GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING MANUAL

Master's of Science

in Journalism & Media Communication

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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Updated March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

▶ How to Use This Manual

This manual details the requirements, policies, guidelines and procedures for completing the Master's of Science in Journalism & Media Communication according to department, college, and university requirements for the degree.

It is intended for use by faculty, students, and staff.

Note that this manual describes the typical master's program process, but **there are many ways to tailor your journey** to fit your specific needs while fulfilling requirements.

Your JMC advisor and the department's Graduate Program Committee are here to help you navigate the process.

See the Graduate School website for:

- CSU ID and RamWeb registration & records system
- Campus housing and campus life
- Financial resources
- Professional development and mentoring
- University policies and procedures
- Graduate School forms

This manual supplements the *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*.

>>> PART ONE: Program policies and procedures

Learn about the degree process, program requirements, graduate assistantships, advising, Plan A and Plan B research projects, and graduation.

>>> PART TWO: Support and resources

Look up department and CSU resources, professional development, research and publication, academic conferences, and student conduct. You can also find a list of required and other forms.

Additional information can be found on the department website at journalism.colostate.edu, including information about:

- JMC faculty and staff
- Current and recent graduate students
- Applying to the JMC graduate programs
- Graduate and undergraduate programs in JMC
- Departmental forms
- Internships and jobs
- JMC courses
- Student media
- Recent theses and dissertations from JMC students
- Alumni

Note that some of the procedures in this manual differ for international students. Please communicate directly with the Office of International Programs regarding immigration status requirements.

Program Summary

The Master's of Science in Journalism & Media Communication in the Department of Journalism & Media Communication (JMC) features coursework in communication theory, research methods, and coursework outside the department, which prepare students with research skills, theoretical knowledge, and teaching excellence for careers in academia or industry such as consulting and research for positions in government, non-profit, and private organizations.

The Master's of Science is a 2-year program for students who hold a bachelor's degree in a related field. It consists of 1½ years of course work and completion of a proposal and final thesis or project under the supervision of a 3-person master's committee. There are 6 required courses (16 credits) in the JMC department, and students take additional courses in the department and in the university to fulfill other requirements (31 total credits).

Students select an advisor after their first year to serve as the chair of their master's committee and oversee their thesis research. This research is a theoretically-grounded, rigorous, independent investigation into communication phenomena on a topic selected by the student. Students may choose to develop this work as an academically-oriented thesis (Plan A) or as a professionally-oriented research project (Plan B). This work is supported through review and feedback in formal and informal meetings with a master's committee of two JMC faculty and one faculty outside the department.

Most master's students also serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) in a 20-hour per week position that pays their tuition, health insurance, and a monthly stipend from mid-August to mid-May. Some students also teach a class or work as a GRA in summers, depending on availability.

The department and university provide support through faculty and peer mentoring, office space and computer access, travel funding for academic conferences, and a wide range of writing and professional development workshops.

CSU Principles of Community

The Colorado State University Principles of Community help us express what our community stands for and guides our expectations for creating a collaborative and vibrant community as a foundation for learning, critical inquiry, and discovery. They are:

Inclusion. We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents, and contributions.

Integrity. We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.

Respect. We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.

Service. We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.

Social Justice. We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies, and procedures that promote justice in all respects.

Detailed Program Timeline

Following is a typical timeline for completion of the master's degree. Note that it is common for students to complete their final thesis/project in the summer after their second year. The steps in the process are the same for a thesis (Plan A) or research project (Plan B).

Semester 1 (Fall)	Meet with your temporary advisor to plan your coursework and program.	
	Register JTC 500, JTC 501, JTC 604 (9 credits)	**Forms** *DG1a Temporary Advising Form (*JMC-GC) *DG1b Additional Work Commitment Acknowledgement Form (*JMC-GC)
Semester 2 (Spring)	Select a permanent advisor and begin developing your thesis/project topic by semester's end.	
	Register JTC 605 + three classes (10 credits)	**Forms** *DG6 MS Coursework & GS6 Planner* (JMC-GC). No submission.
Semester 3 (Fall)	Finalize your master's committee chair/advisor and 2 other members. Write your proposal with guidance from your advisor.	
	Register JTC 698 + 2 classes (9 credits)	**Forms** *GS6 Program of Study* (RamWeb) – Required for 4th semester registration
	Meet: Thesis/project proposal defense with your master's committee.	
Semester 4 (Spring)	Conduct your master's research and writing with supervision by your advisor.	
	Register JTC 699 (Plan A) or 695 (Plan B) (3+ credits)	**Forms** *Special Course Form* (JMC-GC) *GS25 Application for Graduation* (RamWeb) *GS24 Report of Final Examination Results* (RamWeb); *GS30 Thesis/Dissertation Submission* (RamWeb); *DG3 Graduate Degree Completion Checklist* (JMC-GC)
	Meet: Final thesis/project defense with your master's committee.	
Semester 5 onward (as needed)	Students who do not complete their master's thesis/project by semester 4 must register for CR or 1+ credits.	
	Register CR **or** 1+ credits JTC 699/695 each fall and spring	**Forms** *Student Plan for Degree Completion* (JMC-GC) *GS25 Application or Reapplication for Graduation* in the semester you plan to graduate (RamWeb)
	Note: Summer graduates must register for CR or at least 1 credit for that summer semester.	

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1 DEGREE PROCESS

The process you will follow to earn a master's degree starts with taking 1½ years of classes, then working with an advisor and a master's committee you select to identify and refine a topic for a thesis or research project.

You will defend a written proposal, conduct research and analysis, and write a final thesis (Plan A) or project report (Plan B) that you defend orally in front of your committee.

See Part Two of this manual for a full list of the forms required throughout this process. You can find detailed instructions and samples of Graduate School forms on the website.

What are the degree requirements?

- Maintain a 3.0 GPA
- Complete the 31-credit program
- Write and successfully defend a master's research proposal
- Write and successfully defend a written thesis/project report
- Maintain satisfactory progress towards the degree

▶ Forms

At each stage of the process there are key milestones that require approval forms. Forms required by the Graduate School have a "GS" prefix and are provided on your RamWeb. You initiate Graduate School GS forms in RamWeb, as your advisor cannot access them. Graduate School forms are sent to the relevant signatories electronically in sequence, including the Graduate Program Director and the Department Chair. If a form you submit is not completed within a reasonable timeframe, this may be because one person has not yet signed it. If needed, ask your advisor to reach out for a signature.

Forms required by the department have a "DG" prefix and are available on the JMC website and included at the end of this manual. You and/or your advisor send department DG forms via email to the Graduate Program Director and/or the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Degree Schedule

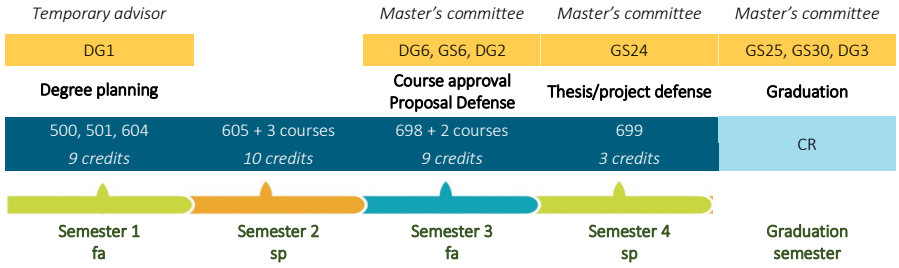
The time required to complete the master's program depends on your background, course load, and research. Full-time students take 9 or 10 credits (typically 3 classes) each semester for 1½ years, followed by a semester of thesis (699 for Plan A) or project (695 for Plan B) credits. Thereafter, you are required to register for Continuous Registration (CR) to maintain your student status.

Note that "full-time" student status is calculated differently for different purposes:

- **Regular course load**: full-time = 9 credits per semester
- **Qualify for health insurance**: full-time = 5 credits per semester
- **Qualify for international student visas**: full-time = 6 credits per semester

▶ Typical full-time schedule

The program generally takes two years to complete. This consists of 1½ full-time years in residence to complete coursework and a semester to complete the research thesis or project.



This chart shows the typical master's program process, but your actual timeline may vary depending on the nature of your prior work, your research topic, and other factors.

▶ For Part-Time Students

Part-time students typically take 1 or 2 classes each semester. Milestones are identified by number of credits completed rather than by semester. If you take a semester off without classes, you must register for Continuous Registration (CR; see below) to remain in the program.

▶ 10-Year Program Limit

Both full-time and part-time students are required to finish all degree requirements within 10 years of first enrollment into the master's program. Courses that are over 10 years old are considered to have "expired" and may no longer count towards the degree. This is because the expertise and training from such courses is considered out-of-date.

You can petition to extend the 10-year time limit only with strong evidence that you have maintained current theoretical and methodological expertise.

▶ Leave of Absence

Students may take a leave of absence from the program to account for extenuating circumstances that disrupt their degree progress. If you wish to do so, with your advisor, complete and submit a Student Plan for Degree Completion to the Graduate Program Director and Coordinator describing the start and anticipated end date of your leave, as well as a plan for progressing through the required milestones when you return.

> Taking a leave of absence does **not** extend the 10-year expiration on coursework.

While taking a leave of absence, you must maintain your student status by enrolling each semester (fall, spring) in Continuous Registration (CR; see below).

If you do not enroll in CR credits, a non-refundable readmission fee is required for returning to the program. Apply for readmission by selecting the "returner application" link on the online Graduate Application Form; this involves submitting a new application, and will require application review by the JMC Graduate Committee for availability of faculty to serve as advisor and on committee and evidence of readiness and availability/time to complete the degree requirements.

Deadlines

Registration, forms, and approvals have regular deadlines set each semester by the Graduate School and the department.

For the current year's deadlines, consult:

- Graduate School website for forms deadlines
- CSU academic calendar for class deadlines

Approximate major program deadlines for each 15-week semester (fall and spring) are:

Week 1-2	Meet with Temporary Advisor *(1st semester)*	DG1
Week 3	Class add/drop ends	
Week 4	Application for graduation *(graduation semester)*	GS25
Week 5	Course transfer request *(1st semester Ph.D. only)*	DG4
Week 6		
Week 7		
Week 8	Final draft of thesis/project/dissertation to committee *(approx)*	
Week 9		
Week 10	Final thesis/project/dissertation defense Class registration begins	GS24
Week 11	Final thesis/dissertation to CSU	GS30
Week 12	Thesis/dissertation formatting approved Class withdrawal period ends	
Week 13	Degree coursework plan *(3rd semester)*	DG5 PhD DG6 MS
Week 14	Program of study form *(3rd semester)*	GS6
Week 15	Classes end	

▸ Floating deadlines

The following deadlines are in relation to completion of program milestones rather than on specific dates in the semester.

Preliminary exam approval (*Ph.D. only*)	GS16	Within 2 days of when all results known
Committee approval of coursework (*Ph.D. only*)	DG5	After preliminary exam
Thesis/project/dissertation proposal approval	DG2	Within 2 days of proposal defense
Student Plan for Degree Completion		Before 1st, 4th, 8th, and 10th semester of CR
Final thesis/project/dissertation approval	GS24	Within 2 days of final defense
JMC degree checklist	DG3	After thesis/project/dissertation final defense
Submit *to Journalism & Mass Comm. Abstracts* (*MS Plan A and Ph.D. only*)		Within 2 weeks of final thesis/dissertation submission

Satisfactory Progress Towards the Degree

Students are expected to make adequate progress toward their master's degrees. To do so, they must meet two standards:

1. Maintain a 3.00 GPA
2. Complete key milestones in a timely fashion (course work, proposal defense, and thesis/project defense)

▶ Review of progress toward degree

Advisors regularly review student progress to ensure they are on track to complete all the milestones in a timely fashion. Many students make small adjustments to the timing of their proposal and final thesis or project completion.

Milestones are in place to help create an environment in which most students can successfully complete their degree given: department funding availability, the availability of your advisor and committee members to mentor you and newly admitted students, advances in the field affecting the timeliness of knowledge gained during your coursework, the Graduate School's 10-year limit on degree completion, and for international students, requirements to maintain valid Visa status. While there is certainly some flexibility, continued progress, accountability, and communication are important. For full-time students, the milestones suggest a 2-year timeline for completion, but students may finish sooner (2 years is typically the minimum).

The general guidelines for milestone completion are the following:

Milestone	Full-time	Part-time
Permanent advisor selected	By end of 3rd semester	Completion of 19 credits
Master's committee selected	By end of 3rd semester	Completion of 19 credits
Coursework completed except for Thesis credits	By end of 3rd semester	~~Varies~~ By end of 6th semester
Defend master's proposal	Before the 4th semester	Within 1 year of completing courses
Defend final thesis/project	Within 6 months of proposal defense	Within 18 months of proposal defense

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To determine if students are progressing through the program in a timely manner, your advisor will discuss with you any delays or extenuating circumstances that have influenced progress, such as major illness, family emergencies, or pregnancy. If you have extenuating circumstances, work with your advisor to write up a plan for addressing your progress, which may include requesting a leave of absence.

Per procedures outlined in the *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*, in cases where the committee determines that the second standard has not been met and with concurrence from the student's advisor and master's committee (for students who have formed their committees), the department's

Graduate Program Committee may recommend to the Graduate School that the student be placed on probation. If the student has a departmental assistantship, the committee may recommend that the assistantship be terminated. Under extraordinary circumstances, the department's Graduate Program Committee or the student's master's committee may recommend dismissal from the program.

▶ Progress Plan Requirements

MS students are subject to a formal degree progress review if they have not graduated by the following deadlines:

- **Full-time students** (first two years completed full-time): End of the Fall semester of their 3rd year in the program
- **Part-time students** (first three years completed part-time)**:** End of the Fall semester of their 5th year in the program

A review may also triggered if a student falls behind on program milestones prior to these deadlines.

Review Process

Students subject to review will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee and will receive a written letter summarizing their degree progress relative to established program milestones. All students under review — regardless of their standing — are required to submit a **Degree Progress Plan** outlining their completion goals for the coming year. This plan must be approved first by the student's advisor and then by the Graduate Committee.

Ongoing Accountability

Adherence to the approved Progress Plan will be assessed as part of the student's next annual evaluation. If a student is not following their plan, the advisor may report this to the Graduate Committee at any point during the year, at their discretion. Catching up to a milestone does not add time to the 10-year degree completion time limit.

The Progress Plan is intended to help students maintain progress in the program, and it may also note any other factors encouraging or impeding potential for future academic success and/or progress. Should the prescribed milestone(s) not be met by the next Graduate Committee review according to your advisor's progress report, the Graduate Committee will deliberate on next steps, which will either require a new Progress Plan or evoke procedures for not making satisfactory progress toward the degree as outlined in the Graduate and Professional Bulletin.

Common Questions About the Degree Process

What if I want to take different courses than I put on my GS6?
You are welcome to make changes to the courses you listed on your GS6 with approval from your advisor. After submitting the GS6, you will no longer have access to it, and you do not need approval from the Graduate School to make changes to your course plan. Instead, update the courses you actually completed when you apply for graduation at the end of your program on the *GS25 Application for Graduation* form through RamWeb.

How much can I customize my progress through the program?
There are sometimes reasons you need to change some of the time, order, or approaches to completing the steps to your degree. Although some steps can be more difficult to adjust than others, there is a lot of flexibility in the program to make sure you get everything you need to complete the degree. Talk with your advisor or a faculty mentor if there are specific changes to the typical process you want to make. In many cases there are forms to make changes, petitions to the Graduate School or to the department, or accommodations for extenuating circumstances you can use to complete all the requirements. The most common adjustments to the process that students make is adjusting the amount of time that it takes to complete the proposal and final thesis/project. As long as you remain in good contact with your advisor, timing for those steps can be flexible.

What if I'm not making "satisfactory progress" towards my degree?
A student who does not maintain a 3.0 GPA is subject to probation and dismissal by the Graduate School, as outlined in the *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*. You can petition for an exception to this requirement, but approval is rare. If you aren't making progress on your degree in a timely manner, the advisor, master's committee, and/or the Graduate Program Committee will determine necessary steps, which may include dismissal from the program. You may be asked to write a memo to the Graduate Program Committee and your master's committee to request approval for the delay. If you anticipate an extended delay in your timeline, you can request a leave of absence with approval from your advisor.

What if I pass the 10-year program time limit and my courses "expire"?
The simplest way to address expired classes is to re-take them. If this is not feasible, you can appeal the time limit for expired courses in rare cases, but this is difficult. Work with your advisor to identify courses for which you have evidence that you have remained up-to-date in your knowledge and expertise in the academic theories and methods relevant to the class. This must be done for each expired class separately, and the petition must be approved by the Graduate School. Processes for submitting petitions to the Graduate School are available on its website.

What if I fail a class?
If you fail a class, you have a few options, depending on the class. If it is a required course (see the Course Requirements chapter below), then you will have to re-take the course or, with permission from your advisor and the Graduate Program Director, complete an independent study with the equivalent content. If it is not a required course, you can simply take an additional course to complete your credit requirements.

What should I do if I decide to leave the program or not return from a leave of absence?
If you decide to leave the program, inform your advisor and/or the Graduate Program Coordinator that you will not be returning. This ensures the department can plan properly in terms of GTA or GRA assignments.

2 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To complete your master's degree, you must earn 31 credits made up of classes in the JMC department and in other departments at CSU. Your courses must fulfill core requirements that include communication theory and research, as well as electives and other coursework. The courses must be mostly graduate level, which at CSU are numbered 500 and above.

Meet with your advisor each fall and spring semester to discuss your options, identify the most appropriate classes for you, and receive your advising code for the next semester's registration.

All registration requires a **current advising code**, including thesis credits and Continuous Registration (CR; see below).

What are the credit requirements?

- 31 total
- At least 21 credits taken at CSU after admission
- Minimum of 16 credits level 500+
- 16 credits required core courses
- 6 credits JMC graduate core courses level 500+
- 9 credits electives outside and/or inside JMC
- 3 thesis/project credits (699/695)

▶ Course Approval Forms

- Work with your advisor to use *DG1 Temporary Advising Form* in your **1st semester** to start thinking about your program.
- Use the *DG6 Master's Coursework & GS6 Planning Form* to plan your coursework in **semesters 2 and 3** with your advisor.
- Fill out the *GS6 Program of Study* on RamWeb to indicate course plan, advisor, and committee for approval by the Graduate School by the end of your **3rd semester**.
- Use the department *Special Course Proposal Form* to register for thesis/project credits (JTC 699/695) in your **4th semester** and beyond as needed for your GRA/GTA appointment or visa status (international students).
- **After coursework** is completed, register for Continuous Registration (CR) each fall and spring until you graduate. If you are employed as a graduate teaching or research assistant, you must register for at least 1 graduate-level credit (e.g., JTC 699) that semester instead.

Required Courses

To complete the 31 credits required for the master's degree, you will take a series of required and selected courses that train you in research methods, communication and other theories, and topics taught inside or outside the department. All first-time GTAs are required to complete an orientation by the Teaching and Learning Institute. GTAs teaching a gtPathways course must complete *E608: Integrating Writing in the Academic Core*.

Once your coursework is complete, take at least 3 thesis credits (JTC 699) while you are writing your proposal and/or your final thesis for Plan A or take JTC 695 for Plan B projects.

▶ Required Core (16 credits)

Fundamental theory, methods, and research credits are required for all students. These courses provide introductory training in qualitative and quantitative academic research methods and analysis and academic theories in the field of communication. These consist of:

Course	Description
JTC 500 Communication Research and Evaluation Methods	Communication research and evaluation methodologies (surveys, interviews, experiments, etc.)
JTC 501 Process and Effects of Communication	Examination of communication theories (mass communication, media effects, critical theory, etc.)
JTC 604 Colloquium in Graduate Teaching/ Learning/Research	Orientation to graduate studies
JTC 605 Colloquium in Communication Research	Explore current research in journalism and media communication
JTC 698 Research Design	Development of thesis or research project proposal
JTC 699 Thesis credits (Plan A) or JTC 695 (Plan B)	Non-scheduled credits for working with your advisor on your thesis or project

▶ JMC Graduate Core (6 credits)

These are graduate-level courses that are offered by the department. All JMC graduate courses level 500 and above can count as graduate core courses, except for those in the MCMM program (see list below). Select those that interest you from the JMC graduate courses offered each semester.

▶ Electives (9 credits)

Courses outside or inside the department can count as electives. These may be undergraduate courses at level 300 or higher, or they may be graduate level courses at level 500+. Select those that interest you from JMC or other departments at CSU. Advisor approval is needed for 300-level courses outside of the department. Note that MCMM courses (see list below) can count as electives, but they are **not funded by the program** as part of a GTA/GRA position.

▶ Independent Study Criteria

You may count a maximum of 3 credits of JTC independent study (JTC 695) courses toward your 31 credit degree requirements.

Requesting Additional Credits
If a student wishes to count additional JTC independent study credits toward their degree, they must discuss this with their advisor. The advisor can then submit a request to the graduate committee Requests must include:

- The independent study syllabus
- A brief explanation for the exemption to the policy

Such **rare** exceptions may be considered for:

- Part-time students or students that took a leave of absence, and due to course offering cycles and a lack of available substitution from another department, need an independent study.

▶ Course Rotation

Some graduate courses are offered on a standard rotation:

- **Every fall semester**: JTC 500, JTC 501, and JTC 604
- **Every spring semester**: JTC 605
- **Every spring semester in odd years**: JTC 602, JTC 614, and JTC 664
- **Every spring semester in even years**: JTC 601, JTC 630, and JTC 665
- **Most fall semesters**: JTC 793 (special topics methods courses)
- **Most spring semesters**: JTC 792 (special topics theory courses)

▶ Replacing Required Courses

Under special circumstances, students may be able to replace a required core course with an alternative course. You must get approval from the Graduate Program Committee and from your advisor. Use a written petition that details the rationale and supporting evidence for replacing the course.

▶ JTC Course List for Each Credit Area

The following table identifies which JMC courses count for each course type (methods, theory, cognate, or elective). Note that MCMM courses in the grey-filled rows can be used for credit toward the degree in electives, but they are **not covered by program GRA/GTA funding**. Required courses are indicated in bold.

Course	Required core	Graduate core	Elective	Notes
JTC 300 – 499 courses			✓	Advisor approval
JTC 500 Comm. Research and Evaluation Methods	✓			
JTC 501 Process and Effects of Comm.	✓			
JTC 505 Advanced Professional Writing			✓	Not funded
JTC 511 Corporate Media Ethics and Issues			✓	Not funded
JTC 517 Advanced Information Graphics			✓	Not funded
JTC 526 Digital Media Writing and Production			✓	Not funded
JTC 535 Electronic Media Regulation and Policy			✓	Not funded
JTC 536 Organizational and Commercial Photography			✓	Not funded
JTC 540 Corporate Digital Video Editing			✓	Not funded
JTC 544 Corporate and Institutional Media Production			✓	Not funded
JTC 545 Organizational Media Production			✓	Not funded
JTC 550 Public Relations			✓	Not funded
JTC 555 Advertising and Marketing Comm.			✓	Not funded
JTC 560 Managing Comm. Systems			✓	Not funded
JTC 568A Journalism for HS Advisers: Journalism			✓	Not funded
JTC 568B Journalism for HS Advisers: Newspapers			✓	Not funded
JTC 568C Journalism for HS Advisers: Yearbooks			✓	Not funded
JTC 569 Advising Student Media for K-12 Educators			✓	Not funded
JTC 570 Political Economy of Global Media		✓	✓	
JTC 571 Digital Media Research and Evaluation Methods			✓	Not funded
JTC 572 Corporate Web Design and Management			✓	Not funded
JTC 573 Strategic Digital Comm.		✓	✓	
JTC 601 Cognitive Comm. Theory		✓	✓	
JTC 602 Social and Cultural Comm. Theory		✓	✓	
JTC 604 Colloquium--Grad/Teaching/Learning/Research	✓			1st yr colloquium
JTC 605 Colloquium in Comm. Research	✓			1st yr colloquium
JTC 614 Public Comm. Campaigns		✓	✓	
JTC 630 Health Comm.		✓	✓	

JTC 640 Public Comm. Technologies		✓	✓	
JTC 650 Strategic Comm.		✓	✓	
JTC 660 Comm. and Innovation		✓	✓	
JTC 661 Information Design		✓	✓	
JTC 662 Communicating Science and Technology		✓	✓	
JTC 664 Quantitative Research in Comm.		✓	✓	
JTC 665 Qualitative Methods in Comm. Research		✓	✓	
JTC 670 Comm. in the Social Processes of Risk		✓	✓	
JTC 684/784 Supervised College Teaching			✓	
JTC 687 Internship			✓	Advisor approval
JTC 690/790 Workshop		✓	✓	Advisor approval
JTC 695/796 Independent Study		✓	✓	Req. for Plan B
JTC 698/798 Research	✓			Research
JTC 699/799 Thesis/Dissertation	✓			Req. for Plan A
JTC 792A-F Seminar (special theory topics)		✓	✓	
JTC 793A-F Seminar (special methods topics)		✓	✓	

Continuous Registration (CR)

Continuous Registration is a non-credit status you register for via RamWeb after you have completed all credit-bearing courses in order to maintain your student status. Continuous Registration (CR) status includes a fee but no course credit costs. You will only register for CR if you are **not** serving as a GTA/GRA that fall or spring and you are not registered for any other credits.

Once you complete both your coursework and GTA/GRA position, you must register for Continuous Registration (CR) each fall and spring until you graduate. Summer graduates only must also register for CR the summer semester they graduate.

If you are currently working as a GTAs/GRA, you must register for 1+ credits of JTC 699/695 instead of CR. You cannot use CR to be eligible for GTA/GRA employment.

Registering for CR requires a registration code from your advisor each semester, but does **not** require a *Special Course Form*.

In your **1st, 4th, and 8th semester of CR**, the Graduate School also requires you to submit a *Student Plan for Degree Completion* to your advisor and the JMC Graduate Committee.

If you take a leave of absence, you must still enroll in CR while you are gone in order to maintain your status. If you lapse in CR registration, the Graduate School will ask you to re-apply to the program.

International students must be enrolled full-time (6+ credits) in classes or thesis/project credits (JTC 699/695) each semester to maintain F-1 or J-1 immigration status.
You will **not register for CR**. See the Office of International Programs.

CR students may choose to purchase CSU student health insurance and/or access the CSU Health Network for an additional fee.

You are limited to 10 semesters (5 years) of CR, and you must enroll in CR or at least one course credit in the semester you plan to graduate.

Common Questions About Course Requirements

How do I get my advising code?
Meet with your advisor every semester to receive your code for the upcoming registration period. You need this code for any registration, including Continuous Registration after your coursework is complete.

Can I take more than 31 credits while enrolled in the master's program?
Yes, you can take extra classes if you wish. There are no limitations on taking more credits other than ensuring you are making sufficient progress towards your degree milestones. You should always consult your advisor before taking additional courses. Typically, tuition for the standard course load of 9 – 10 credits is covered by a full-time GTA/GRAship (50% FTE/20 hours per week), and more credits will NOT increase the tuition owed. However, you should check with your advisor and consult the most recent tuition and fee schedule to determine the amount of fees you will need to pay based on your credit load.

What if a class I need isn't offered during a semester I can take it?
If you cannot take a course you need, you have several options: 1) Work with your advisor to identify an alternative class that addresses the same topics and concepts; 2) Take the course when it's next offered after your coursework period is over (e.g., your 4th or 5th semester); 3) Develop an independent study on the specific content in the needed course and find faculty to supervise it. The Graduate Program Committee must approve any alternative courses.

What if I fail a required course?
If you do not pass a course you need to complete the program, you can re-take that course or take an equivalent that fulfills the requirements with approval by your advisor and master's committee.

What happens if I get an incomplete in a class?
You can request an incomplete from the course professor when the reasons are circumstances beyond your control. If you receive an incomplete, work with the professor to set up a timeline for completing the required work. The professor has discretion to grant the incomplete and the written terms that will determine completion of the course and the timeline for doing so. The professor will change your grade when satisfactory work is complete and graded. If it takes longer than 1 year to complete the work, the "I" on your records will automatically turn into an "F."

What if I missed a semester registering for CR?
Make sure you register for CR for the current semester and discuss the issue with your advisor. In some cases, the Graduate School will not flag lapsed CR enrollment, but it will be necessary to reapply to the program if you miss a semester.

What if I need more than 10 semesters of CR?
After 10 semesters of CR, there will be a hold on your registration from the Graduate School. This may be petitioned by your advisor following their General Petition Instructions and by filling out the Student Plan for Degree Completion along with the petition to the Graduate School for review. Note, too, that there is a maximum of 10 years (20 fall/spring semesters) allowed for completion of the graduate degree.

3 GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The department offers funding to master's students, typically for two years, although the program does not guarantee this funding. Funded students are appointed to quarter-time (10 hours per week, 25% FTE) or half-time (20 hours per week, 50% FTE) graduate teaching assistantships (GTA) or graduate research assistantships (GRA). Appointments are based on your skills and the department's needs and budget.

GTAs and GRAs receive a monthly stipend, a contribution toward the university's health insurance program, a contribution towards fees, and tuition remission. The Graduate School has the most recent information about benefits available to you as a GTA.

Graduate Assistantships

What is it?
A paid position in the department to assist a faculty member as a teaching (GTA) or research assistant (GRA) for 10 or 20 hours per week during the semester.

When do I do it?
From the start of classes through finals week starting your 1st semester and usually extending through the 2nd year.

What forms do I need?
None! Assistantships are appointed via a memo from the Graduate Program Coordinator.

To be eligible for GTA or GRA support, you must be registered for at least 1 course credit (*not* a CR credit), making satisfactory progress toward your degree, fulfilling your job duties to the satisfaction of your supervisors, and meeting Graduate School requirements for holding assistantships.

Graduate Assistantships

▸ Graduate Teaching Assistantships

This position is a 10- or 20-hour per week role supporting a faculty member teaching a department class. GTAs are typically assigned to work with faculty who teach JTC 100 (*Media in Society*), JTC 211 (*Computer-Mediated Visual Communication*), JTC 300 (*Strategic Writing and Communication*), or LB 300 (*Specialized Professional Writing*). Some additional courses use GTAs on an occasional basis. GTA duties may include attending lectures, holding office hours, grading papers, assisting in test preparation and proctoring, and leading recitation/laboratory sections. You are assigned a GTA position depending on department needs, your areas of expertise, and your interests.

Teaching Assistants must meet oral English proficiency requirements as defined in the Graduate Bulletin. Students required to demonstrate English proficiency for acceptance are also evaluated for their ability to communicate orally in English by their department.

To prepare for the position, reach out to the instructor of the class for schedule and expectations. If you're not sure who the instructor is, you can ask the JMC Graduate Program Coordinator.

All first-time GTAs are required to complete an orientation by the Teaching and Learning Institute. GTAs teaching a gtPathways course must complete *E608: Integrating Writing in the Academic Core*.

▶ Graduate Research Assistantships

Graduate students may have the opportunity to serve as a research assistant who supports faculty in a funded research project. GRA positions are typically funded through grants obtained by faculty members from outside agencies. Faculty members have been awarded grants from the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Environmental Protection Agency, Intelligence Advanced Research Project Activity, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, among others.

To prepare for a GRA position, reach out to the sponsoring faculty member to learn about schedule, expectations, and any background training you might need. If you're not sure who might have available GRA positions, you can ask the JMC Graduate Program Director.

▶ Summer Opportunities

MS students typically do not receive summer funding from the department, but if there are openings available for GTA positions, the Graduate Program Coordinator or Director will issue a call for applications via the department's graduate student listserv.

If a call is issued at the end of the spring semester, and you would like to teach a course in the summer, apply through the department. You must also have a Graduate Teaching Evaluation Form filled out by faculty who have supervised you in a current or former GTA position.

We also encourage all students looking for summer work on campus to look for opportunities on CSU's employment system, Handshake, which can be accessed through the CSU Career Center.

Department Financial Support

Most admitted students receive financial support as part of the program, although this is not guaranteed. Visit the Office of Financial Aid for details on student loans, due dates, and paying your bill. The department HR/Fiscal Officer manages graduate student pay and can answer your questions.

> Out-of-state domestic graduate students must formally establish Colorado residency in their 1st year for full tuition remission in years 2+. See the Office of Financial Aid residency guidance.

▶ GTA and GRA Funding

Students with a GRA or GTA appointment receive funding for:

- **Tuition remission** – 9+ credits per semester (100% for half-time, 50% for quarter-time appointments) at the resident tuition rate
- **Stipend** – A monthly salary from mid-August through mid-May
- **Health insurance** – If also registered for 5+ credits, GTA/GRAs receive a health insurance contribution
- **Additional benefits** – Including parental leave and community mental health resources
- **A portion of student fees –** Includes general fees and facility fees - learn more about fees for the current year.

▶ Conference Funding

All graduate students are eligible for some funding towards expenses for attending academic and professional conferences. If you have been accepted to present a paper or talk at an academic or professional conference or meeting, the department will provide some funding toward your registration

and travel expenses. Note that this funding is only available for trips associated with an accepted paper or talk, and may not cover guest lectures or other types of guest speaking engagements. Conference funding that comes from GRA appointments may have different requirements and funding levels; consult the faculty supervisor of your GRA position for details.

For all conference funding of any kind, you **must fill out a pre-trip form** and have it approved by the department before you travel.

More about conferences and forms is in Part Two of this manual, and you can consult the JMC Graduate Program Committee for current funding amounts and details.

▶ Outside Employment

Students holding a half-time (20 hour) GTA or GRA assistantship are not permitted to be employed by the university elsewhere on campus without special permission. CSU employment regulations do not generally allow more than 20 hours of employment for students in a full-time program. Part-time students or those not in coursework should consult with the JMC Graduate Committee to ensure they are permitted to receive additional pay from the university. In some cases, this limit can be petitioned for an exception. Consult the Graduate Program Director if needed.

In addition, students employed by an off-campus entity must get permission from their advisor and the Graduate Program Committee. This is because coursework and GTA/GRA positions are considered full-time work and additional employment may interfere substantially with the degree program.

▶ Key information about GTA/GRA positions

- Final appointment of assistantships is contingent upon completion of all the necessary formal documents, certification of the assistantship appointment by the Graduate School, and formal University approval.
- Assistantships are renewable each semester for 2 years, pending the availability of funds, satisfactory progress toward your degree, and your compliance with program and university guidelines including the Student Conduct Code.
- You must maintain a 3.00 graduate grade-point average and be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour to keep this appointment.
- Please note the Terms and Conditions of Graduate Assistantship Appointments.
- Contractual obligation occurs at the time of appointment or reappointment.
- Graduate assistants must be reappointed each semester based on appropriate progress.
- This position is at will and depends upon successful completion of a background check.
- The Graduate School supplements first-year tuition costs for half-time domestic out-of-state GTAs/GRAs and for some international students. **After this, domestic graduate students are required to apply for residency.**
- The stipend is treated as taxable income, although tuition disbursement is not.
- All CSU employees, including GTAs/GRAs, are designated as *Responsible Employees*. As such they are required to report as early as possible any and all information related to incidents of sexual misconduct and/or interpersonal violence to the CSU Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity. Learn more at their website.

Note that in order to serve as a GTA or GRA, you must be registered for at least one course credit from a class or from JTC 699 or 695 credits.

Common Questions About Graduate Assistantships

Am I required to work as a GTA or GRA?
You are not required to be a GTA/GRA in order to be in the master's program, but you are required to be one in order to receive tuition remission and a stipend.

What responsibilities are expected of me as a GTA?
Exact details depend on the course you're assisting with, but GTAs generally grade student papers, independently run small, weekly recitation sessions or labs if the course includes them, and help prepare and distribute course materials. Most instructors also ask GTAs to attend class lectures to ensure that you are familiar with all the relevant content and in-class activities, especially the first semester you GTA that particular course.

What if there's a problem with my payment?
Speak to the department Fiscal Officer and the JMC Graduate Program Coordinator to sort out any issues with your stipend or other funding from the department.

What do I do if there's a problem with a student or my class isn't responding to me?
It can certainly be challenging to oversee a class independently for the first time, especially if you're not much older than your undergraduate students. Remember that you are there to support and guide students, and that you have the authority to require them to complete the assignments and exercises. Speak to your class instructor or other faculty mentors if you need help clarifying your role or if there are any serious problems with a student. Chatting with experienced GTAs can really help, as they have probably faced similar challenges. There are also pedagogy resources available at CSU's The Institute for Teaching and Learning (TILT) with advice and examples that many students have found helpful.

What if my GRA/GTA position isn't working out?
If you're having troubles in a GTA or GRA position, speak to your advisor and/or with the Graduate Program Director to learn about your options for reassignment. This is not always possible, but the department will do its best to make sure your working environment is suitable for you.

What if I want to change to a different GTA or GRA assignment for next semester?
You are always welcome to request a change in the class you GTA for or see if there are current GRA opportunities. Only certain classes have GTAs, and GRA positions depend on external funding, so your options might be limited. . The Graduate Program Coordinator will let you know how to let the department know your preferences.

What if I find a job outside CSU before I'm finished with my degree?
If you are employed outside CSU, you may not be eligible for a GTA/GRA position. In addition, full-time or close to full-time outside employment is likely to interfere substantially with your degree progress, as getting a master's is a full-time job! Discuss your work expectations with your advisor to come up with a plan to finish the program if you must work outside the department during the fall/spring semesters.

4 PLAN A & PLAN B RESEARCH

The Master's of Science in JMC allows students to select between two options for the final project required to earn the degree. Plan A, for those interested in academic theory and research in the field, involves writing a theoretically-driven academic research thesis.

Plan B, for those who wish to create a more professionally-oriented project, involves conducting theory-driven research and applying it to the creation of a separate media product, such as a public relations campaign, video, website, strategic plan, or similar.

Both a Plan A and B require the same courses and have the same program milestones.

Plan A vs. Plan B Project

What is a Plan A project?
A written thesis based on research and theory concerned with findings that apply across a variety of contexts in the academic field of communication.

What is a Plan B project?
A written report and an original media project based on research and theory that contributes to the communication-related goals of a specific organization.

When do I decide?
By the time you start developing your proposal.

What forms do I need?
DG2 Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval

Plan A Thesis Option

The thesis is an original research study that demonstrates your ability to use relevant theory and research methodology to investigate a communication problem or issue. The goal of a thesis is to enhance the field's understanding of a communication phenomenon.

A thesis is:

- Based on theory, and the results contribute to the knowledge in the field
- Concerned with findings that can be applied across a variety of contexts
- Archived in the university's library as a contribution to academic scholarship

Read more about the thesis and its contents in the *Proposal & Thesis/Project* chapter below.

▶ Plan A Research Approaches

A Plan A thesis needs to contribute to the field of communication scholarship, and it needs to explore and discuss a theoretical framework in the research. A Plan A project conducts research in order to test a specific theory related to communication, rather than reporting the status of a phenomenon. Consequently, the methods chapter and the literature review are generally longer and more focused on theory in a Plan A thesis than in a Plan B project report.

Plan A research projects are based in academic research approaches, such as conducting a survey, interviews, a lab experiment, critical media analyses, or case studies. Such research is theory-driven, and it builds on prior academic research in the field.

Plan B Research Project Option

The Plan B research project involves applying theory and original research to solve a practical communication problem for an organization. The Plan B project includes a research component, such as a survey, interviews, or case study, as well as the development of a media product for a specific organization, such as a company website, training video, PR campaign, technical manual, strategic plan, etc.

> Plan B projects can consist of research that only benefits the collaborating organization, but Plan A theses need to benefit future scholars.

A Plan B is not recommended for students who do not already have solid skills in the relevant media production, such as website design, video production, PR campaign development, etc., as the program does not provide this type of skills training at the graduate level.

In some circumstances, students might work with someone at CSU, including from JMC, as their organizational representative for a Plan B. In this case, this person cannot also serve as your advisor nor as one of the two committee members required by the Graduate School.

The organizational representative must be someone selected in addition to your 3-person master's committee.

▸ Working with an Organization

The Plan B project requires working with a specific organization, generally from outside the university, to develop a media product applied to a practical problem for that organization. You will identify an individual from the organization to serve as a representative throughout project development.

It is strongly recommended that you work closely with the organizational representative through the development of your project to ensure the organization is aligned with your goals and process.

To set up the process of working with the organization:

1. **Obtain the permission of your advisor** to work on the proposed project with the proposed organization. The project must be suitable for fulfilling the requirements of the JMC degree program.
2. **Discuss the project with appropriate members of the organization** and identify a representative who can provide feedback and guidance. This person should have the authority to approve the work and its use at the organization.
3. **Obtain a letter from the client organization** stating its commitment to cooperate with you on your project. Present this letter at your proposal defense.
4. **Obtain approval from your master's committee** at the proposal defense (add this to the *DG2* form) to work with the specified organization.
5. **Consult with the organization representative throughout** the planning and development of the research and the media product to ensure it aligns with their needs and rules.
6. **Invite the organization representative to attend your final project defense** if you wish.
7. **Obtain a letter from the organization approving the final media product.**

▶ Steps in the Plan B Degree Process

The courses, steps, forms, and meetings required to complete your degree with a Plan B project are the same as for a Plan A thesis, except for two major components:

- A letter from the organization you work with is presented at the proposal defense and the final media product is approved by the organization and the final project defense.
- You develop a media product (website, video, PR campaign, manual, etc.) for an organization and present it at your final defense in addition to the written report.

Plan B Proposals

Just like for a Plan A, you write a full proposal that you defend orally in front of your master's committee for a Plan B project. The Plan B proposal includes an additional section detailing the project plan for the media product you will develop for the degree. In addition, the Plan B literature review might be shorter than those in a Plan A proposal/thesis.

> The *Proposal & Thesis/Project* chapter below has a table identifying each chapter of a typical Plan B proposal and final report.

Your advisor or the organization representative might also ask you for additional pages, documents, or sections of the proposal, such as a storyboard, design mock-ups, website map, film treatment, or the like. Both your advisor and your organization representative will help you develop what you need in addition to the typical proposal sections.

Plan B Writing Style

Your written documents for the department (proposal, final report) should use standard academic writing style. However, many Plan B students need to create additional written documents for the client organization. These might be an executive summary or a professional report with a shorter literature review and simpler, more business-style or journalistic writing. Plan B documents intended for organizations may also use more graphs and images, depending on the professional audience.

Plan B Committee

The master's committee is the same for Plan A and B (advisor, 1 JMC faculty, and 1 outside faculty from CSU; see the *Advisor & Committee* chapter below). However, for a Plan B you will also work with someone in the organization who commits to review the proposal, data collection process, and final products (written project report and the media product you create). This person must be in addition to your advisor and the two other committee members.

The organization representative does **not** have to be formally designated as a committee member, and they do not have to attend your proposal or final report defenses, although they can if you wish.

Final Project Defense Presentation

When presenting your final work to your committee, you will present both a written document detailing the background and results of your research as well as the media product you developed based on that research. The written report generally contains the content of your proposal plus short sections explaining the research findings, the media product development process, lessons learned, and final outcomes of your work. In some cases, the final written Plan B document is the proposal plus only 5 or 6 pages; for other projects more is needed. Consult your advisor.

In addition to the final written document, Plan B students provide the media product such as a PR plan, website, film, game, etc. to their committee for feedback in the final defense.

▶ Plan B Research Component

Plan B projects require a research component, which may be similar to market research or internal organizational research. This may be a study such as a survey with clients, interviews with stakeholders, archival research on organizational documents, a competitive analysis, a critical analysis of a technology, or other similar work. This is not a literature review, but instead original research that you conduct.

> Plan B projects are research-based. Therefore, the Plan B proposal has a methods chapter detailing a data collection process as well as a project plan chapter detailing product development.

The Plan B research project needs to benefit a specific organization, and does not have to contribute to the field of communication research (although it might). Plan B projects need to be evidence-based and answer objectives, which means they address a specific research problem, question, or issue within a theoretical framework relevant to the field of communication. Although the project needs this theoretical framework, it does not have to add to our understanding of that framework.

▶ Media Product Development

Although you might have a clear idea of what you want to create for your Plan B media product early in the process, you must wait until after the proposal defense to begin development. Plan B research projects must include a research component and be grounded in relevant communication theories and prior literature, which must be approved by your master's committee. Media product development is based on analyses of these elements.

Examples of Plan B products are available from the department, and prior students have developed projects such as:

- Evidence-based program for fundraising among alumni of CSU's study abroad participants and international students. Used an online survey among alumni, interviews with CSU faculty and staff, and analysis of institutional best practices. Developed a full-color report with graphics for CSU fundraising staff. (Anna Gerber, M.S. 2016)
- Organizational strategic plan to address the decline in artist participation in the Loveland Sculpture Invitational. Used online surveys among prior artists and event attendees and interviews with organization board members. Developed a full-color strategic plan with graphics for the organization's board. (Meghan Norton-Swella, M.S. 2016)
- Science communication workshop to help scientists develop effective visual communication approaches for their audiences. Created lesson plans, content, and guidance for the training, as well as evaluation methods. (Field Peterson, M.S. 2023)

Plan A and Plan B Comparison

Criteria	Plan A Thesis	Plan B Research Project
General characteristics	• Explores and tests communication theory with rigorous theory-driven research • Contributes to public knowledge • Archived in library	• Applies communication research and theory to a specific organizational need, problem, or question • Contributes to organization's private knowledge and understanding • Archived in department
Audiences	• Master's committee • Communication and other scholars in the field	• Master's committee • Sponsoring organization • Peer organizations in the industry (in some cases)
Committee Members	• Advisor, 1 JMC faculty, 1 CSU non-JMC faculty	• Advisor, 1 JMC, 1 CSU non-JMC faculty • External organization representative (optionally designated as 4th committee member)
Proposal Content	• Introduction, literature review, methods, analytical approaches	• Introduction, literature review, methods, analytical approaches • Media product development plan
Research Type and Process	• Theory-driven research testing a concept or hypotheses • Human subjects research always requires IRB approval	• Market, audience, or stakeholder research • Human subjects research may not require IRB approval
Final Document Content	• Thesis: Introduction, literature review, methods, analysis/results, discussion, conclusions and future research	• Research report: Introduction, literature review, methods, analysis/results, project report/debrief, conclusions and future recommendations • Media product
Outcomes	• Advances communication scholarship • Potential academic publications	• Communication recommendations for the relevant organization or industry • Professional-quality media product

Common Questions About Plan A and Plan B

I'm new to academic research, but I feel very comfortable creating media products. Does that mean I have to do a Plan B?
Not at all! Almost everyone in a master's program is new to academic research, so lack of experience shouldn't stop you from doing a Plan A if you want to. The purpose of the classes and the proposal process is to provide you with the training you need to conduct research based on theory for either plan. Ultimately, this decision is up to you and your needs, and the program will prepare you to do a Plan A even if you've never done original research before.

I want to create a media product for my Plan B, but I don't have the technical skills. Can I take classes to learn them?
JMC doesn't offer graduate level classes in technical media development skills, although you can take some classes in video, web development, or photography at the undergraduate level. However, we do not recommend doing a Plan B project that requires a skill you have no background in at all – you probably need more than a few courses to create a quality media product.

I know I want to make a specific media product for my Plan B project. Can I just go ahead and get started?
No, sorry! You have to go through the full proposal development process before you start working on a Plan B project, even if you already have a clear sense of what it will be. All master's degree projects must be reviewed and approved by your committee in the proposal defense before you start working on them.

Can I have someone from the department serve as my Plan B organizational representative?
Under some circumstances, you can work with someone in the JMC department on a media product for your Plan B project. However, this person cannot be your advisor. So, you'll need another JMC faulty member to serve as your advisor along with the JMC person who guides you in the media product development.

Under what circumstances should I consider a Plan B?
Plan B projects are research projects with an additional component – creating a media product. You should consider a Plan B project if you already have media production skills, such as website design, video production, PR campaign development, etc. You need solid skills and experience in the relevant media production to do a Plan B, as the program is not designed to provide skills training in those areas at the graduate level.

When can I switch from a Plan A to B or vice versa?
The best time to decide if you are doing a Plan A or Plan B is before you start working on your proposal. However, sometimes you realize during the proposal development process that you want to change plans. That's just fine! Work with your advisor, or change advisors if appropriate, to adjust the proposal as needed. This has to be done before you defend the proposal. If you want to change from one plan to another after the proposal is defended, you most likely will have to re-defend the new approach in order to make sure you get good feedback from your committee.

What if I stop working for the organization I am doing my Plan B project with before I'm done?
If you have a Plan B project underway and your relationship with the sponsoring organization changes, you can still finish your project if your advisor approves. If you can maintain a relationship with the individual in the organization who was working with you, they may be willing to continue giving you feedback on the project. If that does not work out, your advisor will work with you to either finish the project without the organizational representative or by helping you find another individual or organization to provide review and feedback.

5 ADVISOR & COMMITTEE

Your advisor is a faculty member in the JMC department who helps you plan your coursework and thesis (Plan A) or project (Plan B). You will select your permanent advisor who will serve as the chair of your 3-person master's committee, which consists of one additional JMC faculty and one faculty from outside the department. This must be done in your 3rd semester.

To learn more about JMC faculty as you explore possibilities for an advisor and committee members, go to the list of faculty on the JMC faculty page on the department website. There you can find information about our faculty's background, research and publications, courses they teach, and more.

You can also visit faculty office hours to ask them about their work, explain your own interests, and get to know them.

Advisor & Committee

What is an advisor?
A JMC faculty member who guides you throughout the program and works closely with you on your master's development and research.

What is a committee?
1 JMC faculty and 1 faculty outside the department, chaired by your advisor. Your committee approves your proposal and final thesis/project.

When do I pick them?
In your 3rd semester, you must select a permanent advisor and 2 other committee members.

What forms do I need?
DG1 Temporary Advising to start working with your temporary advisor; *GS6 Program of Study* to designate your advisor and committee.

Program and Coursework Advising

▶ Temporary and Permanent Advisors

Upon admission to the program, you are assigned a temporary faculty advisor to help you with initial course selection and to answer questions about program requirements and procedures. The temporary advisor is assigned to you based on your interest area before you begin the program. Many students select a different faculty member to be their permanent advisor.

Contact your temporary advisor soon after you have been admitted to the program so they can answer any questions you might have and help you select your fall coursework. Use the *DG1 Temporary Advising Form* to start this process.

Thesis/Project Advising

The permanent advisor takes over helping you plan your coursework and other program logistics. Your advisor is also your master's committee chair. Your permanent advisor must be a current member of the department's tenure-track faculty at the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor.

Before the end of your 3rd semester, select a permanent advisor using the *GS6 Program of Study* form.

Change advisors or committee members using *GS9A Petition for Committee Member Changes* on RamWeb if needed.

Your advisor is a primary source of advice and mentorship; consequently, you should seek an advisor with whom you can maintain a close, professional relationship. Equally important, your advisor should have an advising/mentoring style that complements your preferred learning approach, an academic background that suits your research interests, and who is interested in your proposed research.

Once you have some ideas about which faculty might be a good fit for your research interests and work style, meet with them to discuss their availability. It's helpful to have an idea of the general topic area of your thesis or project, including some ideas about possible research methods.

Faculty members have the right to decline a student's request to serve as a permanent advisor. This may occur for a number of reasons, such as when faculty members have heavy advising loads, are slated for sabbaticals at inopportune times based on the student's graduation timeline, see only a tangential relationship to the student's research interests, or have heavy workloads in other areas.

Meet regularly with your permanent advisor throughout the program. This generally means setting up weekly or bi-weekly meetings to discuss your thesis/project, classes, and career planning. There are some stages of the process when you might meet less often, and some advisors meet only occasionally during summers.

Master's Committee

The master's committee, led by your permanent advisor, is the group of people who will read your thesis or project report, give you feedback, and determine whether it meets department and university standards for conferring a degree. They are responsible for upholding these standards, and they must sign forms approving your proposal and final thesis/project. They provide guidance and suggestions about content, and have the right to require appropriate adjustments and changes to your project and documents.

Meet with each member of your committee at least once before you submit your proposal and at least once before you complete your final thesis or project. In some cases, your advisor will encourage you to meet with committee members a few more times, but most of the work you do with committee members will be surrounding the proposal and final defenses.

▶ Master's Committee Membership

Your master's committee is made up of three people: Your chair (the permanent advisor you select), a faculty from within JMC, and a faculty outside JMC.

Master's committee chairs (your advisor) must be a Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor within JMC, but committee members can be of other ranks with department permission. See the Grad School explanation for details.

You should choose committee members who have theoretical and/or methodological expertise that will help you conduct your research and who are interested in your research topic. You are responsible for recruiting your own committee members.

▶ Changing Advisors or Members of a Master's Committee

You have the right to change members of your master's committee, including your advisor, at any time, but this is not recommended unless there are specific problems or issues. The most common reason people change committee members or advisors is because faculty leave the university or their area of study changes.

> Do not put committee members on your GS6 without talking to each of them first to get their permission!

To change your permanent advisor or committee members, fill out the *GS9A Petition for Committee Member Changes* on RamWeb.

Duties and Responsibilities

▶ Student responsibilities to advisor and master's committee

You are responsible for:

- completing your work in a timely manner
- keeping track of program requirements and deadlines
- submitting Graduate School and department forms
- asking questions when you need to know something
- gathering your own literature and resources
- conducting and writing your own research
- following policies for academic integrity and conduct

You should maintain regular contact with your advisor and committee members. If six months or more has passed since you last contacted your advisor or committee members with an update, you shouldn't assume that faculty members have time to continue devoting to your project. In these cases, faculty members may not be able to continue in their advising or committee member capacities, and you might have to replace them.

▶ Advisor and master's committee responsibilities to students

Your advisor is responsible for overseeing your progress through the program and your master's research. They should guide you on how to write your proposal and thesis or project, on designing and conducting research, and they should provide support when issues and challenges arise in your work, classes, or research. Your advisor and committee together are responsible for holding you to appropriate academic and professional standards in your work and ensuring the final documents you produce meet these standards. Advisors and committees can refer you to to available CSU services for mental and physical health. They are not responsible for suggesting or creating your research area, topic, or relevant literature lists.

Advisors should respond with reasonable promptness to your inquiries and provide feedback on appropriate documents in a timely manner. If advisors cannot answer a question or address an issue relevant to the program, they should suggest resources for you to find additional guidance.

Common Questions About Advising and Committee

Can I switch my temporary advisor before I find a permanent one?
Yes. Just talk to the JMC Graduate Program Director to request a change to your temporary advisor.

Does my advisor have to have expertise in the same things I'm interested in studying?
Not always. Your advisor does not have to have an academic focus exactly aligned with your area of research. However, sharing areas of interest and research approaches can be helpful, especially similarities in research methods. Most importantly, remember that your relationship with your advisor is a close one that is influential during the program as well as long after you graduate. Pick someone you respect, like, and value. A perfect academic match will not compensate for personality conflicts.

How do I find my ideal advisor?
The best approach is to make appointments with faculty in JMC whom you think would be a good match and talk to them about your interests and ideas. Ask some specific, relevant questions directly to be sure you will get what you need, such as:

- How often do you usually like to meet with your advisees?
- Do you generally like advisees to come to you with more developed work, or to come with only initial thoughts to be discussed with you?
- How much feedback do you like to give on drafts of chapters? Do you prefer to see each chapter while it's being developed, or do you like to wait until a chapter is complete to provide feedback?
- When you give feedback on written documents, do you usually make mostly broader comments and guidance, or do you provide close line edits?
- Is there anything else about your particular advising style that you think I should know?

Can I change my permanent advisor?
Absolutely. Early in the process, changing your advisor is simple and just requires having a conversation with your current advisor and the new one. Once you submit your GS6 in your third semester, you will have a permanent advisor. Therefore, as you progress through the program, it does become more challenging to change advisors. But if things aren't working out, you are permitted to make this change. Use the GS9A form on RamWeb once you have discussed your decision with your out-going and new advisor. Be sure to thank your previous advisor for their help!

How do I pick my outside committee member(s)?
Your outside committee member is not as closely involved in the writing and reviewing process, but they are important. It helps to select someone you know from courses you've taken outside the department or through some other work you have done, but this is not required. Most important to selecting an outside committee member is that their expertise is a) relevant to your project; and b) it represents perspectives not fully represented by your other committee members.

Browse the faculty lists on individual department websites to learn about your options for committee members. It is best to have a clear area of focus selected for your research before you contact potential outside committee members. Once you find someone you like, then you should:

1. Ask your advisor if the outside faculty member is a good choice.
2. Write an email to the outside faculty member explaining your project in brief and requesting a meeting to explain your project and potentially have them on your committee.
3. Meet with the faculty member to learn about their ideas and perspectives on your project.
4. If you still like them, email them with a cc to your advisor asking to officially have them on your committee.
5. Add their name to your GS6 form.

What if I want an extra person on my committee?
You can have an extra person on your committee beyond the 3 required if your advisor approves. This additional member can be from inside or outside CSU. Some students even include someone from industry as an additional outside member. Check with the JMC Graduate Coordinator about how to fill out the paperwork. A GS9A will be required if you have already submitted a GS6.

How do I "work with my committee"?
This depends in part on your preferences, the committee member preferences and availability, and your advisor's preferences. Committee members, as opposed to your advisor, might have only a few conversations with students before the proposal defense. Make an appointment to talk with your committee members early in the process, take good notes, and then bring their suggestions and insights back to your advisor for discussion. Note that it is uncommon to send drafts of chapter text to committee members. They do not have to approve or provide feedback on work in progress - that's your advisor's job. Most often, you work closely with your advisor and do not send a draft of the proposal/thesis to anyone until your advisor has told you it is ready for distribution (and defense). A good approach is to meet with your committee members twice while you prepare the proposal and then twice more while you prepare the final thesis or project. Talk to your advisor about how to best work with your committee members.

6 PROPOSAL & THESIS/PROJECT

A key requirement for the fulfillment of the master's degree is writing a theory-driven, independent research project.

The thesis or research project is developed in two major steps: a comprehensive proposal and a final document, each of which is defended orally in front of your master's committee.

The final thesis/report defense is open to the campus community and announced at least two weeks prior to the defense date.

Many students invite friends, colleagues, and family members to the final defense.

The Proposal	The Thesis/Report
What is it? A 30- to 60-page written document detailing your thesis or project's theories, methods, analytical approaches, and references **When do I do it?** After coursework is completed. **What forms do I need?** *DG2 Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval*	**What is it?** A 60+ page document with everything in your (updated) proposal plus your project's results and discussion (Plan A) or application to the project (Plan B), and bibliography. **When do I do it?** After defending the proposal. **What forms do I need?** *GS24 Report of Final Examination Results;* and *GS30 Thesis/Dissertation Submission*

Consult the Graduate School website for semester-by-semester deadlines.

Process

▸ Proposal Development and Defense

After successfully completing your coursework (except JTC 698 and 699/695 credits), you will finalize your proposal with your advisor. Then, you will meet with your master's committee for an oral defense for Plan A or Plan B projects.

A thesis/project proposal is a written document generally between 30 and 60 pages long that has an introduction, comprehensive literature review with theoretical framework, a detailed methods section, a description of your analytical approach, and a full bibliography. We recommend you follow the Graduate School's guidelines for the document's formatting (see below).

The proposal defense is usually a 90-minute meeting with your master's committee where you present your proposal in a 20- to 30-minute talk. Then, committee members will ask you questions about the project and discuss how to refine and improve it. Usually your advisor oversees those changes after the defense. Email the *DG2 Thesis/Research Project/Dissertation Proposal Approval* **within two days** to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

After the oral proposal defense, make any required changes and submit them to your advisor for approval. Occasionally, committee members will also ask to see the requested updates.

Plan B Proposals
For a Plan B proposal, students need all the elements of a Plan A thesis. They also need to provide a concrete plan for the development of the proposed media product, such as a film treatment for a video, a project plan for a website, or a development plan for a public relations campaign. These are usually an additional chapter in the proposal.

This project plan should include specific steps that will be followed to create the media product, including needed resources and estimated time to complete each step.

▶ Plan A Thesis Development and Defense

Once the proposal has been successfully defended and all changes requested by your committee have been made, you can begin your data collection and analysis for the thesis. This generally involves conducting a survey, experiment, interviews, or collecting other materials for analysis, analyzing the resulting data, and writing results and discussion chapters for the final thesis.

Data Collection
Before you begin data collection, but after the proposal defense, federal regulations and university policy require you to go through the human participants approval process with the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you are writing a thesis (Plan A) or anything intended to contribute to "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge."

Data collection for Plan A projects cannot begin until your project is approved by the IRB.

Work closely with your advisor throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing process to ensure you are reaching standards in the field for rigor, accuracy, and research ethics.

Final Thesis
The final thesis is a written document generally between 60 and 150 pages long that has an introduction, comprehensive literature review with theoretical framework, a detailed methods section, analysis/results and discussion sections, a conclusion, and a bibliography.

You must follow Graduate School's guidelines for the document's formatting and layout (see below).

Thesis Defense
The thesis defense is generally a 90-minute meeting with your full committee, and is required by the Graduate School to be open to the public. You will present your research in a 20- to 30-minute talk and then answer questions from the public and from your committee. Submit your committee's approval using form *GS24 Report of Final Examination Results* within two working days.

After the oral defense, make any required changes and submit your final thesis to the Graduate School using form *GS30 Thesis/Dissertation Submission*.

▶ Plan B Project Development and Defense

Once the proposal has been successfully defended and all changes requested by your committee have been made, you can begin the research phase for the project. This usually involves collecting data and/or materials that address the questions and objectives for developing the media project, and writing a post-development report that is added to the proposal content. Often, a written explanation or summary of the product is also included in the final written document.

Research and Media Product Development
Once your proposal has been approved by your full committee, you can start working on the research and media product development for your project. Work closely with your advisor and with the representative from the sponsoring organization throughout the process in order to ensure you are fulfilling both expectations for the degree and the needs and goals of the organization. Consult with the IRB before you begin any data collection to ensure that you are following federal regulations.

Final Project Report
The final project report uses the content of your proposal updated as necessary to reflect your actual activities. You will add an overview of the process you used to develop the media product, analysis and results of the research conducted, a conclusions chapter with applied practice implications and future recommendations as relevant, and a bibliography. The resulting document is generally between 30 and 60 pages.

Project Defense
The final defense is generally a 90 minute meeting with your full committee, and is open to the public. You will present your research in a 20- to 30-minute talk and then answer questions from the public and from your committee. Submit your committee's approval using form *GS24 Report of Final Examination Results* **within two working days.** (*GS30 Thesis/Dissertation Submission* is not needed.)

Conducting Thesis Research

Plan A thesis research generally involves data collection or collecting materials for analysis. Graduate students are considered researchers affiliated with Colorado State University, and as such, they are subject to federal regulations concerning research using human participants . Before you begin data collection, but after the proposal defense, you are required to receive human participants approval from the CSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). For details, visit CSU's IRB website.

The IRB helps ensure that all research conducted at CSU meets principles of ethical conduct specified in the *Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects*, including freely given and informed consent and other safeguards. It also helps ensure that all research on human participants is planned, reviewed, and carried out under uniform standards.

> Although not all JMC research involves human participants, most does.

IRB regulations apply to research conducted for theses and dissertations, for classes, and for independent projects. Research intended for private use and not shared publicly does not require IRB review, but it's always a good idea to contact the IRB to confirm you are complying with regulations.

- Before conducting any research, **all researchers must first complete the IRB researcher training course** for "Social Behavioral Research" (online).
- All research that involves human participants or data generated by human participants **must be formally approved** by the university's IRB ***before any data are collected***.

All JMC graduate students, regardless of their intent to use human participants in their research, complete IRB researcher training during their first semester of coursework, typically as part of JTC 604/605 and/or JTC 500. The training certificate is valid for three years and must be updated by taking an online refresher course before it expires.

Violations of IRB requirements in any research conducted may result in dismissal from the program.

▶ Typical Content in a JMC Proposal and Final Thesis/Report

The structure of your thesis will depend on the nature of your research and whether or not you are doing a Plan A or Plan B project. For example, some theses use multiple literature review chapters, and it is common in qualitative work to combine results and discussion into a single chapter. Work with your advisor to determine the best approach.

A typical proposal and thesis have the sections listed below.

Chapter	Description	Plan A		Plan B	
		Proposal	Thesis	Proposal	Report
Introduction	Overview and background for the project	✓	✓	✓	✓
Literature Review	Relevant literature and theoretical framework for the project; research question(s) and hypotheses (if used)	✓	Usually updated	✓	Usually updated
Methods	Research design and rationale; steps for data collection; sampling, recruitment, and/or study cases; key variables, factors, or themes; project validity/reliability or transferability	✓	Extensively updated	✓	Extensively updated
Results/ Analysis	Summary of research results and analytical tools; data tables and/or participant quotes; interpretation and analysis of results	✗	✓	✗	Include as needed
Project Plan	Description of media product to be developed; how proposed research contributes to development; timeline; project steps	✗	✗	✓	Updated to report
Discussion	Discussion and interpretation of the implications of results, especially as related to relevant theories and prior research	✗	✓	✗	✗
Conclusions	Summary and implications of the study, including limitations and future research recommendations	✗	✓	✗	✓
References	Full list of all literature referenced in the text in APA style	✓	Updated as needed	✓	Updated as needed
Appendices	Supporting research materials such as recruitment and consent forms, survey or questionnaire instruments, stimulus materials, reference images, etc.	✓	Updated as needed	✓	Updated as needed
Media Product	Separate media product such as a website, PR campaign, film, technical report, etc.	✗	✗	✗	✓

Thesis Document Formatting for Plan A

Note that Plan B research projects do not require submission to the university, and thus are not subject to Graduate School requirements for formatting. However, most advisors will ask you to use the same formatting for Plan B final reports.

The Plan A final thesis must meet the very exacting requirements for formatting detailed by the Graduate School for final submission to the university. See the Graduate School's *Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide* on their website. These requirements address front matter (cover page, table of contents, abstract, etc.), chapter headings, font, line spacing, margins, and similar elements. They allow flexibility in section headings, tables, lists, images, reference style, and back matter such as appendices.

The Graduate School is extremely precise in their review of the document formatting and will send back your final submission if there are any violations of their requirements. We recommend you submit your Plan A thesis at least three days before the final deadline of the *GS30 Thesis/Dissertation Submission* so you can make any needed formatting changes.

Some formatting not required by the Graduate School is determined by the department. You should use the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) as the style manual for in-text citations, references, bibliographies, tables, and figures. Consult with your advisor if you wish to make minor adjustments to standard APA guidelines.

It is recommended but not required that you also follow these formatting guidelines for your proposal.

For resources and advice on formatting, contact the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Common Questions About Proposals and Theses

What goes in my proposal?
The proposal is a narrative document with an introduction, a comprehensive literature review, a detailed methods chapter, and often, an indication of analytical approaches you plan to use. It includes a full bibliography. A Plan B proposal also has a detailed description of the media product you plan to develop and the project steps and timeline.

How is a proposal different than my final thesis or report?
Your final thesis or report uses much of the content from your proposal (intro, literature review, methods), updated to reflect what you actually did. For a Plan A thesis, you'll add a results/analysis and a discussion chapter, as well as a conclusions chapter. For a Plan B report, you'll update your project plan to be a report of what you actually did. Some final thesis/report documents are very similar to the proposal, but in other cases you will have to make a lot of changes to the initial chapters.

How do I schedule my proposal and/or thesis/project defense meeting?
Once your advisor tells you that you're ready to schedule your proposal or final thesis/project defense, work with them to identify times you are both available, and then email your committee members to find a time that works for everyone. Send a final draft of the completed proposal in an editable format (e.g., in MS Word) to your committee **at least two weeks before** the scheduled defense date, and ask the JMC Office Manager to help you find an available room for the defense meeting. These last about 90 minutes. It's a good idea to send a reminder about the defense a day or two before the meeting, too.

If my committee has lots of changes for my proposal or my thesis/report, does that mean I failed?
Not at all! For proposals especially, defense meetings are intended to identify ways to improve your project and ensure your work is of the highest quality. No one leaves a proposal defense (and almost never a final thesis/project defense) without at least some changes requested by the committee. Most often, committee members will ask for additions or adjustments to the literature review to ensure all the relevant literature is discussed clearly and/or adjustments to the methods chapter to ensure feasibility and rigor.

Then how do I fail a proposal defense? And what happens if I do?
You don't really "pass" or "fail" a proposal defense, but if there are changes required by the committee that are very substantial (especially to your methods) you might need to re-convene your committee to present an updated proposal. This is very uncommon, as most changes to proposals are supervised by your advisor after the defense. Make sure your final proposal text reflects all the changes requested by your committee and advisor.

How do I fail a thesis/project defense? And what happens if I do?
It's possible that your thesis or project will not meet the standards set by the department and the Graduate School (represented by your outside committee member). In that case, you may need to substantially re-write your document, or, in some cases, return to analysis or even data collection to make the required changes. If your committee agrees, you may be permitted to make changes and conduct a second defense of the project. If this happens, discuss with your advisor if and how to proceed, as a second defense opportunity is not guaranteed. If they do not allow a second defense, you will have to leave the program.

7 COMPLETION & GRADUATION

Successful completion of the master's program requires accomplishing each milestone and completing the required forms. These are summarized in the table below, and details can be found in the previous sections of this manual, with additional information available on the Graduate School website.

Requirement	Form	Approved by…
Maintain a 3.0 GPA	n/a	Graduate School
Maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree	DG4	JMC Graduate Committee
Complete the JMC requirements for the 31-credit program	n/a	JMC Graduate Committee
Complete the CSU credit requirements	GS6	Graduate School
Write and successfully defend a master's proposal	DG2	Master's committee
Complete and successfully defend a thesis/project	GS24	Master's committee
Apply for graduation	GS25	Graduate School
Submit thesis to CSU (Plan A only)	GS30	Graduate School
Complete the JMC graduate degree checklist	DG3	JMC Graduate Committee

Department and Other Awards

▶ Department Thesis & Dissertation Awards

Graduate students are eligible for the annual Department of Journalism & Media Communication Engaged and Emerging Scholarship Dissertation and Thesis Awards. Our graduate students work hard to complete their degree programs and their theses and dissertations are the culmination of their work. Thus, the department wishes to recognize the outstanding research and creative accomplishments of our graduate students.

All faculty committee members, especially advisors, are encouraged to nominate exceptional theses and dissertations from students who completed their degrees in the prior academic year. Both Plan A and Plan B projects are eligible for these awards.

The committee looks to award projects that exemplify:

- An innovative/original query with a sound qualitative or quantitative research design
- Public connections that address significant social issues or community concerns
- A solid contribution to the discipline and/or profession
- Sound written and/or visual storytelling

Award recipients are recognized during the annual department meeting in late-August and/or the annual fall graduate student picnic.

▶ CSU Awards

CSU offers awards for outstanding work by graduate students, including several at the Graduate Student Showcase. The Graduate Council also offers a Professional Development & Supply Award for funding towards conference, materials, or other expenses that support your graduate work.

There are also some teaching awards through the College of Liberal Arts and through CSU that graduate students may be eligible for. The Excellence in Teaching Award includes a category for Graduate Teaching Assistant and for Non-Tenure Track Faculty, for which some students may be eligible. CLA also offers, among other awards:

- Outstanding Engaged Scholarship Award
- Distinction in Curricular Innovation Award

▶ Other Awards

Conferences organizations such as ICA, NCA, AEJMC, and others have awards for outstanding theses and top papers, including separate awards for student papers. Some of these automatically include all papers submitted to a specific division, others require a separate submission process. See conference websites for details and your eligibility. A list of conferences commonly attended by JMC faculty and students can be found in Part Two of this manual.

The Graduation Ceremony

The CSU Graduate School holds a graduation ceremony at the end of each spring and fall for friends, family, and colleagues. The ceremony is generally held in Moby Arena, and tickets are not required.

To walk in the graduation ceremony, you do not need to fill out any specific paperwork. Simply come to the event at the appointed time in your master's regalia (see below). If you wish to be listed in the printed program for the graduation ceremony, you must have all your Graduate School paperwork completed for the degree (GS25, GS24, GS30) by the deadline.

You may walk at the ceremony closest to when you complete your final thesis/project defense, which may be shortly before the defense, with the permission of your advisor.

The CSU Commencement website has the dates, location, and all other details about graduation.

▶ Graduation Regalia

You will be able to purchase the required regalia (robe, cap, and hood) for the graduation ceremony through the commencement office at CSU. You can also order higher quality robes, caps, and hoods with CSU colors from regalia providers such as Jostens. CSU also offers financial assistance for regalia if needed.

You will be able to rent or purchase the required regalia (robe, cap, and hood) for the graduation ceremony through the graduate school. Master's regalia is distinct from bachelor's regalia. The robe is the same, but included is a "hood," which is a shawl-like garment that is worn around the neck and drapes down your back. It usually has a lining in the colors of your university.

Common Questions About Graduation

Can I walk in graduation before my thesis or project is defended?
Yes, but you should consult with your advisor about when is the best time to do so. You'll also feel a lot better about the commencement ceremony if you're done or very close to done with your thesis.

What if I don't get my final paperwork done by the Graduate School deadlines in the semester I want to graduate?
Graduate School deadlines generally require completing the defense about 6 weeks before the end of the semester, so you might not be ready to submit your thesis by the official due date for that semester. This does not change anything about your process, and is very common. You will just need to re-apply for graduation with form GS25 on RamWeb, but you do not need to change your plans otherwise. You can re-apply multiple times as needed.

What if my advisor can't come to the graduation ceremony?
There is no specific role for your advisor in a master's commencement ceremony, but it is always nice to have them there, we know. You can always ask a committee member or department mentor to cheer for you if your advisor can't come to the ceremony.

Why is my advisor's robe/hood different than mine?
Many people purchase their graduation regalia, especially if they enter academia. It is tradition to wear regalia from the alma mater (where they got their Ph.D.) when it is called for, even when working at a different institution. So faculty at CSU who received their Ph.D. elsewhere will have regalia that's different than yours.

What happens if I walk in commencement and then I don't finish until a while later?
The university and Graduate School do not monitor this. If you get delayed in completing all the degree requirements and paperwork, you could actually just walk again in the next appropriate commencement ceremony. But if that feels strange, you don't need to.

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8 DEPARTMENT & CSU RESOURCES

Department People and Resources

▶ Department Roles and Committees

JMC Department Chair
A JMC faculty member who leads department administration including: set and manage budgets; teaching assignments for faculty and graduate students; faculty/staff performance reviews; department activities and initiatives; faculty and student disputes. Many department forms require the chair's signature.

JMC Graduate Program Director
A JMC faculty member who leads the Graduate Program Committee. In consultation with the Graduate Committee, they coordinate graduate admissions and approve student progress forms, transfer credits, and other forms.

JMC Graduate Program Coordinator
A JMC staff member who helps process graduate student paperwork, records, and other administrative issues.

JMC Office Manager
A JMC staff member who oversees the department main office, including room scheduling, travel forms and reimbursements, and student and faculty records.

JMC Fiscal Officer/HR Liaison
A JMC staff member who manages financial and personnel paperwork and processing, including stipends, health insurance, and external funding payments.

JMC Program Graduate Committee
A group of 5 – 7 graduate advising faculty responsible for developing and maintaining department policies and procedures for the graduate program. They make decisions on student admittance, transfer credits, student progress, and other program processes.

JMC Graduate Program Committee Student Representative
A JMC graduate student selected by the Graduate Program Committee, generally but not always a Ph.D. student, who attends meetings of the Graduate Program Committee to reflect graduate student perspectives.

JMC Diversity Committee Student Representative
A JMC graduate student who attends and contributes to the department committee focused on equity and inclusion.

Graduate Council Representative
A JMC graduate student who participates in the CSU Graduate Council at the university level, which consists of graduate students who represent and advocate for CSU graduate and professional students within the university.

▶ Department Resources for Graduate Students

Graduate Student Offices

The department provides doctoral and master's students office space and access to a computer. There are also some common areas that can be used for meetings and other gatherings.

Software

Desktop computers in graduate student offices have Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, etc.) on Windows machines. They also have the statistical analysis software SPSS and the qualitative analysis software NVivo. Students who wish to purchase software licenses for their personal computers should seek out student- and/or university-pricing at RamTech.

Participant Recruitment System - SONA

SONA is the department's IRB-approved participant management system for recruiting undergraduate student participants for research data collection. Undergraduate students are able to sign up to participate in your research project through the online platform. Participants are compensated with extra credit in some JTC courses. The system is available for your thesis/project/ dissertation research or for other studies you conduct at CSU. IRB approval is required before use.

▶ Finding What You Need

The most important source of support when questions arise is your advisor, but they may not have all the answers. In JMC, here's where to go with questions.

If you have questions about…	Start by asking the JMC…
Grades or other issues in a course Course content and overrides	Course professor
Program forms and paperwork Graduate School forms and requirements Registration overrides/permissions Travel forms	Graduate Program Coordinator
GTA/GRA assignments Program requirement exceptions	Graduate Program Director
Facilities, meeting rooms, offices Reimbursements for travel and other expenses	Office Manager
Funding, stipend, pay, employee benefits	Fiscal/HR Officer
Selecting courses Career advice	Your advisor
Research processes Your research and writing Publication, conferences, and talks Conduct problems or reports (see *Conduct & Integrity* below)	Your advisor and/or faculty mentors
Grievances or disputes	Graduate Program Director, Department Chair

Still have questions? Consult your advisor or the JMC Graduate Program Coordinator.

Department Financial Support

Most admitted students receive financial support as part of the program, although this is not guaranteed. Students who serve as a graduate assistant for teaching or research (GTA or GRA; see Part One of this manual) receive funding from the department for tuition, a stipend, and contribution towards the required health insurance. The department Fiscal Officer manages graduate student pay and can answer any questions. See the Graduate School website for more details about benefits.

In addition, all graduate students are eligible for some funding towards expenses for attending academic and professional conferences. Consult the Graduate Program Committee for current amounts and details.

Key information about funding:

- GTAs/GRAs must be registered for at least one course credit during the semester they work (CR does not qualify)
- The stipend is taxable income, although tuition disbursement is not

A half-time (20 hours/week) Graduate Assistantship consists of:

- A monthly stipend
- Full-tuition remission at the resident tuition rate. (Quarter-time (10-hour) students have half their tuition covered)
- Access to additional benefits, including parental leave and mental health resources
- Graduate assistants with at least a 10-hour appointment and registered for 5 credits or more also receive a health insurance contribution
- Contribution toward university fees

You are responsible for paying the remainder of the fees. The current graduate tuition and fees are available from the Office of Financial Aid. Fees include:

- General fees
- University technology fee
- University facility fee
- University alternative transportation fee
- There may be additional CSU Health Network and University Counseling Center fees for partial fee-paying students (5 credits or less).
- Some programs charge differential tuition.

Visit the Office of Financial Aid for details on student loans, dates, and paying your bill.

Domestic students from out-of-state
If you are a domestic student who is not a resident of Colorado, the difference between resident and non-resident tuition will be provided as an additional benefit for the ***first year only***. Domestic students are expected to establish residency by the beginning of their second year at CSU. Information on establishing Colorado residency can be found on the Office of Financial Aid website.

For International students
CSU extends the Tuition Premium Program to international students for the length of their tenure in their graduate degree program as long as they are enrolled in a minimum of five resident-instruction

credits fall and spring semesters.

CSU Graduate School

The Graduate School provides the leadership for graduate education at Colorado State University. It sets university-wide standards and requirements for degree completion, including credit hours, thesis/dissertation committee structure, examinations and defenses, thesis/dissertation submission, registration requirements, leave, and health insurance.

The Graduate School must approve many of the required forms for your JMC program. Graduate School forms are available on RamWeb. Appeals to program requirements or policies generally go with your advisor's signature to the Graduate School for final review and approval.

The Graduate School website has well-written, detailed information about many of the logistics of pursuing a graduate degree, including new student orientation, a list of required forms, deadlines, thesis and dissertation formatting for submission, commencement, health services, financial resources, and more. You can also find resources for graduate student professional development, mentoring, academic and professional workshops, and writing support.

See graduateschool.colostate.edu for more.

▶ Graduate School Financial Resources

The Graduate School website has resources for financial considerations and answers to common questions. There you can find information about:

- Graduate tuition rates and fees
- Types of financial support (scholarships, grants, loans)
- Health costs
- Student Employee Retirement Plan (SERP)
- Information on managing your finances as a graduate assistant is available here.

You can also visit the Office of Financial Aid for details about how to apply for loans, important dates, and paying your bill.

▶ Graduate Mentoring

The Graduate School provides workshops, talks, meetings, and other resources around mentoring and inclusion for graduate students. These include regular events throughout the semester and a range of initiatives such as support groups, writing groups, and training. Open to all graduate students, these programs emphasize community building, including supporting student groups that provide a space for underrepresented students.

▶ Graduate Student Council

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents and advocates for CSU graduate and professional students within the university and beyond. Additionally, the GSC provides professional development and social opportunities, procures funds for graduate student organizations, and provides quarterly awards for supply and travel.

Each department can have up to two graduate student representatives who help with and can vote on GSC activities. See gsc.colostate.edu for more.

Academic Support and Wellbeing

▶ International Student Resources

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) provides services and resources to assist international students and scholars with cultural adjustment, academic integration, professional growth, and personal support. They oversee new international student orientation and arrival, regulatory compliance, immigration services, sponsor services, and events, and act as a liaison to the U.S. government.

On their website at international.colostate.edu/isss you can find the following and more:

- Maintaining your immigration record
- Financial aid
- Spouse and family services
- Learning and writing, including tutoring and writing workshops
- Cultural Mentor Program that facilitates peer mentors for new international students at the graduate and undergraduate levels
- Campus events
- Graduation resources

Note that for international students, "full-time" status to fulfill visa requirements is **6+ credits per semester until graduation**. Your final (graduating) semester, you may register for 1 credit.

▶ Writing Center

The CSU Writing Center is a free service offering inclusive, cooperative feedback on academic, personal, and professional writing projects. Their consultations are available to CSU students, faculty, staff, and affiliated community members. They offer three types of consulting sessions:

- Face-to-face consultations in the Writing Center in Eddy Hall or in Morgan Library
- Real-time online consultations for students whose home- or work demands make it difficult to meet on campus
- Written responses to drafts via their online draft response queue

They also provide access to writing guides and textbooks as well as regular workshops and writing sessions, including specifically for graduate students.

See writingcenter.colostate.edu for more information.

▶ Graybill Statistics and Data Science Laboratory

The Graybill Statistics and Data Science Laboratory provides general statistical consulting to researchers at CSU. They offer advice ranging from the planning and design of experiments to the analysis and interpretation of experimental results. There is no charge to CSU faculty, staff and graduate students for general consultation. They do ***not*** consult on material or assignments related to courses.

▶ Morgan Library

CSU's campus library, Morgan Library, provides electronic and paper-based materials along with study and meeting spaces to support CSU's equitable access to knowledge. Use the library website to find academic materials held by CSU, including access to the academic journals to which the university subscribes. Login to their website to access electronic copies of articles from off or on campus.

Staffed with experts in data management, archiving, and special collections in various scholarly areas, the library provides many services to students, faculty, and staff including:

- **Information literacy**: Librarians and archivists are available to help students develop research skills and engage in critical inquiry
- **Data services**: Expert consultations for data management and Open Access support
- **Interlibrary loan**: Allows you to request items not in CSU's library from other libraries
- **Technology checkout**: Laptops, iPads, video cameras, chargers and more
- **Archives and Special Collections**: Collections of unique materials with a particular commitment to Water Resources in the West, Agricultural and Natural Resources, and the University

▶ Student Disability Center

The Student Disability Center (SDC) provides support for students with both permanent and temporary disabilities. This can encompass physical disabilities, chronic illness/health conditions, mental health conditions, learning disabilities, and temporary disabilities. They provide accommodation services, support, education, and consultation for the campus community to ensure people with disabilities have a greater opportunity to achieve social justice and equity.

The SDC provides letters of accommodation for students with disabilities. Accommodations include testing accommodations such as extended time, breaks, or assistive technologies; accessible texts with font and auditory options; classroom accommodations such as assistive technology for note-taking, sign language interpreters and course transcribers; and attendance and deadline flexibility. If you would like to request a letter of accommodation, schedule an appointment with a specialist at the SDC to discuss your needs.

> Note that a letter for accommodation must be requested **every semester**.
>
> Your accommodation letters are generated by the SDC and emailed to your professors with you copied on the email. You must request the letters before you will be able to use the accommodation (such as scheduling an exam).

▶ Career Support

Support for seeking a career in academia or industries related to the field of communication is available from the JMC faculty, including your advisor. Advisors can help you develop your CV, write cover letters, and identify jobs that match your interests inside and outside academia. Students interested in academic careers also have opportunities to practice their job talk presentations in department colloquia.

The College of Liberal Arts and the CSU Career Services center can help graduate students with preparing for future careers, especially outside academia. They provide support for developing a resume or CV, cover letters, job searches, networking both on- and offline, interview skills, and salary negotiation, among other services.

▶ Safety, Health, and Wellbeing

CSU offers a range of health and wellness services for students and their families. For some of CSU's health and wellness services for students, see the following units:

CSU Health Network

The CSU Health Network provides general and some specialty medical services, including mental health services to all CSU students. All students have full access to their wide range of services, regardless of their insurance plan. They also support the online health program You@CSU that provides personalized wellness services. Note, the CSU Health Network only provides a limited number of counseling sessions; those who want or need to be seen more than every few weeks are referred to services in the community.

Student Case Management

Case Management provides crisis prevention and intervention services. In difficult situations such as medical, mental health, behavioral, personal or family crisis, illness, or injury a student or family may find it difficult to navigate the resources and services available. Student Case Managers consult with students, faculty, staff, families, and providers to offer guidance on the next best steps.

Student Resolution Center

SRC aims to assist, educate, and support CSU students through two processes: Conflict Resolution – voluntary, neutral, confidential process to assist students when conflicts, disputes or issues arise and Student Conduct – one-on-one meetings to discuss alleged violations of the Student Conduct Code, hear student perspectives, explore personal responsibility, hold students accountable, and provide educational and restorative outcomes when appropriate.

Tell Someone

You can use the online form or call (970) 491-1350 to discuss concerns about any member of the CSU community. Referrals will be made to campus resources that can develop strategies and use resources to discreetly help students and employees who may be in distress. Referrals may also be made using the online Health and Safety Referral Form.

Student Diversity Programs and Services

Linked are a selection of programs and services designed to support students in a variety of ways and provide opportunities to successfully participate in, and contribute to, the diverse campus environment. While each office listed may emphasize a specific segment of the student body, services and programs are available to benefit all students at CSU.

9 CONDUCT & INTEGRITY

There are a range of CSU resources for students, faculty, and staff to address issues and challenges that arise, including reporting systems and support related to health and wellbeing, harassment, academic integrity, student conduct, and conflict resolution.

If you have a problem with another graduate student, a student in your classes, a faculty or staff member, or any other member of the CSU community, you can use CSU's reporting systems to get support and guidance. Support for problems with non-CSU individuals is also available.

> If you have or observe a serious issue and don't know where to start, contact Tell Someone online or by calling (970) 491-1350.
>
> They can guide you to the appropriate offices and resources for any issue.

Student Conduct

The Department of Journalism & Media Communication follows the policies for student conduct as determined by Colorado State University. The Student Conduct Code details CSU's expectations related to student behavior, their rights, and responsibilities.

Behaviors prohibited by the university as listed in the Student Conduct Code include, among others:

- Academic misconduct, such as cheating, plagiarism, and falsification in any academic work
- Abusive behavior such as threats, intimidation, coercion, hazing, or violence; sexual misconduct; stalking
- Discriminatory harassment based on identity or personal characteristics
- Disruptive behavior such as that which interferes with educational interactions or infringes on the rights of others
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs
- Retaliation, including bullying, threat, or interfering with another individual or group who submits a report of a conduct violation

In cases of conduct violations, a report is filed and reviewed. In some cases the university will hold a hearing and then notify the relevant parties of a resolution process which may include disciplinary suspension, expulsion, or withholding the degree.

Students have the right to appeal decisions made by the university by following the procedures outlined in the Student Conduct Code.

The Graduate School does not become involved in cases of student misconduct unless the alleged misconduct results in a lack of satisfactory progress toward the student's degree.

This summary does not include the full policies for student conduct. Please consult the Student Conduct Code and CSU Policy library for official policy language and parameters.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials, falsification, and facilitation of any act of academic misconduct, according to the CSU Student Conduct Code. Graduate students are also subject to general CSU policies, including around research misconduct. Falsification also includes submitting texts or images inspired or created by generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT without full, detailed disclosure and prior permission.

Prior to using any generative AI tool, even those embedded in common software, you must always first ask your instructors, advisor, committee members, and/or supervisors what is permissible and how to disclose use to support any part (outlining, creation, writing/editing, remixing, etc.) of your coursework, GTA- or GRA-related work, publications, thesis/dissertation, preliminary examination, or anything you create in your role as a CSU student.

Generative AI permission for one use case or by any one person is NOT transferrable to others. Always ask first, adhere to boundaries, clarify before assuming, *and* disclose/cite.

▶ Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined by CSU as, "the copying of language, structure, images, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one's own without proper acknowledgment, and is related only to work submitted for credit. Disciplinary action will not be taken for academic work in draft form."

Work submitted outside the classroom context such as for papers or other writing intended for public distribution, thesis/dissertation proposals, or final thesis/dissertations must also follow guidelines around academic integrity, including plagiarism, as per the CSU Policy: Research and Research-Related Misconduct. As per this policy, "This policy and all related procedures apply to every person who, at the time of the alleged research misconduct or research-related misconduct, was employed by, was an agent of, or was affiliated by contract or agreement with the University."

Detailed descriptions of the definitions and guidance around checking your work for plagiarism can be found at the CSU Writing Center.

Access confidential plagiarism detection at libguides.colostate.edu/ithenticate.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are grounds for failure in all classes and work applied toward the degree.

Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the university's academic integrity policies.

▶ Academic Misconduct Reports and Appeals

When a student is punished by a faculty member for academic misconduct through the grade on an individual assignment or the final grade for a course, the details of the incident must be conveyed in writing to Student Conduct Services at the university's Student Resolution Center and to the department's Graduate Program Director for placement in the student's departmental file.

In extraordinary cases of academic dishonesty, a majority of the department's Graduate Program Committee or a majority of the student's dissertation/master's committee may vote to recommend

program dismissal or other sanctions by referring the matter to Student Conduct Services at the Student Resolution Center. Such cases include but are not limited to: plagiarism in a final, submitted draft of a thesis/project/dissertation proposal or final thesis/project/dissertation; plagiarism in work submitted for publication, conferences, or other external distribution; data falsification; and second offenses of other forms of academic misconduct.

Students have the right to appeal such actions by requesting a formal hearing by Student Conduct Services. as per the *Student Conduct Code* and *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*.

Students are responsible for notifying the Graduate Program Director concerning any actions taken as a result of a hearing in order to update the student's departmental file.

Conflict Resolution and Incident Reporting

CSU has a range of ways you can address problems, issues, conflicts, inequities, biases, or violations. These may be on your own behalf, or on the behalf of your students or colleagues. When paid as GTAs, GRAs, or instructors of record, graduate students are also eligible for CSU employee support services.

Offices on campus that can support you when problems arise include:

- **CSU Police** – Crime and personal danger reporting as well as non-emergency and anonymous reporting
- **Student Resolution Center** – Assists, educates, and supports the CSU community through conflict resolution services and student conduct services
- **Office of Equal Opportunity** (OEO) – Investigations into complaints of discrimination and harassment
- **Office of Title XI Programs and Gender Equity** – Sexual misconduct, gender discrimination, and gender-based violence
- **Risk Management & Insurance** – Worker's compensation for employees for accident or injury in the scope of employment
- **Office of the Ombuds** – A confidential resource for CSU employees who voluntarily seek help in resolving workplace concerns and conflicts

Specific reporting systems at CSU include:

- **Tell Someone** (Student Services) – Comprehensive office where you can report anything that threatens your safety or the safety of others in the university community. Provides guidance and advice for any CSU community member
- **Case Management** (Student Services) – Reporting student personal crises – medical, mental health, alcohol/drugs, behavioral
- **Student Conduct Reports** (Student Affairs) – Submit an Incident Report (violation of the

Mandated Reporting

All CSU employees and volunteers including faculty, staff, and students acting in their employment or volunteer roles (GTA/GRA), are designated as *Responsible Employees*.

As such they are required to report as early as possible any and all information related to incidents of sexual misconduct and/or interpersonal violence to the CSU Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity.

See the definition of relevant acts on the CSU Title IX website.

conduct code) or Academic Misconduct Incident Report (cheating, plagiarism, stealing work, etc.)

- **Bias Reporting** (Office of Inclusive Excellence) – Report perceived bias-related incidents connected to CSU you have experienced or witnessed firsthand
- **Victim Assistance Team** (Women & Gender Advocacy Center) – Support for students and family/friends who have experienced sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking on or off campus
- **Compliance Reporting** (CSU System) – Employee misconduct; violation of law or CSU policy; abuse of authority; public safety, animal welfare, and research misconduct

Common Questions about Student Conduct

Can I use generative AI tools like ChatGPT or other emerging generative AI tools to outline, inspire, re-mix/rewrite, write, summarize literature, and/or otherwise improve or assist my work as a graduate student?

Currently, unless you have explicit permission from your instructor, supervisor(s) of your GRA or GTA position, advisor and committee, you are not to use these tools to outline, inspire, re-mix/rewrite, write, summarize literature, and/or otherwise improve or assist your work as a graduate student. Basic grammar and spell-checkers and thesauruses are fine, but if it's using generative AI to rewrite sentences, it may cross the line of falsification. You must first ask and identify necessary disclosure and any boundaries for its use. Also, if one instructor gives you permission for a particular assignment or use case, that permission is NOT transferrable to any other assignment, class, or use case. In other words, you must always ask first and then abide by boundaries and disclosure they require.

Please always feel welcome to show and ask faculty about ways you want to explore its use! We invite experimentation and discussion and will support you to act with integrity. If you want to use it, it's YOUR responsibility to initiate the conversation early and to seek clarity throughout the process with faculty and/or supervisors for which you are producing the work.

What if my issue isn't resolved after I report it?

Talk to your advisor and/or the Graduate Program Director and/or the department chair if a reported problem is not resolved. Some issues are difficult to resolve quickly, and others may not get resolved in a way that you feel was helpful. We encourage you to talk to your support network and consult the CSU Ombuds for confidential guidance and advice. The Ombuds has no power to take action but can provide valuable support and resources to help you.

What if I have a problem with my advisor?

If you have an issue you can't discuss with your advisor related to student conduct, biases, discrimination, or other work-related issues, you may speak to the department chair, the Graduate Program Director, or you can go directly to the CSU offices charged with addressing these issues such as Conflict Resolution, the OEO, Title IX, or the Ombuds. You can also talk to other faculty in the department or in other departments for guidance.

What if a student, friend, or colleague comes to me about a serious issue?

It depends on the issue and your relationship with that person. As an employee, and especially as a GTA or instructor at CSU, you are a "Responsible Employee," which means you are required by university policy to report any "incidents of sexual misconduct and/or interpersonal violence" that you are told about *in your role as an employee*. However, this does not apply to private conversations with personal friends outside of the work context. You are welcome but not required to report any information shared with you as a friend. If the issue is bias or mistreatment that is not "sexual misconduct and/or interpersonal violence," you are not required to report it in any context, but you are strongly encouraged to do so.

10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CERTIFICATES

Professional Development Training and Workshops

There are many opportunities at CSU to engage in professional development training to gain skills in inclusive pedagogy, leadership, writing, grant applications, professional well-being, career paths, and more. These are not courses, but instead are 1- to 3-hour sessions that address specific professional skills unrelated to an academic discipline. They are generally free of charge.

Professional development sessions open to graduate students at CSU include:

- **The Graduate School** – A range of workshops and talks specifically for graduate students through their Professional Development Series.
- **The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT)** – Pedagogy training focused on specific challenges for faculty, staff and graduate students, including active learning, syllabus design, online teaching, critical thinking, and more.
- **Office of Inclusive Excellence** – A series of employee trainings for faculty, staff, and graduate students offered a la carte focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics such as uncovering bias, intercultural communication, understanding oppression, and more.

Graduate Certificates

Graduate certificates are 9 – 15 credit (3 – 4 course) programs that earn you a transcripted certificate in a specific area of study. Certificates provide training in that area and can be a helpful indicator of your expertise, especially for non-academic careers.

They are offered in online and offline formats, depending on the certificate. Most certificates are offered through a specific department and the required courses are traditional department offerings at the graduate level.

▶ Graduate Teaching Certificate

Many JMC graduate students choose to enroll in the *Graduate Teaching Certificate of Completion*, offered by CSU's The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT). These are especially helpful for those serving as a GTA or planning on a career in academia. Students attend several short pedagogical workshops or certificate courses, create a teaching portfolio, and complete 20 hours of teaching or mentoring. See the TILT website for details on enrollment and requirements.

▶ Other Certificates

Browse more than 50 department-based certificates on the Graduate School website. Check course requirements in the CSU General Catalog under the specific department offering the certificate.

Important things to know about certificate programs:

- All certificate courses must be completed at CSU, and **often some of these courses will not count** towards your JMC degree.
- In most cases, earning a certificate requires **additional courses** beyond the requirements for the M.S. or Ph.D., which can **extend your coursework**.
- Many certificates (especially in the sciences) require courses with **discipline-related pre-requisites**, and may not be feasible for all JMC students.
- Some courses for online certificates **may not be funded by the in-residence M.S. or Ph.D. programs** – check with the Graduate School and the Registrar's office for details.

Graduate certificates completed by previous JMC graduate students include:

- Gender, Power and Difference (Ethnic Studies)
- Conservation Actions with Lands, Animals, and People (Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology)
- Adventure Tourism (Human Dimensions of Natural Resources)
- Communications for Conservation (Human Dimensions of Natural Resources)
- Human-Centered Design Thinking (Nancy Richardson Design Center)
- Data Analysis (Statistics)

To enroll in a certificate program, check the host department's website for application deadlines and procedures.

Common Questions about Professional Development and Certificates

Do I have to complete a certificate or professional development during my degree program?
You do not have to do any professional development or certificates. But if you're interested in serving as a GTA or in a teaching career, the department recommends the TILT teaching certificate as an excellent way to get necessary training in foundations of pedagogy. Professional development sessions are particularly helpful to address specific skills and are low-investment of only a few hours, so we recommend a few of those, too.

What's the difference between a certificate and professional development?
A certificate is a formal, transcripted program (it goes on your CSU transcript) that is intended to provide advanced academic training in a specific discipline and/or area. You take traditional graduate classes for them. Professional development sessions are much more informal, mostly free, and are usually only a few hours each. These are good places to get some tips, guidance, and discussion about different professional skills.

What's the benefit in the long term of doing professional development or certificates?
Regardless of the level of formality, trainings and certificates can all go on your CV and give employers concrete evidence of your training in important skills for your future academic and non-academic work. They show dedication to improving your skills, and most employers find them impressive!

I'm really interested in a certificate in a subject I've never studied before. Can I complete it?
In many cases, department-specific certificates require graduate level training in a field somewhat closely related to the certificate topic. These courses often have pre-requisites that you may not have completed. For example, the certificate "Conservation Actions with Lands, Animals, and People" through the Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology Department includes courses that require you to have taken an ecology or wildlife management course. Some certificates have fewer pre-requisites, though, and most pre-requisites are undergraduate-level courses, so many people find they are eligible. Check the CSU General Catalog before you assume you won't qualify!

What is a CV?
CV stands for "curriculum vitae," and it's just an academic-y way to say "resume." Generally, academic CVs are longer and include different sections than a professional resume. A CV lists every published paper or other manuscript and every conference or other talk related to your scholarship. It includes more detail about specific classes taught and separates service to the department and university from other kinds of employment or volunteer work. Your academic CV should look very different than one you use to apply for jobs in industry, but you can and should put your academic accomplishments on an industry resume in an appropriate format. The CSU Career Center offers templates, review, and guidance for creating a CV or resume for academic and non-academic positions.

11 RESEARCH & PUBLICATION

Students are encouraged to develop papers and projects, including through their courses, for publication in academic and professional outlets such as journals and conferences. This is especially important for doctoral students with either academic or non-academic career goals. Publications contribute meaningfully to evidence of your training and expertise, and conferences provide a valuable opportunity to share your work in a public setting, which is of value to future employers both inside and outside academia.

Pursuing Research & Publication

Especially if you are seeking a career in academia or are a master's student going on to a Ph.D., you should start submitting papers for conferences and publication as early as possible in your program.

Successful completion of your coursework should always take priority.

Major conferences and journals in the field of communication are listed in the appendix of this manual, but conferences and journals focused on other related fields are commonly attended by our graduate students and faculty. Discuss potential outlets for your work with your advisor.

Authoring and Co-Authoring

Authorship in the social sciences is an important signal of your work and leadership. Being the sole author on papers you publish or present at conferences helps build recognition and your academic reputation. In addition, many papers are co-authored among two or more colleagues, especially those that come out of larger research projects.

All authors are assumed to have contributed to the writing of the paper beyond editing or conceptual guidance.

In most social science journals, the first author is considered the project or paper lead who takes the most responsibility for its conceptualization and writing. If duties are shared equally on a project, sometimes co-authors will use a footnote to indicate this. Other times, you might plan to develop two or more papers from a project and set a plan to rotate first authorship among collaborators.

▶ Co-Authoring with Faculty

Faculty members can be expected to provide a reasonable level of coaching and editing assistance on papers developed for publication or conferences as part of their advising duties. Such support does **not** require including the faculty member as a co-author on the paper.

Student/faculty co-authorships are appropriate when faculty contribute significantly to the paper's research and/or writing beyond what is considered reasonable in an advising role. For example, a faculty member might be listed as a co-author when the student conceptualized the project but drew heavily on ideas or a program of ongoing research by the faculty member, or when the faculty was primarily responsible for revising and submitting the manuscript with the concurrence of the student.

Some faculty include students in their work as an additional author, such as when the student serves as their research assistant. This is not always the case, however, and being a research assistant does not guarantee student authorship on papers that come from a project.

Academic Conferences & Talks

Graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit manuscripts to conferences. Submitted manuscripts can be based on class papers, research conducted with faculty or colleagues, thesis/dissertation research, or independent projects.

Conferences provide opportunities to share your work with the field and connect with other scholars and practitioners for collaboration, mentorship, and support. Conferences have somewhat less stringent acceptance standards than academic journals, and are well-suited for getting feedback on work you can later develop for publication.

▶ National and International Conferences

Academic and professional conferences are generally 1- to 5-day annual meetings of an academic or professional organization that hosts panels and poster sessions where scholars present their work. Some conferences require submitting a full paper, others require an abstract only. Conference attendance most often has a fee, but nearly all offer a discounted rate for students. Some conferences also offer additional graduate student funding, so check their websites carefully.

Conferences are generally held at a hotel or conference center. Those accepted to the conference present their paper in a panel or poster session to an audience of academic and/or professional colleagues. See conference websites for submission requirements and conference details.

When you submit a paper to a conference, you select a specific division or working group that aligns with the topic of your paper. These are created based on common sub-areas within the field of communication, and they differ somewhat for each conference. Discuss the best options for your paper with JMC faculty.

The largest conferences JMC faculty and graduate students attend on a regular basis are:

- International Communication Association (ICA) – held late May; submission Nov. 1
- National Communication Association (NCA) – held late Nov.; submission Mar. 25
- Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC) – held mid-Aug.; submission Apr. 1
- Broadcast Education Association (BEA) – held mid-April; submission Dec. 1

See the appendix of this manual for a more comprehensive list of recommended academic and professional conferences, including field-specific conferences focusing on public relations, science, health, games, the internet, the environment, and more.

▶ Campus and Other Talks

You may also have opportunities to submit or be invited to give talks about your research on CSU's campus or elsewhere. You are encouraged to pursue these opportunities as part of your involvement in the field and as a chance to share your work with colleagues for feedback. Opportunities to share your work at CSU include:

- Graduate Research Showcase
- Symposium for Inclusive Excellence
- International Symposium
- Women in Science Symposium

▶ Conference Funding

JMC offers some funding for graduate students to attend conferences in their field to present their work. This funding may not cover all conference expenses. To be eligible for conference funding through the department, you must have an accepted paper or presentation at a relevant conference.

To request conference funding:

1. Consult with your advisor to ensure the proposed trip is eligible.
2. Fill out the department's Pre-Trip Travel Form for approval by the Chair *before you make any reservations.* Make sure to include conference registration fees as part of your budget.
3. Once approved, book any necessary airline tickets through the agencies listed on the pre-trip form (these are often paid directly by the department instead of reimbursed).
4. Make hotel reservations on your own.
5. Register for the conference, which often requires also becoming a member of the host organization (check conference organization fee schedules for student rates).
6. Within 1 week of returning from your trip, submit hotel, registration, taxi, and eligible food receipts for reimbursement to the JMC Office Manager.

Publishing in Journals and Other Publications

Students are encouraged to develop their work for submission to academic journals for publication, especially those seeking a career in academia. Submitted manuscripts can be based on class papers, research conducted with faculty or colleagues, thesis/dissertation research, or independent projects.

Most papers suitable for journal publication are theoretically-grounded, include a robust analysis, and are between 4,000 and 8,000 words in length including tables and references.

Watch out for fees

Journals in communication and related fields almost never charge a fee for submission or publication.

If a journal you find charges a fee, it may be a **predatory journal** (see below).

Papers for academic journals are held to rigorous standards for theoretical contribution, methodological strength, and contribution to the field. Academics in the field volunteer to serve as reviewers of submitted papers to assess quality, accuracy, and rigor and determine acceptance or rejection.

Sometimes rejections are made by the journal editor without sending the paper for external review – a "desk reject" – due to a lack of fit with the journal's scope or requirements. Read the journal's description carefully to reduce the chance of a desk rejection. Sometimes desk rejections are also issued when submitters do not follow formatting or length guidelines.

Journals rarely have specific submission deadlines, with the exception of "special issues" that focus on a particular topic. Submission must follow each journal's exact formatting, citation, and style guidelines carefully; these are often based on APA, MLA, or Chicago Style.

Many of the flagship journals in the field of communication are run by the major conference organizations (ICA, NCA, AEJMC). See the appendix of this manual for a list of quality journals in communication.

▶ Predatory Journals

WARNING

Since 2010, there has been an increase in what are called "predatory journals," which are publications that accept articles for publication without performing promised quality checks for issues such as plagiarism or ethical (IRB) approval. They often charge fees to authors.

Many researchers across all academic fields have been duped into submitting to predatory journals, in which their work can be overlooked.

Predatory journals and publishers are defined as, "entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices." Read more to learn how to check if a journal is predatory.

It's a good rule of thumb that if a journal seems to personally invite you to submit your work for publication, it is likely predatory.

Common Questions about Research & Publication

If someone helps me with a paper, when should I be the sole author and when should I include them as co-authors?
Single authorship is appropriate when you conceptualize a project, conduct the research, and write all of the manuscript. Use the paper's "acknowledgements" to note assistance from colleagues or advisors. If another scholar contributes to the writing beyond suggested edits, they can be a co-author. If you conceptualize and implement a research project with a colleague, it's important to share authorship on any papers that come from that project, unless your colleague does not want to be included. Do not ever add an author to a paper without discussing it with them well before submission to publication! Being listed on a paper is considered an indication that the person contributed meaningfully to the writing beyond edits and advice.

What kinds of papers can I submit to a conference?
There is a wide range of papers that can be appropriate for submitting to a conference. Many conferences allow papers in progress, conceptual papers with or without data, and literature reviews. With some editing, many class papers can be good candidates for conference submissions. Your advisor or class professor may be able to help you identify recommended edits or updates for submission.

Can I submit the same paper to multiple conferences?
No, you cannot. However, you can submit related papers or significantly edited ones, as long as the title, details, and text are ***all unique*** to that submission. Using paragraphs from previously presented papers is considered self-plagiarism. If a paper is rejected, then you **can** submit it to another conference.

What kinds of papers can I submit for journal publication?
Publication standards are generally more strict than conference standards. That means that papers for academic journals should be highly polished, carefully edited, and robust in theory and methods. Class papers rarely fulfill journal requirements without substantial editing and often, additional data collection and analysis. You can identify expectations and standards best by reading the scope, submission guidelines, and previously published papers on the journal's website.

Can I submit the same paper to multiple journals or conferences?
Not at the same time, no. In nearly all social science journals and conferences, you must submit each paper to only one journal or conference at a time. Violating this rule can get your paper rejected and damage your reputation. You must submit a paper, wait for it to be reviewed, and if it is rejected, only then may you submit the same paper to a different journal with or without changes to the text.

Can I submit the same paper I presented at a conference to a journal?
Yes! It is common in our field to present a paper at a conference for feedback, make appropriate updates, and then submit the paper to a journal for publication. Generally journal submission is done after the conference takes place, but this is not a firm rule. Papers submitted to journals can use the same text and titles as those presented as conferences, but check with the journal about their policies if the full conference paper is made available by the conference on their website or in proceedings.

What if my conference trip is funded by a grant?
Externally-funded travel must go through the same approval process using the Pre-Trip Travel form and must be approved by the relevant faculty and the department chair. Budget restrictions on externally-funded travel come from the project budget, not JMC, so consult the relevant faculty on the project to determine what you can spend.

APPENDIX A CONFERENCES & JOURNALS IN COMMUNICATION

Students are encouraged to develop papers and projects for publication in academic and professional outlets such as journals and conferences. Publications contribute meaningfully to evidence of your training and expertise, whether you are pursuing a career in academia or elsewhere. Conferences provide a valuable opportunity to share your work in a public setting, which is of value to future employers both inside and outside academia.

Major conferences and journals in the field of communication are listed here, but conferences and journals focused on other related fields are commonly attended by our graduate students and faculty. Discuss potential outlets for your work with your advisor.

Academic Conferences in Communication

Conference Name	Month Held	Submission Deadline (approx.)
National/Global		
International Communication Association (ICA)	May	November 1
National Communication Association (NCA)	November	March 25
Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC)	August	April 1
Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)	October	March 1
International Association for Media & Communication Research (IAMCR)	June	February 9
American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)	May	December 1
Broadcast Education Association (BEA)	April	December 1
Regional		
Western States Communication Association (WSCA)	February	September 1
Pacific Chapter of Association for Public Opinion Research (PAPOR)	December	October 1
Specialty Areas		
Society for Risk Analysis (SRA)	December	May 23
Conference on Communication and the Environment (COCE)	June	October 15
Kentucky Conference on Health Communication	April	December 14
International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC)	March	November 1
PRSA Educators Academy	October	Early June
American Public Health Association (APHA)	October	February
Association for Practical and Professional Ethics	February	November 3
Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA)	July	October 15
Popular Culture Association	April	September 15
National Agricultural Communication Symposium	February	October 10
American Association for Agricultural Education	May	January 15
American Academy of Advertising	March	October 1

Principle Academic Journals in Communication

General

Annals of the International Communication Association (ICA)
Asian Journal of Communication
Atlantic Journal of Communication
Canadian Journal of Communication
Chinese Journal of Communication
Communicatio
Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies (NCA)
Communication & Sport
Communication Booknotes Quarterly
Communication, Culture, & Critique (ICA)
Communication Methods and Measures
Communication Monographs (NCA)
Communication Quarterly (ECA)
Communication Reports (WSCA)
Communication Research
Communication Research Reports (ECA)
The Communication Review
Communication Studies (CSCA)
Communication Theory (ICA)
Communications—The European Journal of Communication Research
European Journal of Communication
Howard Journal of Communications
Human Communication Research (ICA)
International Journal of Communication
International Journal of Listening (ILA)
Journal of Applied Communication Research (NCA)
Journal of Communication (ICA)
Journal of Communication & Religion (RCA)
Narrative Inquiry
Qualitative Research Reports in Communication (ECA)
Review of Communication (NCA)
Southern Communication Journal (SSCA)
Visual Communication
Visual Communication Quarterly
Western Journal of Communication (WSCA)

Communication & Technology

Information, Communication, & Society
The Information Society
Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (ICA)
Game Studies
Games & Culture

Communication Education

Basic Communication Course Annual
Communication Education (NCA)
Communication Teacher (NCA)
Journal of Communication Pedagogy (CSCA)

Discourse Analysis/Language and Social Interaction

Critical Discourse Studies
Discourse & Communication
Discourse & Society
Discourse Processes
Discourse Studies
Language and Intercultural Communication
Research on Language & Social Interaction
Text & Talk

Gender Communication

Feminist Media Studies
Women & Language
Women's Studies in Communication

Health Communication

Health Communication
Health, Risk, & Society
Journal of Communication in Healthcare
Journal of Health Communication
Journal of Healthcare Communications
Rhetoric of Health & Medicine

Intercultural/International Communication

Asian Journal of Communication
Chinese Journal of Communication
Communicatio
Communications—The European Journal of Communication Research
European Journal of Communication
Global Media and Communication
Howard Journal of Communications
International Communication Gazette
International Communication Research Journal
International Journal of Communication
Journal of Asian Pacific Communication
Journal of Intercultural Communication Research
Journal of International Communication
Journal of International & Intercultural Communication (NCA)
Language and Intercultural Communication
Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication

Interpersonal/Small Group Communication

Journal of Family Communication
Journal of Social and Personal Relationships
Small Group Research

Mass Communication / Media Studies

The Agenda Setting Journal
The Communication Review
Communications—The European Journal of Communication Research
Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies
Convergence
Critical Studies in Media Communication (NCA)
Explorations in Media Ecology
Feminist Media Studies
Global Media and Communication
International Journal of Media Management
International Journal of Press/Politics

Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media
Journal of Media & Religion
Journal of Media Economics
Journal of Media Ethics
Journal of Radio & Audio Media
Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly
Journalism Practice
Journalism Studies
Mass Communication & Society
Media, Culture, & Society
Media Psychology
New Media & Society
Popular Communication
Social Media + Society
Television & New Media
Journal of Communication Management
Management Communication Quarterly

Organizational Communication

Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies
Studies in Theatre and Performance
Text & Performance Quarterly (NCA)
Political Communication
First Amendment Studies (NCA)
International Journal of Press/Politics
Political Communication
Rhetoric & Public Affairs

Public Relations/Strategic Communication

Case Studies in Strategic Communication
International Journal of Strategic Communication
Journal of Communication Management
Journal of Public Relations Research
Public Relations Inquiry
Public Relations Journal
Public Relations Review

Rhetorical Studies

Advances in the History of Rhetoric
Argumentation & Advocacy
Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric
KB Journal
Philosophy & Rhetoric
Quarterly Journal of Speech (NCA)
Relevant Rhetoric
Rhetoric & Public Affairs
Rhetoric of Health & Medicine
Rhetoric Review
Rhetoric Society Quarterly
Rhetorica
Voices of Democracy

Ag/ Risk/ Science/ Environmental Communication

Applied Environmental Education & Communication
Environmental Communication
Health, Risk, & Society
Journal of Contingencies & Crisis Management
Journal of Applied Communications (ag., natural resources)
Public Understanding of Science
Risk Analysis
Science Communication
Technical Communication Quarterly

This list was compiled by the National Communication Association and retrieved October, 2022 from https://www.natcom.org/academic-professional-resources/research-and-publishing-resource-center/journals-publishing.

APPENDIX B FORMS

Graduate students must submit various forms throughout their course of study at CSU. Forms required by the Graduate School have a "GS" prefix and area accessed in your RamWeb. See Graduate School forms for samples and details.

Graduate School forms (GS) are automatically sent to the relevant signatories electronically in sequence. If a form you submit is not completed, this may be because one person has not yet signed it.

Forms required by the department have a "DG" prefix and are available on the JMC website and at the end of this manual. You and/or your advisor will send department forms (DG) via email to the Graduate Program Director and/or the Graduate Program Coordinator.

▸ Required Forms

Form name	Purpose	Due	How to submit
Program Planning			
DG1 Temporary Advising Form	Establish contact with temporary advisor	Early in 1st semester	Email to Graduate Program Director
DG1b Additional Work Commitment Acknowledgement Form	Understand guidance for accepting additional work beyond your assistantship	Early in 1st semester	Email to GPD, GPC
DG4 Ph.D. Program Transfer Credit Approval	List all courses to transfer from master's degree (Ph.D. only)	Mid-1st semester	Email to Graduate Program Director
DG6 MS Coursework Planning	List planned courses to fulfill degree requirements (MS only)	Before 3rd semester	No submission
GS6 Program of Study	List planned courses, committee and advisor	End of 3rd semester	RamWeb
DG5 Ph.D. Coursework Planner	List updated courses for degree requirements (Ph.D. only)	Mid-3rd semester (no submission) & submit after preliminary exam	Email to Graduate Program Director
Preliminary Exams & Thesis/Dissertation			
GS16 Report of Preliminary Examination for the Doctoral Degree	Results of preliminary exam (Ph.D. only)	Within 2 days of faculty assessments	RamWeb
DG2 Thesis/Research Project/ Dissertation Proposal Approval	Committee approval of proposal defense	Within 2 days of proposal defense	Email to Graduate Program Coordinator
Student Plan for Degree Completion	Establish degree plan completion	1st, 4th, 8th, and 10th semester of CR	Email to Graduate Program Director
GS24 Report of Final Examination Results	Committee approval of final project defense	Within 2 days of defense	RamWeb
Graduation			
GS25 Application for Graduation or Reapplication for Graduation	Application for CSU graduation	Semester you plan to graduate, by week 3	RamWeb
GS30 Thesis/Dissertation Submission	Submission of final thesis/ diss. to CSU (Ph.D. and Plan A only)	After final edits	RamWeb
DG3 Graduate Degree	Department checklist for	After all paperwork is	Email to Graduate

Completion Checklist	graduation	submitted	Program Coordinator
Abstract to *Journalism & Mass Communication Abstracts*	Register thesis or dissertation (Ph.D. and Plan A only)	After final edits	Email to Graduate Program Coordinator

Other Helpful Forms

▶ Other Department Forms

These forms are available from the front office staff or Graduate Program Coordinator.

- **Pre-Trip Travel Request Form** – For permission from the department and university for sanctioned travel. Must be completed before you travel on a department- or grant-supported trip.
- **Special Course Proposal Form** – Used to register for variable credit courses including Supervised College Teaching (JTC 684), Independent Study (JTC 795), and thesis or dissertation credits (JTC 699/799). CR registration does **not** need this form.
- **Graduate Teaching Evaluation Form** – For applying for summer teaching positions, filled out by you and a faculty member who has supervised you as a GTA or has a deep knowledge of your teaching.

▶ Other Graduate School Forms

These forms are accessed via your RamWeb. See Graduate School Forms for details.

- **GS7 Request for Change of Department and/or Degree Program** – Change from one department or program to another.
- **GS9A Petition for Committee Member Changes** – Change advisor or committee after GS6 is processed.
- **GS11 Study Abroad Transfer Credit Request** – Submit if you take coursework abroad as part of your program and want the coursework to be officially transferred to CSU.
- **GS52 Discrepancy Clearance Response** – Resolve course discrepancies (if applicable) that were not addressed on your GS25 Application for Graduation.
- **Late Registration Request** – For making registration changes past the registration deadline but within the same semester as the original registration.
- **Registration Appeal** – You can request a drop, withdrawal, or retroactive registration changes for a previous semester or for any course where the drop/withdrawal deadlines for the current semester have passed. See Petitions to the Graduate School.

Petitions or Requests Not Addressed by Existing Forms

In some cases, you may need to request an exemption or other resolution to a policy or procedure due to extenuating circumstances beyond your control. Work with your advisor or the JMC Graduate Program Director to develop a memo addressing the issue. Your department head or advisor must include the following information in a petition emailed from a CSU affiliated (@colostate) email address to: gradschool@colostate.edu.

1. What policy are you requesting an exception to or what procedure was not followed?
2. What is the student's extenuating circumstance prompting this request?
3. What is the proposed date that the requirements will be completed, if applicable?
4. The extenuating circumstances must be documented. (no medical records)

5. Steps department has taken to assure compliance with policies and procedures in the future.

Each petition is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and the Graduate School may request additional information. See the Petitions page on the Graduate School website for more information.