

Ph.D. 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 <http://www.communication.illinois.edu/grad/handbook/>. Be sure to 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
STAGE 1: Completion of M.A. degree		
STAGE 2: Select Ph.D. advisor (member of graduate faculty with appointment in CMN)	By end of second semester of Ph.D. coursework	
Ph.D. coursework = 96 total hrs (64 Ph.D. hrs plus 32 M.A. hrs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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: http://www.communication.illinois.edu/docs/Doctoral%20Program%20of%20Study%20Form.pdf	
Identify doctoral exam/dissertation committee (may be same as program of study committee, but contains four graduate faculty, two tenured, and at least half in CMN)	Before or during last semester of Ph.D. coursework	
Write pre-prospectus; turn in to advisor/committee; hold meeting of committee to determine preliminary exam questions	Begin pre-prospectus during last semester of Ph.D. coursework	

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 (must be done three weeks ahead of oral exam)	Form at: http://www.grad.illinois.edu/forms/appointdec.htm	
Oral exam (prelim exam defense)	After completion of exams and three weeks after filing to appoint exam committee	
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: http://www.communication.illinois.edu/docs/Dissertation%20Prospectus.pdf	
STAGE 3: 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	Complete form at: http://www.grad.illinois.edu/forms/appointdec.htm	
Oral dissertation defense/exam	By middle of semester of expected graduation	
After revisions are completed and approved, obtain Certificate of Committee Approval, have committee sign it	Information and form at: http://www.grad.illinois.edu/forms/certificate/	
Complete departmental approval of dissertation (including format checking)	See http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation	
Deposit dissertation according to Graduate College instructions (pay close attention to deadlines)	See http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation	
Add name to graduation list via web self-service	At least six weeks before end of semester of expected graduation; see 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. *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.)