

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

*School of Media and
Strategic Communications*



**GRADUATE HANDBOOK
2021-2022**

Graduate Studies in
MASS COMMUNICATION

Table of Contents

PREFACE	4
DESCRIPTION OF DEGREE PROGRAMS	5
Master of Science in Mass Communication	5
Thesis Track	5
Project/Creative Component Track	6-7
COURSE REQUIREMENTS	8
Core Courses	8
Concentration Course Electives	8-10
Degree Completion Courses	10-12
Recommended Electives in Other Departments	12-13
Transfer of Credits	13
Full-Time Enrollment	13
Foundation Courses	14-15
Foundation Requirements for Interest Areas	15
Independent Study	15
Accelerated Master's Degree Program (4+1)	16
REGISTERING FOR COURSES	17
Registration Process	17-18
Enrollment Procedures	18
Special Enrollment Considerations for Theses and Projects	18
ACADEMIC STANDARDS	19
Writing Quality and Style	20
Attribution and Academic Honesty	21
Required Training	21
KEYS TO SUCCESS	22
Tips for Graduate School	22
THE PLAN OF STUDY	23
General Information	23-24
Steps in Completing the M.S. Program	24
Course Delivery	24

THESIS RESEARCH	25
General Information	25
Last Semester Enrollment for Thesis Hours	26
The Process	26
The Thesis Committee	27
Writing The Thesis Proposal	27-28
Thesis Proposal Format and Content	28-29
IRB Approval	29-30
Organizing and Writing Theses	30-31
Scheduling The Thesis Defense	32
The Thesis Defense	32
After the Defense	33
THE MASTER'S NON-THESIS OPTIONS	34
General Information	34
Creative Projects	34
Study Abroad	34
Advanced Practicum	34
Enrolling for Credit	35
The Process	35-37
SUMMARY OF GRADUATE COLLEGE POLICIES	38-39
FINANCIAL AID	40
General Information	40
Sources of Information	40-41
Graduate Assistantships	41-42
Principal Financial Aid Programs	42-43
Other Financial Aid Programs	43
GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS	44
General Information	44
Kappa Tau Alpha	44
Graduate and Professional Student Association	44
Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication	44
PROGRAM RESOLUTION	45
Questions and Complaints About Grading	45
Other Course-Related Problems	45
Other Problems and Complaints	45
GRADUATE FACULTY	46-50



WELCOME TO OSU
SMSC GRADUATE STUDIES
Master's Degree Program

Due to rapidly changing communication technology, cultural shifts and new economic realities, today's media and strategic communications professionals face unprecedented challenges. Convergence and globalization have created a need for understanding the world's media systems. The Internet and social media are changing the way we market, educate, disseminate, inform and entertain. Media audiences are shifting demographically and psychographically. New media business practices and economic models have emerged in the United States and around the world.

In short, it's just not business as usual anymore. Advertising and public relations practitioners, journalists and broadcast executives realize that the changing media landscape calls for professional re-tooling in order to survive and thrive. Tomorrow is literally at our doorstep, and Oklahoma State University's School of Media and Strategic Communications is pleased to offer graduate courses designed to help future communications practitioners and educators meet tomorrow's challenges today.

This handbook has been prepared to answer many of your questions about our curriculum, the procedures associated with completing your degree and the overall expectations associated with being a graduate student. Please contact me at any time if you have questions or comments about our programs of study.

Welcome to the OSU family!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jared Johnson
SMSC Coordinator of Graduate Studies
Oklahoma State University
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MASTER of SCIENCE

Degree Programs Available for Graduate Study



The School of Media and Strategic Communications offers a Master’s Degree in Mass Communications. The thesis option requires 31 hours of course work, and non-thesis program options require 32 hours. The master’s degree focuses on media theory, ethics, and research methods. The degree is designed to give students a more in-depth understanding of the changing communication landscape. The program offers three specialty tracks: Global Communication, Brand Communication, and Sports Communication.

Students can choose from several degree completion options within each study track. The thesis option is designed to prepare graduates to teach at the college level or to continue toward doctoral work. The thesis option consists of 31 hours, including 6 hours of thesis research.

The non-thesis option is designed to help graduates advance their media and strategic communications careers. The school offers several non-thesis options consisting of 32 hours of course work with 7 hours devoted to degree completion. Non-thesis options include Creative Project (3 hour project elective, 1 hour project prospectus, 3 hours project research), Study Abroad (6 hours study abroad, 1 hour formal report), and Practicum (6 hours practicum, 1 hour formal report).

Requirements for the **Thesis option** include:

<i>Courses</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<u><i>Required core courses (4 courses):</i></u> MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Study (1 hour) MC 5113 Methods of Research in Mass Communication (3 hours) MC 5333 Mass Communication Theory (3 hours) MC 5733 Mass Communication Ethics (3 hours)	10
<u><i>Specialty Area courses (5 courses from one of the following concentrations):</i></u> Global Communication Brand Communication Sports Communication <i>At least 9 hours should carry the MC prefix.</i> <i>Master’s Students must take MC 5223: Mass Communication Research Analysis and Interpretation (3 hours) – or an alternate Advanced Research methods course (3 hours) as approved by committee for POS</i>	15
MC 5000 Thesis	6
TOTAL CREDITS FOR DEGREE	31

For the **Non-Thesis Option: Project/Creative Component option**, requirements are as follows:

<i>Courses</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<u>Required core courses (4 courses):</u> MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Study (1 hour) MC 5113 Methods of Research in Mass Communication (3 hours) MC 5333 Mass Communication Theory (3 hours) MC 5733 Mass Communication Ethics (3 hours)	10
<u>Specialty Area courses (5 courses from one of the following concentrations):</u> Global Communication Brand Communication Sports Communication <i>At least 9 hours should carry the MC prefix, unless otherwise approved by the graduate committee.</i>	15
One Project Focused Electives from Mass Communication or an outside area.	3
MC 5010 Capstone Project/Creative Component	4
TOTAL CREDITS FOR DEGREE	32

For the **Non-Thesis Option: Study Abroad option**, requirements are as follows:

<i>Courses</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<u>Required core courses (4 courses):</u> MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Study (1 hour) MC 5113 Methods of Research in Mass Communication (3 hours) MC 5333 Mass Communication Theory (3 hours) MC 5733 Mass Communication Ethics (3 hours)	10
<u>Specialty Area courses (5 courses from one of the following concentrations):</u> Global Communication Brand Communication Sports Communication <i>At least 9 hours should carry the MC prefix, unless otherwise approved by the graduate committee.</i>	15
MC 5040 Study Abroad (or sister university course)	6
MC 5000 Formal Report	1
TOTAL CREDITS FOR DEGREE	32

For the **Non-Thesis Option: Practicum options**, requirements are as follows:

<i>Courses</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<i>Required core courses (4 courses):</i> MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Study (1 hour) MC 5113 Methods of Research in Mass Communication (3 hours) MC 5333 Mass Communication Theory (3 hours) MC 5733 Mass Communication Ethics (3 hours)	10
<i>Specialty Area courses (5 courses from one of the following concentrations):</i> Global Communication Brand Communication Sports Communication <i>At least 9 hours should carry the MC prefix, unless otherwise approved by the graduate committee.</i>	15
MC 5020 Advanced Practicum	6
MC 5000 Formal Report	1
<i>TOTAL CREDITS FOR DEGREE</i>	32

Students without an undergraduate degree in journalism or mass communication may be asked to take undergraduate foundation courses. Mass media law and a statistics course are required for MS Mass Communication, graduate coursework. If students have not taken these courses as an undergraduate, they may be required to take JB 4163 Mass Media Law and a statistics course, which can be a graduate course such as REMS 5953 Elementary Statistical Methods in Education.

If students are using a qualitative research method for their thesis or project, a three-hour qualitative course may be substituted for MC 5223 with the approval the student's adviser and graduate committee. Two courses that would substitute are: SCFD 5913 Introduction to Qualitative Research and SOC 5263 Qualitative Methods of Social Research.

Required & Elective Courses at OSU

A Summary of Course Content & Credits



The School of Media and Strategic Communications offers a MS in Mass Communication with two, degree completion options (Thesis and Non-Thesis) and three, specialty tracks to serve the needs of our students.

Core Courses

Core classes are required of all master's students for a MS in Mass Communication. Core courses consist of 10 hours credit that must be completed in addition to a specified number of electives that can be taken to finish the degree. Listed below are descriptions of the core classes offered by the School of Media and Strategic Communications.

MC 5113. *Methods of Research in Mass Communication.* 3 credits. Introduces students to the research process, planning and design, different research approaches and sampling. This course focuses on methods most relevant to mass communications, including experimental design, content analysis, survey research and qualitative approaches.

MC 5333. *Media Theory.* 3 credits. Introduces students to the major research studies that have shaped thinking about mass communication worldwide. The course examines the contributions that social scientists and others have made to the field of mass communication and the theories they have developed. It explores effects of the media on society and the processes used to construct and interpret mass communication messages. The course explains how media theory can be used to improve communication practice and research.

MC 5651. *Introduction to Graduate Studies in Mass Communication.* 1 credit. Introduces new students to the graduate program, academic integrity, form and style for writing scholarly papers, and fundamentals of academic research.

MC 5733. *Media Ethics.* 3 credits. Examines the interaction between mass media and society, with emphasis on the communicator's ethics and responsibilities. Considers contemporary standards, issues, and codes of performance. Special emphasis on legal and ethical issues pertaining to computer-mediated communication.

Specialty Area Concentration Courses

Students can specialize in one of three concentration areas to specialize the focus of their degree program: Global Communication, Brand Communication, and Sport Communication. Five courses (15 hours) are required for each concentration. The MS of Mass Communication offers master's students flexibility in the selection of concentration courses. Students may

select from both MC course offerings and from other areas on campus. At least three concentration courses (9 hours) should carry the MC prefix.

The following are electives in mass communication offered by the School of Media and Strategic Communications. Electives are offered on a rotating basis and are not available every semester. Please note:

- Although the university offers many 3000- and 4000-level courses for graduate credit, M.S. students may count no more than **two** such courses (maximum 6 credits) toward their degree, and they are strongly urged to count only one. These courses are designated by an asterisk in the University Catalog. Ideally, most if not all, elective credits should be in courses numbered 5000 or 6000. *In the final analysis, it is the student's educational and professional goals that determine electives.*
- Undergraduate "foundation" courses and undergraduate mass media law offered by the School of Media and Strategic Communications **may not be counted** as electives for the M.S. degree. A statistics course may be counted if it is taken as a graduate course.
- Some courses are cross-listed for both graduate and undergraduate credit. If a student has taken the course at OSU as an undergraduate or received transfer credit for it, the student cannot take it for graduate credit.

Specialty area classes are required of all master's students for a MS in Mass Communication. Specialty courses consist of 15 hours credit that must be completed in addition to a specified number of core and degree completion credits. Listed below are suggested courses in each of the concentration areas. Other graduate level courses can complete the concentration with approval from the graduate committee members. Students completing a thesis are required to take an advanced research course as one of the courses in the concentration.

Brand Communication 15 – select from the following

MC 5223 Mass Communication Research Analysis and Interpretation*

MC 5933 Theories of Persuasion

MC 5770 Seminar in Communication Media

MC 5613 Readings in Mass Communication

MC 5030 Independent Study in Mass Communication

MC 5020 Advanced Practicum

MC 5520 Specialized Strategic Communication Applications

MC 5853 Strategic Communications Management

MC 5953 Strategic Health Communication Campaigns

MC 5603 Integrated Marketing Communication

MC 5383 Media Relations

MC 5753 Media and Elections

Other graduate level elective (6 hours max, unless otherwise approved)

Sport Communication 15 – select from the following

MC 5223 Mass Communication Research Analysis and Interpretation*

MC 5933 Theories of Persuasion

MC 5770 Seminar in Communication Media

MC 5613 Readings in Mass Communication

MC 5030 Independent Study in Mass Communication

MC 5020 Advanced Practicum

MC 5833 Sport Media Management
MC 5640 Specialized Sports Media Applications
MC 5883 Advanced Media Management
MC 5383 Media Relations
MC 5143 Diversity in Sports Media
Other graduate level elective (6 hours max, unless otherwise approved)

Global Communication 15 – select from the following

MC 5223 Mass Communication Research Analysis and Interpretation*
MC 5933 Theories of Persuasion
MC 5770 Seminar in Communication Media
MC 5613 Readings in Mass Communication
MC 5030 Independent Study in Mass Communication
MC 5020 Advanced Practicum
MC 5253 International Mass Communication
MC 5540 Specialized Multimedia Journalism Applications
MC 5753 Media and Elections
MC 5163 Mass Communication Law
MC 5773 Censorship
MC elective
Other graduate level elective (6 hours max, unless otherwise approved)

**An advanced research course is required for thesis track*

Degree Completion Courses

To complete the MS in Mass Communication, student may select from thesis or non-thesis coursework. Thesis students take a minimum of 6 hours of thesis over at least two semesters. Thesis students also should take an advanced research methods course as part of their degree concentration area in Global, Brand, or Sport Communication. Non-thesis students may select from three, degree completion options: Creative Component Project (4 hours, plus a 3 hour, project-focused elective), Study Abroad (6 hours, plus 1 hour of MC 5000: Formal Report), Practicum (6 hours, plus 1 hour of MC 5000 Formal Report).

MC 5000. Thesis. 6 credits. A thesis is an original research effort in the student's area of interest that draws into a focused scholarly experience the elements of graduate education. The thesis is prepared under the guidance of a graduate faculty member. Full-time students normally begin to develop their thesis topic during their second semester and research the literature about that topic further during the summer. In the fall of their second year, they develop a thesis proposal and defend it before their thesis committee. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board if their research involves human subjects, they begin work on the thesis and complete it during the spring semester. (A student may be required to take more than 6 credits for thesis; however, only 6 credits count toward the 34-hour degree.)

Students must follow these rules regarding thesis credits:

- A minimum of two credits must be taken at any one time. The Graduate College will only count six hours of MC 5000 Thesis toward a degree.
- Once students start taking thesis credit, **they must take it continuously**, except for the summer term. Part-time students should be especially cautious about when they begin taking thesis hours. If in doubt, consult the graduate coordinator.
- Students must take thesis credits in the semester of graduation unless the thesis has been completed beforehand.
- Students must present a research proposal to thesis committee members. After finishing the thesis, an oral defense is held. Committee members must approve the thesis to graduate.

MC 5010. Capstone Project or Creative Component. 4 credits. The capstone project is required only for students in the project/creative component track. It includes applied client-oriented research or special creative endeavors approved by the student's adviser, such as development of special promotional campaigns, a series of articles about an important issue or audiovisual productions. Students must take one hour of MC 5010 during the semester before beginning the project to develop a proposal and have it approved. During the final semester, the student must take three hours of MC 5010 and do the project/creative component. The student's adviser must approve the proposal, and any committee member can request a formal review if needed. The student must defend the final project before the committee, which must approve it.

MC 5020. Advanced Practicum/Internship. 6 credits. The mass communications faculty supports all students desiring to complete an internship, a professionally augmented learning activity. Internships allow graduate students (especially those who have just graduated and/or not previously worked professionally in the mass media) to relate theory to practice in professional settings. Often, this experience helps students obtain work samples, such as clips or broadcast stories on DVD's that are needed to help obtain jobs in the industry. Students enrolled in this program also can augment their knowledge of operations in media-related companies and form industry contacts that may enhance their careers. Students may earn up to 6 hours of academic credit in MC 5020 Advanced Practicum/Internship in Mass Communication. In order to qualify for internship credit, students must meet the following criteria:

- Have completed at least one semester of graduate work.
- Make formal application to the supervising committee and have it approved **BEFORE** enrolling.
- Agree to complete 96 hours of work for each hour of academic credit awarded. Therefore, to receive three hours of credit, the student must complete 288 hours of internship work. The work hours may be spread over more than one semester with the supervising instructor's approval, but all credits must be completed by the end of the following semester or the student's grade will automatically be changed to an "F."
- The student must contact the company and have the on-site supervisor sign the application form **BEFORE** the student can enroll in the course.
- File **weekly** reports with the supervising instructor during the internship period.
- Keep copies of work produced to submit with the final report.
- Submit a summary report at the end of the internship, including the student's own evaluation of the internship experience.
- An on-site supervisor will provide formal evaluation of the student's job performance.

The student is responsible for arranging her/his internship. The school's undergraduate advising office has a database of possible internships in advertising, broadcasting, news/editorial and public relations. The choice of company or organizations must be approved by the supervising instructor and/or graduate faculty, which reserves the right to reject any firm that, in the opinion of the faculty, does not significantly enhance the student's knowledge base or meet the parameters of the Mass Communications/Media Management program. **Students are prohibited from doing an internship at an OSU office or with a business or organization where they are already employed.** Any payment for internship work is a matter between the intern and the employer. The School of Media and Strategic Communications validates academic credit only. All expenses incurred by the students to do internship work, such as travel, parking, supplies and other items, are the responsibility of the student.

The student is responsible for recruiting the supervising professor. Ideally, the supervising graduate faculty member should come from the student's interest area (Global Communication, Brand Communication, Sport Communication, etc.). During the summer, the supervising professor is generally the graduate coordinator.

MC 5040. Study Abroad. 6 credits. Students may take up to 6 hours of MC Study Abroad as a degree completion option. The School of Media and Strategic Communication offers course abroad.

Alternatively, study abroad courses may be taken at sister universities via OSU Study Abroad for degree completion. The student is responsible for organizing study abroad experiences and should consult the OSU study abroad office regarding course options, travel arrangements, and financial obligations.

MC 5011. Formal Report. 1 credit. Students selecting the Study Abroad or the Advanced Practicum option will complete a Formal Report detailing their experience. The formal report will be presented to the student's committee for final approval.

Recommended Electives in Other Departments

The following are a few recommended electives for graduate credit in other departments. Other courses are available. Not all courses are offered every semester so check with the semester schedule. Some courses have prerequisites so check with the department.

<i>Department</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Title</i>
Education	EPSY 5103	Human Development in Psychology
	EPSY 5213	Advanced Education Psychology
	EPSY 5463	Psychology of Learning
	SCFD 5873	Culture, Society and Education
	SCFD 5883	Educational Sociology
	SCFD 5913	Introduction to Qualitative Inquiry
	Education Statistics	REMS 5013
REMS 5953		Elementary Statistical Methods in Education
Business Communications	BCOM 5210	Business Communication Applications
English	ENGL 5140	Seminar in Linguistics
	ENGL 5143	Seminar in Descriptive Linguistics
	ENGL 5340	Studies in Discourse Analysis

	ENGL 5360 ENGL 5363 ENGL 5370	Seminar in Screen Studies Critical Approaches to Screen Studies Studies in Television and News Media
Global Studies	GS 5343 GS 5313	Geopolitics of Media Global Communication & Public Diplomacy
History	HIST 5023	Historical Methods
International Studies	INTL 5010 INTL 5213 INTL 5223 INTL 5243	Contemporary Issues in International Studies International Relations, Affairs and Policy Culture, History and World Systems Globalization and Culture
Management	MGMT 5223 MGMT 5553 MGMT 5563	Seminar in Human Resource Management Management of Technology and Innovation Crisis in Organizations
Marketing	MKTG 5553 MKTG 5613 MKTG 5983 MKTG 5993	International Marketing Strategy Seminar in Consumer Behavior Data Base Marketing Digital Business Strategy
Political Science	POLS 5013 POLS 5123	Quantitative Methods in Political Science The Politics of Globalization
Psychology	PSYCH 5823	Cognitive Processes
Sociology	SOC 5243 SOC 5273 SOC 5333 SOC 5663 SOC 5763	Social Research Design Qualitative Research Methods Global Population and Social Problems American Pluralism, Race and Ethnicity In American Life Contemporary Organization Theory
Statistics	STAT 5013 STAT 5023 STAT 5043	Statistics for Experimenters I Statistics for Experimenters II Sample Survey Designs

All students are encouraged to take courses in statistics, especially REMS 5953 Elementary Statistical Methods in Education. These courses will better prepare them for MC 5113 Research Methods in Mass Communications and MC 5223 Research Analysis and Interpretation, which require knowledge of statistics. Students also are encouraged to take qualitative research methods courses in other departments, such as SCFD 5913 Introduction to Qualitative Inquiry or HIST 5023 Historical Methods, to broaden their research skills.

Transfer of Credits

Students in the M.S. degree program may apply to transfer up to **9** semester hours from another college or university, upon approval of the student's graduate committee. Such credits must have been earned at an accredited institution in which the student was formally admitted to the Graduate College as a graduate student. The courses also must be certified for graduate credit by that institution. Only courses with a grade of "B" or above will be considered.

Full-Time Enrollment

Full-time enrollment for graduate students is **9** semester hours during the fall and spring semesters and **4** hours during the summer session. However, for students holding a .50 FTE assistantship or greater, **6** hours is considered a full-time load.

Students must complete a minimum of 6 semester hours during an academic year until the degree is awarded. Graduate assistants and fellowship recipients must enroll in a minimum of **9** semester hours during the fall and spring semesters and at least **3** semester hours during the summer (if the assistantship is active during the summer). Students with a .50 assistantship must enroll in **6** hours during the fall and spring semesters.

Thesis option students who plan to complete the requirements for a degree must enroll in **2** or more hours of MC 5000 Thesis credit for the final semester, unless the thesis has already completed. Although requirements can vary, students must be enrolled at least **4** credits during the fall and spring semesters and **2** credits during the summer (if taking courses) to remain eligible for federal financial assistance. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure he/she satisfies the requirements for financial aid, and each student should confirm her/his own requirements with the Office of Financial Aid, 119 Student Union (405-744-6604).**

During the last semester of degree completion, the Graduate College can waive the **6-credit-hour** minimum requirement – 9 hours for students with a .25 assistantship -- and certify students as “full time” if they officially request a waiver from the college and are enrolled in at least **3** hours. This waiver is granted only once. If students fail to complete the thesis, those who receive financial aid and those with international status may be required to increase the number of credit hours to full-time status in subsequent semesters to satisfy the financial aid department or the immigration service. Please check with the Graduate College to be sure.

Foundation Courses

Reason for Foundation Courses. Some students entering a mass communications master's degree program do not have an adequate background in the field and are required to take undergraduate foundation courses. Without proper grounding in journalism and mass communications, which can only be obtained through industry experience or undergraduate course work, graduate students can be at a disadvantage in their master's courses. Moreover, with a Master of Science degree in mass communications, a person can be eligible to teach journalism, broadcasting, advertising and public relations courses at many colleges and universities across the United States or practice in the field of mass communications. Without proper foundation, MC graduates could be eligible, but not necessarily qualified, to teach or practice in the field.

OSU does not offer lower-division mass communications skills courses (such as reporting, video production, etc.) for graduate credit. Therefore, if a candidate for a graduate degree does not have an academic or a professional background in mass communications, the necessary background must be acquired by taking foundation (undergraduate) courses for no graduate credit in addition to the courses required for the master's degree. Undergraduate mass communications courses are only offered in Stillwater.

The policy of the OSU School of Media and Strategic Communications is the candidates for the Master of Science degree without adequate undergraduate grounding in journalism or a related field or without adequate industry experience must complete lower-level foundation courses in their interest area **by the end of the first academic year.** *Exceptions must be approved by the student's thesis or project adviser.* This requirement normally is made a provision of admission to the graduate program in mass communications.

News-editorial, broadcasting, advertising or public relations courses taken as part of journalism or mass communications programs at other U.S. colleges and universities may substitute for OSU requirements, although such substitution is not automatic. Courses taken at colleges and universities

in other countries do not necessarily substitute for requirements in mass communications. Candidates must demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the subject matter before waivers will be considered. The only exception to this requirement is an introductory course in statistics. Such a course taken in another country will meet the requirement in the mass communications program. Some substitutions of foundation courses are possible to meet a student's specific needs. Persons with professional experience in some field of mass communications may have foundation course requirements waived if they are able to demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the subject matter.

Foundation Requirements for Mass Communication Interest Areas

The graduate director and the head of the sequence in which the student is interested, such as strategic communication, multi-media journalism or sports media will assess the student's academic transcripts and work experience to determine what foundation courses are needed. Media skills courses and related work experience are especially important in this assessment. Obviously, as the number of media skills and other mass communication courses and work experience increases, the number of required foundation courses decreases.

Students who have not had an introductory course in statistics at some point in their college education may be required to take a course to prepare for graduate research. Both MC 5113 Research Methods in Mass Communication and MC 5223 Research Analysis and Interpretation require a knowledge of statistics.

Recommended statistics courses include either of the following, although the student will likely prefer REMS 5953 because it can be taken for graduate credit as an elective:

- **REMS 5953** Elementary Statistical Methods in Education
- **STAT 3013** Intermediate Statistical Analysis

Because an understanding of media law is essential in mass communications, students who have not taken an undergraduate media law course may be required to take JB 4163 Mass Media Law. It is an undergraduate course, and students will not receive graduate credit for it.

Independent Study

Independent study is an opportunity for a student to pursue a topic of special interest that is not available through a regularly scheduled formal class. Students conduct research, complete projects or read a list of directed readings and meet regularly with an instructor to discuss progress and problems. The instructor must be a member of the graduate faculty. Students often work in close coordination with a faculty member on a topic of mutual interest. Independent study may not be used for working on a professional project, creative component, or thesis, but it may be used for examining a potential topic. The independent study course for M.S. candidates is MC 5030 Independent Study in Mass Communication. Please note few graduate faculty are on staff during the summer to teach this course so consult the faculty member well in advance before considering this course at that time.

Proposals for Enrollment in Independent Study. Students must obtain the consent of a member of the graduate faculty who will serve as instructor, mentor and evaluator of the independent study **BEFORE** they can enroll in the course. Consequently, they must develop a proposal for an independent study, submit it to the desired graduate faculty member, and have it approved **BEFORE**

the student will be permitted to enroll in the course. At a minimum, proposals for independent study must include the following:

- A descriptive title of the research effort or project
- Purpose and objectives of the research or project
- Reasons the research or project should be undertaken
- A preliminary bibliography
- A semester schedule for completing the work
- A description of methods, procedures or strategies to be used

Students cannot enroll in independent study until a copy of the proposal bearing the signature of the approving faculty member has been submitted to the student's adviser, who also must sign it. Because the permission of the instructor is required, the student cannot enroll in MC 5030 through the OSU BANNER system. The student must obtain a Drop/Add form from the SMSC advising staff or the graduate coordinator. **The student must give the graduate coordinator a copy of the proposal that has been signed by the instructor and the adviser.** The graduate director will photocopy the proposal and put it in the student's official record. Please note students cannot take more than 3 hours of MC 5030.

Course Format. Students develop their own project or research effort with the advice and assistance of a graduate faculty member, or with more than one instructor if the topic warrants. Students develop a plan of work and meet with one or more faculty at specified intervals during the semester to discuss progress and problems. More than one student may be involved in the same independent study project. Frequency of meetings is arranged between faculty and students. Generally, they meet at least once a week.

Students are graded primarily on the basis of the final product, but other elements of the process may be included as determined by the instructor. Such elements might include attitude and cooperation, quality of preliminary drafts, annotated bibliographies, reports of lessons learned, and use of grammar/language. When the independent study is completed, students are urged to publish or make other appropriate use of the products of the course. Instructors have an obligation to encourage students in this aspect of the process.

Accelerated Master's Degree Program (4+1 students)

The School of Media & Strategic Communications (SMSC) offers an Accelerated Master's Degree in Mass Communications to our most outstanding undergraduate majors. The program provides a format for students to complete their bachelor's and master's degree in five years. Oklahoma State University undergraduate students who have completed a total of 90 hours of undergraduate coursework in a major in the School of Media & Strategic Communications may apply to the School for the Accelerated Master's Degree program.

After acceptance, students enroll in two, three-hour graduate classes and a one-hour Introduction to Graduate Studies course during their senior year. These courses will be taken concurrently with any hours needed to finish the undergraduate degree. Some coursework to be applied to the Accelerated Master's graduate degree can be double counted toward the undergraduate degree. Students should consult with their undergraduate advisor regarding the number of applicable credits available. During the following year (including summer), students will officially be admitted to the Graduate College. Students will take the remaining 24-25 graduate hours needed to complete the Master's Degree. Students must make an A or B in their first 7 hours to continue in the program. Requirements for the master's degree for the four + 1 program are the same as the traditional program described above.

Selecting & Enrolling in Graduate Courses

Things You Should Know About Registration



Registration Process

The registration process for enrolling in classes each semester consists of these basic steps:

- Noting appropriate deadlines. Graduate students have priority on the first day of enrollment, usually the eighth week of the semester.
- Selecting courses.
- Obtaining necessary signatures in some cases, especially for zero-ending courses such as MC 5000 Thesis or MC 5030 Independent Study in Mass Communication.
- Obtaining Graduate College approval in some cases.
- Students must self-enroll by completing computerized enrollment in BANNER.
- Making changes as needed.

Noting Appropriate Deadlines. Students enroll themselves using the online BANNER system in their second and subsequent semesters. Enrollment usually begins during the eighth week of the semester, and graduate students have priority on the first day. Consequently, all students should enroll online using the computer system as soon as enrollment begins to avoid closed classes. Graduate students should enroll in classes based on their Plan of Study, which must be approved by their adviser, graduate committee and the Graduate College. Beginning and ending enrollment dates and deadlines for adding and dropping courses are announced in each semester's *Course Schedule*, which is available on the Registrar's Web site. The first enrollment day is included on the Academic Calendar: <http://www.okstate.edu/registrar/AcademicCalendar/AcademicCalendarMain.html>.

In addition, the MBA program at OSU requires that all non-MBA students be placed on a waiting list for its graduate classes. By arrangement with the MBA program, space for MC students in Stillwater is generally available for MKTG 5133 Marketing Management, for MGMT 5113 Management Organization and Theory, and for other Business Courses. Wait list requests should be emailed to Jan Analla, the assistant director of graduate programs for the William S. Spears School of Business.

Selecting Courses. Students select their own courses based on program requirements, available electives, requirements for foundation courses, and special interests. These courses must follow the student's Plan of Study, which has been approved by the student's graduate committee and the Graduate College. Therefore, students must consult their advisers and the graduate director any time they anticipate deviating from the plan. Changing courses could affect financial aid, immigration status or even graduation so consulting the adviser and the graduate director could help prevent future problems.

Consequently, if students want to take a course that is not on their Plan of Study, they must submit a Course Change Form to their advisers and the graduate director *prior*

to enrollment. This form must be signed by the adviser and the graduate director. **The course will NOT count toward graduation if the form is not approved BEFORE the student enrolls in the course. In the final analysis, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that all courses required for the degree have been completed.**

To the extent possible, foundation courses must be completed before taking graduate courses. However, this completion order is not always practical, and it may be necessary to mix graduate and undergraduate courses in a schedule during the first year.

MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Studies, MC 5113 Research Methods in Mass Communications, and MC 5333 Media Theory should be taken during the first year so students may start thinking about thesis or project topics. These courses also provide the students with the academic background needed to perform better in graduate seminars. A Plan of Study must be prepared by the student as part of a course requirement in MC 5651. This plan can be used as a checklist for subsequent enrollment.

Courses Requiring Prior Approval. MC 5000 Thesis, MC 5010 Capstone Project/ Creative Component, MC 5020 Internship, MC 5030 Independent Study, and MC 5040 Study Abroad require instructor approval **BEFORE** students will be allowed to enroll. Thus, students cannot enroll using the SIS system. **Instead, they must fill out a Drop/Add form and have it signed by the instructor and the adviser. The graduate director has the forms. Then, they must take the signed form to Sectioning at 321 Student Union, where they will be officially enrolled in the course.**

Enrollment Procedures

After the first semester, students must enroll themselves online via the SIS (Student Information System) system, which is available from the main OSU Web page (osu.okstate.edu in Stillwater and www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu in Tulsa.)

Making Changes. Students must complete a Drop-Add form when changing enrollment in a course or when the consent of the instructor is required to take a course, such as MC 5030 Independent Study. Necessary forms should be prepared by the students and taken to their graduate adviser – committee chair -- and course instructor for signature. Deadlines for adding or dropping courses are listed in the *Course Schedule* for each semester and should be followed. The Graduate College strictly adheres to the rules. If students miss the drop deadline, they cannot withdraw from the course and will receive the grade they have earned.

Special Enrollment Considerations for Theses and Projects

Final Semester Enrollment in Thesis or Projects. During their last semester, students can request a waiver from the Graduate College to certify them as full time if they are enrolled in at least 3 hours. This waiver must be formally requested from the college, and it is granted **only once**. If students fail to complete the thesis or professional project during this semester, they may be required to increase the number of hours during subsequent semesters to satisfy financial aid or immigration requirements. The final date to add thesis or professional project hours is published in each semester's course schedule book and online. The deadline for submission of the draft copy of the thesis is published in the University Catalog on the Graduate College's Web site (gradcollege.okstate.edu).

Graduate Student Academic Standards *Defining Performance Expectations*



The Graduate Faculty of the School of Media and Strategic Communications is naturally concerned about the academic performance of students enrolled in the program. Students must receive a “B” or better in all courses, including foundation (undergraduate) courses. This requirement means students must retake any course in which they receive a “C” or below. Students can make only one “C” or below and remain in the program. If a student makes a second “C” or below, the student will be dropped from the program and the Graduate College will be notified. Students who are dropped from the program under this provision may appeal the decision by submitting a written request to Graduate Faculty of the School of Media and Strategic Communications explaining why readmission is justified. The Graduate Faculty will review the request and render a decision.

Students admitted on academic probation must earn a “B” or better in all their courses during the first nine to 12 hours of enrollment. If they fail to meet the requirement, they are subject to suspension by the Graduate College.

Moreover, graduate students in the School of Media and Strategic Communications cannot submit a proposal for a thesis or project/creative component until they have made a "B" or better in the following courses: MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Study, MC 5113 Methods of Research in Mass Communication and MC 5333 Media Theory.

Further, students enrolled in MC 5000 Thesis who receive a grade of UR (Unsatisfactory Research) will automatically be placed on departmental probation. If a student makes a second “UR,” the student will be dropped from the program and the Graduate College will be notified. Students who are dropped from the program under this provision may appeal the decision by submitting a written request to Graduate Faculty of the School of Media and Strategic Communications explaining why readmission is justified. The Graduate Faculty will review the request and render a decision.

The Graduate College audits the grades of all graduate students each semester. Students receiving a grade of “C” or below in any course will receive a letter from the Graduate College informing them of one of the following actions:

- **Warning.** Any graduate student who receives a grade below a “B” will be warned by the Graduate College that such grades are “below Graduate College standards.”
- **Strict academic probation.** Students whose Grade Point Average drops below a 3.00 or who receive a grade below a “B” for two consecutive semesters are subject to being placed on strict academic probation by the college. During the next semester of full-time enrollment (or two semesters of part-time enrollment), they will be required to make no grade below a “B.” If they fail to meet this requirement, they will be subject to suspension from the university. **Please note the school’s policy of dropping students**

from the program for making two “C’s” or below is stricter than the Graduate College’s policy. At OSU, any department or school can establish policies that are stricter than the Graduate College’s policies.

- **No further enrollment without consent of the department.** Students who are on strict academic probation either as a condition of their admission or as a result of past academic problems are not allowed to earn a grade below a “B.” Failure to meet this requirement will result in a student being suspended from the Graduate College unless the student’s department makes a written request for continuance. Such a request must be received by the Graduate College before the day specified in the letter notifying the student or the student’s pre-enrollment will be canceled.
- **No further enrollment.** Students who have repeatedly violated conditions of their academic probation will be dismissed from graduate studies at OSU. Students suspended from the Graduate College may be readmitted after a sufficient period to permit them to correct their problem and if they demonstrate satisfactory improvement. However, the graduate faculty of the department or school will make a separate decision regarding whether to readmit the student to their program.
- **Expectations for Graduate Teaching Assistants.** Mass Communications master’s students placed on academic probation may not hold teaching or research assistantships. A student employed by the School of Media and Strategic Communications as a graduate teaching or research assistant who is placed on academic probation after her/his appointment must relinquish the assistantship until significant work has been completed to bring the grade point average up to meet the minimum 3.00 standard.

Writing Quality and Style

In an accredited journalism school, writing quality is of prime concern, and all written assignments will be evaluated on writing quality as well as intellectual content. Organization and structure of a paper, mechanics of writing (spelling, grammar, word usage, sentence structure, etc.), and adequacy of supporting elements (citations, bibliography, appendices, etc.) are elements of effective written communication. Candidates who are unable to communicate effectively in writing are unlikely to earn a graduate degree. The standard of writing is that expected in a quality newspaper or magazine. Because writing standards are the same for both domestic and international students, some international students may need extra tutoring or the help of the campus Writing Center, 104 Morrill Hall (405-744-6671 or www.writing.okstate.edu).

Unless otherwise specified by the course instructor or adviser for a thesis or project, students must use the most recent *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* as the standard style guide for writing papers in mass communications courses, theses and projects. Such exceptions would include legal and historical research.

Attribution and Academic Honesty

Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this school. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration on homework or assignments, plagiarism, multiple submissions of the same assignment, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, having unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in the action being reviewed under the OSU Academic Integrity Policy.

In graduate work, academic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Taking all or any part of information from other sources, including academic journals, academic papers, theses and dissertations, books and the trade publications such as newspapers or magazines, and including it as your own.
- Failure to cite the source of any such information.
- Making up sources of information.
- Having others write your thesis or project, papers, exams or substantially contributing to them.

Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course; receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript; and being suspended from the university. If a violation of the Academic Integrity policy is alleged, the faculty member and the student will meet with a facilitator. The instructor and student can decide whether a violation of the policy occurred and a possible remedy. If the two disagree, the case will be reviewed by an Academic Integrity Panel. A student chairs the panel, which consists of students and faculty. If you have questions about the policy or for more information, contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, or click on the Web site at <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/>.

Graduate students in the School of Media and Strategic Communications who have committed Level 2 and/or Level 3 violations of the OSU Academic Integrity Policy will be automatically and permanently dropped from the program.

Required Training

The Graduate College requires all students to take training for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) during their first semester. The training course teaches students how to conduct research ethically. The Graduate College requires a Certificate of Completion before students submit the Plan of Study. Further, students enrolled in MC 5000 Thesis who plan to conduct research involving human subjects must complete training regarding the protection of human subjects through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program. This training must be completed before the student can begin research for a thesis because it is required before the Institutional Review Board will approve the research project. SMSC students must receive a Certificate of Training as part of MC 5651, Introduction to Graduate Studies.

Tips for Graduate School

Keys to Success



The following are some keys to success as a graduate student:

- **Take charge of your education.** Ultimately, you are responsible for your success. Be proactive and take charge of selecting your classes, picking an option, and finding a topic for your thesis or project. Plan ahead and ask for advice when needed. Set high standards and goals for yourself.
- **Read your e-mail every day.** You must read your e-mail daily to keep up with your classes and to communicate with your professors, your adviser, your committee members and the graduate director. The Graduate College and the SMSC Graduate Coordinator will frequently send messages to inform you about deadlines and important information regarding the program.
- **Work closely with your adviser.** Beside yourself, your thesis or project adviser is perhaps the most important person in your graduate education. Consequently, you must stay in constant contact with your adviser and meet regularly. Ask your adviser questions when you have them and work together closely.
- **Sign up early for classes.** You must know when enrollment begins and sign up for classes early -- ideally on the first day -- to ensure you will get the classes you need. If you want to take classes in the MBA program, send an e-mail to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks before the beginning of enrollment.
- **Read ahead and come to class prepared.** Good time management is essential in graduate school. Read your assignments ahead of time and come to class prepared to discuss them. Many classes use a seminar format so discussion will be a vital to your education. Know what is required and exceed it.
- **Be aware of deadlines and meet them.** Graduate students are expected to be self-starters who can budget time well to meet deadlines. Consequently, you must always be aware of the deadlines. You can find many of them on the Graduate College's deadlines on its calendar (gradcollege.okstate.edu). The Oklahoma State University Registrar posts deadlines on the University's Academic Calendar (www.okstate.edu/registrar/AcademicCalendar/AcademicCalendarMain.html)
- **Know the requirements and regulations.** Read this handbook any time you have questions about the graduate program. Don't be afraid to contact your adviser and/or the SMSC Graduate Coordinator for further assistance. They are here to help you. Graduate College Rules and Regulations are in the University Catalog, which can be downloaded in .PDF form from the Registrar's Web site (<http://www.okstate.edu/registrar/Catalogs/Catalog.html>). Forms are available at the Graduate College Web site (gradcollege.okstate.edu).

The PLAN of STUDY

Preparing Your "CONTRACT" with OSU



The **Plan of Study** is essentially a "contract" between the student and the university. In completing their plans, students declare the courses listed on the plan constitute their graduate program for the degree they are seeking. When the student's committee members sign the plan, they are signifying that they accept the proposed course work as sufficient for the degree. The plan lists all courses that will count toward the degree. These courses include graduate courses previously taken, classes in which the student is currently enrolled, and courses he/she still plans to take to complete degree requirements. The plan must list all courses for the degree, and the total credits must be at least 31-32 hours. The graduate director also must verify that the student has completed RCR (Responsible Conduct of Research) training. Plans of Study are completed electronically via the Graduate College. The electronic form can be found on the Graduate College's Web page at gradcollege.okstate.edu/download/plansforms.htm. **Students are responsible for initiating and preparing their Plan of Study and obtaining the necessary faculty signatures.** They are required to do so as part of MC 5651, Introduction to Graduate Study. The Graduate College has created an online system for completing the Plan of Study and for obtaining electronic signatures from supervising faculty.

The Graduate College requires M.S. candidates to complete a Plan of Study by the time they complete their **17th graduate credit**. The college will not permit students to enroll in any classes beyond the 17th graduate credit hour until the student submits and the college approves the plan. Because full-time students take at least 9 hours per semester, this requirement generally means students must complete their plan during their first semester of course work, usually in MC 5651, so they can enroll in second-semester courses. If students enter the program during the spring semester when MC 5651 is not taught, they should complete their plan and submit it to the college by the fourth week of the semester. This deadline allows time for the college to approve the plan before enrollment begins.

The Plan of Study must be approved by the student's thesis or project committee. The committee consists of three members. Two members, including the student's adviser, must be mass communications graduate faculty. The third member can be a member of the mass communications graduate faculty or a graduate faculty member from another department. **The student is responsible for recruiting the adviser and committee members.**

Electronic signatures are required on the plan from the Student, the Committee Members and the SMSC Graduate Coordinator. After the Plan of Study has been completed and received electronic signatures, it must be submitted to the Graduate College. The student should retain a copy. After review and approval by the college, a copy is returned to the school and placed in the student's academic file. Any subsequent changes in the plan must be approved by the adviser. Further, if the student plans to take any course that is not on the student's plan, the student must obtain a Course Change Approval Form from the Graduate College website. The Student, the Adviser and the Graduate Coordinator must sign the form, which will be placed in the student's file as a record of permission. This permission is needed so the

student's adviser can discuss the course with the student, and the director can review the student's plan to determine the course's potential impact on graduation requirements. **If the student fails to have the form signed BEFORE enrolling in the course, it will NOT count toward graduation.**

Within the first two weeks of their final semester, students must submit a revised electronic Plan of Study and a Graduation Clearance Form to the Graduate College. These forms must be submitted before the student can apply for a diploma. Students should wait a week or two after submitting these forms to the college and then complete a Diploma Application using the online system. The revised Plan of Study must include the courses that were actually taken. Students should go over their revised plan with their Adviser and then the SMSC Graduate Coordinator before submitting it. The Graduate Coordinator must sign the revised plan and the Graduation Clearance Form. **The student is responsible for submitting the revised plan and the form to the College.**

Steps in Completing the M.S. Program

For full-time students enrolled in either the **Thesis** (31 hours) or **Non-Thesis** (32 hours) options, takes one-two years to complete. The following table illustrates the basic process and schedule involved in earning the degree for either track.

Time	Procedure
Year 1 Fall Semester <i>10 hours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register for classes• Prepare Plan of Study• Arrange for thesis or project/creative component committee• Get approval for Plan of Study
Year 1 Spring Semester <i>6-9 hours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop thesis or non-thesis topic• Register for classes
Year 1 Summer Semester <i>Optional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register for classes Optional if courses available
Year 2 Fall Semester <i>6-9 hours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register for classes• Defend thesis or project/ creative component proposal
Year 2 Spring Semester <i>6-9 hours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit revised Plan of Study and Graduation Clearance Form• Apply for diploma• Defend thesis or project/creative component and submit form.• Submit thesis to Graduate College

Course Delivery

The Mass Communication Master's program offers various course delivery methods. Some courses are taught in the traditional 16-week in-class format, others are offered completely online, while others may be taught in a "hybrid" format.

THESIS RESEARCH

A Capstone Option for Degree Completion



The thesis is a comprehensive original research project in an area of interest to the student researcher -- from concept to written report -- that is presented to the faculty for evaluation. It is the final work for master's students enrolled in the thesis option. Theses bring together what the student has learned during graduate studies.

M.S. candidates must complete a minimum of six credits under MC 5000 Thesis. Students must enroll in at least two credits at a time. **Once students begin taking thesis credit, the Graduate College requires that they continue to take at least two credits each semester, except for the summer sessions. Also, students must take at least two credits in their final semester, unless they have already completed their thesis.**

The six thesis credits are normally earned in the fall and spring semesters of a student's final year (three credits each semester). In the fall, the student should decide on a topic for the thesis, meet with her/his adviser and draft a proposal to be defended before the committee, usually in October.

No letter grade will be given for MC 5000, and it will not count toward a student's GPA. If the student has made satisfactory progress on the thesis, the student will receive an SR for Satisfactory Research. If the student has not made satisfactory progress, the student will receive a UR for Unsatisfactory Research. Students who receive a UR cannot count those hours toward a degree. In addition, they will be placed on departmental probation. If they receive a second UR, they will be dropped from the program. They can write a letter of appeal to the Graduate Faculty, which will render a decision. **Consequently, students should not begin taking MC 5000 unless they are committed to doing the required work. Also, students should meet with their instructors at the start of the semester to discuss what is expected to receive an SR grade.**

No "standard" research methodology exists for a thesis. Some theses are highly quantifiable, using statistical analysis, whereas others, such as historical studies and case studies, use qualitative methods. Students should discuss the various types of methods with their adviser and committee members before making a decision. The driving factor, however, is the student's research topic. Some topics can be dealt with by using only one method, while others may be approached with several methods, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Students select their topics with the approval of their advisers and/or committee. Ideas for topics come from mass media experience, course work, articles in professional journals, seminar research projects and from examining other students' theses.

Last Semester Enrollment for Thesis Hours

During the last semester of degree completion, the Graduate College will upon request waive the 6-credit-hour minimum requirement – 9 hours for students with a .25 assistantship -- and certify students as “full-time” if they are enrolled in at least three hours. This waiver for 3 hours is granted only once. If students fail to complete the thesis, those students who receive financial aid and those with international status may be required to increase their credit hours to full-time status in subsequent semesters to satisfy the financial aid department or the immigration service. The final date to add thesis hours will be published in each semester’s course schedule. **The university requires students during their final semester to attend a Thesis/Dissertation Workshop prior to submitting their final thesis proposal.** Consult with the graduate director regarding the schedule for those meetings on the Stillwater and Tulsa campus each semester. If the graduate student fails to attend the workshop, then the student must submit a draft copy of the thesis by an established deadline that final semester (consult the SMSC Graduate Coordinator or the SMSC graduate website for that information). If students realize that they have not met the draft date for graduation, the Graduate College may grant approval for enrollment in additional hours.

The Process

The thesis process is a directed study course of instruction taken by a student with the close cooperation and supervision of an adviser. Generally, the process for students enrolled on a full-time basis is as follows:

Thesis Steps
Find an area of interest.
Recruit committee members in the first semester of graduate work. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three members, including an adviser.
Prepare Plan of Study in first semester.
Committee signs Plan of Study.
Work with adviser to refine the thesis topic during the second semester.
Expand your literature review and other parts of your MC 5113 paper during the summer.
Work on thesis proposal in the fall semester of the second year.
Defend thesis proposal before committee during October. Submit approval form to the graduate director.
Submit application and other necessary information to the Institution Review Board if using human subjects in your research.
Begin research when IRB gives permission.
Attend Graduate College thesis workshop by deadline or submit thesis draft to Graduate College by deadline.
Submit thesis draft to committee members at least one week before the defense.
Defend thesis draft by established deadline. Make changes to draft as suggested by committee and Graduate College. Submit thesis approval form to the Graduate College.
When changes have been made and your adviser approves them, submit the final version online to the Graduate College by established deadline.
Submit a CD-ROM with the thesis to the graduate director.
Attend Graduate commencement with family and adviser.

The Thesis Committee

The purpose of the thesis committee is to assist students with their research efforts and to evaluate the efforts at prescribed intervals. During the first semester, it is the student's responsibility to recruit a committee of three graduate faculty members. Students must ask faculty members for permission to be part of their committee prior to including them on their plan of study. The Adviser and another committee member must be Graduate Faculty from the School of Media and Strategic Communications. The third member can be a graduate faculty member from the school or another department. The thesis adviser will direct the student's thesis, and it is important for the student to work closely with the adviser. Usually, the adviser and student meet monthly during the second semester and weekly thereafter. Some advisers require a Graduate Advising Agreement, which is signed by the student and the adviser. The agreement stipulates the responsibilities and expectations of the student and the adviser, including meeting dates and deadlines. If the student does not follow the terms of the agreement, the adviser can terminate it, and the student must find another adviser. If research interests change or terms are not met, student also can terminate the agreement and select another adviser.

Faculty from other departments and schools may be included on committees if the research topic warrants outside expertise. Generally, committee members are chosen based on (a) an individual faculty member's research expertise and industry experience and (b) the workloads and general availability of graduate faculty members during a given semester. Committee chairs are normally the thesis advisers. Ideally, the adviser should specialize in the area of study of interest to the student so the adviser will be familiar with the relevant academic literature, journalistic skills, and processes. Other committee members should have some expertise regarding the thesis topic or its research methodology. Members with expertise in quantitative or qualitative data analysis, depending on the thesis approach, are also desired.

If your committee membership changes over the course of your graduate experience (e.g., a faculty member replace someone who has taken a job with another University), you will need to complete a form identifying what changes have taken place and have it signed by the SMSC Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of the Graduate College.

Writing the Thesis Proposal

Students must complete the following courses with a grade of "B" or better before they can submit a thesis proposal: MC 5651 *Introduction to Graduate Study*, MC 5113 *Methods of Research in Mass Communication* and MC 5333 *Process and Effects of Mass Communication*.

The thesis proposal helps the thesis writer to focus on ideas and to explore ideas of interest before undertaking the study. It is up to the student to develop a thorough and well-planned thesis idea. Ideas come from professional experience, readings, class work, research papers and discussions with faculty and friends. Students should begin to seek ideas as soon as they start their course work and should discuss potential thesis topics with appropriate faculty. It is mandatory for M.S. candidates to formalize their research ideas in a thesis proposal that is reviewed by the candidate's adviser and the entire thesis committee. In many instances, the proposal will become Chapters I, II and III of the thesis.

Because many students have difficulty getting started on their study, a mini-proposal (or outline) presented to the thesis adviser is a good way of getting the work under way and something on paper. It is common to do two or three mini-proposals on different topics before picking one to expand and present to the entire thesis committee.

The thesis proposal must be typewritten, double-spaced and follow traditional academic writing style expected of it. The more detailed and complete the thesis proposal, the easier it will be to conduct the research and write the remaining chapters within the allotted time. The student will present the proposal to the committee, which discuss and vote on it. You should obtain a copy of the OSU Thesis & Dissertation Handbook, which also includes detailed specifications for submission to the college. This handbook can be downloaded from the Internet at gradcollege.okstate.edu. Endnotes and bibliography are expected.

Thesis Proposal Format and Content

The proposal should be written in American Psychological Association (APA) style, unless it involves legal or historical research, and it should be structured using the following outline as a guide. The student should use the headings indicated as applicable. Not all proposals will contain all of the elements.

Introduction. Begin with a couple of paragraphs that clearly explain what it is that you intend to do in your study. Then, the introduction to the proposal should include:

- Research Problem—what is the problem that your study will help solve? Why is the problem one that needs to be solved?
- Significance (or Justification)—What is the value of your proposed study? Who will benefit? How will this advance the theory being utilized? Why should the study be conducted? Who will be interested in the study?
- Preview remaining chapters—Offer a paragraph that summarizes what will be covered in other chapters in the proposal.

Background/Review of Literature

- This step is a thorough examination of literature related to the study and of what other researchers and writers have to say about the problem. In doing the summary of previous work, you will be expected to rely heavily on peer-reviewed academic resources. It should make a case for your study and explain how it will fill a gap in existing research.
- Hypotheses and/or Research Questions: At the end of the literature review, the student should present a section that summarizes what was covered in the literature review, and how these findings lead to the hypotheses and/or research questions addressing your research problem. The student is encouraged to propose hypotheses if the goal is predicting relationships between groups (quantitative research) or offer research questions if the outcome cannot be predicted (or the student is engaged in qualitative research).

Methodology. Perhaps the most important aspect of the proposal is the methodology section, focusing on (a) the sample, (b) the instrument being used for gathering data, and (c) procedures for carrying out the research. The methodology should discuss:

- What methodology do you want to use for your study? (Survey, content analysis, experiment, case study, historical, etc.)

- Whom or what do you intend to study? That is, where are the data you want for your study? (People's heads, files, archives, reports, etc.)
- What variables do you want to study? How will you define and measure them? If appropriate, what research design will you use?
- How will you analyze the data? If you intend to use statistical analysis, what tests do you contemplate using?
- How will you address issues of reliability and validity in quantitative research? How will you address issues of verification and credibility in qualitative research?
- Provide a tentative schedule with dates of the overall process, and a proposed budget that will help you estimate potential expenses (e.g., travel, cost of mailings). Are you able to do the necessary travel?

Please note that if the proposal is intended to be the first three chapters of the thesis, it should follow the format of a thesis discussed below. All information in the methodology section needs to be updated in the final version to indicate what actually occurred in the study.

Thesis Proposal Defense: Students must present the thesis proposal to their committee, and a majority of the committee members must approve the proposal before the student can proceed with the thesis.

Students should schedule their thesis proposal defense no later than the Friday before the start of "Dead Week" during the Fall and Spring Semester (the week before final exams). It is wise to schedule the defense **at least two weeks** prior to the deadline and **give your committee members copies of the thesis proposal at least one week** prior to the scheduled defense. Remember, committee members are active faculty who teach graduate/undergraduate courses and serve on other graduate committees, as well as conduct research and do university service. Consequently, give them sufficient time to evaluate your work. Further, bind the proposal together or place it in a notebook so it is easier to read. **Sending the thesis proposal via e-mail to a faculty member is unacceptable.**

Students must print out a "Thesis Proposal Defense Form" to bring to the proposal defense meeting. The form can be downloaded from the Mass Communication Graduate Program (MCGP) site on Desire2Learn. All committee members must sign it, and it must be submitted to the graduate director so it may be placed in the student's file to show that the meeting took place.

IRB Approval

Students who are conducting research **involving human subjects** must wait to submit their applications to the OSU Institutional Review Board until **AFTER** they have successfully defended their thesis proposals. Once the thesis committee approves the student's proposal, the student must apply to the IRB for permission to conduct the study and it must be approved **BEFORE** students can begin gathering data for their theses. **An IRB Approval Letter is required as part of the final thesis that will be submitted to the Graduate College. If the letter is not included, the student will not graduate!**

All students and their advisers must have completed (or updated) their IRB (CITI) training BEFORE applications can be approved. The training uses programmed instruction, and it is conducted online via the IRB Web site. Thus, it is wise to complete this training well before submitting the proposal.

Soon after the thesis committee approves the student's proposal, the student should download the IRB application form from the board's Web site and read the instructions (compliance.vpr.okstate.edu/hsp/index.htm). The student must fill out the form, and the student and adviser must sign it. The form must then be signed by the director of the school and sent to the IRB. **Several other items must accompany the form.** They include:

- **The research plan.**
- **Informed consent/assent forms.**
- **Outline or script to be provided prior to subjects' agreement to participate.**
- **Research instrument(s), such as questionnaires.**
- **Resume or vitae for student and the adviser.**
- **The grant proposal, if any.**

Students are encouraged to ask their advisers for previous IRB applications and accompanying materials to use as examples. In most cases, the IRB will approve the proposal within two to three weeks. The board will request changes if the materials are incomplete or do not meet IRB requirements. The IRB's concerns must be resolved before approval is granted. Superficial and incomplete materials are the main reasons that IRB approval is delayed, so make sure that you have everything that is required and your materials are thorough. **It is the responsibility of the student to obtain IRB approval before gathering data involving human subjects.**

Organizing and Writing Theses

The Graduate College publishes a guide for writing and organizing a thesis. Students must obtain the guide to ensure their theses are written in accordance with Graduate College requirements. A copy of the thesis manual can be downloaded from the Graduate College's Web site at gradcollege.okstate.edu.

School of Media and Strategic Communications faculty members require the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* as the standard style guide for writing theses. The manual instructs the student on the use of in-text citations, use of numbers, references, etc. Students must use the most recent APA edition at the time they are writing the thesis. Students using historical or legal method for their thesis should use the style manual recommended by their advisers.

The organization of a thesis -- number and content of chapters -- is driven by the nature of the research topic and research effort. However, a traditional organization is as follows. Note that not all topics below are appropriate to all studies.

Chapter I: Introduction

- Introduction: What is the thesis about?
- Background: What led up to the problem?
- Statement of research problem: State the specific research problem you are examining
- Address purpose of the study: Broadly discuss the objectives of your study
- Address research method: Briefly describe methodological approach, sample being used
- Significance: Give justifications (usually more than one) concerning significance of your research.
- Briefly outline organization of remaining thesis chapters.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

- Overview of the chapter (how it is organized).
- Utilize APA-style headings and sub-headings.
- Historical background of the problem.
- Acquaint the reader with recent studies and expert opinions; often organized general-to-specific.
- Provide theoretical framework for study.
- Summary section: Discuss main points coming out of lit review.
- Propose your hypotheses and/or research questions based on the literature review.

Chapter III: Methodology

- Overview of the chapter: its organization.
- Description and justification of research methodology or approach.
- Research design: variables, operational definitions
- Discuss sampling plan (e.g., recruitment, type of sample, number of subjects)
- Discuss research instruments (questionnaires, etc.) : Describe how it is structured.
- Discuss procedures for data collection (e.g., survey distribution, recording focus groups, etc.)
- Discuss data processing and analysis techniques.
- Address reliability and validity (quantitative) or verification and credibility (qualitative)

Chapter IV: Analysis of Data (or “Findings” or “Results”)

- Overview of the chapter: Summarize major findings or results from research
- Discuss demographics of sample.
- Findings are reported with respect to furnishing evidence for each question asked or each hypothesis posed, with appropriate statistics.
- **Focus on results! Inferences and evaluations are saved for next chapter!**
- Utilize tables, charts as appropriate.

Chapter V: Discussion

- Summary: Each hypothesis and/or research question is dealt with, indicating how each was resolved (use theory and literature review to explain results).
- Discussion: Relate findings of the current study to the existing literature reviewed in Chapter 2.
- Conclusions: The “so what” of the findings! What are the applied and/or theoretical implications of your findings?
- Include sub-heading called “Limitations” to discuss research limitations, weaknesses in your study.
- Include sub-heading called “Future Research”, offering recommendations for further research on the research topic, based on the findings of the present study.

Appendices

- IRB Approval Letter.
- Consent form(s).
- Cover letters and subsequent mailing or e-mail reminders to subjects.
- Copy of instrument, such as a questionnaire or coding sheet.
- Data tables and graphs (discuss with advisor)

Scheduling the Thesis Defense

When the thesis is completed, it must be submitted to the candidate's committee for the "oral defense" or "final examination." The defense is open to the public. The date for the defense must conform to the semester deadlines as determined annually by the Graduate College and the School of Media and Strategic Communications graduate faculty. Each candidate and her/his adviser will work to complete the thesis for presentation by the established deadlines (please check with the Graduate College office). **If the student fails to meet the date for presentation, he/she may be forced to wait until the next semester to defend her/his work.** The student, the adviser and thesis committee members must also work out the thesis defense date, keeping SMSC & Graduate College submission deadlines in mind. **It will be the student's responsibility to find a defense date that is acceptable to all committee members. Committee members must have at least one week to read the thesis before the defense.**

The Thesis Defense

While a defense is often called an "examination," it is not a test in the traditional sense. Preparation for a defense mainly consists of developing a thorough understanding of the results and the implications of the research study, and preparing an oral presentation. The student should be prepared to answer questions that the committee members might raise about the results and their implications. Although not required, handouts, and/or visual aids are often used to summarize the study, especially the findings and their implications.

According to Graduate College regulations, all members of the committee must participate in the oral defense. **The examination cannot be held without all members participating!** Faculty members can participate via speakerphone, Skype, or similar arrangements.

The defense usually takes about an hour. At the outset, the candidate usually makes a 5-to-10-minute presentation, focusing mainly on the results of the study and their implications. Committee members will typically ask questions about the results and what they mean. Committee members will also offer suggestions to improve the research report. Often, both the candidate and the adviser will take notes regarding the suggestions so they can be addressed in the revisions. Next, committee members vote in closed session on the acceptability of the research work and on what changes are needed. Students should realize that revisions are requested for nearly every thesis! Candidates are then called back to discuss the committee's recommendations.

Results of an oral defense are reported to the Graduate College as "pass" or "not pass" on a special form, which the candidate must obtain from the college's Web site or from the graduate program page on Desire2Learn (MCGP). Candidates who do not earn a "pass" evaluation for the thesis may repeat the defense twice for a maximum of three times. Students are required to bring copies of the form to the defense. Criteria for evaluation are as follows:

Pass

- Pass with no changes needed to the report.
- Pass with minor changes needed to the report.

Not Pass

- Additional oral defense may be required.
- Substantial changes needed due to one or more of the following:
 - Inadequate literature review
 - Deficient research methodology
 - Deficient statistical analysis
 - Incomplete data collection
 - Deficient source citations
 - Opinion confused with evidence
 - Poor quality of writing

All committee members must vote either “pass” or “not pass” and sign the defense form. **The student must submit the results to the Graduate College immediately after the defense.** The student also must photocopy the signed defense form and give the copy to the graduate director, who will put it in the student’s file. The form will help the graduate director determine whether the student has fulfilled the requirements for graduation when asked by the Graduate College.

After the Defense

Students have a short time after the defense to make all required changes, so consult the Graduate College website for exact dates. Suggested revisions must be made prior to submission of the thesis to the Graduate College. **The student is responsible for making changes, which are reviewed by the adviser. The student is responsible for completing all revisions by the established Graduate College deadline and having them approved by their adviser before submitting the final electronic draft to the Graduate College. Such revisions usually need not be resubmitted to the entire committee.** Students are also asked to submit the final electronic version of their thesis to the Graduate Coordinator

Candidates must submit the thesis online in .PDF form by the deadline. Guidelines for electronic submission are available at the Graduate College website (gradcollege.okstate.edu). Students should check with Graduate College officials for details well before the final thesis is due.

NON-THESIS OPTIONS

A Capstone Option for Degree Completion



The Non-Thesis Option is an alternative to writing a thesis at the master's level. Students may select a Creative Project, Study Abroad, or Advanced Practicum to complete degree requirements.

Creative Project

This option allows students to demonstrate their mastery of theory and skills in an Applied fashion through the process of creating original work. Like the thesis, a proposal must be submitted and shared with student's committee for approval. The final project or creative component must be presented, defended and approved by the student's committee.

This capstone effort typically takes one semester to plan and one semester to complete. Projects may vary in scope and character, but successful projects completed by students in the past have included such topics as:

- Producing a recruitment video for a special program for economically disadvantaged minority students at Langston University.
- Developing a special international program allowing OSU undergraduate students to study in Russia.
- Developing a crisis communication plan for an organization.
- Planning an anti-litter campaign for the city of Edmond in central Oklahoma.
- Producing a handbook to guide public relations firms when using social media.
- Developing podcasts about job-seeking skills for OSU Career Services.
- Conducting attitudinal research among patrons who typically donate money during KOSU-FM's semi-annual fund-raising drives.

Study Abroad

This option allows students to experience Global Communication, Brand Communication, or Sport Communication abroad. Like the thesis, a Formal Report must be submitted and shared with student's committee for approval. The final report must be presented, defended and approved by the student's committee.

Advanced Practicum

This option allows students to experience Global Communication, Brand Communication, or Sport Communication practice first-hand via internship work. Like the thesis, a Formal Report must be submitted and shared with student's committee for approval. The final report must be presented, defended and approved by the student's committee.

Enrolling for Credit

Before enrolling in MC 5010, MC 5020, or MC 5040, students must have completed the following courses with a grade of "B" or better: MC 5651 Introduction to Graduate Study, MC 5113 Methods of Research in Mass Communication and MC 5333 Media Theory.

Students electing to do a non-thesis option must work with their adviser to satisfy the requirements. This process involves regular communication, so the adviser can monitor the student's progress, evaluate the student's writing and make recommendations.

The Process – Creative Project

For the Creative Project option, students will enroll in one hour of MC 5010 Capstone Project or Creative Component during the semester before the last one and create a proposal, similar to the thesis proposal but shorter. The student's committee should review the proposal and make recommendations for any changes before giving approval to proceed. Committee members can request a formal defense if they think it is needed (see below). The student will enroll in three hours of MC 5010 Capstone Project or Creative Component during the final semester and complete the project or creative component. Projects may extend beyond one semester, with the consent of the adviser, **but no project may earn more than four hours of credit for MC 5010 that would count toward graduation.**

Project/Creative Component Steps
Enroll in one hour of MC 5010 in third semester. Work on project/creative component proposal.
Have the adviser approve the proposal. A formal proposal defense is not required UNLESS a committee member requests it after reviewing the proposal.
Enroll in three hours of MC 5010 in the last semester.
Begin project/creative component proposal.
Submit project to committee members at least a week before the defense. Make any changes that committee members request. Committee members sign approval form.
Submit the approval form to the graduate director.
Submit an electronic copy of the project or creative component to the graduate director.
Attend Graduate commencement with family and adviser.

Guidelines for the Project/Creative Component Proposal. Sections of the proposal for the project/creative component should include:

1. An introduction stating the rationale for the project/creative component and why it is necessary or beneficial.

2. A review of the relevant trade and scholarly literature, including some theoretical perspective. This review will be shorter than for a thesis proposal, but it should include the most important literature.
 3. A methodology section stating how the project/creative component will be accomplished.
 4. A proposed budget (when appropriate).
 5. A proposed timeline for project completion.
 6. How the project/creative component will be evaluated.
- **Approving/Defending the Proposal.** Once the adviser has been selected, the student should meet regularly with the adviser to discuss possible projects or creative components and to discuss the proposal. These discussions generally should entail writing a proposal similar in nature to a thesis proposal, although shorter. When the proposal is completed, the adviser shall share it with committee members who will offer suggestions for revisions. **If any committee member requests it, the proposal must be reviewed at a meeting of the student's committee. In this instance, committee members must receive a copy of the proposal at least one week in advance. A project defense form that provides a record of the meeting taking place and committee members approving the project/creative component is available on the SMSC Graduate Program website and should be brought to the meeting. The Graduate Coordinator places the form is placed in the student's file.**
 - **IRB and Project/Creative Component Proposal.** In past consultations with the IRB office, a determination has been that such projects DO NOT require IRB approval. **However, if the adviser deems the project could result in a publishable work, then IRB approval should be obtained before the project/creative component moves forward.**
 - **Complete the project/creative component.** The final form of the project/creative component will be determined by its content and/or function. The student may begin working on the project or creative component immediately after the adviser and/or committee approves the proposal. In general, the project/ creative component should include a final, written report comprised of the following sections:
 1. An introduction, including a rationale for the project and its benefits.
 2. A review of the relevant trade and scholarly literature, including some theoretical perspective.
 3. A methods section, detailing how the project/creative component was conducted and what kind of research, if any, was conducted in the process of completing the project. This section should reflect the principles and application of research learned during completion of the student's research courses.
 4. A detailed time line illustrating the sequence in which the various phases of the project were completed.
 5. An evaluation section that describes the project's findings, how its success/effects were measured and what specific recommendations the student can draw from the findings.
 6. A reference list.
 7. Appendices that contains any additional materials relevant to the completion of the project. These sections should include any media, scripts, treatments, manuscripts, final publications, promotional pieces or other items that were produced during the completion of the creative component/project.

Preparing the Final Draft and Defense

The report of the final project should be printed and bound or placed in a binder with dividers for the sections. The project should also have the capability of storing any supporting elements of the creative component/project, such as videotapes, scripts, etc. Students should produce one copy of their final project for the faculty adviser and an electronic copy on a CD-ROM for the School of Media and Strategic Communications for use by future students.

The defense of the creative component/project should be completed before the “dead week” (Week 16) of that semester. Each committee member must receive a copy of the written report at least one week before the defense of the project/creative component, so it can be properly evaluated. The student is responsible for scheduling the defense at a mutually agreeable time for all committee members. The student should bring a Project/Creative Component Defense Form to the meeting (forms can be obtained from the Desire2Learn site).

At the start of the defense meeting, the student must make a 10-to-15-minute presentation focusing mainly on the results of the project/creative component and its implications. If committee members give their approval, they would sign the Defense Form, which is then submitted to the graduate director. **It is especially important that the graduate director receive this form because it is the only written record that the student has successfully defended the project/creative component. It will be used to check whether the student has completed the requirements for graduation during the Graduate College’s graduation checks at the end of the semester.**

The Process –Advanced Practicum or Study Abroad

For the Creative Project option, students will enroll in 6 hours of either MC 5020 (Advanced Practicum) or MC 5040 (Study Abroad). The student’s committee should review the proposed internship or study abroad experience to make recommendations for any changes before giving approval to proceed. The student will enroll in 1 hour of MC 5000 Thesis/Formal Report during the final semester and complete the formal report.

Advanced Practicum or Study Abroad Completion Steps
Enroll in 6 hours of MC 5020 or 5040.
Have the adviser and committee members approve the proposed internship or study abroad experience. A formal proposal defense is not required UNLESS a committee member requests it after reviewing the proposal.
After the Experience, complete a Formal Report. Enroll in 1 hour of MC 5011.
Submit project to committee members at least a week before the defense. Make any changes that committee members request. Committee members sign approval form.
Submit the approval form to the graduate director.
Submit an electronic copy of the Formal Report to the graduate director.
Attend Graduate commencement with family and adviser.

Guidelines for the Formal Report. The Formal Report should detail the selected experience and discuss knowledge learned related to the area of concentration.

GRADUATE COLLEGE ADVICE

A Summary of Important Policies



Enrollment Requirements

- Graduate students must complete a minimum of 6 hours during each 12-month period to be continuously enrolled. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment requires reapplication and admission to the program.
- Graduate students must be enrolled in at least 2 hours during any semester in which they are utilizing university resources, including the semester in which they graduate.
- Graduate assistants must meet minimum enrollment requirements:

<i>0.50 or greater FTE</i>	<i>6 hours in fall or spring</i>
	<i>3 hours in summer</i>
<i>less than 0.50 FTE</i>	<i>9 hours in fall or spring</i>
	<i>3 hours in summer</i>
- All students must be enrolled by the deadlines listed in the Schedule of Classes.

Time Limits

- All requirements for master's candidates must be completed within 7 years.
- No course on the Plan of Study may be more than 10 years old at the time of graduation.
- Students must follow deadlines for submission of drafts and theses as listed in the University Catalog.

Grade Point Requirements

- Graduate students in the School of Media and Strategic Communications must make a "B" or better in all graduate and foundation courses. Students must retake all courses in which they make below a "B."
- The Graduate College requires students to have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in all course work (excluding research and creative component hours).
- Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on strict academic probation by the Graduate College.
- Mass communication students who make a second grade of "C" or below will be dropped from the program. They can appeal to the Graduate Faculty.

Transfer Hours

- Master's students may transfer a maximum of 9 hours from another university or from Special Student status at OSU. To qualify, students must be admitted to the Graduate College at the other university and the courses must be certified for graduate credit at that university. The student's committee also must approve the courses as part of the student's Plan of Study.

Plan of Study

- The Plan of Study must be approved before the student enrolls in the 17th hour, usually the first semester. The student must complete RCR (Responsible Conduct of Research) training by that time.
- All students must indicate on their Plan of Study whether their research will involve human subjects. **If human subjects are involved for a thesis, they must receive IRB approval before starting their research.**

Graduation

- Within the first two weeks of the final semester, graduating students must submit a revised Plan of Study to ensure consistency with actual course work and a Graduation Clearance Form. Then, they must use the SIS system to apply for a diploma.
- Students must meet the deadlines for submitting drafts and final copies of their theses and projects.

FINANCIAL AID

Finding Money & General Information



Financial aid programs for graduate students are limited so applicants should not normally rely on university-related financial support to complete their education. The availability of financial aid for most programs is contingent on the state's economic situation, which varies from year to year. The School of Media and Strategic Communications offers a limited number of teaching assistantships and scholarships. The College of Arts and Sciences also offers three \$3,000 incentive grants for the school to use to attract highly qualified students who can serve as teaching assistants. The grants can be renewed for a second year. International students are eligible for graduate assistantships, but generally they are not eligible for other financial aid according to state and federal law. They must also take a test to demonstrate their English proficiency. When they apply for admission, international students also can apply for a \$100 scholarship from the Graduate College, which can help them pay for their application fees.

Most graduate students work part or full time to meet their financial needs. Other positions are available on campus for students with writing and editing or publication design skills, and some positions may be available in the community. International students are permitted to work on campus. **Generally, students must be enrolled at least half time -- 4 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters and 2 credits in the summer -- to remain eligible for federal financial aid, although requirements for other financial aid varies. Students must be enrolled in at least 9 hours for .25 assistantships and at least 6 hours for .50 assistantships, which is considered full time. Pay particular attention to this requirement when enrolling and when considering whether to drop a course because funding depends on it.**

Sources of Information

Information on financial aid programs is available in the Office of Financial Aid located in 119 Student Union, (405) 744-6604. A manual of financial aid programs is available at the Graduate College. The college also has access to the Academic Research Information System Student Report, which produces periodic compilations of sources of financial aid for graduate students. Please see Mike Heppler, Assistant Director of Student Academic Services at the college. Availability of funds and programs, eligibility requirements and deadlines vary from year to year so students should always check the latest information before assuming they are eligible for any particular form of aid and before taking any specific action.

Notices of special grants and awards are placed on the Mass Communications Bulletin Board at the top of the stairs on the third floor of the Paul Miller Building. Most campus and community organizations contact the School of Media and Strategic Communications when they want to hire students with certain communication skills. These positions often are

announced in graduate classes and/or via e-mail. The Edmon Low Library, Food Mart and personnel office, 407 Whitehurst, are sources of other employment information.

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available to M.S. graduate students in the School of Media and Strategic Communications. **Assistantships are *not* scholarships and are *not* given on the basis of need or academic performance. Graduate Assistants are hired by the University generally because of their professional mass media experience and skills.** All graduate assistants must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade-point average. **Students on academic probation may *not* hold assistantships, and students who are placed on probationary status at any time during their tenure as a teaching assistant must forfeit their assistantship.** They can reapply when their probation has ended.

To be given full consideration, students interested in assistantships may apply for assistantships at the same time they apply for admission through the graduate college. Alternately, they must submit to the graduate director a letter explaining their interest in the assistantship and their qualifications and a detailed resume or curriculum VITA. Students may still apply for positions afterward, but their availability will be limited. The associate director of the school and the graduate director will make the final decision regarding graduate assistantships, usually with the input of the relevant faculty. Before the semester, students will receive a letter detailing the assistantship and compensation. Students must send an acceptance letter by the deadline, or it will be offered to someone else.

Graduate teaching assistants help regular faculty by grading undergraduate assignments and/or helping with skills labs such as a video production. Assistantships are for one academic year (fall and spring semesters) at a time. Graduate assistants receive a monthly salary and have the out-of-state portion of their tuition waived. Usually, the Graduate College also waives a portion of the remaining tuition. Generally, three hours of tuition are waived for a .25 FTE (10 hours per week) position, and six hours are waived for a .50 FTE (20 hours per week) position. However, the waivers are subject to change by the Graduate College. **Teaching assistants are initially required to attend Graduate Assistantship Orientation training provided by the Graduate College. In addition, they may be required to attend the lectures in the courses to which they are assigned.**

Performance of graduate assistants is evaluated at the end of each semester, and only those students who have been rated satisfactory will be allowed to continue for another semester. Assistantships may be renewed for a second year for M.S. candidates at the discretion of the graduate director and the school's director. Renewal beyond these limits is possible if there are no other qualified applicants.

Qualified international students are eligible for assistantships. If students make a 26 or higher on the Speaking portion of the Internet-based TOEFL, they are immediately eligible to teach. Students who make between 22 and 24 must also pass the ITA exam administered by the English Department. If they score 20 or lower on the TOEFL, students must attend OSU for a semester and then they must first pass the Versant test. Then, they must pass the ITA exam. Moreover, all new international teaching assistants are required to participate in the international teaching assistant orientation and evaluation workshop, which involves three sessions offered at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. International students should realize that studying mass media topics or working in a mass media profession in their

home country does not automatically qualify them to assist in teaching American students about media and strategic communications in the United States.

Graduate assistants whose duties include teaching classes must attend the OSU-sponsored seminars on teaching effectiveness or have had comparable teaching experience in higher education. International graduate assistants whose duties include teaching must attend an English language workshop designed to enhance and evaluate language skills.

Principal Financial Aid Programs

Non-Resident Tuition Waivers. Non-resident graduate students who hold assistantship appointments of .25 FTE or more will have the out-of-state portion of their tuition waived. Other non-resident students who receive a cash scholarship through OSU may qualify for a partial waiver of the non-resident tuition. The student should contact the Graduate College for information about the program.

Graduate College Tuition Waivers. Students who hold assistantship appointments of .25 FTE will generally receive 3 hours of tuition waiver from the Graduate College. They must be enrolled in 9 credit hours. Students who hold assistantship appointments of .50 FTE will generally receive 6 hours of tuition waiver. Additionally, 6 hours will be considered full time. Students with either assistantship will also receive student health insurance.

Departmental Tuition Waivers. The school has \$1,000 in departmental tuition waivers from the Graduate College. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, and the money cannot be used to pay for Outreach courses. Further, applicants can have a .25 assistantship but not a .50 assistantship. To apply for the funds, students must fill out an application form and submit an updated resume or VITA to the graduate director. The graduate faculty will review the applications and make a recommendation to the Graduate College, which makes the final decision. The money can be divided and awarded to several students.

Incentive Grants. The school usually receives a varying number of \$3,000 incentive grants from the College of Arts and Sciences. The grants are used to attract high quality students to the program. Students receive \$3,000 during the first academic year, and the grant can be renewed for a second year. The school's director and graduate director, along with the associate dean for research of the College of Arts and Sciences, will determine whether the grant will be renewed.

Need-Based Grants. Special one-time grants are sometimes available on the basis of need to aid formally admitted students who suffer a life crisis that could threaten their continued enrollment in their degree program. Requests for these grants should be prepared by the student and sent directly to the Graduate College for review. A letter of support from the graduate director is required. Funds available for need-based grants are limited. If the student is placed on strict academic probation or is suspended from the university, the grant will be revoked and removed from the student's Bursar account, and it may result in financial liability for the student.

Kendall Durfey Memorial Scholarship. The family of Kendall Durfey, a graduate of the School of Media and Strategic Communications who died in a plane crash along with nine others including members of the OSU basketball team, has created a \$500 scholarship in his honor for broadcasting students in the school, including graduate students. Applicants must submit a resume and completed application form to the school's undergraduate adviser. The forms can be downloaded from the Financial Aid section of the program's Desire2Learn site (oc.okstate.edu). The deadline for applications is by Feb. 15.

Charles A. Fleming Memorial Scholarship

The family of Dr. Charles A. Fleming, the former director of graduate studies at the school and the namesake of the school's Kappa Tau Alpha honor society chapter, has created a \$1,000 per semester scholarship in his honor for graduate students. Applicants must submit a resume and completed application form to the graduate director. The forms can be downloaded from the Financial Aid section of the SMSC website. The deadline for applications is by Feb. 15.

Social Justice Tuition Waivers. Non-resident, domestic graduate students from under-represented groups who do not hold departmental assistantships are eligible for a waiver of their out-of-state tuition. Eligible applicants should contact the Graduate College at the beginning of each semester. This waiver is not limited to new students.

Academic (Top 20%) Non-Resident Tuition Waivers. Incoming domestic students with a GRE composite score in the 80th percentile and above may qualify for a full waiver of their non-resident tuition. Eligible applicants should send a written request as well as a copy of their standardized test scores to the Graduate College. Contact Jodie Kennedy at the OSU Graduate College as (405) 744-4806 for more information.

NOTE: Waivers cannot be used for Extension, audit or correspondence courses. Additionally, tuition waivers cannot be applied retroactively to past semesters.

Other Financial Aid Programs

Application for need-based federal and state institutional financial aid is made by completing the FAFSA packet available through the Office of Financial Aid located in 119 Student Union, (405) 744-6604.

Financial Help from Professional Organizations and Associations. Numerous professional organizations and associations offer financial aid to graduate students in the form of scholarships, grants, awards, fellowships or internships. Some awards are for scholarly papers and theses, others are true scholarships, and others involve working for the sponsoring organization for a semester or less.

Announcement of these opportunities are posted on the Mass Communication Graduate Student bulletin board located at the top of the stairs on the third floor of the Paul Miller Building.

GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Connecting with Academics & Professionals



Graduate students may participate in a number of professional organizations in the School of Media and Strategic Communications that also serve undergraduate students, such as Alpha Epsilon Rho (a broadcasting honorary), the Society for Professional Journalists, the Public Relations Student Society of America and the Advertising Club.

Kappa Tau Alpha

The Charles A. Fleming Chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha is an internationally recognized honor society for journalism, broadcasting and mass communication graduate and undergraduate majors. Criteria for graduate student membership are:

- Degree candidate
- GPA of 3.75 in all graduate and foundation courses, if applicable
- Second year of graduate study

M.S. student records are reviewed each spring and qualified students -- undergraduate and graduate -- are invited by letter to become members of KTA. The school's annual awards banquet is the occasion for public recognition of new KTA members. The national headquarters for KTA charges a membership fee for new members. The chapter is named after Dr. Charles A. Fleming, a former graduate director and KTA adviser for many years who died of cancer. Dr. Fleming's family has created the Charles A. Fleming Memorial Scholarship in his honor for graduate students in our school.

Graduate and Professional Student Associations

Students also can become members of the Graduate and Professional Student Organization. The group helps provide student input about graduate education, and it is an official advisory body for the OSU president. For more information, click on the group's Web site at <http://gpsga.okstate.edu/index.php>.

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)

AEJMC is a nonprofit, educational association for educators, students, and industry professionals. The organization has a Graduate Student Interest Group and many Divisions offer categories for Graduate Student Research. AEJMC is a great place to network and to share study findings. (<http://www.aejmc.org/home/>)

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

When Students Need Help Completing the Degree



Students should feel free to contact the SMSC Graduate Coordinator at any time regarding concerns about the SMSC graduate program. The best way to reach the director is via email correspondence. The SMSC Graduate Coordinator is available by appointment (in-person or SKYPE) and during scheduled office hours. Students should email the director to request an appointment. The SMSC Graduate Coordinator can assist you in resolving your concerns or put you in contact with others who can be of help.

Questions and Complaints About Grading

Students who have complaints about the grading of assignments or examinations should refer the complaint to their professor. If the matter cannot be resolved with the professor, students should submit their complaints in writing to the university level grade appeals board.

Other Course-Related Problems

Other concerns should be referred to the student's graduate adviser, who will attempt to resolve them with the professor concerned, the Graduate College, Registrar, Bursar, etc. Problems involving a particular course or professor will not be considered by the academic adviser until the student first has discussed the matter with the professor.

Other Problems and Complaints

Students are urged to discuss their questions, problems and complaints with any faculty member. Thesis advisers and the graduate director are available for this purpose. Problems involving the program overall that cannot be resolved within the School of Media and Strategic Communications can be taken to the associate dean of the Graduate College.

SMSC GRADUATE FACULTY
Academic & Professional Credentials



Graduate faculty of the School of Media and Strategic Communications hold doctorates from some of the nation's most prestigious schools. Our professors routinely publish articles in leading academic journals, present research findings at national conferences, author books and book chapters, and travel around the world to share their knowledge.

DR. ROSEMARY AVANCE

Teaching Assistant Professor

B.A., Communication, University of Tulsa

M.A., Communication, University of Pennsylvania

Ph.D, Communication, University of Pennsylvania

Research Interests:

- Persuasive writing for strategic communications
- Writing for print and digital media
- Entertainment media

DR. CLARA BAE

Assistant Professor

M.A., Mass Communication, Korea University

Ph.D., Media and Information Studies, Michigan State University

Research Interests:

- Mass Communications
- Cause-Related Marketing
- Visual Attention & Perception
- Consumer Psychology
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Advertising Effects

DR. ASYA COOLEY

Lecturer, Strategic Communication

B.A., Mass Communication, Alcorn State University

M.A, Mass Communication, Louisiana State University

Ph.D., Public Policy and Administration, Mississippi State University

Research Interests:

- Nonprofit Communication
- Nonprofit Management
- Nonprofit Leadership
- International Communication

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B.A., International Relations, Louisiana State University

B.A., International Studies, Louisiana State University

M.A., Mass Communication, University of Alabama

Ph.D., Mass Communication, University of Alabama

Research Interests:

- International Communication
- Political Communication
- Peace Keeping
- Source Intelligence
- Online Civic Engagement

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Research Interests:

- Media Law
- Entrepreneurship
- Ethics
- Religion and Media
- Political Communication

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B.A., Broadcast Journalism, Weber State University

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Ph.D., Public Communication, Georgia State University

Research Interests:

- Media Technology
- Intercultural Communication
- Media and Culture
- Sports and Culture

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B.A.J., Journalism, University of Georgia

M.Ed., Sport Management, University of Texas at Austin

Ph.D., Sport Administration, Florida State University

Research Interests:

- * Portrayals of Gender and LGBT in Sport Media Content
- * Attitudes and Experiences of Sport Media Professionals
- * Internet Sport Journalism and Sport Social Media
- * Marketing of Sport to LGBT Consumers

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Research Interests:

- International/Global Communication
- Political Communication
- New Media and Geopolitics
- Asian communication

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Research Interests:

- Advertising
- Communication and Religion
- Religion and Music

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B.A., Advertising, University of Texas at Austin

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Research Interests:

- Consumer Psychology
- Message effect
- Social media
- Corporate Social Responsibility

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B.A., Broadcast-Business, Northwest Missouri State University

M.A., History, Northwest Missouri State University

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Research Interests:

- Sports Journalism and Sports Broadcast Distribution Systems
- Television Genres
- Political Communication

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B.A., Broadcast Journalism, Arizona State University

M.S., Journalism and Mass Communication, Oklahoma State University

Ph.D., Journalism, University of Oklahoma

Research Interests:

- Advertising & Public Relations Ethics
- Advertising & Public Relations Education
- Mediated Communication
- Political Communication
- Political Advertising and News Coverage

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Research Interests:

- Media Law
- Open Government
- First Amendment