

MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Degree Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Students admitted to the doctoral program must complete a qualifying examination. For students with a master's degree or equivalent, this examination ordinarily will occur before the student has completed 10 credits of doctoral-level work. For individuals admitted with only a baccalaureate degree and no graduate-level work, the qualifying examination will be administered after 30 credits and before 40 credits of graduate-level work have been completed. The committee designated to conduct the examination will determine whether the student's knowledge of mass communications is adequate for doctoral-level study, specify what deficiencies, if any, must be removed, and pass judgment on a proposed plan of study.

The program requirements include both semesters of the Mass Communications Proseminar (COMM 501), a foundation course and other courses selected by the student, with committee approval, that collectively constitute a coherent sequence appropriate to the advanced study of mass communications. Students are expected to take a minimum of 20 credits in communications-related courses. No more than 6 credits can be taken as independent study credits. Students also are required to take at least one course in research methods approved by the Ph.D. committee.

Upon completion of the course work approved for the plan of study, the candidate will take a comprehensive examination. Following the comprehensive examination, doctoral candidates schedule a dissertation proposal meeting at which the research plan for their dissertation is reviewed and approved by their committee. Upon completion of the dissertation, doctoral candidates present a final oral defense of their dissertations before their committees.

The communication and foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree may be satisfied by intermediate knowledge of one foreign language or by an equivalent research skill relevant to the student's field of study.