods that the student should have mastered during their coursework. The *content section(s)* emphasize the classes on the

student's plan of study that are more specific to his/her area of emphasis.

Students should work with their advisor on putting together this reading list. During the meeting with the committee, the advisory committee may suggest changes to the list, and must at the end approve a final version of the reading list. The *translational project* should also be part of the discussion. A committee may choose to make the translational project part of the comprehensive exam itself, or it may suggest that the student use the comprehensive exam process to refine a translational project to be reviewed by the advisor at a later date. For example, a committee may ask the student to turn in and be able to discuss during the exam defense a model syllabus based on one of their content foci, or the student may discuss during the exam defense how they will develop a grant proposal or white paper within a few months after the defense of the exam.

The comprehensive exam has three components: a written examination, a translational project, and an oral defense. **Two weeks prior to the oral defense**, the student must submit a *Notification of Scheduled Examination* form to the Graduate School.

- i. Written examination (12 hours, closed book, timed exam).
  - Students should arrange for access to department computers (if possible) and a private room.
  - Students may bring a reference list with them into the exam.
  - Students may not access the internet or reference reading notes.
  - Students may know the area and general contours of the question but will not be given the specific questions in advance.
  - The questions will be formulated based on the agreed-upon reading list.
  - 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.
  - The length of each question 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)

- The exam will be scheduled by the advisor.
- The closed book portion of the exam must be completed in a consecutive two-week timeframe.

ii. Translational research (open book)

The student and their supervisory committee will discuss the form of the translational research project based on the student's research foci and career goals. They may include:

- Developing a submission-ready proposal for an externally funded grant.
- Developing a "Communication Current" style paper based on their single authored conference paper.
- Developing courses and syllabi based on the three examination areas.
- Creating a training manual.

iii. Oral defense

- Students are required to orally defend their comprehensive exams, and to formally schedule their defense at least 2 weeks prior by submitting the *Notification of Scheduled Examination* form to the Graduate School.
- 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 *Report of Preliminary Exam* 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 as the student's prospectus defense.

iv. Academic honesty

Plagiarism or other dishonesty during the comprehensive exam process will be subject to a range of negative sanctions, from the student having to rewrite the



exam to the student's expulsion from the program (see Academic Conduct Policy 335 for more information).

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.

Students should provide committee members with a *minimum of 2 weeks* to review dissertation documents. As with the comprehensive exam, it is at the discretion of the committee members if prospectus meetings or dissertation defenses occur 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.

The dissertation project consists of the following formal components:

- i. **Dissertation prospectus:** Depending on advisor preference, a prospectus may encompass the first three chapters of a student's dissertation (intro, literature review, methods), or a detailed plan outlining the rationale, scope, and methods for the study. At the prospectus meeting, the student and their advisory committee work closely to define the scope and direction of the dissertation project.
- ii. **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.

- iii. **Dissertation defense:** 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. **Two weeks prior to the dissertation defense**, the student must submit a *Notification of Scheduled Examination* form to the Graduate School.

Once the student has successfully defended his/her final dissertation, they 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 Studies 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 graduating doctoral students should plan to present their research at the colloquium.

## **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 beginning T.A.s are responsible for teaching lab 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 different 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 offered changes from year to year depending on department resources. Master's students who wish to be considered for assistantships must submit a separate application with their admissions materials. Screening of new doctoral students starts in mid-March.

Master's students who desire to teach classes other than COMM 110 lab sections should 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 academic conferences. The department makes funds available to support students in their travel. Students can apply for travel support when they have academic papers accepted by a regional or national communication 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 master's 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 copy will be provided to each student in their shared folder. At the committee's discretion, advisors 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 focuses on 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, Student Ratings of Instruction (SROIs) 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 standards under 5.1 of this document. Students should list all publications to date. In addition, students should include manuscripts that are under review and works in progress. For manuscripts that are under review, please provide as much detail as possible (e.g., date of submission, round of review). 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 and peer evaluations. Faculty or staff in charge of course direction, such as the basic course director, will be solicited for feedback.

## 9. History of the Department of Communication at NDSU

North Dakota State University established its first communication studies program in 1907, when Alfred Arvold 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. In 2012 the director position was reorganized and given leadership of all graduate programs. Dr. Amy O'Connor served in this new capacity from 2012-2014. Dr. Stephenson Beck is the current Director of Graduate Studies.

### 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)