

# Communication Studies Graduate Student Guide

Communication Studies Program  
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## THE COMMUNICATION STUDIES PROGRAM

### **Welcome**

This Guide has been designed to provide prospective and current students a glimpse into our M.A. program in Communication Studies, along with additional program details and requirements that can be referenced anytime during one's tenure in the program. This Guide should be used along with the Graduate School's [Checklist for Earning the Master's Degree](#), which provides a quick overview of the application, admission and graduation process. In addition, the [University Catalog](#) should also be consulted for both university and program policies and requirements. Finally, the [Guide to Graduate Studies](#) provides full, detailed explanations of all things related to applying, enrolling, and completing your Master's Degree at CSU, Chico.

The Communication Studies Faculty is committed to promoting an environment of graduate study that is founded on collaboration among graduate students rather than competition. In addition, it is expected students come into the program with self-motivation, a desire to learn, a strong commitment to their studies and personal integrity. The Communication Studies Program has a strong history of supporting our graduate students and fostering the development of communication skill sets and in-depth knowledge such that graduates are able to pursue a variety of career options. We invite students to seek understanding, strive for excellence, manage balance in life and develop your academic potential with our M.A. program in Communication Studies.

### **Communication Studies Graduate Program Mission Statement**

The M.A. in Communication Studies provides students an opportunity to pursue advanced study in human communication and to improve its practice in interpersonal contexts, organizations, and the public sphere. This generalist approach to the discipline requires that all students study the historical and theoretical foundations of the discipline, current research, and qualitative, quantitative and rhetorical research approaches. The program is designed for students who are intellectually curious and engaged, who seek a broad-based advanced understanding of the field, and who desire opportunities for exploring specialized interests. As active participants in a community of scholarly discourse, students are expected to practice, develop and master advanced written and oral communication, research and critical thinking skills, and collaborative scholarship.

## **Communication Studies Learning Goals & Objectives**

The following chart identifies the specific Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives as of 9/2012. These Goals guide our Curriculum Development and Assessment of Program Outcomes.

<b>CMST Graduate Program Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>1. Articulate the discipline and related sub areas.</b>
SLO	1.1 Discuss the current landscape and evolution of the discipline and /or sub areas through a variety of roots, noting critical points of development and significant contributors.
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>2. Appropriately apply communication theory to human communication phenomena.</b>
SLO	2.1 Compare the various theoretical perspectives associated with the discipline with regard to their assumptions, predominant focus, and weaknesses.
SLO	2.2 Analyze current communication phenomena using communication theory.
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>3. Apply research methods knowledge to communication problems.</b>
SLO	3.1 Design and/or conduct a <u>qualitative</u> research study incorporating all the principles of good design.
SLO	3.2 Design and/or conduct a <u>quantitative</u> research study incorporating all the principles of good design.
SLO	3.3 Design and/or conduct a <u>rhetorical</u> research study incorporating all the principles of good rhetorical scholarship.
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>4. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a specialized area of communication studies.</b>
SLO	4.1 Present in written form a comprehensive understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.
SLO	4.2 Orally present and/or defend individual understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.

## **CMST Faculty**

The CMST Faculty represents a diverse collection of expertise and pursue a variety of interest areas, yet they all share one thing in common; they care about your interests and success as a graduate student. Listed below for each faculty is current rank, degree and university. More detail about each faculty member can be found on our [department website](#).

Susan Avanzino	1995	Graduate Coordinator, Associate Professor	Ph.D.	University of Southern California
Jennifer Brundridge	2014	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	University of California, Santa Barbara
Young Cheon Cho	2008	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	University of Iowa
Michelle D. Givertz	2007	Associate Professor	Ph.D.	University of Arizona
Stephanie A. Hamel	2003	Associate Professor	Ph.D.	University of Texas at Austin
Zachary Justus	2009	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	Arizona State University
Nan Li	2008	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	University of Colorado, Boulder
Sue E. Peterson	2007	Lecturer	MA	Pepperdine University

## **Retired Faculty**

Steven R. Brydon	1973	Professor Emeritus	Ph.D.	University of Southern California
Gary G. Collier	1971	Professor Emeritus	Ph.D.	University of Southern California
Samuel M. Edelman	1979	Professor Emeritus	Ph.D.	University of Arizona
Ruth M. Guzley	1994	Professor Emerita	Ph.D.	Arizona State University
Madeline M. Keaveney	1974	Professor Emerita	Ph.D.	University of Illinois
Stephen W. King	1987	Dean Emeritus	Ph.D.	University of Southern California
Michael D. Scott	1981	Professor Emeritus	Ph.D.	University of Southern California
William R. Todd- Mancillas	19	Professor	Ph.D.	Florida State University

## **FIRST YEAR**

### **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS & PROGRESS**

#### **Graduate Coordinator**

The CMST Graduate Coordinator initially works with all new graduate students, prior to their arrival and during the first two semesters, facilitating the application process, providing scheduling advice, answering general questions concerning progress toward your degree, approving study plans and program changes, while playing a supportive role in all students' culminating activities. The Graduate Coordinator helps you to identify appropriate classes, explore thesis and research topics, identify possible committee members, and to progress systematically toward your degree. At the end of the first year of classes, or after 15 units a student should be considering which culminating activity they wish to pursue. Depending upon that choice, students will either continue to work with the Graduate Coordinator, or, if the thesis option is chosen a Thesis Committee will need to be formed. These different options are discussed in much more depth in the latter portion of this Guide.

#### **Required Courses**

The Master of Arts in Communication Studies (M.A. in CMST) is housed in the Communication Studies Program within the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences (CMAS). Note that this guide is written with the typical, full-time student schedule in mind, a person who would take four semesters to complete the degree. In cases where students complete the program on a part-time basis, the schedule would be adjusted as needed. Graduate students complete 30 units (10 courses). Within the 30 units total, the CMST Program requires you to complete four core classes (12 units), 15-18 units of elected courses, and students choose between the Thesis/Project (3 units) or Comprehensive Exam as a culminating experience to complete the degree requirements.

#### **Core Classes**

CMST 601: Seminar in Communication Studies (Fall)  
CMST 602: Seminar in Communication Research Methods (Spring)  
CMST 603: Approach to Human Communication Research (Fall)  
CMST 613/612: Seminar in Rhetorical Criticism/Rhetorical Theory (Spring)

Beyond these required seminars, you will take a variety of graduate level elective courses in Communication Studies, as they are available. Full details, course descriptions and requirements may be found in the current [University Catalog](#). Under special circumstances, graduate students may be allowed to enroll courses outside the Communication Studies program and/or in 400/500 level courses. Such courses must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator and must count toward a students' program of study. This kind of approved coursework outside the Communication Studies program and/or at the 400/500 level should not exceed 6 units.

## **Student Status & Satisfactory Progress**

Most graduate students in the CMST graduate program are accepted as "classified;" that is, you are assigned to (i.e., "classified") under the CMST master's degree program. Some students may be admitted as "conditionally classified," which means there is some requirement or level of achievement that must be reached to become "classified." If you were admitted with any "conditions," the Graduate Coordinator will have informed you of this and you will know what is needed to reach "classified" status. Students complete the first year or half of their studies as a "classified" student. Your status changes and you are advanced to "candidacy" in the second year or second half of the program. This stage is covered briefly below and then in more detail in the section on the "Second Year."

In addition to reaching "classified" status, all students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress towards completion of their degree program. This includes completing all courses in a timely fashion, completing on schedule all exams, papers, and paperwork necessary for advancement to classified status or to candidacy; and maintaining satisfactory grades. Satisfactory progress also includes successful and consistent completion of your coursework with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 within the 5-year limit required by the University. The Graduate School mandates that all requirements for a master's degree must be completed within 5 years of the semester you begin coursework. (See Section regarding "Validation of Expired Coursework & Request for Extensions").

Within CMST, satisfactory progress is also understood as continued proof of research or scholarly activity related to your degree. Unsatisfactory progress would include, for example, the inability to complete coursework within specified timelines, perhaps requesting too many extensions or incompletes. (See "Incompletes" below). Or, unsatisfactory progress could be failure to produce research or bibliographical information related to one's thesis or to complete one's comprehensive examination within a mutually accepted and reasonable time frame (more detail provided in the section "Second Year"). Demonstrated writing proficiency is a university-mandated graduation requirement for all M.A. programs. Students enrolled in the M.A. program in Communication Studies demonstrate their writing proficiency both by their articles or papers submitted as a requirement for admission to classified status and by their successful completion of the four common core courses for the degree (CMST 601, 602, 603, and 613/612), each of which requires substantial writing in various forms (e.g. exams, summaries, research papers).

## **Independent Study**

Independent Study (CMST-697) allows students to explore a particular subject within the discipline that is not presently served by the Department's regular curriculum. Independent Study can be an excellent alternative for students in the Comprehensive Plan who wish to explore a single research topic. For the student following the Thesis or Project Plan, Independent Study units permit examination of a topic different from or related to her/his thesis idea. Independent Study is not automatically an option to students but rather is available upon agreement with the supervising faculty member and approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

- A student selecting Independent Study must have approval of the Graduate Coordinator, Supervising CMST Faculty member, and is typically selected after 15 units have been completed in the CMST program.

- An Independent Study contract must be completed in typed form by the student and full time faculty member agreeing to supervise the independent study. (Contracts for Independent Study are available in the CMAS office.) The contract must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator for approval prior to enrollment in CMST 697. The contract must explain (a) the purpose of the Independent Study, (b) the content of study including specific readings, (c) the method for ensuring systematic progress on readings and/or assignments, (d) assignments or outcomes, and (e) the method of evaluation to be used by the professor. The criteria for evaluating your performance and assigning a letter grade should be explicit. Substantial readings in an area should be supported by attaching a bibliography.
- Independent Study hours cannot be used as research hours toward a thesis or project, but may be used for developing a separate or broader research interest.

## **Grade Point Average**

A CMST graduate student should receive no less than a "B" in any class to ensure a 3.0 (B) average within the program. The Graduate School, in addition, requires that in order to graduate you must maintain a 3.0 overall GPA. An unsatisfactory grade ("B-" or less) in nearly any graduate course usually places a burden upon the student to meet the minimum 3.0 GPA to graduate from the program, particularly early in the student's program. (Please refer to the University Catalog's [definition of letter grades for graduate work](#).) A student whose program or overall GPA falls below the required 3.0 at the end of a semester will be formally placed on probation for the following semester. Probationary status normally results in revocation of graduate assistantship opportunities (discussed below) during the probationary period. During probation the student is expected to meet with his/her current course professors and the Graduate Coordinator regularly to discuss progress in classes. If the student has not achieved a 3.0 GPA in both program and overall courses by the end of the one semester probationary status, the Graduate Coordinator (along with the student's Thesis Committee, if one has been formed) may elect to disenroll the student from the CMST graduate program.

## **Incompletes**

As defined in the most recent edition of the [University Catalog](#), "Incompletes (I) will be assigned only in cases where instructors conclude that a clearly identifiable pattern of course requirements cannot be met for unforeseen reasons." Incomplete grades are not encouraged in the CMST graduate program. An incomplete grade (I) for a course is not granted automatically when a student does not complete all the necessary assignments by the prescribed time at the end of a semester. Rather, the student must request from the instructor an incomplete grade and provide a sound argument that such a request is warranted. The instructor may or may not choose to grant the request for an incomplete grade. If granted, the instructor must fill out the Incomplete Agreement, discuss the agreement terms with the student (e.g., required work and date of completion), and complete the necessary computer data entry to record the agreement. While the University Catalog specifies that "An incomplete must be made up within one calendar year from the end of the term for which it was assigned, whether or not you maintain continuous enrollment," it is within the purview of the instructor to request completion sooner than one year. Failure to meet all requirements of the incomplete agreement, within the time prescribed by the instructor, may result in a grade change from I to F. Students with Teaching Associate or research positions may not be rehired if there is an incomplete on their record.

## **Culminating Experience Overviews**

Once a student has reached “classified” status and has successfully progressed in the CMST program with 15 units completed, there are three choices they will have to complete their program of study. A brief overview is offered here, while full details, steps and policies are covered in the Section “Second Year.”

<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Comprehensive Exam</b>
601	601	601
602	602	602
603	603	603
613/612	613/612	613/612
699T	699P	
15 units additional CMST elected courses	15 units additional CMST elected courses	18 units additional CMST elected courses

**Thesis/Project Plan of Study:** In addition to the four core classes (12 units), students selecting the CMST Thesis Plan or Project Plan must complete 15 units of graduate-level coursework plus 3 thesis units (for a total of 30 units). At least 24 units completed must be within the CMST Program, whereas up to 6 units can be approved at the 400/500 level and/or from outside the program. Upon successful completion of the above core classes and usually in one’s fourth semester of full-time study, a thesis student will register for three units of CMST 699T (Thesis hours). For those students taking a project rather than a thesis the procedure to be followed is essentially the same, except that the student is enrolled in CMST 699P (Project hours) rather than CMST 699T. Registration for thesis hours is contingent upon the formal/written approval of a thesis prospectus by the student’s Thesis Committee and the CMST Graduate Coordinator, which is typically began in the student’s third semester. (See Section “Second Year” for details.)

**Comprehensive Exam Plan of Study:** In addition to the four core classes (12 units), students selecting the Comprehensive Exam Plan must complete 18 units of graduate-level coursework in order to meet the University’s minimum requirements of 30 units of graduate study. At least 24 units completed must be within the CMST Program, whereas up to 6 units can be approved at the 400/500 level and/or from outside the program. The Comprehensive Exam Plan requires preparation meetings and work starting in the fall and continuing in the spring as well as the completion of a minimum of six hours of examinations covering all coursework identified on the student’s Master’s Degree Program Plan. (See Section “Second Year” for details.)

## **Scholarly Activities and Professional Organizations**

Starting from your first semester, CMST graduate students are encouraged to join professional academic or applied associations and attend/participate in research competitions. Student memberships are often relatively inexpensive and an exceptional investment for the amount of information you receive. Currently, graduate students and CMST faculty are members of [Western States Communication Association](#), [National Communication Association](#) and [The International Communication Association](#) as well as campus wide organizations such as the [Council of Graduate Students](#). The Department considers your participation in professional and scholarly activities to be an important part of your development and has been able to support student travel to conferences

when presenting papers, when funds are available. Write your seminar papers with a consideration for submission to an academic conference. Often these opportunities will be discussed by faculty in your core courses, but students may also ask the Graduate Coordinator or Thesis Chair about deadlines for submitting papers or panels to conferences. Be sure to find out when and where conferences are being held, so that you may plan to attend.

### **Collaboration: A Culture of Scholarship**

Collaborative research is encouraged, as co-authorship with faculty and other graduate students is an excellent way to develop research competencies. CMST graduate students have regularly submitted and presented papers at applied and scholarly conferences as coauthors, as well as authors of their own work. It's important to note, serving as a research assistant to a faculty member does not constitute rights to being a co-author. Likewise, a Thesis Chair or committee member is not automatically the co-author of your thesis or major research paper merely because of editorial assistance.

Co-authorship is a mutual agreement between you and the other party. The best advice is to make an agreement before the research is underway and at the time the responsibility for portions of the research are assigned. Some people prefer to "put the agreement in writing." That's fine, but make sure to communicate your intentions openly so that your agreement is mutually understood and acceptable. Your agreement should minimally acknowledge the order of co-authorship (e.g., "first," "second," etc.). Although you may mutually agree to change the order later, you will need to decide who is responsible for taking the lead in writing the paper. As a rule, the first author holds greater editorial power and contributes substantially to the identification and development of the idea. The second author often brings additional expertise in a theoretical or methodological area related to the research, and helps to polish the writing and strengthen the final work. To be sure, many co-authors rotate the order of first and second author in subsequent presentations of a research project to indicate the extent to which they shared in the production. You should acknowledge an individual's contributions (e.g., your thesis Chair and committee members) on the title page when the person(s) (who is not a co-author) has contributed substantially to the formation of your ideas or editing process. Your title page should also identify that you are a master's student in the Communication Studies Program at CSU, Chico. (See Section Authorship Rights and Your Thesis and Co-Authorship Standards of the APA in the Appendix for details.)

### **Academic Honesty**

The Communication Studies Graduate Program is committed to the highest standards for student work both in and outside of classes and in culminating degree activities (i.e., theses, projects, comprehensive exams). Strict adherence to university guidelines with regard to cheating and plagiarism is required and violations may result in failing the class in which the violation occurred as well as other university sanctions. Violations by graduate students in Teaching Associate positions may cost them their teaching position for the semester in question or in a following semester. The Graduate School has published clear and detailed guidelines with regard to academic honesty, all students are responsible for being fully informed as to what may constitute Academic Dishonesty and the possible consequences of such violations. It is your responsibility to review the [Guide to Graduate Studies \(pg. 18\)](#) for more detailed information, as well as the [Student Judicial Affairs](#) website. Some brief detail will be highlighted below, from the Guide to Graduate Studies:

*An important component of graduate education is the development of original research, innovative problem solving, and creative expression. Each student must demonstrate and provide evidence of independent thought. The university will employ various methods of auditing graduate student submissions to ensure that they conform to university standards for academic honesty. These will include reviews by professors, thesis/project committee members, and graduate school staff as well as technology-assisted audits of submitted works using the latest anti-plagiarism software and services.*

### **Misconduct**

*Allegations of misconduct in research, course work, the culminating activity, or any other instructionally related activity will be addressed by the supervising faculty member and possible referred to the relevant program coordinator. In consultation with the appropriate faculty member(s), the coordinator will determine the merits of the allegation and whether to refer the allegation to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for possible disciplinary action. Evidence of plagiarism (see below) will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, which will act in direct consultation with the student's program coordinator (and thesis or project committee when appropriate). The Office of Student Judicial Affairs will follow University disciplinary policy. The most likely disciplinary outcome of plagiarism in any completed culminating activity (e.g., thesis, project, comprehensive examination, etc.) will be expulsion from the University.*

### **Plagiarism Defined**

*The University, like the Council of Writing Program Administrators, distinguishes between plagiarism and the misuse of sources. In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers. (WPA, 1) Plagiarism includes claiming credit for the artistic and creative work of someone else, such as a map, graph, musical composition, photo, electronic image, painting, drawing, sculpture, design, or computer code. Obtaining unauthorized assistance from another person in the writing of a comprehensive examination is also plagiarism.*

### **Misuse of Sources Defined**

*[C]arelessly or inadequately citing ideas and words borrowed from another source. [. . .] Ethical writers make every effort to acknowledge sources fully and appropriately in accordance with the contexts and genres of their writing. A student who attempts (even if clumsily) to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student [has] failed to cite and document sources appropriately. (WPA, 2)*

*Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA). "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices." Jan. 2003. 28 Aug. 2003 <http://www.ilstu.edu/~ddbesse/wpa/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>>.*

## **Graduate Teaching Associates & Assistants**

The CMST program offers Teaching Associate positions each year to qualified, classified CMST graduate students. There is an application process that must be completed to be entered into the pool of candidates for positions that are assigned each fall semester (See [CMST Website](#) for details). Qualifications include a bachelor's degree in communication or related discipline, potential for teaching and previous academic or work experience with teaching, coaching or related areas. The CMST Graduate Coordinator, along with Faculty Supervisors for Public Speaking and the Speech & Debate Team review applications and consider student's qualifications and the Program needs with

final appointments made by the Department Chair. Most Graduate Teaching Associates work with full-time faculty in the basic public speaking course. Graduate Teaching Associates with a background in oral interpretation and debate may work with our forensics team and its coach. Graduate Assistants are occasionally assigned to help full-time faculty in the preparation of course materials or on research projects.

CMST graduate students must maintain full-time graduate student enrollment of 15 units per academic year in which they are awarded a CMST Teaching Associate position, a Graduate Assistantship, or a Research Assistantship. Exceptions to this rule may be infrequently granted by the Graduate Coordinator and Department Chair. Positions are awarded for a maximum of four regular semesters. Eligibility for positions during these four semesters may be revoked if a student's program or overall and/or program GPA falls below the 3.0 requirement or other program or university policies are violated. A Graduate Assistant, Teaching Associate, or Research Assistant **may not hold any other work position on campus** as that would exceed contractual time basis. These positions should not be accepted if a student expects to hold an additional job and attend courses full-time. Other than university limits for positions on-campus, the CMST program cannot enforce any other restrictions on a student seeking opportunities beyond the above listed positions. **However, we strongly advise new graduate students against dividing their time too severely.** Failure to meet program, coursework and/or position expectations will place your position and/or program of study in jeopardy. Your first priority should be to complete your master's degree coursework successfully and in a reasonable time frame, while also meeting your position expectations. The California State University's Teaching Associate positions provide a highly competitive yearly stipend and are intended foremost to assist students who are considered full-time students while completing their graduate degree at CSU.

The awarding of a position within the CMST program comes with responsibility and clear expectations. These coveted positions provide instruction and coaching for over 500 students every semester and supply graduate students with exceptional work experience. Failure to meet the expectations and requirements of a position creates an unacceptable situation for the CMST Program, as these responsibilities are not "negotiable." To accept any position within the program means you acknowledge you are now a paid employee with a work contract and as such, you are willing and able to meet or exceed all expectations and will meet the highest professional standards for your position. Such expectations include working during the week during regular university and program hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-10pm, with weekends at times) and making sure you are able to be physically on campus as required by your specific position. Schedule accommodations are considered for reasonable requests, such as military service requirements, health or physical related limitations that are shared in advance, course-work related conflicts and if possible religious obligations. Graduate students who are able to accept and meet these expectations will find Supervisors and Faculty willing to be supportive and encouraging, if not mentors and future references.

### **Financial Aid or Scholarships**

It is a students' responsibility to seek information regarding potential financial aid to support your studies. Students should consult with the [Financial Aid & Scholarship Office](#), as well as investigate the many fellowship and award opportunities provided by the [Graduate School](#). If you are receiving financial assistance from some other source, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are meeting the special requirements of your contract. The Financial Aid Office on campus can help to answer

your questions if you are receiving state or federal aid monitored by its department. You should ask for the Financial Aid officer who is responsible for graduate student aid programs. Unit requirements for aid may vary depending on student status level. Please make sure that you are enrolled in sufficient units (usually a minimum of 8 for-credit graduate seminars) so that you don't lose important financial support.

## SECOND YEAR

### PHASE I: FORMS, COMMITTEES, & PROGRESS

#### Official Forms & Role of the Committee

Once you have selected whether you will be taking the Thesis or Comprehensive Examination route, you will need to make the decision official. The following section will describe how to complete your [Master's Degree Program Plan](#) form, and how to select members for your committee.

#### **Master's Degree Program Plan**

After completing 15 units and before completing 18 units of graduate coursework it is time to select your culminating experience (thesis/project or comprehensive exams) and complete the [Master's Degree Program Plan](#) form. In order to fill out this form you will need to select members for your Graduate Thesis Advisory Committee (Thesis Committee). This process will be discussed in detail below. Completing the Master's Degree Program Plan form with all required signatures by all relevant parties makes your culminating experience official. This form is completed in consultation with the CMST faculty member who will become your Graduate Advisory Thesis Committee Chair (Thesis Chair) and/or with the Graduate Coordinator (comprehensive exam route). This form represents your master's program plan (your contract with the Department), and is a formal record of courses (required and elective) you will count toward degree requirements. The Master's Degree Program Plan is not written in stone. You can change a selected course or your thesis topic or area of interest. Also, committee members, including your Thesis Chair, may be changed after the submission of the Program Plan by submitting a Program Change form. Obtain the Master's Degree Program Plan, Program Change, and other forms required by the Graduate School from their [website](#) and turn signed forms in to the CMAS Administrative Support Coordinator.

#### **Responsibilities of the Graduate Coordinator and Thesis Committee Chair**

Your Thesis Chair assumes responsibility for your continued progression on your culminating experience upon signing your Master's Degree Program Plan. Whereas the Graduate Coordinator handles more general issues relevant to all graduate advisees in the CMST Program, your Thesis Chair is responsible for directing your specific research work and advising you on courses that may help you both to complete your degree in a timely fashion and to contribute to your research. In this regard, your Thesis Chair is your content advisor and the Graduate Coordinator is your process advisor. One helps you with content relevant to your intellectual development and research; the other ensures that you complete your program (the process), meeting all requirements of the department and university.

#### **When Do You Form a Graduate Advisory Committee?**

Thesis Option: You should form a Thesis Committee after completing 15 units and before completing 18 units of graduate coursework. As a rule, it is necessary to form your committee before or early on in your second year or third semester of coursework. More importantly, your Thesis Committee is formed after you and the Graduate Coordinator (or likely Thesis Chair) have outlined your 30 units of study Program Plan, and when you are sufficiently satisfied with the theoretical or conceptual domain of your prospective thesis or project. This latter criterion is

important to keep in mind. For example, while you may not know "exactly what [you] want to do [your] thesis on," after 15 units most students understand what aspect of the discipline interests them. Once you have an area of interest and perhaps a working question or hypothesis, you can begin to talk with faculty who have a specialty or related competence consistent with your research interest.

Comprehensive Exam Option: Comprehensive Exam preparation begins the third semester (Fall) and all students will work with the CMST Graduate Coordinator to not only prepare for exams, but complete your plan of study. Your Comprehensive Exam Committee is the CMST faculty as a whole, with the Graduate Coordinator as Exam Committee Chair.

### **Qualifications for the Thesis Chair**

Ideally you may prefer to have successfully completed a seminar with your Thesis Chair before formalizing your commitment. Yet, course schedules, faculty activities, and your schedule do not always permit this convenience. The fundamental academic criterion is that the faculty member possesses expertise in an area of the discipline you hope to master. Given that you will spend considerable time with your Thesis Chair in completion of your degree requirements, compatibility is often an important requirement. In addition, it is important to remember that your Thesis Chair must be willing and able to serve on your committee and the department requires that your Thesis Chair have a terminal degree (i.e., a doctorate) and be a full-time tenure or tenure-track faculty member in the CMST Program. Both you and your Thesis Chair should notify the Graduate Coordinator of the agreement. As mentioned earlier this agreement becomes formal when the Master's Degree Program Plan is signed and submitted to the Graduate School (through the department office).

### **Qualifications for the Thesis Committee Members**

1. At least three voting members are required and all must be a full-time faculty member with a terminal degree. Two of those voting members must be full-time tenured or, tenure-track faculty who are from the CMST faculty. Your Thesis Chair counts as one of these voting members.
2. The third member must be selected from the CMST faculty, or another department at Chico State, or a Chico State faculty member on leave or on early retirement who has agreed to participate.
3. Additional members who meet the qualifications may be appointed to the Thesis Committee and will have a vote.
4. Adjunct, non-voting, committee members who do not meet the above criteria may be appointed to the Thesis Committee when their expertise is valuable to the instruction and evaluation associated with the development and defense of the thesis or project. Adjunct committee members should have a terminal degree or a significant scholarship record or a significant professional achievement record in an area related to the subject of the thesis or project. Adjunct Committee Members will be identified as such on the signature page.
5. The CMST Graduate Coordinator is an ex officio member of all CMST Thesis Committees, reads all theses and signs all final signature pages only when the final draft has been reviewed.

### **Changes in Your Thesis Committee**

Occasionally, you may need to change committee members, including your Thesis Chair. Changes to your graduate committee may be made under the following conditions:

- (1) If the student elects to complete the Comprehensive Exam Plan, the Graduate Coordinator will become their Chair.
- (2) If a student's thesis or major emphasis changes, either the student or faculty members may request a change in the committee membership.
- (3) After first giving written notice to the student (with a copy sent to the Graduate Coordinator), a faculty member may withdraw from a committee. A faculty member (including the student's Thesis Chair) may terminate her/his committee membership, for example, due to a sabbatical leave, retirement, or departure from the university, or when the student fails to show evidence of satisfactory progress (defined below) toward the completion of the degree. The reason for resigning from a Thesis Committee is to be stated in the faculty member's letter to the student.
- (4) You may not change voting members of your committee four weeks before a scheduled defense of your work or after your work has been officially and unsuccessfully defended. Changes in membership at those late hours, however, may be initiated by the committee member if the faculty has serious and compelling reason preventing him or her from serving during the final review. Personality disputes between a committee member and student are not considered serious and compelling.
- (5) If the absence of the faculty member results in the serious limitation of preventing a student from graduating in a timely fashion, the Graduate Coordinator--with the advice and consent of the student's Thesis Committee--may approve a change in committee membership.
- (6) Adjunct, non-voting, committee members may be dropped from a Thesis Committee at any time. But you should extend at least professional courtesy and explain to the committee and the adjunct member the reason for the elimination. You should consult your committee Chair before making a decision to drop any committee member including an adjunct member.

You are responsible for ensuring that a [Program Change Form](#) is submitted to the Graduate School (original) and the CMST graduate student file (copy). All committee members and the Graduate Coordinator must sign the Program Change Form. Exceptions are permitted when the committee member(s) of record is no longer regularly employed at the University or reasonably available (e.g., sabbatical leave taken outside of the country or state).

## **Progress towards Graduation**

In consultation with your Thesis Committee Chair, you should draft a timeline outlining key deadlines for completion of your thesis work. You should submit these deadlines to your Thesis Committee when submitting your Master's Degree Program Plan, or at your thesis or project prospectus meeting (next Section). The timeline should be a reasonable estimate of your progress toward the completion of degree requirements and be acceptable to all Committee members. Typically, your Thesis Committee will amend or make suggestions to your timeline at the end of your prospectus meeting. A lack of progress in coursework, if substantial, may be brought to a students' attention by the Graduate Coordinator or Thesis Committee. The student's Thesis Chair or Committee will inform the CMST Graduate Coordinator of its decision related to "unsatisfactory progress." When appropriate, this information is sent to the Graduate School to become a part of the student's official graduate file and may affect decisions related to extensions. Faculty will not automatically grant extensions beyond the agreed upon deadline, that must be approved by the

Thesis Chair and Committee. Failure to make satisfactory progress may lead to a student being advised to switch to the comprehensive exam track, so graduation can be achieved.

Students should never “assume” when faculty are available or that an extension beyond deadlines is acceptable. There is a standard expectation that all work completed by the student will be given to Thesis Committee members and Chair with at least 2 weeks for review, unless otherwise negotiated. Therefore, any timeline must account for turnaround time and all deadlines for graduation in a given semester. Be sure to check thesis and [comprehensive exam deadlines for graduation](#). It is the student’s responsibility to ultimately monitor their progress, meet deadlines, and seek assistance if faltering.

In the final semester, a student must plan for graduation. This requires following a [Graduation Checklist](#) and completing all necessary forms and paying any necessary fees. (see Section Phase II)

### **Request for Extensions and Validation of Expired Coursework**

Occasionally, a graduate student may exceed the five-year limit for completion of the master's degree. In these rare cases, the student must appeal for an "extension" and (if approved) "validate" any expired coursework and a maximum of two additional years may be granted. The process for receiving an extension, as outlined in the [University Catalog](#), requires the student seek approval of (1) her/his Thesis Committee, and/or (2) the CMST Graduate Coordinator, and (3) the Graduate School (in this order). The extension may require taking additional coursework and dropping expired courses from the approved program, or validating expired coursework.

The University permits expired course validations to be done in one of three ways: "by registration, examination, or other appropriate means." Registration has the student enroll in the expired course as an auditor and successfully complete all assigned work. Validation by examination requires successful completion of a written examination or report covering the area of expertise in question. The Graduate Coordinator in conjunction with other faculty involved will provide a final report or examination with a written statement that current knowledge of the course content has been satisfactorily demonstrated. The report will be kept on record until the degree is completed.

The purpose of course validation is to verify that the student's mastery of the subject is current. If the student exceeds the five-year limit required by the University, the student may not only have lost specific knowledge from a course, but also have taken a course that no longer contributes to the mastery of the subject. Simply verifying competency in an outdated (invalid) course, therefore, is insufficient, for the course itself may reflect an outdated perspective of the field. To be sure, extensions are exceptions to the five-year limit, and genuine extensions are considered when the student has been prohibited from continued progress in her/his degree for serious and compelling reasons. Validation of expired coursework and these conditions are not punitive measures, but are intended to ensure that a student seeking a master's degree reflects scholarly competence in our discipline and satisfaction of CSU system-wide requirements.

## SECOND YEAR

### PHASE II: CULMINATING EXPERIENCE AND GRADUATION

This section and information is designed to inform students about the culminating options offered by the CMST Program, as well as offer additional detail about the process of completing each option. Once one has selected one option, this general information will be expanded upon as you work with either the Graduate Coordinator or Thesis Chair. As mentioned above, the department offers a variety of culminating experiences to complete the master's degree program. You may choose the thesis, project or comprehensive examination as your culminating experience. The three culminating experiences are described in more detail below.

#### **Thesis or Project**

Theses and projects are similar in nature though distinct. The thesis is a traditional culminating experience for a master's degree, one that encourages the student to produce scholarly research. It is a good match for students who are considering doctoral studies, are considering a career outside academia involving research and/or grant writing, or who are particularly curious about a significant issue in the field of Communication and are proficient at the research process. The project represents a more applied but equally rigorous culminating experience. It is a good choice for students who wish to demonstrate their ability to translate research into a practical outcome (e.g., research-based training programs of communication tools and evaluation). While both the thesis and project permit students to work autonomously with guidance from their chosen Thesis Committee, a significant amount of tenacity and self-motivation on the part of the student is required. After the completion (or near completion) of required coursework, your Thesis Chair directs you through three steps: (1) Development & Presentation of the Prospectus; (2) Conducting Research & Writing; and (3) Oral Defense.

1. **Development & Presentation of the Prospectus.** Your prospectus is a written explanation and justification of what you are going to study for your thesis or project and why and how you are going to study it. The prospectus often develops from your coursework and personal interest. For a thesis it should include (1) a rationale and review of literature, (2) research questions or hypotheses, and (3) a description of the method for answering the questions or testing the hypotheses. These three areas typically correspond to the first three chapters of a thesis. While the scope and length of a prospectus may vary somewhat with the wishes of a Thesis Chair, as a general rule the prospectus is approximately 20 pages of text and must include a complete bibliography. The procedure for developing a prospectus for a project is basically the same as that for developing a prospectus for a thesis, although no research question is involved for a project.

After you and your Thesis Chair have revised and completed your prospectus and have provided copies of your prospectus to your committee members (along with sufficient time to thoroughly read it) a prospectus meeting should be held. The prospectus meeting lasts about one-two hours and involves the formal presentation of the research project to your Thesis Committee for feedback and approval. The prospectus meeting should be completed before the end of the semester preceding your final semester. The prospectus serves as a research agreement between you and your committee. Together with your Thesis Chair you should also draft a realistic

schedule outlining key deadlines with attention to Graduate School imposed deadlines for Graduation. Note the final deadline for a completed thesis or project to the Thesis Editor is one month prior to Graduation. You must plan for a minimum of 3 weeks for review, thesis defense and revisions, meaning that the majority of the work for the thesis must be completed mid-way through the final semester, highlighting how important it is to begin this process in the prior semester. Your thesis schedule should be given to all members of your committee at the time of the prospectus meeting.

Upon the committee's approval of the prospectus, you submit one copy of the prospectus and the required form with signatures to the Graduate Coordinator. You cannot register for CMST 699T (Thesis Hours) or CMST 699P (Project Hours) until you have satisfactorily completed your prospectus meeting and submitted your approved prospectus to the Graduate Coordinator. The CMAS Administrative Support Coordinator (ASC) will then complete your registration for CMST 699T (Thesis) or CMST 699P (Project). The prospectus meeting must be held and the prospectus approved no later than the end of the third week of the semester in which you plan to register for CMST 699T or CMST 699P.

2. **Conducting Research and Writing.** The second step involves the progress of the research toward the completion of the final thesis or project. Following your thesis timeline, you should stay in touch with your committee throughout the thesis or project research; particularly when significant interpretations or editorial changes become necessary. In these cases, your Thesis Chair may convene the committee to approve an amendment to the research proposal or help settle academic differences in the intellectual content of a chapter or section. It is advisable that a record of such major changes be included in the student's CMST graduate file. Keep in mind that Thesis Chairs differ in how often they believe your Thesis Committee should meet or how they want to direct committee meetings, and on how often drafts of the thesis or project should be distributed to committee members. Please note that failure to make progress on your research and writing, such that you cannot meet the final deadlines may require either extensions or the possibility of changing your culminating experience option. Consult the [Guide to Graduate Studies](#) for help formatting your Thesis or Project. Students interested in University quality guidelines for outstanding theses (which are also used by CMST) should see the Appendix for this rating form.
3. **Oral Defense.** The third stage includes the completion of a final draft of the thesis/project submitted to all committee members, planning and completing an Oral Defense, then completing all necessary revisions and paperwork, ending with submission to the Thesis Editor for final approval. This final draft would be the product of previous draft revisions. This draft may not be the first time the whole committee would read the entire thesis, but hopefully is the next to last time, with at least two weeks for review before the scheduled defense of the thesis or project. The final draft of a thesis or project should be a complete document free of major errors, cleanly typed and printed, and reasonably meeting all the requirements of a final copy, with the acknowledgement that additional revisions may be necessary post-defense.

Once the Thesis Committee has been provided the final draft, written notification is given to the Graduate Coordinator and the CMST Administrative Support Coordinator of your intent to defend your thesis with possible dates & times (these should be selected with input from all committee members). The Graduate Coordinator, working with the CMST ASC will ensure that room assignments and final defense times are properly scheduled and promoted. This

coordination ensures that thesis defenses are not scheduled concurrently. The department ASC will make room assignments and distribute announcements to the College at the Graduate Coordinator's request.

The oral defense of a thesis or project is a public meeting where colleagues are welcome such that this is a learning experience for the writer and audience members. This meeting typically lasts one-two hours. Graduate students are encouraged to attend a thesis or project defense before their final semester. All members of a Thesis Committee are expected to participate in the defense of the thesis or project. The Oral Defense begins with a presentation by the writer to the audience, followed by a question and answer period and then an evaluation by the Thesis Committee. The student's Thesis Committee completes the evaluation of the student's work in closed session, but then invites the writer, and audience if appropriate, to return to conclude the defense. The Thesis Chair and student are responsible for clarifying all expected revisions to the thesis/project expected by the Committee and if there is need for additional review by the members before final submission.

The Thesis Chair is also responsible for ensuring appropriate documentation is signed by all Committee members, as well as the Graduate Coordinator who must also review the final thesis and sign signature pages. This includes not only signature pages, but also a [Verification check sheet](#) that indicates the committee's verification to the Graduate School that the thesis/project complies with [Graduate School](#) requirements. All Committee members, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Dean of the Graduate School reserve the right to read a final copy of the thesis before signing the signature page and approving the thesis. The graduate student is responsible for meeting all thesis or project requirements (including deadlines) of the Graduate School and the thesis/project editor. Please refer to the Graduate School's [A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, and Format](#). The Graduate School posts this guide and all [important deadlines](#) specifying absolute requirements for submitting your thesis and meeting graduation requirements.

## **Comprehensive Examinations**

Comprehensive Exams represent an alternative culminating experience to the thesis or project for CMST graduate students. This option is a good fit for students who wish to pursue a career outside academia requiring a graduate education. It is a good match for those who may not be able to complete a robust research project, those who have already demonstrated significant research ability, or those who find the work cycle of the exams more conducive to their schedule. Comprehensive Exams are designed to be rigorous and challenging address a variety of aspects of one's program of study and demonstrate appropriate student learning outcomes specified by CMST. Students pursuing this culminating activity will be working with the CMST Graduate Exam Advisory Committee (known as the Exam Committee and is represented by all CMST Faculty) and the Exam Chair is the Graduate Coordinator.

The Comprehensive Exam process involves: (1) Preparation & Planning; (2) Exam Questions; and (3) Exam Evaluation & Oral Defense.

1. **Preparation & Planning.** The exams involve six hours of writing and are normally completed in over multiple days in specified time blocks during the semester in which you will have completed 30 units of coursework. The Spring semester is the semester all students complete Exams, unless there has been an exception made. Students will have officially

notified the Graduate Coordinator of their intent to take exams when they turned in their Program Plan at the end of their second semester or before the beginning of their third, traditionally the Fall (see above).

The Graduate Coordinator will organize exam preparation meetings starting by the end of the Fall semester. All students taking exams are expected to attend all meetings leading to the exams and meetings will be scheduled around student schedules. Additionally, students are encouraged to make use of their winter break time for exam preparation. Other than the meetings times, the Graduate Coordinator will assign a common exam time to facilitate efficient completion of comprehensive exams. In assigning the exam dates, the Graduate Coordinator gives careful attention to Graduate School deadlines to ensure ample time for the Exam Committee to review and grade the exam answers and conduct the accompanying oral defense. Typically, exams taken in Spring semester are scheduled around the seventh week of classes. (In the case of a single student taking comprehensive exams, the date and time of exams will be determined by the Graduate Coordinator.) The Graduate Coordinator will reserve a computer lab or other setting appropriate for the exam process. Examination answers are typed, saved digitally, and printed on the day they are completed (rare exceptions may be negotiated on an individual basis in the case of students with learning or other disabilities.)

2. **Exam Questions.** The content of the Comprehensive Exams includes both standardized and specialized questions. Standardized questions address your comprehension of human science methodology or critique from CMST-602, CMST-603, CMST-613, knowledge of the field of human communication and specific areas within the field (e.g., interpersonal, organizational, health, intercultural, rhetoric), including but not limited to history and development of the field/specialized areas. Standardized questions may require that you integrate knowledge of one or more specialized areas or across courses. Specialized questions test your content emphasis of specific areas of interest within any particular areas in the field. The Graduate Coordinator is responsible for working with students in the identification of all qualified courses and materials for testing from the student's Program Plan. The order in which questions are given to students is determined by the Graduate Coordinator who will inform students what question they will take on which day.
3. **Exam Evaluation & Oral Defense.** The Exam Chair and Committee will evaluate both the written and oral components of the comprehensives. Exam written answers will be blind reviewed by multiple faculty members, culminating in a final evaluation of each written answer. Comprehensives are evaluated as High Pass, Pass, Pass with Qualifications, or Fail (see Comprehensive Exam Rubric in Appendix). The Graduate Committee may recommend "High Pass" or "Pass" for students who provided superior/effective answers in all aspects of the examination. The student will still participate in an oral defense that will build upon what was achieved in the written exam and/or clarify any unclear elements. Whereas a "Pass with Qualifications" requires that the committee specify what action you must take to provide a satisfactory measure of competence. Qualifications may include (but are not limited to) articulating improvements in specific areas of a question within the oral defense and/or retaking one or two portions of the examination.

Final evaluation of comprehensive examinations is made after the completion of a two-hour oral defense that includes the Exam Chair and two Committee members. The oral defense

is scheduled within two weeks after the completion of your written examinations. Questions in the oral defense may address clarification and elaboration of written responses and content that was not included in the written essay items or needs improvement. A student would know what areas of improvement are needed prior to the defense when they meet with the Exam Chair to review their answers and prepare for the oral defense.

Following the oral defense, if a student succeeds in meeting all Committee expectations, the student is congratulated and all paperwork is completed with the Exam Chair. If the student needs to retake specified portions of the exam, that process will take place and an additional review will take place and students will have to meet expectations without the help of an oral defense. If entire, multiple questions from the examination need to be retaken completely, that would mostly likely constitute a mark of "fail." A student who fails the comprehensive examinations may retake all portions of the examination, if possible in the current semester or possibly in the next regular semester. Students may retake part or all of the examination only twice, and cannot graduate until all qualifications have been satisfied. Retaking portions of the exam may require the student to reapply for graduation in the summer or Fall semester and also require continuous enrollment in the program.

## **Graduation Planning**

While completing your culminating experience you should also be preparing for graduation. Provided below is a checklist to insure that you remain on track with progression towards graduation. This checklist can also be found on the [Graduate School](#) website. Also, keep in mind while planning for graduation that Chico is a small town and providing accommodations for guests that plan to attend is something that must be prepared for well in advance of graduation weekend.

- (1) Obtain the graduation application materials from the Graduate Studies website. These include the [Graduation Application Form](#) and the [Graduation Clearance Form](#).
- (2) Complete the Graduation Application Form and take it to the Student Financial Services window in Student Services Center 230 to pay the [graduation filing fee](#). The cashier will receipt the fee payment on the form and return the form to you for submission to the Office of Graduate Studies, Student Services Center 460.
- (3) Fill out the Graduation Clearance Form ([Instructions for Completing the Graduation Clearance Form](#)) and obtain the signatures of your Graduate Coordinator and Thesis Committee members. Please note that a Graduation Clearance Form is required even if you have previously submitted a Program Plan for your program.
- (4) Submit the receipted Graduation Application Form and the signed Graduation Clearance Form to the Office of Graduate Studies in Student Services Center 460 by the graduation filing deadline for the semester in which you plan to graduate. If you are located outside of the Chico area, you may also mail in your application for graduation to the Office of Graduate Studies with a check or money order for the required fee payable to CSU, Chico.
- (5) Update your contact information with the University (mailing and permanent addresses, telephone numbers and email address) through your [student portal account](#). Be sure to continue to update this information if it changes during the graduation clearance process.  
 You are invited to contact the Office of Graduate Studies if you have any questions about the graduation application process or your clearance for the master's degree.

## APPENDIX

### **History of the Department**

The progress of our department parallels the development of the field and discipline of Speech Communication. In 1945, two full-time faculty created the Department of Speech from curriculum within the English Department. Only three years later and with three new faculty members (Alan Forbes, Lloyd Jones, & Herbert Rae), the department was renamed the Department of Speech and Drama in order to reflect more accurately the drama curriculum already under its auspices. In fact, the faculty's specialties included public address, speech pathology, and drama. At the time, Chico State College did not have "schools" or "colleges;" instead the Department of Speech and Drama was under the direction of the Division of Language Arts. In 1949, after a year at Chico State, Alan Forbes followed Herbert Rae and became the Department's second chairman, serving until 1971.

The department's emphasis on speech as a performing art continued into the early 1960s when it became the "Department of Speech, Drama, and Dance" in the School of Humanities and Fine Arts. The department also maintained curriculum in speech pathology, and would continue to do so until about 1973 when that major was moved to the School of Education.

Lloyd Jones, professor of drama and oral interpretation, became chairman in 1971 and held the position until 1984 when the speech faculty left the School of Humanities and Fine Arts. Though Jones continued as chairman of the Department of Drama until 1986, the speech curriculum became part of the new School of Communications in 1984. Dr. Mike Scott helped to bring the speech communication curriculum into the newly formed School of Communications (the "s" was removed officially in Spring 1988). In 1983 he followed Dr. Jim Chu as the Director of the Center for Information and Communication Studies. To this end, Dr. Scott became the first chairman of the Department of Information and Communication Studies in 1984. Drs. Steven Brydon (1985-1988), Jim Chu (Fall 1988), and Isaac Catt (Spring 1989) also served as chairs of the ICST Department. All "schools" at Chico State became "colleges" in 1987.

Until recently, the College of Communication housed only two departments--Information and Communication Studies (ICST) and Communication Design (CDES). Within ICST, an undergraduate student could major in public relations, journalism, speech communication, and organizational communication. By 1985, the ICST master's program had about six graduate-level classes and continued to expand its different emphases. Professors Isaac Catt and Mark Cox (former ICST professors) developed several of the current graduate course offerings and were instrumental in developing an "Interpersonal/ Organizational Communication Option," which in the Fall of 1990 became the "Human Communication Option." In the Spring of 1989, the University approved the establishment of a new Department of Journalism and accepted the name change of ICST to the Department of Human Communication Studies (HCS). Dr. Isaac Catt became the first Chair for the HCS Department; he served from July 1989 until August 1991. He then resigned to take a position at another University.

Dramatic changes occurred in Summer of 1992: The College of Education was merged into the College of Communication and we are now the College of Communication and Education. Further changes occurred in Summer of 1993 when the department was expanded by the addition of faculty and program in speech pathology and audiology (now known as CMSD) as a result of an administrative reorganization following the merger of Communication and Education. The new enlarged department is now called Communication Arts and Sciences (CMAS). Dr. Brydon (CMST)

served as the Chair for the CMAS Department from 1991-1997. Dr. Robert Blackmon (CMSD) succeeded him as chair from 1997-2004, after Dr. Blackmon's retirement in 2004, Dr. Ruth Guzley (CMST) was elected chair from 2004-2010 and the current chair is Suzanne Miller (CMSD).

Recent changes within the CMST program are reflective of transformations throughout higher education. Since early 2000 we have had eight full-time, full professors retire and/or enter the FERP program (Faculty Early Retirement Program). Since 2007, 6 new members will have joined the program, with a 7<sup>th</sup> on the way in 15/16, all bringing exciting new expertise to the program. Additionally, Dr. Angela Trethewey, former Director of the Hugh Downs School of Communication at Arizona State University was hired as the new Dean of the College of Communication & Education in Spring 2014. Dr. Trethewey's expertise and dynamic leadership has reinvigorated the entire college and helped the Communication Studies program envision and begin enacting exciting plans for our future. As these members join the College and CMST, the graduate program has been consistently revised to better meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate student and reflect the new group of faculty.

## **History of the CMST Graduate Guide**

This guide, originally titled the "Survivor's Guide" was largely prepared by Dr. Marc Porter, Graduate Coordinator for the Department of Human Communication Studies from 1990 through Summer 1992. Revisions in this useful document have been made since 1992 by Dr. Collier (Graduate Coordinator 1992-Spring 2000), Dr. Guzley (Graduate Coordinator Fall 2000-Fall 2010), and Dr. Susan Avanzino (Fall 2010-Current) in order to update certain details about program offerings, department personnel, and so on.

As Dr. Collier previously noted, in Dr. Porter's "Preface" to the original printing of this Guide, he stated that its purpose was to provide common answers to some of the questions most commonly asked by graduate students in our program. As such, students should carefully review this guide as an essential resource that can assist you in the pursuit of your graduate degree.

In addition to his practical advice, Dr. Porter also attempted to inspire his readers with an enthusiasm for pursuing their graduate study, not only in achieving some narrowly focused professional goal but also in seeking a broader "serious mastery of the subject"--"a passion for the contemplative and a desire for enlightenment." I agree this broader vision is important, in addition to the focus and practical details, which are a necessary and inescapable part of graduate study.

Your graduate school experience will be enhanced to the extent you can achieve balance between your studies and personal life. Commitment to timely completion of the demands associated with each course and your graduate degree is important. In addition, the process of completing your graduate degree is more enjoyable and rewarding with the adoption of a mature perspective.

*Prepared by*

W. Marc Porter, Ph.D. & The CMST Faculty, August 20, 1991

*Revised by*

Gary Collier, Ph.D., August 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999

Ruth M. Guzley, Ph.D., August 2001, 2003, 2004

Susan Avanzino, Ph.D., August 2012, 2014

## Rubrics

### Outstanding CMST Thesis Assessment Form

	<b>3=Exceptional</b>	<b>2=Effective</b>	<b>1=Acceptable</b>
	<b>Highest Quality Work</b>	<b>Good, Solid Work</b>	<b>Good Enough Work</b>
<b>A. Introduction/Literature Review</b>			
1. Was the research question well defined?	3	2	1
2. Was the need for the study clearly stated?	3	2	1
3. Is this study a significant contribution to the field?	3	2	1
4. Was the review of the literature comprehensive?	3	2	1
<b>B. Methodology</b>			
1. Was the methodology appropriate for the task undertaken?	3	2	1
2. Was the description of the methodology clear and orderly?	3	2	1
<b>C. Results</b>			
1. Were analytical methods clearly implemented?	3	2	1
2. Were adequate statements made regarding the support or rejection/discussion of the research question?	3	2	1
<b>D. Discussion and Conclusion</b>			
1. Did the discussion account for the results/findings?	3	2	1
2. What are the limitations of this project and were they clearly delineated?	3	2	1
3. Were implications for future research clearly thought out and described?	3	2	1
4. Was the writing style clear, appropriate, and interesting?	3	2	1

**Summary** Please make an analytic statement summarizing why this thesis is outstanding within the criteria of the discipline.

### Comprehensive Exam Rubric

Grading Criteria	Exceptional	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Completeness: Comprehensive knowledge in area of concentration (breadth and depth)	All aspects of the material under consideration are not only thoroughly addressed, but are addressed with notable attention to detail. There is considerable evidence of depth and breadth of topic understanding and a superior level of topic competency demonstrated. Analysis is very thorough and there is a high level of critical thinking apparent in the answer.	All aspects of the material are addressed, although some aspects may be more thoroughly addressed than others. Depth and breadth of topic understanding are evident and acceptable competency of topic knowledge is demonstrated. Analysis reflects critical thinking and is sufficiently thorough.	All aspects of the material may be addressed, or only some aspects but in either case the writing is sparse. Evidence of depth and breadth of topic understanding is missing or inadequate and does not adequately reflect competency of topic knowledge. Analysis is incomplete and does not reflect adequate critical thinking.
Validity: Validity of arguments Quality of evidence Documentation of evidence	Arguments are clearly and explicitly stated and presented logically through the use of claims, data, and warrants. Student demonstrates awareness of the primary research in the relevant area of concentration by supplying compelling evidence from reputable sources to support arguments.	Overall, arguments are clearly and explicitly stated, however, some may be vague and/or may not be presented logically through the use of claims, data, and warrants. The student demonstrates some awareness of the primary research in the relevant area of concentration, but some gaps or oversights are present. Arguments are inconsistently supported or sometimes unsubstantiated.	Arguments are not clearly or explicitly stated, nor are they presented logically through the use of claims, data, and warrants. Student does not demonstrate awareness of the primary research in the relevant area of concentration. Arguments are unsubstantiated.
Organization: Logical development of ideas. Effective use of summaries, signposting, and transitions.	Ideas are developed in a logical manner to support the central purpose or argument. Ideas flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The line of reasoning is readily apparent and easy to follow.	Overall, ideas are developed logically, however, some of the ideas presented may not make sense together or do not clearly support the central purpose or argument. The line of reasoning is mostly apparent and the reader is able to follow.	Ideas are not developed logically. Ideas frequently fail to make sense together and/or do not clearly support the central purpose or argument. There is no identifiable line of reasoning, and the reader is unable to follow.
Clarity: Focus Ability to stay on point Presentation of complex ideas	Insightful and nuanced understanding is demonstrated. Ideas are immediately on point and stay on point. Complex ideas are presented in an understandable way.	Acceptable interpretation is evident. Some difficulty staying on point but overall demonstrates appropriate focus. Complex ideas are discussed adequately or possibly inconsistently.	Poor or inadequate interpretation is demonstrated. Serious lack of focus is evident in the answer. Inability to translate complex ideas into understandable terms.
Mechanics: Technical aspects of writing (i.e., grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) Documentation of evidence	Writing is technically clean, with few errors. APA format is used accurately and consistently throughout.	Writing is technically proficient, however, there may be some errors that reflect lack of technical understanding. Errors, however, do not interfere with intelligibility. There are errors in APA format.	Writing is technically inadequate. Errors interfere with the intelligibility of the writing. Errors reflect a lack of technical understanding. Documentation of sources is not recognizable as APA format.
Overall Rating (circle).	Exceptional	Acceptable	Unacceptable
<p>-If Unacceptable, please list Main Areas that must be improved to be Acceptable. -If Acceptable or Exceptional, please list the Main Areas of good or better achievement.</p>			

## **Authorship Rights and Your Thesis**

Questions of co-authorship most often arise with graduate theses or projects. The presumption of thesis/project authorship is that you honestly conducted your own research and subsequently produced your own written work, and that the Chair and (usually to a lesser extent) committee members served as editors and content advisors, not as primary authors. Once a thesis or project has been defended and completed you may choose to revise it for conference presentation and/or publication. To be sure, upon your request your thesis/project Chair (and perhaps other committee members) may agree to help you revise significantly your thesis/project for conference presentation and/or professional publication. Depending on the extent of the revisions necessary, your Chair (and perhaps other committee members participating significantly in the revision process) may request to be named as co-author(s). (Refer to the discussion above about the conditions of co-authorship.) As a rule, work out an agreement before beginning the revision process. Be clear as to what your responsibilities are supposed to be in revising your thesis/project and in subsequently producing and presenting a shared convention paper or publication. While it may be considered a compliment if the professor agrees to serve as a co-author (lending credibility to or endorsing the intellectual effort of your work), there is no assumption in the CMST graduate program that your Chair (or other committee members) will automatically be asked by you (or request) to participate in revising your thesis/project for joint professional gain. It is unethical for a faculty member to use your intellectual property (e.g., your thesis work) without your consent.

## **Co-authorship Standards of the APA**

The policy adopted by the American Psychological Association serves as a useful standard for clarifying key issues discussed in this section and for establishing more objective (external) guidelines for the CMAS Department.

1. Only secondary authorship is acceptable for the thesis supervisor.
2. Secondary authorship may be considered obligatory if the thesis supervisor designates the primary variables or makes major interpretative contributions or provides the data base.
3. Secondary authorship is a courtesy if the supervisor designates the general area of concern or is substantially involved in the development of the design and measurement procedures or interpretation or substantially contributes to the write-up of the published report.
4. Secondary authorship is not acceptable if the thesis supervisor only provides encouragement, physical facilities, financial support, critiques, or editorial contributions.
5. In all instances, agreement between the student and thesis supervisor should be reviewed before the writing for publication is undertaken and at the time of submission. If disagreements arise, they should be resolved by a third party. In the College of Communication, the third party may include the CMAS Graduate Coordinator, CMAS Department Chair, or Dean (in this order).

{These guidelines are modified from an article by Cheryl Fields, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 14, 1983.}