Communication MA

Together, the Graduate Student Handbook and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- Academic Honesty
- Academic Integrity Training - Open to all graduate students at no cost

Introduction

Mission Statement

The Communication MA Program is dedicated to serving its students, faculty, the Central Florida community and the professions associated with the field of communication. The mission of the program is to offer high-quality, academically challenging graduate education in Mass and Interpersonal Communication; to mentor students in the conduct of research and creative activities; to provide the program's students with the educational development that will enhance the intellectual, cultural, environmental, and economic development of the metropolitan region; to develop students' academic and professional competencies; to establish UCF as a major presence in local and global communication related professional and academic communities; and to support the mission and vision of the University of Central Florida as a whole.

Course Requirements

Students must fulfill both the core and elective course hour requirements for their track.

Effective Fall 2014: Students are required to attain a minimum grade of B- in all core classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Core: 15 hours</th>
<th>Core: 15 hours</th>
<th>Core: 18 hours</th>
<th>Core: 18 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elective: 15 hours</td>
<td>Elective: 18 hours</td>
<td>Elective: 12 hours</td>
<td>Elective: 15 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis: 4 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis: 4 hours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Common Program Core**
- COM6008 Proseminar in Communication
- COM6304 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication
- COM6303 Qualitative Research Methods
- STA5045 Statistical Analysis of Communication Data

**Specific Track Core**
- MMC6402 Mass Communication Theory
  - SPC6219 Modern Comm. Theory
  - COM6046 Interpersonal Communication

**Elective Courses**
Students from either track may choose from any of the following electives:
- ADV 6209 Advertising and Society
- COM 5932 Topics in Communication Theory and Research
- COM 6025 Health Communication
- COM 6047 Interpersonal Support in the Workplace
- COM 6048 Communication in Close Relationships
- COM 6121 Communication Management
- COM 6145 Organizational Communication
- COM 6463 Seminar in Intercultural Communication
- COM 6467 Studies in Persuasion
- COM 6468 Communication and Conflict
- COM 6525 Communication Strategy and Planning
- COM 6425 Symbolism in Terrorism
- MMC 6202 Legal and Ethical Issues for Communication
- MMC 6266 Communications Convergence and Media Planning
- MMC 6307 International Communication
- MMC 6407 Visual Communication Theory
- MMC 6567 Seminar in New Media
- MMC 6600 Media Effects and Audience Analysis
- MMC 6607 Communication and Society
- MMC 6612 Communication and Government
- MMC 6735 Social Media as Mass Communication
- PUR 6005 Theories of Public Relations
- PUR 6215 Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility
- PUR 6403 Crisis Public Relations
- PUR 6405 Communication and PR in Politics and Government
- SPC 6442 Small Group Communication
- COM/MMC/PUR/SPC 6938 Special Topics
**Special Electives**

Students from either track may choose to supplement their plan of study with special electives, which include independent study, directed research, internship, courses taken from another graduate program (either at UCF or transferred), traveling scholar, and study abroad. Each option requires approval from the NSC Graduate Program Director in order to be credited to the plan of study. With the exception of participation in study abroad, no more than half of a student’s elective (a maximum of twelve credits) should come from this category.

**Independent Study**

An independent study course is a specialized course developed together by a student and faculty member with experience in the subject. It allows the student to study a subject that is not available as a regular class and obtain credit for it. The course of study must be specified in writing and approved by the student, the instructor (who must be a member of the graduate faculty), and the program director prior to enrollment. Students are allowed to credit up to six hours of independent study to the electives portion of their plan of study. However, students expecting to matriculate to a PhD program should limit their independent study hours to three.

**Directed Research**

Directed research involves participation in, or execution of, a research project developed together by a student and faculty member who oversees the student’s work. The project can be a self-contained research project conducted from start to finish by the student over the course of a semester or can be part of a larger research project in which the student takes on a significant role. The project should be specified in writing and approved by the student, the instructor (who must be a member of the graduate faculty), and the program director prior to enrollment. Students are allowed to credit up to six hours of directed research to the electives portion of their plan of study. However, students expecting to matriculate to a PhD program should limit their independent study hours to three.

Any research using human subjects should obtain IRB approval before the project is approved by the program director.

**Internship**

An internship is a course of study that provides professional on-the-job training experiences for students in their discipline. Students may count three hours of internship credit to the electives portion of their plan of study. Internships are not considered formal coursework but must add some academic value to the student’s graduate experience. Students should consult the COM6946 syllabus for details of the academic work required for graduate credit for an internship. In addition, students must complete at least 3 hours of work per week at the internship site for every hour of internship credit they earn (a minimum of 144 hours total for a three credit internship). However, a maximum of three credit hours can be earned from an internship no matter how many hours the student works. All internships are supervised and graded by the NSC Graduate Program Director and require his approval prior to enrollment. Students may not receive internship credit for work performed in a job the student is already working. To obtain approval, the student must have the internship site supervisor contact the NSC Graduate Program Director with a description of the internship, the number of hours the student will be working, and the contact information of the internship site supervisor. If the internship is approved, the student will be authorized to enroll.

Non-degree-seeking students and students from non-NSC graduate programs are not eligible to earn NSC graduate internship credit. No exceptions are made. Students in their first semester are not eligible to earn internship credit. Exception may be made at the discretion of the NSC Graduate Program Director.

**Transfer Coursework and Courses from Outside the NSC**

http://www.handbooks.graduate.ucf.edu/COMMA/
Students may take up to three courses from another graduate program at UCF outside the Nicholson School of Communication as electives. Courses must be approved by the NSC Graduate Program Director before they will be added to the plan of study and count toward degree completion.

A student may also request up to nine hours of graduate credit completed prior to admission to the Nicholson School of Communication MA program be transferred into the plan of study. These hours may have originated from another graduate program at UCF, from a graduate program at another university, credit earned in Senior Scholars program or as a non-degree-seeking graduate student. Only courses with a grade of B or higher (a B- does not qualify) are eligible to be transferred into the student’s plan of study.

Overall, students may not transfer more than 9 total credit hours originating in programs outside of the NSC as credit toward the completion of the Communication MA degree. Transferred courses (except for courses that meet the statistics requirement or courses taken within the NSC prior to official program admission) will count only as electives. All core courses must be completed at UCF in the NSC. All transfer coursework must be approved by the NSC Graduate Program Director. Communication courses from other programs will not be automatically approved.

Graduate College policies for Independent study and transfer coursework can be found here:
www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/policies.aspx?id=5708#Course_Requirements

Traveling Scholar

Students who wish to take graduate coursework elsewhere while enrolled as a student at UCF must apply and be accepted as a Traveling Scholar. Graduate credits earned as a Traveling Scholar are considered “resident” credits that are earned at UCF and are applicable to the plan of study without being subject to the nine-hour limit. They require approval from the NSC Graduate Program Director. Consult the section on Traveling Scholars in the Graduate Catalog for more information.

Global Studies Programs

The Nicholson School of Communication is pleased to partner with Ilmenau University of Technology to provide a semester-long graduate study abroad experience. Students who are graduate degree-seeking and have a minimum GPA of 3.0 are eligible to participate in the NSC Global Studies graduate program. Students may not study abroad during their first or last semesters of study. Interested students should contact the Graduate Program Advisor for more information.

Ilmenau University of Technology

Students may choose from a variety of courses and, upon successful completion, will receive graduate credit for those courses from University of Central Florida.

Advising/Mentoring

Advising

The NSC Graduate Program Director acts as the adviser for all Communication MA degree-seeking students. Although we encourage students to develop a mentoring relationship with a faculty member, all decisions pertaining to the student’s plan of study must be approved by the NSC Graduate Program Director. The NSC Graduate Program Advisor provides basic advising, as well. The staff and faculty of the Nicholson School of Communication Graduate Program are important resources for students and will provide guidance on overall academic and program requirements, as well as university policies and procedures. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to seek out information about all Nicholson School Graduate Program, College of Sciences, and College of Graduate Studies policies and procedures (www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/ > Policies). Graduate program policies and procedures will not be waived nor will any exceptions be granted because a student is not informed of a policy or procedure. This handbook is the first stop in the search for this information.

Consult the NSC Graduate Program Director regarding:

- Transfer coursework
• Outside coursework at UCF
• Academic progress
• Conditional Retention Plans
• Admissions decisions
• Independent study approval
• Internship approval
• Thesis project expectations and committee selection
• GTA performance assessments
• Hiring of assistants
• Selection of a mentor
• Any exception to UCF graduate policy

Consult the NSC Graduate Program Advisor regarding:

• Admissions standards
• Application procedures for admission and for assistantships
• Preparation of Graduate Plan of Study
• Enrollment into Communication MA courses
• Completion of hiring paperwork for assistantships
• Processing of independent study, internship, and thesis enrollment paperwork
• Explanation/clarification of UCF graduate policy
• Certification of graduation

Mentoring

Often, the student's thesis committee chair will also act as a mentor for the student. However, the NSC Graduate Program encourages its students to develop a mentoring relationship with a member of the graduate faculty even if the student does not write a thesis. Mentors can provide valuable guidance regarding career aspirations, selection of coursework, and development of a curriculum vitae (CV). Acquiring a mentor is not required, so there is no formal assignment process. Of course, a student may seek out more than one mentor if she or he so desires.

Consult a mentor regarding:

• Developing a thesis from inception to final defense (see section on the thesis process below for more information)
• Developing a research record
• Pursuit of an academic career
• Career opportunities outside academia
• A plan for academic work after completion of the MA

Plan of Study

The Graduate Plan of Study (GPS) is a projected plan to completion of the Communication MA degree. The plan of study is prepared in partnership with the Graduate Program Advisor and under the supervision of the NSC Graduate Program Director. Typically, the GPS is completed during the student's participation in COM6008 (Proseminar). Once the plan of study is complete, the student is responsible for enrolling in courses in a timely way to ensure course availability. The UCF College of Graduate Studies requires all graduate students to have a GPS on file by the end of their ninth hour of enrollment. Once the plan of study has been completed, it will be forwarded to the NSC Graduate Program Director for approval.

Students are encouraged to meet with the advisor for guidance with the GPS if the student is unable to enroll in courses listed on the plan of study, has poor academic performance, and/or is withdrawing from courses. A student is required to revise the plan of study when changing tracks or changing the culminating experience. Students may revise their GPS once a semester via appointment with the NSC Graduate Program Advisor.

Nicholson School of Communication Policies
Student Access and Privileges

The Nicholson School of Communication Graduate Program strives to provide opportunity for its students to collaborate on their studies, as well as develop a sense of community within the NSC. A graduate student office, located inside the Nicholson Academic Student Service Center (NASSC), is available for use by Communication M.A. degree-seeking students and students taking NSC graduate courses. There are eight computers, loaded with standard software, as well as SPSS and Adobe Acrobat Pro, and two laptop stations in the graduate student offices (NSC143E and NSC143F). Students have printing privileges, but are expected to act responsibly when employing this privilege. Responsible use includes printing of assignments and papers, as well as printing file copies of presentations. Students may print a limited amount for free via the Student Government Association computer labs and an unlimited amount via the UCF Graduate Student Center (if they provide their own paper). The Technology Commons provides printing services and The Spot has photocopying capabilities for reasonable prices.

The Graduate Student Office is stocked with basic office supplies for the student's use in the fulfillment of coursework and assistantship duties. Students are expected to behave professionally and interact cooperatively while using the Graduate Student Office. The office is accessible Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., depending on faculty/staff availability. Students are not authorized to remain in the office without a faculty or staff member present in NASSC. Students are encouraged to use the Graduate Student Center on weekends and after hours (if applicable).

The computer classroom in NSC208 is also loaded with the latest SPSS software and has printer access for use in printing assignments. However, this is a classroom and not an open computer lab. Students found using the lab without faculty or staff supervision will be asked to leave.

There are conference rooms available for reservation for student defense of thesis projects. NSC213 is designated a research room and is available to aid with the completion of research projects, either for a faculty member or a class. To reserve a conference room or the research room, please contact 407-823-1711. When requesting, students are expected to inform the administrative staff member making the reservation whether the request is for a thesis defense, a meeting, or a class project (specify which class). If the room is required after-hours, the student has to request to borrow a key, which is subject to approval by the Nicholson School of Communication.

Rooms are available for check-out at the UCF Library for study groups or similar collaboration.

Mailboxes, keys, and limited storage are privileges reserved for those students on assistantship. Photocopyer access is a privilege reserved for GTAs serving on the teaching team.

The Nicholson School of Communication office staff and administrators are available to provide guidance and assistance to graduate students. Graduate students are expected to behave courteously and professionally, be self-sufficient with personal academic record-keeping and academic performance, and clean up after themselves to ensure a neat and maintained workspace for their colleagues. Abuse and/or misuse of any privileges can result in the revocation of them.

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment in all graduate courses in the Communication M.A. program is done by “Department Consent Only.” Students are expected to contact the NSC Graduate Program Advisor to receive department consent in order to enroll. Department consent will not be issued until the day of the student’s enrollment appointment—requests made before the student’s enrollment appointment will be denied and the student will be instructed to wait until his/her enrollment appointment to resubmit the enrollment request. Department consent for the Summer and Fall terms is granted based on the student’s enrollment appointment, but the Nicholson School of Communication Graduate Program does not allow enrollment for the Spring semester until mid-September (specific date is announced in early August).

Enrollment into thesis, independent study, directed research, and internship hours requires special department approval. Students interested in enrolling in any of these courses are asked to see the NSC Graduate Program Advisor for guidance on seeking approval. Students will complete an enrollment request. If approved, the request will be forwarded to the College of Sciences Graduate Services office and the student will be enrolled.
Students in programs outside the Communication MA program are placed on a waiting list for space availability. The waiting lists open one to two weeks before the start of the term—priority for space availability is ranked as follows: Communication M.A. students; students in another graduate program at UCF; undergraduate students employing the Senior Scholars program; and non-degree-seeking students. Once the waiting lists have been opened and those on the list accommodated, enrollment into Communication MA program graduate classes is granted on a “first come, first served” basis.

A student’s failure to request department consent in a timely fashion does not merit an exception to the policy nor an override into a class, even if it means the student’s graduation will be delayed. Students must be enrolled for the semester in which they plan to graduate.

Withdrawal Policy

The Nicholson School of Communication follows the UCF College of Graduate Studies policy on withdrawing from a class. For more information on withdrawing from a course, please refer to:

www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/Registration.aspx

If a student chooses to withdraw from the university, s/he is encouraged to meet with the NSC Graduate Program Director to determine viable options for degree completion. Often, a student chooses to withdraw to pursue professional opportunity, to attend to family, personal, or medical issues, or to transfer to another university. A decision regarding withdrawal from the university or pursuit of a Special Leave of Absence can be made in conjunction with the NSC Graduate Program Director. More information on the Special Leave of Absence can be found here:

www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/policies.aspx?id=5700#Special_Leave_of_Absence

Students must be enrolled for at least one semester of every three consecutive semesters in order to maintain active student status. Students who do not meet this enrollment requirement will be removed from active student status and must reapply for admission. For more information:

www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/policies.aspx?id=5700#ContinuousEnrollmentandActiveStudentStatus

Student Responsibility

The Nicholson School of Communication adheres to the university policy on the student’s responsibility to be informed, located at:

www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/policies.aspx?id=5700#StudentResponsibility_to_Keep_Informed

The Nicholson School of Communication also supports the university policy on the student’s responsibility for university communication, located at:

www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/content/policies.aspx?id=5702#University_Notices

In addition to this, the Nicholson School of Communication’s policy on student communication is that only a KnightsMail email address will be acceptable and must be used for all university business, including class rosters, webcourses/Canvas, financial aid, advising, etc. Basic application, admissions, and advisement information will be provided to a non-UCF-affiliated email account UNTIL the student declares intent to attend the university. At this point, the student is expected to sign up for a KnightsMail account and use it for any future UCF-related business. Students will receive communication from the Nicholson School of Communication via their KnightsMail and are expected to monitor said account to remain informed. The Nicholson School of Communication will not be held responsible for missed deadlines or lack of information because a student is not employing KnightsMail. Information regarding KnightsMail is located at: extranet.cst.ucf.edu/kmailselfsvc

Additionally, students can “like” the NSC Graduate Program on Facebook, which is used like a virtual bulletin board to provide another outlet for information on deadlines, internship and employment opportunities, NSC events, etc.

Curriculum
All students must select either the Interpersonal Communication or Mass Communication track. To select or change a track, students should consult the graduate program director at the Nicholson School of Communication.

**Track Curriculum: Interpersonal Communication**

The MA degree program in Interpersonal Communication is a four-semester program for full-time students. Part-time students may take up to seven years to complete the program. Both thesis and nonthesis options are offered and both consist of a minimum of 34 (thesis) or 33 (nonthesis, comprehensive examinations) semester hours of work. By the end of their first 18 hours of course work, students should decide whether to pursue the thesis or nonthesis option. During their first nine hours of study, students are required to complete COM 6008 (Proseminar in Communication) and are expected to complete a research course (either qualitative or quantitative research methods).

**Required Courses—18 Credit Hours**

All required courses must be completed with a grade of B- or higher.

- COM 6008 Proseminar in Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6046 Interpersonal Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6303 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6304 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication (3 credit hours)
- SPC 6219 Modern Communication Theory (3 credit hours)
- STA 5045 Statistical Analysis of Communication Data (3 credit hours)

**Elective Courses—12 Credit Hours**

In addition to the courses listed below, special topics courses, study abroad courses, up to 6 credit hours of approved independent studies, directed research, internship, and graduate-level courses taken outside the Nicholson School of Communication may be counted as restricted electives, pending approval by the program director.

- ADV 6209 Advertising and Society (3 credit hours)
- COM 5932 Topics in Communication Theory and Research (3 credit hours)
- COM 6025 Health Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6047 Interpersonal Support in the Workplace (3 credit hours)
- COM 6048 Communication in Close Relationships (3 credit hours)
- COM 6121 Communication Management (3 credit hours)
- COM 6145 Organizational Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6425 Symbolism in Terrorism (3 credit hours)
- COM 6463 Studies in Intercultural Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6467 Studies in Persuasion (3 credit hours)
- COM 6468 Communication and Conflict (3 credit hours)
- COM 6525 Communication Strategy and Planning (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6202 Legal and Ethical Issues for Communication (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6266 Communications Convergence and Media Planning (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6307 International Communication (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6407 Visual Communication Theory (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6567 Seminar in New Media (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6600 Media Effects and Audience Analysis (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6607 Communication and Society (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6612 Communication and Government (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6735 Social Media as Mass Communication (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6005 Theories of Public Relations (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6403 Crisis Public Relations (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6215 Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6405 Communication and Public Relations in Politics and Government (3 credit hours)
- SPC 6442 Small Group Communication (3 credit hours)

**Thesis Option—4 Credit Hours**

On average, students take about two full semesters to complete a thesis project, so students should begin the process about one year from their desired graduation date. Students begin the thesis process by selecting a thesis adviser who will serve as the Chair of the Thesis Advisory Committee. In conjunction with their thesis adviser, students will develop a topic and choose two additional members of the thesis committee. The thesis committee must be approved prior to enrolling in thesis hours. All thesis advisory committees in the Nicholson School of Communication must be chaired by a member of the NSC graduate faculty. At least one semester prior to the thesis defense, students will submit a thesis proposal. Copies of the proposal will be routed to members of their thesis committee and a proposal hearing scheduled. All students must pass a proposal hearing as well as a final oral defense of their thesis. Students who elect to write a thesis should become familiar with the university’s requirements and deadlines for organizing and submitting the thesis. More information about the thesis process is available in the program handbook and the UCF College of Graduate Studies website.

- XXX 6971 Thesis (minimum of 4 credit hours, can be taken individually)

**Nonthesis Option—3 Credit Hours**

The nonthesis (comprehensive examination) option is a six-examination requirement that assesses students’ coursework competency. Students who choose the comprehensive examination option must take one additional elective course (three credit hours) and successfully complete the comprehensive examinations. The examinations will cover quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods, interpersonal communication, communication theory (i.e., the program core), and two elective areas selected by the student. In order to fulfill the comprehensive exam requirement the student must pass all exams in the program core and at least one of the elective area exams. Once an exam in an area is passed, the student does not have to sit for that exam area again. Students are allowed three attempts to satisfy the comprehensive exam requirement. Students are expected to refer to the NSC Graduate Program handbook for the comprehensive examination protocol.

- Elective (3 credit hours)
- Comprehensive examination

**Equipment Fees**

Full-time students in the Communication MA program pay a $16 equipment fee each semester that they are enrolled. Part-time students pay $8 per semester.

**Track Curriculum: Mass Communication**

The MA degree program in Mass Communication is a four-semester program for full-time students. Part-time students may take up to seven years to complete the program. Both thesis and nonthesis options are offered and both consist of a minimum of 34 (thesis) or 33 (nonthesis, comprehensive examination) semester hours of work. By the end of their first 18 hours of course work, students should decide whether to pursue the thesis or nonthesis option. During their first nine hours of coursework, students are required to complete COM 6008 (ProSeminar) and expected to complete a research methods class (either qualitative or quantitative research methods).

**Required Courses—15 Credit Hours**

All required courses must be completed with a grade of B- or higher.
Elective Courses—15 Credit Hours

In addition to the courses listed below, special topics courses, study abroad courses, up to 6 credit hours of approved independent studies, directed research, internship, and graduate-level courses taken outside the Nicholson School of Communication may be counted as restricted electives pending approval by the program director.

- ADV 6209 Advertising and Society (3 credit hours)
- COM 5932 Topics in Communication Theory and Research (3 credit hours)
- COM 6025 Health Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6047 Interpersonal Support in the Workplace (3 credit hours)
- COM 6048 Communication in Close Relationships (3 credit hours)
- COM 6121 Communication Management (3 credit hours)
- COM 6145 Organizational Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6425 Symbolism in Terrorism (3 credit hours)
- COM 6463 Studies in Intercultural Communication (3 credit hours)
- COM 6467 Studies in Persuasion (3 credit hours)
- COM 6468 Communication and Conflict (3 credit hours)
- COM 6525 Communication Strategy and Planning (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6202 Legal and Ethical Issues for Communication (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6266 Communications Convergence and Media Planning (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6307 International Communication (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6407 Visual Communication Theory (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6567 Seminar in New Media (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6600 Media Effects and Audience Analysis (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6607 Communication and Society (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6612 Communication and Government (3 credit hours)
- MMC 6735 Social Media as Mass Communication (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6005 Theories of Public Relations (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6403 Crisis Public Relations (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6215 Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility (3 credit hours)
- PUR 6405 Communication and Public Relations in Politics and Government (3 credit hours)
- SPC 6442 Small Group Communication (3 credit hours)

Thesis Option—4 Credit Hours

On average, students take about two full semesters to complete a thesis project so students should begin the process about one year from their desired graduation date. Students begin the thesis process by selecting a thesis advisor who will serve as the Chair of the Thesis Advisory Committee. In conjunction with their thesis advisor, students will develop a topic and choose two additional members of the thesis committee. The thesis committee must be approved prior to enrolling in thesis hours. All thesis advisory committees in the Nicholson School of Communication must be chaired by a member of the NSC graduate faculty. At least one semester prior to the thesis defense, students will submit a thesis proposal. Copies of the proposal will be routed to members of their thesis committee and a proposal hearing scheduled. All students must pass a proposal hearing as well as a final oral defense of their thesis. Students who elect to write a thesis should become familiar with the university’s requirements and deadlines for organizing and submitting the thesis. More information about the thesis process is available in the program handbook.

- XXX 6971 Thesis (minimum of 4 credit hours, can be taken individually)
**Nonthesis Option—3 Credit Hours**

The nonthesis (comprehensive examination) option is a six-examination requirement that assesses students’ coursework competency. Students who choose the comprehensive examination option must take one additional elective course (three credit hours) and successfully complete the comprehensive examinations. The examinations will cover quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods, communication theory (i.e., the program core), and three elective areas selected by the student. In order to fulfill the comprehensive exam requirement the student must pass all exams in the program core and at least two of the elective area exams. Once an exam in an area is passed, the student does not have to sit for that exam area again. Students are allowed three attempts to satisfy the comprehensive exam requirement. Students are expected to refer to the NSC Graduate Program handbook for the comprehensive examination protocol.

- Elective (3 credit hours)
- Comprehensive examinations

**Equipment Fee**

Full-time students in the Communication MA program pay a $16 equipment fee each semester that they are enrolled. Part-time students pay $8 per semester.

**Timeline for Completion**

Sample Timeline for Completion of Program for Full-time enrollment, based on Fall admission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mass Communication Track</th>
<th>Interpersonal Communication Track</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- COM6008 (Proseminar)</td>
<td>- COM6008 (Proseminar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- COM6304 (Quantitative Research Methods)</td>
<td>- COM6303 (Qualitative Research Methods)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- MMC6402 (Mass Communication Theory)</td>
<td>- Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Complete Plan of Study with NSC Graduate Program Advisor</td>
<td>- Complete Plan of Study with NSC Graduate Program Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- COM6303 (Qualitative Research Methods)</td>
<td>- COM6304 (Quantitative Research Methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- STA5045 (Statistical Analysis)</td>
<td>- COM6046 (Interpersonal Communication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elective</td>
<td>- SPC6219 (Modern Communication Theory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Finalize culminating experience:</td>
<td>- Finalize culminating experience:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If thesis, meet with NSC Graduate Program Director, determine topic, select committee.</td>
<td>- If thesis, meet with NSC Graduate Program Director, determine topic, select committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If comprehensive exams, begin collection of review materials.</td>
<td>- If comprehensive exams, begin collection of review materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elective</td>
<td>- Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Elective</td>
<td>- Elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Thesis hour, if applicable</td>
<td>- Thesis hour, if applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Eligible to take comprehensive exams.

Fall
• Elective
• Elective
• Elective or remaining Thesis hours
• Eligible to take (or retake) comprehensive exams. Defend and submit final thesis.
• File for graduation.

Fall
• STA5045 (Statistical Analysis)
• Elective
• Elective or remaining Thesis hours
• Eligible to take (or retake) comprehensive exams. Defend and submit final thesis.
• File for graduation.

Sample Timeline for Completion of Program for Part-time enrollment, based on Spring admission

Mass Communication Track
Spring
• COM6008 (Proseminar)
• COM6303 (Qualitative Research Methods)
• Complete Plan of Study with NSC Graduate Program Advisor

Spring
• COM6008 (Proseminar)
• COM6304 (Quantitative Research Methods)
• Complete Plan of Study with NSC Graduate Program Advisor

Summer
• Elective
• Elective
• Finalize culminating experience:
  • If thesis, meet with NSC Graduate Program Director, determine topic, select committee.
  • If comprehensive exams, begin collection of review materials.

Summer
• Elective
• Elective
• Finalize culminating experience:
  • If thesis, meet with NSC Graduate Program Director, determine topic, select committee.
  • If comprehensive exams, begin collection of review materials.

Fall
• COM6304 (Quantitative Research Methods)
• MMC6402 (Mass Communication Theory)

Fall
• COM6303 (Qualitative Research Methods)
• STA5045 (Statistical Analysis)

Spring
• STA5045 (Statistical Analysis)
• Elective

Spring
• COM6046 (Interpersonal Communication)
• SPC6219 (Modern Communication Theory)

Summer

Summer
Examination Requirements

Comprehensive Examination Requirements

A student may choose to complete his/her program by writing comprehensive examinations or by writing a thesis.

The comprehensive examinations consist of six exams taken during one examination period. The examination period is split into two four-hour sessions, with three exams given during each session. All students must take examinations on these program core classes: quantitative research, qualitative research, and communication theory. Students on the Mass Communication track also write examinations on three elective courses. Students on the Interpersonal Communication track write exams on their additional program core class, Interpersonal Communication, and two elective courses.

A student is eligible to take comprehensive examinations once the student has completed, or is currently enrolled in, all courses in the program core curriculum as well as all elective courses for which the student requests to be examined. However, students are not allowed to take comprehensive exams until they are within nine credits of graduation. Students must complete the Comprehensive Exam Registration form and submit it to the NSC Graduate Program Advisor by the specified deadline in the semester for which they wish to complete exams. At the time of registration, the student must declare all elective courses on which s/he intends to be examined. The student may not change elective courses once declared. In most cases, the exams will be prepared and graded by the instructor of each course.

Exams cannot be written on courses taken outside the Nicholson School of Communication Graduate Program (unless the course is completed with an international partner program), on an independent study, a directed research, or on an internship course.

Students are encouraged to write comprehensive exams early to allow time for rewriting, if necessary, without delaying graduation. A student must be enrolled in order to take comprehensive exams. If the student has completed all coursework, he/she should contact the Nicholson School of Communication Graduate Program for enrollment assistance.

The comprehensive exams shall be scheduled near the end of each semester, typically 1-2 weeks before the final exam period. Students will write six exams. The comprehensive exam period consists of two four-hour sessions that are scheduled typically on a Friday evening (session one) and the following Saturday afternoon (session two).

Session #1: Mass and Interpersonal Communication track students write exams for quantitative research, theory, and one elective.

Session #2: Interpersonal Communication track students write for the Interpersonal Communication course, qualitative research and one elective. Mass Communication track students write for the qualitative research and two elective courses.

There are two results for the comprehensive exams:

- Elective
- Elective or Thesis hours
- Eligible to take comprehensive exams.

- Elective
- Elective or Thesis hours
- Eligible to take comprehensive exams.

Fall

- Elective
- Thesis hours, if applicable
- Eligible to take (or retake) comprehensive exams.
- Defend and submit final thesis.
- File for graduation.

Fall

- Elective
- Thesis hours, if applicable
- Eligible to take (or retake) comprehensive exams.
- Defend and submit final thesis.
- File for graduation.
• Pass: The student passes all core course exams and five out of six exams total. In this case comprehensive exams are successfully completed and the student is qualified to graduate once all other graduation requirements have been met.

• Fail: The student fails one core course exam and/or two or more exams total. In this case, the student must enroll at UCF in a future semester and retake all of the failed comprehensive exams at a regularly scheduled comprehensive exam period.

Once a student passes a comprehensive exam area, the student will not be asked to take an exam in that area again. If a student fails a comprehensive examination in an elective course, the student may elect to take a different elective course exam at the next exam sitting.

Students who fail one or more of their comprehensive exams are encouraged to review the failed exams with the course instructor before retaking the exams. Faculty who return an exam with a grade of FAIL are required to meet with the student if the student makes such a request. The faculty should provide detailed feedback that explains the basis for the failing grade. Faculty are strongly encouraged to use a detailed rubric when grading comprehensive exams to help identify weaknesses and strengths in students’ comprehensive exam responses. Student grievances over failed comprehensive exam grades will be handled using procedure outlined in the graduate handbook.

Students who fail to satisfy the comprehensive exam requirement after taking the exams three times will be reviewed by the NSC Graduate Committee. The committee will consult the instructor(s) who graded the failed exams and will determine a course of action for the student. This may include additional coursework designed to strengthen the student’s knowledge and proficiency in areas where the comprehensive exam performance is deficient. The student will not be allowed to retake the exams again until s/he has complied with the committee’s recommendations.

**Thesis Requirements**

**University Thesis Requirements**

A student may choose to complete his/her program by writing comprehensive examinations or by writing a thesis.

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation](https://www.ucf.edu/graduate/studies/thesis/) page contains information on the university’s requirements for thesis formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available at [Completing Your Thesis or Dissertation](https://www.ucf.edu/graduate/studies/thesis/)

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](https://www.ucf.edu/academiccal/). The student’s program or college may have other earlier deadlines and the student is encouraged to contact the NSC Graduate Program for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by thesis students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final thesis document by final submission deadline

Students must format their thesis according to the standards outlined at [Formatting the ETD](https://www.ucf.edu/graduate/studies/thesis/). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](https://www.ucf.edu/graduate/studies/thesis/) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](https://www.ucf.edu/graduate/studies/thesis/) site. The Thesis Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](https://www.ucf.edu/graduate/studies/thesis/) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the thesis process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).
Thesis Process

The Master's thesis is the capstone of a student’s graduate training. Although some students have a thesis topic in mind early in their graduate career, other students develop ideas as they progress through their classes. It is always a good idea to discuss ideas early with the faculty who have expertise in that area. Sometimes students write a seminar paper that sparks their interest while others develop their thesis projects based on their involvement in a research project with a faculty member.

The thesis process requires the student to work closely with a faculty member on a research project resulting in a research report, which is evaluated by a faculty committee. The objectives of the project are:

- Application of research skills acquired in the classroom
- Demonstration of both oral and written communication skills
- Demonstration of the student’s advanced understanding of research and theory in a particular area of communication scholarship
- Completion of a research project from inception to final report
- Contribution to the research literature through publication in a referred journal or presentation at a regional, national or international conference

Major components of the thesis process include the thesis proposal and the thesis defense.

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal process begins when the student identifies a topic area and/or research question. The process continues with a rigorous and in-depth review of the literature in the topic area, discussions with program faculty, identification of a thesis chair and evaluation committee, a written thesis proposal, and a formal thesis proposal meeting. Normally this process should begin no later than the beginning of the third semester for full time students.

Consultation with the program director, or any other graduate faculty, can facilitate the initial stages of the thesis proposal process. Early in the process, the student should approach faculty members to determine the faculty members’ interest in the project along with their ability and willingness to serve as a committee member or chair.

In conjunction with the chair of the thesis advisory committee, the student will identify a minimum of two other faculty members to serve on the thesis evaluation committee. Great care should be taken in selecting committee members. Issues such as interest, expertise, and availability should all be taken into account. The thesis committee makes all final decisions regarding the thesis project.

Two of the three members of the thesis advisory committee (including the chair) must be NSC faculty who possess a terminal degree and who are members of the UCF graduate faculty. The third member may come from a related field, the NSC faculty, or the professional community and must hold at least the rank of Graduate Faculty Scholar. Additional members of the committee are optional, but must meet the same qualification criteria.

Once the committee is chosen, the student must obtain and complete the Thesis Advisory Committee Approval form, gather the signatures of all committee members and the NSC Graduate Program Director then return the paperwork to the NSC Graduate Program Advisor. Students will not be allowed to enroll for thesis hours until they have an approved thesis committee on file with the College of Graduate Studies.

Under the supervision of the thesis chair, the student prepares a formal thesis proposal that includes an abstract, introduction, review of relevant literature, proposed research methodology, statistical analysis plan, and a complete list of references and supporting literature. A formal thesis committee meeting must be held to review the proposal, address any concerns raised by committee members, and formalize the activities the student must perform to complete the thesis. The thesis advisory committee chair should obtain signatures and committee members’ required revisions on the Thesis Proposal Defense form at the time of the formal proposal meeting. Ordinarily, data should not be collected (although IRB approval may be obtained) until the entire committee has approved of the thesis proposal (however in some circumstances this may not be feasible). The proposal meeting should be thought of as an agreement between the student and committee members about what the student plans to produce as a final product.
Thesis Defense

Once the student has completed the work agreed upon at the proposal meeting, and after the thesis advisory chair agrees that the student is ready to defend, a thesis defense meeting may be scheduled. The entire committee must receive a copy of the penultimate draft of the thesis at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. All committee members are obligated to read the thesis before the meeting occurs and prepare questions for the student. A date, time and place for the meeting shall be posted at least one week prior to the actual date along with a notice of examination. This is done by preparing a Thesis Defense Announcement (a sample of the appropriate format is available from the program advisor) and submitting to the NSC Graduate Program Director, who will review and approve the announcement on behalf of the Nicholson School of Communication and invite the campus community. At this time, the student should request the Thesis Approval form through the College of Graduate Studies. The form will be automatically populated with the student’s thesis project and committee information, and needs to be submitted to the NSC Graduate Program Advisor for final customization. The student brings this form to the thesis defense meeting. The thesis defense meeting represents an opportunity for the intellectual exchange of ideas as well as an evaluation of the worthiness of the research report. The thesis defense meeting is an open meeting, and may be attended by other students, faculty, or members of the community. The thesis defense meeting should be scheduled for approximately one and one half hours. The format of the meeting includes an oral presentation of the research, a question and answer session, and a closed executive session attended only by the thesis committee members.

With prior approval from the Nicholson School of Communication, one committee member may participate via tele- or video-conferencing in the thesis final defense. The student, committee chair, and one other committee member **MUST** be physically present at the thesis defense.

The oral defense usually begins with an oral presentation of the research project that includes some discussion of the literature, a description of the methodology, an explanation of how the data was analyzed, an interpretation of the research results, and a discussion the implications of the study. The presentation is followed by a question and answer session in which each committee member will be expected to ask questions regarding the student’s thesis project. Finally, the student and guests will be excused from the room and a closed session will be conducted. In the closed session the committee chair shares results of the iThenticate.com originality report with the committee followed by the committee’s discussion of the merits of the project and a vote on the acceptability of the thesis. A majority of committee members must vote in favor of a passing grade on the project for the student to qualify for graduation. The committee may decide to accept the thesis as is, accept the thesis with minor revisions (requiring no rescheduled meeting), or in the event that a majority of committee members do not vote to pass the project, the student will be asked to make major revisions to the thesis (requiring that a new thesis defense meeting be rescheduled after revisions are completed). Once the committee has decided on a result, the student will be invited back into the room and the adjudication by the committee will be shared with the student. If the committee accepts the project, they will sign the Thesis Approval form.

The student is expected to acquire the additional signatures for the Thesis Approval form, which includes the NSC Graduate Program Director, the Director of the Nicholson School of Communication, and the Dean of the College of Sciences. It is not necessary for the student to acquire the signature of the Vice Provost and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies before submitting the form with the final thesis project. He will sign the form when he accepts the project on behalf of UCF.

Thesis committee members may not designate another person to sign on their behalf for thesis final defense approval. Members who participate remotely must either sign ahead of the defense or be able to sign, scan, and email a copy of the approval form. Only members of the NSC graduate faculty are qualified to approve of a thesis defense on behalf of the NSC Graduate Program and Nicholson School of Communication.

Gifts for the thesis advisory chair and committee members with any kind of intrinsic value are highly discouraged. This would include gift cards with a monetary value, a bottle of wine, gift baskets, and so forth. The advisory chair and committee members are paid by the state of Florida for the time and effort they put into a candidate's thesis project so they are not owed any sort of valuable consideration from the candidate. Additionally, receiving a gift with intrinsic value constitutes a conflict of interest for the committee members and advisor as they are responsible for assigning a grade to the student's academic work. Gifts with only sentimental value, such as a framed photograph, a handwritten thank you note on nice stationery, a flower arrangement, and so forth are not considered gifts of intrinsic value so they are not covered by this rule.
Thesis Enrollment Requirement

To be considered full-time after completion of coursework, students must be continuously enrolled in three hours of thesis research every semester (including summers) until successful defense and graduation. This enrollment each semester reflects the expenditure of university resources. Students that wish to enroll in part-time hours must enroll for a minimum of one credit hour. For more details about enrollment, please refer to the Thesis Enrollment Requirement and the Full-time Enrollment Requirements policies of the UCF Graduate Catalog.

Graduate Research

NSC Graduate Faculty and their Research Interests

A list of current Interpersonal and Mass Communication faculty members is available on the Nicholson School of Communication webpage, along with contact information and areas of research interest. Use this to identify faculty with whom you might wish to work. Please note that only faculty certified by the College of Graduate Studies are eligible to supervise graduate student research.

Research Projects

Conducting and sharing original research is an important part of graduate training. Therefore, students are highly encouraged to submit their work for presentation at conferences and for publication in communication journals. The submission of a research project to a conference should occur in close consultation with a faculty advisor or course instructor to maximize the probability of success. In some circumstances, faculty members will approach students who complete excellent course projects to encourage them to submit their work to conferences and/or a journal for publication. Conference participation and/or publication of research is essential for students interested in obtaining the PhD.

Students are also encouraged to work on faculty members’ ongoing research projects. Most faculty members will welcome a graduate student’s participation on a project. In many cases, a graduate student may earn three hours of independent study credit for their work on a faculty member’s research project. If a graduate student plays an important role on the project, the student will often receive credit for her/his work in the form of a co-authorship on the final product. This type of credit for research participation can be very valuable when applying for admission to doctoral programs. Students may also receive three hours of credit for directed research in which the student works on her or his own project under the direction of a faculty member.

Students are bound by UCF’s Golden Rule (see www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu), which contains Student Rights and Responsibilities including regulations on academic honesty, plagiarism, and codes of conduct. If a student is found to be engaged in plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, this can result in dismissal from the program.

Graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of the workshops on thesis formatting, library research, and other workshops organized by the Graduate Student Association (www.gsa.graduate.ucf.edu) and Pathways to Success (www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/Pathways/).

Support for Conference Presentation

The College of Graduate Studies offers a presentation fellowship that provides funding for enrolled master’s, specialist, and doctoral students to share their research at a professional meeting. Students must be the primary author and presenter. More information is here: funding.graduate.ucf.edu/presentation/

The UCF Student Government Association funds individuals for travel. Student Outreach Services in the Student Union, room 208, provides a brochure describing the steps in applying for this travel funding. Students can also pick up this brochure in the Graduate Student Center in Colbourn Hall 146. For more information, contact Student Outreach Services at: sosgrad@ucf.edu (email), Graduate Knights (Facebook), or @UCFGrad Knights (Twitter).

Students presenting research at a local, regional, national, or international conference are eligible for a $200 research excellence award from the Nicholson School of Communication. If a student wins a first place, top, or best-of-show award in a competitive
category at the conference, the student will be awarded an additional $50, for a total of $250. Contact the NSC Graduate Program Director for more information about this award. Students who receive this award from NSC are expected to apply to present their paper at the Graduate Research Forum (www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/research_forum/). Students are eligible to receive this award once a year as students and once overall as an alumnus (if applied within 2 years of graduation).

The Nicholson School of Communication displays poster presentations of student research in NSC143D and will pay to print a student’s research poster, if the student consents to return the poster (in good condition) for display. Students requesting presentation funding are encouraged to contact the NSC Graduate Program Advisor for information on the availability of this opportunity. Students presenting at the UCF Graduate Research Forum will be approved for poster printing, while students presenting elsewhere will have their requests reviewed and approved based on funding availability.

Research Policies and Ethics Information

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to

1. support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry
2. develop the intellectual property stemming from research
3. disseminate the intellectual property to the general public

Students are responsible for being informed of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For policies including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: > Compliance.

UCF’s Patent and Invention Policy

In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will, according to this policy, share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the current UCF Graduate Catalog for details: www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

Financial Support

Assistantships and Tuition Waivers

The Nicholson School of Communication is given a set number of tuition waivers each year. Distribution of the tuition waivers is based on fellowship/scholarship, the match between special skills of the student and the needs of the NSC, GRE scores, and undergraduate and NSC graduate program GPA. For complete information about university assistantships and tuition waivers, please see the UCF Graduate Catalog. The Nicholson School offers a number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) each year (the number offered will vary depending on the budget situation of the department). Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) may also be offered through faculty members’ grants. After completing 18 credit hours, students may also be eligible to teach their own course. Students are encouraged to reference the College of Graduate Studies for descriptions of each job category. When granted a tuition waiver, students should understand the waiver only assists in the matriculation fees accrued. In addition to matriculation, students are also charged several university fees (athletic fee, distance fee, etc.) that the tuition waiver does not pay for. Students can reference the UCF website for the breakdown of tuition and fees. Non-resident graduate students should note that non-residents fees are only waived during periods of full (20 hours per week) assistantship appointments or if awarded university-wide fellowships. For more information on residency requirements, students should refer to Residency for Tuition.

Incomplete Grades
Students with excessive Incomplete (I) grades (2 or more) that do not resolve those grades within one semester will not be eligible to receive future financial support from NSC in the form of Graduate Teaching Assistantships or Graduate Research Assistantships. A student will be considered eligible for this support once the “I” grades are satisfactorily resolved and the student is in good academic standing.

Graduate Employment Requirements

To be employed and to maintain employment in a graduate assistantship, the student must be enrolled full-time and meet all of the training requirements and/or conditions of employment noted within the current graduate catalog.

The NSC will communicate training requirements to students at the time of hire, but the onus to fulfill all requirements by university deadlines is solely the student’s responsibility. A failure to meet the requirements will result in the loss of an assistantship and all corresponding tuition waiver funds. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress can also result in the loss of financial support. Although GTA funding depends on the annual budget of the Graduate Program, assistantships are usually awarded for a two-year period. Under extenuating circumstances or according to the needs of the Nicholson School, some students may be awarded one extra year of funding.

GTA Performance Evaluation

At the completion of each semester, students employed as GTAs (graders, assistants and associates) are required to be evaluated by the NSC Graduate Program Director. The Director will consult with faculty to whom the student was assigned. If the student is serving as the instructor of record, the Program Director will consult with the GEP Coordinator. These assessments will be used to review strengths and weaknesses in the student’s performance in preparation for future employment. Multiple negative evaluations may cause the student to lose future assistantships. Additionally, a failure to submit an evaluation will also result in a loss of future assistantships.

Additional Financial Aid

Requirements that need to be met for federal loan eligibility override graduate full-time requirements. A student may be held to other enrollment requirements, as defined by financial awards, veteran status, employment or other outside agencies.

International Students

Several types of employment are available to international students, including on-campus employment. International students are encouraged to contact the International Student Center for more information about the types of employment available and the requirements and restrictions based on visa-type.

Graduate Student Associations

Graduate students in the Nicholson School of Communication are welcome to pursue membership in any NSC-sponsored student organization and events. Some of these include: Radio-TV Directors News Association (RTDNA), WNSC, Ad Club, Lambda Pi Eta, Quotes, and NSC’s annual COMM Week activities. Information about these can be found on the Nicholson School of Communication website and flyers posted in NSC.

The Nicholson School of Communication is proud to host the International Crisis and Risk Communication (ICRC) professional conference each March. A limited number of graduate students are sponsored by NSC to attend the conference. The opportunity is announced in mid-February.

Professional Development

Teaching and Learning
The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. They offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

- **GTA Training (mandatory for employment as a GTA)**

This online training provides information and resources for students who will be assisting instructors. A variety of topics is covered, including classroom management, learning styles, testing and grading, and university policies and procedures. Those who will be teaching are required to complete the online training as well as attend an in-person one-day seminar, which includes course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom. This seminar is available to any student who desires additional training. For more information, please refer to the College of Graduate Studies’ GTA website: [www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/GTA_Training_Requirements/](http://www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/GTA_Training_Requirements/)

- **Preparing Tomorrow’s Faculty Certificate**

Completion of the 12-week [Preparing Tomorrow’s Faculty Program](http://www.fctl.ucf.edu) satisfies the requirement for GTA Grader, Assistant, and Associate Trainings. The Preparing Tomorrow’s Faculty course will only meet the GTA Training requirement if completed in a prior semester. It is not sufficient to attend the Certificate course concurrently with your first teaching experience, if you have not taken the GTA Grader, Assistant, and Associate Trainings.

For more information: [www.fctl.ucf.edu](http://www.fctl.ucf.edu) > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544.

**Graduate Research Forum**

The Graduate Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF’s diverse colleges and disciplines. It is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition. Students who receive travel funding from the Nicholson School of Communication are required to submit their research to the UCF Graduate Research Forum. The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact researchweek@ucf.edu.

**Graduate Excellence Awards**

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant**

This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching**

This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student’s teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Master’s Thesis**

This award recognizes graduate students for excellence in the master’s thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field. The university award will be forwarded to a national-level competition sponsored by the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) when the thesis discipline corresponds to the annual submission request.
For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see the College of Graduate Studies website
www.graduate.ucf.edu/GradAwards

Meeske Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year

Each Spring, the Nicholson School of Communication Graduate Program names its student of the year, in honor of Dr. Milan "Mike" Meeske. Faculty can nominate Communication M.A. students and the award is based on student’s academic performance, community and campus contributions, research record, as well as overall recommendation by NSC faculty.

Pathways to Success

The UCF College of Graduate Studies coordinates free workshops for graduate student academic and professional development. These workshops include topics on academic integrity; pursuit, acquisition, and management of grant funding; personal strategies for success in graduate school; and professional development and advancement after graduation. For more information and an up-to-date schedule for workshop offerings, please refer to: www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/Pathways/.

Other Professional Development

Students should take opportunities to present a poster or a topic of research at a conference. To obtain financial support to present at a conference (other than through your program) or to engage in comparable creative activity at a professional meeting, visit the Graduate Travel Fellowship section at www.graduate.ucf.edu.

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: www.csgs.org > Awards.

For grant-proposal writing resources: uwc.ucf.edu/gradwriting.php.

Professional Affiliations

Below is a short list of professional affiliations our faculty have. These are great resources for scholarships, conferences, professional development, and employment opportunities. Most of these organizations have student memberships, with annual dues ranging from $20-$75.

Ad 2—Orlando
ad2orlando.org

American Advertising Federation
www.aaf.org
www.aaf-orlando.org

No student membership dues found. Individual membership: $175

American Society for Training and Development
www.astd.org

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
www.aejmc.org

Florida Communication Association
www.ficom.org

Florida Public Relations Association
www.fpra.org

International Association of Business Communicators
www.iabc.com
International Communication Association
www.icahdq.org

National Communication Association
www.natcom.org

Public Relations Society of America
www.prsa.org

Society of Professional Journalists
www.spj.org

Southern States Communication Association
www.ssca.net

Forms

- College of Graduate Studies Forms
  A listing of general forms and files for graduate students including student services and records and graduation forms.

Useful Links

- College of Graduate Studies links
- Graduate Catalog
- Graduate Student Center

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