

M.A. Student Checklist
Department of Communication, University of Illinois

This checklist is meant to complement, NOT replace, the more detailed information in the 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
Select M.A. advisor (member of graduate faculty with appointment in CMN)	No later than second semester of M.A. coursework	
Coursework: 32 hours minimum (24 hours in CMN)	Ongoing, consult with advisor	
At least 12 hrs in 500-level courses (at least 8 of those in CMN)	Ongoing, consult with advisor	
No more than 8 hours outside CMN	Ongoing, consult with advisor	
No more 4 hours of independent study (CMN 595)	Ongoing, consult with advisor	
Approval of M.A. coursework by advisor, and filed with Director of Graduate Study	Third semester of coursework (before scheduling comprehensive exam. Form at: https://communication.illinois.edu/resources/graduate-handbook/forms)	
Get clearance to take comprehensive exam (no incompletes in coursework)	Two months ahead of exam, check in with advisor	
Talk with advisor about post-M.A. plans (Ph.D., job market)	Anytime, but especially early in the fall semester of second year of coursework	
Schedule comprehensive exams, reserve room, and reserve laptop	If Ph.D. applicant, schedule by mid-Nov and take exams by early Jan (application deadline Dec 15) If not, schedule/take during last semester of coursework (at least eight weeks ahead of expected graduation date)	
Identify six courses and request questions from faculty; advisor writes seventh general question	At least 6-8 weeks before the exam to allow for suitable preparation and study time	
Establish exam committee who reads whole exam (two faculty plus advisor)	Eight weeks before the exam	
Take exam and have it evaluated by the committee	In time to report to Grad Admissions Committee (for Ph.D. applicants) and/or on-time graduation (for non-Ph.D. applicants)	
Advisor completes "Report of Examining Committee" form, file with Director of Graduate Study	Form at: https://communication.illinois.edu/resources/graduate-handbook/forms	
Add name to graduation list via Enterprise web self-service	At least six weeks before end of graduation semester: https://apps.uillinois.edu/selfservice/	

Note: These tasks should be completed in consultation with your advisor. Stay in good contact with him/her, and share a copy of this checklist so you can keep track of things together. You aren't necessarily bound to this timeline; it is just the typical M.A. program of two academic years. Consult with your advisor if you are interested in accelerating your program of study.