



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Graduate Program Handbook - 2025/26

*Strategic Communication Ph.D.*

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Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the *Strategic Communication Ph.D. program*.

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Nicholson School of Communication and Media, College of Sciences  
Last updated Fall 2025



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# Navigating Policy and Resources at the University of Central Florida

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at the University of Central Florida.

## ACADEMIC CATALOGS

These online catalogs can help you quickly locate and save details about our undergraduate and graduate programs. Whether you are a prospective student or already enrolled, you can easily see what the University of Central Florida has to offer!



Current Undergraduate Offerings

VISIT CATALOG




Latest Graduate Programs

VISIT CATALOG



Prior Years' Catalogs

VISIT ARCHIVES



## THE GOLDEN RULE STUDENT HANDBOOK

## STUDENT LIFE

ORLANDO, FL | 73°F

### Student Handbook



### Knight Life at UCF

Don't just go to college — get the most out of it. At UCF, you'll have many ways to get involved inside and outside of the classroom. From application to graduation, you'll be inspired to do amazing things. So whether you prefer academics and research or campus activities and athletics, we'll provide you with the tools and support you need to find your place and foster your purpose.

Discover your next adventure at UCF.

## GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

### Understanding Your Graduate Experience

[Student Handbook Intro](#)  
[Financial Matters](#)  
[Role of the College of...](#)

## UCF Regulations



HOME NOTICE ARCHIVES SUBSCRIBE TO NOTIFICATIONS UCF POLICIES

## Pathways to Success

Personal and Professional Development Opportunities



## Chapter 5: Students

## How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is an essential guide to navigating your Ph.D. in Strategic Communication. Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student will be answered by the various sources of policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms listed in this document. Please refer to the Table of Contents to seek answers to specific inquiries. The information provided here will be reviewed in orientations, but it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be aware of the relevant policies and procedures.

## Who to Contact for Questions

The following campus resources are excellent sources for answers to any additional questions you may have.

### **Graduate Program Staff**

Each graduate program has at least one department staff person, in our case, the graduate student services coordinator, who serves as a point person for program policy and procedures. The graduate student services coordinator is well-versed in most elements of graduate education that extend beyond academic instruction in your program and will likely be your first stop for questions related to anything in this handbook. The current Graduate Student Services Coordinator associated with this program is Michael Haney and can be reached by email at [nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu) or by phone at 407-235-3576.

### **Graduate Program Faculty Administration**

#### **Graduate Coordinators**

Each graduate program has one faculty member designated to direct its educational vision and structure. The current Graduate Coordinator in the Communication area is Dr. Ann Miller. You can contact her at [ann.miller@ucf.edu](mailto:ann.miller@ucf.edu).

### **Graduate School Services**

For general graduate inquiries and graduate student services, please review the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website as an additional resource.

## Onboarding

We encourage students to stay in contact with their Graduate Coordinator throughout the summer before they begin the program to have current information about orientation and onboarding.

## Introduction/Overview Section

### Complete Name of Degree

Strategic Communication Ph.D.

### College

College of Sciences

### Department

Nicholson School of Communication and Media

### Program Type

Doctoral

### Program Website

<https://communication.ucf.edu/degree/strategic-communication-ph-d/>

### Year of Program Inception

2019

### Program Overview Narrative

Strategic communication, one of the fastest-growing areas 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 working in the public and private sectors to solve real-world problems.*

The Ph.D. in Strategic Communication offers advanced education in emergency risk communication, crisis communication, health communication, and public relations. 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.

The curriculum provides a rigorous program of study preparing students to research and teach, as well as to develop and test messages that prepare for, respond to, and learn from critical situations where health and/or social and/or economic interests are at risk or in crisis.

## Student Learning Outcomes/Competencies

The core feature of this program is training experts to bring the best social science research and theory to emergency risk communication, crisis communication, health communication, and public relations, and to apply that knowledge to policy-relevant issues in both academic and non-academic settings.

The applied nature of research and theory in the program prepares students for career success in both academic and non-academic professional settings.

## Student Expectations

A Ph.D. is not a casual undertaking. To be successful in the program, you will need excellent time management, reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. The program emphasizes community and professional collaboration that requires effective communication across differences and difficulties. Students will excel if they have a strong commitment to their studies, a curious mind, and the capacity to engage with their peers and faculty. To achieve these goals, students in the doctoral program are required to present and/or publish research under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

## Program Professional Conduct/Ethics Statement

All Strategic Communication Ph.D. students are expected to represent the Nicholson School of Communication and Media with the highest standards of ethics and integrity. We encourage students to read the National Communication Association [Credo for Ethical](#) Communication for more details. Students are also expected to abide by the [UCF Golden Rule](#).

## Professional Development

All Ph.D. students will begin with a zero-credit colloquium course that introduces them to the field, professional organizations, program expectations, and essential skills in

doctoral study. Additionally, there will be monthly research colloquia in which faculty or students present their research, as well as informal brown bag lunches with faculty, focused on specific topics. Students are required to participate in at least two professional development activities each academic year in NSCM. Full-time first-semester doctoral students are expected to attend all research colloquia. Additionally, the College of Graduate Studies requires completion of several courses in its [Pathways to Success](#) program.

## Advising/Mentoring

Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members.

Your advisor has two main roles: 1) to assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field, and 2) to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed at an acceptable level in each of your degree milestones. Other roles of your advisor may include tracking your progress in completing your degree, assisting with course selection and planning your academic path, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research opportunities.

Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Be sure to discuss this with your advisor.

## Finding & Selecting an Advisor

Your advisor should be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and project/research interests match closely with those that you intend to acquire. To learn more about the faculty in your program, consider consulting the following sources:

- Courses and seminars you attend
- [Our program website](#)
- Faculty publications
- A prospective advisor's current students

Additionally, you may wish to have a discussion with a prospective advisor. Below are questions to consider asking in this discussion, though this is not a complete list. Take time to identify what is most important to you in your graduate training and ask questions accordingly.

## Questions to Ask of Prospective Advisors

- What is your philosophy regarding the amount of guidance the advisor should provide to a student during the preparation of the dissertation proposal, dissertation writing, etc.?
- How frequently do you typically meet with advisees?
- What regularly scheduled activities (e.g., group meetings, joint group meetings, research clubs) would you suggest I get involved with that provide an opportunity to get outside input on my research project and to hear about the work of other students?
- Do you include your graduate students in professional activities that will familiarize them with their field of interest/research, such as reviewing manuscripts and meeting with visiting speakers?
- How long do you think it should take me to get my degree?
- What are your former graduate students (if any) doing now?
- What is your general philosophy of graduate training, and what goals do you have for your graduate students?

No faculty member is obligated to accept a student's request to serve as advisor, though invitations are often accepted unless the faculty member judges that a different advisor would serve your needs better.

After you have located your permanent advisor, be sure to talk through with them about your values, goals, and responsibilities; expectations about how you will meet and maintain contact; and how regular reviews and evaluation of progress will be structured. Should problems arise in the advisor-student relationship, students and/ or faculty should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator.

## Changing Your Advisor

As the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. If you decide that you would prefer working with a different advisor, discuss this with your prospective advisor to seek the change. If you have already finalized your dissertation committee, you will need to inform committee members and the graduate coordinator of the change and repeat the approval process. All necessary forms are in the Strategic Communication PhD webcourse. If you have difficulty locating a form, please contact the graduate student services coordinator at [nicholsongrad@ucf.edu](mailto:nicholsongrad@ucf.edu).

## Giving & Receiving Feedback

Although your advisor is likely to institute a regular meeting schedule, if they do not, you should approach them to discuss feedback mechanisms.

## Program Assessment

At the end of each academic year, you will be required to complete two assessment mechanisms—one for the Colleges of Sciences and one for the Strategic Communication PhD program. Both units will initiate contact with you via email with instructions.

## How to Get Involved

As a graduate student at UCF, you have a multitude of opportunities to become involved on campus and in your academic discipline. This involvement often enhances your academic, professional, and personal growth through developing advanced leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides an opportunity for professional networking.

## In Our Discipline

There are many regional, national, and international organizations that will be important to your development as a doctoral student. While you should work closely with your advisor to select the most salient opportunities, the following organizations are valuable places to start:

- [National Communication Association \(NCA\)](#)
- [International Communication Association \(ICA\)](#)
- [Broadcast Education Association \(BEA\)](#)
- [Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication \(AEJMC\)](#)
- [Public Relations Society of America \(PRSA\)](#)
- [European PR Education and Research Association \(EUPRERA\)](#)

## On Campus & In the Community

You may also consider the following on-campus involvement:

- Joining the [COMMNotes listserve](#) from NCA
- Joining the NSCM Graduate Student Council
- Participating in the university's [Graduate Student Advisory Council](#) and
- Connecting with [Downtown Student Engagement](#)

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.

## Curriculum Section

### Admission Requirements

- Applicants must have an earned master's degree or its equivalent in Communication or a related field (e.g., public relations, emergency management). The Graduate Program Coordinator, in conjunction with the graduate admissions committee, 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.
- 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 coordinator.
- 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). This statement should clearly articulate how your work aligns with the purpose and character of this program.
- 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. If the student did not write a master's thesis, an example of other empirical research can be substituted.
- A CV or Resume.
- Applicants applying to this program who have attended a college/university outside the United States must provide a course-by-course credential evaluation with GPA calculation. Credential evaluations are accepted from [World Education Services \(WES\)](#) or [Josef Silny and Associates, Inc.](#) only.
- International applicants whose first language is not English are required to submit results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the Duolingo English Test unless they

hold a degree from a U.S. accredited institution. The minimum TOEFL score for full admissions consideration is 80 on the Internet-based test (IBT). Applicants desiring a graduate teaching assistantship must take the speaking portion of the TOEFL and score a 26 or higher. The minimum IELTS score is 6.5 (7.0 for applicants desiring a graduate teaching assistantship). The minimum Duolingo test score is 120. Applicants should plan to take the appropriate test no later than early November to ensure they meet the January deadline. It can take 4 to 6 weeks for the university to receive test scores.

Meeting minimum UCF admission criteria does not guarantee program admission. Final admission is based on an evaluation of the applicant's abilities, past performance, recommendations, match of this program and faculty expertise to the applicant's career/academic goals, and the applicant's potential for completing the degree.

## Degree Requirements

**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.)

### *Core Requirements – 15 Credit Hours*

- COM 7464 Theory Building for Strategic Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7529 Strategic Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7815 Risk Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7236 Seminar in Risk and Crisis Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6401 Communication Theory (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.)
- COM 7325 Seminar in Research Methods (3 cr.)\*
- SPC 7685 Rhetorical Criticism of Strategic Communication

Note: First-year doctoral students who have not completed graduate-level courses in quantitative research methods in the last five years are strongly encouraged to enroll in COM 5312 Introduction to Communication Research (3 credit hours) in their first semester. The course will count as an elective.

- Students may substitute a research methods course that supports their specific research program for COM 7325 with advisor approval.
- COM7325 is repeatable once, if taken a second time, it will be considered an elective.
- Students without recent research coursework may be required to take COM5312 in addition to the research courses listed above.

### ***Community Engagement Practicum – 3 Credit Hours***

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

### ***Unrestricted Electives – 15 Credit Hours***

Choose from the NSCM graduate courses below. Special topics, study abroad, independent study, directed research, internship and other graduate level courses may be counted as restricted electives, pending approval of the program coordinator for up to 6 credit hours total. Note: Non-Nicholson School courses may be offered on the UCF Main campus.

- COM 5932 Topics in Communication Theory and Research (3 cr.)
- COM 6046 Interpersonal Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6121 Communication Management (3 cr.)
- COM 6145 Organizational Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6463 Studies in Intercultural Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 6467 Studies in Persuasion (3 cr.)
- COM 7227 Seminar in Health Communication (3 cr.)
- COM 7325 Seminar in Research Methods (3 cr.)
- COM 7745 Current Issues in Communication (3 cr.)
- MMC 6307 International Communication (3 cf.)
- MMC 6567 New Media (3 cr.)
- MMC 6600 Media Effects and Audience Analysis (3 cr.)
- MMC 6735 Social Media as Communication (3 cr.)
- PUR 6005 Theories of Public Relations (3 cr.)
- PUR 6215 Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility (3 cr.)

- PUR 6403 Crisis Public Relations (3 cr.)
- SPC 6430 Teaching Communication (3 cr.)

***Dissertation – 15 Credit Hours***

- COM 7980 Dissertation Research

**Sample Plan of Study/Course Sequence/Completion Timeline**

*Below are SAMPLE timelines for completion of the program. Please note that, except for a student’s first semester, this is a suggested timeline. Students are expected to develop their own timeline in consultation with their faculty advisor or with the graduate program coordinator.*

<b>Fall Year 1 (9 hours)</b>	<b>Spring Year 1 (9 hours)</b>	<b>Summer Year 1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM 7920 Doctoral Colloquium (0 hours)</li> <li>• COM 7529 Strategic Communication</li> <li>• COM 7815 Risk Communication OR COM 7236 Seminar in Risk &amp; Crisis</li> <li>• COM 6304 Quantitative Research Methods in Communication OR COM 5312 Introduction to Research Methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM 6303 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication</li> <li>• COM 7464 Theory Building for Strategic Communication OR Restricted Elective</li> <li>• COM 7325 Seminar in Research Methods OR Restricted Elective</li> </ul>	
<b>Fall Year 2 (9 hours)</b>	<b>Spring Year 2 (9 hours)</b>	<b>Summer Year 2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC 7685 Rhetorical Criticism of Strategic Communication OR Restricted Elective</li> <li>• COM 7815 Risk Communication OR COM 7236 Seminar in Risk &amp; Crisis</li> <li>• Restricted elective OR COM 6304 Quantitative Research Methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted elective</li> <li>• Restricted elective OR COM 7325 Seminar in Research Methods</li> <li>• Restricted elective OR COM 7464 Theory Building for Strategic Communication</li> <li>• Establish dissertation committee</li> </ul>	
<b>Fall Year 3 (9 hours)</b>	<b>Spring Year 3</b>	<b>Summer year 3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted elective OR SPC 7685 Rhetorical Criticism of Strategic Communication</li> <li>• Restricted elective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM 7980 Dissertation (3 hours)</li> <li>• Dissertation proposal. defense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM 7980 Dissertation (3 hours)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Engagement/Internship/Directed Research</li> <li>• Advise of candidacy exam by Sept. 15</li> <li>• Take Candidacy Examinations</li> </ul>		
<b>Fall Year 4</b>	<b>Spring Year 4</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM7980 Dissertation (3 hours)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM 7980 Dissertation (6 hours)</li> <li>• Dissertation final defense</li> </ul>	

## Statement of Graduate Research

A doctoral degree is a research degree. Scholars in strategic communication and related fields engage in research in public relations, risk and crisis communication, health communication, and related areas to solve real-world problems. Students are expected to adhere to [principles of ethical research elucidated by the National Communication Association](#), as well as broader scientific principles of research with human subjects laid out in [the Belmont Report](#).

## Examination Section

### Exam Introduction

Upon completion of 36 hours of coursework, including a minimum of 9 hours of methodology coursework and all core courses, students will be eligible to take the written candidacy examination. The examinations will be used to determine the students' knowledge of theory, methods, and past and present research in their chosen areas of focus.

### Scheduling of Exams

Candidacy examinations will be administered in the fall and spring of each year. (Exams may be scheduled in summer if the committee agrees and the student is enrolled in at least one credit hour in that term.) Students must notify the graduate program coordinator by September 15 for fall exams and by January 15 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.

## Candidacy/Qualifying Exam

The examination committee will be composed of three UCF graduate faculty members. 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 4 exams of 4 hours each over a period that does not exceed two weeks (14 calendar days). The examination committee will generate the questions to reflect program outcomes specifically tailored to the individual student. The questions covered on the exams will consist of research methods, program core, and specific topics in strategic communication. Exam areas will be identified by the student in consultation with their examination committee.

Advisors should engage in a high level of transparency with their advisees during preparation for the exams. Each committee member can make decisions about the use of notes or a bibliography in the exam question they provide. There will be no access to other resources during the exam (e.g., Internet, books, articles). The examination questions will be graded on a four-point scale (1 = entirely 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 they fail. 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 their 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.

## Community Engagement Requirement

Students in the Strategic Communication Ph.D. program are required to complete three credits as part of the experiential research requirement for the degree. This practicum requirement provides an opportunity to apply theory and research skills to local issues during their program. This requirement is fulfilled in one of three ways:

- Enroll in COM 7528 Communication and Community Engagement (practicum) with your advisor.
- Complete COM 6946 Internship for 3 credits under the supervision of your primary advisor.
- Completed COM 6918 Directed Research for 3 credits under the supervision of a graduate faculty member in the program, with approval of your advisor.

Goals:

- Build partnerships in and outside of UCF
- Develop skills under direct faculty and community leader mentorship
- Engage in the application of the knowledge students gain in the program

Deliverables:

- Project proposal – this should include a preliminary plan for the community engagement project or internship and be submitted to your advisor in the first two weeks of enrollment in the credit hours (or earlier). List contact information and descriptions of community/professional partners, anticipated project outcomes, and a timeline of progress.
- Project completion report – this should include a description of the project, including links to or attachments that contain the deliverables or evidence of project outcomes. If applicable to the project, attach IRB approval for the research component of the project.

Examples of community-engaged work:

- A special project at your current job that is outside your regular duties, that could allow you to demonstrate your ability to provide evidence-based solutions to organizational problems, working with a local mission-based organization on a campaign or grant, or creative activities with the approval of your advisor.

## **Dissertation Section**

Doctoral Dissertation - Overview

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. As such, it is the final milestone for the Ph.D. program and is typically completed in the third and fourth years of the program. Students should anticipate the process taking three semesters at a minimum, but more likely four. The dissertation document includes the following chapters at a minimum: 1) Introduction, 2) Literature Review, 3) Method, 4) Findings, 5) Discussion and Conclusion, as well as a complete bibliography and any necessary appendices. The process includes a proposal defense, research engagement, and a final defense.

## Dissertation – Form and Content

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in the [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#).

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](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

The dissertation will be completed in the American Psychological Association (APA) style. Dissertations vary in length and content depending on the specialty area and methodology used. Students should discuss expectations with their committee very early on and schedule regular check-ins to ensure appropriate progress.

## University Dissertation Requirements

Students wishing to take dissertation credit hours must have successfully entered candidacy. That is, they have completed all coursework, taken and passed all qualifying exams, completed all university-mandated academic integrity (responsible conduct of research) training, and have all associated documents submitted and approved by the related deadlines on the academic calendar. Students will work with their graduate advisor to enroll in the relevant dissertation course. Students may not enroll in more than nine credits in any given semester and must enroll in at least three credits; full-time is three credits each semester. Graduate policy states students have seven years from the beginning of the program to complete the degree.

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.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Consult with the graduate director or advisor for potential earlier 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
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit a signed approval form by the final submission deadline
- Submit the final dissertation document by the final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in the Thesis and Dissertation [Webcourse](#).

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](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

## Doctoral Candidate

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 except for dissertation hours.
- Successful completion of the candidacy examination.
- Formation of an advisory committee, consisting of approved graduate faculty.
- Completion of the academic integrity requirement

## Dissertation – Deadlines

### **Fall 25 Thesis/Dissertation Hours Enrollment Deadlines**

Initial Committee Submission: July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Passing Candidacy Submission: July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Thesis/Dissertation Release Option Submission: October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Thesis/Dissertation Format Review: October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
\*Thesis/Dissertation Defense Deadline: November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Thesis/Dissertation Final Submission: November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
\*Passing Dissertation Proposal: December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

\*Students are not allowed to defend their proposal and their dissertation in the same semester.

### **Spring 26 Thesis/Dissertation Hours Enrollment Deadlines**

Initial Committee Submission: November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Passing Candidacy Submission: November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
Thesis/Dissertation Release Option Submission: March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Thesis/Dissertation Format Review: March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
\*Thesis/Dissertation Defense Deadline: April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Thesis/Dissertation Final Submission: April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
\*Passing Dissertation Proposal: May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

\*Students are not allowed to defend their proposal and their dissertation in the same semester.

**Intent to Graduate Deadline:** June 23<sup>rd</sup> – October 10<sup>th</sup>

## **Dissertation – Committee**

Dissertation committees should be established at the end of the second year or the beginning of the third year of study, prior to taking the candidacy exam. Students who successfully complete their candidacy examination are allowed to 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 Graduate Program Coordinator. 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 the University of Central Florida's graduate faculty or a graduate faculty scholar from outside the field of communication. Additional graduate faculty or graduate faculty scholars outside the university may be appointed.

## Dissertation – Proposal/Prospectus

The purpose of the dissertation proposal hearing is to explain the subject under investigation, place it within the existing scholarly literature, and present the planned approach for writing the dissertation. The proposal hearing may not take place until the end of 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 be completed before full consideration and approval. The committee should clearly articulate any changes they require and the process for reviewing revisions.

The proposal must be made available to the committee at least two weeks (unless otherwise agreed upon) before the defense date. Proposal defenses should be scheduled before the final exam week of the semester in order to submit paperwork in a timely manner. The committee should complete the Dissertation Proposal Defense Form and submit it to the program coordinator. The dissertation proposal defense must take place in a different semester from the final defense.

The proposal will be comprised of an 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.

## Dissertation – IRB

Many dissertations will require the completion of the IRB approval process after the successful completion of the Proposal defense. Students should have completed CITI training and any other necessary research training before the development of the proposal.

[CITI research certification](#)

[IRB submission process](#)

Please note that all students planning to complete a dissertation must complete the UCF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Webcourse and attach the completion certificate when submitting their advisory committee.

## Dissertation – Defense

Students will prepare for their dissertation defense in consultation with their advisor/dissertation chair. 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 (unless otherwise agreed upon) 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 only. If the candidate successfully defends the dissertation, the committee recommends that the final form of the dissertation be completed and that the University of Central Florida confer the Ph.D. degree.

## Dissertation – Submission Procedures

After students have successfully defended their dissertation, they must follow the guidelines and instructions for working with the College of Graduate Studies through [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation](#) to have the document prepared for publication and final submission.

# Program and Institutional Policies

## Absences

Students who anticipate that they may not be able to enroll continuously due to external circumstances should apply for Special Leave of Absence. Specifically, students who are taking courses should apply for a Special Leave of Absence when they cannot enroll in more than two consecutive semesters. Students who are in thesis/dissertation hours should apply for a Special Leave of Absence when they cannot enroll in one semester of every three consecutive semesters to maintain active student status.

To qualify for a Special Leave of Absence, the student must demonstrate good cause (e.g., illness, family issues, financial difficulties, personal circumstances, recent maternity/paternity, employment issues). The specific reason for the Leave of Absence request must be indicated by the student on the Leave of Absence Form. Due to current U.S. government regulations, international students must be enrolled every fall and spring semester. For students in this category, a Special Leave of Absence is only available for documented medical reasons.

## Academic Standards/Conduct/Integrity

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

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: <http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html>.

Please refer to the UCF [Golden Rule](#) for additional UCF conduct expectations.

## Accommodations

UCF admits a diverse graduate student population. Some of those students may need accommodations to help them be successful in the program. Students can find more information about formal accommodation from the Student Accessibility Services office: <https://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/accommodations/>

## Admission to Candidacy

A student must demonstrate their readiness for the PhD program by successfully completing the candidacy examination before admission to full doctoral status and enrollment in dissertation hours. The Candidacy Examination should be taken when the student is nearing the end of coursework. The exam is administered by the members of the student's dissertation advisory committee or another appropriate committee appointed by the program. Admission to candidacy will be approved by the program director and the college coordinator and forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies for status change. Students must complete all academic integrity training as listed above before the College of Graduate Studies can approve their admission to candidacy. Only after admission to candidacy may a student register for doctoral dissertation hours (COM 7980/COM 7987). Effective beginning Summer 2019, students must have passed candidacy and have the candidacy and dissertation advisory committee documentation received and processed by the College of Graduate Studies by the date listed in the academic calendar in order to enroll in dissertation hours for that term.

Doctoral students admitted to candidacy are expected to enroll in dissertation hours and to devote full-time effort to conducting their dissertation research and writing the required dissertation document. Students in doctoral candidacy must continuously enroll in at least three hours of dissertation coursework (XXX 7980) one semester of every three consecutive semesters in order to maintain active status.

## Annual Review

Annual reviews are required for all doctoral students in order to assess how students are doing academically, as well as to track progress toward milestones in the program. The annual review is an important opportunity to reflect on your own goals and discuss any areas of improvement with your temporary or permanent advisor. Students complete the review for the College of Sciences in collaboration with their advisor, who will also provide an assessment of their performance and progress. The form will be reviewed by the program coordinator, who will provide an overall assessment and recommendation for the student moving forward.

## Appeals/Grievances

If students do not agree with an assessment or believe they have been treated unfairly, they should refer to the [Academic Grievance Procedure](#) from the graduate catalog. We encourage students to meet with their advisor and the program coordinator, if appropriate, as well.

## Communication

Students are expected to use their UCF email address for program-related information. All Ph.D. students are enrolled in the Strategic Communication Ph.D. Webcourse where essential information (e.g., reminders, program opportunities, updates, information about workshops) is posted on a regular basis. Additionally, the Webcourse will contain essential documents and forms that students need at various stages of the program.

### **Student Responsibility for University Communication**

UCF uses email as the official means of notifying students of important university business and academic information concerning registration, deadlines, financial assistance, scholarships, student accounts (including tuition and fees), academic progress and problems, and many other critical items for satisfactory completion of a UCF degree program. The university sends all business-related and academic messages to a student's campus email address to ensure that there is one repository for that information. Every student must register for and maintain a campus email account [here](#) and check it regularly to avoid missing important and critical information from the university. Any difficulty with establishing an account or with accessing an established account must be resolved through the [UCF Computer Services Service Desk](#) so that a student receives all important messages.

Additionally, each student must have an up-to-date emergency e-mail address and cell phone number by which they can be reached in case of a crisis on campus. This emergency contact information will be used only for emergency purposes. Also, both permanent and local mailing addresses must be on the record, so that any physical documents that must be mailed can be delivered.

It is critical that students maintain and regularly check their email accounts for official announcements and notifications. Communications sent to the campus email address on record will be deemed adequate notice for all university communication, including issues related to academics, finances, registration, parking, and all other matters. The University does not accept responsibility if official communication fails to reach a student who has not registered for, or maintained and checked on a regular basis, their email account, nor for students who do not read their emails. Please ensure that this

information is current and that any changes in contact information are made online through the [myUCF portal](#).

## Continuous Enrollment

All graduate students are required to enroll in at least one class over the span of the Academic year. Failure to enroll in 3 consecutive terms results in dismissal from the program. After the candidacy exam is passed for doctoral students, they are required to enroll in dissertation hours every semester until graduation. The institutional policy from the graduate catalog regarding continuous enrollment could be provided in this section. [Continuous Enrollment](#) and [Continuous Enrollment and Active Students](#).

## Disability Statement

UCF strives to be a fully accessible campus and an inclusive environment for people with disabilities. Students with accessibility concerns should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#).

## Dismissal/Discipline

If a student is not able to remain in good academic standing or meet the program standards, they may be subject to discipline and/or dismissal from the program. Any formal action will be considered by the program coordinator in consultation with the doctoral faculty and NSCM Director.

## Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance

The University of Central Florida considers its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to a respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at <https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu> and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers or inaccurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact [Student Accessibility Services](#).

For more information on Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes, contact:

- Title IX – ONAC <https://onac.ucf.edu/> & [onac@ucf.edu](mailto:onac@ucf.edu)
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – <https://sas.sswb.ucf.edu/> & [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu)
- Student Complaints and Appeals– <https://www.sdes.ucf.edu/student-complaints-and-appeals/>
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – <http://compliance.ucf.edu/> & [complianceandethics@ucf.edu](mailto:complianceandethics@ucf.edu)
- Ombuds Office – <http://www.ombuds.ucf.edu>

## Enrollment in Thesis/Dissertation Hours

All thesis and dissertation committees must be submitted at least one semester before the anticipated start of thesis or dissertation hours; see the academic calendar for deadlines related to the committee submission and candidacy. The university requires all doctoral students to take a minimum of 15 credit hours of doctoral dissertation hours; however, specific programs may require more than this minimum. Dissertation research is considered to be a full-time effort, and post-candidacy enrollment in at least three doctoral dissertations (COM 7980/ 7987) credit hours constitutes full-time graduate status. Doctoral students who have passed candidacy and have begun taking doctoral dissertation hours (COM 7980 / 7987) must be enrolled for at least one semester of every three consecutive semesters to maintain active student status. Students wishing to enroll in fewer than 3 credit hours must have approval from their advisor. Students who need to interrupt their dissertation work for extenuating circumstances must submit a Leave of Absence Form to the College of Graduate Studies. Submission and approval of the form must be obtained before the first day of classes for the term of non-enrollment.

## Golden Rule

The Golden Rule is the university's policy regarding non-academic discipline of students and limited academic grievance procedures for graduate (grade appeals in individual courses, not including thesis and dissertation courses) and undergraduate students. Information concerning The Golden Rule can be found at [www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/](http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/). Section 11, Student Academic Behavior, addresses appeals of graduate program actions or decisions.

## Grading and Grading Procedures

Faculty will determine and provide their grading schemes for each course. In general, the university uses a standard alphabetic system (i.e., A-F). Other university designations may include the following:

I	Incomplete
N	No grade reported by the instructor
S	Satisfactory (with credit)/Satisfactory Progress (Research, Thesis, or Dissertation)
U	Unsatisfactory (no credit)
W	Withdrawn
WF	Withdrawn Failing
WH	Health Form Withdrawal
WM	Medical Withdrawal
WP	Withdrawn Passing
X	Audit (no credit)

The designation of "N" will be temporarily assigned by the Registrar's Office only in the case when a grade has not been submitted by the faculty by the grades due deadline. The designator will be replaced by the earned letter grade at the earliest opportunity in the semester that immediately follows. The "N" designator may not be assigned by faculty.

Grade changes other than medical withdrawals will be considered only during the semester immediately following the one in which the grade was assigned, except that grades assigned during the spring semester may be changed during either the following summer term or fall semester. A change in grade must be approved by the dean of the college or school. If an academic action, such as dismissal or probation, has been taken by the university before a grade change, the action will remain in effect regardless of the grade change. A grade will not be changed after a degree has been conferred.

## Harassment

Discrimination based on race, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, parental status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or genetic information is prohibited.

Sexual harassment, a form of sex discrimination, is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including any of these three situations:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or enrollment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or enrollment decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or enrollment, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Occurrences will be dealt with per the guidelines above and university rules. Employees, students, or applicants for employment or admission may obtain further information on this policy, including grievance procedures, from the ONAC Coordinator. The Director of the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance is the campus Equity Coordinator responsible for concerns in all areas of discrimination. The office is located on the main campus, in Barbara Ying CMMS Building 81, Suite 101. The phone number is (407) 823-1336. Policies and guidelines are available online at <https://onac.ucf.edu/>.

## International Students

The Nicholson School of Communication and Media welcomes international students in our graduate programs. There is often additional paperwork and processes that are specific to students from other countries. The program coordinator and graduate student services coordinator will work closely with students to navigate those realities. International students should also see [UCF Global](#) for additional information about living and studying in the United States and at UCF.

## Plagiarism

Graduate students are responsible for understanding plagiarism and abiding by the expectations of academic integrity in our program and field. If this information is new to you, we encourage you to participate in the College of Graduate Studies' programming about plagiarism in the Pathways to Success Program.

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work and presenting it as your own. Any ideas, data, text, media, or materials taken from another source (either written or verbal) must be fully acknowledged. a) A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, opinions, theories, formulas, graphics, or pictures of another person without acknowledgment. b) A student must give credit to the originality of others whenever:

1. Directly quoting another person's actual words, whether oral or written;
2. Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories;
3. Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, or theories of others, whether oral or written;
4. Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; or
5. Offering materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment.
6. Using material generated by large language models (AI).

The Office of Student Conduct has a set of criteria that determines if students are in violation of plagiarism. This set of criteria may be set to a higher standard in graduate programs. Therefore, a student may not be found in violation of plagiarism by the Office of Student Conduct, but a professor or program requiring higher standards of attribution and citation may find a student in violation of plagiarism and administer program-level sanctions. The standard in doctoral programs should be the highest, as students earning these degrees are expected to be experts in their fields and produce independent work that contributes to their discipline.

NOTE ABOUT AI: Currently, faculty members have various rules about the use of AI in their course assignments. Students are responsible for carefully following the guidelines laid out in each course.

## Probation

If a student is not meeting program and institutional expectations for maintaining good academic standing, they may face probation or dismissal. Students should become familiar with information on [Academic Progress and Performance](#) to understand GPA and other requirements for maintaining good standing.

## Time Limits to Degree Completion

A student has seven years from the date of admission to the doctoral program to earn a doctoral degree.

Extenuating circumstances may arise that hinder a student's progress towards program completion and the ability to maintain continuous enrollment. If such a need arises, the student may petition for a Special Leave of Absence. Leaves are considered for medical (e.g., illness, injury) or non-medical (e.g., family needs, military deployment). Students should be proactive in maintaining accurate records with the university and petition for a Special Leave of Absence prior to the need. When this is not possible,

students should do so promptly after the need arises. Students are required to complete and submit the Leave of Absence form with all relevant supporting documents. See the [Graduate Catalog](#) for more information.

## Transfer Credit

Students should see the [Graduate Catalog](#) for information about the University limits on Transfer Credits. All transfer credits require approval from the graduate program coordinator.

## Review for Original Work (iThenticate)

The university requires all students submitting a thesis or dissertation as part of their graduate degree requirements to first have their electronic documents submitted through iThenticate for advisement purposes and review of originality. The thesis or dissertation chair is responsible for scheduling this submission to iThenticate and for reviewing the results from iThenticate with the student's advisory committee. The advisory committee uses the results appropriately to assist the student in the preparation of their dissertation.

Before the student may be approved for final submission to the university, the dissertation chair must indicate completion of the Review for Original Work through iThenticate by signing the Dissertation Approval Form.

## Additional Program Details

### Financial Aid Funding

The College of Graduate Studies Funding Website provides broad information regarding funding for graduate study. 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. (The College of Graduate Studies requires continuous enrollment during the dissertation phase.)

### Graduate Assistantship Details

The Strategic Communication Ph.D. has several [Graduate Assistantships](#) each admissions cycle that are awarded to the most competitive candidates for admission. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) in NSCM typically receive a tuition waiver, health insurance, and a stipend. Full-time GTAs are expected to teach two undergraduate courses each semester they are funded. Most GTAs will teach sections of our Fundamentals of Oral Communication Course in their first year. GTAs will work with the Ph.D. program coordinator and the General Education Program Coordinator for assignments, training, and support.

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](#). Additionally, students on a graduate teaching assistantship are required to participate in training seminars hosted by the Nicholson School of Communication and Media and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. These seminars are detailed when the GTA is presented with his/her contract.

NSCM 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. All employment of graduate teaching assistants is overseen by the Director of the NSCM.

After each semester, GTAs (graders, assistants, and associates) are required to be evaluated by the Associate Director of Communication. The Associate Director will consult with the faculty to whom the student was assigned. If the student is serving as the instructor of record, the Associate Director or a representative will review Student Perceptions of Instruction and be involved in the assessment process. 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 annual performance evaluation will also result in a loss of future assistantships.

## Graduation Requirements

Please refer to the [Commencement](#) details for official procedures, forms, and timelines.

Preparing for graduation is an exciting time, and it is important to make sure you have completed all the requirements.

- Completion of 45 hours of coursework with a cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Passage of the candidacy examination
- Completion of 15 hours of dissertation credit
- Passage of the dissertation defense
- Submission of completed dissertation
- Presentation of at least one research paper at a regional, national, or international conference
- 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

Additionally, you will want to complete the following steps:

- File your intent to graduate: The ability to file online opens at mid-term of the semester before the semester of graduation. Intents to graduate should be filed online no later than the last day of registration for the semester of graduation.

- Students who intend to graduate must complete the online Intent to Graduate Form by logging into myUCF and navigating to the Student Self-Service– Other Academics > Intent to Graduate: Apply.
- Plan for Commencement <https://graduate.ucf.edu/commencement/>

## Graduate Student Center

UCF is fortunate to have its own Graduate Student Center on the main campus. It is a great place to relax, practice a presentation in one of the conference rooms, have your lunch, and meet other graduate students. Check out the [Graduate Student Center](#) for more information.

## Student Research Week/Student Scholar Symposium

The College of Graduate Studies hosts an annual Student Scholar Symposium to provide a conference setting for our own students to showcase their work, either with poster presentations or a face-to-face presentation. This is a great opportunity to get valuable feedback and practice for larger national or international conferences. See [Student Research Week](#) for more information.

## 3 Minute Thesis (3MT)

The College of Graduate Studies hosts a [3MT](#) competition for graduate students in both the Fall and Spring Semesters. Doctoral research is presented in a novel and exciting way at UCF's Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. Doctoral students communicate their research in just three short minutes and with only one PowerPoint slide to non-expert judges while competing to win scholarship awards.

## Forms

There are many different forms associated with being in your program and a graduate student at UCF. This is the administrative side of completing a degree. Essential forms will be available in your Strategic Communication Ph.D. webcourse. Additionally, you can find many forms from the College of Graduate Studies at this link: [Forms](#).

## Useful Links/Resources

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)

- [College of Sciences](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Golden Rule](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Parking Services](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Shuttles](#)
- [UCF Downtown](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

## Graduate Faculty

### **Dr. Rufus Barfield, Associate Professor**

Research interests: Health disparities, technology in health intervention, group communication, mixed methods

Contact Info: [rufus.barfield@ucf.edu](mailto:rufus.barfield@ucf.edu)

### **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](mailto:timbrown@ucf.edu)

### **Dr. Melissa Dodd, Associate Professor**

Research interests: Activism, Corporate Communication, Public Relations, Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Media, Social Capital

Contact Info: [melissa.dodd@ucf.edu](mailto:melissa.dodd@ucf.edu)

### **Dr. Christine Hanlon, Senior Lecturer**

Research interests: Advertising, Gender, LGBTQ+, Military Recruitment and Integration

Contact Info: [Hanlon@ucf.edu](mailto:Hanlon@ucf.edu)

### **Dr. Sally Hastings, Professor**

Research interests: Communication and Bereavement, Communication and Marginalization, Intercultural, Interpersonal

Contact Info: [Sally.Hastings@ucf.edu](mailto:Sally.Hastings@ucf.edu)

### **Dr. Erica Kight, Associate Lecturer**

Research interests: Hispanic Media, Spanish-language Media, Hispanic/Latinx audiences, Diversity in Media, Representation of People of Color in Media

Contact Info: [Erika.Kight@ucf.edu](mailto:Erika.Kight@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Jihyun Kim, Professor**

Research interests: Communication and Technology, New Technology, Quantitative Methods

Contact Info: [Jihyun.Kim@ucf.edu](mailto:Jihyun.Kim@ucf.edu)

**Dr. William Kinnally, Associate Professor**

Research interests: Mass Media Effects, Effects and News Content, Social Judgement, Media Enjoyment

Contact Info: [William.Kinnally@ucf.edu](mailto:William.Kinnally@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Renata Kolodziej-Smith, Lecturer**

Research interests: Organizational and Intercultural Communication

Contact Info: [Renata.Kolodziej-Smith@ucf.edu](mailto:Renata.Kolodziej-Smith@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Xialing Lin, Assistant Professor**

Research interests: intersections of risk, crisis communication, and communication technology.

Contact info: [Xialing.Lin@ucf.edu](mailto:Xialing.Lin@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Robert Littlefield, Professor**

Research interests: Intercultural, Risk/Crisis, Forensic Pedagogy

Contact Info: [Robert.Littlefield@ucf.edu](mailto:Robert.Littlefield@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Ann Miller, Professor**

Research interests: Health Communication, Instructional Communication

Contact Info: [Ann.Miller@ucf.edu](mailto:Ann.Miller@ucf.edu)

**Dr. George Musambira, Associate Professor**

Research interests: Bereavement and Communication, International and Intercultural Communication, Non-Government Organizations, Communication and Development in African Countries

Contact Info: [George.Musambira@ucf.edu](mailto:George.Musambira@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Adam Parrish, Lecturer**

Research interests: Health Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Persuasion, Risk and Crisis Communication

Contact Info: [Adam.Parrish@ucf.edu](mailto:Adam.Parrish@ucf.edu)

**Dr. Bridget Rubenking, Associate Professor**

Research interests: Media Processing and Effects, New Media, Entertainment, Quantitative Methods

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