



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Strategic Communication Ph.D. Program Handbook

Nicholson School of Communication and
Media

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Introduction

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your Strategic Communication Ph.D. 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 the Strategic Communication Ph.D. program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in Nicholson School of Communication and Media and in the College of Graduate Studies.

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
- [Plagiarism](#)
- [Title IX](#)

Welcome to the Strategic Communication Ph.D. Program

The Ph.D. in Strategic Communication offers advanced instruction strategic communication with specific emphases in health communication, instructional communication, and risk/crisis communication; it prepares students with the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue a successful, advanced career in communication and related fields in both academic and applied settings.

Strategic communication, one of the fastest growing areas situated within the broader field of communication, is an innovative and unique subfield. It is distinct from other communication subfields in that it is intentionally goal-driven communication wherein communication scholars work in partnership with professionals in the public and private sectors to solve real world problems.

The program provides students considerable flexibility in theoretical perspectives (e.g., health communication theories, risk and crisis communication theories, disaster/emergency management theories, public relations/image management theories), methodological perspectives (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, rhetorical), and applied contexts (e.g., classroom, organization, business and industry, government), which is characteristic of the field of strategic communication.

Admission Requirements

The admission requirements for the proposed degree are consistent with most Ph.D. programs in the Communication discipline. Admissions will be available only during the fall semester. Students in the first year complete coursework as a cohort. The core courses in the first year serve as a foundation for their work during the rest of the program. There is no education or experience-related requirement in risk and crisis communication or health communication for admission to the program. The focus of this Ph.D. program is strategic communication with emphases in risk, crisis, and health contexts. Interest in and commitment to these contexts is essential, but specific coursework or work experience in risk, crisis, or health is not. The following constitute the requirements for entry into the doctoral program:

- Applicants must have an earned master's degree or its equivalent in Communication or a related field (e.g., public relations, emergency management). The director of graduate studies will evaluate the suitability and applicability of M.A. or M.S. degrees in other related disciplines for admission purposes.
- Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all graduate work and must also have a cumulative 3.0 GPA in their undergraduate degree.
- A competitive score, with the range to be reviewed on regular basis, on each of the sections of the Graduate Record Examination (taken within five years prior to application to the program).
- Three letters of reference that evaluate the applicant's academic performance, suitability, and potential for undertaking doctoral study, at least one of which must be written by a faculty member at the institution where the master's degree was earned, preferably the thesis advisor or program director.
- A personal statement outlining the applicant's academic and professional experience, the applicant's professional and research goals, and a statement indicating a preference for working with a particular faculty member(s).
- A writing sample of the applicant's work (at least 2500 words in length) demonstrating the ability to complete graduate-level research, preferably a portion of the student's M.A. thesis.
- A CV or Resume.
- International applicants whose first language is not English are required to submit results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) unless they hold a degree from a U.S. accredited institution. The TOEFL is strongly preferred. The minimum TOEFL score for full admissions consideration is 90 on the Internet-based test (IBT) and must take the speaking portion of the TOEFL and score a 26 or higher, 232 on the computer based test, or 575 on the paper-based test. The minimum IELTS score is 7.0. Applicants should plan to take the appropriate test no later than December to ensure they meet the January deadline.

Program Administration

A director of graduate studies, who is responsible for administering the Ph.D. program will be appointed by the director of the Nicholson School of Communication and Media. The director of graduate studies will report to the director of the School.

Director of Graduate Studies

The director of graduate studies will be a tenured member of the graduate faculty serving a 4-year term. The responsibilities of the director of graduate studies include:

- Chairing the Doctoral Program Committee
- Approving Candidacy Exam Committees
- Providing oversight of the program curriculum
- Conducting an annual assessment of the program
- Determining proficiency requirements, and will serve as the central advisor for the program
- Overseeing the M.A., M.F.A., and M.S. programs in the Nicholson School of Communication and Media

The director of graduate studies chairs the Doctoral Program Committee, which consists of five members of the NSCM graduate faculty. Subcommittees, such as the Admissions Committee, will report to the director of graduate studies and the full Doctoral Program Committee. Subcommittee membership will be assigned on an hoc basis depending on the program development needs of the Ph.D. and M.A. programs by invitation of the director of graduate studies.

Graduate Admissions Specialist

The graduate admissions specialist assists graduate students wishing to enroll in the Ph.D. program with admission process. The graduate admissions specialist works as a liaison between the director of graduate studies and the College of Graduate Studies in the review and compilation of all necessary documents for admission, transfer and re-admission.

The responsibilities of the graduate admissions specialist include, but will not be limited to:

- Possession and maintenance of all graduate student records
- Processing and updating all necessary Ph.D. program paperwork
- Assisting the director of graduate studies in preparing promotional materials concerning the Ph.D. program
- Publicizing Notices of Defense in accordance with UCF procedures
- Compiling current notices and updates concerning the Ph.D. program for School website

Doctoral Program Committee

The Doctoral Program Committee will assist in advising and administering this program. The Committee will have five cycling members, each elected for two-year terms in staggered election cycles, plus the director of graduate studies who will serve as chair. For the first term, the director of graduate studies will coordinate elections for three members who will serve a two-year term and two members who will serve a one-year term. Each following year, the School's graduate faculty will elect members to replace those completing their term. Committee members must be active in the doctoral program. The responsibilities of the Doctoral Program Committee will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Reviewing applications, interviewing applicants (along with the prospective advisor), and allocate funding to newly accepted students
- Membership on all thesis and dissertation committees, as well as all chairs, vice chairs, and co-chairs of thesis and dissertation advisory committees must be approved by the graduate program committee.
- Approving qualifying examination committees
- Approving credit for courses taken outside of the School

- Deciding on Ph.D. student appeals of grades on doctoral examinations, based on UCF student conduct (i.e., Golden Rule) policies
- Recommending changes in graduate policies and procedures to the director of graduate studies and School faculty
- Providing recommendations on new graduate courses prior to their submission to the School and graduate faculty
- Approving the composition of dissertation committees
- Approving Ph.D. students' annual academic reviews with input from the director of graduate studies and appointed faculty advisors
- Deciding on the status of Ph.D. students who receive unacceptable grades and/or whose GPA falls below the minimum standard, as dictated by university policy.
- Engage in assessment results reporting.

Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum and course listing for our program.

Doctoral students in Strategic Communication will examine social science theories defining communication processes that influence health promotion, risk prevention, crisis interventions and instructional practices responsive to the needs of public and private organizations. The two primary foundations of social science research are theory and empirical methods. NSCM expects students to have a firm foundation in these areas when they arrive. The core area in the curriculum will build on this foundation and provide students with advanced training in a variety of new and established theoretical traditions, as well as in state-of-the-art social scientific research methods such as network analyses for tracking Internet messaging, web-based analytics, use of big data, and newly identified statistical analysis techniques. The core area will provide students with training in the most current and ground breaking theoretical, technological, and methodological approaches in conducting rigorous and scientifically sound research in strategic communication. The elective courses will ensure that students develop an in-depth understanding of the role of communication in major health and risk/crisis issues, as well as practical applications of theories to real world problems.

The doctoral program in strategic communication does not provide training in the health professions. Health content is not the focus of the program; rather, coursework addressing instructional communication in health-related contexts or for health-related campaigns is the focus of the curriculum. Unrestricted electives like communication campaigns, studies in persuasion, risk communication, new media, media effects and audience analysis are all internal courses that would be particularly well-suited for students with a concentration in health. All these courses would allow students to focus their inquiry and scholarship in health contexts (e.g., health edutainment, health campaigns, eHealth).

Graduation Requirements (described in detail in the other sections)

- Completion of 45 hours of coursework with cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Passage of the candidacy examination
- Completion of 15 hours of dissertation credit
- Passage of dissertation defense
- Submission of completed dissertation
- Presentation of at least one research paper at a regional, national, or international conference as the lead author
- Submission of at least one manuscript for publication in a refereed journal, either independently or with a faculty mentor
- Completion of at least one Pathways to Success seminar offered by the College of Graduate Studies each semester not including the academic integrity training
- Completion of the academic integrity training offered through the Pathways to Success program

Curriculum Outline

The Strategic Communication Ph.D. requires a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond the master's degree, with 9 credit hours coming from required core courses, 12 credit hours in required research methods courses, 3 credit hours in community engagement/practicum/internship, 6 hours required in the Health or Crisis/Risk concentration, 15 hours of electives (internship/practicum are included as part of the electives), and 15 hours of dissertation credit complete the 60 credits total. The zero-hour Doctoral Colloquium will be required in the fall semesters of the first and second year. This course will introduce students to professional standards and practices associated with doctoral level training in the field of strategic communication.

Total Credit Hours Required: 60 credit hours minimum beyond the master's degree

Students must earn a grade of "B" or better in the program's core courses and maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in their plan of study.

Colloquium – 0 credit hours

- COM 7920 Doctoral Colloquium (0 cr., repeatable once)

Core Requirements – 9 Credit Hours

- COM 7464 Theory Building for Strategic Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7821 Instructional Communication in Strategic Contexts (3 cr.)
- COM 7529 Strategic Communication (3 cr.)

Research Requirements – 12 Credit Hours

- COM 6303 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6304 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication (3 cr.)
- SPC 7685 Rhetorical Criticism of Strategic Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7325 Seminar in Research Methods (3 cr.)

Community Engagement Requirement - 3 Credit Hours (select one)

- COM 6918 Directed Research (3 cr.)
- COM 6946 Internship (1-3 cr.)
- COM 7528 Communication and Community Engagement (1-3 cr., repeatable)

Restricted Elective Courses – 6 Credit Hours (choose one area of concentration)

Concentration in Risk and Crisis Communication

- COM 7815 Risk Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7236 Seminar in Risk and Crisis Communication (3 cr.)

Or

Concentration in Health Communication

- COM 7025 Health Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7227 Seminar in Health Communication (3 cr.)

Unrestricted Electives – 15 Credit Hours

Choose from NSCM graduate courses below. Upon consultation with, and approval of the student's advisor, a student may complete up to 6 hours of elective courses from outside the Nicholson School of Communication and Media (e.g., Emergency Management, Public Affairs). Note: Non-Nicholson School courses might not be offered on the Downtown campus and will require students to attend the course at the UCF East campus.

- COM 6535 Communication Campaigns (3 cr.)
- COM 6046 Interpersonal Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6145 Organizational Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6425 Symbolism in Terrorism (3 cr.)
- COM 6463 Studies in Intercultural Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6467 Studies in Persuasion (3 cr.)
- COM 7745 Current Issues in Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7815 Risk Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7025 Health Communication (3 cr.)
- MMC 6402 Mass Communication Theory (3 cr.)
- MMC 6567 New Media (3 cr.)
- MMC 6600 Media Effects and Audience Analysis (3 cr.)
- PUR 6403 Crisis Public Relations (3 cr.)
- PUR 6005 Theories of Public Relations (3 cr.)

Dissertation – 15 Credit Hours

- COM 7980 Dissertation Research (15 credit hours)

Timeline for Completion

The following table provides a tentative year-by-year and semester-by-semester outline of degree requirements, and/or provide a listing of milestones for degree completion.

Fall Year 1 (9 hours)	Spring Year 1 (9 hours)	Summer Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 7920 Doctoral Colloquium (0 hours) • COM 7529 Strategic Communication • COM 7821 Instructional Communication in Strategic Contexts • COM 6304 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 6303 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication • COM 7464 Theory Building for Strategic Communication • Elective or Methods course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional elective
Fall Year 2 (9 hours)	Spring Year 2 (9 hours)	Summer Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 7920 Doctoral Colloquium II (0 hours) • Restricted Elective within concentration • SPC 7685 Rhetorical Criticism of Strategic Communication • Elective or Methods course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted Elective within concentration • COM 7325 Seminar in Research Methods • Elective or Methods course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional elective
Fall Year 3 (9 hours)	Spring Year 3	Summer year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elective or Methods course • Elective or Methods course • Community Engagement/Internship/Directed Research • Candidacy Examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 7980 Dissertation (6 hours) • Dissertation proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 7980 Dissertation (3 hours)
Fall Year 4	Spring Year 4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM7980 Dissertation (3 hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COM 7980 Dissertation (3 hours) • Dissertation defense 	

Examination Requirements

Upon completion of 36 hours of coursework, including a minimum of 9 hours of methodology coursework, all core courses and coursework in one area of concentration (6 hours), students will be eligible to take the written candidacy examination. The examinations will be used to determine the student's knowledge of theory, methods, and past and present research in their chosen areas of focus. Candidacy examinations will be administered in the fall and spring of each year. Students must notify the graduate program director by September 1st for fall exams and by January 15th for spring exams. The exams will be administered by the academic advisor in collaboration with the graduate program staff. Students will complete the exam in a prearranged room on the UCF Downtown campus. The examination committee will be composed of three UCF graduate faculty members who will be expected to compose the student's dissertation committee. At least two of the committee members must be members of the NSCM graduate faculty. The exam must be successfully completed prior to enrollment in dissertation hours.

Each student in consultation with an advisor will establish content areas reflective of program outcomes to account for 16 hours of examination over a period of days deemed appropriate (not longer than five days). The examination committee will generate the questions in consultation with the director of graduate studies to reflect program outcomes. The questions covered on the exams will consist of research methods, program core and specific topics in strategic communication. Exam areas will be identified within the areas of communication theory, research methodology, and applied strategic communication best practices by the student in consultation with his or her examination committee. The examination questions will be graded on a four-point scale (1 = fails to meet expectations, 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = satisfactory; 4 = exceeds expectations). Students must achieve a 3 or 4 on all questions to receive a "pass." Students achieving less than a 3 on one question may receive a "conditional pass." Students who fail to achieve a minimum of 3 on two or more questions will receive a "fail." Students who fail two or more questions are allowed to retake any question(s) one additional time. Students will retake only the portion of the exam she or he fails. If the exam is failed a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program. If a student receives a "conditional pass" on the examination, an oral examination with her or his examination committee must be scheduled and held within two weeks of notification of exam results. At the oral examination, the committee will ask the student to explain or modify written responses. This oral examination is meant to give the student an opportunity to provide additional clarification or information pertaining to the written responses. The committee will meet within a two-week period of time, after the oral examination to determine whether the student has demonstrated the knowledge and skill to proceed to the dissertation.

Admission to Candidacy

The following are required for admission to candidacy and enrollment in dissertation hours:

- Submission of an approved program of study.
- Completion of all program coursework with the exception of dissertation hours.
- Successful completion of the candidacy examination.
- The dissertation advisory committee is formed, consisting of approved graduate faculty.
- Completion of academic integrity requirement.

Dissertation Requirements

Dissertation Committee Selection

Students who successfully complete their candidacy examination are allowed to form a dissertation committee, prepare and defend a dissertation proposal, conduct original and independent dissertation research, and present and defend a dissertation (students must complete and file a "Doctoral Committee Form" with the graduate admissions specialist).

The student's committee is comprised of at least four appropriately qualified individuals: a dissertation supervisor and at least three others approved by the director of graduate studies. The chair of the supervisory committee,

who is also the dissertation supervisor, must be a full-time, tenured NSCM faculty member (tenure-earning may co-advise after their third year of service), and approved by the College of Graduate Studies to act as chair of the supervisory committee. Two additional members of the committee must be full-time graduate faculty of any rank and must be faculty in the Nicholson School of Communication and Media. The fourth member must be a member of University of Central Florida's graduate faculty or a graduate faculty scholar from outside of communication. Additional graduate faculty or graduate faculty scholars may be appointed.

Dissertation Proposal Hearing

The purpose of the dissertation proposal hearing is to explain the subject under investigation, place it within the existing scholarly literature and to present the planned approach for writing the dissertation. The proposal hearing takes place in the first semester a student is enrolled in dissertation hours; therefore, students may not schedule a proposal hearing with their dissertation committee until they have completed all coursework and candidacy exams. Students work with their dissertation committee to develop and refine the proposal. Immediately after the proposal hearing, the student's Dissertation Committee will meet to decide whether the student passed the proposal hearing. A student who passes the proposal hearing then begins the actual research and writing of the doctoral dissertation. The committee may recommend that additional work must be completed prior to full consideration and approval.

The proposal will be comprised of introduction, literature review, and proposed methodology (including a data analysis plan) sections that the student intends to include as the first three chapters in the dissertation. The student will meet with the committee and offer an oral defense of the proposal. The student may be required to meet with the committee again if it deems that additional work is required before the student may proceed with data collection, analysis, and conclusions.

Doctoral Dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation entails independent original research. A student must complete a minimum of 15 credit hours of doctoral dissertation research (COM 7980). The work must represent an achievement in research; it must be a significant contribution to its field; and it should be deemed publishable in refereed journals or a quality press.

Dissertation Defense

The student prepares to defend the dissertation in consultation with the dissertation supervisor. All members of the committee will agree to the date of the defense, and the dissertation must be made available to the committee at least two weeks before the examination date. The defense is given as a public seminar presentation of the dissertation (publicly announced two weeks before the defense by submitting the dissertation announcement form to the graduate admissions specialist), followed by an oral examination by the committee. If the candidate successfully defends the dissertation, the committee recommends that the final form of the dissertation be completed, and that University of Central Florida confer the Ph.D. degree.

University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). College of Sciences may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by dissertation 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 dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation 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.

Annual Review

Students will be evaluated in the spring of each year to assess their progress toward the degree, professional activity, and adherence to the general policies for graduate students in the Nicholson School of Communication and Media. Lapses in any of these areas may require evaluations at an earlier point in the academic year. Annual reviews will be conducted during the second half of the spring semester every year. Progress toward the degree is based on the expectations for satisfactory academic performance (see general policies below) and the completion of coursework (not including dissertation) in a period of four years or less. The general policies for graduate students in the Nicholson School of Communication and Media follow.

General Policies

Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Golden Rule is provided to answer any questions a student may have about the university rules and regulations, as well as outlines a student's rights and responsibilities. The Golden Rule can be found online at <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>. Graduate students can find additional information about their responsibilities in the [Graduate Catalog](#) online. For more information about college and university graduate policies, see also:

Nicholson School of Communication and Media Program Website: <https://communication.ucf.edu/>
 College of Sciences Graduate Website: <https://sciences.ucf.edu/graduate/>
 College of Graduate Studies Website: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/>

Satisfactory Academic Performance. Satisfactory performance involves maintaining the standards of academic progress and professional integrity expected in and as judged by the Strategic Communication PhD Program faculty. Failure to maintain these standards may result in termination of the student from the program. If the student is in violation of any of the rules of professional integrity, the Graduate Committee can make a recommendation to the College of Sciences to revert the student to non-degree status. The university requires that students must maintain a graduate status GPA of at least 3.0 or higher in order to maintain graduate student status, receive financial assistance, and qualify for graduation. The graduate status GPA is the cumulative GPA of graduate courses taken since admission to the degree program. This graduation requirement for a minimum 3.0 GPA in all graduate courses completed since admission into the graduate program cannot be waived. The policy can be found at Graduate Catalog. Students are also required to maintain a 3.00 GPA in all coursework included in the program of study. Be aware that a B- (2.75) does negatively impact a GPA. While students are allowed to have six hours of C (2.00) grades or lower (including U and I) in their program of study, this is the limit. Grades of D+ and lower will count against the graduate GPA and those courses cannot be used toward completion of the degree requirements.

A program or graduate status GPA below 3.00 at the end of any semester will result in a student being placed on probation. The student is given the next nine hours of their program coursework to improve their GPA to 3.00 or better. While in this status, a student is eligible for tuition support and employment in a graduate position; however, the program may discontinue either of these until the student resolves their status. Exceeding 6 hours of C or lower grades or a program GPA of 2.00 or lower may result in dismissal from the program. The program of study must include at least 72 credit hours of post-baccalaureate, minimum 42 credits of graduate course work and at least half of the credits in the program of study must be at the 6000 or 7000-level. For a full description of course requirements for a doctoral program refer to the section on Course Requirements in Graduate Catalog under policies.

Full Time and Continuous Enrollment. Full-time graduate status is nine (9) hours during the Fall and Spring Semesters and six (6) hours during the summer semesters, until regular program course work is completed. Students who have completed all of their course requirements and are enrolled into three hours of dissertation are considered full-time for fellowship, employment and tuition waiver purposes. Once a student has begun work on their dissertation, he or she must be continuously enrolled in dissertation course work. 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. For further information, refer to the section on Full-time Enrollment at the Graduate Catalog.

Seven-Year Rule. The student has seven years from the date of admission (prerequisite, articulation, and foundation courses are exempt) to the doctoral program to complete the degree. For more details, refer to the section on Time Limitation for Degree Completion in the Graduate Catalog.

Transfer Coursework. All transfer coursework must be at the graduate level, have a grade of B- or better, and must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Transfer coursework is limited to 9 hours. For more details transfer coursework, refer to the section on Transfer of Credit in the Graduate Catalog.

Incomplete Grades. An Incomplete grade may be assigned when a student is unable to complete a course due to extenuating circumstances and when all requirements can clearly be completed within a reasonable time. For more details, refer to the section on Incomplete Grades in the Graduate Catalog. Incomplete grades are not counted as satisfactorily completed courses and are not recognized as such by Graduate Studies for fellowship purposes nor by Financial Aid. Students on financial assistance must check with the Financial Aid office to see if the receipt of an incomplete grade will affect their financial award. All incompletes in courses included in a student's program of study must be completed before a student can enroll in dissertation hours.

Withdrawal Policy. If a student decides to withdraw from a course, they must do so by the semester's withdrawal deadline. In doing so, the student is still liable for tuition and fees for the course. For a semester's withdrawal deadline, refer to the Academic Calendar.

Petitions and Grievances. It is the student's responsibility to be informed of graduate policies and procedures; however, should a student wish to request an exception to a university or program policy, he or she must file a petition that outlines the nature of their request. Normally, petitions are presented to the graduate program's coordinator and/or committee, the college's Director of Graduate Services and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Council for consideration. Should a student wish to file a grievance, she or he should first review UCF's Golden Rule and the Academic Grievance Procedures in the Graduate Catalog.

Graduate Research

Research is a vital part of graduate education, particularly for doctoral students. Students should work closely with faculty members to enhance their research skills. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with the resources identified below:

- Students should closely adhere to the expectations for Integrity and Compliance for studies involving human and animal research > [IRB Webpage](#).
- Students should complete [CITI Training](#)
- [Proprietary and Confidential Information](#)
- [Ownership of Intellectual Property](#)
- Students should apply the research standards, ethics, and practices identified in the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.
- Students working in laboratories where physical danger is present should follow the safety standards established for that laboratory setting.

Financial Support

Assistantships

Graduate teaching assistantships and graduate research assistantships are available for doctoral students. These assistantships include stipends and tuition waivers (fall and spring semesters) for up to three years-given suitable performance on assigned tasks and satisfactory progress toward the degree. In the spring of the third year following the successful completion of the prospectus phase, students entering the dissertation phase are eligible for a fourth year of funding commencing in the summer before the fourth year (College of Graduate Studies requires continuous enrollment during the dissertation phase).

Fellowships

The program will work with the entering students to apply for internal funding opportunities (e.g. Dean's Fellowships, Presidential and Trustee fellowships, and other scholarships).

Travel Support

Doctoral students are encouraged to submit and present their research at refereed academic conferences affiliated with the Communication Discipline. Students may apply for financial support using the Traveling Scholar form.

Graduate Student Associations

Students are encouraged to participate in the University of Central Florida's Graduate Student Association: <https://ucfsga.com/graduate-student-association/>

Professional Development

Collaborative experiences and internship opportunities abound for students in the Strategic Communication doctoral program. Students are welcome to engage in experiential learning with media organizations, corporate social responsibility/community engagement departments, health organizations, nonprofit organizations, research firms, public affairs firms, and public relations firms, to name a few.

Potential community partners who have specifically identified opportunities for collaboration with our doctoral students include: the development of strategic communication plans for their organizations; applied research and creative advertising and marketing campaigns; health communication campaigns; risk and crisis communication planning; public communication about science-related topics to non-experts; thought leadership for behavioral

change that positively impacts society; communication evaluation (pre-posttest) and measurement; message testing; community engagement efforts; media analysis; social analytics (e.g., network analysis techniques); data collection and analysis; advanced client counsel; and public policy research, among others.

Job Search

Students will be assisted in their job search process through consultation with individual faculty members, workshops sponsored by the Nicholson School of Communication and Media, professional association Websites, and job fairs at professional meetings.

Forms

The following forms are helpful to doctoral students:

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

Useful Links

- [Program Website](#)
- [College Website](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

Graduate Faculty

Dr. Tim Brown, Associate Professor

Research interests: Media and Society, New Media in Journalism, New Media in Education, Industry/Academy Relationship

Contact Info: timbrown@ucf.edu

Dr. Steven Collins, Associate Professor

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