Master of Arts (Norman Campus)

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Requirements

The following core curriculum (6 hours) is required of all Master’s students to insure uniformity and consistency in the quality of the Master’s program.

- COMM 5003: Quantitative Research Methods OR COMM 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
- COMM 5013: Introduction to Graduate Study

Program Options

The Master’s student may follow one of two options in planning his or her program:

1. A minimum of 32 coursework hours and a comprehensive examination, or
2. The thesis program, which requires a minimum of 26 coursework hours, a thesis and an oral examination over the thesis (COMM 5980), four hours.

Students are encouraged to take some course work outside of the department. However, a minimum of 24 coursework hours of the student’s M.A. must be in communication courses.

M.A. students will be advised during orientation meetings. Students may also discuss their enrollment options and any questions with Shay Glover, Academic Counselor. Upon entry, AP M.A. students will be advised by the Graduate Liaison until a permanent advisor is obtained. On-campus M.A. students will be assigned a first-year advisor by the graduate committee. Students should obtain a permanent major advisor from the department’s graduate faculty by the second semester at the latest. The student, advisor, and Graduate Liaison must sign the Request for Appointment of Committee Chair form included at the end of this handbook and turn it in to the department office for inclusion in the student’s file. With the help of the permanent advisor, the student will develop a program of courses and research to meet his or her individual needs. Permission to become a faculty member’s permanent advisee must be secured from the faculty member in question.

The student should submit the Admission to Candidacy Form to the Graduate Liaison for approval prior to submitting it to the Graduate College.

Credit Limitations

No more than 25% of the credit hours required for the Master’s degree may be transfer credit from another department at the University of Oklahoma or from another university.

In order for transfer credits to be accepted toward a graduate degree, the transfer credit must:

1. Represent valid graduate credit earned in graduate level courses at an accredited university
2. Carry a grade of A, B, or Satisfactory (B- does not transfer)
3. Not be more than five-years old at the time of admission
4. Be applicable to the degree program
5. Be approved by the department and the Dean of the Graduate College

If a transfer course has the same title as a course taken at OU, the content of the course must be substantially different to count both for credit. To make this case, the student must provide a syllabus and a letter from the Graduation Liaison illustrating that the classes covered different content. This letter must be submitted to the Graduate College with the Admission to Candidacy Form.

Transfer credit is considered neutral in computing the University of Oklahoma grade point average. No graduate credit may be earned by correspondence courses or advanced standing examinations. However, credit from a professional degree may be applied toward a graduate degree if it meets the criteria listed above. Credit hours may be counted toward satisfying the requirements for one Master’s degree only, with the exception of approved dual-degree programs.

No more than six hours of the course work for a Master’s degree (excluding thesis, 5980) may be in Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded courses. Students may exceed the 6-hour limit on these courses only if they take hours beyond the minimum hours required for their degree. M.A. students should not take more than three hours in Directed Readings, which is letter graded.

**Time Limits for Completion**

A student registered in the Master’s program should complete all of the degree work within five calendar years after his or her first graduate enrollment at OU. When an additional year is needed to complete the degree, the student and advisor may petition the department for a one-year extension. The student, advisor, and Graduate Dean must be notified in writing of the department’s decision. If the decision is denied, the student will be dismissed. An extension of time beyond one year will require approval from the Graduate Dean. The department is required to describe how it will determine that the student is current in the field at the time the degree is awarded. This may involve re-examination or additional course work.

**Standards of Performance**

All Master’s degree students are required to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA in all graduate courses attempted. One grade of C or a GPA under 3.0 will cause the student to be placed on academic probation. The student will then have a 12-hour probationary period. The student must not make lower than a B or a grade of U during this time. At the end of the 12-hour probationary period, the student must have raised his or her overall GPA to 3.0. Failure of either of these two conditions will result in the student being unable to continue enrollment in graduate classes. Should a student receive two or more Cs, an automatic stop will be placed on enrollment. To have this stop lifted, the student must submit a plan for improving his or her performance and
petition the Graduate Liaison to stay in the program. If the student is permitted to reenroll, the student must still obtain an overall GPA of 3.0 by the end of 12 hours after the first C.

**Master’s Thesis Option**

A Master’s student should choose the thesis option, in conjunction with his or her advisory committee, *as soon as possible*. The thesis committee must be comprised of at least three members from the Department of Communication. The members of the committee must be members of the graduate faculty. The student must, with the cooperation of his or her advisor, select a thesis subject no later than the semester in which the student plans to start thesis work.

To obtain a degree from the University of Oklahoma, any research utilizing human participants must obtain approval from the University of Oklahoma—Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NCIRB), *even if the individual is not collecting data from participants at the University of Oklahoma*. This approval must be obtained *before* any participants are recruited or data are collected. If the thesis utilizes participants from any other university or is affiliated with any other university, then permission must be obtained from that university’s IRB as well. Before anyone can obtain IRB approval, he or she must complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI), which is required for all investigators. A student should complete this training before submitting an IRB application, as otherwise, it will be returned. For further information see [http://www.ouhsc.edu/irb-norman/training.asp](http://www.ouhsc.edu/irb-norman/training.asp). If the student plans to utilize the Department of Communication Research Subject Pool, he or she should reference the policies listed on page 43 of this handbook.

The student then prepares a prospectus and submits it to the thesis advisory committee that will meet with the student to discuss the proposed study. The prospectus must be signed by committee members and filed in the student’s departmental folder. Once the prospectus is approved, the student must obtain a *Thesis Title Card* from the Graduate College. The card must be completed and signed by all members of the student’s thesis committee. The signed card must then be returned to the Graduate College. If a change in thesis becomes necessary as research progresses, a new *Thesis Title Card* must be processed.

**Enrollment in Research**

Following initial enrollment in COMM 5980, which must be for a minimum of two hours, the graduate student must maintain continuous enrollment during each fall and spring semester until requirements for the degree are completed or candidacy is discontinued. If a student is actively working on a thesis, seeking committee advice, or using university facilities, thesis enrollment must be maintained during the summer semester as well. Requirements for full-time enrollment status are in effect while the student is engaged in thesis research. Taking no other course work and enrolling in only two hours of COMM 5980 does not constitute full-time status.

In the event that the graduate student does not comply with the continuous enrollment policy, the student must enroll during the semester in which graduation is expected in the exact
number of hours of COMM 5980 that would have been completed with continuous enrollment. In addition, a late enrollment fee must be paid for each of the missed semesters. The final determination of the number of hours of COMM 5980 in which the student must enroll in the final semester in the degree program, along with the collection of the appropriate fees, is the responsibility of the Graduate College and the Office of Admissions and Records.

Admission to Candidacy

A student who has done satisfactory graduate work and has maintained an overall GPA of 3.0 on all residence graduate level courses may be admitted to candidacy for a Master’s degree as soon as he or she has enrolled in sufficient hours for the degree and has a committee selected. The committee consists of an advisor and two other members of the graduate faculty. To apply for admission to candidacy, a student must complete and submit the Admission to Candidacy form provided by the Graduate College. An Admission to Candidacy form must be filed in the Graduate College no later than the first Monday in March (for summer graduates), the first Monday in April (for fall graduates) and the first Monday in October (for spring graduates).

All listed coursework must have satisfactory grades and no incompletes. When appropriate, use the program-specific form.

One must obtain signatures from all committee members and the Graduate Liaison on the Application for Approval of the Master’s Thesis Topic and Committee Membership, which should be turned in to the Graduate College at the same time as the Admission to Candidacy form. Any changes in the topic or committee composition results in a new copy of this form being completed and turned in to the Graduate College. This must be approved at least 14 days before the defense by the Graduate College.

Change of Thesis Title Needs Approval of Graduate Dean

Change of thesis topic or committee membership needs signatures of all old (if relevant) and new members of the committee and the Graduate Liaison.

Remember: one must initially enroll in at least two credit hours of Research for the Master’s Thesis and must continually maintain at least two hours of enrollment until one has completed the degree or discontinued candidacy.

Thesis Defense and Graduation

Students must file for graduation by the deadlines listed by the Graduate College each semester. When the student has completed the thesis to the satisfaction of his or her advisor, a hard copy of the thesis should be provided to every committee member at least two weeks before the defense. The student is responsible for allowing enough time for each member of the examining committee time to read the thesis before the examination. The student must request authority from the Graduate College for the thesis defense. At the time the authorization is requested, the student presents a copy of the completed thesis (a final draft will be acceptable) in person to the Graduate College for review at least a week before the defense. If the thesis is acceptable, the student will be issued the Authority Report Form of the Thesis Defense. The student cannot defend until he or she has obtained this form. As each
thesis defense is public, the student is also responsible for posting a notice announcing the impending defense several days before it is to be held.

The M.A. thesis defense meeting cannot be held when a student’s committee members are unavailable. Most faculty members are on 9-month appointments; therefore, examinations and/or committee meetings will not be scheduled during the summer months. Exceptions may be possible if a student is being deployed for military service and needs to complete his or her degree requirements before the deployment date. In such cases exclusively, the student may proceed to make summer arrangements only after first receiving written permission from the graduate liaison and each member of his or her committee prior to the summer semester during which he or she wishes to schedule the exam and/or thesis defense meeting. No other exceptions to the policy will be allowed.

A unanimous vote of the examining committee is expected. However, on occasion some dissenting reports are received. If one member of the examining committee dissents, the dissent is recognized as a minority report, and the student is still considered to have passed the defense. When a committee consists of more than three members and two dissent, the Graduate Dean will investigate and make the final decision on the student’s performance. If two of a committee of three dissent, or more than two of a committee of more than three members dissent, the performance will be seen as a failure. Only one attempt is afforded the candidate in defending the thesis.

Within 72 hours after the thesis defense is held, the Authority Report Form of the Thesis Defense must be returned with the results and signatures of all committee members to the Graduate College. Within 60 days of the defense or by the deadline of the desired graduation semester (whichever is earlier), the student must deliver to the Graduate College three unbound and originally signed final copies of the thesis typed on 100% cotton bond paper. The thesis must be in the form described in the instructions provided by the Graduate College. If all is in order, the copies of the thesis and a Thesis Receipt Card are given to the student. The student then delivers the three originally signed final copies of the thesis to the Acquisitions Department (Room 206), lower level two, of the Bizzell Memorial Library (before 4:30 p.m. each day). After checking the thesis for deposit, a representative of the library will sign the Thesis Receipt Card, which the student must return to the Graduate College along with the Data Entry Form for Thesis/Dissertation Title on Student’s Academic Record. The student can then be cleared for graduation.

Master’s Nonthesis Option

The same Admission to Candidacy Form procedure applies for nonthesis M.A. students. A comprehensive examination is one of the requirements of a nonthesis program. It requires the student to undertake a general review and integration of all studies. The exam is organized around fields of study rather than around courses and is not intended to repeat the final examinations of the actual courses taken. Eight hours are scheduled for the exams, which are usually divided among two 3-hour questions and one 2-hour question. One exam question must relate to a core course. All exam questions are closed book. In preparation for the
comprehensive exam, students are expected to read and study beyond the requirement of their courses. The student must be enrolled in at least two hours the semester he or she takes the exam. The examination in the Department of Communication typically consists of a written exam and may also include an oral portion if requested by any member of the examining committee.

To schedule the examination and obtain the proper paperwork, the student needs to contact Shay Glover, Academic Counselor, or Kristi Wright, Assistant to the Chair. They will request the Authority Report Form for the Comprehensive Examination in writing from the Graduate College at least one week prior to taking the exam. This form will be used by the student’s committee to show a satisfactory or unsatisfactory result on the exam. No form will be issued if the student has not filed an Admission to Candidacy Form. The student must have completed all required courses and 75% of coursework before taking the comprehensive exam. No Master’s comprehensive exam may be taken until all Is (incompletes) have been resolved or while the student is on academic probation. Once authorization is secured, the student and advisor will set the date of exams. All exams are taken on the University of Oklahoma campus. Notify the Academic Counselor, Shay Glover, or the Assistant to the Chair, Kristi Wright, to schedule a room to take the exam as soon as possible.

The comprehensive exam may not be held during the period of final course exams, when the university is not in session, or when a suitable committee cannot be assembled. The M.A. comprehensive exam cannot be held when a student’s committee members are unavailable. Most faculty members are on 9-month appointments; therefore, examinations and/or committee meetings will not be scheduled during the summer months. Exceptions may be possible if a student is being deployed for military service and needs to complete his or her degree requirements before the deployment date. In such cases exclusively, the student may proceed to make summer arrangements only after first receiving written permission from the graduate liaison and each member of his or her committee prior to the summer semester during which he or she wishes to schedule the exam and/or thesis defense meeting. No other exceptions to the policy will be allowed.

The examining committee consists of at least three members from the faculty of the Department of Communication. All committee members must be present if an oral portion is requested. Just as for the thesis option, the back of the Authority for Comprehensive Examination form must be returned to the Graduate College with the results and the signatures of all committee members within one week after the comprehensive exam is held. The same dissenting procedures apply to the nonthesis option.

Unlike the one-shot chance at a thesis option, if a student fails the comprehensive exam, the exam may be repeated once in the following semester (at the earliest) at the discretion of the examining committee. The comprehensive exam may not be given a third time.
### Master’s Paperwork and Time Table at A Glance

#### M.A. Thesis Option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Required Paperwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Advisor and Committee</td>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} Semester (full-time) or Equivalent (part-time)</td>
<td>Request for Appointment of Committee Chair (Dept. Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Prospectus</td>
<td>Semester prior to beginning research</td>
<td>Prospectus signed by all thesis advisory committee members (Dept. Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Topic Approval</td>
<td>After prospectus approval</td>
<td>Thesis Title Card (Graduate College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for Graduation</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in March (summer grads), 1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in April (fall grads), 1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in October (spring grads)</td>
<td>Graduation Application (Records)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission to Candidacy</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in March (summer grads), 1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in April (fall grads), 1\textsuperscript{st} Monday in October (spring grads)</td>
<td>Admission to Candidacy Form and Application for Approval of the Master’s Thesis and Committee Membership (Graduate College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Defense Request</td>
<td>Along with Requiring Authority Form</td>
<td>Authority Report Form of the Thesis Defense (Grad College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of Thesis</td>
<td>Along with Requiring Authority Form</td>
<td>Three copies of final draft submitted to Graduate College Dean for review. Receive Thesis Receipt Card which must be signed by Library Acquisitions and returned to the Graduate College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# M.A. Nonthesis Option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Required Paperwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Advisor and Committee</td>
<td>2nd Semester or equivalent</td>
<td>Request for Appointment of Committee Chair (Department Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for Graduation</td>
<td>1st Monday in March (summer grads), 1st Monday in April (fall grads), &amp; 1st Monday in October (spring grads)</td>
<td>Graduation Application (Records)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission to Candidacy</td>
<td>1st Monday in March (summer grads), 1st Monday in April (fall grads), &amp; 1st Monday in October (spring grads)</td>
<td>Admission to Candidacy (Graduate College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Comprehensive Exam</td>
<td>Final Semester</td>
<td>Memo from Graduate Liaison requesting permission to administer examination (Department) Authority Report Form for Comprehensive Exam (Set to the Department from the Graduate College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>Final Semester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Exam Defense</td>
<td>If requested by at least one committee member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
<td>Immediately Following Defense</td>
<td>Return Authority Report Form for Comprehensive Exam within one week of completed exam or oral defense to the Graduate College (Grad College)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>