

Ph.D. Student Checklist

Department of Communication, University of Illinois

This checklist is meant to complement, NOT replace, the more detailed information in the CMN Grad Handbook at <https://communication.illinois.edu/resources/graduate-handbook>. Review the material there frequently for the most up-to-date information, and make it your first stop for policy guidelines when you have questions.

Task	Deadline and Procedure	✓ when complete
<u>STAGE 1</u> : Completion of M.A. degree	Note: For fly-ups, hours earned during the MA past the required 32 hours for the MA may be counted toward the doctoral requirements.	
<u>STAGE 2</u> : Select Ph.D. advisor (member of graduate faculty with appointment in CMN)	By end of second semester of Ph.D. coursework	
Ph.D. coursework = (64 Ph.D. hrs beyond M.A. degree) - 40 hrs minimum of courses not including research methods (20 of these in CMN) - no more than 8 hrs of independent study count toward 40	Typically, four semesters beyond M.A. coursework	
At least 12 hours outside of CMN (counts toward 40; methods ok)	Work with advisor to identify appropriate coursework outside of CMN	
Identify program of study committee (advisor plus at least two members of graduate faculty, half must be in CMN)	No later than third semester of Ph.D. coursework (ideally, end of second semester)	
Draft program of study document, meet with program of study committee to discuss research and professional goals	No later than third semester of Ph.D. coursework (ideally, end of second semester or early in third semester)	
Identify major and minor areas of specialization to focus professional development	Consult with advisor and program of study committee	
Complete research methods requirement; minimum of two courses (although often more)	Consult with advisor and program of study committee to determine best mix of methods	
File Program of Study document with Director of Graduate Study	No later than end of third semester; form at: https://communication.illinois.edu/resources/graduate-handbook/forms	
Identify doctoral exam/dissertation committee	Before or during last semester of Ph.D. coursework. (may include program of study committee, but must contain four graduate faculty, two tenured, and at least half in CMN)	
Write dissertation roadmap; turn in to advisor/committee; hold meeting of committee to determine preliminary exam questions	Begin dissertation roadmap during last semester of Ph.D. coursework (no more than 12 double-spaced pages including references)	

Task	Deadline and Procedure	✓ when complete
Write preliminary exams (semester of defense, enroll in 4 hrs of CMN 595; otherwise enroll in CMN 599)	Devise timetable for completion of each question and set firm deadlines with advisor and committee	
When advisor okays written exams, file for appointment of oral exam committee	Graduate College Student Portal for Prelim & Final Exam Committee Requests: 3 weeks prior https://go.grad.illinois.edu/student-portal	
Oral exam (prelim exam defense)	After completion of exams and appointment of exam committee. Submit signed result form to department following exam.	
Submit revised dissertation prospectus to advisor and committee for approval	Begin revisions immediately after prelim exam defense	
File approved dissertation prospectus with Director of Graduate Studies	Immediately following its approval by committee; form at: https://communication.illinois.edu/resources/graduate-handbook/forms	
<u>STAGE 3</u> : Dissertation! (enroll in CMN 599)	Draft plan and timetable with advisor, schedule defense date with advisor approval	
Appoint dissertation defense/oral exam committee at least three weeks before scheduled defense	Graduate College Student Portal for Prelim & Final Exam Committee Requests: https://go.grad.illinois.edu/student-portal	
Oral dissertation defense/exam	By middle of semester of expected graduation	
After revisions are completed and approved, obtain signatures on Final Exam Result Form and Dissertation Approval Form	Submit to department before deadline	
Complete departmental approval of dissertation (including format checking)	See https://grad.illinois.edu/thesis/format	
Deposit dissertation according to Graduate College instructions before deadline	See https://grad.illinois.edu/thesis/submit	
Add name to graduation list via Student Self-Service	Before posted deadline : https://apps.illinois.edu/selfservice/	

Note: These tasks should be completed in consultation with your advisor. Stay in good contact with them and share a copy of this checklist so you can keep track of things together. *But*, it is your job (not your advisor's job or the department's job) to get the proper forms ordered, completed, and signed at the right times. (Be aware that failure to file forms on time can delay important events such as the prelim oral defense and the dissertation defense.)

Fly-up Notes: *Hours earned during the MA past the required 32 hours for the MA may be counted toward the doctoral requirements.*

Students may run an unofficial Degree Audit via the Graduate Degree Audit Tool. <https://grad.illinois.edu/academics/registration-records/degree-audit-tool> Please note that this is a tool, not an official audit. If you find any discrepancies or have questions and would like to discuss coursework requirements, please see Will or Michelle.